

Hickory, North Carolina
BrandPrint Final Report
August 11, 2011



Life. Well Crafted.



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ABOUT NORTH STAR DESTINATION STRATEGIES

North Star Destination Strategies comprises over two dozen talented individuals dedicated to growing community brands through integrated marketing solutions. North Star offers communities a combination of research, strategy, creativity and action. This process – called Community BrandPrint – provides direction for the community's brand development, like a blueprint guides the construction of a home. And just like a blueprint, the priorities and targets of each Community BrandPrint are stated in clear and unambiguous language. The resulting brand personality is as revealing as an individual's fingerprint, and just as unique.

ABOUT THE BRANDPRINT PROCESS

Through the Community BrandPrint process, North Star determines Hickory's most relevant and distinct promise. From that promise, we create a strategic platform intended to generate a brand position in the minds of residents, visitors and businesses. We then develop powerful Brand Action Ideas and a Brand Identity Package (creative expressions), all of which reinforce the positioning and ensure brand equity and growth.

This process is divided into four stages: Understanding, Insights, Imagination and Evaluation.

BRANDING PARTNERS:

The City of Hickory contracted with North Star Destination Strategies to determine and define the area's true, unique and relevant destination brand position to stand out in the marketplace. City staff led Hickory's branding efforts on behalf of a broad group of Hickory-area interests including the Hickory Metro Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Catawba County Economic Development Corporation and the Hickory Business Development Committee. The Executive Summary represents a snapshot of the critical highlights from the BrandPrint process. Detailed findings are compiled in the Final BrandPrint report that follows.

◀ UNDERSTANDING (*Research findings*):

North Star conducted more than a dozen pieces of research to identify what differentiates Hickory from its competitors when it comes to. By examining the community (stakeholders), consumers (visitors, regional and state tourism and economic development officials) and the competition (neighboring communities), North Star determined a strategy for Hickory to assert across all community assets to implement an effective, meaningful and relevant brand.

Important findings are summarized in a SWOT analysis.

STRENGTHS: Most-often mentioned strengths throughout North Star's research

- **Furniture industry:** Furniture is an undeniable building block in Hickory's growth and maturity as a city and is still important today both as an industry and a tourist draw. Outsiders tend to know about Hickory because of its furniture industry and continue to associate the two with one another.
- **Location:** Just one hour from Charlotte or Asheville, Hickory is close enough for residents to enjoy the amenities of these bigger cities; but it is just far enough away to allow Hickory to be the hub of its own region.
- **Resilience:** A "strong cultural toughness" as one interviewee stated, is a pervasive attribute of the city. Despite trying economic times, Hickory residents and business-owners retain a "let's get to it" attitude.
- **Cooperation:** There is a collective spirit that seems to bind Hickory residents and organizations to work together to achieve common goals, whether they be school improvement or attaining the All-American City designation.
- **Natural beauty:** Hickory's location at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains makes for a picturesque setting for residents and visitors alike to enjoy.
- **Arts and culture:** SALT Block is the cornerstone of Hickory's robust fine arts and cultural scene that is surprisingly active and diverse for a community of Hickory's size.
- **Downtown/Union Square:** Home to many unique shops and restaurants the downtown area is also host to events like Farmers Markets, the Art Crawl, Oktoberfest and others that draw from neighboring counties and beyond.

- **Quality of life:** Good parks and recreation, a small-town atmosphere, big box retail and strong healthcare systems offer residents an overall high quality of life.
- **Higher education:** Lenoir-Rhyne University, Catawba Valley Community College and a satellite campus for Appalachian State University are all seen as important community assets.

WEAKNESSES: Most-often mentioned weaknesses throughout North Star's research

- **Furniture industry decline/association:** In recent years, many furniture industry jobs have gone overseas and are unlikely to return. Additionally, the reputation of Hickory as the home of furniture makes it difficult for the city to talk about itself to outsiders in terms of anything else.
- **Unemployment:** Beyond the furniture industry, Hickory has also shed many jobs in fiber optics and other manufacturing. These blows have left Hickory with a higher unemployment rate than the national average.
- **Blight/Entryway blight:** The community is dotted with old and abandoned property and warehouses. Many of these unkempt areas are near major Hickory entry points. These visuals can give business prospects the impression that Hickory is worse off than it actually is.
- **Confusing street system:** Street names are repetitive and require knowledge of Hickory's designated quadrants to navigate. Most stakeholders agree the system is confusing, but that it is too costly to overhaul.
- **K-12 education:** The three school systems which operate within Hickory produce redundancy, waste and confusion. Additionally, schools are seen as average or even slightly-below average.
- **Downtown development:** Stakeholders and residents agree that the downtown area needs to be given attention and priority so that it may flourish. But not everyone agrees on what kinds of businesses should be recruited.
- **Socioeconomic challenges:** Pockets of poverty exist throughout Hickory causing some residents to feel disenfranchised.

OPPORTUNITIES: Most-often mentioned opportunities throughout North Star's research

- **Economic development:** Residents and stakeholders are upbeat about Hickory's future and are quick to mention economic development programs as a major source of opportunity for the city.
- **Labor pool development:** Manufacturing workers who have remained in Hickory through the recession will need to be retrained in other skills before they can return to the workforce. Worker retraining represents an opportunity for Hickory to restart itself, and be strategic about the types of industry it would like to attract in the future.
- **Downtown:** Downtown's best days may be ahead according to residents and outsiders. Making more of Hickory's events, adding a hotel, continuing revitalization efforts, better signage and recruiting complementary businesses were all mentioned as opportunities for downtown moving forward.

- **Marketing and promotion:** There is excitement around this BrandPrint process, and stakeholders are eager to move forward with a well-researched message in the marketplace.
- **Partnerships and collaboration:** Great value is placed on well-formed city partnerships. Opportunities are seen in strengthening current bonds while seeking to add new ones throughout the Unifour area.
- **Tourism:** The Hickory Convention Center and CVB staff are well-regarded by past visitors and collaborators. Many opportunities were mentioned for growing tourism in the future including a better packaging of tourism assets, Convention Center updates and/or expansions, and furniture-related product development.
- **Location:** Hickory's location is seen as an asset to be leveraged more to potential businesses and visitors.

THREATS: Most-often mentioned threats throughout North Star's research.

- **Competition:** Hickory's competition, particularly Asheville and Charlotte, are more vocal and better-known than Hickory. The city will need to play up those assets which are most unique and focus on attracting those who would most appreciate Hickory's culture and amenities
- **Collaboration of organizations:** County government, city leadership, and county and city organizations will all need to buy in to the city's new brand in order for it to reach its full potential. Without collaboration, the brand can fall through the cracks.
- **Reputation management:** An uncontrolled message to either residents or outsiders results in off-putting – and often inaccurate – perceptions that can negatively affect the city's growth and could potentially perpetuate negative feelings amongst residents.
- **Inability to communicate to residents:** Lack of information can make citizens brand adversaries rather than advocates.

🔺 SUMMARY of INSIGHTS (Conclusions based on research)

"I describe Hickory as the former furniture capital of the world."

This sentiment permeated North Star's research. Hickory is known for furniture both inside and out, and the correlation is inescapable in people's minds. But as many industry jobs were lost, most likely never to return, due to the economic downturn, residents worry that the furniture label Hickory bears has become not applicable at best and a negative at worst.

But North Star research revealed that like the tree, the City of Hickory is best characterized as strong, tough and also lovely. These are descriptors not at all at odds with a furniture reputation.

With a strong location between Charlotte and Asheville, a sturdy utility as the hub for the "Unifour" region, and a tough cultural resilience due to a resolute work-ethic, Hickory has all of the elements of a strong community foundation. And Hickory's softer side, its lovely collective positive outlook and history of cooperation, emphasis on arts and culture and commitment to

resident amenities and city improvements make Hickory a well-rounded, well-built, **well-crafted** community.

There is an inherent skill, quality and artistry in the things the city and residents do to continually make Hickory a better place. This collective spirit of craftsmanship is what makes Hickory so special and unique. Other communities might be as tough or strong and may cooperate well, but none has the combination of these attributes that Hickory does. And none has the craftsmanship attitude to take that raw material and make it into a high-quality community.

🔺 **STRATEGIC BRAND PLATFORM:**

North Star funnels these strategic insights for the brand into a single sentence, the brand platform. The brand platform is used as a filter for the formation of creative concepts and implementation initiatives. All communications, actions and product development should connect to the essence of this relevant and defining statement.

<i>Target Audience:</i>	For doers and makers seeking a well-rounded community
<i>Frame of Reference:</i>	Hickory is a bridge between Asheville and Charlotte at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains along I-40
<i>Point-of-Difference:</i>	where a collective spirit of craftsmanship
<i>Benefit:</i>	strengthens any endeavor with detail, artistry and quality.

◀ **IMAGINATION (Creative Ideas for Building the Brand):**

The brand platform serves as a guide for the positioning of the Hickory brand. From this statement, a creative concept is born; a concept that aligns creative treatments of the brand in a variety of communication mediums and action ideas.

The creative concept developed by North Star is based on the approved brand platform positioning Hickory a community of collective craftsmanship where attention to detail, pride in precision and careful thought followed by decisive action are revered. Craftsmen hand down their craft generation to generation, teaching slowly over time. Hickory passes down its culture to each new resident, business and visitor, and in time, each of those individuals contribute back to shaping and refining this lovely community.

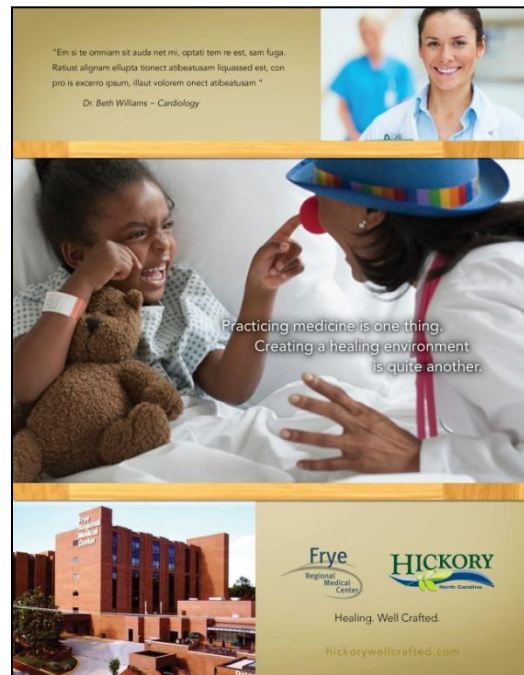
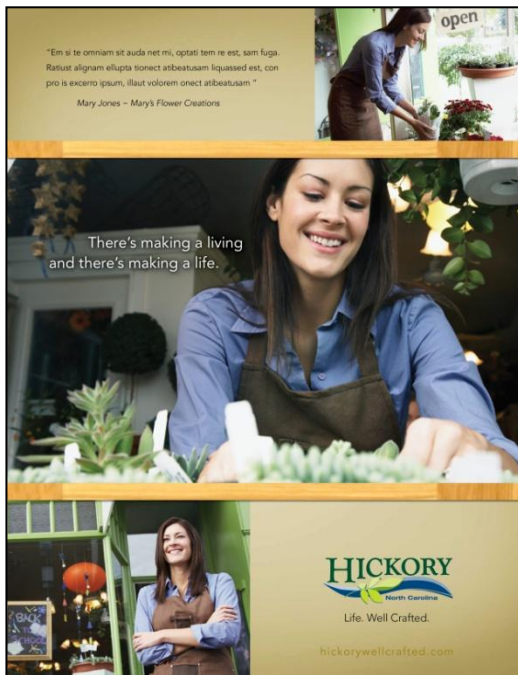
The concept draws inspiration from the idea that craftsmanship is more than a way of doing something. It's a way of seeing, being and creating anew. It's about the individual doers and makers who have harnessed Hickory's resources and their own talents to make a community rich in both tradition and promise. Visuals take cues from these themes – profiling “craftspeople” using their tools – whether a spade or an espresso machine – as they work at their craft. Warm, natural colors of blues, greens and browns play off the city's combination of strength and beauty. The result is an inviting, authentic product showcasing Hickory's artistry and fortitude in equal measure.

LOGO & STRAPLINE

“Life. Well Crafted.”



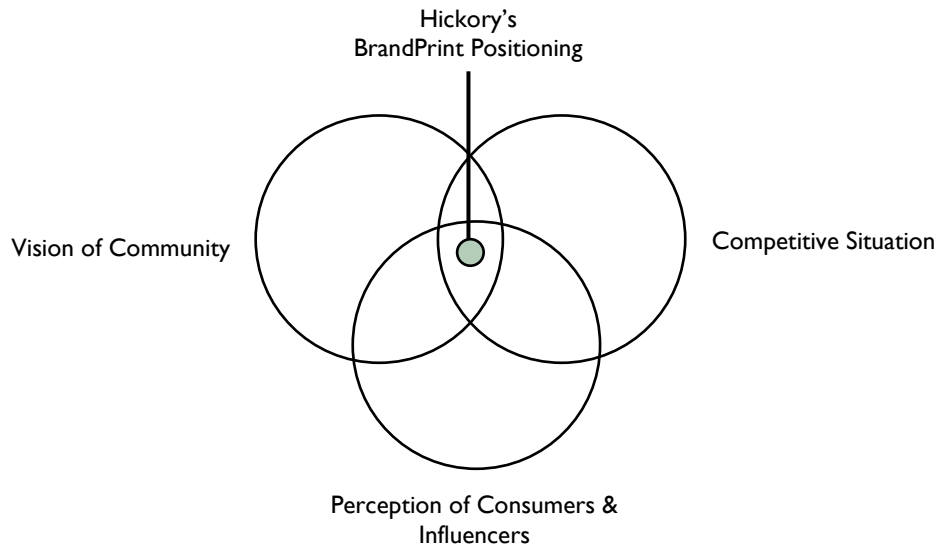
SAMPLE CREATIVE DELIVERABLES



WHERE THE BRAND HAS BEEN AND WHY

This stage addresses the community’s current brand positioning. We assess the environment; demographics and psychographics of residents; perceptions of visitors, residents and stakeholders; current communications and the competition. Most importantly, we gather input from Hickory and its constituents.

We are looking for current attitudes regarding the brand. We are also trying to spot behavioral trends that exist around that brand. This stage is critical because it uncovers the relationship between three factors: the community's physical qualities, communication materials and the position the community holds in the minds of its consumers.



IN-MARKET STUDY

Purpose

The purpose of the In-Market Study is to gain understanding of the perceptions and attitudes of Hickory residents and stakeholders towards their community and to experience first-hand what makes it a unique destination for visitors, residents and businesses.

Methodology & Results

The following summary reflects observations and input received during the North Star Destination Strategies In-Market visit from November 9-12, 2010. The information is not meant to be all-inclusive, but rather highlight the most common themes experienced on the trip. This includes an area FAM tour, stakeholder focus groups, stakeholder one-on-one interviews and local community one-on-one perception interviews.

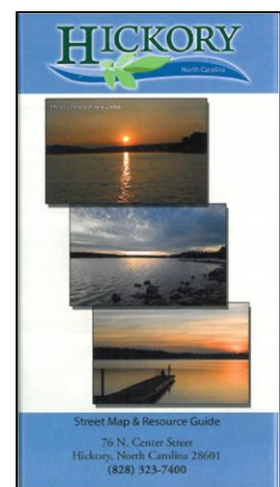


MATERIALS REVIEWED:

As part of the Research & Materials Audit, prior to the In-Market Study

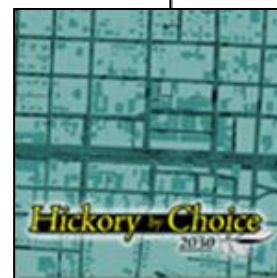
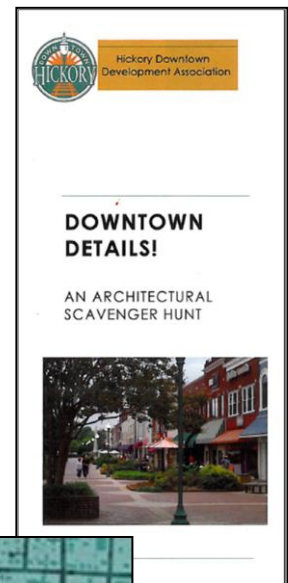
Conventions and Visitors Bureau

- Various Hickory CVB merchandise
- Welcome to the Hickory Metro Area map
- 2010-2011 Action Plan Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority
- Tourism Spending and Its Impact in Catawba County Report
- Analysis of Catawba County Hotel Property and Visitor Related Taxes Report
- Hickory CVB Advertisement in NC Magazine
- Greater Hickory Metro NC Official Visitors Guide
- Greater Hickory Metro NC Meeting Planners Guide
- Spring Events in Hickory Metro (2010)
- Executive Summary Report (July 2010)
- Association Executives / Meeting Planners list
- 2009 Visitor Center Tracking information
- Hickory Street Map and Tourism Guide



City government

- Hickory merchandise
- Hickory Highlights (2009)
- City of Hickory by Choice 2030 Land Development Code
- City of Hickory All America City CD (2007)
- Citizens Guide to City Services
- Street Map and Resource Guide
- Leisure Pursuits Hickory Parks and Recreation
- Hickory Public Library “Your Community Center”
- City of Hickory Redevelopment Program information
- City of Hickory “Hickory by Choice 2030” Planning and Development Department
- City Snippets (Oct. 2010)
- City of Hickory Brownfield’s Redevelopment Newsletter (Summer 2010)
- Area Demographics from the 2000 Census and 2007 estimates
- Downtown Hickory brochure
- Downtown Hickory:
 - 2010 Budget sheets
 - Marketing and advertising 2010 Calendar of Events
 - HDDA Plan of Work 2010



Economic development

- The Catawba County, NC Area Labor Availability Report (Feb. 2007)
- Catawba County EDC Business Retention and Expansion Program
- Catawba County EDC 2010 Plan of Work Summary
- Business Images Catawba County
- Charlotte USA Economic Development Guide
- Catawba County EDC Data Center Sites
- Catawba County EDC Customer Service Centers
- Catawba County EDC Information sheet and statistics
- Catawba County EDC Workforce Fact book
- Catawba County EDC Business and Industry
- Catawba County EDC Quality of Life
- ECD Data center info

Chamber of Commerce

- Catawba County Street and road map

Arts

- Arts, Sciences, History brochure
- Hickory Museum of Art Current Exhibitions flyer
- The SALT Block Foundation flyer
- Hickory Choral Society brochure
- Hickory Public Library brochure
- Hickory Landmarks Society brochure
- Western Piedmont Symphony announcement
- Join the Hickory Museum of Art brochure



- Western Piedmont Symphony brochure
- Hickory Community Theater 2010-2011 season
- Science After Dark (2010-2011)
- Catawba Science Center
- Hickory Museum of Art Galleria
- Holiday Snow Village 2010 Festival of Trees
- Catawba Valley Pottery and Antiques Festival
- The Caroline Moonlighters Barbershop Harmony Society
- Annual Report United Arts Council of Catawba County (2009-2010)
- Art Beat Catawba County (Oct-Nov 2010)



The following represents information and feedback gathered during North Star’s In-Market visit.

MOST-MENTIONED ASSETS:

Location

- Centrally located
- Hub of region– center of 4th largest MSA in state
- Access to Asheville, Charlotte, and Boone (Hunting, hiking, skiing, big city, etc.).

Furniture industry

- Still a source of pride and cannot be denied as a building block for Hickory.
- Hickory Furniture Mart and Catawba Furniture Mall – major tourism draws.



Neighborhoods

- Neighborhood districts are authentic
- Residents take great pride and ownership in maintaining their neighborhoods
- Many of the neighborhoods are historic
- Neighborhoods close to the downtown allows for some comfortable walkability
- Good variety and quality of housing stock.

Culture and the Arts

- SALT Block – Science, Art, Literature Together
- Catawba Science Center – Planetarium, interactive museum
- Hickory Museum of Art – rotating exhibits, art classes, permanent local art exhibits, event space
- Hickory Public Library
- Many arts organizations have offices here
- Point of pride for the community
- Tourism draw for families and school groups.



“Medical Mile” – Tate Boulevard

- Catawba Valley Medical Center
- Frye Regional Medical Center
- Many doctors’ offices, physical therapy, rehab, medical suppliers, etc. in conjunction with the hospitals form a building block of Hickory’s economy.



Higher education opportunities

- Catawba Valley Community College – working to create innovative programs.
Work with hospitals and are currently working with ECD for workforce development programs
- Lenoir-Rhyne University – Four year private liberal arts university. Very involved in community. Great performing arts. Positive relationships between University and City leadership
- Appalachia State University satellite campus.

Downtown

- Scenic Union Square is centerpiece
- Shops, dining, pubs and square used for Farmers Markets and community events like Oktoberfest, Hickory Alive!, tree lighting, Art Crawl.
- Olde Hickory Tap Room – live music.



Community Assets

- Valley Hills Mall and all major big box retail
- Hickory Regional Airport
- Hickory Crawdads baseball team
- Good parks, recreation center, YMCA
- Natural beauty/setting – foot of Blue Ridge Mountains and just 20 minutes from Blue Ridge Parkway
- Lake Hickory - with 100 miles of shoreline and recreation like swimming, canoeing boating and more
- Hickory Convention Center
- Small-town atmosphere
- Community-and family-focused, safe
- Citizens – positive attitude, entrepreneurial
- Strong work ethic
- Willing to work together – cooperation starting with “Miracle of Hickory” to modern-day collaborations between different city-wide and county-wide entities
- Industrial buildings and land available
- Hickory Community Theater.



MOST-MENTIONED CHALLENGES:

Gorilla in the room

- Furniture industry overshadows everything. Residents and outsiders can’t get past how the industry has shrunk
- *“Residents are a little down. We are all in retreat mode. We were just hard hit by the economy.”*

Unemployment

- “Unemployment has stayed steady around 11% for the past couple of years. Everyone seems to understand the manufacturing jobs lost will not be returning.”

Economic development

- Lack of industry, jobs
- Attracting industry that suits community/workforce
- Brain drain, attracting and keeping youth
- City permitting process is seen as having too much “bureaucratic red tape.”

Workforce no longer adequate

- Citizenry was largely made of high school graduates that were skilled in furniture making. Many of these workers will need further education to get a new job.

K-12 Education

- Three school systems operate within Hickory causing redundancy and confusion
- All three are seen as average, not quite excellent.

Some community fragmentation

- Community does have racial, socio-economic fragments and pockets of poverty
- Lingering bitterness over closed city swimming pool
- African-American community doesn’t always feel connected to the community at large.

Business development downtown

- Undercover interviews revealed a disconnect with the residents and the opportunities to shop downtown. A couple of local business owners voiced some concern in the amount of customers they have, especially after dark
- There is a bit of dissention with downtown. Some people think it needs more shopping, others think it needs more restaurants and bars more places like the Tap Room
- Signage directing visitors downtown could be improved
- Parking is an issue.

Street naming/roadway system

- Most agree that it is confusing and a hassle, but it is seen as too costly to overhaul.

Entryway blight/confusion

- Numerous entrances to the city make it difficult for city to give visitors a strong impression upon arrival. How do you decide which entryway to revitalize first?
- Many entryways are blighted with old, vacant buildings and property.

Aesthetics

- Empty storefronts and buildings in downtown area and on entry roadways
- Gateways into town are unattractive and not well-marked
- An overabundance of empty factory/warehouse-type buildings.

