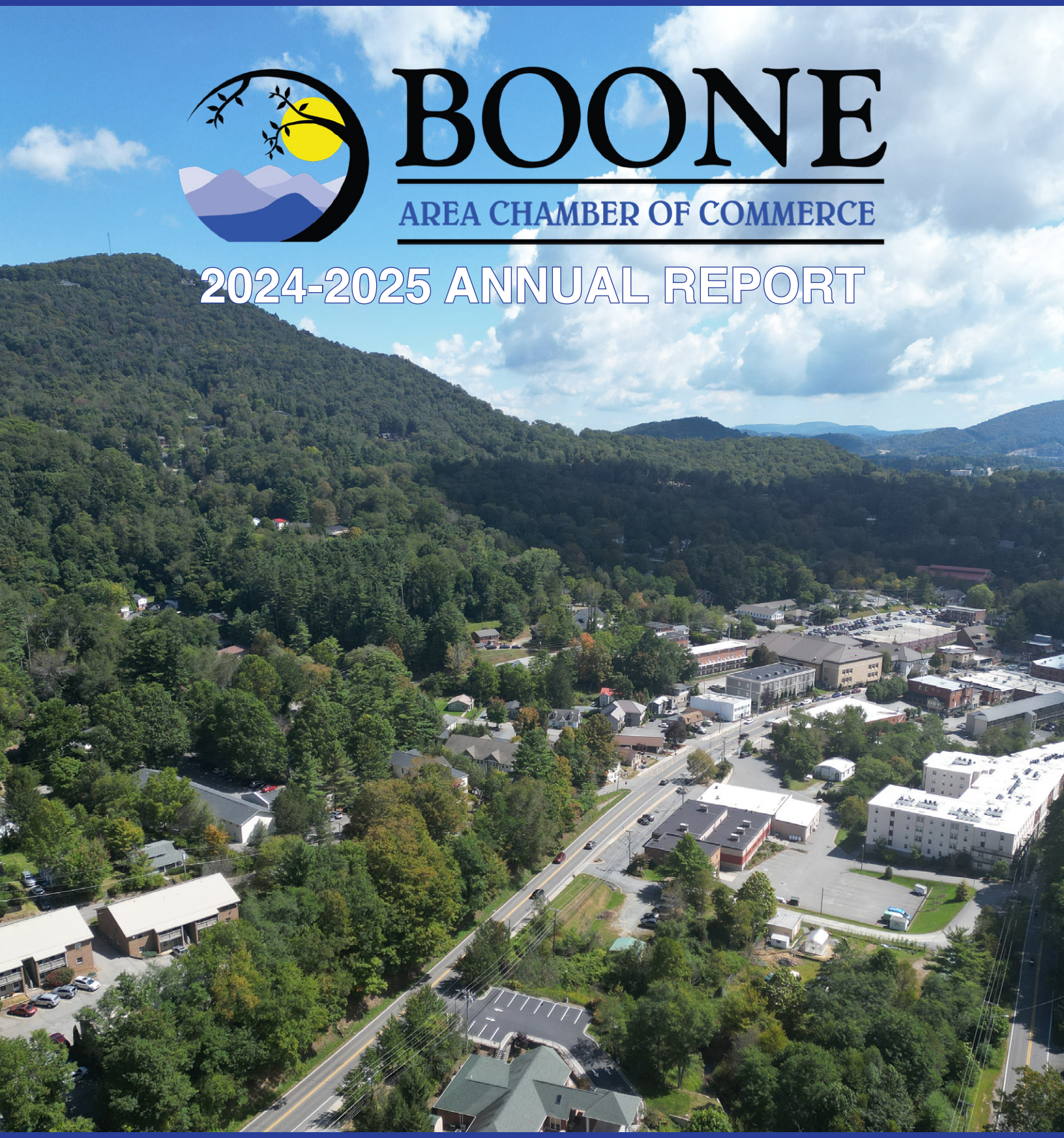
BOONE

AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT



Connect. Advocate. Educate.

THE BOONE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

MISSION STATEMENT

To connect business and community partners, to enhance opportunities through advocacy and education, and support continued sustainable economic development within our region.

VISION STATEMENT

The Boone Area Chamber of Commerce is the catalyst for a diverse and engaged local economy, cultivating a thriving community that serves as the economic hub of Northwest North Carolina.

BOONE AREA CHAMBER STAFF

David Jackson
President/CEO
Carrie Henderson
Vice President of Events/Chief of Staff
Natalie Harkey
Vice President of Finance
Patrick K. Setzer
Vice President of Member Engagement
Lindsay Cook
Director of Operations
Emma Faulkner
Director of Communications
Joe Furman
Director of Economic Development
Ethan Dodson
Director of Development
Reggie Hunt
Executive Director, Boone Area Sports Commission
Jeannine Underdown Collins
Chamber Volunteer

BOONE
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

David Jackson, Emma Faulkner, Ethan Dodson, Lindsay Cook, Joe Furman, Carrie Henderson, Natalie Harkey, Patrick Setzer

Table of Contents

Mission, Vision, Staff 2
Letter from the President/CEO & Board Chair 3
Year in Review 4
Awards & Media Statistics 5
BACC Foundation 6-7
Helping After Helene 8-9
Chamber Advocacy in Action 10-11
Celebrating Members 12-13
Chamber Events 14-15
Programs & Partnerships 16-17
Your Membership, Your Investment 18
Chamber Partners 19
Finances & Strategic Plan 20-21
Looking Ahead 22
Board & Committees 22-23

Dear community member,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce, thank you for your interest and support of our organization. Your investment makes it possible for us to serve as a catalyst for a diverse and engaged local economy, cultivating a thriving community that serves as the economic hub of Northwest North Carolina.

