



Chatham County has been preparing for this dramatic moment. Several years ago, resolute community leaders took steps to ensure the viability of the county for years to come. They asked residents to believe that two megasites would bring jobs and opportunity. More importantly, they asked residents to be patient while they readied the sites and recruited companies. That faith and patience has paid off! Chatham County now calls itself home to two of North Carolina's largest economic development projects ever announced. And we're still just getting started.

In March of 2022, Vietnamese vehicle manufacturer VinFast announced that they would purchase 2,000 acres at the Triangle Innovation Point (TIP) Site in Moncure for its first American electric vehicle production facility. The project will generate \$4 billion in investment and 7,500 jobs. In September of that same year, Durham-based semiconductor manufacturer Wolfspeed announced that it would build a new facility on 450 acres in Siler City, at the Chatham-Siler City Advanced Manufacturing (CAM) Site, investing \$5 billion and creating 1,800 jobs. This meant that in 2022 alone, Chatham County saw over \$9 billion in investment and 9,000 jobs planned. Currently, both projects are moving forward and ramping up their presence around the county.

This is all just the beginning. As we continue working with VinFast and Wolfspeed on their facilities, we are launching a new business retention and expansion program and putting together information on our remaining industrial land. With Wolfspeed's site plan, the remaining 1,400 rail-served acres of the CAM Site is ready for a user, primed for advanced manufacturing. Additional land is available adjacent to VinFast's site, at TIP West, and the Midstate Development Center has 300 acres beside the CAM site. Altogether, Chatham County has over 2,000 acres available for additional new businesses.

We certainly have a lot to do, but we won't be setting out alone. We are fortunate to have partners inside and outside of the county as well as our investors in



*Global electric automobile manufacturer VinFast has selected Chatham County for the site of its multi-billion dollar electric vehicle plant.*

the Accelerate 2026 campaign who are willing to collaborate with us to achieve our vision, and a greater future for all. Our education partners at Central Carolina Community College and Chatham County Schools are several of our biggest assets. Our regional utilities partners in Lee County and Randolph County are essential to what we do. Chatham Park is the gem we show off to all prospective companies, covering 8,000 acres. County leadership has backed us the entire way. Collaboration is the way we do things in Chatham. We invite you to visit and see why our success continues to grow.

Sincerely,



C. Michael Smith  
President  
Chatham Economic  
Development Corporation  
964 East Street  
Pittsboro, NC 27312





# COLLABORATION ACROSS COUNTY LINES

Chatham County's business, education and lifestyle spill beyond its borders.

A sign stating “Trespassers Welcome” brings a smile as visitors reach The Plant, Chatham County’s 17-acre eclectic gathering spot for business, nature and the arts. Chatham County Economic Development Corporation President Michael Smith says the sentiment defines the county. Chatham regularly collaborates and partners with businesses, academic institutions, government officials, farmers, entrepreneurs and residents within and across its borders.

Many of the county’s recent business and manufacturing acquisitions, residential-mixed use projects and educational partnerships spill into neighboring counties. For example, Smith

was recently at The Plant for a meeting organized in part by UNC Chapel Hill, in neighboring Orange County and Karen Howard, chair of the Chatham County Board of Commissioners. Chatham and the university team up often.