Strong competition

- Within the one hour radius there is Asheville, Boone and Charlotte.



MOST-MENTIONED OPPORTUNITIES:

Economic Development

- Might be able to position the city as an entrepreneurial/small business center
- Could consider a small-business incubator
- Continue focusing on data centers, high-tech and information-based industries
- Continue and increase collaboration with local Community College and University, especially when it comes to redeveloping the labor pool.



Downtown

- Awareness campaign about what the locals can do for the local economy downtown
- Keep up recruitment and revitalization efforts and communicate successes to residents
- Build hotels near downtown, do more to promote downtown to overnight guests
- Signs that direct to downtown from different directions.

Blight/empty buildings and warehouses

- Educate buyers on alternative uses for manufacturing buildings
- Continue promoting unused buildings through ECD as opportunities
- Work with a community foundation to start buying and renovating some of the more prominently-seen properties.

Marketing, promotion and image enhancement

- *“Don’t let the rebranding sit on a shelf. Need to get Hickory out there again.”*

Grow the University and College

- Continue to increase collaboration among these entities, local businesses and city government.

Capitalize on health care industry

Focus on Youth

- College discount downtown to drive more Lenoir-Rhyne kids to the area
- Create opportunities for young people to stay in Hickory – mentoring and apprenticeship-like programs, incubators.



Culture and the Arts

- Culture and arts will continue to be a huge opportunity for Hickory

Events

- Hickory Alive, Oktoberfest, International Fest, all should be utilized to capture the huge turnout they seem to attract

Better signage and wayfinding system

- To combat difficult street naming system

Continue being a leader in the region

- Especially in areas such as green practices, tech innovation and community services.

STAKEHOLDER VISION SURVEY

Purpose

Part of the Understanding stage includes collecting stakeholder perceptions of Hickory. What do stakeholders like and dislike about their community? How would they make it better? What kind of things do they associate with Hickory? After all, no one knows your city better than those that form its backbone.

Methodology & Results

To understand stakeholder perceptions, a Vision Survey was emailed to key stakeholders in the community, identified by the brand drivers. All questions were open-ended, allowing for a qualitative measure of stakeholder perceptions. Many of the questions in the survey focused on Hickory's direct strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Other questions focused on brand perception, allowing the respondent to translate the intangible elements of a brand into a tangible noun.

95 stakeholders responded to the survey. The answers most reflective of all stakeholders are shown below.

Please see **Appendix A** for a copy of the Stakeholder Vision Survey and the unabridged results from that survey.

Hickory Vision Survey

2. General Perceptions

1. When you first think of Hickory, which three words come to mind?

2. Describe Hickory to someone who has never heard of it before.

3. What in/about Hickory currently attracts most...
Residents
Visitors
Businesses

4. List one place in Hickory where you would take a visitor so they would always remember their visit (i.e. an attraction, restaurant, or place to see something memorable).

5. What is Hickory's single greatest asset?

6. What are the biggest challenges currently facing Hickory?

Stakeholder Vision Survey

DESCRIBING HICKORY:

When you first think of Hickory, which three words come to mind?

- Furniture
- Home/family-oriented
- Cable/fiber-optics.



Describe Hickory to someone who has never heard of it before.

- “Big city without the big city traffic or crime. We have true big time quality of life. Great schools, great arts, great mild four season climate. Home/family oriented.”
- “A progressive college town that serves as the cultural, retail, and restaurant hub of this part of North Carolina that offers many of the amenities of a larger city in a smaller town setting. On a clear day you can see the Blue Ridge mountains from many parts of Hickory.”

How would outsiders (residents in other parts of the state) describe Hickory?

- High unemployment
- Confusing traffic system
- Furniture
- Great people, friendly.

ATTRACTING PEOPLE TO HICKORY:

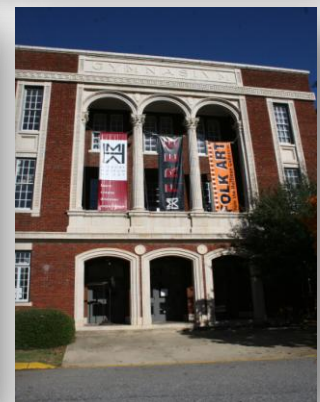
List one place in Hickory where you would take a visitor so they would always remember their visit (i.e. an attraction, restaurant, or place to see something memorable).

- Salt Block
- Union Square
- Lake Hickory.



What in/about Hickory attracts most...

- Residents
 - Arts and culture
 - Quality of life
 - Climate.
- Visitors
 - Furniture history/furniture shopping
 - Location
 - Shopping/dining.
- Businesses
 - Workforce availability and cost
 - Affordable cost of business
 - Location and access.



ASSETS AND CHALLENGES:

What is Hickory's single greatest asset?

- People/attitude
- Location
- Lenoir-Rhyne University.

What are the biggest challenges currently facing Hickory?

- Unemployment/lack of jobs
- Workforce that needs re-education/training
- General lack of growth/economy.

OPPORTUNITIES:

If you could add something to Hickory that would make a positive difference for its future, what would you add?

- A four-year public university
- Large manufacturer
- Jobs in general.



If you could subtract or remove something from Hickory that would improve its future, what would you remove?

- Empty warehouses/blight
- Negative attitudes
- Street system and names.



What are Hickory's biggest opportunities for growth?

- High-tech jobs/information-type jobs/data centers
- Attract a diversity of businesses
- Develop the labor pool.

COMPETITOR COMMUNITIES:

What is the first adjective that comes to mind when you think of the following communities?

- Asheville, NC
 - Artsy
 - Eclectic
 - Mountains/beautiful scenery.
- Greenville, SC
 - Manufacturing/industrial
 - Progressive
 - Growing.
- Greensboro, NC
 - UNCG
 - Textiles
 - Active/busy.

- Charlotte, NC
 - Banking
 - Metropolitan
 - Exciting.
- High Point, NC
 - Furniture/furniture market
 - Declining
 - Sleepy.
- Winston-Salem, NC
 - Wake Forest University
 - Historic
 - Tobacco.
- Knoxville, TN
 - Too much growth, aggressive
 - Growing, moving, progressive.

DIFFERENTIATING HICKORY:

How is Hickory different from all of the communities listed in the previous question?

- Smaller
- Great location
- Lacks economic activity.

What are you most proud of in Hickory?

- Great, hardworking people
- Arts and culture
- Lenoir Rhyne University.



What does Hickory offer (attitude, experience, business sector, etc.) that no other community in the western North Carolina area can?

- Central location
- Community-minded residents and leaders
- Quality workforce.

FUTURE OF HICKORY:

In your opinion, what would be an ideal version of Hickory in 10 years?

- A community with great employment opportunities
- Strong business culture
- Quaint, thriving town.

What would your ideal version of downtown/Union Square be 10 years from now?

- A more inviting place to eat and shop
- Better landscaping and more visually appealing
- Pedestrian access with dynamic events
- Quaint anchor stores
- An easier route to downtown needs to be established.



DOWNTOWN PERCEPTIONS:

What role does Hickory's downtown/Union Square area play in the city's identity?

- Should play an integral role in the city's identity
 - *"This should be an area of growth and should play a very important part of the city's identity. Visitors talk about how quaint and cute Hickory's downtown area is and want to come back to see more. We should expand the farmer's market, bring in more unique shops like Crushed Olive, revitalize this area more, have more music festivals and cultural events in the spring and fall."*
- Doesn't play a big role in commerce
 - *"Downtown is currently irrelevant. There is nothing there to anchor the area. If downtown is to be a shopping area, it needs anchor stores much like a mall. If downtown is to attract restaurants, there needs to be sufficient traffic to support it."*
- Needs to be promoted more.



HICKORY HERITAGE:

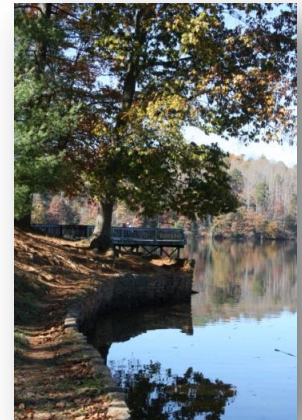
In your opinion, how has the manufacturing industry affected Hickory's past and present?

- Manufacturing was Hickory's greatest strength and now its greatest weakness.
 - *"Hickory relied on manufacturing too heavily. When those jobs left there was no plan in place to replace them and not enough diversification."*
 - *Manufacturing created the vast majority of the wealth in this community in the past but is now declining in importance leading to a mismatch between what resources we have and what we are able to do with those resources.*

BRAND PERSONALITY QUESTIONS:

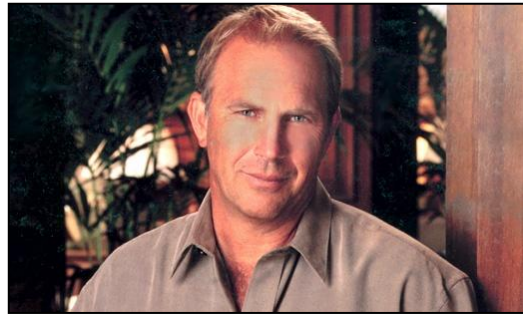
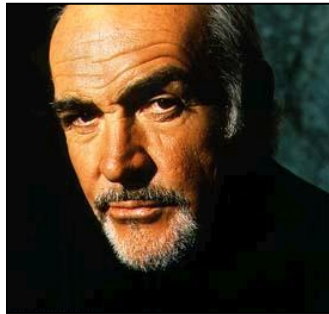
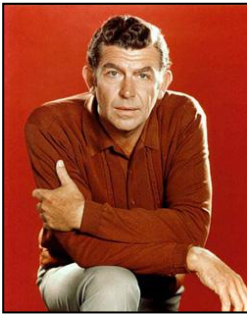
If you were to take one picture of something within Hickory that best represents the area as a whole, what would you take the picture of and why?

- SALT Block
 - *"Because it represents people coming together to support the arts and science. It is a remarkable accomplishment for the community of our size."*
- Lake Hickory
 - *"An aerial photo of our neighborhoods with a back drop of the lake and mountains. This would show how beautiful our region is and that we are family-oriented."*
- Downtown
 - *"Downtown with the train station in the photo- as this represents our history – many people came through this area on the train and may remember this- it also shows our community as alive and unique."*



If Hickory were a famous person, who would it be? Why?

- Andy Griffith
 - *“Brought humor to the floor/gave people something to think about - Has aged out but still hangs around because nobody else has taken his place.”*
- Sean Connery
 - *“Because in his prime (as James Bond) he was like Hickory was in the late 90's. Now Connery has aged, but he is still a good actor....but for how long, and for how long will Hickory be able to sustain its current status?”*
- Kevin Costner
 - *“Gets better with age, has been a huge hit with some failures, has reinvented itself, will continue to change and be successful.”*



What consumer brand product does Hickory most resemble? Why?

- Kodak
 - *“Hickory had a strong history and could theoretically leverage the recognition to find success in the future, but will have to re-tool, because its historic “products” are no longer able to drive the economics of the city.”*
- General Motors
 - *“Like GM did, we must reinvent ourselves, we must come to grips that what worked in the past does not necessarily work in the present or the future.”*
- Jack Daniels
 - *“All-American but appeals to many, many would not claim to like it in public but they all secretly do, some very loyal consumers.”*



STAKEHOLDER VISION SURVEY INSIGHT SUMMARY:

- The leaders of your community identified several pillars of your community, each working together to form promotable strengths when leveraging your new brand. Those pillars include:
 - Strong history of furniture craftsmanship that shapes the manufacturing community and continues to attract visitors/shoppers to the area
 - The SALT Block creates an excellent environment for artistic collaboration and knowledge transfer
 - Reputable educational opportunities through Lenoir-Rhyne University
 - Friendly, generous nature of Hickory's residents.
- An opportunity exists to create jobs for the large unemployment base in Hickory. The low cost of doing business, accessibility, and the new brand will continue to portray Hickory as a place to do business and execute one's dreams.

ONLINE COMMUNITY-WIDE SURVEY

Purpose

The purpose of the Online Community-wide Survey is to gain a quantitative measure of the community's perceptions of Hickory.

Methodology & Results

North Star developed an online survey based on the results of the qualitative Stakeholder Vision Survey. All questions were multiple-choice, allowing for a quantitative measure of resident perceptions. Community members were encouraged to participate after the survey was posted on city websites and publicized in local media. 445 responses were collected.

The graphs on the following pages highlight responses for each question on the corresponding survey, allowing side-by-side comparison of results.

Please refer to the Final BrandPrint CD and **Appendix B** for larger graphs and detailed lists of all "Other" responses.

Hickory Community Survey

In describing Hickory, please mark the answer you believe to be most accurate.

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being "not at all likely" and 10 being "extremely likely", would you recommend to a friend or colleague...

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Living in Hickory	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visiting Hickory	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conducting business in Hickory	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. If you had to pick one word/phrase to describe Hickory, it would be...

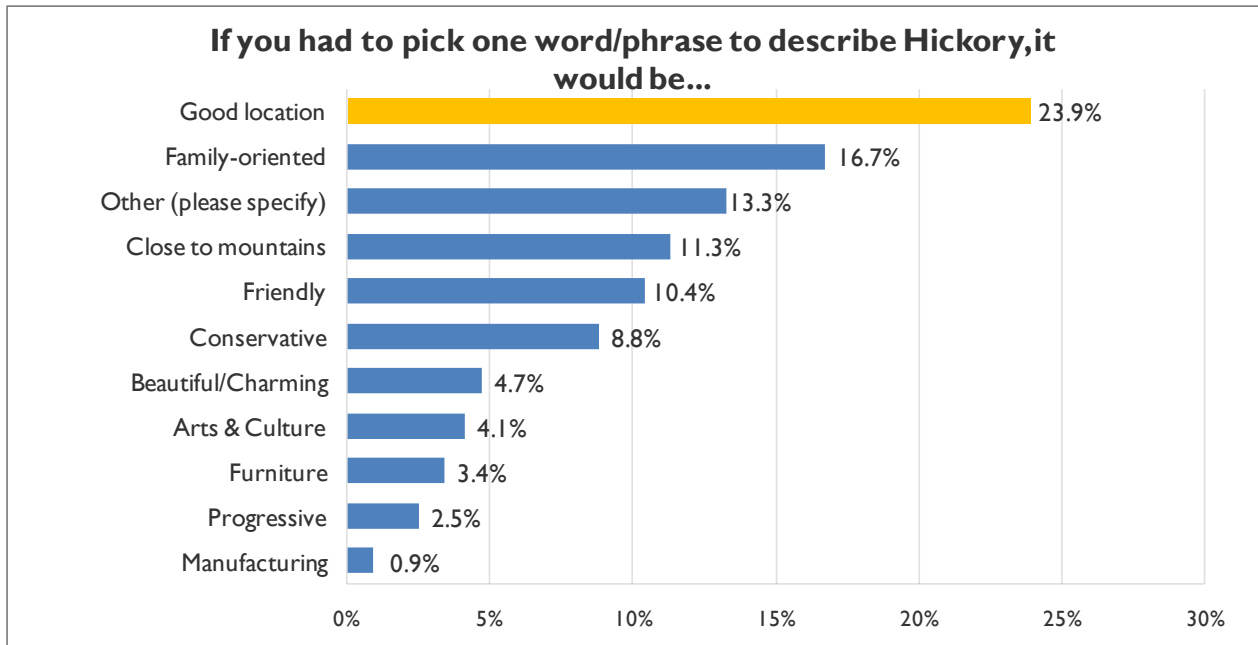
- Manufacturing
- Furniture
- Family-oriented
- Close to mountains
- Friendly
- Progressive
- Arts & Culture
- Beautiful/Charming
- Conservative
- Good location
- Other (please specify)

3. Hickory's greatest asset is...

- Manufacturing history
- Positive attitude of the people
- Good location

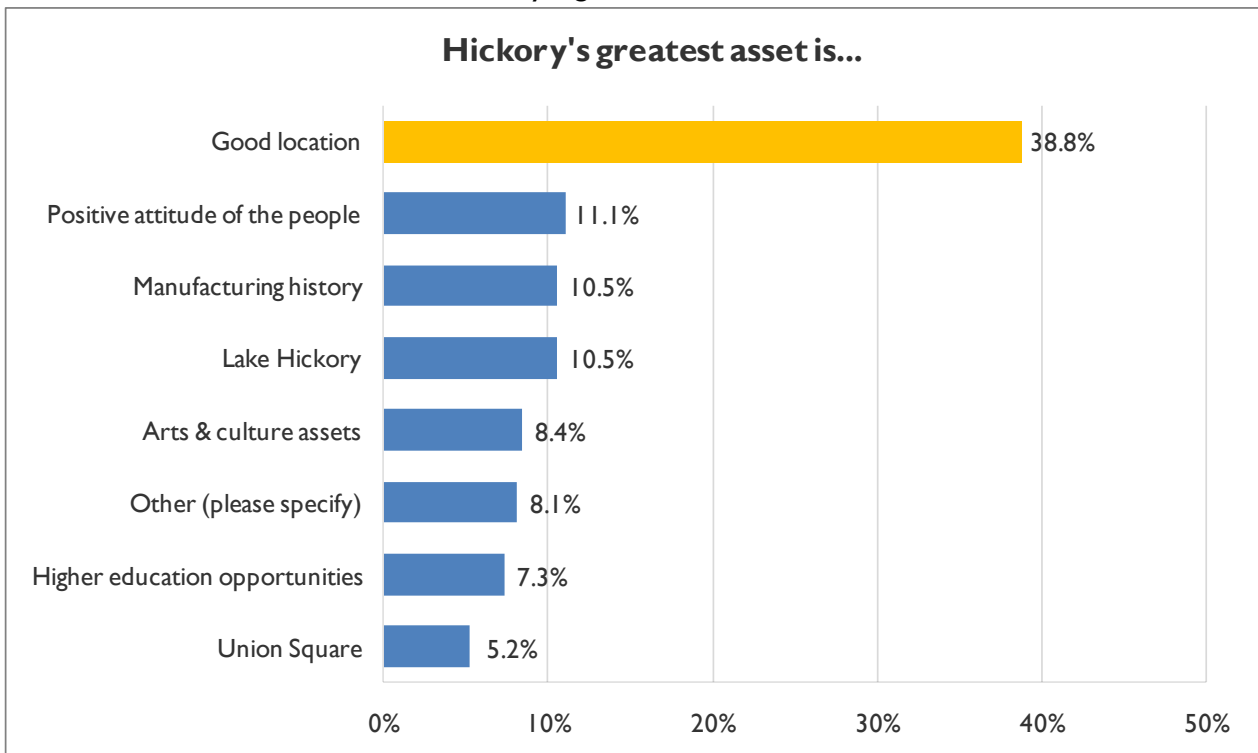
Hickory Online Community Survey

Describe Hickory: Residents describe Hickory in one word/phrase as a good location.



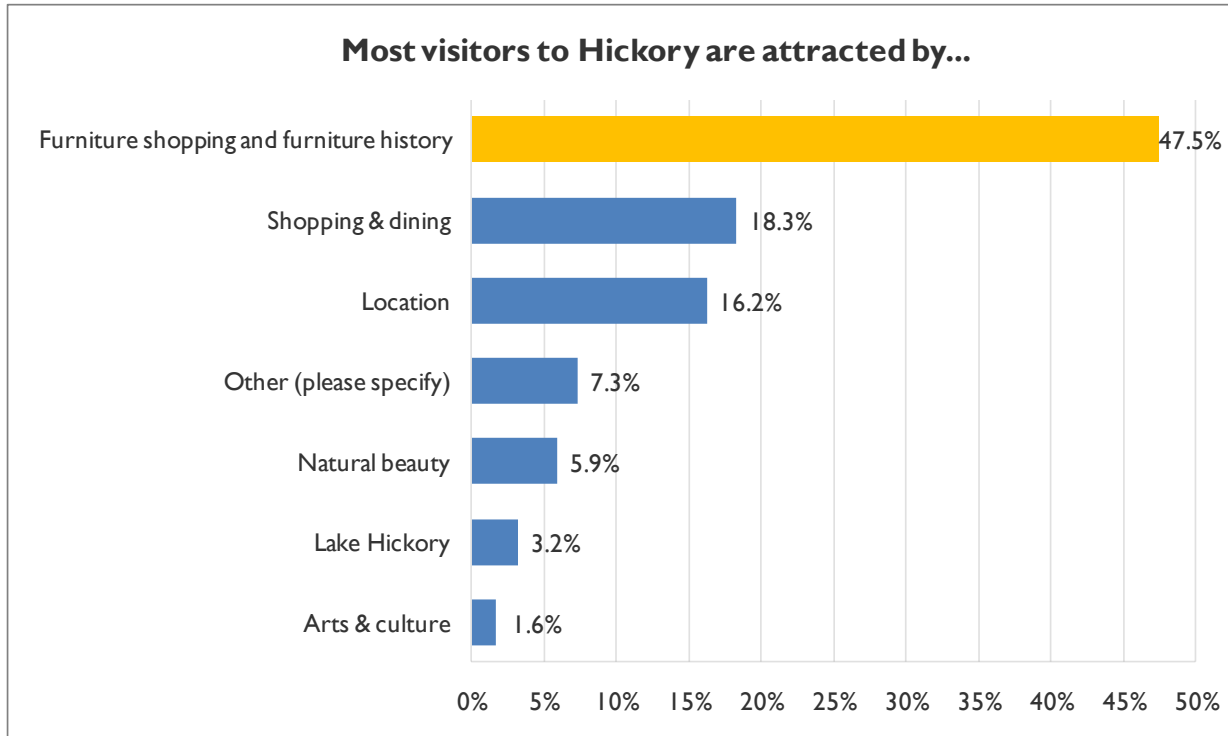
Other: Boring, depressed, and small-town

Greatest Asset: Good location is Hickory's greatest asset.



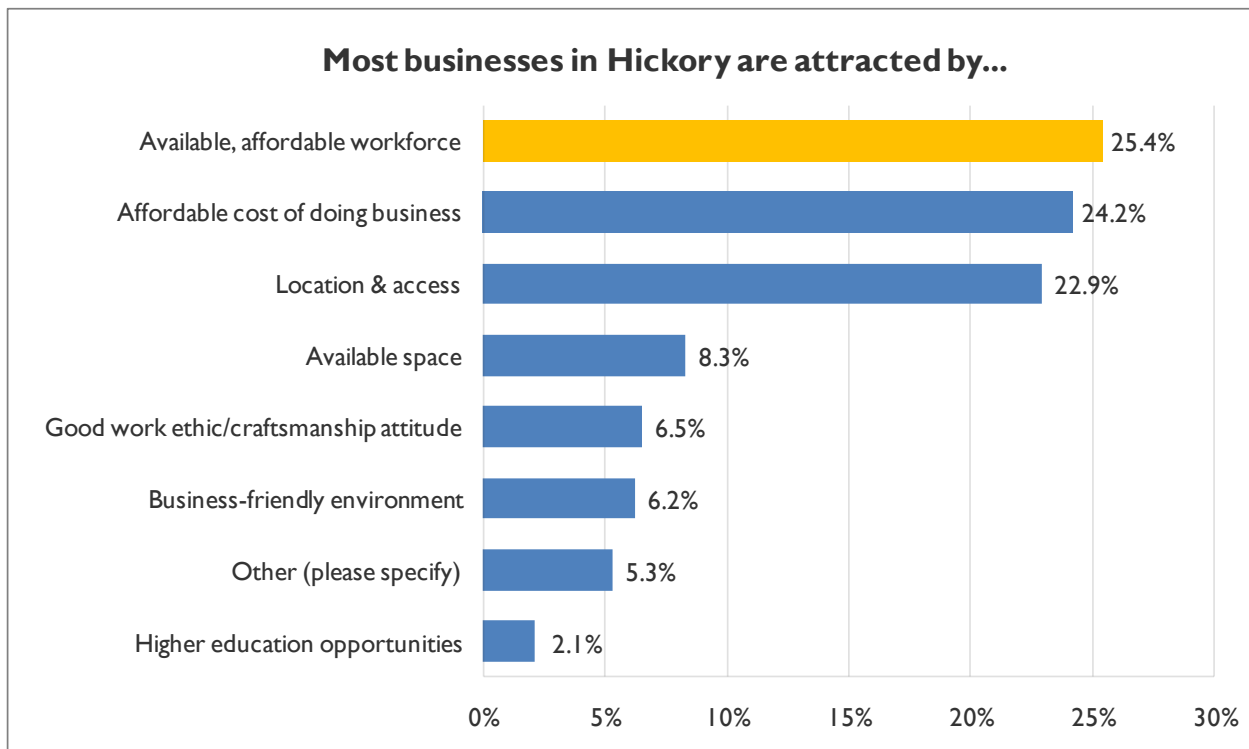
Other: Small town, well-rounded, helpful

Attracting Visitors: Most visitors are attracted by furniture shopping and history.