Through both the Chamber and the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation, we are able to deliver programs that connect members to business opportunities, expand leadership development, support workforce initiatives, and advocate for future investments in our community. These efforts have taken on greater importance as we continue the vital work of helping our community recover from the impact of Hurricane Helene. At the same time, we remain focused on addressing the long-term needs of the High Country—ensuring our region is not only resilient in the face of challenging times but also prepared for the opportunities that will shape our region for decades to come.

Thank you again for your interest in the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce and for supporting the work of our Foundation. We remain committed to strengthening the High Country's business community while protecting and enhancing the quality of life we enjoy in the High Country.

With appreciation,

David Jackson
President/CEO
Boone Area Chamber of Commerce

Tara Brossa
Chair
Boone Area Chamber of Commerce
Board of Directors

YEAR IN REVIEW

88 New member businesses/organizations during fiscal year 2024-25, up from 74 new members during the previous fiscal year.

30 Ribbon-cuttings between September 2024 and September 2025

3 of those were for #WNCOpenForBusiness

1 was with NC First Lady Anna Stein

5 were comebacks from Helene, including delayed openings or destroyed and rebuilt

1 was with a new neighbor in the Greenway Commons building

9 *Business After Hours* events

1091 Total *Business After Hours* Attendees

121 Average attendees per event

The largest Business After Hours event was at the **Original Mast General Store** celebrating their 45th anniversary, partnered with Blue Ridge Conservancy.

The second-largest event was at **Shipley Farms** in May. They were supposed to host in October of 2024, but it was delayed due to the hurricane.

2024 saw record-breaking attendance for **Spirit of Boone** and the event sold out in 2025.

AWARDS

DOGWOOD AWARD - DECEMBER 2024

The Chamber staff, along with FizzEd and Zionville Ramp Company were honored as Watauga County recipients of the 2024 Dogwood Award. This state-level award recognizes those who are working to improve the health, safety, and well-being of their fellow North Carolinians.

CACCE COMMUNICATIONS AWARD - APRIL 2025

The Boone Area Chamber received a Communications Excellence Award for the 2024 Spirit of Boone Community Awards & 75th Anniversary Video, showcasing the resilience and vibrancy of our local businesses and leaders.

NC RURAL CENTER - APRIL 2025

President/CEO David Jackson attended the 2025 Rural Summit, hosted by the NC Rural Center, where he was honored with the **Community Advocate of the Year** award.

NC CHILD - CHAMPION FOR CHILDCARE

Chamber President/CEO David Jackson, Director of Operations Lindsay Cook, and Content Manager Emma Faulkner attended **NC Child's State of the Child** conference in Raleigh — a day focused on the well-being of North Carolina's children and the policies that shape their futures.

The Chamber was recognized at the evening reception as a **2025 Champion of Childcare** alongside local Representative Ray Pickett. The award honored the Chamber's continued advocacy efforts and direct community support.

Ethan, Carrie, and David with Governor Josh Stein (then Attorney General) receiving the Dogwood Award.

"After Helene, the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce has been instrumental in helping Boone's economy get back on its feet. They understand that when our businesses and families succeed, our towns and cities thrive."
- NC Governor Josh Stein

Emma, David, and Patrick with CACCE Board Members receiving the CACCE Communications Award.

Social Media Statistics

Facebook Reach: 2.7 million
Instagram Reach: 575,900

Fun fact: Total social media reach = larger than the population of Iowa!

Facebook New Followers: 6,300 (Total : 9,700)
Instagram New Followers: More than doubled to 9,700

Constant Contact Email Statistics

Average 45% open rate (5% above industry average)

4,458 total email contacts

Left: David with Patrick Woodie, NC Rural Center President & CEO, receiving the Community Advocate of the Year award. Right: David with Representative Ray Pickett as Champion of Childcare recipients.

THE BOONE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOUNDATION (BACCF)

The Boone Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation (BACCF) was created to solicit, manage, and distribute funds and resources for the future betterment of Boone, NC, and the Watauga County area. It was the vision of several community leaders to use the funds raised by this organization to address critical issues like access to childcare for working parents, attainable housing for our growing workforce, and professional development and services for our small businesses.

The first major project funded by the foundation was an important research report about Childcare in Watauga County. This was published on April 13, 2024, and identified gaps in our childcare offerings and the impact on our workforce. As of September 27, 2024, the BACCF had raised just over $10,000. Just a few days later on September 30, that number had been quadrupled. Donors from across the country saw the High Country in need and stepped up to give in droves to help address the immediate needs. What started as an ambitious yet modest branch of the BACC, was now accelerating into action to address the dire business needs of our community.

