

# 2024

## Annual Report

Henderson-Vance County

Economic Development Commission

Ferdinand Rouse, CEcD - Director

Ryan Shaffer - Economic Development Specialist

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Henderson, North Carolina 27536*

**HENDERSON**   
**VANCE COUNTY**  
Economic Development Commission

# Overview

The Henderson-Vance County Economic Development Commission (EDC) experienced a transformative second half of 2024. This period included several achievements:

- Winning a nationally competitive economic development project.
- Conducting multiple Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) visits.
- Securing key funding to enhance local infrastructure.

With a fully staffed team, the EDC continues to align its initiatives with the Strategic Plan, focusing on positioning Vance County as a premier destination for business and residential growth in North Carolina and the Southeast.



# Letter from the Director

**Dear Community Members and Partners,**

The second half of 2024 has been a time of tremendous progress and momentum for the Henderson-Vance County Economic Development Commission (EDC). With the hiring of new staff, we have successfully pursued key priorities from our Economic Development Strategic Plan, resulting in measurable economic growth.

A major success this year is the selection of Vance County for a nationally competitive opportunity in which we faced contenders from South Carolina, Georgia, and Illinois. Thanks to our strategic location, pro-business environment, and competitive incentives, this opportunity will bring **60 jobs** and an **investment of \$10 million** to our community.

Further bolstering our economy, companies like **StayOnline** and **Select Products** are expanding operations with new product lines, reflecting our focus on **Business Retention and Expansion (BRE)**. We are also proud that **Vance County** has been recognized as a **Designated Retirement Community** by Retire NC, a testament to our natural amenities, affordability, and cultural richness.

In line with the Strategic Plan, the EDC has actively engaged local employers--including **Pacific Organics, Timberline, Select Products, StayOnline, and Walmart Distribution**--through our **Site Visit Initiative**. These visits help us understand workforce needs and connect businesses to essential resources like **Vance-Granville Community College (VGCC)** and **NC Works**.

Additionally, we have strengthened regional and global partnerships through the **Research Triangle Partnership** and events such as the **Southeastern U.S. (SEUS) Conference**. This outreach included meetings with Japanese business leaders, showcasing **North Carolina's** position as a prime destination for foreign investment.

Our commitment to communication and transparency continues to grow. Since July, our updated website and new social media strategy have reached thousands of visitors, offering real-time workforce data, business resources, and marketing materials. as we move into 2025, we will launch a **quarterly newsletter** to further connect with target industries and community stakeholders.

The successes of this year highlight our shared dedication to the goals of the **Strategic Plan**: attracting new investment, retaining and expanding local businesses, fostering partnerships, and positioning Vance County as a preferred location for both enterprises and residents.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to build a more prosperous Vance County.

Sincerely,

Ferdinand Rouse, CEcD

Economic Development Director

Henderson-Vance County Economic Development Commission

Office: (252) 492-2094 | Cell: (252) 820-0041



# Key Achievements & Alignment with Strategic Plan Goals



## Goal 1: Attract, Retain, and Foster Start-Up Businesses

- BRE visits supported existing businesses, addressing their challenges and facilitating growth.
- Social media campaigns and downloadable guides on the website bolstered entrepreneurial support.



## Goal 2: Make Vance County a Choice Location

- Investments in the HVIP III Shell Building and industrial site enhancements laid the foundation for future business attraction.
- Efforts to attract retirees align with place-making and community investment strategies.



## Goal 3: Develop and Retain Talent

- Collaboration with VGCC and local schools ensured alignment between educational programs and workforce needs.
- Promoted career pathways through digital campaigns and events.



## Goal 4: Strengthen Local and Regional Connections

- Partnerships with RTRP expanded Vance County's reach in regional and international markets.
- Active participation in regional initiatives with the Kerr-Tar Council of Governments strengthened the County's economic development network.

## Goal 5: Strengthen the Henderson-Vance County EDC

- Enhanced website functionality and robust social media presence aligned with marketing goals.
- Strategic partnerships increased resource allocation and engagement opportunities.

## Key Achievements and Initiatives (cont.)

**Securing a Nationally Competitive Project:** This significant initiative concluded successfully, bringing an investment of \$10 million and creating 60 jobs in the County. Competing against sites in South Carolina, Georgia, and Illinois, Vance County's strategic location, business-friendly climate, and competitive incentives secured the win. This is the first such announcement in five years.