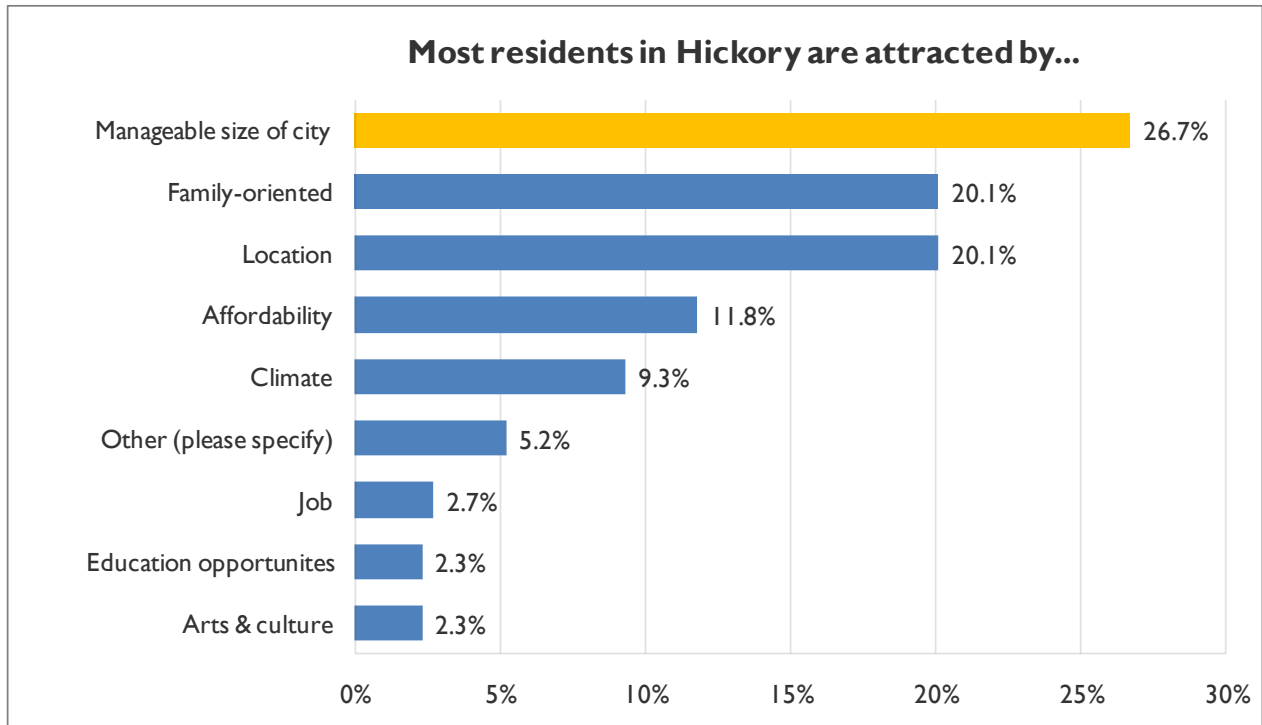
Other: Family/friends, just visiting, nice people

Businesses attracted by: Most businesses in Hickory are attracted by an available, affordable workforce.



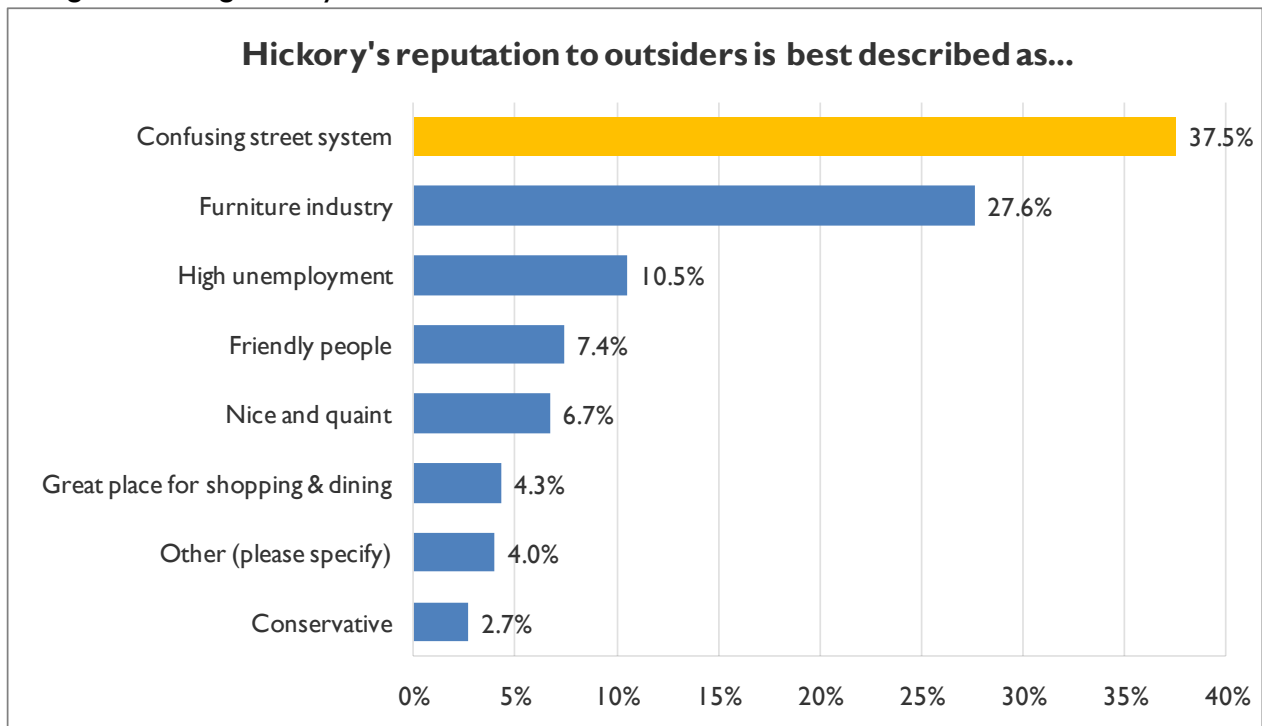
Other: Low taxes, quality of life, tax incentives

Attracting residents: Most residents in Hickory are attracted by the manageable size of the city.



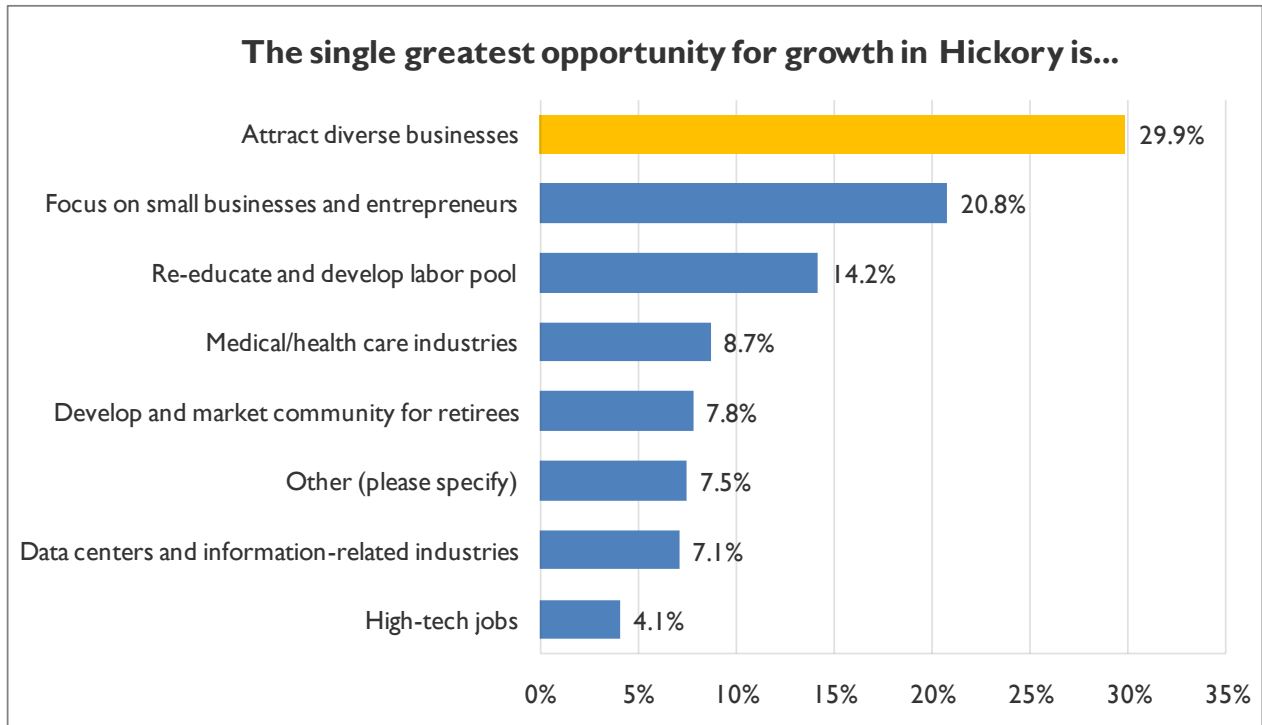
Other: Born here, people, never lived anywhere else

Hickory's reputation to outsiders: Hickory's reputation to outsiders is best described as having a confusing road system.



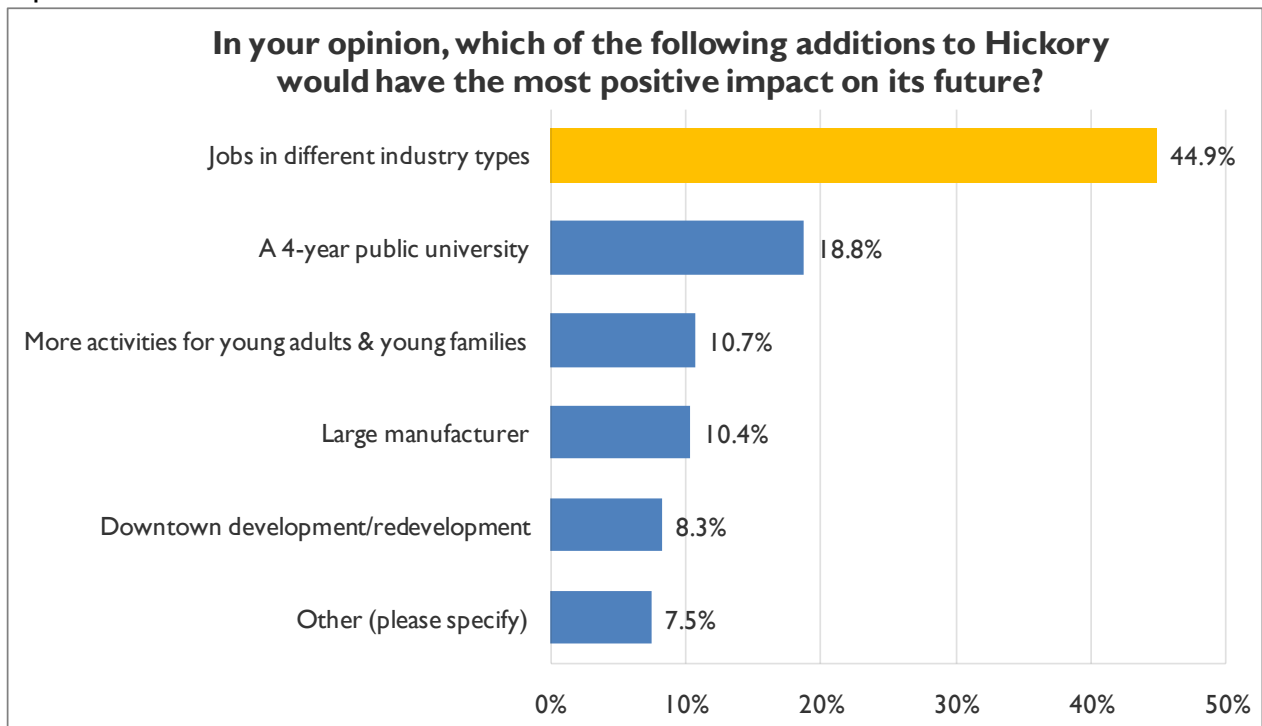
Other: Backwards, country, not business friendly

Opportunities: The single greatest opportunity for growth in Hickory is the ability to attract diverse businesses.



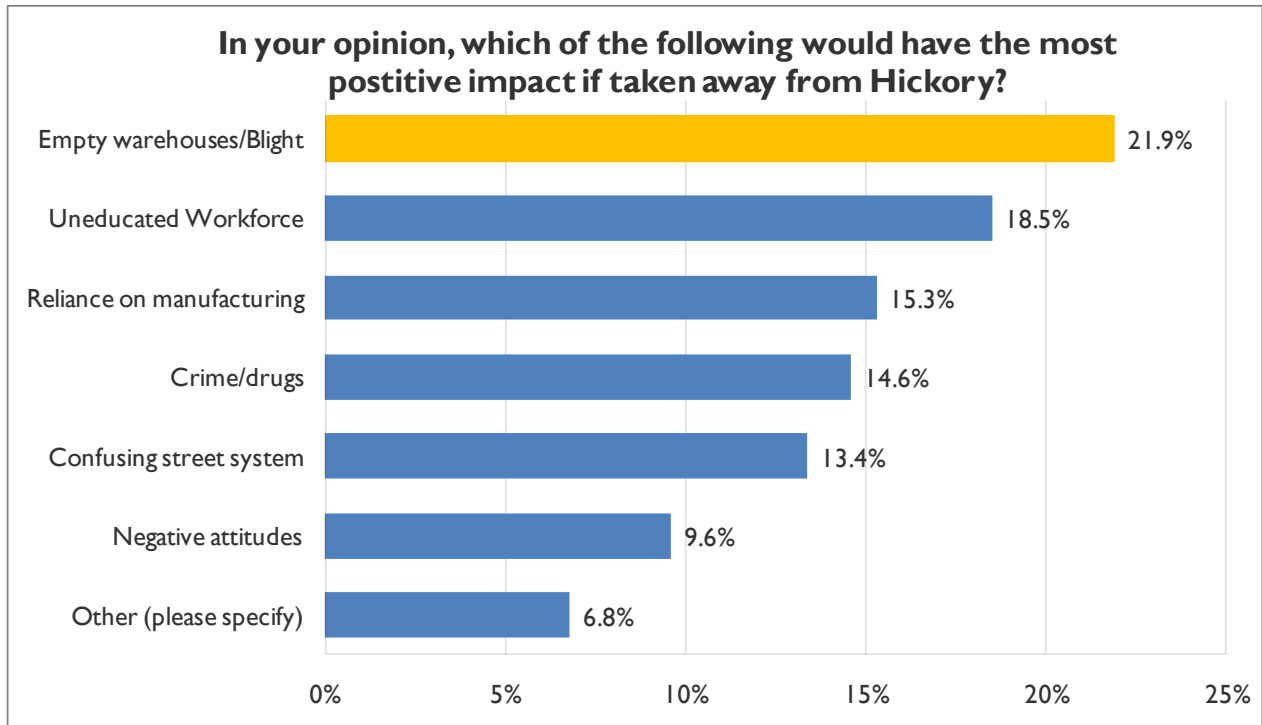
Other: Safety of residents, more community involvement

Positive Impact: The addition of jobs in different industry types would have the most positive impact on its future.



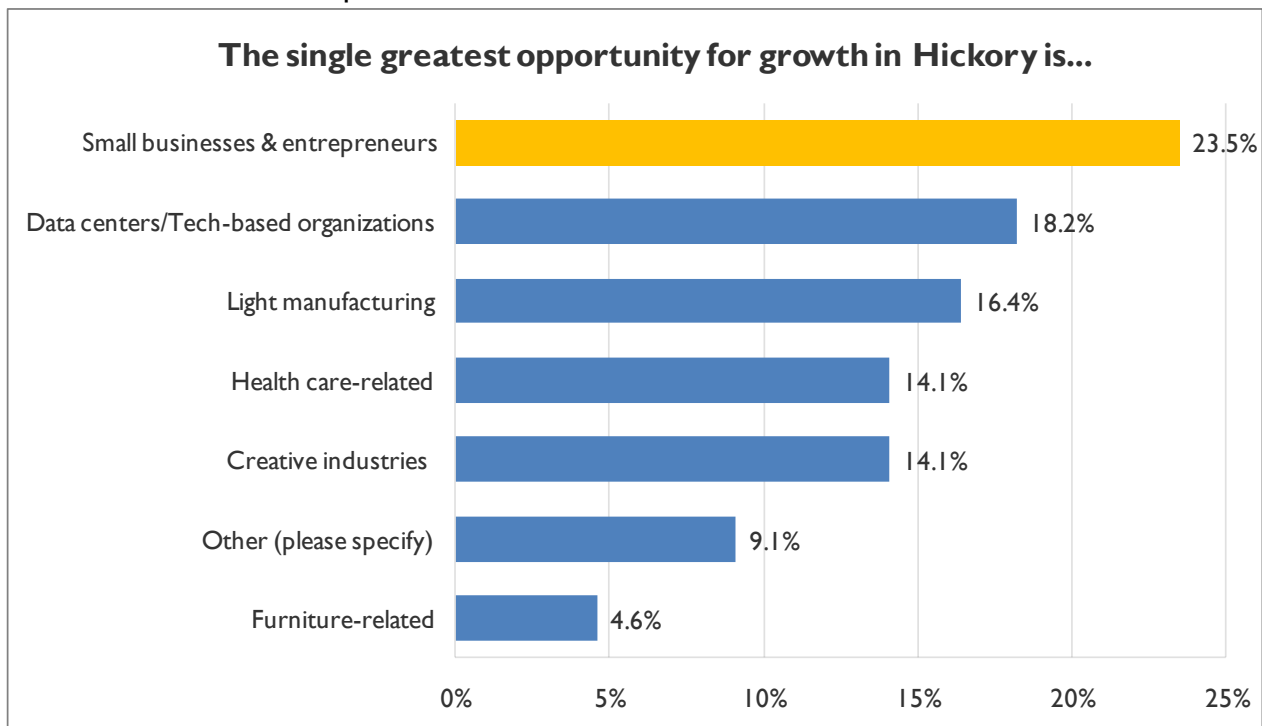
Other: Diversity

Positive impact: If empty warehouses/blight were taken away from Hickory, it would have the most positive impact.



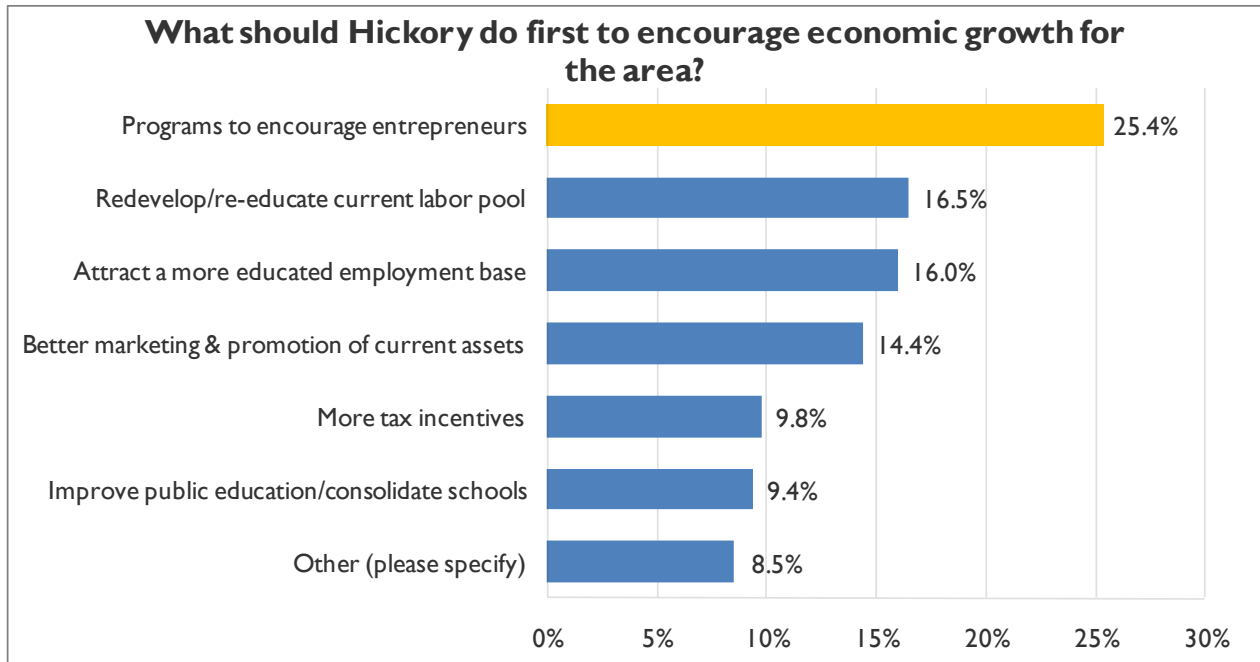
Other: Street system

Greatest opportunity for growth: The single greatest opportunity for growth in Hickory is small businesses and entrepreneurs.