"We are deeply grateful to the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce for the incredible support we received following Hurricane Helene. Your hard work and generosity not only provided critical funding in a time of uncertainty but truly saved our new small business from the risk of shutting down, allowing us to continue to serve our community. We know the effort behind making these funds available was immense, and we are so thankful for the stability and hope it gave us as new business owners."

- Erin Wonder & Tiffany Weitzen of Wonder Pelvic Therapy and Wellness

To our donors, all of whom gave to the BACCF or to other non-profits after Hurricane Helene, you provided immediate relief and set the stage for long-term recovery in our community. Many of you have strong ties to the High Country (we see you App State, CCCTI, and Watauga High School Alumni!) and we thank you for standing with us when it mattered most.

Our foundation will never rest on its laurels and will always be forward acting for our priorities. After distributing more than $1m into the High Country, the need remains for more funding for small businesses and assistance for our childcare providers. Furthermore, we cannot let this disaster disrupt our workforce development programs and stifle how we advance our own community leaders.

You answered the call before and we ask that you do it again to help propel Boone forward in this upcoming important year.

David, Lindsay, and Ethan tabling at App State's Homegiving football game in October 2024.

BACC staff working together days after Hurricane Helene.

EARLY CHILDCARE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATIONAL FUND

The Foundation funded the **Pathways to Accreditation Program** run by the **Children's Council of Watauga County,** benefiting 59 teachers and 12 center directors.

In October of 2024, the Foundation paid $206,000 to eight licensed childcare centers in Watauga County to cover tuition for families for the month.

HOPE FOR THE HIGH COUNTRY SMALL BUSINESS RESILIENCY DISASTER GRANT PROGRAM

The Boone Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation, our 501c3 non-profit, has established the High Country Business Resiliency Disaster Grant to help small businesses in Watauga, Ashe, and Avery County recover from the crippling impacts of Hurricane Helene. These emergency grants, not loans, will provide necessary aid to the very businesses that have provided for our communities for generations. Grant applicants do not need to be members of the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce to receive funding.

Among the sobering realities we've recently experienced, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), says 40% of small businesses do not reopen after a disaster. Thanks to the gifts and support of generous donors, business leaders, and longtime friends of the area, we are position to change that narrative and help sustain the small, independent businesses that make the High Country so unique.

TOTALS:
209 businesses impacted
$978,500 total in grants given

COUNTY BREAKDOWN:
Ashe: 32
Avery: 45
Watauga: 144

TOTAL FUNDS DISTRIBUTED $1,184,500

ROUND 1
Concluded on November 4, 2024:
86 businesses, $344,500

ROUND 2
Concluded on December 12, 2024:
76 businesses, $114,000

ROUND 3
Concluded on May 13, 2025:
38 businesses, $120,000
Mountain Bizworks Partnership
23 businesses, $400,000

Online:
940 gifts, $219,290
$233.54 avg gift
$100 most frequent

Other gifts:
117 gifts, $1,512,892
$8,019.10 avg gift
$1,000 most frequent

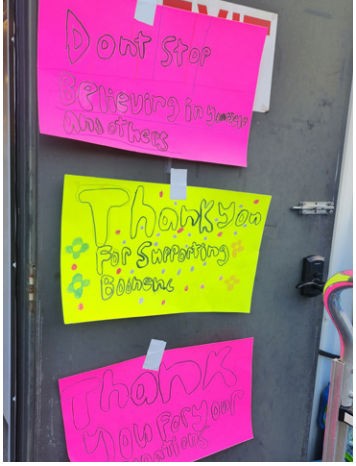
1057 TOTAL DONORS

Quotes from Impacted Families:

"This tuition reimbursement has been such a gift to us! Our monthly budget is very tight, and this payment is one of our largest. It allowed us to give more to our friends in need immediately after Helene because we knew that we would have some room in the budget for it. Being able to give a little more was what we wanted to be able to do after such a difficult event for our community and helped lift our spirits in the process! Specifically, we were able to donate to a friend who lost his home in a way we would not have been able to otherwise! So grateful!!"

"We had damage to our home, requiring us to remove walls and restore a damaged oil tank. The waiver helped cover costs that insurance could not assist with."

"Because of the Boone Chamber Foundation's generous donation to cover our childcare expenses for the month of October, we were able to offset the expense of our car repairs. This would not have been financially possible for us without their support. THANK YOU SO MUCH"



Left: Lindsay with donated boots to pass out at the annual First Responders Breakfast at Daniel Boone Inn in November 2024. Middle: Board Member Halee Hartley with donations at Pinnacle Storage. Right: Encouraging notes for volunteers and those giving donations.

Helene Donations by the Numbers

SIX 53' TRAILERS OF SUPPLIES OVER A 6 WEEK PERIOD.

Containers held:

5 pallets of generators

- 3 pallets of tools
- 650+ blankets donated by Art of Living
- 10 pallets stacked 7' high with heaters
- 5 pallets stacked with fleece lined blankets
- 2 pallets of outdoor gear
- 20+ pallets of diapers, wipes, and formula - partnered with the Children's Council and Blue Ridge Peds to get them into the community
- 1 pallet emergency water filters
- 250 boxes of battery operated smoke/carbon monoxide detectors for those without power operating propane heaters
- 1 pallet of batteries
- 2 pallets of fuel
- 2 pallets MREs
- 4 pallets of hand sanitizer
- 1 pallet medical grade bandages, gauze, ambulatory aids, etc.

