

2018 - 2019 (FY)

# ANNUAL REPORT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COALITION



**ASHEVILLE**  
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE





# THANK YOU TO OUR BOARD



## A MESSAGE FROM...

*Michael Meguiar, Board Chair of the Economic Development Coalition*



**25** YEARS AGO THIS SUMMER, Buncombe County Chairman Dr. Gene Rainey signed resolution #20465 creating a Commission to 'stimulate the sustained growth and development of Buncombe County.' Today, we owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Rainey and his

successors at Buncombe County, the City of Asheville, and the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce for their vision and stewardship of the Economic Development Coalition.

Our partnership recognizes the value of public and private sector stakeholders committed to a common vision for community prosperity. That vision is known today as the AVL 5x5 Strategic Plan. Our Board of Directors champion business and innovation in Buncombe County. Our program of work promotes a diversified economy, sustainable growth in tax base, and the creation of quality jobs in high-value sectors. Our purpose is grounded in improving the outcomes of education, health and wellbeing for the next generation.

Our longevity also attests to the agility required to navigate the changes of the past quarter century while planning for the next. Economic Development must always be about the future. Are we anticipating the impact of economic, technological and demographic trends on our residents? Are we making the investments today that will yield a more prosperous and resilient tomorrow for Buncombe County?

This remains the challenge before our Board of Directors. I am personally grateful for their expertise, creativity and leadership in 2019 that will continue to advance and expand this community vision for the next 25 years.



**CLARK DUNCAN**  
*Executive Director  
Economic  
Development Coalition*



**JANICE W. BRUMIT**  
*VP of Community  
Relations Brumit  
Restaurant Group*



**MARC MALLOY**  
*SVP, Health Plan  
Solutions  
Mission Health System*



**AVRIL PINDER**  
*County Manager  
Buncombe County*



**KIT CRAMER**  
*President & CEO  
Asheville Area  
Chamber of Commerce*



**MATTHEW BURRIL**  
*President  
BrickStreet Equity  
Management*



**HON. ESTHER  
MANHEIMER**  
*Mayor  
City of Asheville*



**JAEL RATTIGAN**  
*Co-Founder  
French Broad  
Chocolates*



**DR. TONY BALDWIN**  
*Superintendent  
Buncombe County  
Schools*



**DEBRA CAMPBELL**  
*City Manager  
City of Asheville*



**LEE MCELRATH**  
*Manager, Large  
Accounts Dominion  
Energy*



**JEFF SLOSMAN**  
*President/CEO  
National Wiper Alliance*



**W. LOUIS BISSETTE, JR.**  
*Attorney - Of Counsel  
McGuire, Wood, Bissette,  
P.A.*



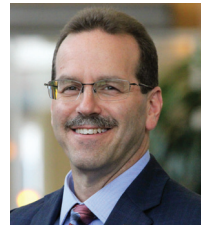
**BRAD GALBRAITH**  
*VP - Community  
Development Biltmore  
Farms*



**JIM OLIVER**  
*Founder  
AVL Technologies*



**JASON WALLS**  
*District Manager  
Asheville Area  
Duke Energy*



**MR. LEW BLEIWEIS**  
*Executive Director  
Greater Asheville  
Regional Airport Authority*



**DR. DENNIS KING**  
*President  
A-B Technical  
Community College*



**DR. DENISE  
PATTERSON**  
*Superintendent  
Asheville City Schools*



**ALFRED WHITESIDES**  
*Buncombe County  
Commissioner*

## BUSINESS RETENTION, EXPANSION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The AVL 5X5 strategy begins at home with a focus on improving the skills of the regional workforce, building the capacity of local business leadership, reducing the cost of doing business and making available the public and private sector resources business needs to compete and thrive in today's global economy.

## COMMUNITY MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT

The in-migration of business is a catalyst for a healthier Buncombe County. The AVL 5X5 strategy focuses on the intentional recruitment of high growth industries spanning advanced manufacturing, healthcare, science and technology that complement the legacy strengths of our workforce and educational systems.

## RIVERBIRD RESEARCH

Over the past 25 years, the EDC has become the authoritative source for economic data in the Asheville Metro and Western North Carolina Region. The analytics and tools of the research team inform not only the AVL 5X5 Strategy, but promote data-driven decision making by governmental leadership, non-profit partners, Chamber members and communities.

## ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT AND VENTURE ASHEVILLE

Venture Asheville was launched in 2013 in an innovative and comprehensive effort to cultivate the next generation of Asheville-headquartered business. Focusing our human and financial resources on high-growth companies with the capacity to scale nationally and internationally, Venture Asheville builds the entrepreneurial ecosystem through connection, mentorship and funding.

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL



Accredited Economic Development Organization

“

*I'm incredibly proud of the creativity, persistence and discipline of this team. Under the leadership of the EDC Board, our staff strives for excellence and continues to earn national accolades. In 2016, the Economic Development Coalition was accredited by the International Economic Development Council and remains one of only 62 organizations in North America to have earned the distinction.”*

— KIT CRAMER  
President & CEO

Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IN THE PAGES THAT FOLLOW WE CELEBRATE THE progress of the Buncombe County economy including the expansion of Reich Automotive and the arrival of Vancouver-headquartered, Haakon Industries. 2018 also marked the grand opening of nationally recognized consumer brands such as East Fork Pottery and Fox Factory in our community.