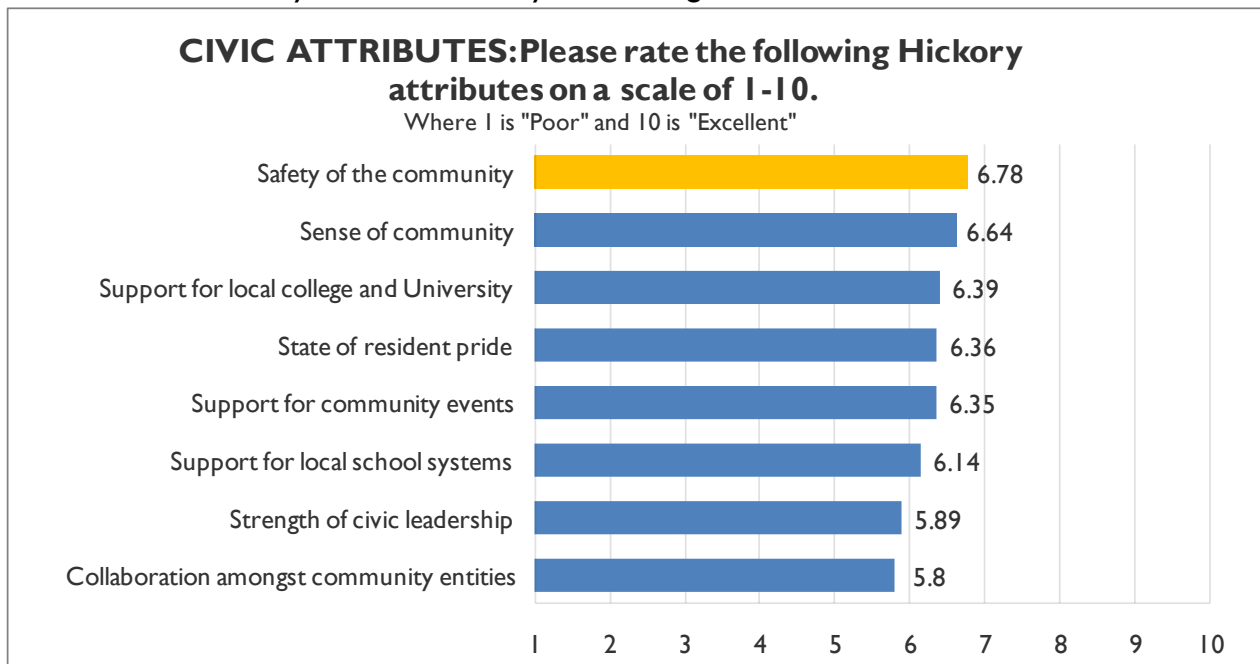
Other: Cohesive identity and sense of community, all of the above

Encourage economic growth: Hickory should first provide programs to encourage entrepreneurs to encourage economic growth for the area.

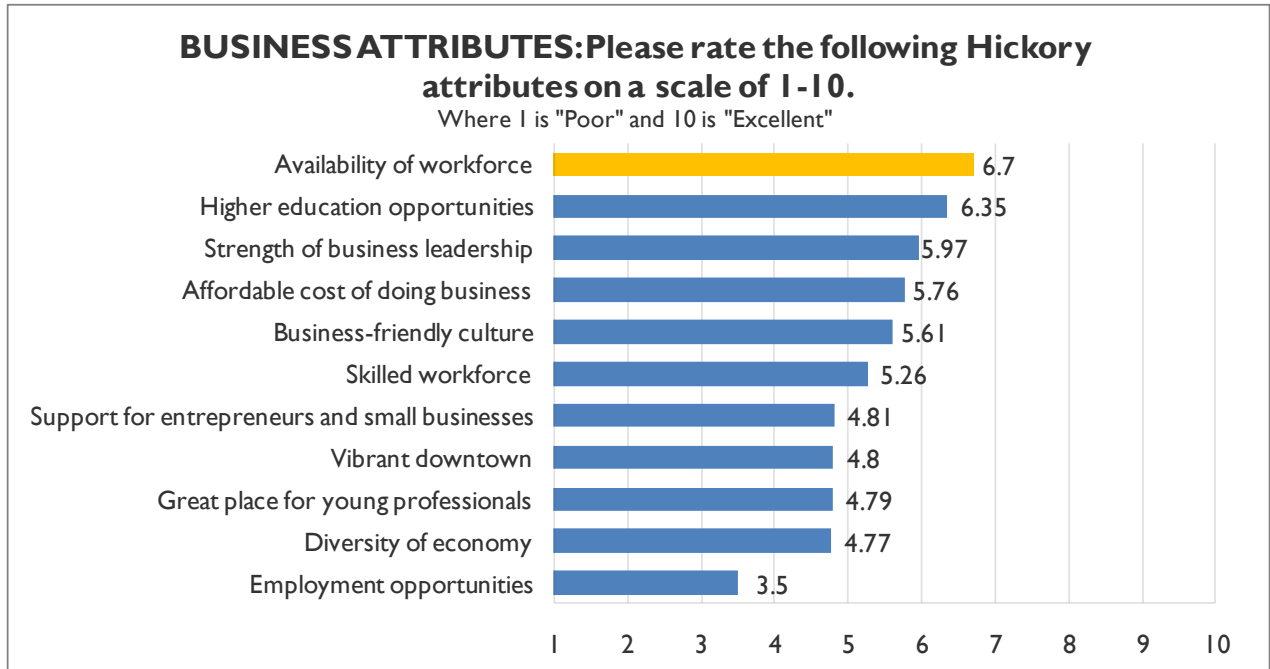


Other: Lower taxes

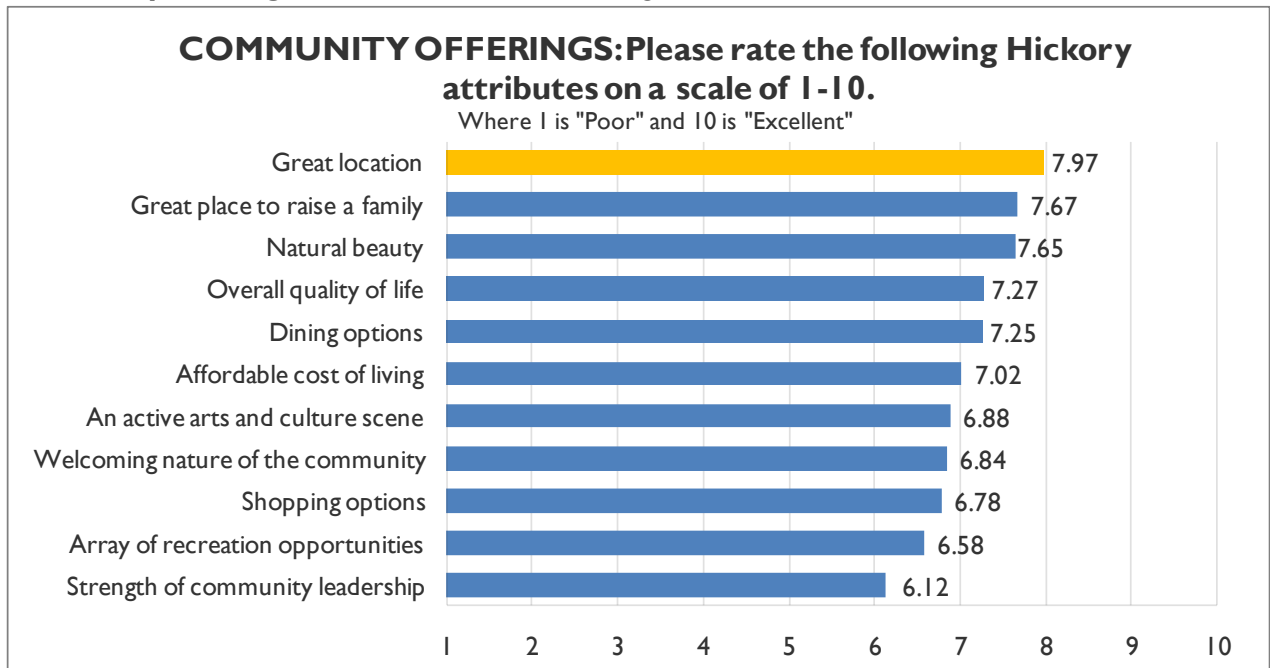
Civic attributes: Safety of the community was the highest rated attribute.



Business attributes: Availability of workforce was the highest rated attribute.



Community offerings: Great location was the highest rated attribute.



OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS:

What unites Hickory?

- Friendly people
- A sense of community
- Families.

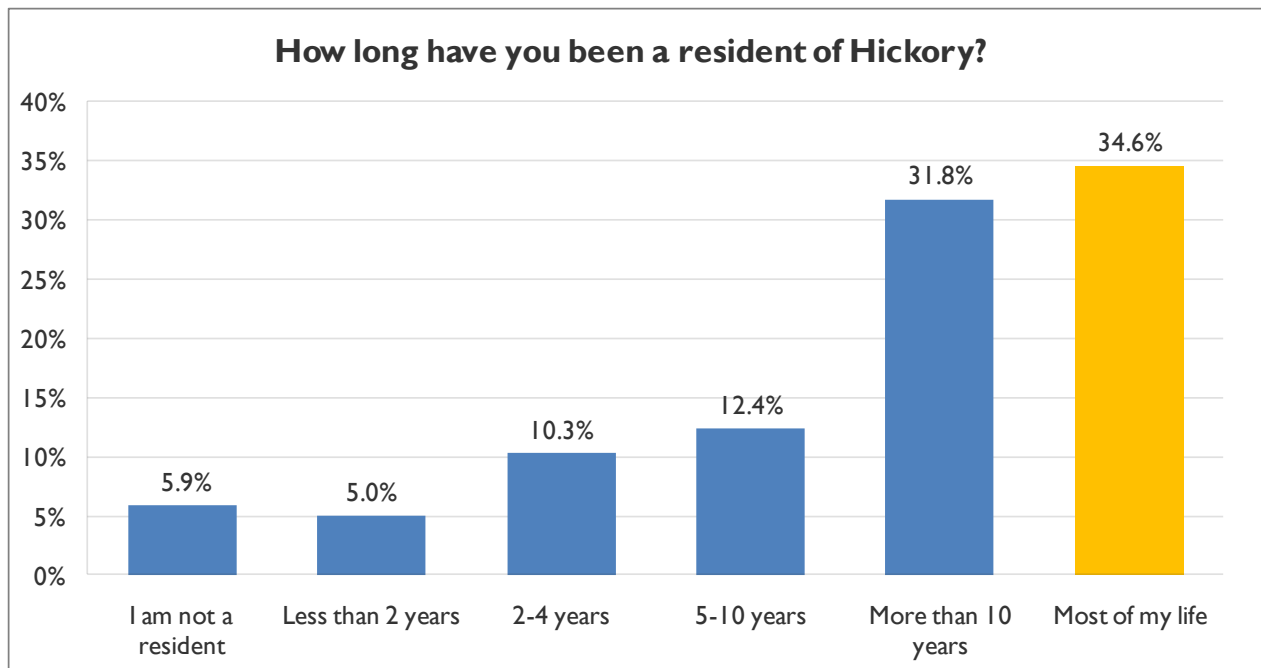
If you were forced to move to another city, what would you miss most about Hickory?

- Its location (proximity to big cities and recreation)
- The small-town feel and sense of community
- Its friendly people.

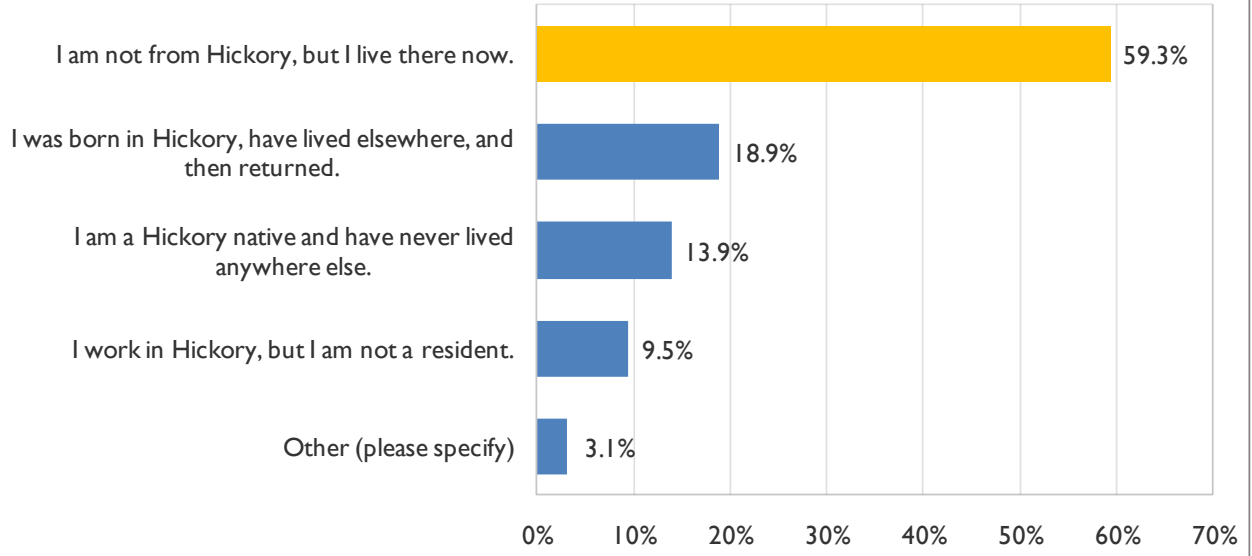
In your opinion, what is the best way for Hickory to better promote the community? (i.e. through local media, social media tactics, advertisements, etc.)

- General advertisement
- Social media
- Local media advertisement.

DEMOGRAPHICS:

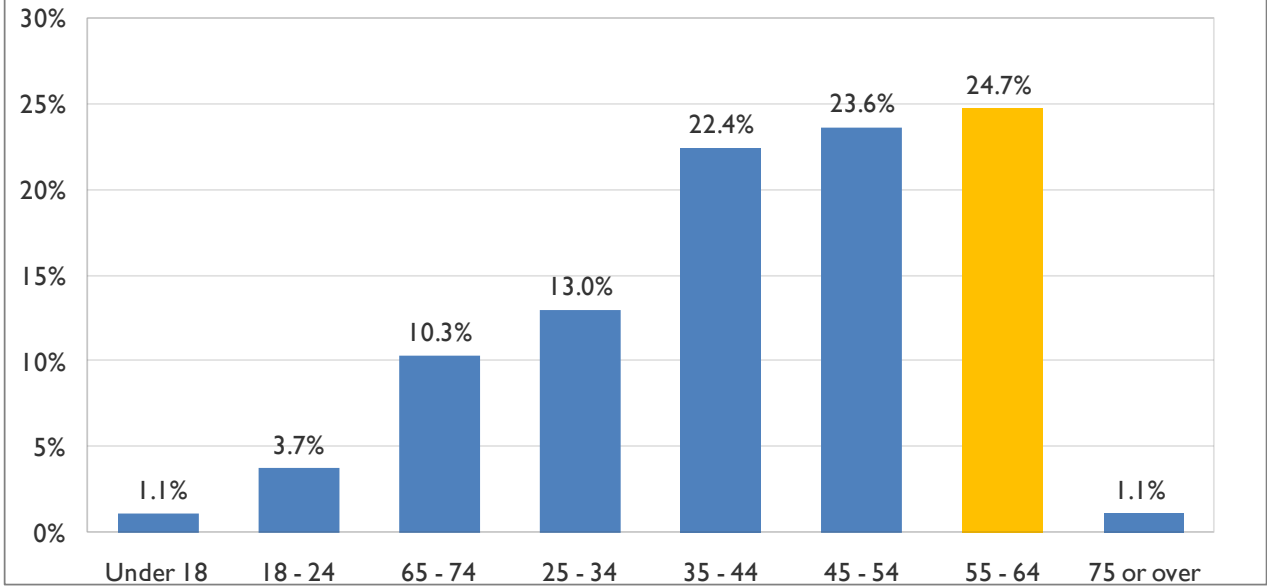


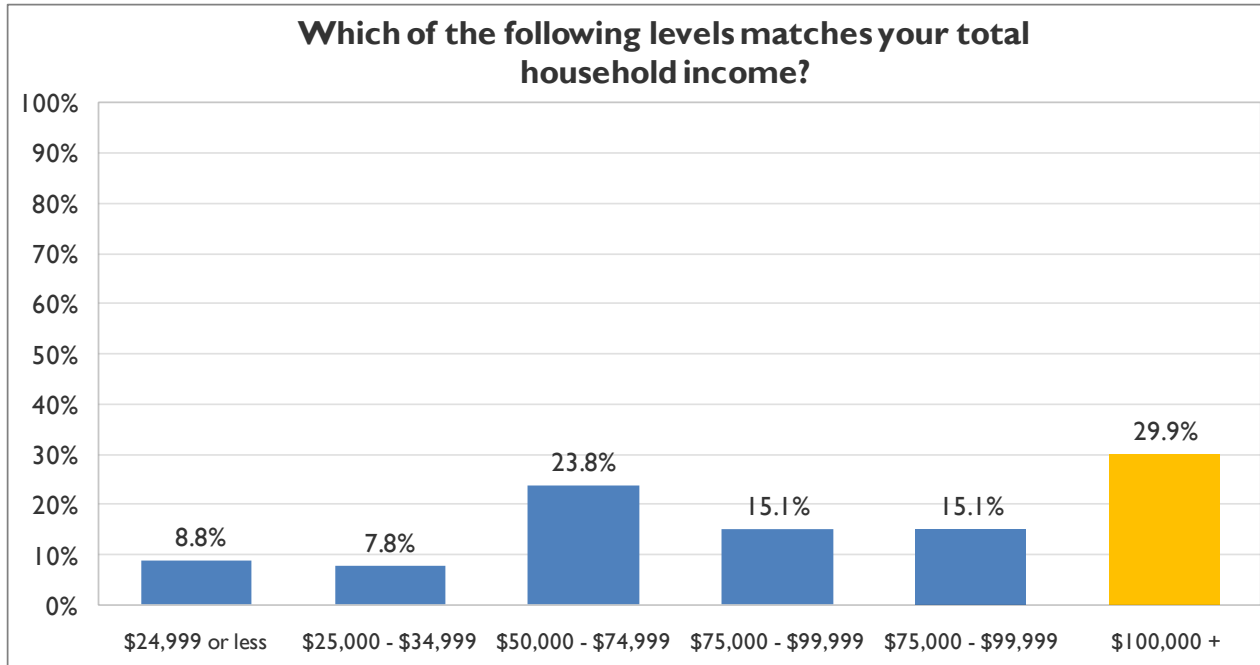
Please choose the best description of your relationship with Hickory from the choices below.



Other: Work here, live close, retired here to be close to family

Which of the following includes your age?





COMMUNITY-WIDE SURVEY INSIGHTS SUMMARY:

- Respondents of the Community-wide Survey are attracted to Hickory’s prime location, quality of life aspects (charming, arts and culture, mountain setting, family-oriented and friendly people) as well as educational opportunities that exist in the community.
- Hickory’s initiative to diversify its economy will have a positive effect on unemployment as well as community morale. Throughout the Community Survey, economic development consistently ranked high when asked about opportunities for growth. The community’s plan to encourage and entice data centers and health care to the community is well-timed. Leveraging the existence of Apple and Google data centers in conjunction with the new brand should positively enforce the area’s image as the Data Center Corridor.
- Given Hickory’s manufacturing past and current initiative to entice data centers, health care and retail development, an opportunity exists to re-educate the workforce to better suit technology and health care employers. Taking the workforce from textiles to technology can be daunting but your residents seem supportive of supplying the unemployed with training opportunities will be a secure long-term investment.

COMMUNITY BRAND BAROMETER

Purpose

The Community Brand Barometer measures strength of the Hickory brand according to:

- Resident satisfaction with and advocacy for the brand as a place to live, work and play
- Hickory satisfaction/advocacy relative to the nation.

Methodology & Results

Significant research* on a wide variety of customer satisfaction metrics found that a single powerful question has the greatest ability both to measure current resident satisfaction and predict future community growth. That question, “Would you recommend your city to a friend or colleague as a place to live (or work or visit)?” is powerful because it surpasses the basic model of economic exchange, where money is spent for products or services. People who score their community high on the Brand Barometer actively recruit new residents, visitors and businesses through positive word-of-mouth marketing. It is very personal. By making a strong recommendation, they are willing to risk their own character, trustworthiness and overall reputation for no tangible reward.

The methodology for the Brand Barometer has been carefully developed and determined to be statistically significant. Participants in the Online Community Survey answered three questions:

- Would you recommend living in Hickory to a friend or colleague?
- Would you recommend visiting Hickory a friend or colleague?
- Would you recommend conducting business in Hickory to a friend or colleague?

Responses are measured on a 10-point scale with 1 being “Not at all likely” and 10 being “Extremely likely.” Results are presented on an individual respondent level as well as an aggregate Brand Advocacy Score. Scores are calculated with response percentages in the following categories:

- Promoters (9 or 10): Loyal residents who will continue fueling your growth and promoting your brand.
- Passives (7 or 8): Satisfied but unenthusiastic residents who are vulnerable to other opinions and brands.
- Detractors (1-6): Unhappy residents who can damage your brand and impede growth through negative referrals.

$$\text{Brand Advocacy Score} = \% \text{ Promoters} - \% \text{ Detractors}$$

Hickory’s Brand Advocacy Score can then be compared to a benchmark score that has been derived for the entire nation. North Star employs multiple survey methods through proprietary sources to determine national averages. Scores represent a stratified random sample of the entire U.S. population and are updated on a regular basis. You can use this information to track your own brand performance relative to national trends over time. In addition, you can repeat the Community Brand Barometer after a designated period and compare the results to your own benchmark score for an on-going metric of how community attitudes change over time and in response to specific events or activities.

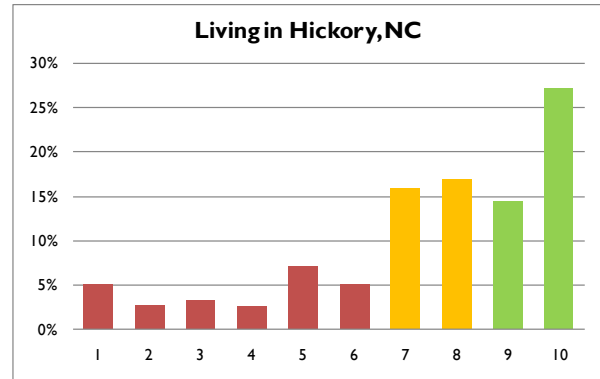
*Research conducted by Satmetrix Systems, Inc., Bain & Company and Fred Reichheld, author of “The One Number You Need to Grow,” Harvard Business Review (Dec. 2003).

BRAND BAROMETER RESPONSES

On a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being “not at all likely” and 10 being “extremely likely,” would you recommend living, visiting or conducting business in Hickory...to a friend or colleague?

Living:

Living in Hickory, NC		
1	5.02%	
2	2.74%	
3	3.20%	
4	2.51%	
5	7.08%	
6	5.02%	25.57% Detractors
7	15.98%	
8	16.89%	32.88% Passives
9	14.38%	
10	27.17%	41.55% Promoters

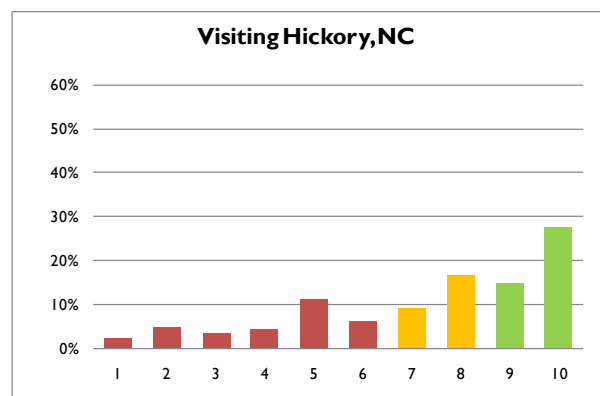


Observations:

- Hickory’s residents are passionate advocates of the community as a place to live. With 41.5% of residents being Promoters of the community, there is an opportunity to educate this base with tenants of the new brand, and leverage the passion for the community.
- 32.88% of respondents are Passives, thus suggesting a large population who are neutral in their feelings towards living in Hickory. A strong brand can be effective in converting these residents to Promoters of the community.