10,000 square foot warehouse donated for use by a community member (prefers to remain anonymous) - we used the space for 8 months

250+ pairs of boots given to first responders, community volunteers, and Helene survivors at the Annual First Responders Breakfast in November 2024

Carrie consults with a volunteer about oil for chainsaws.

The Summit Pickleball courts turned supply warehouse.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS: HELENE RECOVERY CHAMBER PARTNERSHIPS

Within several days after Hurricane Helene, we coordinated a partnership with a new Chamber member business that had just opened its operations in Boone: **Pinnacle Storage**. Through the generosity of Pinnacle, we were able to secure three climate-controlled storage units which we primarily used for disaster relief items collected through **WCNC-TV Charlotte** in the aftermath of Helene. WCNC-TV encouraged its viewers to donate new winter clothing items (coats, gloves, hats, socks, etc.) for children of Boone and surrounding High Country communities. More than 3,000 new winter clothing and accessory items were donated by WCNC-TV viewers, and these were delivered to our units at Pinnacle during the second and third week of October 2024, just several weeks following Helene.

During this same time period, **A Cleaner World** of Boone also donated several hundred gently used adult winter coats that we were able to keep in storage and distribute from our units at Pinnacle. As of late summer 2025, nearly all of our children's winter clothing items have been distributed to communities in Watauga, Avery, Ashe, Mitchell, Yancey counties. Further, we were able to work with volunteers and agencies in other areas of Western North Carolina, Eastern Tennessee, and parts of Kentucky to provide support and relief to families in need.

In addition to the storage space provided through Pinnacle, **The Summit Pickleball** in Boone partnered with the Chamber to serve as a large-scale supply warehouse in the weeks following the storm. Co-owners Crystal Smith and Grant Williams temporarily suspended operations and opened their 16,000-square-foot facility to house incoming relief supplies, quickly transforming the courts into a hub for collection and distribution. Donations arrived from across the region and beyond, and with the help of local volunteers, schools, churches, and partner organizations, essential items such as food, clothing, and medical supplies were organized and sent to communities most in need. This partnership not only expanded our storage and distribution capacity but also underscored the role of local businesses as critical anchors in community recovery.

Patrick at Pinnacle Storage with WCNC staff members.

CHAMBER ADVOCACY IN ACTION

The Chamber formed a **Hurricane Helene Long Term Recovery Group** dedicated solely to economic and business recovery in December of 2024. It functions as a subcommittee of the overall **Watauga Long Term Recovery Group**. In addition to the **Hope For The High Country Small Business Resiliency Disaster Grant** program of the Chamber Foundation, the LTRG-Business works to provide information, marketing, and advocacy. Among the first actions recommended by the group was to establish a "landing-page" for business resources including disaster preparedness, economic recovery, and regional coordination. The result is the **Watauga Forward** page on the Chamber web site. The marketing efforts have primarily been to let prospective visitors know that Watauga County is accessible and open for business; one action was to run a full-page ad in the July issue of Business North Carolina magazine. Finally, members of the group have tirelessly advocated for needed assistance to NC and US elected officials as well as to the Blue Ridge Parkway regarding scheduling of repair work.

WATAUGA FORWARD

The Chamber contracted with Watauga County to provide administration and staffing for the County's economic development function including the Watauga Economic Development Commission (WEDC). This was a return to a similar contractual relationship that existed mid-1990s to early 2000s. The WEDC was reorganized to better represent the entire county by including members appointed by each of the five local government bodies. The WEDC established priorities of workforce housing, childcare, and workforce development, recognizing that shortages in those areas must be addressed in order to grow the local economy. Hurricane recovery became an overarching priority in October.

Chamber staff members have worked closely with Watauga Housing Council and Watauga Community Housing Trust to explore innovative approaches to address the housing shortage and have consistently communicated to state and local government the need to develop housing that is attainable by the work force. There is a gap in the housing inventory of homes that can be afforded by individuals/families with incomes that exceed 80% of the Area Median Income.

Chamber staff organized several conversations among members and others to discuss employer-led housing solutions and continues to explore possibilities. Childcare continues to be at the top of advocacy activities. In January, the Chamber hosted a childcare "legislative day" attended by elected officials and statewide childcare organizations during which information was shared and local facilities were visited.

Local and state legislatures touring childcare facilities in Watauga County for Childcare Legislative Day in January, 2025.

David Jackson participated in discussions in Raleigh, Atlanta, and Washington DC advocating for funding for child care. Throughout the year, Chamber staff hosted and led the Watauga myFutureNC Attainment Planning Committee. myFutureNC is a statewide non-profit organization established by the NC General Assembly with the mission of increasing the number of adults aged 25-44 who hold post secondary education degrees or certificates, thereby increasing the skills of the work force. Each County has a numerical goal to reach by 2030, Watauga is on-target to do so.