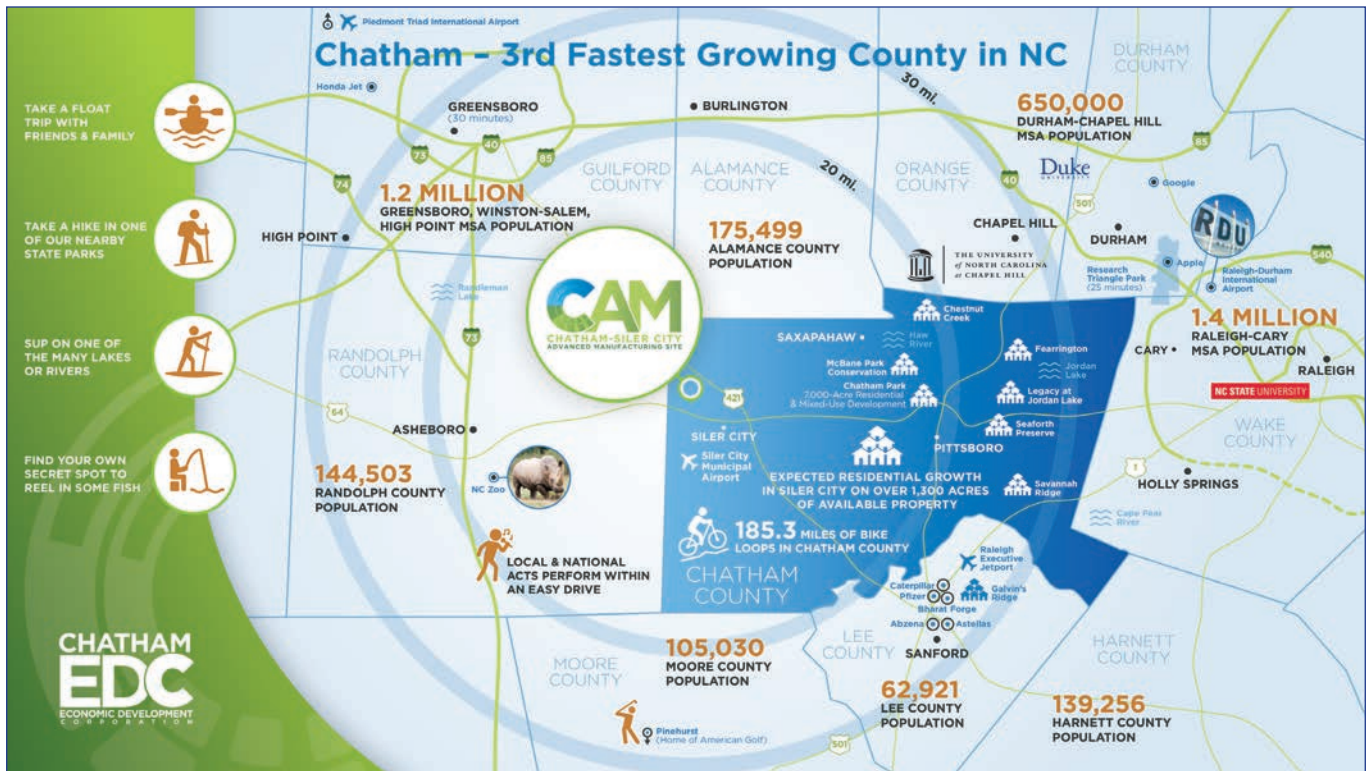
“I recently collaborated with UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School to launch Chatham Leads, which seeks to bring together leaders from business, academia and government to propel innovation and opportunity in Chatham County and the region,” Howard says. “It was an exciting opportunity to bring together old, new and future businesses, non-profits, our schools and community college, UNC faculty and staff and local government staff and partners to talk about what

Chatham’s future can look like, and The Plant was the perfect venue.”

“For a variety of reasons,” Smith says of overlapping county lines, “Chatham has cultivated really strong relationships with neighboring counties. We have collaboration. We have this advantage that we’re in the RTP regional partnership and part of the Carolina Core, and we’re so grateful to have regional marketing groups helping us with our story.”

Chatham is certainly well situated geographically, surrounded with business and educational connections in Wake County to the east, Guilford County to the west and Alamance, Orange and Durham counties to the north.





“With the coming of Interstate 685 [from Dunn to Greensboro] that side [of the county] is only a half hour from Greensboro, and that side of Greensboro continues to grow. So, one part of us is near the Triangle and one part is near the Triad,” Smith says.

“Chatham really is well placed for growth and opportunity,” Howard echoes. “As a large, still fairly rural county, we are close to airports, rail, major highways and byways but are working diligently to retain much of our rural character and precious greenways while allowing for access to job centers, arts and recreation and housing.”