Visiting:

Visiting Hickory, NC		
1	2.33%	
2	4.90%	
3	3.26%	
4	4.20%	
5	11.19%	
6	6.29%	32.17% Detractors
7	9.09%	
8	16.55%	25.64% Passives
9	14.92%	
10	27.27%	42.19% Promoters

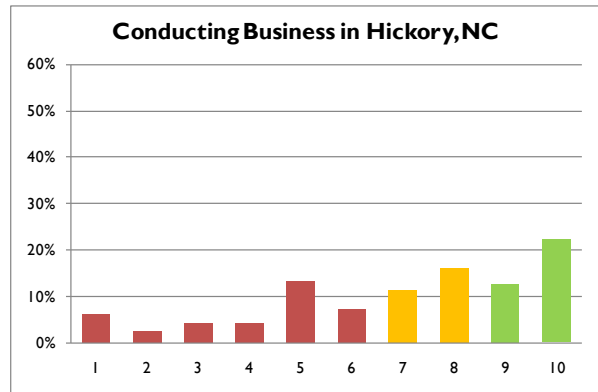


Observations:

- 32.17% of respondents are Detractors of visiting Hickory. This suggests a negative perception among residents regarding assets that might encourage visitors. With furniture shopping being a major reason for visiting Hickory, spreading the word about Hickory’s other tourism assets will help counter these negative perceptions.

Conducting business:

Conducting Business in Hickory, NC		
1	6.10%	
2	2.35%	
3	4.23%	
4	4.23%	
5	13.38%	
6	7.28%	37.56% Detractors
7	11.27%	
8	16.20%	27.46% Passives
9	12.68%	
10	22.30%	34.98% Promoters



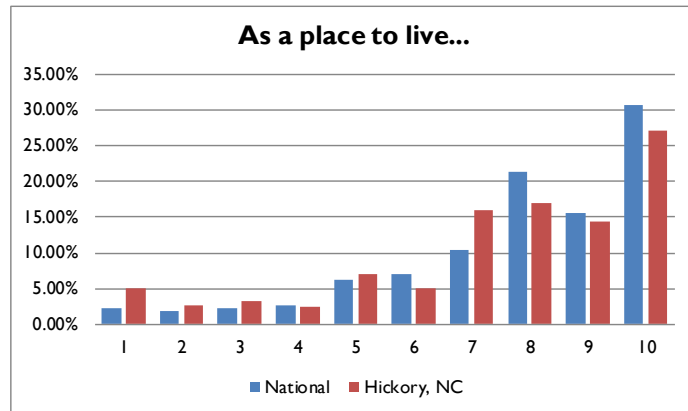
Observations:

- On a national level, manufacturing employment has plummeted. The high unemployment rate in Hickory could explain why 37.56% of respondents are Detractors of conducting business in the community.
- Continue to recruit technology, health care, and retail firms so that a better perception among residents will emerge in terms of the business climate in Hickory.
- The conducting business category presents the best opportunity to leverage the new brand for positive change.

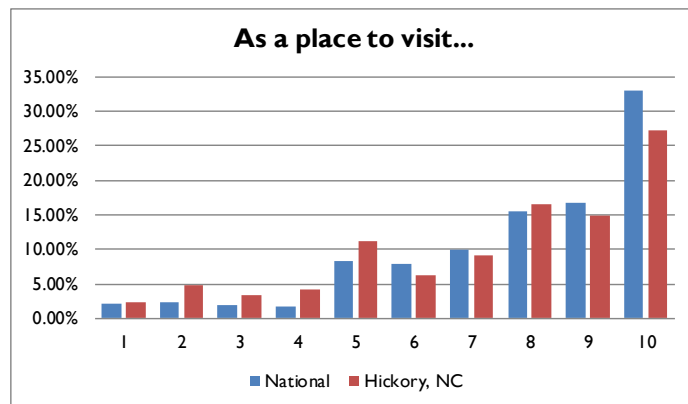
COMPARISON RESULTS | BY NUMBERED RESPONSE

The charts below allow comparison of numbered responses between Hickory residents and the national sample in each of the categories tested (living, visiting and conducting business). They illustrate how many respondents selected each individual number as their response choice. For example, 1.80% of all respondents in the national sample selected “2” when recommending their city as a place to live. (On a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being “not at all likely” and 10 being “extremely likely.”)

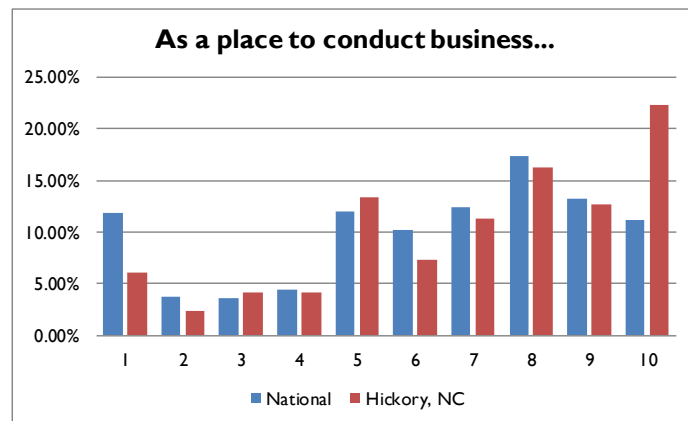
Living in Your City		
	National	Hickory, NC
1	2.20%	5.02%
2	1.80%	2.74%
3	2.20%	3.20%
4	2.60%	2.51%
5	6.20%	7.08%
6	7.00%	5.02%
7	10.40%	15.98%
8	21.40%	16.89%
9	15.60%	14.38%
10	30.60%	27.17%



Visiting Your City		
	National	Hickory, NC
1	2.20%	2.33%
2	2.40%	4.90%
3	2.00%	3.26%
4	1.80%	4.20%
5	8.40%	11.19%
6	7.80%	6.29%
7	10.00%	9.09%
8	15.60%	16.55%
9	16.80%	14.92%
10	33.00%	27.27%



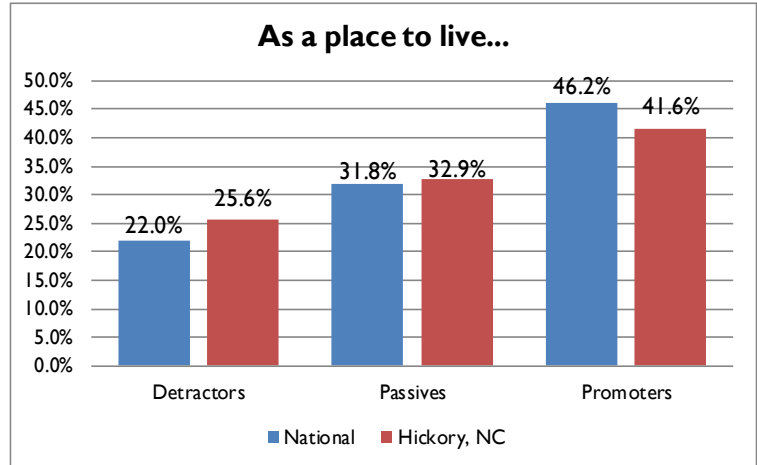
Conducting Business in Your City		
	National	Hickory, NC
1	11.80%	6.10%
2	3.80%	2.35%
3	3.60%	4.23%
4	4.40%	4.23%
5	12.00%	13.38%
6	10.20%	7.28%
7	12.40%	11.27%
8	17.40%	16.20%
9	13.20%	12.68%
10	11.20%	22.30%



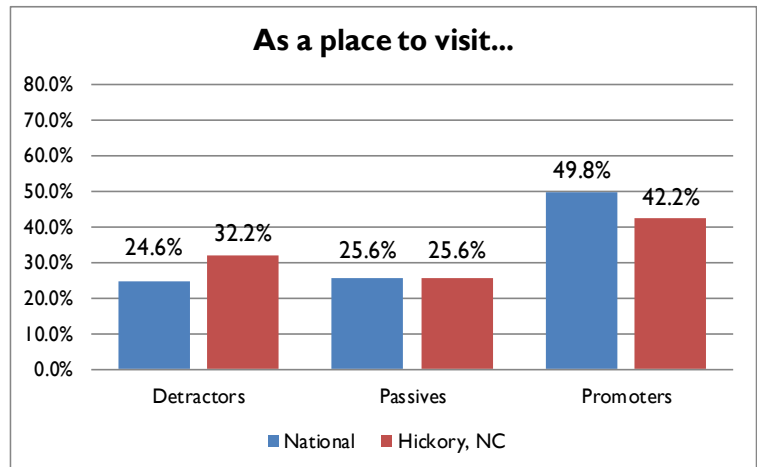
COMPARISON RESULTS | PROMOTERS, PASSIVES & DETRACTORS

The charts below allow comparison of responses between Hickory residents and the national sample as it relates to the delivery of Detractors, Passives and Promoters in each of the categories tested – living, visiting and conducting business.

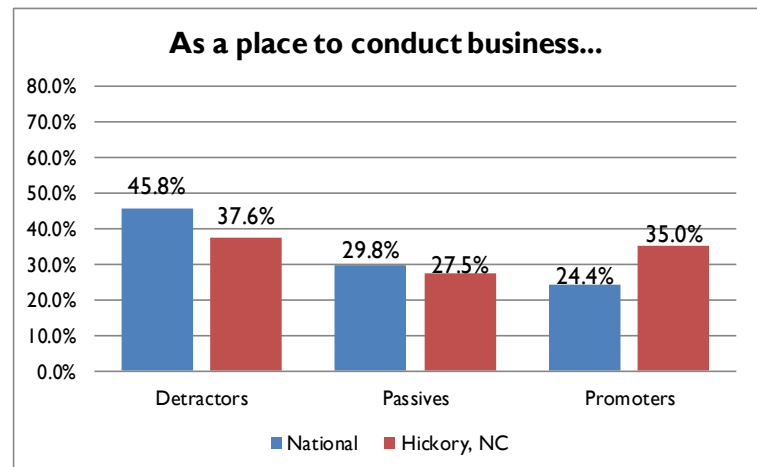
As a Place to Live		
	National	Hickory, NC
Detractors	22.0%	25.6%
Passives	31.8%	32.9%
Promoters	46.2%	41.6%



As a Place to Visit		
	National	Hickory, NC
Detractors	24.6%	32.2%
Passives	25.6%	25.6%
Promoters	49.8%	42.2%



As a Place to Conduct Business		
	National	Hickory, NC
Detractors	45.8%	37.6%
Passives	29.8%	27.5%
Promoters	24.4%	35.0%

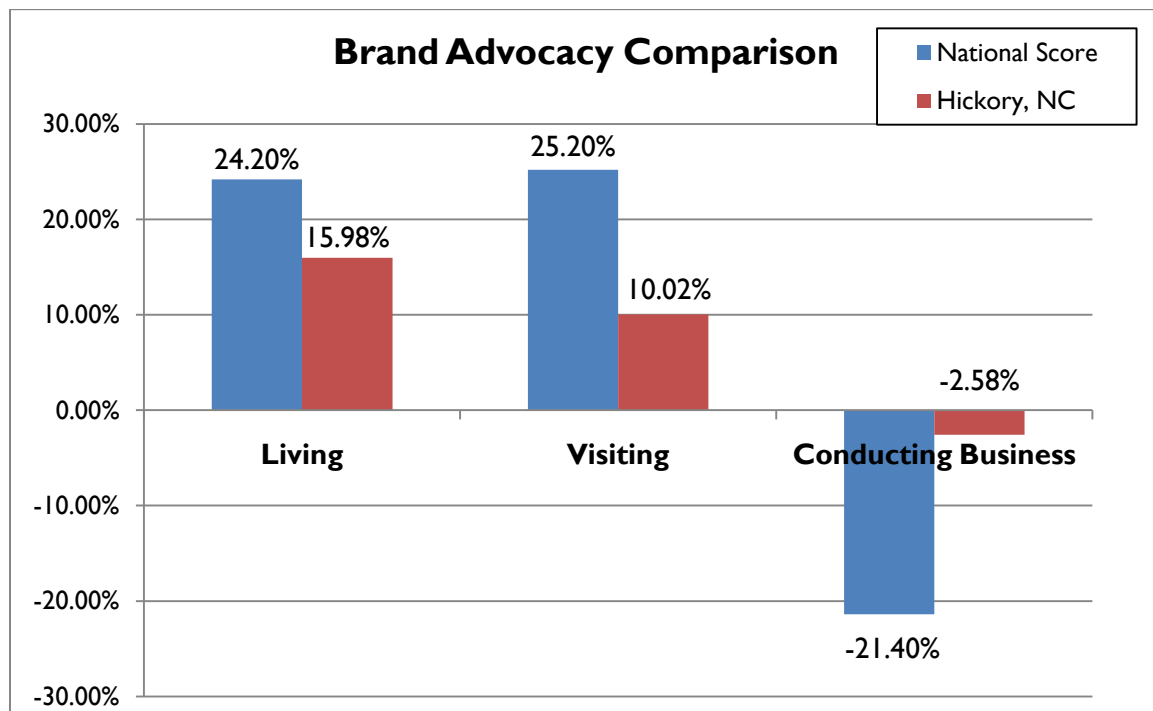


COMPARISON RESULTS | BRAND ADVOCACY SCORES

The chart below illustrates Brand Advocacy scores for Hickory and at the national level in the categories tested – living, visiting and conducting business.

Brand Advocacy Score = % Promoters – % Detractors

	National Score	Hickory, NC
Living	24.20%	15.98%
Visiting	25.20%	10.02%
Conducting Business	-21.40%	-2.58%



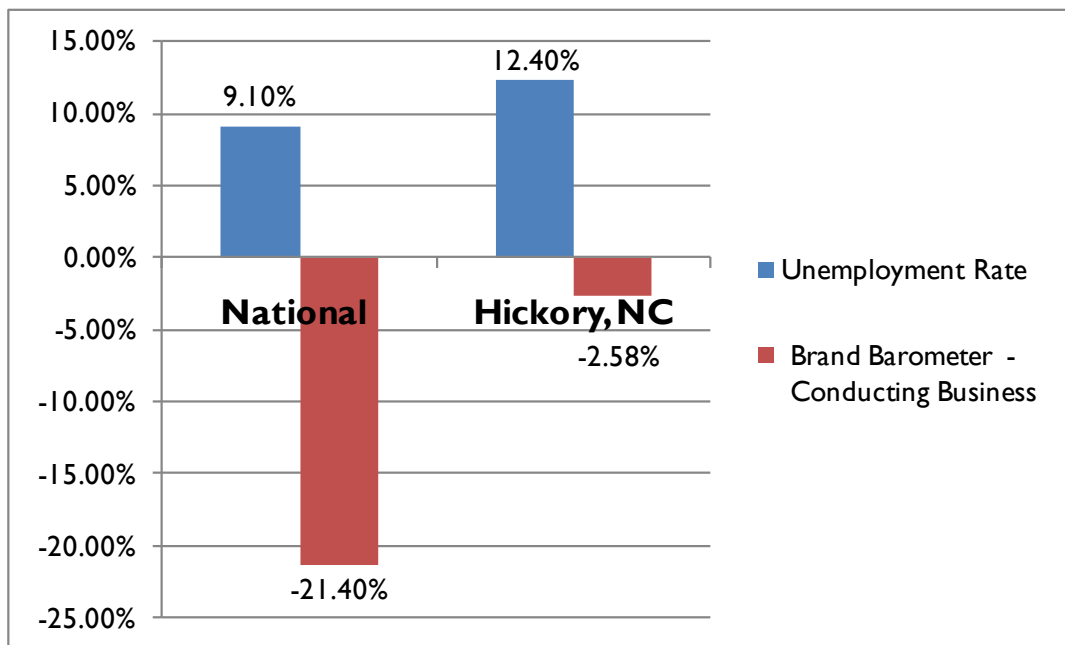
Observations:

- Compared to the national average, Hickory performs well in the conducting business category. Given the current climate of resident doubt in terms of career opportunities, this is an excellent score. As you begin to implement the new brand in your community, referring to this score will help encourage your efforts.

COMPARISON RESULTS | UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

The chart below illustrates the perceptions between conducting business in your community and the actual unemployment rate (as of January 2011 when the Brand Barometer was conducted). National averages are presented for comparison.

	National	Hickory, NC
Unemployment Rate	9.10%	12.40%
Brand Barometer - Conducting Business	-21.40%	-2.58%



Observations:

- Ironically, an inverse relationship exists between Hickory's unemployment rate and the relatively encouraging score for brand perceptions. As you can see, there is a significant negative perception among the national score. Given that Hickory's unemployment rate is higher, one would expect a more negative brand barometer score. This suggests an air of hopefulness in your community in terms of employment opportunities.

INQUIRY ORIGIN STUDY

Purpose

An Inquiry Origin Study was conducted to understand the markets from which inquiries about Hickory originate.

Methodology & Results

We collected over 1,100 inquiry records from the Hickory Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau. Each record was geocoded (assigned) to a Core Based Statistical Area (CBSA) – the geographic area used to define advertised markets. The following information should be considered when selecting markets for brand communications. Additional variables like cost of advertising and distance from Hickory should also be taken into account.

The complete set of results and associated reports for the Inquiry Origin Study can be found on the Final BrandPrint CD.

Please see **Appendix C** for a larger version of the origin map and a Customer Geographic Summary, detailing the top 20 states, zip codes, counties and CBSAs for inquiries.

TOP FIVE INQUIRY STATES OF ORIGIN:

The largest majority of inquirers originated from North Carolina.

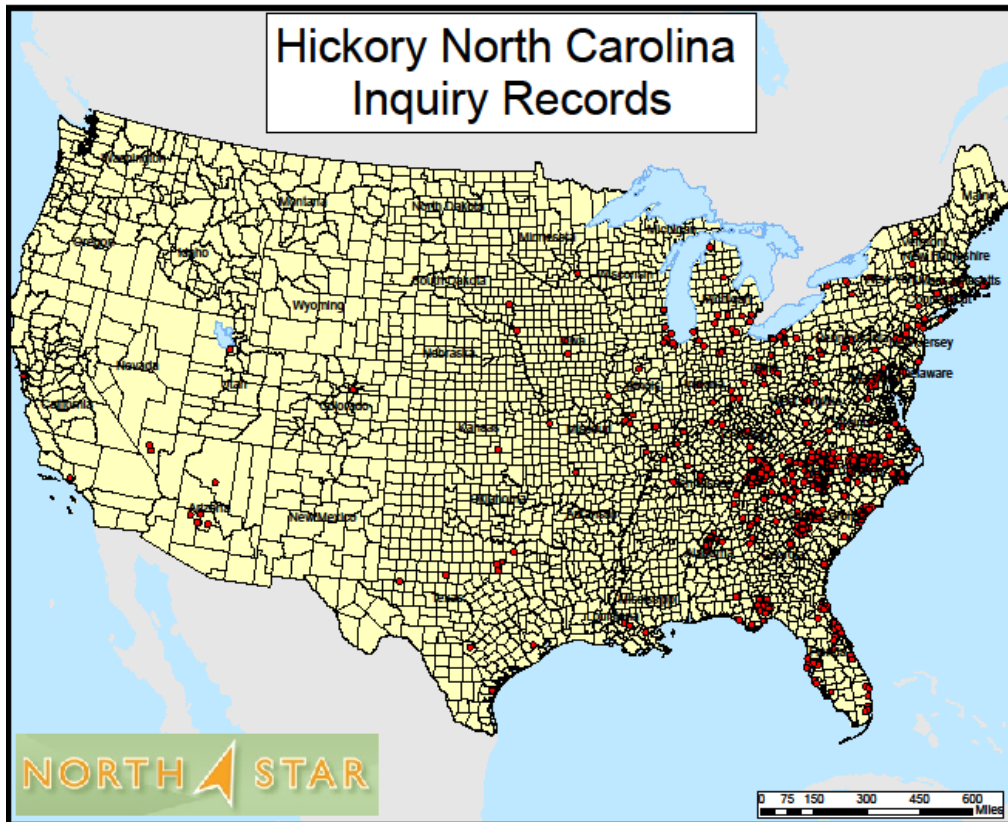
1. North Carolina	38.8%
2. South Carolina	14.3%
3. Florida	13.8%
4. Tennessee	10.1%
5. Georgia	4.4%

TOP 10 INQUIRY CBSAs OF ORIGIN:

The highest ranking CBSA of origin is Raleigh-Cary, NC

1. Raleigh-Cary, NC (39580)	12.8%
2. Winston-Salem, NC (49180)	9.6%
3. Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord, NC/SC (16740)	7.0%
4. Knoxville, TN (28940)	6.4%
5. Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach, FL (19660)	6.2%
6. Myrtle Beach-North Myrtle Beach-Conway, SC (34820)	6.2%
7. Columbia, SC (17900)	4.8%
8. Augusta-Richmond County, GA/SC (12260)	4.3%
9. Birmingham-Hoover, AL (13820)	3.9%
10. Tallahassee, FL (45220)	3.5%

INQUIRY ORIGIN DOT-DENSITY MAP:



OVERNIGHT VISITOR ORIGIN STUDY

Purpose

An Overnight Visitor Origin Study was conducted to understand the markets from which Hickory's overnight visitors originate.

Methodology & Results

We collected 3,244 overnight guest records from Hickory-area hotel properties. The hotels which participated in the study included: Best Western and the Hampton Inn. Each record was geocoded (assigned) to a Core Based Statistical Area (CBSA) – the geographic area used to define advertised markets. The following information should be considered when selecting markets for brand communications. Additional variables like cost of advertising and distance from Hickory should also be taken into account.

The complete set of results and associated reports for the Overnight Visitor Origin Study can be found on the Final BrandPrint CD.

Please see **Appendix D** for a larger version of the origin map and a Customer Geographic Summary, detailing the top 20 states, zip codes, counties and CBSAs for inquiries.

TOP FIVE OVERNIGHT VISITOR STATES OF ORIGIN:

The largest majority of overnight visitors originated from North Carolina.

