



## Community and History

Located in the beautiful foothills of western North Carolina, Catawba County provides an outstanding quality of life for its diverse population of 155,800 citizens. Catawba County is a historically rich area with access to a wide range of recreational and cultural activities, making it a great place for families and singles to live, work and play. It is home to a stable, progressive, innovative government and its employees.

There are eight (8) cities and towns in the County, ranging from the City of Hickory with over 40,000 residents to quaint smaller communities which offer a wide range of housing and life-style choices. The center of the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Statistical Area, home to more than 360,000 citizens, Catawba County is conveniently located within an hour's drive of Charlotte and Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

The County's strategic location in the State places top travel destinations within a short drive. Charlotte, the nation's 19th largest city, is less than one hour's drive from Catawba County and is home to a wide range of entertainment options. The Appalachian resort areas of Boone and Blowing Rock (skiing and hiking) are also within an hour's drive, and the City of Asheville, home to the Biltmore Estate and a growing community of artisans is located within a seventy-five (75) minutes' drive from the County.

Thriving as one of the major manufacturing locations in the country, Catawba County has achieved high

marks nationally for its low business costs and low costs of living, as well as being recognized by *Reader's Digest* as the 10<sup>th</sup> 'Best Place to Live and Raise a Family in the United States'.

Home to an educated and skilled workforce of 250,000, the Catawba Valley region is a growing, vibrant and diverse location of choice, not only in North Carolina, but also the nation.

## Local Economy

Driven by a strong and well-educated workforce, nearly 25% of Catawba's working population is engaged in the field of manufacturing – the County's largest source of jobs. Some of the diversified manufacturing sectors that call Catawba County home include machining and metal working, plastics, fiber optics, furniture and medical. Major manufacturers in Catawba County include: Apple (its East Coast data center) Commscope, HSM Solutions, GKN, Starsted, Corning, Lee Industries, Shurtape, McCreary Modern, Heritage Home Group, and Ethan Allen and Century Furniture. In addition, farming is a major industry within the County and Catawba has implemented several programs promoting eating local as well as a Food Sustainability plan.

Catawba County has also earned a strong reputation for cooperation between businesses, as evidenced by long-term strategic planning in a series of FORESIGHT reports, and with non-profit organizations.



## Educational Opportunities

Catawba County is dedicated to education and technical training for its residents, students and workers. The County supports three (3) high performing public school systems – Catawba County Schools, Hickory City Schools and Newton-Conover City Schools, as well as twelve (12) private schools. In all, there are forty-five (45) public schools within the County that enroll just over 24,500 students.

Catawba County has also placed an emphasis and focus on higher education, with the development of the Appalachian State University Center at Hickory. The Center is a collaborative effort between Appalachian State University and Catawba County's two (2) existing higher education institutions, Lenoir-Rhyne University and Catawba Valley Community College.



In addition, the new North Carolina Center for Engineering Technologies provides facilities for applied research in engineering related fields and serves as a conduit to baccalaureate education delivered by the University of North Carolina system of schools. Notable colleges and universities nearby also include North Carolina State University, Wake Forest University, UNC Greensboro, Western Carolina University, Appalachian State University, UNC Charlotte, and Gardner-Webb University.

## Medical Care

Catawba County serves as a regional medical center and has two (2) outstanding hospitals, Catawba Valley Medical Center, which is County-owned and Frye Regional Medical Center.



## Transportation

Catawba County's proximity to interstate highways makes the County a prime location for business. Interstate 40 runs east to west through the County, providing access to Asheville to the west and the Research Triangle to the east and Interstate 77 lies approximately 20 minutes to the east providing easy access to Charlotte and points north. In addition, Highway 321 runs through Catawba County and gives convenient access to key travel routes. Air travel is provided through two (2) major airports, both within a reasonable drive, Charlotte Douglas International Airport (49 miles away) and Piedmont Triad International Airport (Greensboro) (89 miles away), with each offering hundreds of domestic and international flights daily.



## Recreation, Entertainment and Leisure

Hickory Motor Speedway, dubbed the 'Birthplace of the NASCAR Stars', is located in Hickory and has several racing events each year. In addition, the Hickory Crawdads, a Class-A affiliate team of the Texas Rangers, attracts thousands of fans each season. Other popular cultural and science related offerings in the County include the Western Piedmont Symphony, Green Room Community Theater, Historical Association of Catawba County, Catawba Science Center, and the Hickory Museum of Art. Catawba is also home to many faith-based churches and organizations which are spread throughout the County. The Hickory Community Theatre is the oldest community theater in North Carolina.