Workforce development remains a pressing topic for employers across the region. Seeking to quantify the impact of increasing labor demands and demographic shifts, EDC staff conducted the first-ever employer survey of the entire 10-county labor-shed. Survey outcomes are already driving new strategic programs of the EDC such as Next AVL. The first-of-its kind mentorship collaborative with local university partners will advance goals of equity, inclusion and talent retention here at home.

The programs of Venture Asheville continue to build the next generation of Asheville headquartered business from the ground up. Over the past year, we supported over 25 start-ups in the Elevate program with the help of 54 trained mentors. New programmatic innovations included recognition of the first-ever 'Venture 15' fastest growing start-ups, as well as the award of \$25,000 to early stage start-ups through the Asheville Impact Micro Grant.

Lastly, the work of economic development remains informed by our rigorous, in-house research team. The Riverbird Research brand was launched this year to expand the reach and resources of the EDC. In recent months, we've collaborated with esteemed partners such as the Research Triangle Institute and EMSI in a landmark workforce study and have undertaken a data-driven analysis of community progress in advance of the next AVL 5x5 Strategic Plan launching in 2020. Special thanks to our partners and investors who made possible the progress of the past year.



**CLARK DUNCAN**  
Executive Director  
Economic Development Coalition

2018-2019 (FY)

**250** New Jobs

**40** Out of 250 Jobs  $\geq$  \$50,000

**\$33M** Capital Investment

**\$41,678** Overall Average Wage

**25** Start-ups in the Elevate Program

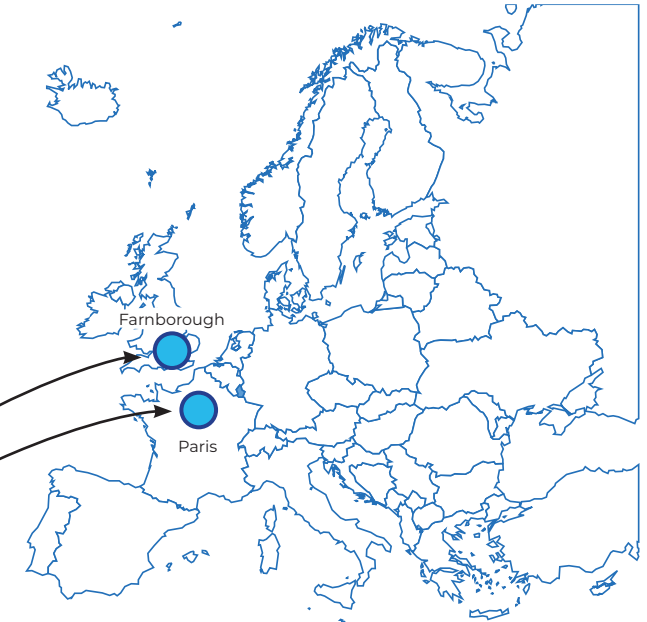
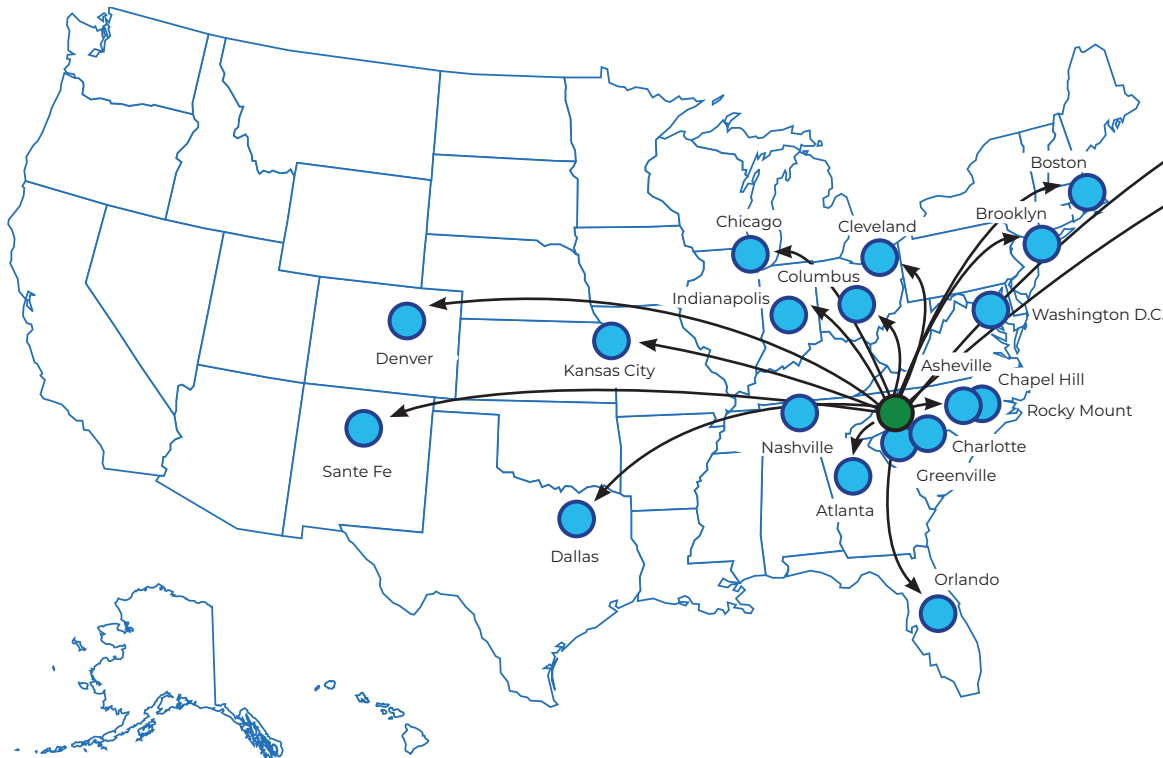
**\$195K** in Asheville Angel Investment