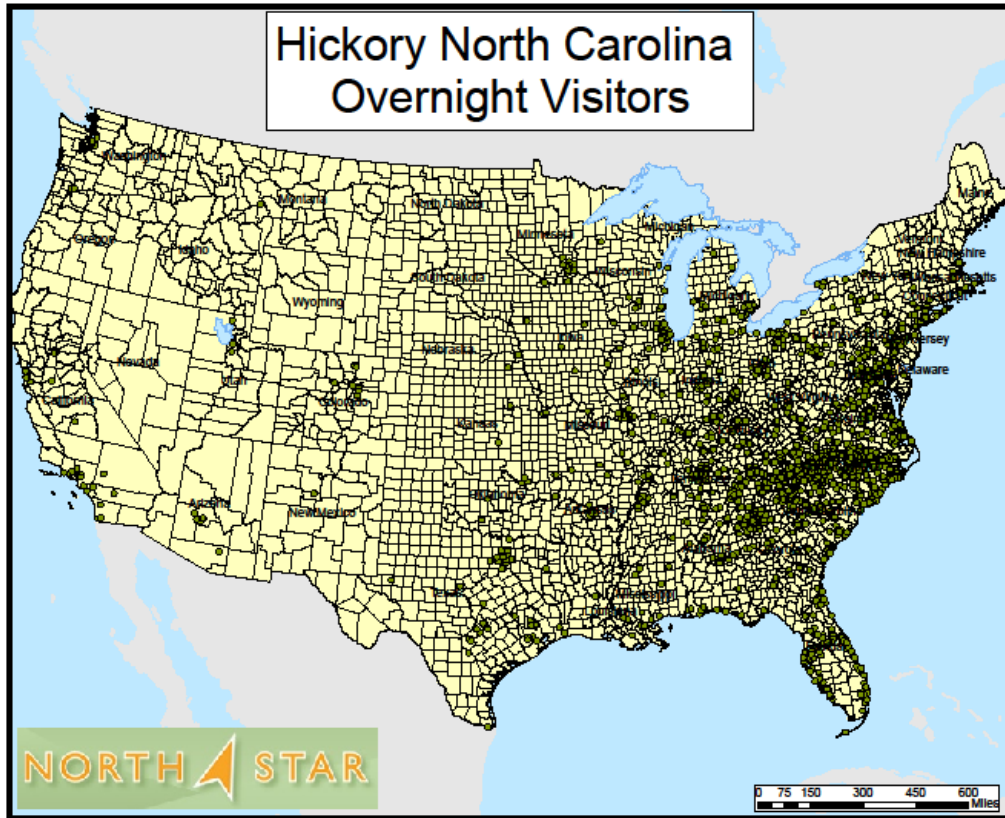
1. North Carolina	30.3%
2. Georgia	6.7%
3. South Carolina	5.6%
4. Tennessee	5.4%
5. Florida	4.1%

TOP 10 OVERNIGHT VISITOR CBSAs OF ORIGIN:

The highest ranking CBSA of origin is Raleigh-Cary, NC

1. Raleigh-Cary, NC (39580)	5.1%
2. Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Gainesville, GA/AL (12060)	5.0%
3. Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton NC (25860)	4.3%
4. Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord, NC/SC (16740)	4.2%
5. Greensboro-High Point, NC (24660)	2.3%
6. Asheville, NC, SC (11700)	1.9%
7. Durham, NC (20500)	1.8%
8. Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro, TN (34980)	1.6%
9. Knoxville, TN (28940)	1.4%
10. Columbia, SC (17900)	1.2%

OVERNIGHT VISITORS ORIGIN DOT-DENSITY MAP:



CBSA COMPARISON:

Four out of ten segments are shared between the Inquiry and Overnight visitor profiles.

	Inquiry Profile		Overnight Visitors	
1	Raleigh-Cary, NC	12.8%	Raleigh-Cary, NC	5.1%
2	Winson-Salem, NC	9.6%	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	5.0%
3	Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord, NC/SC	7.0%	Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton, NC	4.3%
4	Knoxville, TN	6.4%	Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord, NC/SC	4.2%
5	Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach, FL	6.2%	Greensboro-High Point, NC	2.3%
6	Myrtle Beach-North Myrtle Beach-Conway, SC	6.2%	Asheville, NC	1.9%
7	Columbia, SC	4.8%	Durham, NC	1.8%
8	Augusta-Richmond County, GA/SC	4.3%	Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro, TN	1.6%
9	Birmingham-Hoover, AL	3.9%	Knoxville, TN	1.4%
10	Tallahassee, FL	3.5%	Columbia, SC	1.2%

Observations:

- Four out of the top 10 CBSAs are shared among the two Profiles above. This shows your key markets for possible future marketing expenditures. Inquirers from Raleigh-Cary, NC are finding interesting things about Hickory that is enticing them to visit often.

COMMUNITY TAPESTRY STUDY

An Introduction to Community Tapestry™

For the past 30 years, companies, agencies and organizations have used segmentation to divide and group their markets to more precisely target their best customers and prospects. This targeting method is superior to using “scattershot” methods that might attract these preferred groups. Segmentation explains customer diversity, simplifies marketing campaigns, describes lifestyle and lifestage of the residents and consumers and incorporates a wide range of public and private data.

Segmentation systems operate on the theory that people with similar tastes, lifestyles and behaviors seek others with those same tastes (hence the phrase “like seeks like”). These behaviors can be measured, predicted and targeted. The Community Tapestry™ segmentation system combines the *who* of lifestyle demography with the *where* of local neighborhood geography to create a model of various lifestyle classifications or segments of actual neighborhoods, identifying distinct behavioral market segments.

Based on the foundation of proven segmentation methodology introduced more than 30 years ago, the Tapestry system classifies U.S. neighborhoods into 12 larger LifeMode groups and within those 12 larger groups, 65 more distinct market segments. Neighborhoods with the most similar characteristics are grouped together while neighborhoods showing divergent characteristics are separated.

Understanding your customers (residents and visitors), knowing customers’ shopping patterns, assessing the media preferences of customers, cross-selling to customers, and successfully retaining existing customers for a lifetime are just some activities that are supported by mining customer files. Some of these marketing activities include:

- Customer profiling
- Media targeting
- Direct mail
- Site analysis.

The customer profiles reveal the demographics, lifestyles and product preferences of a community’s consumers. Consumers can be visitors, residents or businesses, anyone who actively buys or sells goods in the city. By understanding who its customers are, more appropriate responses can be formed to address their needs with better messaging, products and services.

Said simply, the more you can learn about your customers (in this case your residents and visitors), the better you can serve them, keep them and find more like them.

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Purpose

A Community Tapestry Study was conducted to understand the target audience's lifestyle in detail. This included complete profiling reports for the Hickory residents, inquiries, and overnight visitors.

Methodology & Results

Tapestry represents the fourth generation of market segmentation systems that began 30 years ago. This powerful tool classifies U.S. neighborhoods in several ways, including:

- LifeMode Groups:
 - 12 summary groups based on lifestyle and lifestage
 - Members share an experience (being born in the same time period, facing the same lifestage, having a certain level of affluence, etc.)
- Community Tapestry Segments:
 - 65 groups based on sociographic and demographic composition
 - Considers income, occupation, educational attainment, ethnic origin, household composition, marital/living arrangements, patterns of migration, mobility and communication, lifestyle and media patterns
 - Most distinct level of segmentation

The results from the Tapestry studies can be classified into two main reports:

- Who Report:
 - Profiles the demographic and lifestyle segmentation of the population
 - Classifies the population in each of the ways outlined above and indexes the population under study against national averages
- What Report:
 - Provides a detailed profile of the core population for 37 separate lifestyle and media groups in over 2,200 sub-categories
 - Each category is indexed against the average U.S. resident to determine whether a member of the population under study is more or less likely to exhibit the specific behavior.

Key findings from the Community Tapestry reports are shown on the following pages.

For the comprehensive Tapestry Who and What reports, please refer to the Final BrandPrint CD. For further explanation of any data or methodologies used to analyze the Tapestry reports, please refer to the supplemental Community Tapestry Poster or visit the following link:

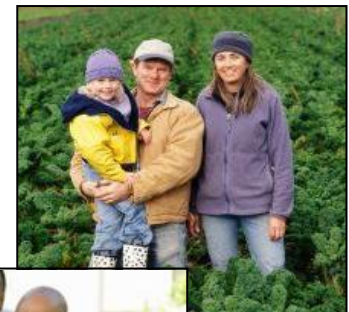
<http://www.esri.com/library/brochures/pdfs/tapestry-segmentation.pdf>.

COMMUNITY TAPESTRY SEGMENT BREAKDOWN BY LIFEMODE GROUP

The following chart lists all 65 Tapestry Segments under their respective LifeMode Group. The percentages listed are representative of the entire United States and not your community. As you read about your own community's Segments in the following pages, use the table below as a guide when matching those Segments with their corresponding LifeMode Groups.

SEGMENT BREAKDOWN BY LIFEMODE GROUP	% of U.S. Pop.
L1. High Society	12.7%
01 Top Rung	0.7%
02 Suburban Splendor	1.7%
03 Connoisseurs	1.4%
04 Boomburbs	2.2%
05 Wealthy Seaboard Suburbs	1.4%
06 Sophisticated Squires	2.7%
07 Exurbanites	2.5%
L2. Upscale Avenues	13.8%
09 Urban Chic	1.3%
10 Pleasant-Ville	1.7%
11 Pacific Heights	0.6%
13 In Style	2.5%
16 Enterprising Professionals	1.7%
17 Green Acres	3.2%
18 Cozy and Comfortable	2.8%
L3. Metropolis	5.3%
20 City Lights	1.0%
22 Metropolitans	1.2%
45 City Strivers	0.7%
51 Metro City Edge	0.9%
54 Urban Rows	0.3%
62 Modest Income Homes	1.0%
L4. Solo Acts	6.8%
08 Laptops and Lattes	1.0%
23 Trendsetters	1.1%
27 Metro Renters	1.3%
36 Old and Newcomers	2.0%
39 Young and Restless	1.4%
L5. Senior Styles	12.4%
14 Prosperous Empty Nesters	1.8%
15 Silver and Gold	1.0%
29 Rustbelt Retirees	2.1%
30 Retirement Communities	1.5%
43 The Elders	0.6%
49 Senior Sun Seekers	1.2%
50 Heartland Communities	2.2%
57 Simple Living	1.4%
65 Social Security Set	0.6%
L6. Scholars & Patriots	1.4%
40 Military Proximity	0.2%
55 College Towns	0.8%
63 Dorms to Diplomas	0.4%
L7. High Hopes	4.1%
28 Aspiring Young Families	2.4%
48 Great Expectations	1.7%

SEGMENT BREAKDOWN BY LIFEMODE GROUP	% of U.S. Pop.
L8. Global Roots	8.2%
35 International Marketplace	1.3%
38 Industrious Urban Fringe	1.5%
44 Urban Melting Pot	0.7%
47 Las Casas	0.8%
52 Inner City Tenants	1.5%
58 NeWest Residents	0.9%
60 City Dimensions	0.9%
61 High Rise Renters	0.7%
L9. Family Portrait	7.8%
12 Up and Coming Families	3.4%
19 Milk and Cookies	2.0%
21 Urban Villages	0.8%
59 Southwestern Families	1.0%
64 City Commons	0.7%
L10. Traditional Living	8.8%
24 Main Street, USA	2.6%
32 Rustbelt Traditions	2.8%
33 Midlife Junction	2.5%
34 Family Foundations	0.9%
L11. Factories & Farms	9.5%
25 Salt of the Earth	2.8%
37 Prairie Living	1.0%
42 Southern Satellites	2.7%
53 Home Town	1.5%
56 Rural Bypasses	1.5%
L12. American Quilt	9.3%
26 Midland Crowd	3.7%
31 Rural Resort Dwellers	1.6%
41 Crossroads	1.5%
46 Rooted Rural	2.4%

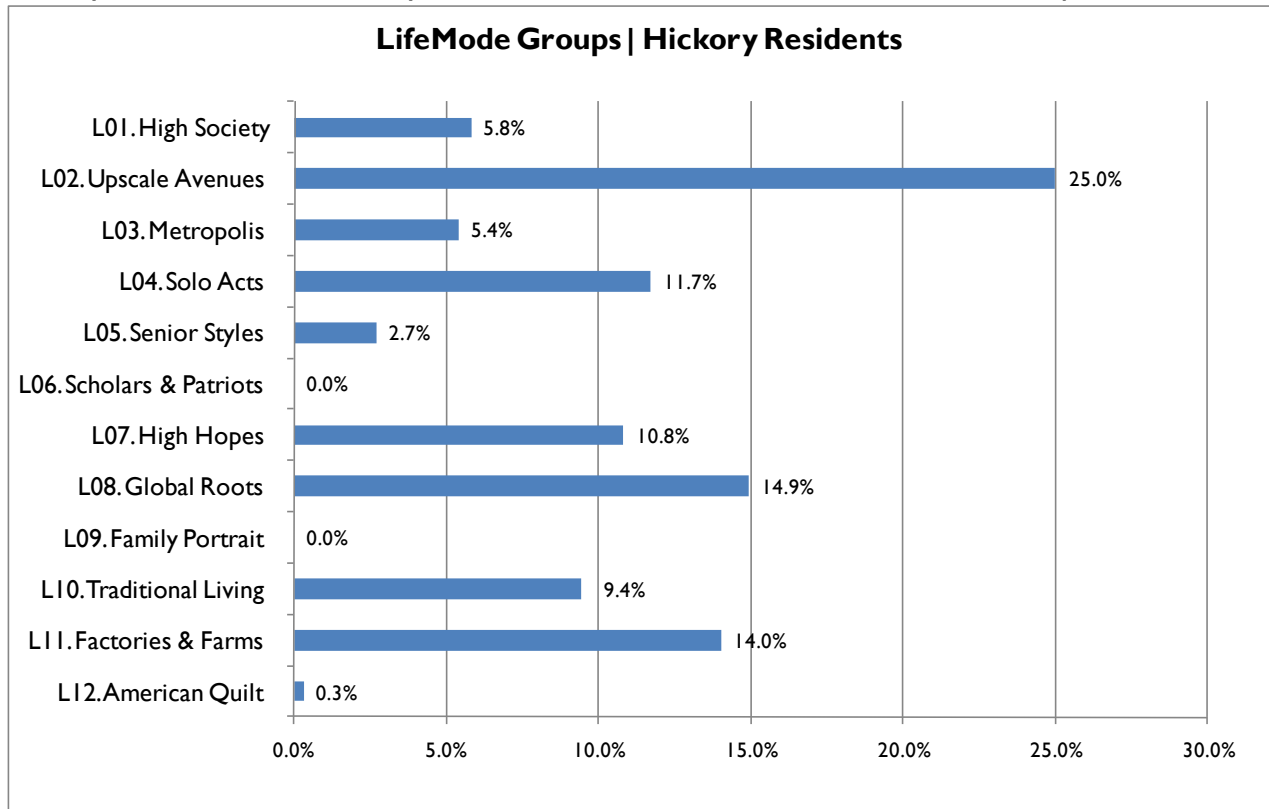


COMMUNITY TAPESTRY WHO REPORT | LIFEMODE GROUPS

The following charts highlight some of the key findings about the Hickory Resident Profile, Inquiry Profile, and Overnight Visitor Profile as they relate to LifeMode Groups. Remember, members in a LifeMode Group share an experience such as being born in the same time period, facing the same lifestage, having a certain level of affluence, etc.

The number in front of each LifeMode corresponds with the LifeMode Group designation outlined on the community Tapestry Poster. Please refer to the Community Tapestry Poster that North Star provided for more in-depth information on each LifeMode Group. The indexing system you will see referenced below has the U.S. average sitting at 100. Therefore, any index above 100 indicates that Hickory is delivering above the U.S. average in that LifeMode or Tapestry Segment.

Below you can see how Hickory residents are divided into the 12 LifeMode Groups.



OBSERVATION: A good mix of prosperity and cultural diversity exists in your resident profile. Both *Upscale Avenues* and *Global Roots* emphasize family. This is evident through your community's genuine, inviting nature that is mentioned throughout the research.

Top Resident LifeMode Groups: The U.S. average sits at 100.

L2 Upscale Avenues (25.0%) – Indexed 180 against the U.S. average

- Many are well educated with above average earnings and are successful from years of hard work.
- Median household income is \$65,000+ and median net worth is \$153,000+.
- Prosperous domesticity also characterizes the lifestyle in Upscale Avenues.
- They invest in their homes; the owners work on landscaping and home remodeling projects, and the renters buy new furnishings and appliances.
- They play golf, lift weights, go bicycling, and take domestic vacations.
- Although they are partial to new cars, they also save and invest their earnings.

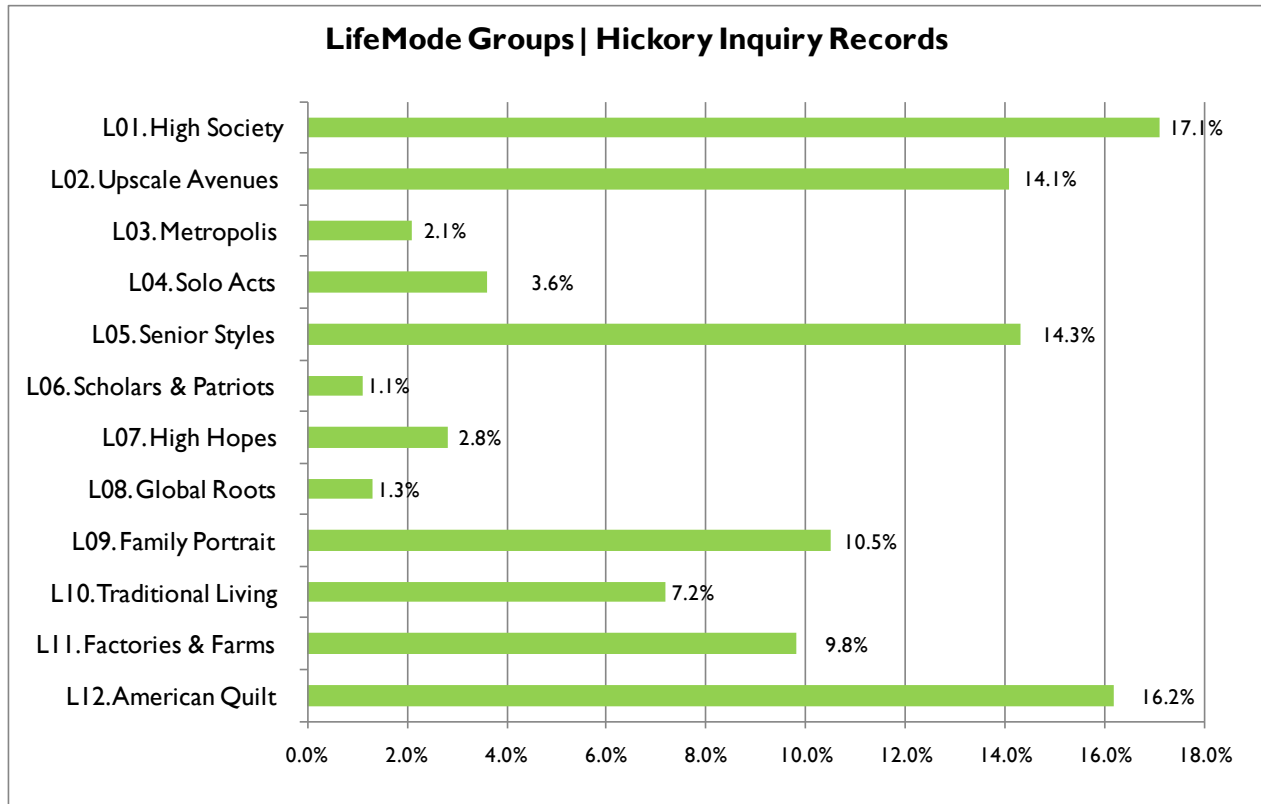
L8 Global Roots (14.9%) – Indexed 183 against the U.S. average

- Ethnic diversity is the common thread among the eight segments in Global Roots;
- Las Casas and NeWest Residents represent a strong Hispanic influence in addition to a broad mix of cultural and racial diversity found in Urban Melting Pot and International Marketplace.
- Residents are young, earn modest incomes, and tend to rent in multiunit buildings.
- Their youth reflects recent immigration trends; half of all households have immigrated to the United States within the past ten years.
- Married couples, usually with children; single parents; and people who live alone are typical.
- Spending is high for baby products, children's clothing and toys.
- Residents are less likely than other groups to have home PCs but just as likely to use cell phones.

L11 Factories & Farmers (14.0%) – Indexed 149 against the U.S. average

- Employment in manufacturing and agricultural industries is typical in these small, settled communities across America's breadbasket.
- The rural South and Rustbelt areas change little over time, which often hinders area growth.
- Married couples (some with children), most own their homes.
- Median household incomes are \$37,000.
- Population change is nominal, and the profile is classic.
- Their lifestyle reflects their locale, emphasizing home and garden care, fishing and hunting, pets, and membership in local clubs.

The following chart examines the LifeMode breakout of your Inquiry Profile.



OBSERVATION: Typical of inquiry profiles, Hickory’s inquirers represent a gamut of lifestyles and preferences. All levels of affluence are represented in this Profile.

Top Inquiry LifeMode Groups: The U.S. average sits at 100.

L1 High Society (17.1%) – Indexed 135 against the U.S. average

- The markets in High Society are affluent and well educated.
- The median household income for this group, \$94,000, is almost twice that of the national median.
- Most households are married-couple families residing in affluent neighborhoods where the median home value approaches \$290,000.
- Residents of High Society are affluent and active—financially, civically, and physically. They participate in a wide variety of public activities and sports and travel extensively.
- Try the Internet or radio instead of television to reach these markets.

L12 American Quilt (16.2%) – Indexed 174 against the U.S. average

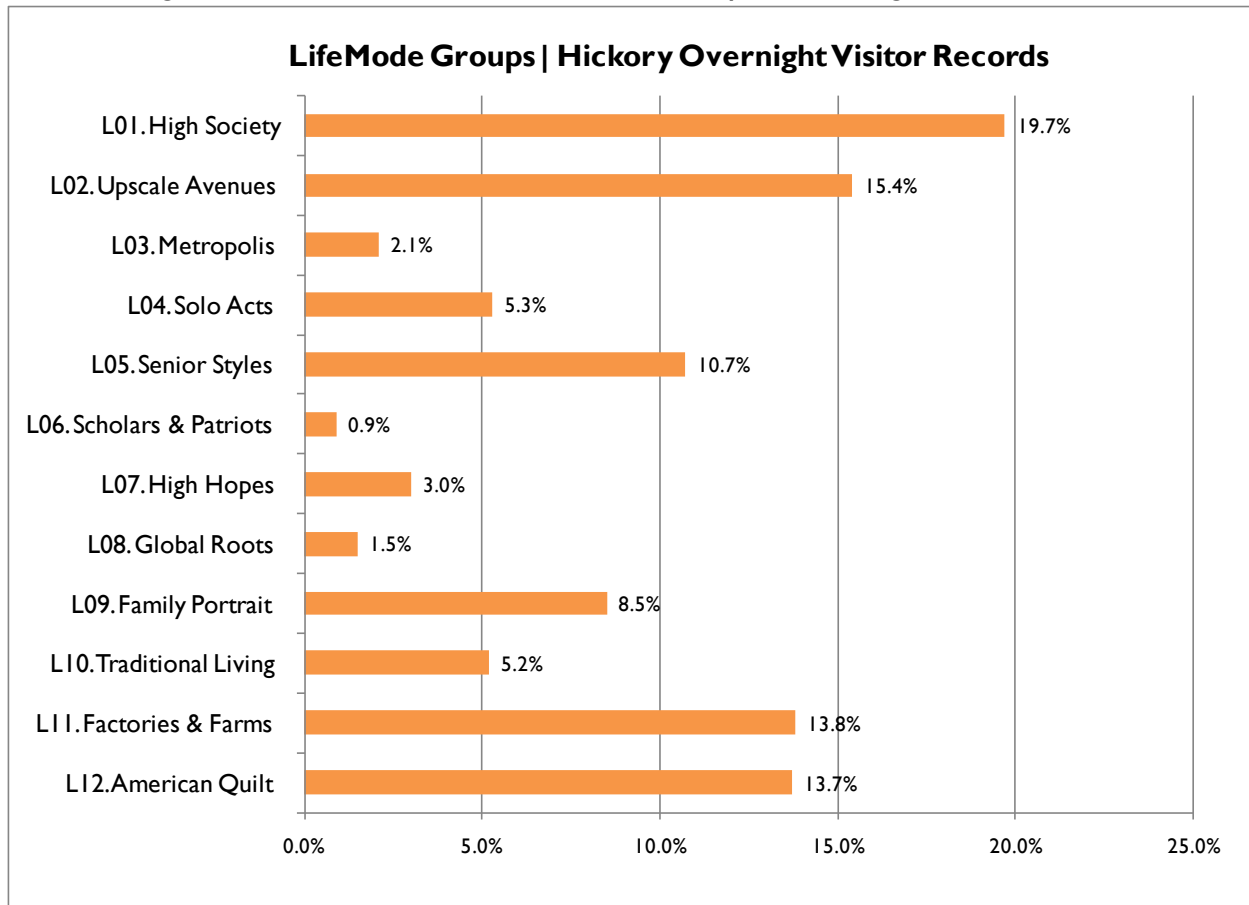
- Live in small towns and rural areas and own modest houses.
- Work as skilled laborers in Manufacturing, agriculture, local government, service, construction, and farming industries

- American Quilt includes the Rural Resort Dwellers segment, an older population that is retiring to seasonal vacation spots, and the Crossroads segment, a younger, family population that favors mobile homes.
- Households in American Quilt are also more affluent, with a median income of \$44,478, and more are homeowners.
- However, the rural lifestyle is also evident, with fishing and hunting (and power boats) and a preference for pickups and country music.