For outdoor enthusiasts there are numerous parks such as Bakers Mountain Park and Riverbend Park spread throughout the County, and three lakes: Lake Hickory, Lake Lookout Shoals and Lake Norman—the largest manmade lake in North Carolina, all offer numerous opportunities for recreation and leisure activities.



## The Catawba County Governmental Organization

Catawba County operates under a county manager form of government, with a five (5) member Board of Commissioners elected on an at-large basis to staggered four year terms.

Catawba County has traditionally balanced fiscal conservatism and innovation, which is reflected in Catawba’s lower tax rates and budget. For FY 2015-16, the County is operating with a budget of \$235.5 million and a property tax rate of \$0.575 per \$100 valuation. In addition the County holds a AA+ Bond rating and maintains a workforce of 1,124 full-time equivalent employees. Catawba County operates with a wide range of departments which provide high quality services to its citizens including Public Health, Emergency Medical and Management Services, the Sheriff’s Department, Social Services, Planning and Parks, Libraries, Utilities and Engineering (including maintenance of a County-run landfill), Fire Inspections and Rescue, Animal Services, Register of Deeds, Tax Administration and Elections.

Constantly looking to the future, the County opened two new buildings in 2014 to better serve the citizens of the County. In July, a new Leadership in

Energy and Design (LEED) certified Animal Shelter was opened in Newton and houses both the County’s Animal Control Services and the Humane Society in a collaborative effort designed to enhance services to citizens. In September, a new LEED certified Library in the vibrant and fast growing Sherrills Ford community in southern Catawba County was opened. Currently the County is involved in a \$42 million expansion of its Justice Center/Public Safety Complex to meet the needs of a growing emergency services, court and jail system.

Catawba County maintains a strong focus on progress and innovation. The Public Health Farmers’ Market received the highest national honor for innovation in local government from the Alliance for Innovation in 2015. The on-site weekly Farmers’ Market is designed to improve community health by increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables, with a focus on Women, Infants and Children program recipients. Additionally, the Child Wellbeing Project and the Regional EcoComplex and Resource Recovery Facility were recognized by Harvard University’s Ash Center with the Democratic Governance and Innovation “Bright Ideas” Award in 2015.

## The County Manager’s Position

The County Manager serves as the chief administrator for Catawba’s governmental structure and is responsible to the Board of Commissioners. Catawba was among the earliest North Carolina counties to adopt the council/manager form of government, hiring its first County Manager in 1937, so there is a long tradition of using the council-manager plan.

The duties of the County Manager include supervising the employees or agents of the County, except those elected by the people or whose appointment is otherwise provided by law; supervision of all county departments, boards, commissions and agencies under the general control of the Board of Commissioners; preparation and submission of annual budget; and any other

reports and duties required or authorized by the Board of Commissioners. In addition, the County Manager works directly with the Board of Commissioners and has liaison responsibilities with Catawba’s three (3) public school systems and the Catawba Valley Community College, Catawba Valley Medical Center and the Catawba County Economic Development Corporation as well as the County Attorney, the Sheriff’s Office and the Register of Deeds Office. The Catawba County Manager's Office staff is also responsible for planning and implementing the directives of the Board of Commissioners, strategically managing the various County departments and developing an annual budget. Two (2) Assistant County Managers support the County Manager.

## Catawba County, North Carolina Core Qualifications of the Ideal County Manager

### Position Requirements

Minimum requirements for the position include a Bachelor's degree in public or business administration, planning, finance or a related field, with a Master's degree in a related field highly recommended. An extensive level of public sector management experience as a manager or deputy in a comparably sized or larger city or county is also required. Past experience of qualifying candidates must demonstrate a high level of interest and successful achievement in a broad range of areas including public finance, succession planning, community building, economic and community development, working with and understanding the needs of existing businesses, building Board and community consensus, assessing organizational effectiveness and building performance based organizations. A progressive record of strong, open and visionary professional administrative leadership is an important consideration.

Candidates must also have demonstrated a high level of performance and success in working with a high functioning, engaged Board, citizens and staff to build consensus and must possess the ability to effectively work with, and challenge, well qualified and motivated department heads. Excellent communication skills are a must, including the ability to communicate with a community that encompasses urban and rural interests and represents forward-looking and creative ideas from a well-educated, diverse community. The County Manager must be willing to devote whatever time is necessary to achieve the goals and implement the programs established by the Board of Commissioners. Knowledge of how to effectively use existing community resources and strong, yet quiet leadership qualities are extremely important skills for candidates to possess. The County's present management team has all earned the ICMA Credentialed Manager designation.