15  
TRIPS  
MADE

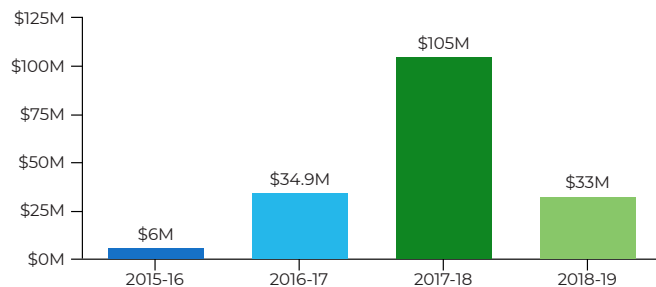
223  
CONTACTS  
CONNECTED

58  
PROJECT  
LEADS  
ADDED TO  
THE PIPELINE



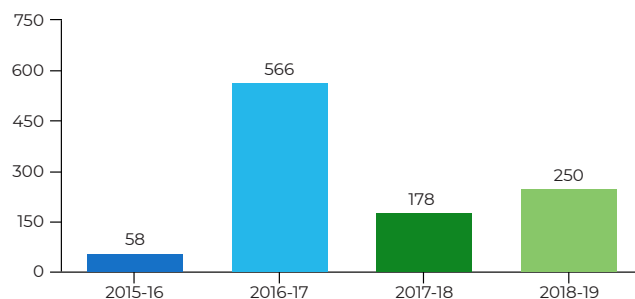
**OUR PROGRAM OF WORK INVESTS IN STRATEGIC** marketing to site selection consultants, key industry influencers and company prospects within the target industries of the AVL 5x5 Strategic Plan. These relationships with national and international leaders in Advanced Manufacturing, Science & Technology, and Healthcare sectors contribute to our growing reputation for skilled workforce, agile training partners, competitive cost of doing business, expanding air service and a forward-looking business community. Perhaps more importantly, these efforts convey the values that define the Asheville Metro Region and will continue to attract others to it.

## CAPITAL INVESTMENT (FY)



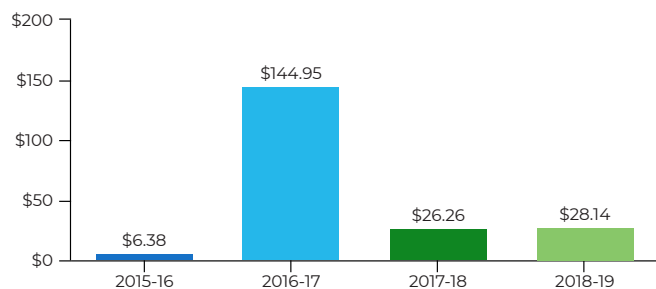
New capital investment of announced companies (building, machinery, and equipment). Does not include purchase price of existing land or building.

## JOB COUNT (FY)



Number of jobs represents new positions created by announced companies.

## RETURN ON INVESTMENT (FY)



Labor income\* generated by new jobs divided by total investment into the EDC.

\*As determined by IMPLAN software

## ECONOMIC INDICATORS

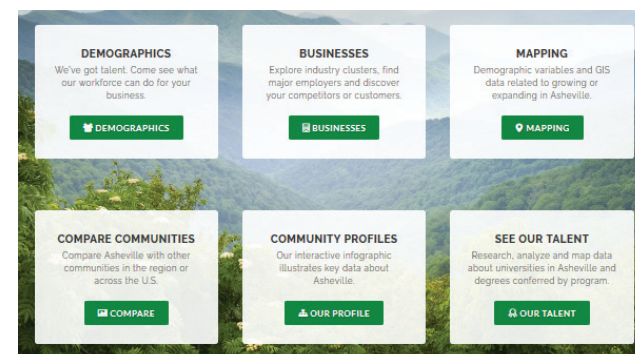
Indicator	2017 Annual	2018 Annual	Change
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	3.7%	3.2%	-0.5% ↓
TOTAL NONFARM EMPLOYMENT	190,700	195,417	2.5% ↑
# OF HOUSES SOLD	7,491	7,259	-3.1% ↓
AVERAGE HOUSE PRICE	\$300,277	\$317,502	5.8% ↑
# OF NEW RESIDENTIAL PERMITS	2,768	2,998	8.3% ↑
VALUE OF NEW RESIDENTIAL PERMITS	\$558M	\$600M	7.6% ↑
	2016 Annual	2017 Annual	
GDP (CURRENT DOLLARS)	\$19.1B	\$20.2B	5.7% ↑
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	42.7%	47.4%	4.7% ↑

220+  
RESEARCH  
REQUESTS

INCLUDING ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS, MEDIA REQUESTS, PRESENTATIONS, CUSTOMIZED FOCUS REPORTS AND ANALYTICS, WORKFORCE AND INDUSTRY ANALYSIS AND MORE.