A by-product of the committee's work was the establishment of a partnership between Watauga and Caldwell Counties' economic development offices and public school systems with Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute to develop a work-based learning program that will provide opportunities for students to achieve degrees or certificates in the areas of hospitality, health care, and construction and other trades. The primary vehicles for the training will be pre-apprenticeships, and internships. Full launch of the program is scheduled for January, 2026.

STABLE WORKPLACES

STABLE Workplaces is an initiative in Watauga County with a vision of thriving workplaces sustained by a stable workforce. The acronym stands for "Staff Training and Business Leadership for Evolving Workplaces."

Lindsey Sullivan, AppHealthCare

The effort was born out of an event in August of 2022 which convened area agencies and partners alongside Watauga County business owners and employers to discuss the possibility of an ongoing collaborative effort toward more resources in the workplace. The August event built on years of data collection efforts to better understand challenges around workforce development through the perspectives of local stakeholders, including business leaders and staff.

STABLE Workplaces recognizes that the business sector is facing unprecedented recruitment and retention challenges alongside complex challenges among staff, such as family needs, mental health and substance use concerns, and lack of housing. STABLE is exploring ways to better deliver resources to the business sector and other employers through unified messaging, collaborative training efforts, toolkit development and incentivized participation.

In February 2025, the Chamber via the Foundation entered into a training cohort provided by **Family Forward NC** to explore local promotion family-friendly workplaces. This activity fits nicely into the framework of the STABLE initiative. The cohort will be completed by the end of 2025 and will result in a strategy to incorporate the knowledge gained into STABLE.

If you have questions about getting involved, reach out to Lindsey Sullivan at *info@stableworkplaces.org.*

CELEBRATING MEMBERS

Our members are the heart of the Chamber. From ribbon cuttings to signature events and everything in between, we are proud to celebrate the businesses, people, and partnerships that strengthen our community.

Chamber Board, staff, and partners at the iconic Doc Watson Statue for a WNC is Open for Business Ribbon Cutting.

State Leaders in Boone

After paddling on the New River, the First Lady of North Carolina, Anna Stein, joined local outfitters and partners for a WNC Open for Business Week Ribbon Cutting.

Governor Josh Stein holding press conference at Boone Chamber office January 2025 to announce public-private partnership for small business recovery grants.

Lieutenant Governor Rachel Hunt at Vision NWNC

Secretary of Commerce Lee Lilley at Kid Cove in Boone

Sponsors and Summit Partners at the 2nd Annual Fairway Fore Foundation Golf Classic.

EVENTS & PROGRAMS

SPIRIT OF BOONE
September 12, 2024 | Grandview Ballroom, Appalachian State

WATAUGA COUNTY MEET THE CANDIDATES FORUM
September 16, 2024 | The Appalachian Theatre

STATE OF THE COMMUNITY
November 15, 2024 | The Beacon Butcher Bar

EVERGREEN VOICES: WATAUGA WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP GALA
November 21, 2024 | The Inn at Crestwood

WATAUGA LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE
January 2025-April 2025

9TH ANNUAL HIGH COUNTRY ECONOMIC KICKOFF LUNCHEON
January 16, 2025 | Grandview Ballroom, Appalachian State

9TH ANNUAL 4 UNDER 40 AWARDS
March 26, 2025 | The Appalachian Theatre

FAIRWAY FORE FOUNDATION GOLF CLASSIC
April 30, 2025 | Jefferson Landing

VISION NORTHWEST NORTH CAROLINA
May 22, 2025 | Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute

Finalists and winners at the 9th Annual 4 Under 40 Awards.

PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS

Watauga Leadership Institute (WLI)

The Watauga Leadership Institute (WLI) is a comprehensive leadership development program designed to meet our community's need for the active participation of informed and educated leaders. Graduates of WLI programs enjoy lifelong networking opportunities with over 300 program alumni. The Chamber contracts with **Ridgeline Leadership** and Dr. Jim Street to coordinate curriculum for all WLI programs.

Watauga Leadership Challenge
Watauga Leadership Challenge strikes a balance between understanding leadership and understanding the community. Participants will have the opportunity to interact with business and community leaders who are finding ways to bring people together for change. This class gives participants the opportunity to broaden their understanding of leadership and to see themselves as agents of change in their associations, their places of work, their community, and in their own lives.

Watauga Leadership Development
The Watauga Leadership Development course provides participants the opportunity to take a deeper dive into understanding leadership and the competencies required for effective leadership in work, community, and in life. The program focuses on authentic leadership and covers competencies that are critical in the leadership process.

Watauga Leadership Encore
This cohort-style course offers attendees the opportunity to expand their leadership knowledge, mindset, and skills. Each two-hour session will examine a specialty topic that builds off the core elements of the Watauga Leadership Institute curriculum, while encouraging the self-renewal of your guiding leadership principles.

Participating in Watauga Leadership was a transformative experience that deepened my understanding of community impact, strengthened my leadership skills, and connected me with inspiring local leaders. It is one of the best experiences of my professional career and I would highly recommend this program to anyone who wants a brighter and deeper understanding of the workforce in our community. - Chandler B.

Boone Business Exchange (BBE)

The Boone Business Exchange (BBE) is a business-to-business referral network that provides opportunities for its members to connect with other businesses, share best business practices, and generate referrals.