**Designation as a Retirement Community:** Vance County earned recognition as a Designated Retirement Community by Retire NC, emphasizing its natural and cultural amenities and affordable cost of living. This designation positions the County as a prime destination for retirees.

**Active Projects:** Progress continues on Projects Tuffy, Mineral, and Spring, which are at various stages of development.

*"With our scenic landscapes, excellent healthcare facilities, and wide range of activities for all ages, we believe Vance County is the perfect place for retirees to call home."*

*- Renee Perry, Vance County Manager*


 The logo for Retire NC, featuring the word "retire" in a white sans-serif font, followed by a white icon of a window with a small house silhouette inside, and the letters "nc" in a bold, dark blue sans-serif font. The entire logo is set against a solid blue rectangular background.

### Vance County Secures Nationally Competitive Project

**\$10**  
million  
in investment

**60**  
new jobs

**5** years  
since last awarded  
project

# Key Achievements and Initiatives (cont.)

## *Business Retention Site Visits*

Reinforcing its commitment to existing businesses, the Commission reinstated its BRE site visits.

Visits included major employers such as Pacific Organics, Timberline, Select Products, StayOnline, and Walmart.

Surveys preceding these visits captured workforce challenges, market dynamics, and operational needs, including the critical role of reliable high-speed internet and workforce availability. A sample survey is included on Pages 21-26.

Partnerships were strengthened with VGCC, NC Works, and the Kittrell Job Corps, connecting businesses to workforce training and resources.



# 80%

of job growth in any community is generated by the businesses already located there, according to a 2009 MIT study.

# Strategic Partnerships

*The Commission actively participated in regional and international partnerships:*

The Director represented Vance County at the Southeastern U.S./Japan Conference, engaging with Japanese investors, North Carolina's leading foreign investors.

The Commission collaborated with partners such as EDPNC, Golden Leaf, North Carolina Railroad Company, and Duke Energy to foster economic growth and funding for Vance County site development.

The EDC's membership in the Research Triangle Regional Partnership enabled access to broader marketing and collaborative opportunities.



***NCRR awards \$40,000 to Vance County***



In December, the North Carolina Railroad Company awarded Vance County \$40,000 to fully cover the costs of site assessments of two properties within the Henderson-Vance Industrial Park.

The assessments will provide the Commission with the necessary information to effectively market the properties and engage with potential buyers.



# Social Media and Communications

*To increase visibility and community engagement the EDC has done the following:*

- ✦ Regular posts were initiated on social media platforms to highlight Vance County's assets and economic success stories.
- ✦ Website updates included real-time workforce statistics, downloadable business resources, and alignment with the Strategic Plan's branding guidelines.
- ✦ Website traffic analytics revealed more than 5,600 visits in 2024, with significant international interest from Poland and China. This information will help us target specific regions, inform marketing strategy, and demonstrate social media impact.



## Workforce Development

*The Commission's initiatives aligned closely with the Strategic Plan goal of strengthening the talent pipeline:*



- ✦ Promoted VGCC's advanced manufacturing center and dual-enrollment programs.
- ✦ Advocated for expanded career and technical education opportunities.
- ✦ Connected local employers with resources for internships and apprenticeships.

# Looking Ahead

The HVCEDC remains dedicated to implementing its Strategic Plan and fostering a vibrant economic future for Vance County. This report underscores the progress made and sets the stage for continued growth and innovation in 2025.

## In 2025, the Commission plans to:

**1**

Host or sponsor events such as Manufacturing Week and a business roundtable series.

**2**

Launch a quarterly newsletter tailored to target industries and commercial developers.

**3**

Expand its Business Retention & Expansion program to reach additional businesses.

**4**

Advocate and seek funding for investment in industrial site development and quality-of-life amenities.

