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# WPCOG - Newsletter

April - May 2019

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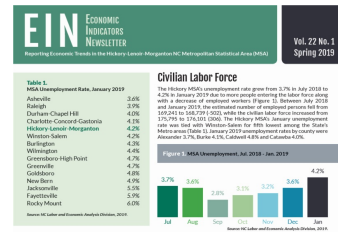
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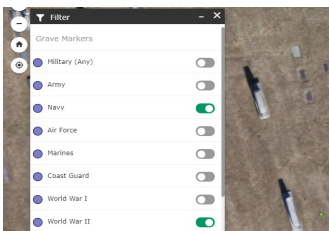
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## Workforce Development Board 2nd Annual NEXTGen Job Fair.

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## Area Agency on Aging AAA Supports Grandparents Raising Grandchildren



The Area Agency on Aging Family Caregiver Support Program supports families in which grandparents are raising their grandchildren. On Friday, March 29 the Area Agency on Aging staff volunteered with Foothills Service Project to build a wheelchair accessibility ramp in Catawba County for a grandmother who is raising her six year-old disabled granddaughter. The need for the accessibility ramp had been growing recently for the grandmother as she carried her growing granddaughter in and out of the house and to the car each day when they were leaving for therapy. With the completion of the accessibility ramp, the grandmother can now bring her granddaughter down the ramp in her wheelchair, rather than carry her down the steps and the sidewalk.

Each year, more and more grandparents from all walks of life are taking an unplanned detour in their lives and becoming primary caregivers for their

grandchildren. When parents are unable to raise their children, grandparents or relatives often step up and take on the role of parent, providing much needed security and stability for the children. This new role of parenting brings with it a whole range of emotions for grandparents as well as the children. Many grandparents are still working, while looking toward retirement, and are suddenly taking on the responsibilities of parenting and added financial expenses.

Grandparents raising their grandchildren across the region and in North Carolina are not alone. Numbers continue to grow across the United States. In North Carolina, there are over 90,500 grandparents responsible for the care of their grandchildren. This translates to approximately 182,000 children under the age of 18 with grandparents as their primary caregiver. (US Census Bureau, 2015 American Community Survey)

Despite the challenges of raising a second generation, the majority of grandparents willingly take on this new role providing the security of keeping the family together. They also develop strong relationships with their grandchildren and provide a new path for their lives. While no two families are on the exact same path with parenting a second time around, they all share a common thread of providing love and stability for the children.

Additionally they share a common need to connect with other families in similar situations and the desire to find support, resources, and education for their families. Grandparents greatly benefit from taking a parenting class, finding breaks from day-to-day demands by attending a support group or learning to say "no" to outside obligations. These efforts go a long way toward supporting them in their role as parents.

Caregiver support groups provide an opportunity for families to connect, share encouragement with one another, and learn about community resources. The support groups in our area offer important connections

for families.

## Area Support Groups For Grandparents/Relatives Raising Grandchildren

### **Burke County:**

#### **Circle of Grandparents-Grandparent Raising Grandchildren Support Group**

Date: Every Thursday (Dinner & childcare provided)

Time: 5:00-7:00p.m.

Location: Oak Hill Elementary, Morganton

For More Information: Lisa Schell (828)502-9786

### **Catawba County:**

#### **Parenting The Second Time Around**

Date: 1st Thursday of each month (September - June) (Dinner & childcare provided)

Time: 5:30-7:30p.m.

Location: Shuford YMCA, Conover

For More Information: Family Caregiver Support Program, Mary Mitchell, 828-485-4256

Article by Mary Mitchell

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## Community & Economic Development

### Burke County Company Receives Building Reuse Grant



Marves Industries, located in Hildebran, has been awarded a Building Reuse Grant by the N.C. Department of Commerce Rural Economic Development Division in order to expand its facility and create 25 new, full-time jobs. A manufacturer of non-woven materials used in the automotive, furniture, and packaging industries, Marves Industries worked with WPCOG staff to submit the grant. The company was awarded \$312,000, which will be used to offset the cost of a 10,000-square-foot expansion of its facility at 205 Cline Park Drive.

According to grant protocols, eligible expenses are reimbursed as the company creates the new jobs and

maintains them for a period of six months.

Marves Industries has been in operation since 2009 and has grown from a handful of employees to more than 80 today. The expansion will allow the company to add a new line and utilize recently purchased equipment. Marves Industries plans to invest more than \$1.86 million on the expansion project.

