



A PROGRAM OF THE ROWAN EDC

2024 FORWARD ROWAN CAMPAIGN FOR ECONOMIC PROSPERITY



PARTNERSHIP for
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
SALISBURY, NC

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Message from the Co-Chairs

Before COVID-19 impacted our lives, our businesses, and our communities, the Rowan County EDC had taken bold steps to improve its economic development strategy with the launch of Forward Rowan. This aggressive, five-year strategic initiative focuses on our economic development target areas of advanced manufacturing, logistics & distribution, office & technology, and health. To fund the new initiative, the EDC also established a capital campaign to leverage private dollars with its public-sector funding.

In retrospect, it may seem like bad timing to have launched a capital campaign six weeks before a pandemic, but we think the timing couldn't be better. The detrimental business impact of coronavirus magnifies the need for our EDC to grow jobs, attract investment, and build a more resilient economy to weather this and future economic challenges. The Rowan EDC is well-positioned to help our economy recover, and we must take bold steps to increase prosperity, reduce poverty, and improve the quality of life for all that live in Rowan County.

The need for the Forward Rowan capital campaign couldn't be more urgent. Through this new public-private partnership, we can return to the positive economic momentum we enjoyed at the beginning of 2020 and build a thriving community for the future. We invite you to join your colleagues in supporting Forward Rowan. This is an opportunity for every stakeholder in Rowan County to take part in determining our future prosperity.

With optimism for the future and our warmest personal regards



Greg Edds
Campaign Co-Chair
Chair, Rowan County Commission
State Farm Insurance



Steve Fisher
Campaign Co-Chair
President, F&M Bank

Campaign Leadership



Greg Alcorn
Global Contact Services, LLC



John Carr
Salisbury Post



Denise Hallett
Vulcan Materials Co.



Gary Hamblin
Henkel Corp.



Bryan Overcash
Global Contact Services, LLC



Pete Teague
Livingstone College



Teross Young
Food Lion, LLC

Choosing Our Tomorrow

Rowan County, North Carolina, has enjoyed much economic success throughout its nearly 270-year history. A highly diverse mix of businesses has contributed to a healthy economy; and internationally-recognized companies such as Daimler Trucks North America, Cheerwine, and Food Lion are proud to call Rowan County home.

Despite this long history of economic dynamism, Rowan County's economic prosperity had become anemic in the recent past. However, a renewed emphasis on economic growth, led by the Rowan County Board of Commissioners and others is returning Rowan County to its former vitality while capturing new economic growth.

Then, COVID-19 came and made a devastating effect on many sectors of the economy. It's unclear what impact it will have on our economy in the short-term and beyond, but one thing is clear: Rowan County must work to shore up businesses now and attract new jobs and investment.

Before coronavirus, Rowan County had just entered a renaissance phase. The Rowan EDC's Forward Rowan initiative will play a crucial role in continuing that resurgence as the economy reopens. Rowan County can be an extraordinary place, a place where we embrace proactive strategies in job creation, preparation, and access. It can be a place where we fully realize our economic potential and increase access to opportunity for everyone.

The new Forward Rowan initiative follows the approach recommended by Avalanche Consulting in its 2016 Strategic Plan for Rowan County. It provides greater emphasis on the needs of our existing businesses who form the core of our economy. It prioritizes the availability of skilled labor as the number one constraint to our growing economy. The plan also puts a priority on readiness - having sites, infrastructure, and incentives in place to compete effectively with other communities for investment.

Rowan EDC Mission

The mission of the Rowan EDC is to promote and facilitate business retention and strategic business growth in Rowan County. The Rowan EDC works with government agencies, business leaders, regional economic development organizations, site selection consultants, and others to facilitate expansion and development strategies for existing businesses and to recruit target industries to Rowan County. Our vision is to enhance Rowan County's prosperity and quality of life through well-planned and balanced economic growth to the benefit of all residents of Rowan.



Rendering of Chewy's \$55 million facility. Expected employment to be 1,200.

A Purpose-Driven Partnership

Through the Forward Rowan initiative, public- and private-sector leaders will work through the Rowan EDC to advance the following guiding principles:

Increasing Prosperity – Rowan County must move towards an inclusive economy where all residents prosper and enjoy rising income. Rowan County will benefit as income grows, and disparities in employment, educational attainment, income, and housing are reduced. The plan prioritizes creating wealth, expanding the talent pool, and increasing the well-being of all residents.

Reducing Poverty – Rowan County ranks 50th among North Carolina's 100 counties in the number of persons living below the poverty level. As the economy grows, so do opportunities for employment and income growth. More robust labor markets and higher income levels will build a more inclusive economy that lifts families out of poverty.

Improving Quality of Life – Rowan County has enjoyed an exceptional "quality of life" comprised of a complex set of indicators that include education, healthcare, housing, arts & culture, crime, taxes, recreation, and more. Improvements in these livability factors will attract and retain population, add revenue, and boost the recognition and reputation of Rowan County.

A Holistic Plan for the Whole Community

The Forward Rowan initiative outlines the strategic economic development framework that will sustain and enhance many of our current efforts. It includes bold new strategies we will pursue to ensure a comprehensive approach to economic growth.