## BLURRED LINES

“A win for one is a win for all,” Smith says. “Technically, our largest town is Cary. And Cary is more in Wake County, but 10,000 people are in Chatham. And The Governor’s Club [residential community and country club] has a Chapel Hill address, but residents pay Chatham County taxes.”

Chatham has a claim to some of the state’s most recent economic development home runs.

In March, electrical vehicle company VinFast announced its \$4 billion investment in an EV and battery facility at Triangle Innovation Point in Moncure, in southern Chatham. It’s expected to create 7,500 jobs. The facility’s water and sewer utilities, however, are across the line in Sanford, in Lee County.

Last September, Wolfspeed, a silicon carbide manufacturing company, announced it is building a \$5 billion chip production plant on 445 acres at the Chatham-Siler City Advanced Manufacturing megasite. Its water lines are in Randolph County.

In April, Duke Energy paid \$3 million for 68 acres near the Chatham-Randolph line to increase service in the area.

As more employees and businesses come to the area, rooftops are going up to meet the demand for housing.

Chatham Park is a new 7,000-acre mixed-use development on the county’s east side about 15 minutes from Wake

County and Chapel Hill.

“It’s 20 minutes from VinFast, 25 minutes from Wolfspeed and every client we have, we’re going to talk about Chatham Park,” Smith says. The master-planned community with onsite healthcare, shopping, recreation and a K-12 private school, will have several neighborhoods including townhomes, apartments and a 55-plus adult community with pool, tennis, pickleball and a putting green.

“There will be 20,000 residential units in there,” Smith says. “Every image we show of Chatham County, we show Chatham Park.”

Howard chairs the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization.

“While most of Chatham is in a rural planning organization for transportation planning [the Triangle Area Rural Planning Organization TARPO], a small portion of northeastern Chatham is in the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization [DCHC-MPO],” she says. A portion





# CUSTOMIZED AND CORPORATE TRAINING

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or [mroberton@cccc.edu](mailto:mroberton@cccc.edu)

[www.cccc.edu](http://www.cccc.edu)



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are developed to deliver Customized Training to your existing employees focused on your company's business model to ensure customer satisfaction. Elements in a Customized Training Project can include leadership and professional development, strategic workforce consultation, and pre-employment assessment. Eligible Companies can qualify for "No Cost/Free" training through the State-supported program through:

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- ✓ Technology Investment
- ✓ Productivity Enhancement



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- ✓ Technical Skills
- ✓ Continuous Improvement
- ✓ Administrative
- ✓ Leadership and Professional Development
- ✓ Safety, Health, and Wellness
- ✓ Quality Fundamentals



of Chatham may also soon fall within the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization [CAMPO].

“All three planning organizations are responsible for regional transportation planning, but the methodologies and needs make for very different conversations in order to ensure that the right options for our community are on the table,” Howard adds. “Things like Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), light rail and commuter rail should be in our sights, but we are also committed to ensuring that bike lanes and sidewalks are part of what we negotiate for Chatham so that we can create communities that are walkable and where bike and pedestrian safety is foremost.”

## STRONG EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The relationships between Chatham’s high schools, Central Carolina Community College and neighboring universities are vital to educating a workforce, Howard says.

She has many ties to education in the area and across the state including chairing the county Board of Education in 2013-14 and serving on the school system’s AIG Advisory Committee, the admissions committee for Kenan-Flagler’s MBA at UNC program, the Legislative Committee of the North Carolina Schools Boards Association and the Parent Advisory Council of the North Carolina School of Science and

Mathematics and currently as co-chair of the task force of Presidential Initiative, Pathways for Disconnected Youth.

“Chatham County Schools, Central Carolina Community College, our EDC and other partners are trying to address the need to build a pipeline to meet the needs of the workforce, and it seems the landing of such companies as VinFast and Wolfspeed in our community have super-charged the conversation,” she says. “The launching of programs at the Moore Center in Lee County, which is proximate to VinFast, and creation of programs to support the employee needs of both companies has spurred program development at campuses in Chatham as a natural progression of that relationship.”