Article by Paul Teague

## Community & Regional Planning

### Spring EIN Highlights Metro Employment & Residential Real Estate Trends

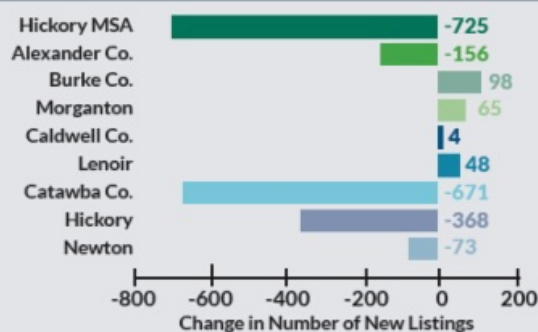
The Spring issue of the Economic Indicators Newsletter addresses Hickory Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) unemployment rates, Hickory Metro bank deposits, Hickory MSA employment trends and Hickory MSA Multi-Listing Service (MLS) real estate sales data.

Here are a few key highlights of the EIN:

- The Hickory MSA's unemployment rate increased from 3.7% in July 2018 to 4.2% in January 2019.
- Between July 2018 and January 2019, the number of employed persons fell by 502 to 168,739 while the civilian labor force increased from 175,795 to 176,101 (306).
- Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) summary of deposits data reveals that since June 2014 Hickory MSA bank deposits have grown by \$467 million to \$4.64 billion.
- Current Employment Survey results reveal that estimated employment in the Hickory MSA increased from 146,600 in December 2013 to 158,100 in December 2018.
- Hickory MSA goods-producing employment, which includes mining, construction and manufacturing, increased from 41,900 in 2013 to 46,900 in 2018.
- Service-producing employment in the Hickory MSA grew from 104,700 in December 2013 to 111,200 in December 2018.
- Between December 2017 and December 2018, more than 2,000 jobs have been added in the Hickory MSA's service-producing sector.
- The Charlotte and Raleigh MSAs had the most employment growth (178,100 and 90,900 jobs respectively) between December 2013 and December 2018.
- Multiple Listing Service results reveal that the Hickory MSA had 4,394 new residential listings and 3,362 closed sales in 2018.
- Results for the Hickory MSA indicate that there were 725 fewer new listings and 730 fewer closed sales in 2018 than in 2017. The 14.2% reduction in new listings led to a decrease in the number of closed sales.
- In 2018, the median sales price in the Hickory MSA was \$145,250 and the average sales price was \$197,987.
- In 2018, a house was only on the market 57 days before it was purchased. By comparison, in 2017 it took over 100 days on the market until the sale of the house.

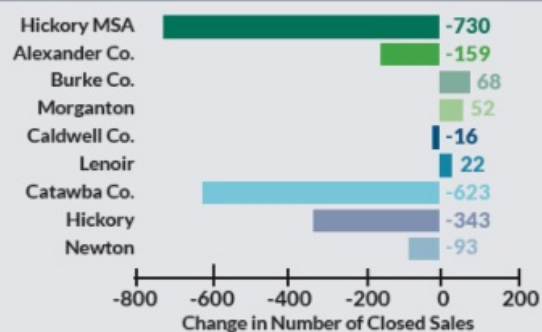
The EIN is produced quarterly and is a publication of the Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board. [To subscribe to the EIN](#) or, contact Taylor Dellinger, Data Analyst at 828-485-4233 or by email [taylor.dellinger@wpcog.org](mailto:taylor.dellinger@wpcog.org).

Figure 7. Hickory MSA MLS Change in the Number of Residential Listings, 2017-2018



Source: Carolina Multiple Listing Services, Inc. (CarolinaMLS), 2019.

Figure 8. Hickory MSA MLS Change in the Number of Closed Residential Sales, 2017-2018



Source: Carolina Multiple Listing Services, Inc. (CarolinaMLS), 2019.