# Appendix A:

## Website Updates and Traffic Data

**5,647** total visitors to  
HVCEDC website  
in 2024

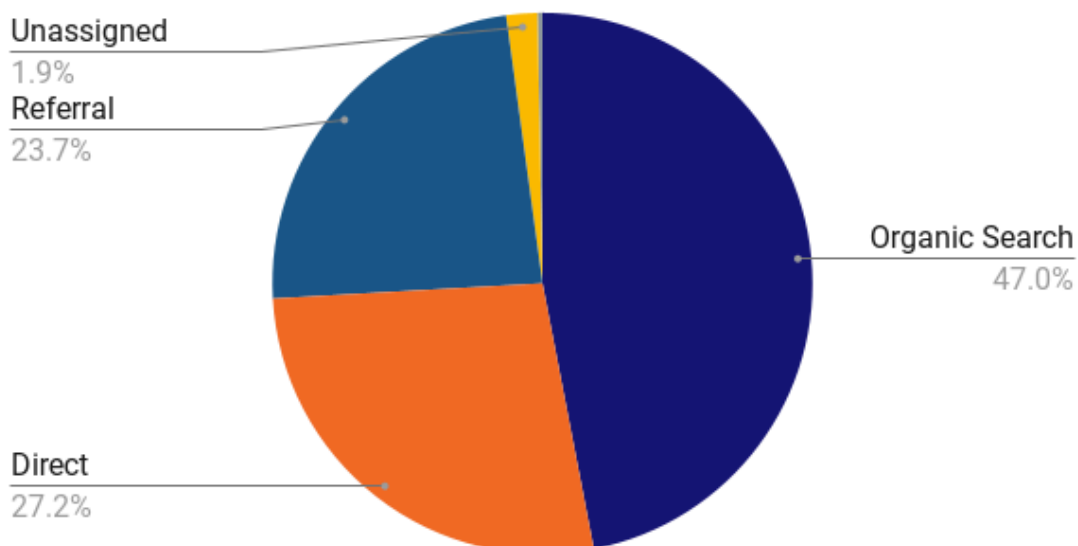
### Views by Country: Top 3

United States 	3,875
Poland 	435
China 	301

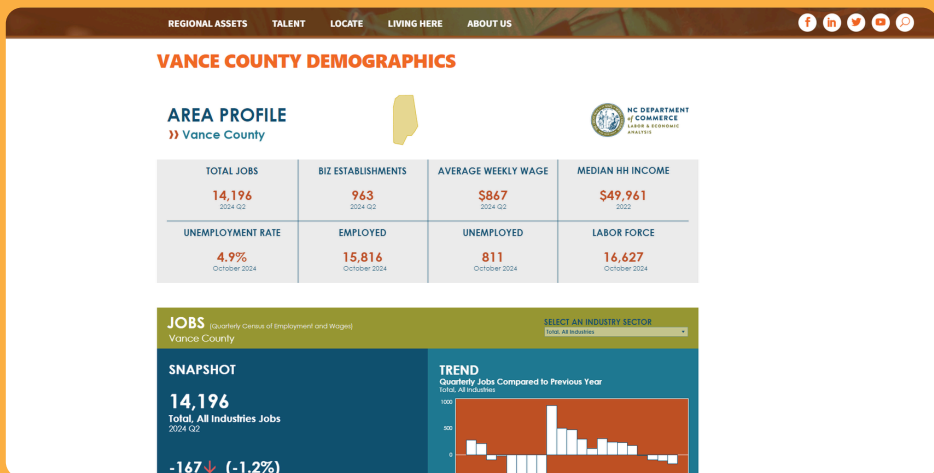
### Views by City: Top 5

Warsaw, Poland	434
Henderson, NC	433
Raleigh, NC	315
Ashburn, VA	219
Atlanta, GA	188

### How users found the HVCEDC Website



# Appendix A: Website Updates and Traffic Data



Several updates were made to the EDC website this year, following recommendations made in the Strategic Plan.

Under the Talent Tab, users can now view the most up-to-date information and statistics on Vance County's and the Kerr-Tar Region's demographics and working population.

The data displayed is now automatically updated when the NC Dept. of Commerce releases its monthly figures.

User can view the latest unemployment figures, average wage, jobs statistics, and top industries, as well as compare that information with communities across the state.

In addition, the Commission added a "Business Resources" page to its website under the Locate Tab. Users can now view financial, technical, and workforce development resources for their business all in one location. The information on this page was also made available as a condensed, downloadable brochure, which is included on pages 12-14.

## Technical Assistance & Permitting

**VGCC Small Business Center** – The Small Business Center at Vance-Granville Community College aims to help [new and existing small businesses](#) throughout Franklin, Granville, Vance, and Warren Counties. The Center provides a suite of services and assistance at no cost, including education, training, one-to-one counseling, business plan development, and access to capital resources.  
[www.vgcc.edu/coned/small-business-center/](http://www.vgcc.edu/coned/small-business-center/) (252)-738-3240