## GIS PLANNING

Implemented new online interactive and map-based software system, GIS Planning, covering five counties in WNC.





## RIVERBIRD RESEARCH

**Inform. Impact. Influence.** Launched new Research brand to further goals that advance an expanded regional and national customer base, represent research's collaborative identity with competitive capabilities and advanced tools, and support potential revenue generation opportunities.

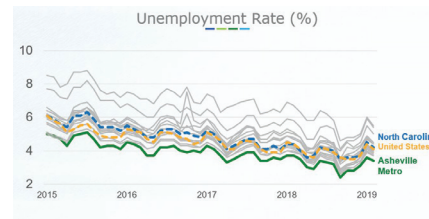


## METRO ECONOMY OUTLOOK

Featured Dr. Michael Walden, a William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor and Extension Economist at North Carolina State University.

## METRO GROWTH BREAKFAST

Developed and presented the inaugural Metro Growth Breakfast which focuses on local community and economy, with direct connections to economic development strategy.



## LIFE SCIENCE AND BIOTECH

Supported by the NC Biotech Center, Mountain Area Workforce Development Board, and Duke Energy a 24-county Life Science Industry and Workforce Availability Analysis was established.

## EMSI GAP ANALYSIS

Partnering with leading labor market analytics firm, EMSI, the Target Cluster Gap Analysis report was completed as a follow-up to RTI International's State of our Workforce survey led by EDC for 10 counties in Western North Carolina.



## NC RURAL CENTER

Selected to participate in the NC Rural Center Homegrown Leaders program.



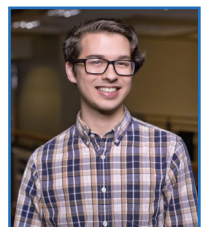
*The capabilities of Riverbird Research ground the decision making of our Chamber and EDC, local businesses and government in authoritative data. Our mission to inform and influence good decision making builds better business, stronger leaders and a more robust economy for Buncombe County.”*

— JANICE BRUMIT

EDC Immediate Past Board Chair  
Brumit Restaurant Group



HEIDI REIBER  
Director of Research



MAXWELL OLLE  
Research Analyst

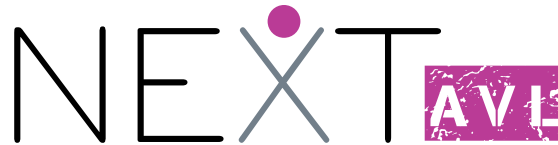
## STATE OF OUR WORKFORCE

IN ORDER TO BETTER UNDERSTAND the in-demand skills needs of area employers, we asked area employers through a 10-county survey how they expect to grow, the types of jobs, skills, training, and education they need in their future workforce, and where they are looking to find their future workforce. In summary, WNC businesses expect to add up to 26,000 new jobs in the next 3 years, 25% of which will be in manufacturing. Additionally, companies value a full spectrum of credentials, from high school diploma to professional certifications, to 4-year college degrees. Finally, there is a strong preference from employers to utilize apprenticeship programs.



*Economic development is about building the future we want for Buncombe County - where all residents are able to participate in the thriving economy of the region and the next generation can emerge stronger than the one that came before. The NEXT AVL Mentorship program is helping more of our youth see themselves and their future success, here at home in Buncombe County."*

— AL WHITESIDES  
EDC Board Member  
Buncombe County Commissioner



WHERE YOU WANT TO BE

NEXT AVL is a 9-month mentorship program for currently enrolled college students – specifically targeting first in family and historically marginalized students. The big idea here is to get students connected to professionals in the area before they graduate. This past year we successfully launched the inaugural program with 10 students. Students reported that through NEXT AVL they have a much clearer understanding of life after college and that they are more comfortable making professional connections. Almost 30 new students have been accepted into the program for Fall 2019.



## PARTNERSHIPS FOR ECONOMIC MOBILITY

What is the number one source for talent, according to employers who responded to the WNC Talent survey? Answer: Networks and referrals. However, this finding has helped us realize that we can do more to pull more people into existing networks and diversify and expand our local talent pool. We are working to extend connections and networks to historically marginalized populations in our community through partnerships with Asheville Housing Authority, UpSkill WNC, Green Opportunities, and the State of Black Asheville.