Our aspirations of the Forward Rowan initiative include the following:

- Assure an environment that offers businesses the opportunity for profit and expansion.
- Deepen the understanding of our existing businesses, their needs, and market opportunities.
- Champion regional collaboration that supports additional investment opportunities.
- Recruit targeted businesses that provide quality employment and increased per capita income.
- Stimulate and support the success of small businesses and entrepreneurial activity.
- Improve the delivery of professional, personalized assistance to existing businesses.

Program Initiatives



Strategy I: Targeted Economic Growth

Goal: Increase prosperity for all Rowan County residents through business retention and attraction efforts.

Key Objectives

- Grow existing businesses.
- Attract new firms and investments.
- Maintain competitive locational advantages.

Actions

- Provide leadership for the coordination of local economic development services.
- Broaden Expand Rowan, the Rowan EDC's business retention & expansion program that proactively addresses the needs of Rowan's traded-sector businesses.
- Attract new employers in Rowan County's targeted sectors:
 - Advanced Manufacturing
 - Logistics & Distribution
 - Office & Technology
 - Health
- Ensure infrastructure and amenities are enhanced to support business expansion and development.



Strategy II - Talent Attraction & Development

Goal: Support lifelong learning endeavors that increase talent levels in Rowan County through the alignment of education, training, business, and social services.

Key Objectives

- Align education and workforce systems.
- Develop home-grown talent.
- Promote the innovation occurring in education systems across Rowan County.
- Retain the best and brightest workers.
- Attract talented individuals to Rowan County.

Actions

- Actively engage in the development of demand-driven education and training programs in high school and post-secondary education.
- Work with education and workforce development partners to increase educational attainment levels in Rowan County.
- Increase awareness among Rowan County businesses about available workforce development programs.
- Attract new residents and workers by promoting the job opportunities available among Rowan County employers.
- Highlight the favorable working environments and career opportunities available within Rowan County's major industries.

Program Initiatives



Strategy III: Brand Identity and Storytelling

Goal: Promote Brand Rowan and serve as the leading marketing organization for communicating the brand message to targeted audiences.

Key Objectives

- Promote and accelerate the use of the Rowan County brand elements among local organizations.
- Promote Rowan County to external audiences.
- Build community pride and understanding among our internal audiences.

Actions

- Support the Brand Rowan marketing initiative to improve local perceptions of Rowan County and communicate its competitive advantages.
- Develop high-impact, professional marketing and communications tools
- Market Rowan County to site selection influencers and companies within our targeted industries through multiple marketing channels



Strategy IV: High-Performance Service Delivery

Goal: Build an organizational structure that ensures the delivery of high-performance economic development services that is supported by Rowan County's public and private sectors.

Key Objectives

- Increase public awareness of the value of the Rowan EDC and the community's growth effort.
- Provide outstanding levels of service to our investors, prospects, and existing industries.
- Recruit, retain, and develop highly talented staff.
- Develop an organizational structure that supports outstanding service levels.

Actions

- Build public support and knowledge of economic growth activities and their impact on the community.
- Recruit, retain, and train "best in class" staff capable of strategically leading and managing the Rowan EDC.
- Develop an engaged leadership body comprised of public- and private-sector representatives to provide oversight to the Forward Rowan initiative.
- Conduct an assessment to identify the organizational structure that supports the complementary goals of the Rowan EDC and Rowan Growth Partners.

Total Five-Year Budget



Five-Year Outcomes

- Create 2,500 jobs in Rowan County
- Secure new jobs that pay wages exceeding \$33,000/year
- Attract \$350 million in capital investment

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

The anticipated jobs and investment from the efforts of Forward Rowan are estimated to generate more than **\$82 MILLION** in annual consumer expenditures.



Every job created through Forward Rowan is estimated to create another .5061 additional jobs in the area. At the end of five years, the program's targeted creation of 2,500 new jobs is estimated to create an additional 1,265 secondary jobs for an estimated **3,765 total new jobs**.

Oversight & Governance

The Board of Directors of the Rowan EDC will guide the five-year Forward Rowan initiative. They will remain responsible for program implementation, management, oversight, and the disbursement of funds. Investors will receive regular updates on program successes, briefings, progress reports, and invitations to key program events.

Now Is the Time

For too long, other counties in the metro Charlotte region have outperformed Rowan County. The EDC's Forward Rowan initiative prepares our community to be competitive with our product and incentive offerings, enhances our business-friendly environment, and delivers high-performance business services. We believe that Rowan County is in a strong, strategic position to take advantage of growth that is projected in the Charlotte metro region and the state of North Carolina.

Now is the time to pull ourselves out of the current economic downturn, to build upon a renewed emphasis on economic development, and to accelerate our growth efforts through the Forward Rowan initiative.

Rowan Economic Development Commission Board

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Vulcan Materials Company

Darise Caldwell, Vice-Chair
Dari Caldwell Consulting

Daniel Peters, Secretary
Salisbury Fire Department

Tim Proper, Treasurer
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Pete Teague
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Brad Walser
Walser Technology Group, Inc.

Tammy Whaley
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