**SBA Business Centers** – The U.S. Small Business Administration has a number of different centers that provide technical assistance, including Veterans Business Outreach Centers and Women’s Business Centers. These Centers provide problem-solving assistance, help businesses access capital, improve business planning, and other technical support.  
*Veterans Business Outreach Center at Fayetteville State University*  
[www.fsuvboc.com](http://www.fsuvboc.com) (910)-672-2683  
*Women’s Business Center of North Carolina*  
[www.theinstitutenc.org/programs/](http://www.theinstitutenc.org/programs/) (919)-956-2334

**NC Manufacturing Extension Partnership** – NCMEP is [a hub for small- and mid-size manufacturers](#) seeking to incorporate new technology to expand their business. Businesses can partner with NCMEP to find solutions to improve productivity, increase sales, and create and retain jobs. The Partnership offers help with workforce development and training, supply chain assistance, advanced manufacturing deployment, and cybersecurity strategy, as well as regular webinars and events to network and learn the latest technology and practices.  
[www.ncmep.org](http://www.ncmep.org) (919)-513-6119

**Vance County Planning and Development Department** – The County’s planning department conducts state-mandated building inspections for all phases of construction. It also administers and enforces all development plans and related ordinances. On its website, the Department has [compiled guides](#) to help local businesses understand the permitting process and has also listed a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page.  
[www.vancecounty.org/departments/planning-and-development](http://www.vancecounty.org/departments/planning-and-development) (252)-738-2080

## Financing, Grants, and Incentives

**OneNC Fund** – The One North Carolina Fund is a [cash-grant program](#) that allows the state to quickly respond to job creation projects, especially those in less prosperous areas of the state. Businesses can take advantage of the program by locating or expanding in Tier I counties, like Vance County. The funds must be used for installing/purchasing equipment, structural repairs to buildings, or upgrading/expanding utility lines, and the project must create new jobs.

**Building Re-use Grants** – This grant program provides funds to local governments to assist with [improvements to buildings](#) that will directly lead to the creation of new, full-time jobs. The funds can be used for two purposes: The renovation of vacant buildings and the renovation/expansion of a building occupied by an existing company wishing to expand at its current location.

**North Carolina Rural Development Center** – The NC Rural Development Center’s mission is to develop, promote, and implement strategies to improve the quality of life of rural North Carolinians. The Center has several programs that provide [access to capital](#) for small businesses in the state’s 78 rural counties. One such program is [CornerSquare Community Capital](#), which is focused on serving individuals and communities that have struggled to access capital for reasons that include race, gender, wealth, or experience. [Thread Capital](#) is another program, a direct micro-lending program that provides access to capital, coaching, and connections to small businesses across North Carolina.

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

(919)-250-4314

**Community Development Financial Institutions** – CDFIs are banks, credit unions, or other financial agencies that promote inclusion and economic development in disadvantaged communities. With a larger focus on serving people in low-income communities that have historically been locked out of the financial system, CDFIs rely less on credit scores when providing loans and other products and instead focus on more holistic factors and community development efforts. To find a North Carolina CDFI, you can visit the [U.S. Department of the Treasury’s list](#) of certified CDFIs.

## Workforce Development

**Customized Training at VGCC** – The Customized Training Program at Vance-Granville Community College partners with local businesses to provide [tailored training programs](#) to meet workforce and industry needs, often at no cost to the business. The program is available to businesses making an appreciable capital investment, deploying new technology, expanding its operations, or seeking to enhance workers' skills.

[www.vgcc.edu/coned/industry-services/](http://www.vgcc.edu/coned/industry-services/)

(252)-738-3520

**Kittrell Job Corps** – The [Kittrell Job Corps](#) is a federally funded program that offers free career training and education to low-income, young adults. Employers can partner with the Job Corps to streamline recruitment to customize training programs and create no-cost work-based learning programs.

[www.kittrell.jobcorps.gov](http://www.kittrell.jobcorps.gov)

(252)-438-9100

# Appendix B:

## Engagement Data

**120** engagements with stakeholders or prospective companies

**47** calls made to HVCEDC mainline phone since October.

\*Data does not include calls made directly to the Director's cell

Since July, the HVCEDC staff has on 120 occasions met with stakeholders, prospective companies, or industry experts to advance projects in or promote Vance County.

This includes events hosted by the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC), the NC Department of Commerce, Kerr-Tar Regional Council of Governments (COG), NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT), and several business representatives.

Such events may include in-person site visits, tours of HVIP properties, networking events, and calls with state officials, among other items.

The Commission is also engaging with the public through social media and local news outlets. This includes interviews with WIZS and the Henderson Dispatch that promoted the County's strategic advantages and inform the public of the Commission's work.