Photography: Courtesy of Asheville Housing Authority >>





## REICH LLC

- New Jobs:** 15
- Capital Investment:** \$10.9 Million
- Industry:** Motor Vehicle Parts Manufacturing

<< **Photography:** Courtesy of Reich LLC

Reich LLC announced plans to invest \$10.9 million through its new expansion of operations in Arden. Reich LLC is a subsidiary of Reich USA GmbH; together they manufacture turned parts, ball bearings, components for fuel injection systems, and other automotive parts. Through this expansion, the new jobs include wages 40% above the county average.

The expanded production capacity will sustain \$1.8M in annual labor income from new direct, indirect and induced jobs, and will support another \$650,000 in new annual federal, state and local taxes essential to the fiscal health of our region.



## EAST FORK POTTERY

- New Jobs:** 75
- Capital Investment:** \$2.5 Million
- Industry:** Clay Product Manufacturing

<< **Photography:** Courtesy of Capital at Play

East Fork Pottery expanded production and operations in a newly renovated facility in Biltmore Village in 2018. East Fork expects to increase production of their artistically produced plateware and everyday pottery by more than 5 times by 2020. In order to facilitate and accommodate growth, they plan to add approximately 75 new jobs with wages at or above the county average, and will additionally invest over \$2.5 million in facility renovations and new machinery.

“

*The decision to expand Reich LLC operations in Buncombe County fulfills our long-term commitment to serving our North American Customers. We continue to build on a great workforce, culture, and community that support advanced manufacturing jobs in Western North Carolina.”*

— **MATTHIAS GOETZ**  
Asheville Plant Manager

“

*The Matisses are on a mission to introduce artisanal ceramics to a new generation of consumers. Alex and Connie – along with a third cofounder, potter John Vigeland – are building a start-up called East Fork that blends craft pottery with a distinctly modern, digitally savvy approach to business, taking cues from progressive startups like Warby Parker and Everlane.”*

— **FAST COMPANY**  
11.27.2018



**April Brown**  
Economic Development Project Manager

## STRATEGIC MARKETING

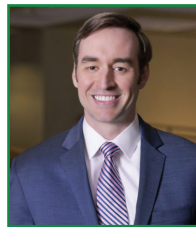


### SITE SELECTION FALL CONFERENCE

The EDC sponsored and provided operational support to the inaugural NC Site Selectors Summit held in Asheville, October 2018. The event coincided with North Carolina Economic Development Association's (NCEDA) fall conference held annually in Asheville. EDC and its local partners promoted Asheville to over a dozen site selection consultants with significant influence over business expansions and relocations for companies all over the world.

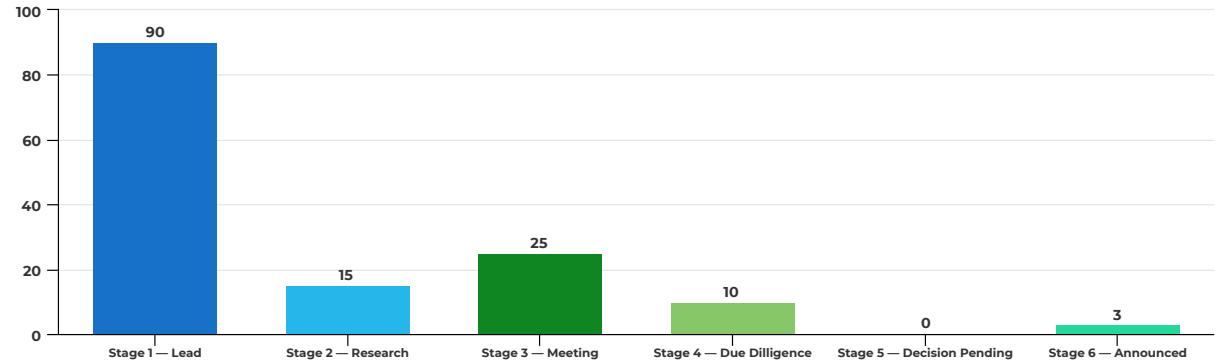
### MOMENTUM "MO" SUMMIT

The EDC sponsored and provided operational support for the MO Summit in Asheville, April 2019. The event attracted 185 top CEOs and business executives from across the country who are scaling high-growth, positive-impact companies and allowed the EDC to broadcast the competitive advantages of doing business in Asheville.