L5 Senior Styles (14.3%) – Indexed 115 against the U.S. average

- More than 14.4 million households comprise Tapestry's largest summary group
- Incomes in this group cover a wide range, but the median is \$40,000
- Younger, more affluent seniors, freed of child rearing responsibilities, are traveling and relocating to warmer climates
- Less affluent, settled seniors are looking forward to retirement and remaining in their homes.
- Residents in some of the older, less privileged segments live alone and collect Social Security and other benefits. Their choice of housing depends on their income. This group may reside in single-family homes, retirement homes, or highrises.
- Golf is their favorite sport; they play and watch golf on TV. They read the newspaper daily and prefer to watch news shows on television.
- Although their use of the Internet is nearly average, they are more likely to shop through QVC than online.

The following chart examines the LifeMode breakout of your Overnight Visitors Profile.



OBSERVATION: Interestingly, your visitor profile is comprised of both affluent, well-educated visitors and rural, hardworking individuals. The Overnight Visitor Profile represents a spectrum of lifestyles and preferences.

Top Inquiry LifeMode Groups: The U.S. average sits at 100.

L1 High Society (19.7%) – Indexed 155 against the U.S. average

- See page 54, for description

L2 Upscale Avenues (15.4%) – Indexed 112 against the U.S. average

- See page 53, for description

L11 Factories & Farmers (13.8%) – Indexed 146 against the U.S. average

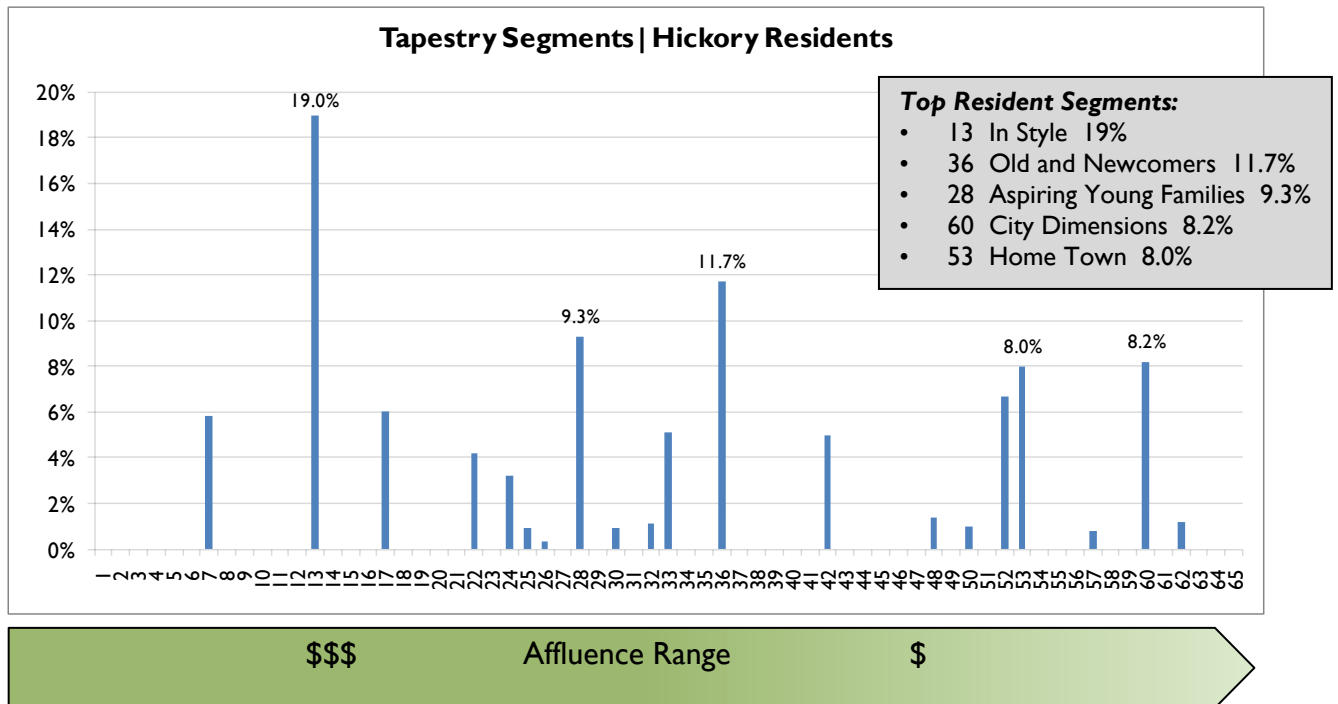
- See page 53, for description

COMMUNITY TAPESTRY WHO REPORT | COMMUNITY TAPESTRY SEGMENTS

Community Tapestry Segments are the most distinct level of segmentation within the Tapestry System, dividing members of a population into 65 clusters based on sociographic and demographic composition. Tapestry Segments take into consideration things like income, occupation, educational attainment, ethnic origin, household composition, marital/living arrangements, patterns of migration, mobility, communication and lifestyle and media patterns.

The chart below illustrates delivery within all the Segments for Hickory residents.

The Tapestry Segments are organized by level of affluence – Segment 1 is the most affluent Segment and 65 is the least affluent Segment.



OBSERVATION: Among your top Segments, your residents range in age from late-twenties to late-thirties. Married couples and young singles are popular among your resident profile.

Top Resident Segment Descriptions: The U.S. average sits at 100

13 In Style (19%) – Indexed 766 against the U.S. average

- Professional couples who live in the suburbs but favor the lifestyle of city dwellers.
- Median age is 37.8 and median HHI is \$65,000+.
- Physical fitness is an integral part of their lifestyle with many participating in Weight Watchers and exercise programs.
- They enjoy dining out at The Cheesecake Factory and Chili’s Grill and Bar, watching E! and the Golf Channel, traveling domestically, and going to rock concerts and live theater shows.

36 Old and Newcomers (11.7%) – Indexed 602 against the U.S. average

- The Old and Newcomers neighborhoods are in transition, populated by renters who are starting their careers or retiring.
- Householders are either in their twenties or over 75, the median age is 36 years.
- The median HHI is \$40,400.
- Purchasing preferences reflects their unencumbered lifestyles.
- Compact cars are popular to fit the needs of the nonfamily households.
- They love reading books and have the highest readership of any segment. They also enjoy going to the movies and renting movies.
- They play racquetball and golf, as well as jogging or walking.
- Age is not always obvious from their choices.

28 Aspiring Young Families (9.3%) – Indexed 396 against the U.S. average

- Young, start-up families, a mix of married-couple families (with and without children), and single parents with children.
- Median age is 30.1 and median HHI is \$46,400.
- Attracted to the large, growing metropolitan areas in the South and West.
- Spend most of discretionary income on children and homes. Buy baby products and home furnishings, including bedroom and dining room furniture.
- Also, spend time on chat rooms, searching for employment, playing games and making travel plans.
- Vacations are likely to include visits to theme parks.
- Leisure time may include dining out, dancing, going to the movies and attending professional ball games.

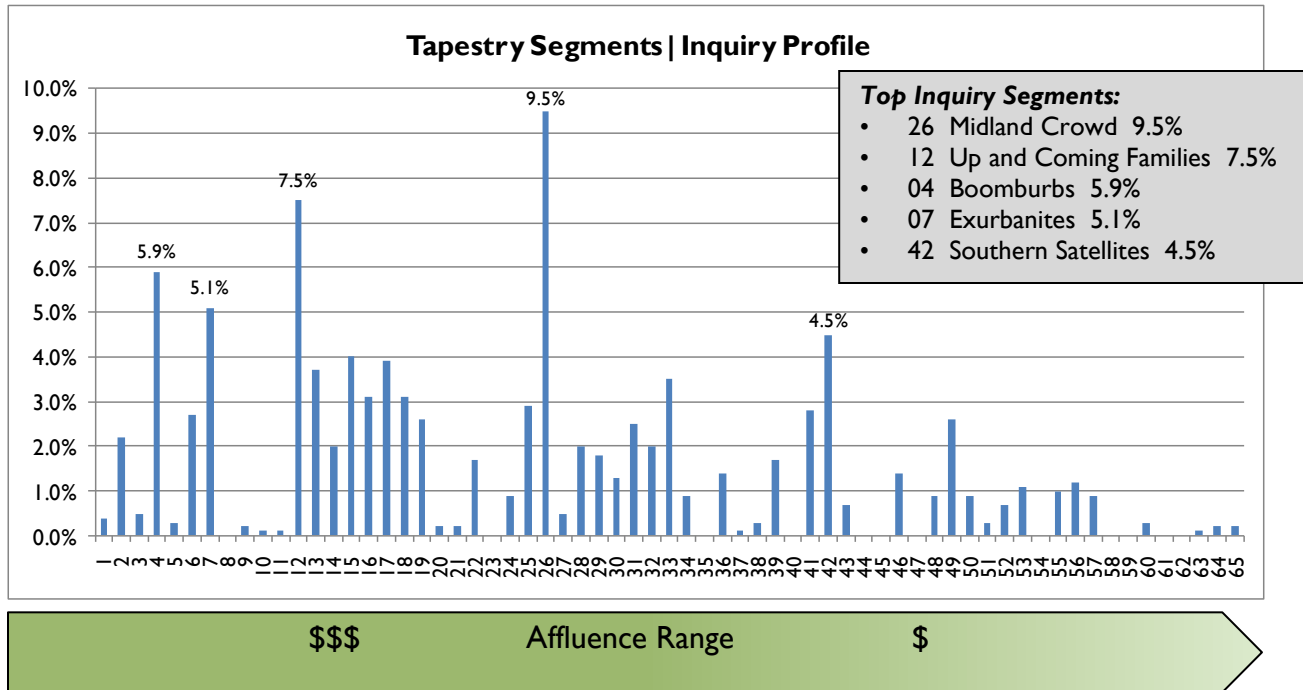
60 City Dimensions (8.2%) – Indexed 952 against the U.S. average

- This segment is characterized by diversity in household type and ethnicity.
- Primarily young and single with a median age of 28.7.
- The median HHI is \$26,000.
- They are frequent viewers of cable television and most homes own more than one television.
- These residents are avid watchers of sports but rarely participants.
- Prefer to shop at discount stores and many of the homes do not have amenities such as central air conditioning.
- Prefer purchasing used domestic cars to foreign made cars. For entertainment, they enjoy dining out, going dancing and attending music performances.

53 Home Town (8.0%) – Indexed 553 against the U.S. average

- Median age is 34 and median HHI is \$28,800.
- Although unemployment is high many find service or skilled labor jobs.
- Savor quasi-country lifestyle by spending time outdoors, gardening, fishing, and swimming.
- Enjoy urban location by visiting nightclubs, movies, museums, and zoos.
- Primary means of communication is telephone.
- Watch CNN, Fox News, and the Discovery Channel.
- Shop at Wal-Mart, buy clothes at discount stores, and eat out at Applebee's or Cracker Barrel.

The following chart examines the Segment breakout of your Inquiry Profile.



OBSERVATION: Hickory’s inquirers affluence level is slightly more affluent than average.

Top Inquiry Segment Descriptions: The U.S. average sits at 100

26 Midland Crowd (9.5%) – Indexed 255 against the U.S. average

- Largest market with nearly 4% of the US population.
- Majority in married-couple families, half with children and half without.
- Median age is 36 years and median HHI is \$47,000.
- Rural location and traditional lifestyle fuels their do-it-yourself attitude when it comes to taking care of homes and vehicles.
- A Chevrolet or Ford truck is the vehicle of choice.
- High demand for children’s products. Very high TV viewership of NASCAR, fishing programs and CMT.
- Politically conservative; devoted pet lovers; domestic travelers; and dependent on fast-food, cell phones and the internet.

12 Up and Coming Families (7.5%) – Indexed 221 against the U.S. average

- Young, affluent families with small children; own new single-family homes.
- 65% have attended college.
- Median age is < 32 and median HHI \$67,000.
- Fast food is a staple in the family diet. Leisure includes attending ball games, going to the zoo, etc.
- If these families travel, they only do so domestically.

- Since many are first time homeowners, they still purchase household basics.
- Up and Coming Families are starting or expanding their families so they purchase baby equipment, toys, etc.

04 Boomburbs (5.9%) – Indexed 263 against the U.S. average

- Newest additions to the suburbs; younger families with a busy upscale lifestyle.
- Fastest growing market in US at 6% annually.
- Median age is < 34 and median HHI is \$100,000+.
- Little ethnic diversity; population is predominantly white.
- Product preferences reflect suburban lifestyle. Purchase everything from household furnishings and baby furniture to cars and camcorders.
- Boomburbs drive SUV's and are very active; they favor golf, tennis and swimming.
- Buy food at upscale grocery stores like Harris Teeter.
- Technically savvy; own PDAs, computers, MP3 player, etc. Their children represent top market for video game and PC use.

07 Exurbanites (5.1%) – Indexed 204 against the U.S. average

- Living beyond the urban fringe, Exurbanites prefer open space with affluence.
- Majority of residents are empty nesters, but the median age is 43. Median HHI is \$80,000+.
- Consult with financial planners and track investments on the Internet.
- Listen to public radio, donate to PBS, and remain active in their communities.
- Enjoy golf, boating, hiking, kayaking, vacations, and working on their homes and gardens.
- Practical shoppers favoring Old Navy, Target, and L.L. Bean.

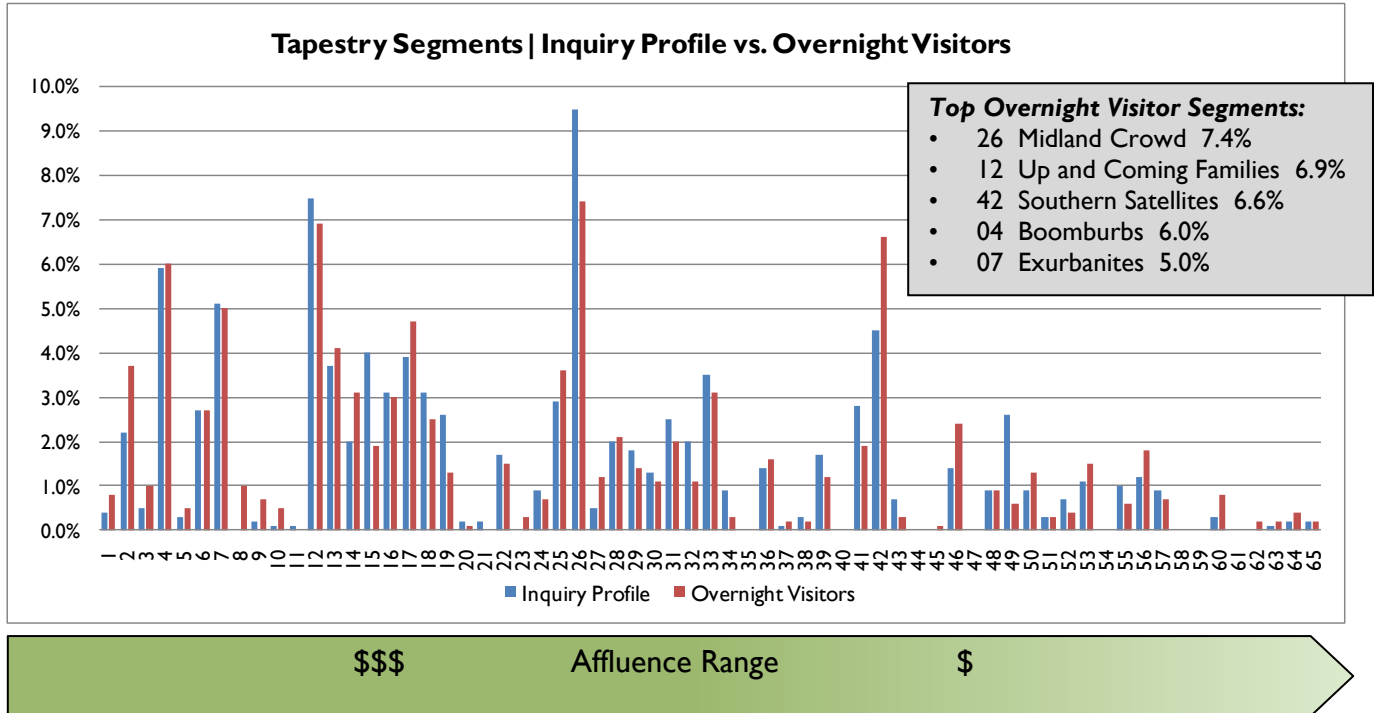
42 Southern Satellites (4.5%) – Indexed 165 against the U.S. average

- Primarily found in the rural south, it is one of the most sparsely populated market segments in the US.
- Most households are married couples.
- The median age is 37 years and the median HHI is \$37,000.
- These residents enjoy country living. Fishing and hunting are two of the favorite activities and they spend money on magazines and gear to support those interests.
- They are likely to own mowers, tractors and trucks.
- Home activities typically include gardening but not home improvement projects.
- Home PCs and the Internet have not made inroads in this market.



COMMUNITY TAPESTRY WHO REPORT | TAPESTRY SEGMENT COMPARISON

Below is a chart that compares the Inquiry Profile's Segments with those from the Overnight Visitors'.



OBSERVATION: The similarity between the Inquiry Profile and Overnight Visitor Profile suggest a high conversion rate.

Top Overnight Visitor Segment Descriptions: The U.S. average sits at 100

26 Midland Crowd (7.4%) – Indexed 199 against the U.S. average

- See page 59, for description

12 Up and Coming Families (6.9%) – Indexed 203 against the U.S. average

- See page 59, for description

42 Southern Satellites (6.6%) – Indexed 241 against the U.S. average

- See page 60, for description

04 Boomburbs (6.0%) – Indexed 269 against the U.S. average

- See page 60, for description

07 Exurbanites (5.0%) – Indexed 199 against the U.S. average

- See page 60, for description

COMMUNITY TAPESTRY WHAT REPORT | UNDERSTANDING THE WHAT REPORT

The Hickory Resident, Inquiry and Overnight Visitor What Reports can be found in their entirety on the BrandPrint CD. The information below (and on the following pages) can be used as a guide to help you more fully understand the What Reports. When used correctly, this report will help you gain a much deeper understanding of the resident and consumer population *and* serve as a valuable tool for economic development.

We encourage you to familiarize yourself with the What Reports and challenge economic development entities to focus recruitment efforts on businesses frequented by populations with the same demographic composition as Hickory.

As explained previously, the Tapestry What Report provides a detailed analysis of the audience under study for 37 separate Lifestyle and Media groups (see list below) in over 2,200 categories. Lifestyle and media groups are very broad (“Shopping”) while sub-categories are much more specific (“shopped at The Gap in the past 3 months”).

Complete list of all Tapestry Lifestyle and Media groups:

- Apparel
- Appliances
- Attitudes
- Automobiles
- Automotive/Aftermarket
- Baby Products
- Beverage Alcohol
- Books
- Cameras
- Civic Activities
- Convenience Stores
- Electronics
- Financials
- Furniture
- Garden Lawn
- Grocery
- Health
- Home Improvement
- Insurance
- Internet
- Leisure
- Mail/Phone/Yellow Pages
- Watch
- Read
- Listen
- Personal Care
- Pets
- Restaurant
- Shopping
- Smoking
- Sports
- Telephone
- Tools
- Toys/Games
- Travel
- Video/DVDs
- Miscellaneous

READING THE WHAT REPORT CHARTS:

All categories are indexed against the national average of people who exhibit that certain lifestyle trait. An index of 100 is average, thus anything above a 100 index is above average and anything below a 100 index is below average. The sample below is pulled from the Hickory Resident What Report and can help you understand this indexing system.

As an example, your residents index 154 in eating at Big Boy within the last six months. This means your residents are one and a half times more likely to eat at Big Boy than the U.S. average.

Economic development entities in your community can use this information as a sales tool to recruit potential businesses with cold hard numbers. Let's return to the Big Boy example: If Hickory currently has a Big Boy operating within its city limits, you are satisfying your residents' desire to eat at this family restaurant. However, if for some reason Hickory is without a Big Boy, you can use this information to entice Big Boy to open a location within the city limits. Businesses will be more likely to partner with Hickory if they are given data to support such a decision.



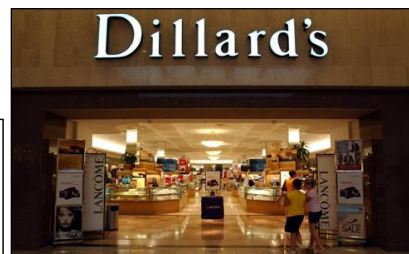
Restaurants	Index
Fam rest/steak hse last 6 mo: Big Boy	154
Fast food/drive-in last 6 mo: Church`s Fr. Chicken	153
Fam rest/steak hse last 6 mo: Ryan`s	141
Fam rest/steak hse last 6 mo: Cheesecake Factory	73
Fast food/drive-in last 6 mo: Fuddruckers	56

RESIDENT WHAT REPORT:

Below you will find a summary of the What Report for Hickory residents. The following page contains selected charts that highlight some of your residents' key preferences. For all of the results from the Tapestry What Reports, refer to the Final BrandPrint CD.

Summary of Resident What Report:

- ▶ **A mix of income ranges and social and ethnic diversity influence preferences:**
- **Restaurants:** Residents are likely to dine at restaurants like Big Boy and Church's Fried Chicken, but unlikely to dine at places like Fuddruckers or Cheesecake Factory.
 - **Watch:** Residents of Hickory are likely to watch television networks like BET (Black Entertainment Television). Also, they are heavy viewers of daytime television and are more likely to watch syndicated television shows like Inside Edition.
 - **Listen:** Likely to listen to urban or variety/other formats of radio. Residents of Hickory are much less likely to listen to Hispanic radio.
 - **Shopping:** Residents are likely to have shopped at Dillard's within the last three months, but unlikely to shop at higher-end stores like Nordstrom or club stores like Costco.