Through platforms like Instagram and X (formerly known as Twitter), the Commission is sharing its message directly to a broad audience.



# Appendix B:

## Engagement Data - Key Partnerships

### NCDOT Division 5 TCC/Tac

NCDOT Division 5 covers Durham, Wake, Person, Granville, Vance, Warren, and Franklin Counties.

The TCC/TAC meetings are an opportunity for economic development officials and other representatives from each county to advocate for specific road and infrastructure projects.



### RTRP

The Research Triangle Regional Partnership is a 14-county economic development organization that aims to recruit new industries. RTRP also markets the region to external audiences.

### S-Line

The S-Line will deploy high-performance passenger rail service between Raleigh and Richmond.

Currently, the project is in the design phase, with final approval expected between 2024 and 2027. Meanwhile, Vance County Officials are meeting to designate the depot and secure funding for the project.

# Appendix B: Engagement Data

**hvanceedc**  
Kittrell, North Carolina



[View insights](#)






**hvanceedc** The Kittrell Job Corps hosted its Christmas Social today! Lots of friendly faces dedicated to seeing the people of Kittrell and Vance County succeed! #jobcorps #northcarolinabusiness #vancecountync #hendersonnews  
 3 days ago

**Henderson Vance County EDC @...** · 12/5/24

The Commission is your partner for finding incentives and grants to grow your business. Whether your looking to deploy new technology, renovate a building, or find a new location, the Commission is here to help out.

#AdvanceInVanceCounty #GrowSmart  
[vancecountyedc.com/locate/taxes-a...](http://vancecountyedc.com/locate/taxes-a...)






 93
 


**Henderson Vance County EDC @...** · 12/3/24

Manufacturing thrives in Vance County thanks to the skilled workforce and talent powered by @VanceGranville. Vance County is your partner in building a dynamic workforce.

#AdvanceInVanceCounty #skilled





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  1
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  44
 


**hvanceedc**



[View insights](#)

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**hvanceedc** Our recent tour of Select Products highlighted Vance County's strengths in manufacturing—skilled workforce, lower business costs, and prime location near key transport links.

We're committed to supporting our local businesses in reaching new heights! Interested in a site visit? Contact us today! #AdvanceInVanceCounty #econdev  
 November 19

# Appendix C:

## Current Grant Opportunities & BRE Activities

The Commission has several projects in progress. This section is intended to provide information for a few substantial projects as well as highlight the work and resources provided by the EDC.

### HVCEDC to receive \$40,000 from NCRR Microgrants

In December, the North Carolina Railroad Company awarded Vance County \$40,000 to help cover the costs of site assessments of two properties at the Henderson-Vance Industrial Park. The assessments will provide the Commission with the necessary information to effectively market the properties and engage with potential buyers.

The NCRR Microgrant program makes funding available for site identification due diligence, including wetland delineation studies, endangered species reports, archaeological reports, geotechnical reports, site surveys, and more.

### Golden Leaf Site Program

The Golden LEAF Site Program provides support to identify potential industrial sites for economic development, enable completion of due diligence on industrial sites already identified, or extend public utilities to or conduct grading and clearing of industrial sites for which due diligence has been completed.

The SITE Program consists of the three phases described below. Communities will be able to participate in the program in any of the three phases, and a site may progress from Identification through to Development over time.

**SITE Program – Identification** provides support to identify potential industrial sites in communities that do not currently have quality industrial sites to market.

**SITE Program – Due Diligence** provides funding to complete eligible due diligence activities such as environmental assessments, archaeological analyses, and mapping for identified industrial sites.

**SITE Program – Development** provides funding for public infrastructure and, for publicly owned sites, clearing and grading to develop sites that have completed the due diligence necessary to demonstrate that the site is suitable for industrial development.

## Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) Activities

The Commission restarted its BRE visits this year, with the goal of building relationships with mid- to large-sized employers and to better understand the successes and challenges of the county's major industries. Site visits are a key component of the Commission's business retention, as the expansion of existing industry is a major driver in economic growth.

Before each visit, employers fill out an in-depth survey (Pages 21-26) that captures up-to-date data about their workforce, markets, and outlook. The survey also allows employers to share recent successes and pertinent challenges that affect their success in Vance County.

So far, the Commission has met with Pacific Organics, Timberline, Select Products, Walmart Distribution, and StayOnline.

During these visits, EDC staff tour the facility while sharing information about the Commission and how it can be of assistance. A one-page handout (Page 20) is handed to each business representative at each site visit.