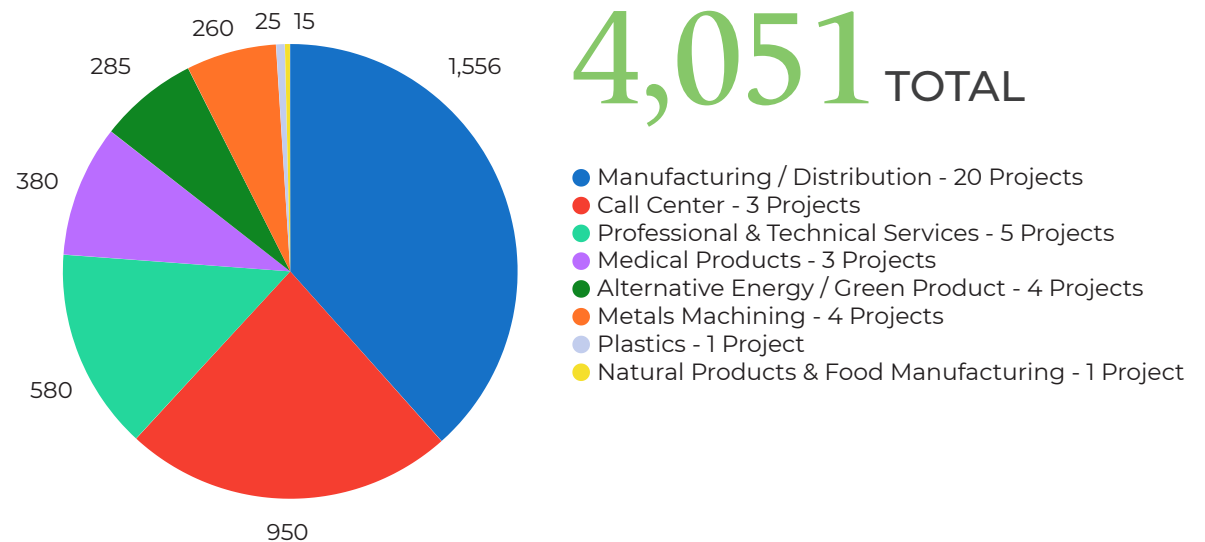
**RYAN REGAN**  
Director of Business Development

## PROJECT PIPELINE BY STAGE - ALL LEADS

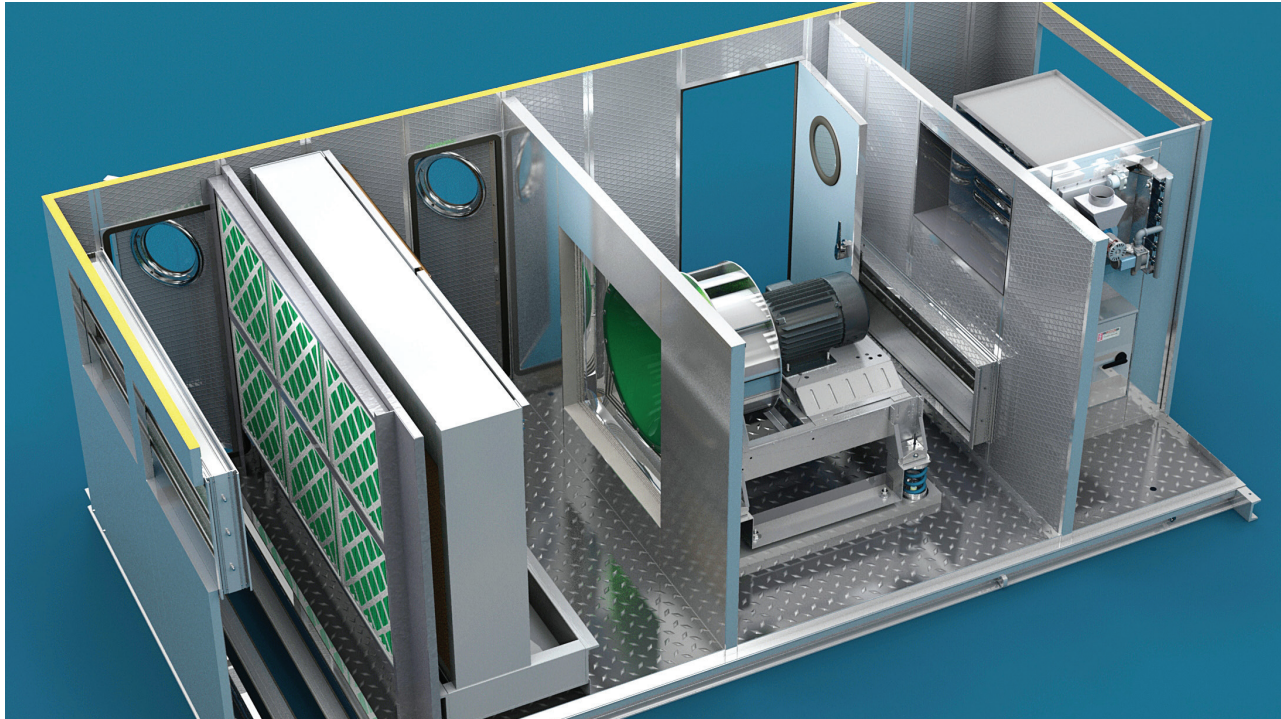


*Investment: All Lead and Active projects represent a potential community investment of **\$921.4M**. All lead and active projects represent a total potential of **19,020 jobs**.*

## ACTIVE PROJECT JOBS BY SECTOR







<< Photography: Courtesy of Haakon Industries

**New Jobs:** 160 **Capital Investment:** \$19.6 Million **Industry:** HVAC Manufacturing

## HAAKON INDUSTRIES

In September 2018, Haakon Industries announced plans to invest \$19.6 million in a new facility to be located in Asheville's Enka Commerce Park. The Canadian company manufactures industrial HVAC units that primarily support hospitals, educational institutions, data centers, and other commercial and industrial facility types. Haakon's expansion into the Asheville area is expected to create 160 new jobs across a range of occupations, including; assembly and production, machining and engineering, and management and administration.