Central Carolina Community College's Promise Program offers free in-state tuition to accepted students who graduate from schools in Chatham, Harnett and Lee counties.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CENTRAL CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE



# *At the Center of it All*

**C**hatham County is located in the geographic center of North Carolina. Within its central location between the **Research Triangle** and **Triad** regions, 1,400 acres are available at the **Chatham-Siler City Advanced Manufacturing (CAM)** site, the future home of **Wolfspeed**. Neighboring **Midstate Development Center** has 300 acres available and the **Triangle Innovation Point (TIP)** West site, adjacent to **VinFast**, has 300 shovel-ready acres available. Award winning **Central Carolina Community College** offers industry specific training geared towards your workforce. **The Moore Center** will offer custom, hands-on education for your employees in a new facility. **Pittsboro's Chatham Park** is a live-work-play mixed-use development bringing 22 million square feet of commercial and 22,000 residential units. **Mosaic**, pictured below, is slated to be a premier entertainment and lifestyle destination. We invite you to come and be in the center of it all.



Chatham Economic Development Corporation  
[www.chathamcdc.org](http://www.chathamcdc.org)  
919-542-8274



*Mosaic at Chatham Park*





Students learn welding skills at Central Carolina Community College.

Central Carolina Community College's Promise Program offers free in-state tuition for two years for accepted students.

"This program is eligible for all our Chatham, Harnett and Lee County residents who graduate from a public high school, private school, charter school or homeschool," says Felicia Gilmore, Central Carolina Community College's Career Center coordinator. "We also offer several other programs like TRIO [Upward Bound, Talent Search and Student Support Service], YouthBuild and other great programs throughout the college to help high school students have a smooth transition to college."

Howard is the current liaison with the Board of Education. The school system recently initiated One Chatham, a push to unite students, faculty, staff, facilities, infrastructure, curriculum and communications.

"This really touches on the intersection of many years of focused work we have been doing in the county to ensure that local students have access to well-paying, meaningful employment that will offer them the opportunity to stay close to home and be involved in the community that has invested in them," Howard says.

"In our high schools, we have also built supports that help guide our students to the careers of the future both in programming and in access to Central

Carolina Community College through dual enrollment, our Early College and the Chatham Promise. We are seeing that change in real time as businesses and industry, as well as community expectations, have emerged to create 21st-century opportunities in clean manufacturing and forward-looking industrial applications of science and technology."

In 2020, she co-chaired the N.C. Association of County Commissioners Presidential Initiative on Disconnected Youth that focused on people ages 16 to 24 who were neither in school nor employed. "Since then," she says, "we have a new partner in this work in MyFutureNC, which seeks to get 2 million North Carolinians to a degree or certification by 2030, and a percentage of that number resides in Chatham."

## CONNECTING EMPLOYERS AND STUDENTS

"Everything is shared," Smith says. For example, the past two years he has participated in the N.C. Certified Economic Developer Program with N.C. State, which was held at Central Carolina Community College's Sanford campus.

"They talk about attraction and getting new companies to come to your community," he says. "I was fortunate to be part of what happened in Lee

[County] because it reemphasized all the shared assets we have in the counties. A few weeks ago, we met a client at the Raleigh Executive Jetport, and we drive seven minutes to the VinFast site."

Central Carolina Community College partners in work-based learning with Bharat Forge, Wolfspeed, Accauro Gene Therapies, Toyota, Astellas and VinFast. The college's job board, College Central Network, "assists our local employers, employers from other states, and national employers in posting jobs for our students, alumni, and community residents to search for careers," Gilmore says. "Students have the opportunity to apply instruction in an actual workplace setting by working for an employer that is directly related to the program of study." Workers needing more job-specific training utilize the college's Department of Workforce Development.

"Different departments assist with aiding in teaching new skill sets, new techniques, and even basic skill sets to help employees become more successful in the area of expertise that is needed by the employer," Gilmore says. "The Career Center hosts career fairs [at campuses in Chatham, Harnett and Lee] and expos that bring in a variety of different employers in the spring, fall and summer semesters."