## IT/GIS Services

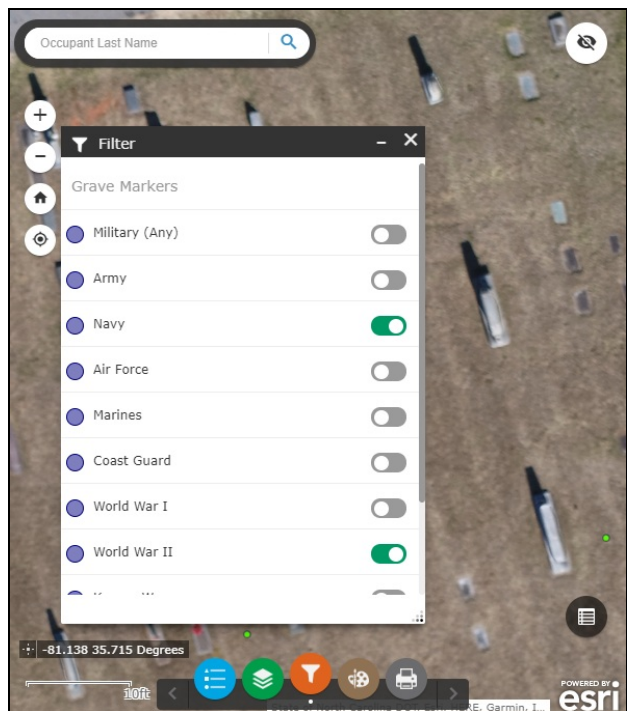
### WPCOG Partners with Local Church to Create an Online Cemetery GIS

Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church in the City of Claremont, NC maintains a picturesque cemetery along East Main Street for its members. In December 2018, the church contracted with WPCOG to collect all the graves and place them into an online Geographic Information System (GIS). Once the GIS was created, the church staff would be able to use it to inventory and locate graves, as well as store related documents and photographs. The agreement also called for a separate web application for church members to use to locate graves and see information about the persons buried therein.

In order to ensure the grave locations in the GIS matched earlier paper drawings of the cemetery, WPCOG staff first consulted with the Church's surveyor to determine that the existing plot boundaries as contained in paper drawings of the cemetery were currently accurate. Then, volunteers from Mt. Calvary went to the cemetery and located markers and pins that denoted the boundaries of grave plots, often using metal detectors to find them. Once uncovered, small pink flags were placed at each pin.

Following this, an FAA-certified drone pilot at WPCOG - GIS Technician Trey Schweitzer - overflew the cemetery to obtain high-resolution imagery. Using this imagery, WPCOG staff used Esri software to stitch together the separate pictures into one seamless background. The high resolution of the image allowed the flags to be seen in the imagery, and thus improved the ability of the GIS to match each gravestone on the ground with its accompanying plot as shown in the older paper maps.

Over the next month, WPCOG staff members visited the cemetery and used mapping grade GPS equipment and ArcGIS Online software to collect each grave, including its location, a photograph and all information found on the gravestone. This included each occupant's name, dates of birth and death, along with other information on the markers, including titles (e.g. Rev., MD), military branch (e.g. Army), military conflict (e.g. WW1, Korea), dates of marriage and whether the occupant was an infant or small child.



WPCOG staff placed this information into an online database and built two web applications (or "webapps") to allow access. The first webapp allows authorized church staff members to update the information as burials occur, along with recording monetary transactions and adding older paper records to existing graves as information is found. The second webapp allows public users to search for and locate graves by name of the occupant. The public webapp also allows users to search for veterans of various military branches and conflicts. For instance, users can search all the grave locations of Navy veterans of World War II (see inset).

In March 2019, WPCOG staff installed the GIS and provided church staff with the initial training in operating the system on their devices. The church staff is now becoming accustomed to the system and is beginning the process of digitizing existing paper records and placing them into the online entry for each matching grave.

WPCOG is pleased to partner with Mt. Calvary Church in creating the online cemetery database and in helping them to implement and maintain the system over time.

For more information regarding cemetery GIS, please contact IT/GIS Director - Scott Miller or GIS Analyst - Tom Bell, 828-322-9191 extensions 230 and 234, respectively.

Article by Tom Bell

# Regional Housing Authority

## RHA is Accepting Applications for Section 8

The Regional Housing Authority (RHA) is accepting applications online at [wpcog.housingmanager.com](http://wpcog.housingmanager.com).

Through this website you can check your application status, update your application and update your address.

### FAQs regarding online applications and website

#### How do I apply online?

Using the link [wpcog.housingmanager.com](http://wpcog.housingmanager.com), you can click "apply for housing" and complete your application in minutes.

OR you can visit the WPCOG location and apply using an iPad that is provided in the main lobby.

#### What happens after I apply?

The RHA takes 30 days to process your application. Once a determination has been made, you will be notified by mail. Please remember to keep your address updated with us.

#### When will I get a voucher?

Please remember, the Section 8 program does not offer emergency assistance and the waiting time could be 3 years or more.

#### Why did my waiting list number change?

The waiting list is currently open. People continually apply. The Regional Housing Authority places applicants on the waiting list by date and time, but we also use preferences. There are four preferences used to place applicants: Resident, Disabled, Veteran and Homeless. Applicants who apply and receive more than one preference would be placed higher on the list than an applicant with only one or no preferences.