During each weekly meeting, each group member is provided the opportunity to introduce their business/service/product to the group and the group then breaks out into smaller groups where they can discuss specific referral opportunities one-on-one.

BBE provides opportunities for its members to connect with other businesses, share best business practices, and generate referrals. The group's emphasis is placed on building professional relationships with your fellow members and creating a solid network of referrals and resources for operating your business.

- 32 active member businesses/organizations
- 437 business referrals were made during BBE FY24-25
- Business referrals estimated value of $1,212,793.78 during the 2024-2025 fiscal year

Watauga Women in Leadership (WWIL)

The mission of **Watauga Women in Leadership** (WWIL) is to empower High Country women in business and leadership in all stages of their careers. The organization presents events that support women through networking and educational speakers. We hope to enable and grow business, support and mentoring opportunities among professional women in the High Country.

Community outreach/programming is made possible by sponsorships from members/member organizations. Programmatic themes and coffee connections are geared toward women, but all are welcome. Committee made up the following: Christy Gottfried, Amy Odom, Lindsay Cook, Suzy Greene, Nancy Crawford, Kayla Lasure, and Amanda White.

High Country Young Professionals (HC YoPros)

The **High Country Young Professionals**, affectionately dubbed "the High Country YoPros," is a dedicated group of 200+ professional young adults under the age of 40 serving in various industries across the High Country. Born out of the desire to provide a supportive community for young working people, the group's primary goal is to connect like-minded individuals. These connections foster trust, collaboration, and lasting community ties.

For those who are new to the workforce, recent graduates, or new residents in the High Country, the YoPros offer an invaluable way to establish roots both professionally and personally. Each month, the group highlights and partners with local businesses to host events, offering professional development and providing a direct link to the business community, helping members gain insights, mentorship, and opportunities to thrive in their careers and lives.

Boone Area Sports Commission (BASC)

The Boone Area Sports Commission (BASC) was created in 2019 to enhance the High Country of Northwest North Carolina as a sports tourism destination. The BASC is a 501c3 non-profit organization under the umbrella of the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce.

The BASC is a proud member of the Sports Events and Tourism Association, the premier trade association for the industry in the United States. The Boone and Watauga County Tourism Development Authorities provide a portion of the operational funding to the BASC along with industry contacts that have helped create awareness with event organizers across the State of North Carolina and the Southeast Region.

The BASC works with a variety of partners and all levels of sport. Our staff connects organizers with event-hosting resources, including hotel and restaurant partners, area attractions, and other services provided by members of the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP, YOUR INVESTMENT

As a non-profit membership association, we strive to connect business and community partners and provide opportunities to enhance those connections through thoughtful programming and services focused on advocacy, education, and supporting sustainable economic development in our region. Your membership investment allows you to increase business visibility, build brand awareness, and promote services here locally and in the region. Moreover, your membership gives you access to a wide range of networking opportunities, business referral pathways, advertising and communications marketing platform, online career center listings, leadership development programming, and business advocacy network.

The members and work of the Chamber reflect the needs and values of our local and regional community. Our goal of building successful, sustainable, and long-term business relationships is directly related to Chamber member engagement. We take great pride in seeing our member businesses and organizations thrive and we continuously seek ways and avenues to further enhance our platform of programming, events, and services.

When you invest in a Boone Area Chamber of Commerce membership, you are also investing in your business and helping our community thrive.

SUMMIT PARTNERS

Appalachian State University

BlueRidge Energy

Beech Mountain Resort

Echota

Highstreet Insurance & Financial Services

Home 2 Suites by Hilton

Mast General Store Since 1883

UNC Health Appalachian

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

PLATINUM

Allen Wealth Management

Amorem

Appalachian Commercial Real Estate

BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina

CarolinaWest Wireless

dmjps be greater

ERX Emergency Restoration Xperts

First Horizon

Graystone Lodge

La Quinta by Wyndham

Mercy Urgent Care

New Peoples Bank

NRL&P

Sleep Inn by Choice Hotels

SkyLine SkyBest

Spangler Restoration

Stacie Pineda Real Estate Group

GOLD

Boone Drugs Inc.

Booneshine Brewing Co

Chetola Resort Blowing Rock, NC

Courtyard by Marriott

Grandview Catering & Events

Greene Construction, Inc. GC Structural Integrity Since 1941

Hampton Inn & Suites by Hilton

Horton Hotel

Life Store Bank Insurance

Reid's Cafe Beacon Betty's

Boone North Carolina

Truist

Wata 1450 am 96.5 fm High Country News & Info

NC Innovation

VPC Builders

FINANCIAL INFORMATION & GOVERNANCE

Revenues

Event Income	$113,109
General Income	$203,499
Membership Income	$433,651
WWIL Income	$14,945
Special Projects	$98,373
TOTAL	$863,577

Expenses

Personnel Expenses	$510,634
Professional Expenses	$26,040
Operations Expenses	$93,244
Special Projects/Events	$133,354
Building Expenses	$81,856
TOTAL	$845,128

Board Rosters

BOONE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Tara Brossa, *Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute*
Mark Gould, *Mast General Store*
Seth Sullivan, *The Cardinal Food & Spirits*
Ralph Polk, *DMJPS PLLC*