Gilmore created a summer semester program called Work-it Wednesdays to bring students and employers with open positions together. "Employers have the opportunity to pick the location that best suits their needs from a pool of candidates that they can pull from to hire for their open positions," she says. "Work-It Wednesdays will be held on Chatham, Lee, and Harnett's main campuses. Some of the employers that have participated in the series of hiring events are Lee County Government, Belflex Staffing Network, Residential Services Inc. and GKN Automotive."

She says the fields most in-demand are manufacturing, healthcare, personal care and services, logistics and food services.





Chatham  
Assistant County  
Manager Bryan Thompson, County  
Attorney Bob Hagemann, Michael  
Smith, president of Chatham Economic  
Development, Board of Commission  
Chair Karen Howard, House Minority  
Leader Robert Reives and County  
Manager Dan LaMontagne pose for a  
photograph while wearing “\$9B/9K/22”  
pins, which represent a remarkable year  
with \$9 billion in investments and  
9,000 jobs in 2022.



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The Plant, a place for food, drink and music in Pittsboro, is owned by husband and wife, Tami Schwerin and Lyle Estill.

## NATURAL CHARM

“There are so many quirky things. We had the largest job announcement with VinFast, the largest investment with Wolfspeed, and I was at that meeting a few weeks ago and The Plant was packed because there was a jazz band playing outside,” Smith says.

And that’s a prime example of industry and quality of life coming together. Education and workforce are key to attracting business, of course, as well as location, transportation, investment incentives, and many other components. But Chatham County’s distinct quality of life is an important draw, too. The mostly rural county has proximity to the urban downtowns of Raleigh and Greensboro, and offers its own small town charm, as well.

The Plant is a gathering place for families, artists, performers, wedding goers and business folks wanting a cool place to meet and work. It houses restaurants, breweries, coffee companies, shops, an art gallery, and a farm-to-fork food truck along with a native plant nursery and nature walk. Visitors can throw an ax, write in a journal under a tree or rent bikes.

Lyle Estill, his wife Tami Schwerin and Lyle’s brother Mark Estill bought the former metal alloy plant in 2004 after it sat vacant behind barbed wire for a decade. Before it was a manufacturing facility, the property was one of the biggest flower farms in the country. It provided the chrysanthemums for John F. Kennedy’s inauguration in 1961.

Now, Lyle and Tami operate The Plant as a place to grow food, host events and “promote local resilience.” The relaxing encampment offers everything from caviar to scented candles to bird-watching. Its calendar is full of live music, ice cream socials, yoga, dance performances and more.

Smith also points to Bynum Front Porch, another gathering place that is a former general store in an 1872 cotton mill village on the Haw River that’s become a non-profit with family-friendly events and Friday night live-music series.

Jordan Lake State Recreation Area in Chatham, 30 miles from Raleigh, has boating, swimming, more than 1,000 campsites for tents, trailers or RVs, hiking trails and fishing areas.





“Over many years, we’ve enjoyed the convenient location and personal service at Raleigh Exec, which is why we recently invested in building a major corporate hangar at the airport. As more companies learn about the advantages it offers, I’m sure they’ll also be making the decision to operate out of Raleigh Exec.”

**DONNIE SHELTON**

CEO of Shelton Aviation, Coalmarch and Triangle Pest Control

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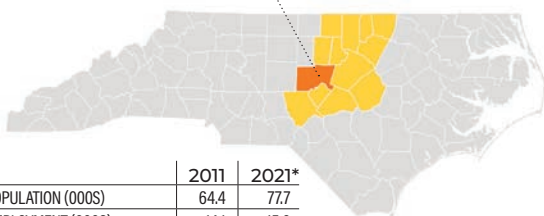


**RALEIGHEXEC**  
JETPORT





## CHATHAM COUNTY



	2011	2021*
POPULATION (000S)	64.4	77.7
EMPLOYMENT (000S)	14.1	15.8
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	8.0%	3.6%
PER CAPITA INCOME (000S)	\$471	\$66.8

**EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY**  
Health care: 14.9%  
Retail: 10.7%

**LARGEST PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYER**  
Carolina Meadows

**LARGEST CITY/TOWN**  
Siler City: population 7,699

**COUNTY PROPERTY TAX**  
66.5 cents per \$100 value

**HIGHER EDUCATION**  
Central Carolina Community College

Triangle Innovation Point -TIP



Unique architecture helps showcase Triangle Innovation Point while public art highlights the industrial Chatham Park site.