For more information regarding the waiting list or how to apply contact: Kala Guido 828-485-4282 or [kala.guido@wpcog.org](mailto:kala.guido@wpcog.org).

Article by Kala Guido

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## Transportation

### New Mobi Award for Burke Flex Routes



WPCOG was recently recognized at the inaugural "Mobi" awards hosted by North Carolina Department of Transportation. The Mobi awards recognize projects that showcase the important and transformational role that investments in multimodal transportation play in enhancing communities in all parts of North Carolina. WPCOG nominated the new Burke Flex Routes for how the project leveraged existing sidewalks, benches, and lighting in Morganton, Drexel, Valdese, and Rutherford College for bus stops. Buses operating the new service are equipped with bicycle racks.

The Burke Flex Routes won first runner-up in the awards category of Rural projects. Other top project categories included Urban, Suburban, Tourism, and Innovation. With pictures of the project as the backdrop, awardees were honored at a luncheon hosted on April 3, 2019, hosted by NCDOT and co-hosted by North Carolina State University, their Institute for Transportation Research and Education, the NC chapter of Women's Transportation Seminar, and NC Go! The new Mobi awards represent an expanded multimodal focus at the heart of NCDOT's mission to leverage the state's transportation infrastructure to ensure a strong economy for future generations.

Article by Brian Horton

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## Workforce Development Board

Inviting all 16 to 24 year olds  
**2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL JOB FAIR**

**May 11, 2019**  
(10am - 12pm)

**NCWorks**  
**NEXTGEN**  
www.westernpiedmontworks.org

**Alexander County - Alexander Central High School**  
223 School Dr, Taylorsville, NC 28681

**Burke County - Mtn View Recreation Center**  
645 First St, Morganton, NC 28655

**Caldwell County - Library**  
120 Hospital Ave NW, Lenoir, NC 28645

**Catawba County - Western Piedmont Council of Governments**  
1880 2nd Ave NW, Hickory, NC 28601

*Your future starts here.*

A proud partner of the americanjobcenter network.

# NCWorks

<b>Alexander Career Center</b> 604 7th St. SW Taylorsville, NC 28681 (828) 632-4631	<b>NCWorks Career Center - Burke</b> 720 East Union St Morganton, NC 28655 (828) 438-6161
<b>NCWorks Career &amp; Placement Center - Caldwell</b> 1909 Hickory Blvd SE Lenoir, NC 28645 (828) 759-4680	<b>NCWorks Career Center - Catawba</b> 403 Conover Station SE Conover, NC 28613 (828) 466-5535

Calling all employers and jobseekers, our 2nd annual NEXTGen Job Fair will be held on Saturday, May 11. Employers, please contact your local NCWorks Career Center for more details on how to reserve your table for the job fair. Don't wait, space is limited at all locations.

We invite employers from across the four counties to participate in this year's NEXTGen Job Fair for the Western Piedmont Region. This opportunity is no cost to employers, and you understand that these future employees will come with little to no work experience. Partnering workforce agencies will also be involved the day of the event.

Article by Wendy Johnson



## Celebrating 50 Years!



[50 Years of Service - Video](#)

[WPCOG Annual Report](#)

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## Chamber Survey - Catawba County

A critical factor to an economically vibrant Catawba County both now and in the future is housing affordability and supply.

The Catawba County Chamber, Catawba County EDC, the Catawba Valley Association of Realtors and Habitat for Humanity of Catawba Valley are seeking the input of BOTH Catawba County employers AND local employees to better understand the following:

- The current status and perceptions of your business (and employees) as it pertains to the recruitment and retention of talent
- The effect of the Catawba County housing market on the recruitment & retention of talent
- The decision-making factors that contribute to local employees choosing to live in or outside of Catawba County

The survey only takes a few minutes of your time.

[Take the Survey](#)

**WPCOG Calendar**



## May

13 - Regional Aging Advisory Committee (RAAC) (12-2PM)

22 - Joint Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) & Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) (2PM)

23 - WPCOG Policy Board Meeting (6PM) Town of Granite Falls

## June

26 - Joint Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) & Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) (2PM)

27 - Workforce Development Board Meeting (8:30AM) WPCOG Offices

## July

22 - Region E Aging Providers (2-4PM)

24 - Joint Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) & Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) (2PM)

25 - Water Quality Conference at Belk Centrum (LRU) (9AM)

26 - Air Quality Conference at Belk Centrum (LRU) (9AM)

Stay Connected



1880 2nd Ave NW · Hickory, NC 28601 · 828.322.9191

[www.wpcog.org](http://www.wpcog.org)