

# YOUR Membership at Work


## OUR VISION

Everyone who does business or lives in Union County enjoys a thriving local economy and excellent quality of life.

## OUR MISSION

We champion business growth and business prosperity throughout Union County.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



This year, Make It In Union County was re-vamped with a new, modern logo and website and had 1,393 students participate. While Make It In Union County focuses on local manufacturing opportunities, the Middle School Speakers Bureau exists to teach students about local careers through hands-on presentations. This year it was expanded to include 5 middle schools reaching even more students. Now, over the course of 2 years, speakers will visit all UCPS middle schools.

Each year, YOUR Chamber partners with South Piedmont Community College, NC Works, Union County Public Schools and Centralina Workforce Development Board to host an annual Job Fair. This year's Job Fair, hosted in April, had more than 550 applicants attend. Attendees learned more about open positions at over 80 local businesses and organizations. Community partners also had booths set up to help with resumes, and with information on childcare and transportation services.

## ADVOCATING FOR A THRIVING COMMUNITY

YOUR Chamber successfully advocated for changes to proposed transportation sales tax legislation. House Bill 948 authorized a sales tax referendum in Mecklenburg County. The Chamber voiced concerns about its broader regional impact. The Board of Directors signed a resolution urging lawmakers to consider how the influx of local funding could give Mecklenburg County a competitive edge in state funding decisions, at the expense of projects in Union County. The bill passed, but the language was altered in a way that addressed the Chamber's concerns.

Roads and transportation funding took center stage during the 2nd quarter. In May, we partnered with NC Go! for a Public Policy Luncheon. Speakers Tony Lathrop – NCDOT Board Chair, Brett Canipe – NCDOT Div. 10 Engineer, and Marc Finlayson – NC Go! Chair provided a deep dive into the road funding process. They highlighted the critical infrastructure needs in our region, along with the steps necessary to secure funding for these vital projects.



## CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL



The Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Committee partnered with Union County Human Resources Association on their annual spring conference. The focus this year was on recruiting, hiring, and retaining individuals with developmental disabilities.

Over 100 Small Businesses were represented at the 2025 Small Business Summit. We hosted the summit in partnership with the Small Business Center at South Piedmont Community College and the Women's Business Center of Charlotte. The theme was "Scaling Smart" and included targeted presentations focused on providing information to help businesses thrive.

We partnered with the City of Monroe to host the 15th Annual Groundhog Day Economic Forum on February 4 at the historic Dowd Center Theatre. The event brought together over 200 business and community leaders.

## CLAYTON WHITSON, IOM ANNOUNCED AS NEW PRESIDENT/CEO

After an extensive nationwide search, the Union County Chamber announced that Clayton Whitson, IOM, was selected as its next president/CEO. He will officially begin his role on January 5, 2026.

Clayton brings a unique blend of strategic leadership, hands-on public service, and a deep commitment to strengthening communities. He currently serves as president and CEO of the Madison County Chamber in Anderson, Indiana. Since 2020, he has guided strategic initiatives that helped expand economic development, strengthen advocacy efforts, and foster collaboration across the county.

"I'm incredibly honored to step into the role of president/CEO of the Union County Chamber," Whitson shared. "I'm excited to partner with the board, members, volunteers, and staff to strengthen the organization, champion local businesses, and promote continued growth and prosperity."



## BY THE NUMBERS

**505,307**

Member directory page views. This includes 7,720 click-throughs directly to member websites.



**171,420**

Page views on UnionCountyCoC.com. Top pages: home page, events listing, member directory, & job opportunities.



**18,744**

Followers on chamber social pages. New member posts and ribbon cuttings get the highest engagement.



**\$298,139**

Amount of money spent by YOUR Chamber with chamber members in the past 12 months.



**3,196**

Students reached by Make It In Union County and the Middle School Speakers Bureau - exposing students to local careers.



**200+**

Events in 2025. We are continuously evaluating our events and what matters most to our members.

## MEMBERSHIP STATS

**95**

2025 New Members

**14**

Champion Investors

**561**

Total Members

**457**

Small Businesses (less than 50 employees)

**80%**

Increase in Ribbon Cuttings

**120**

Members for 20+ years

## MILESTONES

### JANUARY

Launched the Small Business Alliance, to connect business owners and help them grow.

### FEBRUARY

Robust new-member onboarding completed to inform new members throughout their first year.

### APRIL

The first Eric Dixon Scholarship was awarded to an SPCC student studying Construction Management Technology.

### JUNE

Pat Kahle, IOM, retired after serving as president/CEO for 11 years.

### SEPTEMBER

Expanded Middle School Speakers Bureau to 5 Union County Public Schools.

### NOVEMBER

Amcor presented the Inaugural Spirit of Union County Award.

Clayton Whitson, IOM named as the next president/CEO of YOUR Union County Chamber.