

Haywood Economic Development

Haywood County may not be keeping up with the Joneses when it comes to our more successful neighbors to the east. A study released last summer which reviewed economic incentives from 2009-2014 for all NC counties shows that Haywood County ranks in the middle of state in economic development at 53rd.

Buncombe County

Buncombe County ranked second on the list with \$29.7 million in economic incentives from 2009-2014 with a total of 23 contracts.

In 2010 Buncombe County and the Asheville Chamber began Asheville 5x5 to create 5,000 jobs and \$500 million in corporate investment in five years. They targeted clusters of businesses from automotive to the arts. Last autumn, the Asheville Chamber reported the plan generated one billion in investment and 6000 new jobs.

When comparing Buncombe County's operating budget in 2014 to the potential incentives for economic development would equal about 11% of their County budget

Henderson County

Henderson County ranked 12th on the list with \$6.6 million in economic incentives from 2009-2014 and Henderson had 20 contracts.

Since 2013, Henderson County has placed a high priority on existing businesses and the recruitment of new industry in their county. The expansion of existing manufacturers Continental, Elkamet and ASG added 110 jobs in 2014.

Recent successes of locating beverage manufactures Sierra Nevada and Bold Rock Cider in the Mills River area brought national attention to Henderson County.

When comparing Henderson County's operating budget in 2014 to the potential incentives for economic development would equal about 6% of their County budget

Haywood County

Haywood County ranked 53rd on the list with \$376,166 in economic incentives from 2009-2014 Haywood had two contracts.

Both companies expanded their facilities and workforce during this time. No new operations have moved to the County during the timeframe.

When comparing Haywood County's operating budget in 2014 to the potential incentives for economic development would be less than 1% of our County budget

WNC Counties

McDowell was ranked 42nd with five contracts totaling \$827,000 during the same time period.

Cherokee, Clay, Macon and Transylvania had one contract each and were ranked below Haywood. Jackson, Madison, Swain and Yancey County did not have a contract to report.

Recommendations

The guidelines for Industrial Development and Incentives have not been updated since 2004. The Haywood County Manager respectfully requests to review and bring recommendations for improvement to the Board of County Commissioners as part of the budget for 2017.

Current Economic Development Projects

Haywood County has approved funds for infrastructure to the Junaluska Sanitary District (JSD) to expand sewer services out Hwy 209 from the Smoky Mountain Health Rehabilitation Center to Riverbend Elementary. The County aided JSD in completing a grant through the Golden Leaf program. The grant application has made it through the preliminary and secondary rounds of the approval process.

The Duke Energy 2016 Site Readiness Program is a program to help increase awareness of industrial sites in the Duke Energy region. Haywood Economic Development submitted the 10 acre site ready pad and adjoining parcels at the Beaverdam Industrial Park. As part of the program, there may be recommendations for site improvements which would require capital.

The Committee for Haywood County Broadband has been meeting since summer of 2014. The committee serves to address the Broadband issues in Haywood County for unserved and underserved areas of the County. Surveys conducted over the past two years estimate that 47% of the households in Haywood County had either no or inadequate Internet services and less than 16% have high speed Internet.

Broadband has become just as an important utility as roads, water and sewer for any economic development. The demand for faster download and upload speeds are essential and critical to expand job opportunities to our citizens.

The committee has applied for grants through the Southwestern Commission to complete a strategic master plan for Haywood County to help in identify all existing fiber networks, facilities and a plan to provide broadband partnerships throughout Haywood County. Haywood Advancement Foundation has pledged \$10,000 to the grant.

Haywood County may need to consider resources to aid in the assessment of and implementation of broadband solutions as the project proceeds.