*"Haakon is excited to join the Asheville community with access to the highly skilled workforce of the region. Haakon customers expect the highest quality air handling units and our success is dependent on the quality of our people. That made Asheville the obvious choice, and we look forward to many years here in Western North Carolina."*

— RYAN LEAHY  
Haakon Plant Manager



<< Photography: Courtesy of Fox Factory

## FOX FACTORY GRAND OPENING 2018

After initially announcing their expansion plans in 2017, Fox Factory unveiled their new Buncombe County facility in South Asheville in July 2018. The 20,000 square foot operation serves as a regional headquarters for the company, housing functions like sales, finance, research & development, service, and distribution. Fox Factory expects to employ nearly 50 people at the facility once fully scaled.

Fox Factory is a premier brand in the outdoor recreational sports industry, specializing in shocks and suspension components used on mountain bikes, all-terrain-vehicles (ATVs), and other off-road vehicles. Fox Factory's Asheville location is the company's first facility in North Carolina.

*"We are very excited to now call Asheville, NC home for one of our bike division's satellite offices focused on service, sales, engineering, R&D, distribution, and finance. Along with a very passionate mountain biking culture, we believe Asheville offers us the ability to tap into a top-notch talent pool."*

— LARRY L. ENTERLINE  
FOX's Chief Executive Officer



## VENTURE 15 AWARDS

**NEW EVENT KICKED OFF IN 2018.** The Venture 15 awards the 15 fastest-growing Asheville-area start-ups. This event recognizes the area's outstanding entrepreneurs and serves as an elite setting where they can share their talent and wisdom as well as offer inspiration to other fledgling companies to be part of this exclusive group.

## AWARD HONOREES

**\$52M** in Local Revenue

**11** of 15 are Elevate Alumni

**Half** are Female Founded

**Half** were in the Technology Sector

## VENTURE FUNDING

The Asheville Impact Micro Grant was launched in 2019 as a radical approach to fund very early stage, high growth potential start-ups in Buncombe County. With over 110 donors and the generous support of AVL Technologies and the Wells Fargo Foundation, our community raised **\$25,000**. Five winners were selected from a very competitive pool of 100 applications.



## 5 MICRO GRANT WINNERS

RELASPEN

NO SWEAT UNDIES

3 MOUNTAINS

ASHEVILLE WEDDING COLLECTIVE

BURBAN



Established by Venture Asheville in 2014, the Asheville Angels are the local chapter of Venture South, a 300+ investor network across the US Southeast with a focus on early stage tech companies.

## START-UP ROADTRIP

Six Asheville-Area start-ups hit the road in April of 2019 to bring a showcase of funding-ready startups to Charlotte, Winston-Salem, Durham and Cary for two days in March. Each of these startups is actively raising a round, valued around **\$3.5M** in total. Industries range from solar energy driven solutions to craft beverages.

### PRESENTING COMPANIES:

#### BRIGHTFIELD TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS

Delivering commercial Solar Driven® charging solutions for the rapidly expanding electric vehicle marketplace.

#### CHAR GROW

Probiotics for plants, enabling growers to cut costs, improve yields and move away from harmful chemicals.

#### BURBAN

Cheap food, drinks, and entertainment conveniently laid out on a map.

#### ELITE HRV

Removing the guesswork from health and fitness by making advanced biomarkers easy and accessible.

#### ADORATHERAPY

Manufacturer of innovative aromatherapy products.

#### GINGER'S REVENGE

A craft brewery in North Asheville focused on the production on alcoholic ginger beer.



## ELEVATE PROGRAM

Our Elevate program enables start-up entrepreneurs simultaneously to navigate the practical, day-to-day challenges of building great companies and develop their skills as effective managers, leaders and CEOs. Modeled on the MIT Venture Mentoring Service, Elevate is a service provided by Venture Asheville as part of our strategy to systematically strengthen and support high-growth ventures in the Asheville area.



## VENTURE ASHEVILLE'S ELEVATE START-UPS 2018-19

- Brightfield Transportation Solutions
- NEMAC-FernLeaf Collaborative
- Mount Inspiration
- SoulKu
- Mandala Naturals
- Elite HRV
- WatchPitch
- CraftPeak
- The Bright Angle
- Poppy Handcrafted Popcorn
- AtBay
- Postre Caramel
- Devil's Foot Beverage Co.
- Moonlight Makers
- AuxBus
- Kitsuma Bar
- Gnarcissist
- Sparksmith
- Bellyak, Inc.
- Burban
- Asheville Wedding Collective
- 3 Mountains
- Relaspen
- Blue Spatial Corp.
- Twistek

“

*Asheville has long enjoyed a national reputation for creativity and entrepreneurship. The City is proud to champion the programs of Venture Asheville and is committed to our partnership with the EDC to build, mentor and fund the next generation of Asheville-headquartered business.”*

— ESTHER MANHEIMER  
EDC Board Member  
Mayor, City of Asheville



**JEFFREY KAPLAN**  
Director of Entrepreneurship at  
Venture Asheville



**HANNAH SIZEMORE**  
Executive Operations  
Manager

# AVL 5x5 INVESTORS

**E**CONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS A TEAM EFFORT. Our community relies on the leadership and investment of Buncombe County, the City of Asheville and more than 80 private individuals and organizations to advance our goal of broadly shared economic prosperity. These investors help the EDC strategically expand high-growth industries, attract higher wage jobs, advance greater economic opportunity and stimulate private sector investment in Asheville and Buncombe County. Special thanks to our governmental stakeholders and private contributors investing in job growth through AVL 5X5 Vision 2020!