### Other Necessary Skills and Experience

#### ***Board/County Manager Relations***

The County Manager must be willing to take the time and demonstrate a strong interest in working with all Board members to keep them well informed on a frequent basis and explain technical processes so that there are no surprises. The Manager must also be able to accept constructive criticism and be willing to implement needed changes while incorporating new ideas. He/she must be open and honest with the Board and be able to present well-developed proposals on issues and problems which affect the County. While conveying a sense of openness and honesty, the Manager should be able to interpret and carry out Board's policies and directives enthusiastically.

#### ***Economic Development***

Past experience for candidates must include well-developed skills in working with public and private partners in successfully planning, initiating and completing a wide range of sustainable economic development projects and building a sound economic base in both an urban and rural setting, all within the framework of a strong land-use plan and environmental ethic.

#### ***Budget and Finance***

Successful candidates should have prior experience in managing a county or public sector budget with comparable complexity to Catawba County's budget with emphasis on efficient utilization of resources. Candidates must also be able to develop a budget that is "transparent" and well understood by elected officials, citizens and staff, and targets the use of limited resources in a well thought-out and prioritized manner guided by the Board of Commissioners. He/she must have considerable knowledge and the ability to manage development of a realistic capital plan while managing long-term debt. In addition, candidates must have knowledge of the value of performance measurement tools and their applicability in improving public sector operations.

#### ***Community Relations***

Candidates must be willing to engage the greater Catawba County community and present a confident, open image of local government to the public and private sector while balancing an ever-changing daily workload.

### ***Intergovernmental Relations***

Must demonstrate an ability to understand, value and collaborate with and encourage partnerships with local governments within the County and neighboring jurisdictions. Candidates must also be able to represent the County, when needed, with a wide range of public organizations and maintain and enhance partnerships with regional bodies and state and federal agencies.

### ***Environmental Protection and Sustainability***

Successful candidates should have a demonstrated commitment to the protection of environmental resources, consistent with the strong environmental ethic of the community. The candidate should have

prior knowledge and experience in the areas of environmental protection and sustainability.

### ***Human Resources Management***

Candidates must demonstrate a personality that can communicate the Board of Commissioners' human resources goals, policies and practices to department heads and employees. The candidate must be willing to address personnel issues fairly and consistently while motivating staff to ensure that their performance continually improves. Candidate must have knowledge and experience in maintaining and improving a high level of customer service for the County's residents.

## **Personal Traits for Successful Candidates**

- ❖ Passionate about a leadership role in local government and Catawba County.
- ❖ Unbiased and tolerant in dealing with individuals, highly ethical with well-honed moral standards, honest, trustworthy, open and candid.
- ❖ Team oriented, forward looking leader of staff, self-confident, tactful, discreet and diplomatic.
- ❖ Works well under pressure.
- ❖ Accessible, approachable and comfortable with a wide range of personalities.
- ❖ Apolitical.
- ❖ Well-versed in the technical aspects of governance in North Carolina and Catawba County.
- ❖ Good listener, responsive to concerns of the Board of Commissioners, residents and staff.
- ❖ Able to demonstrate compassion in addressing problems, humility in dealing with successes, and a commitment to producing good outcomes.
- ❖ Proactive in dealing with issues; decisive in actions while employing common sense.
- ❖ Personable with a good sense of humor.
- ❖ Patient in dealing with others.

### **Compensation and Benefits**

The salary for the position is negotiable dependent upon the candidate's qualifications and experience. The County offers an excellent benefits package including but not limited to participation in the North Carolina Local Government Employee's Retirement System (LGERS), vacation and sick leave, group life insurance, medical and dental insurance, professional dues and conference expenses.

### **Application and Selection Process**

The application deadline is **February 18, 2016**. To be considered, please submit your cover letter, résumé with salary history and five (5) professional references online by visiting our website, <https://waters-company.recruitmenthome.com/>.

Following the filing date, résumés will be screened by Waters & Company based on the criteria established by Catawba County. The County will review recommended candidates who most closely meet the established criteria and finalists should be interviewed in Catawba in March 2016. For more information, please contact John Anzivino at [richmond@waters-company.com](mailto:richmond@waters-company.com).

*Catawba County is an Equal Opportunity Employer.*