BOONE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Carrie Afanador, *Immigrant Connection of the High Country*
Shirley Alexander, *Booneshine Brewing Company Inc.*
Dr. Harry Davis, *Appalachian State University*
Talia Freeman, *Beech Mountain Resort*
Christy Gottfried, *Go Postal in Boone*
Jim Hamilton, *NC Cooperative Extension*
Halee Hartley, *Kid Cove*
Angela Heavner, *180 Float Spa*
Hal Hood, *LifeStore Bank*
Nathaniel Johnson, *Granite Insurance*
Brent Keith, *SkyLine/SkyBest*
Angus Lamond, *Graystone Lodge*
Nick London, *VPC Builders, LLC*
Michael Maybee, *Watauga Opportunities, Inc.*
Gary Moss, *Walker & Associates-Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC*
Danielle Neibaur, *The Horton Hotel and Rooftop Lounge*
Amy Odom, *Appalachian State University*
Dr. Mark Poarch, *Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute*
Lyndsi Richardson, *UNC Health Appalachian*
Dr. Tierra Stark, *Watauga County Schools*
Omer Tomlinson, *Spectrum Reach*
Amanda White, *First Horizon Bank*

BOONE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair: Tara Brossa, *Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute*
Immediate Past Chair: Mark Gould, *Mast General Store*
Chair Elect: Seth Sullivan, *The Cardinal Food & Spirits*
Edward Hinson, *SkyLine/SkyBest*
Amy Crabbe, *Women's Fund of the Blue Ridge*
Chuck Eyler, *Peak Insurance Group*
Dr. Leslie Alexander, *Watauga County Schools*
Dr. Harry Davis, *Appalachian State University*
Talia Freeman, *Beech Mountain Resort*
Ralph Polk, *DMJPS*
James Milner, *Appalachian Commercial Real Estate*

WATAUGA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair: Pete Gherini, *Blowing Rock Town Council*
Vice Chair: Lee Rankin, *At-Large Member*
Weidner Abernathy, *Beech Mountain Town Council*
Bob Bertini, *Seven Devils Town Council*
Tim Hodges, *Watauga County Commissione*r
Eric Plaag, *Boone Town Council*
Christine Hendren, *Appalachian State University*
David Jackson, *Boone Area Chamber of Commerce*
Robin Miller, *Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce*
Suzanne Livesay, *At-Large*
Virginia Wallace, *At-Large*

BOONE AREA SPORTS COMMISSION

Chair: Wright Tilley, *Explore Boone*
Vice Chair, David Jackson, *Boone Area Chamber of Commerce*
Secretary: Joe Furman, *Watauga County EDC*
Tara Brossa, *Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute*
Amy Davis, *Town of Boone Manager*
Terese Fogleman, *Chick Fil A*
Dustin Kerley, *Watauga County Schools*
Keron Poteat, *Watauga County Parks & Recreation Director*
Stephen Poulos, *Sports Organization*
Crystal Smith, *The Summit Pickleball*
Sarah Strickland, *Appalachian State University Athletics*

Committee Rosters

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE
Co-Chairs: Mark Gould, Omer Tomlinson
BACC Liaison: David Jackson
EDC Liaison: Joe Furman
Tim Hodges
David Birtwistle
Jay Harrill
Scott Elliott
Chuck Eyler
David Martin
Michael Maybee

WATAUGA WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP (WWIL)
Chair: Christy Gottfried
BACC Liaison: Lindsay Cook
Events: Carrie Henderson
Amanda White
Suzy Greene
Amy Odom
Nancy Crawford
Kayla Lasure

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
Chair: Talia Freeman
BACC Liaison: Emma Faulkner
Carrie Afanador
Yolanda Adams
Angus Lamond
Nick London

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE
Chair: Nathaniel Johnson
BACC Liaison: Patrick Setzer
Travis Critcher
Hal Hood
Kaylor Meade
Gary Plaag

HIGH COUNTRY YOUNG PROFESSIONALS COMMITTEE
Chair: Danielle Neibaur
BACC Liaison: Emma Faulkner
Katy Willis
Andrew Ortiz
Morgan Sturgill
Nathaniel Johnson
Trevor Moody

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Chair: Tara Brossa
EDC/BACC Liaison: Joe Furman
Misty Bishop-Price
Debra Fox
Scott Hinkson
Phil Pope
Toni Deal
David Koontz

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Chair: Heidi Ragan
BACC Liaison: David Jackson
EDC Liaison: Joe Furman
Dr. Harry Davis
James Milner
Frank "Ham" Wilson
Michelle Novacek
Lane Moody

2025-2030 Strategic Plan

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Create operational excellence by maximizing our resources and evaluating procedures.