## LOCAL CONTACTS

### Ferdinand Rouse

Director, Henderson-Vance Economic Development Commission

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### Chris Wright

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252.438.6656

### Sherry Moss

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### Robert Rosch

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252.738.2081

## KEY PROGRAMS

**OneNC Fund:** The OneNC Fund is a cash-grant program that allows the state to quickly respond to job creation projects, especially those in less prosperous areas of the state. Businesses can take advantage of the program by locating or expanding in Tier I counties, like Vance County. The funds must be used for installing/purchasing equipment, structural repairs to buildings, or upgrading/expanding utilities lines, and the project must create new jobs.

**Building Reuse Grants:** This grant program provides funds to local governments to assist with improvements to buildings that will directly lead to the creation of new, full-time jobs. The funds can be used for two purposes: the renovation of vacant buildings and the renovation/expansion of a building occupied by an existing company wishing to expand in its current location.

# Henderson-Vance County Economic Development Commission Business Retention and Expansion Survey

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The purpose of this survey is to learn more about and to support the companies in Vance County. The information provided will help with planning programs and services for area companies, your responses will allow us to tailor our support to your specific company. This survey is being conducted as part of Henderson-Vance County Economic Development Commission's Business Expansion and Retention program.

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## **Business Profile:**

Company Name:

Contact Person:

Title: Address:

Phone:

Email:

Product/Service(s):

Website:

SIC or NAICS Code:

Number of Employees:

Years at Location:

Site Size (acres):

Plant Size (sq ft):

Other Plant Locations:

Parent Company Name:

Corporate Contact Person:

Title:

May we contact him/her? (Yes/No)

**Markets / Products:**

What markets does your company serve? (Indicate % of total sales in each market) Local

County (outside of city)

State (outside of county)

National (outside of state)

International (Total should equal 100%)

**Top Products Information:**

Provide details for up to four products:

1. Product:

Customers (Industry Type):

Outlook:

2. Product:

Customers (Industry Type):

Outlook:

3. Product:

Customers (Industry Type):

Outlook:

4. Product:

Customers (Industry Type):

Outlook:

Would you be interested in assistance in locating local customers? If yes, what type of assistance would you require?

**Raw Materials / Suppliers:**

Which major raw materials or services purchased from outside the area would you prefer to buy locally if available at a comparable price?

# Henderson-Vance County Economic Development Commission Business Retention and Expansion Survey

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## **Personnel / Labor:**

Number of:

Hourly skilled employees:

Hourly unskilled employees:

Clerical employees:

Supervisory/technical employees:

Rate the availability and quality of local employment for the following skill classes (1

= Excellent, 2 = Good, 3 = Average, 4 = Poor, 5 = No Opinion):

Professional/Management:

Availability: [ ] Quality of Skills: [ ]

Skilled:

Availability: [ ] Quality of Skills: [ ]

Semi-Skilled:

Availability: [ ] Quality of Skills: [ ]

Unskilled:

Availability: [ ] Quality of Skills: [ ]

Clerical:

Availability: [ ] Quality of Skills: [ ]

Other:

Availability: [ ] Quality of Skills: [ ]



**Business Activity / Business Climate:**

What are the greatest advantages and disadvantages of operating your business in Vance County?

Advantages:

Disadvantages:

What recommendations do you have for improving the business climate or quality of life in Vance County?

**Future Expansion:**

Does your company plan to establish new or expanded operations outside of Vance County? If yes, where and why?

Does your company anticipate a need to reduce or phase out a local facility? If yes, when and why?

# Henderson-Vance County Economic Development Commission Business Retention and Expansion Survey

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**Business Assistance Needs:**

Is your company currently facing challenges with any of the following? (Circle all that apply) Capital

Financing

Utilities

Physical Space

Vandalism

Production Process

Labor

Transportation

Safety

Environmental Issues

Taxes

Government Regulation

Marketing

Business Management

Other: [Please Specify]

**Additional Comments:**

**Thank You Note:**

Thank you for completing our survey. Your participation is crucial as we develop new programs to enhance the success of your business in Vance County. We will visit your office soon to discuss the survey results and gather further input. If you have any immediate questions, please contact the EDC by phone or email.

Ferdinand Rouse – Economic Development Director

Office - 252-492-2094

Email – [frouse@vancecounty.org](mailto:frouse@vancecounty.org)

Henderson –Vance County Economic Development Commission