“

*We remain incredibly grateful to the AVL 5X5 investors who fund the important work of the EDC. From local headquarters to multinationals and family foundations, these community leaders are investing in something beyond themselves and their contributions will pay dividends in expanded economic opportunity for our region.”*

— LOU BISSETTE

*First Chair for Economic Development  
Attorney of Council*



## BUNCOMBE COUNTY



## ASHEVILLE CITY




## HAYWOOD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Asheville Eye Associates  
Asheville Merchants Corporation  
Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College  
Assured Partners of NC  
AT&T North Carolina  
Avista Business Development Corporation  
AvL Technologies, Inc.  
Bankers Insurance  
BB&T  
Beverly-Grant, Inc.  
Beverly-Hanks & Associates, REALTORS  
Bhuna Corporation  
Biltmore  
Biltmore Farms, LLC  
Blue Ridge X-Ray Co., Inc.  
Boys Arnold & Company  
Brick Street Equity Management  
Brumit Restaurant Group  
Bunnell-Lammons Engineering  
Carolina Alliance Bank  
Cintas - The Uniform People  
City of Asheville  
Coldwell Banker King  
Colton Groome & Company  
Constangy, Brooks, Smith & Prophete, LLP  
David Gantt Law Offices  
DHG  
Diamond Brand Gear  
Dominion Energy  
Duke Energy

ECS  
Element-360  
ERC Broadband  
Fifth Third Bank  
FIRC Group North Carolina Inc.  
First Bank  
First Citizens Bank  
Friday Staffing Services  
GFoss Consulting, LLC  
Goldsmith Molis & Gray  
Greater Asheville Regional Airport  
Authority  
Harper General Contractors  
Highland Brewing Company  
HomeTrust Bank  
Hyatt Place Asheville-Downtown  
Insurance Service of Asheville, Inc.  
Jacob Holm Industries (America), Inc.  
Johnson Price Sprinkle PA  
Lenoir-Rhyne University Center for  
Graduate Studies of Asheville  
Lewis Real Estate  
Linamar  
MB Haynes Corporation  
McGill Associates, P.A.  
McGuire, Wood & Bissette, PA  
John McKibbin  
McMillan Pazdan Smith Architecture  
Mercy Urgent Care  
MHAworks Architecture  
Mills Manufacturing Corp.

Mission Health  
Moog Music Inc.  
moon io media, inc.  
New Belgium Brewing  
The Omni Grove Park Inn  
Parsec Financial Wealth Management  
Pearsall Operating Company  
Pepsi Cola Bottling Co. of Asheville  
Pulliam Properties, Inc.  
Renaissance Asheville Hotel  
Roberts & Stevens  
Senator Terry Van Duyn  
Silver-Line Plastics Corporation  
Skyland Distributing Company  
South Asheville Hotel Associates  
TD Bank  
Tennoca Construction Company  
Thermo Fisher Scientific  
Tops for Shoes, Inc.  
Troy and Sons Distillers  
TSAChoice  
UNC Asheville  
The Van Winkle Law Firm  
Vannoy Construction  
WeaverCooke-Kirkland Construction  
Companies  
Webb Investment Services, Inc.  
Wells Fargo Bank, NA  
Western Carolina University  
Worley, Woodbury, & Associates, PA

 IN THE HEELS OF UNPRECEDENTED Y-Y ANNUAL job growth in the metro manufacturing sector, we can expect a year of continued progress in Buncombe County. Recognizing that workforce is fundamental to successful economic development, staff is already laying the groundwork for new investments in talent attraction, student mentorship and apprenticeship programs.

In parallel, we will undertake a landmark study of present and future industrial sites in Buncombe County, building the confidence and capacity for regional economic growth. Venture Asheville will continue to strive for excellence and innovate new programs that bring the right expertise and necessary funding to local start-ups, at the right time. Initiatives that fill perceived gaps and leverage existing partnerships remain our priority.

As we commit to a strong finish for the current AVL 5X5 Plan in 2020, we are likewise engaged around the question of what is next for Buncombe County. In collaboration with community leaders, Riverbird Research will lead that inquiry to understand our greatest opportunities for meaningful economic growth, as well as the Top 10 most pressing obstacles in our path.

In September of 2019, a broad collaborative of Chamber, City, County and community partners will launch AVL Greater, a solutions-oriented response to the most pressing social and economic challenges that inhibit community wellbeing in the Asheville Metro Region. Subsequently, the EDC will re-launch the AVL 5X5 Strategic Plan – Vision 2025 in July of next year adjusting our targets, strategies, goals and aspirations for the next 5 years. The 5X5 will remain the road map for the Economic Development Coalition for Asheville and Buncombe County, encouraging community consensus and collaboration around our shared goals for economic development. Thank you for your partnership on this journey.