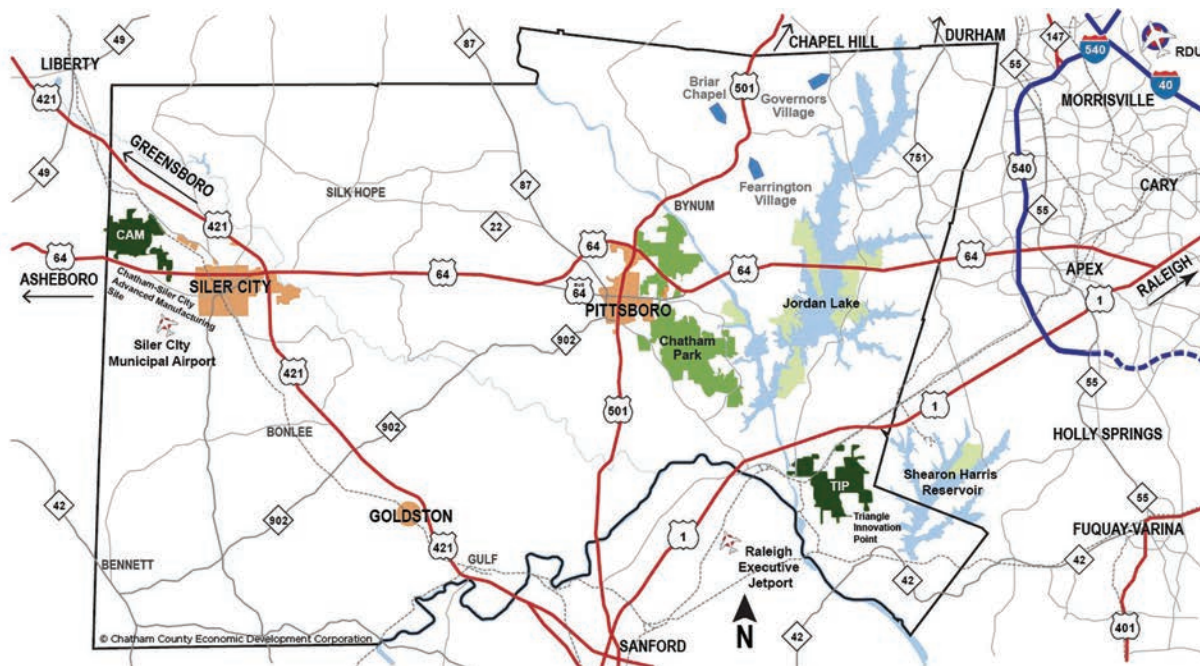
Chatham Park is a 7,100-acre planned mixed-use development.

“A few weeks ago, someone put on my desk (information that stated) Jordan Lake is one of the most visited state parks in North Carolina, and that’s exciting, because it’s right here in our county,” Smith says. “You have this beautiful body of water with zero development on it.”

The park drew more than 2 million visitors in 2022, 27% more than 2021.

“Chatham is Jordan Lake and the thousands of acres of surrounding protected lands,” Howard says. “It is music and the arts. Great schools. Quaint towns. Rivers and trails. Like most places we are a complex network of newcomers and old-timers looking for ways to collaborate for a future Chatham that respects its past with integrity and looks toward its future with hope. We are racially and ethnically diverse, and we don’t always agree but Chatham continues moving toward that better future for all.” ■

— Kathy Blake is a writer from eastern North Carolina.





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