- Evaluate and refine the organizational structure and staff roles to expand executive capacity, maximize skillsets, improve efficiency, and create opportunities for long-term growth and advancement.
- Formalize an internal communication plan that ensures consistent messaging by providing staff with clear talking points for member questions and concerns.
- Develop a plan for the use of technology in Chamber-managed facilities and prioritize the training of staff on all systems.
- Establish a defined recruitment strategy for board members and committee members.
- Ensure committees are a valuable asset to the Chamber and have goals and work plans rooted in the organization's strategic priorities.
- Prioritize meaningful, professional development opportunities for Chamber staff and board members to foster growth, strengthen leadership, and enhance our organizational impact.
- Develop the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation as a reliable third revenue stream through donor relations and event creation, and by solidifying it as the front porch to the Chamber's economic development work within the region.
- Regularly assess and refine member benefits to ensure they remain relevant, valuable, and responsive to the evolving needs and priorities of the business community.
- Create a strategic and sustainable budgeting process with goals that balance dues and non-dues revenue streams.
- Emphasize Chamber board development – continue to evaluate clear roles and expectations for Chamber Board members.

ADVOCATE

Serve as the regional voice for business advocacy by leading important conversations that will move the region forward.

- Create a board-approved public policy agenda, formulated with input from Chamber and community members, that is effectively communicated to both audiences.
- Cultivate relationships with elected officials, candidates, and agency partners at all levels to advance a pro-business agenda and support policies that foster community and economic development.
- Lead and engage in strategic partnerships with regional and statewide organizations to amplify the collective voice of business and advance shared priorities across the High Country and North Carolina.
- Support and guide the business community in their individual advocacy efforts.

• Convene and participate in conversations related to continued Helene recovery efforts.
• Work towards community-wide infrastructure improvements to cultivate business growth.
• Celebrate and encourage entrepreneurial efforts in the High Country by connecting resource partners with business growth opportunities.
• Support and guide the business community in their individual advocacy efforts.

COMMUNITY

Actively contribute to developing a vibrant, sustainable community in the High Country. Community development is business development.

• Remain as the leading voice for economic development across the High Country, bringing visibility, alignment, and momentum to local and regional initiatives.
• Connect the business community with key partners in education, government, and healthcare to align efforts and maximize impact.
• Stay engaged in conversations around critical issues – workforce development, childcare, attainable housing, disaster recovery, and access to essential services.
• Establish the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation as the secure funding mechanism for community development efforts that create lasting, measurable change.
• Continue to connect businesses, community, and partnerships through strategic communication, storytelling, and advocacy, serving as a voice for local businesses and sharing the stories that shape our community.
• Host intentional events and facilitate meaningful connections, ensuring members have access to timely, relevant information and opportunities to build lasting relationships.

EDUCATE

Build on the success of providing excellent educational opportunities that will provide Chamber members with the knowledge, strategies, and tools to support their success.

• Encourage community and local government officials to prioritize Watauga County as a leader in educational attainment, early childhood policy, and workforce-centered curriculum alignment.
• Regularly assess the evolving business and community landscape to identify and deliver the educational programming members need to adapt and thrive.
• Facilitate educational opportunities that build community resilience, including preparedness for economic disruption, natural disasters, and other critical events.
• Work with local education partners and utilize their expertise to enhance connections with the business community.
• Collaborate with local education partners to enhance workforce development through work-based learning and stronger business-to-classroom connections.
• Promote STABLE Workplaces as a framework for creating supportive, resilient, and retention-focused workplace cultures. Use it as a resource to guide employer education, workforce development conversations, and community standards.
• Continuously evaluate and strengthen existing learning and engagement opportunities such as Watauga Leadership Institute, High Country Young Professionals, Watauga Women in Leadership, and other programmatic outreach, with the goal of migrating Watauga Leadership Institute to operate under the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

CONNECT

Enhance value to members by connecting them to the Chamber, to one another, and to the resources and opportunities that support their success.

• Partnerships – define our role as a trusted convener that brings together key stakeholders for meaningful and impactful conversations.
• Foster alignment between members, community partners, and regional organizations by highlighting shared goals and encouraging collaborative strategies.
• Effectively communicate the value and benefits of membership, telling the story of our organization, our members, and our business community. Enable our members to become our best advocates.
• Emphasize personal chamber/member relationships by identifying, maximizing, and increasing touchpoints.
• Continue to evaluate effective ways to onboard and orient new members.

LOOKING AHEAD: 2026 AND BEYOND

Our staff and Board of Directors are dedicated to advancing the needs of our members. We have our eyes fixed on the horizon, eager to lead important conversations around long-term storm recovery, community development, accessible and affordable childcare and housing, while staying focused on emerging topics like transportation funding and workforce development. We also remain committed to developing the next generation of leaders for our region, and will use platforms like Watauga Leadership Institute, High Country Young Professionals, and Watauga Women in leadership to energize the voices of tomorrow.

As we move through the year ahead, we encourage you to stay actively involved in our organization in a way that works best for you and the needs of your business. Attend upcoming programs, take advantage of networking opportunities, provide resources for impactful initiatives, and lend your voice to the conversations shaping our community's future. Your participation ensures our organization continues to be a powerful advocate and trusted resource for our local business community.

BOONE
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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Boone, North Carolina 28607
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828.264.2225

Our Chamber

CAROLINAS ACCREDITED CHAMBER

The Boone Area Chamber of Commerce is a private, not-for-profit 501(c)(6) organization, and is not affiliated with any municipal or county government. We are a Carolinas Accredited Chamber by CACCE and serve over 750 members across the High Country.