Example charts from the Resident What Report:

Restaurants	Index
Fam rest/steak hse last 6 mo: Big Boy	154
Fast food/drive-in last 6 mo: Church`s Fr. Chicken	153
Fam rest/steak hse last 6 mo: Cracker Barrel	125
Fam rest/steak hse last 6 mo: Cheesecake Factory	73
Fast food/drive-in last 6 mo: Fuddruckers	56



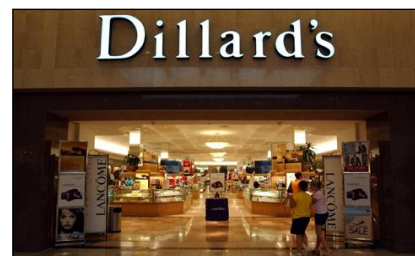
Watch	Index
Watched last week: BET (Black Entertainment TV)	192
Watch Syndicated TV (M-F): Inside Edition	159
Heavy viewer of daytime TV	158
Watched last week: MTV	136
Watched last week: FX	125



Listen	Index
Radio format listen to: variety/other	143
Radio format listen to: urban	142
Radio format listen to: soft adult contemporary	75
Radio format listen to: all news	72
Radio format listen to: Hispanic	44



Shopping	Index
Dept/clothing/variety store/3 mo: Dillard`s	136
Dept/clothing/variety store/3 mo: The Disney Store	76
Dept/clothing/variety store/3 mo: Nordstrom	69
Warehouse/club store/6 mo: Costco	66



INQUIRY AND OVERNIGHT VISITOR PROFILES WHAT REPORT:

Below you will find a summary of the What Report for the Inquiry and Overnight Visitor Profiles. The following page contains selected charts that highlight some of the consumers' key preferences. For all of the results from the Tapestry What Reports, refer to the Final BrandPrint CD.

Summary of Inquiry What Report:

- ▶ **Middle to high range incomes and the presence of children influence preferences:**
 - **Leisure:** Likely to have attended an opera or classical music performance, but also gone bird watching and visited Disney World's Magic Kingdom in the past 12 months.
 - **Restaurants:** Inquirers of Hickory are likely to dine at fast food/drive in restaurants like Chick-fil-A and casual dining restaurants like Panera Bread. Residents are, however, less likely to frequent a restaurant like Sizzler.
 - **Shopping:** Inquirers are likely to have shopped at Dillard's within the last three months, but unlikely to have shopped at drug store Rite Aid in the last six months.

Summary of Overnight Visitor What Report:

- ▶ **Slightly higher income levels and children influence preferences:**
 - **Leisure:** Overnight Visitors are likely to have gone bird watching, visited Disney World's Magic Kingdom or attended a classical music performance in the past 12 months.
 - **Restaurants:** Likely to dine at fast food restaurants like Hardee's and Chick-fil-A, but are unlikely to dine at a steakhouse such as Sizzler.
 - **Shopping:** Overnight Visitors of Hickory are likely to have shopped at stores like Nordstrom or Crate & Barrel within the last three months and to have ordered from Land's End or L.L. Bean within the last twelve months.

Example charts from the Inquiry What Report:

Leisure	Index
Did birdwatching in last 12 months	142
Visited Disney World (FL)/12 mo: Magic Kingdom	131
Attended classical music/opera performance/12 mo	130
Did woodworking in last 12 months	130
Gambled in Atlantic City in last 12 months	68



Restaurants	Index
Fast food/drive-in last 6 mo: Chick-fil-A	166
Fast food/drive-in last 6 mo: Panera Bread	154
Fast food/drive-in last 6 mo: Hardee`s	152
Fam rest/steak hse last 6 mo: Cracker Barrel	150
Fam rest/steak hse last 6 mo: Sizzler	71



Shopping	Index
Dept/clothing/variety store/3 mo: Dillard`s	158
Ordered last 12 mo from: Lands` End	151
Ordered last 12 mo from: L.L. Bean	145
Warehouse/club store/6 mo: Sam`s Club	138
Drug store shopped at last 6 mo: Rite Aid	74



Example charts from the Overnight Visitor What Report:

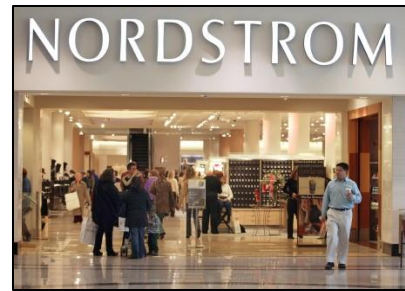
Leisure	Index
Did birdwatching in last 12 months	145
Attended classical music/opera performance/12 mo	144
Visited Disney World (FL)/12 mo: Magic Kingdom	133
Did woodworking in last 12 months	132
Went to museum in last 12 months	130



Restaurant	Index
Fast food/drive-in last 6 mo: Hardee`s	163
Fam rest/steak hse last 6 mo: Ryan`s	158
Fast food/drive-in last 6 mo: Chick-fil-A	156
Fast food/drive-in last 6 mo: Panera Bread	156
Fam rest/steak hse last 6 mo: Sizzler	71



Shopping	Index
Dept/clothing/variety store/3 mo: Nordstrom	164
Ordered last 12 mo from: Lands` End	164
Dept/clothing/variety store/3 mo: Crate & Barrel	162
Ordered last 12 mo from: L.L. Bean	152
Dept/clothing/variety store/3 mo: Eddie Bauer	148



INQUIRY AND OVERNIGHT VISITOR MEDIA COMPARISON:

Inquiry Profile

Internet	Index
Ordered on Internet/12 mo: flowers	153
Internet last 30 days: traded/tracked investments	145
Connection to Internet from home: wireless	135
Have access to Internet: at work	126
Used Internet in last 30 days: at home	125

Overnight Visitor Profile

Internet	Index
Ordered on Internet/12 mo: flowers	169
Connection to Internet from home: wireless	161
Use Internet 5 or more times per day	142
Used Internet in last 30 days: at home	128
Internet last 30 days: used email	126

Watch	Index
Watched last week: Golf Channel	180
HH has satellite dish	149
Watch on TV: rodeo/bull riding	130
Watched last week: Speed Channel	129
Watched last week: MSNBC	125

Watch	Index
HH has satellite dish	157
Watched last week: Golf Channel	156
Watched last week: Home & Garden Television	131
Watch TV aired once/wk: Grey`s Anatomy	127
Watched last week: Speed Channel	126

Observations:

- Evidenced by similar interest, the Inquiry Profile and Overnight Visitor Profile suggest complimentary lifestyles and life stages. Those inquiring about Hickory may be making the decision to visit the area.
- Above, the two categories showcased are examples of media outlets. To increase your conversion rate, consider spending media dollars on networks like the Golf Channel or Speed Channel.

ESRI ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

Purpose

The Economic Opportunity Analysis is conducted by the Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI) – a national leader in business information systems and analysis. The information associated with this analysis, including data on Catawba County and select competitive markets, enable data driven decision making and provide supporting evidence for attracting investment into the community. The analysis consists of four main reports and several sub-reports as described below.

Methodology & Results

The complete results from the Economic Opportunity Analysis can be found on the BrandPrint CD and should be passed on to economic development entities in the area. All files on the CD include reports for Catawba County and selected competitors including:

- Lincoln County
- Iredell County
- Gaston County
- Mecklenburg County

NOTE: The complete results from the Economic Opportunity Analysis can be found on the BrandPrint CD and should be passed on to economic development entities in the area.

A brief explanation of each report included in the analysis is provided below.

MARKET PROFILE

The Market Profile Report offers **ECONOMIC BACKGROUND INFORMATION** on Catawba County, providing an overview of key demographic attributes and consumer spending patterns. This set of data should be used in the evaluation process for site selection, market analysis and general trend evaluation. A Graphic Market Profile – with graphic representations of the demographic data – is also included.

- **Lists Catawba County’s economic statistics, demographic statistics and background**
 - Population by individuals, households, families
 - Housing by type, size, year moved in, housing units, home value
 - Age, Income, Ethnicity
 - Employment information by industry and occupation including commute info
 - **Lists changes over time (2000, 2010, 2015 projected)**
 - Households by income
 - Population by age, sex, race, employment status
 - **Lists consumer spending data**
 - Total, average and spending potential index (SPI) for 14 categories

BUSINESS SUMMARY

The Business Summary offers information on **SUPPLY** in Catawba County, providing a breakdown of the total number of businesses and employees per industry within 30 different sectors of the marketplace. It also provides a comparison of daytime versus residential population for the given area.

- **Lists numbers of businesses and employees in Catawba County**
 - By industry sector
 - **Uses Bureau of Labor Statistics “Infogroup Business Database”**
 - Includes business white and yellow pages, annual reports, SEC information, government data, business magazines, newsletters, newspapers
 - Infogroup does annual telephone verifications with each business

RETAIL GOODS AND SERVICES EXPENDITURES

The Retail Goods and Services Expenditures Report offers information on **DEMAND** in Catawba County. Focusing on consumer spending patterns of Catawba County’s residents, it looks at the spending potential index, average amount spent, and total amount spent in 12 categories and 74 sub-categories. It details total and average amount per household spent on retail goods and services such as food, apparel, travel and insurance.

A spending potential index (SPI) is used to compare the amount spent in the area under study to the U.S. average.

- **Lists Demographic Summary of Catawba County Residents**
 - Population, families, age, income, ethnicity
 - Top Tapestry Segments
 - **Lists Consumer expenditures**
 - By average amount spent per household annually

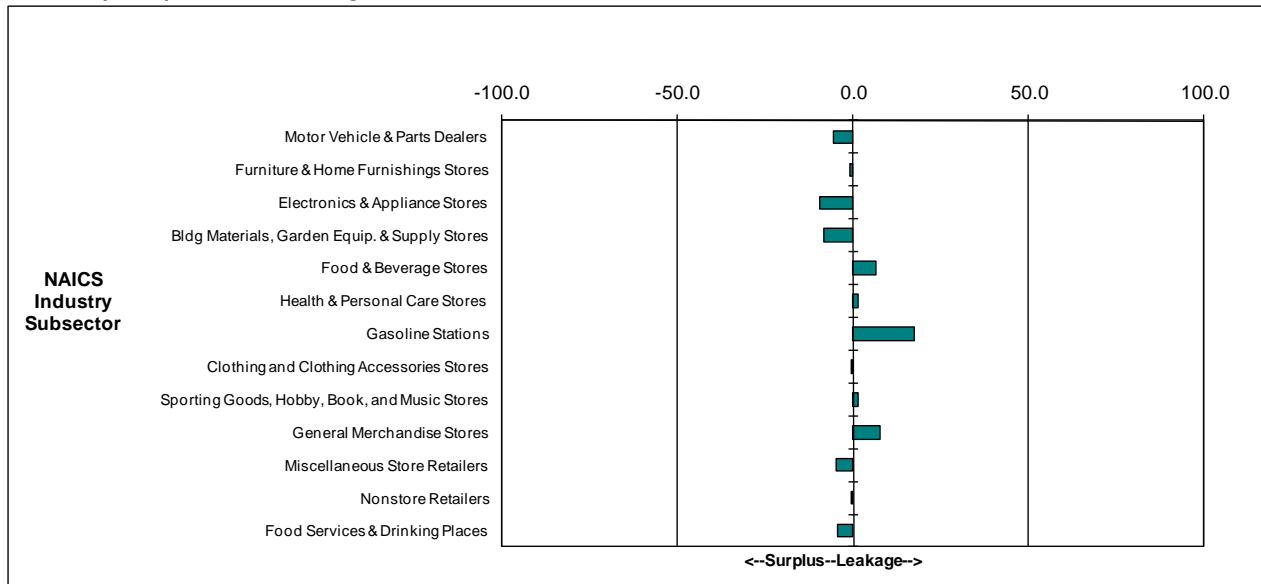
- By Spending Potential Index (SPI), which compares average expenditures for a product locally to the average amount spent nationally
 - **Combines Consumer Expenditure Surveys (CEX) with Bureau of Labor Statistics data**

RETAIL MARKETPLACE PROFILE

The Retail MarketPlace Profile offers information on **SURPLUS AND LEAKAGE**, or comparisons between existing supply and demand in Catawba County. It provides an industry summary, leakage/surplus factor for each industry group and sub-sector, and total supply and demand for each industry sub-sector.

- **Compares demand (retail potential by household) with supply (retail sales to consumers)**
- Leakage (green, positive) means retail opportunity is leaking outside Catawba County, or Catawba County residents are buying what they need outside of the community (+100 = total leakage)
- Surplus (red, negative) means Catawba County has a surplus of supply which draws customers in from outside the community (-100 = total surplus)
 - **Businesses are classified by primary type of economic activity and organized by North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code**
- NAICS, created by the U.S. Census Bureau

Summary Surplus and Leakage Chart



Observations: Catawba County shows leakage in several categories, meaning County residents are looking to competitor communities for their goods and services. Gasoline Stations, Food and Beverage Stores, and General Merchandise Stores present immediate opportunities for the County. Sharing this information and the additional information found on the BrandPrint CD with economic development entities in the County will help spread the word that there are opportunities in these areas.

TARGET MARKET SOLAR SYSTEM

Purpose

North Star’s Target Market Solar System clearly lays out Hickory’s targeting prospects visually, allowing a quick and easy identification of the markets with the greatest potential for return. Our proprietary “Likeness Index” ranks your top visitor markets according to *how well each market’s residents resemble your core visitors*. Expansion markets, or the markets which should be targeted most aggressively, are clearly identified in the upper left hand quadrant. The Solar System allows you to prioritize your marketing and media budgets, by showing you where your spending would be most effective, and where it might be wasted.

Methodology & Results

The Target Market maps out and correlates four market variables in one visual graph.

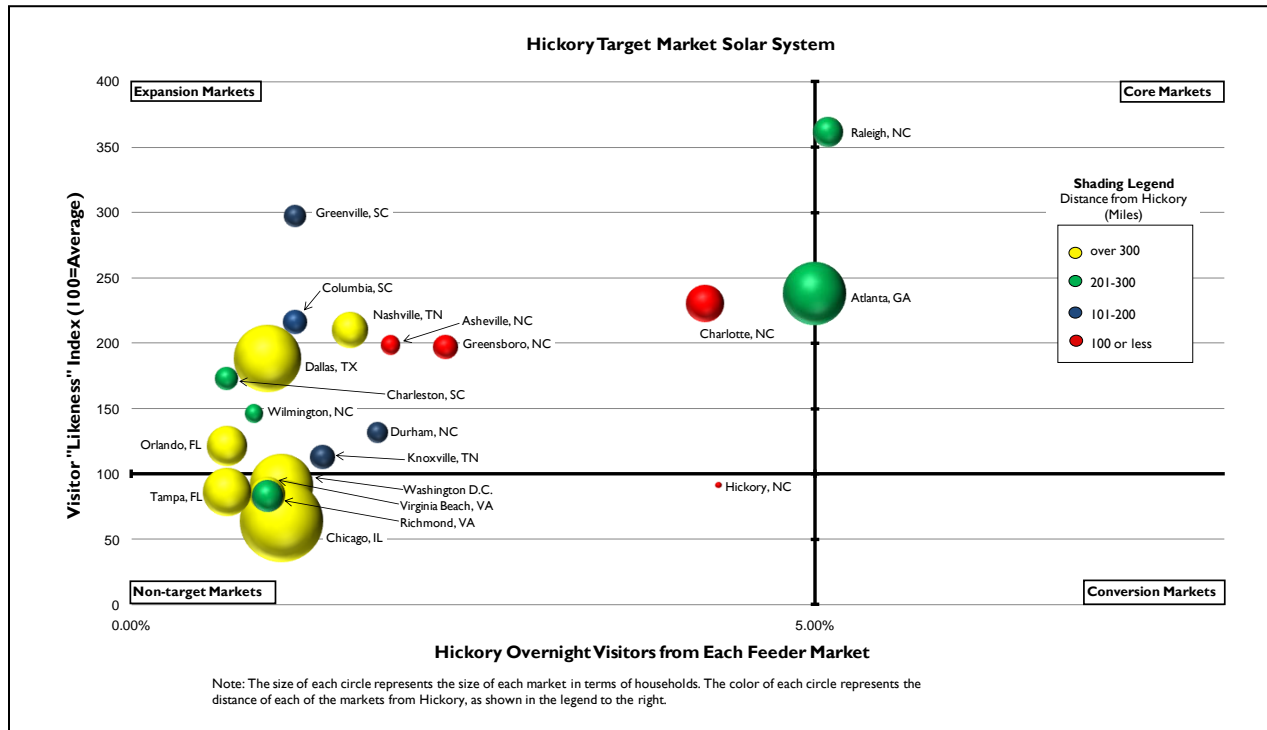
These include:

- The volume of current visitors to Hickory coming from each feeder market, indicated on the x, or horizontal, axis of the graph and listed from left to right.
- The calculated Likeness Index for each feeder market, or how well each market’s psychographic profile matches with Hickory’s target visitor profile. This is indicated on the y, or vertical, axis of the graph and listed from top to bottom.
- Size of each of Hickory’s top 20 feeder markets, indicated by the relative size of the market’s “planet.”
- Distance of each feeder market from Hickory, indicated by the color of each market’s “planet.”
- The main take-away for the Solar System study is to identify ways in which you could move markets from left (low visitation) to the right (high visitation). At a future date, this can be reevaluated to measure progress.

Guide to Target Market Solar System Quadrants:

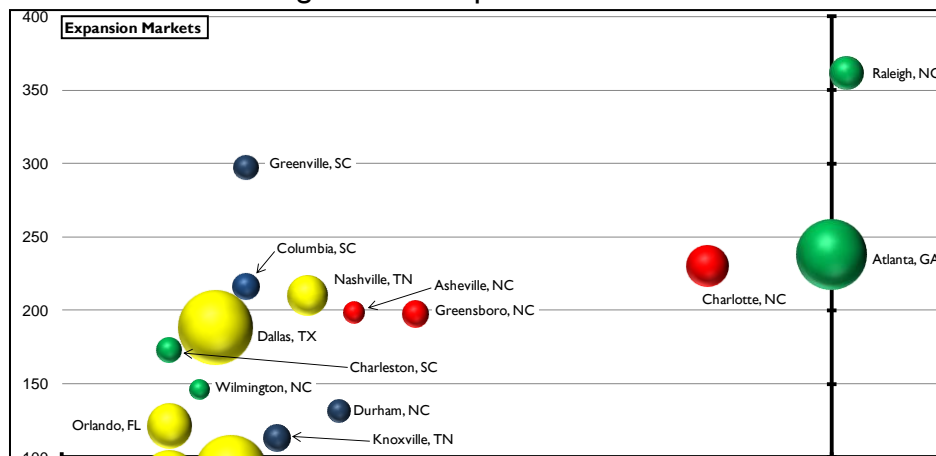
Expansion Markets	Core Markets
Markets in the expansion quadrant are a lot like your typical visitor, but aren't yet coming in large numbers. They represent the biggest opportunity for attracting new visitors and should be targeted aggressively.	Markets that fall into this quadrant are your core markets (over 5% visitation, over 100 "likeness" index). Already coming in big numbers and likely to keep coming, they should be well maintained.
Non-Target Markets	Conversion Markets
Markets in this quadrant are "gravy", not coming in big numbers and not like your typical visitor. They originate from large metro areas with a diverse population. These markets should not be considered targets but may present niche marketing opportunities in narrow sub-sectors.	These are conversion markets: they are coming in big numbers but are not like your typical visitor. Somehow you've managed to convert them; usually related to market volume and/or proximity. Keep them on the radar, but don't make them a priority.

Hickory Target Market Solar System Overnight Visitors



OBSERVATIONS: The majority of Hickory’s overnight visitor markets are within the Expansion Market quadrant. This suggests that there is ample opportunity to capture visitors from these markets and begin to move the “planets” into the Core Markets quadrant. Focusing your immediate efforts on the markets that have a higher likeness index would be most beneficial.

Hickory Target Market Solar System Overnight Visitor Expansion Market View



NOTE: A pdf version of the Target Market Solar System can be found on the BrandPrint CD and should be used for strategic marketing, media planning and media buying initiatives. Additionally, a larger printout of the Target Market Solar System graphs can be found in **Appendix E**.

PERCEPTION STUDY

Purpose

The purpose of the Perception Study is to gain an in-depth understanding of the brand perceptions of Hickory among stakeholders within the city and regional and state-level tourism and economic development professionals. What do these constituents of the Hickory brand have to say about the area as a place to live, visit and conduct business?

Methodology & Results

North Star conducted perception interviews via telephone and email with tourism and economic development professionals provided to North Star by the Hickory brand drivers. Questions were phrased to gather qualitative information. A summary is outlined below. The quotes chosen below are representative of the types of responses heard during interviews.

For comparison, a summary of responses heard from stakeholders within Hickory for similar questions has been provided where applicable.

Economic Development:

	Past prospects/Regional professionals
Adjectives/ Describe Hickory	Manufacturing Access / location Regional hub Furniture Cable /fiber-optics Data centers Center for commerce Activity Entrepreneurs Low crime rate Self-contained Trying to reinvent

	Past prospects/Regional professionals	Stakeholders
Assets	<p>Location</p> <p>Natural resources</p> <p>Strong manufacturing community</p> <p>Hub of a region</p> <p>Physical environment – scenery</p> <p>Good infrastructure</p> <p>Strong work ethic</p> <p>Aggressive ECD</p> <p>Good incentives</p> <p>Entrepreneurs</p> <p>Large employee base to source from</p> <p>Quality of life</p> <p>Quality assets in general – health care, shopping, golf courses, Lake Hickory</p>	<p>Location</p> <p>Furniture industry</p> <p>Neighborhoods</p> <p>Culture and arts (SALT Block)</p> <p>“Medical Mile” – health care assets</p> <p>Higher education opportunities</p> <p>Downtown</p> <p>Citizens – positive attitude, entrepreneurial. Strong work ethic</p> <p>Industrial buildings and land available</p>

	Past prospects/ Regional professionals	Stakeholders
Challenges	<p>Job losses / unemployment</p> <p>Recruiting industry</p> <p>Atmosphere of being “downtrodden”</p> <p>Perception they are anti-business</p> <p>Have to reinvent themselves</p> <p>No commercial air service</p> <p>No image</p> <p>Confusing street system</p>	<p>Job losses / unemployment</p> <p>Recruiting industry</p> <p>Lingering reputation of furniture industry sometimes a burden</p> <p>Street system</p> <p>Lack of identity</p>
Opportunities	<p>Diversification of industry types</p> <p>Leverage hub location and status</p> <p>Workforce development</p> <p>Developing / redeveloping sites to be ready when companies are looking</p> <p>More promotion</p> <p>Tech industry and related</p> <p>Regional partnerships and cooperation</p> <p>Leverage the positives of a manufacturing mindset (i.e. hardworking, loyal)</p>	<p>Tech industry and related</p> <p>Workforce development</p> <p>New /renewed identity and promotion</p> <p>Capitalize on Health Care industry</p> <p>Focus on Youth at the local higher education institutions</p> <p>Culture and the Arts</p> <p>Continue to be a regional leader</p>

	Past prospects/Regional professionals	Stakeholders
Competition	Charlotte Greenville Spartanburg Asheville Lincoln County South Carolina, Virginia and Tennessee Depends on the industry Anywhere in the same general area	Charlotte Greenville Asheville Surrounding counties Knoxville
How Hickory is different	Industrial tax base (even though it's been hit hard) Great location Lots of amenities Tight-knit community Nice downtown Available workforce Close to mountains Arts & culture (SALT Block) Safe community Great community college and L-R U	Higher unemployment / more available workforce Friendlier community Closer-knit community Quality of life Good location Good size of community

	Past prospects/Regional professionals
What is the 1st thing they should do to attract more economic development?	Need a positive brand – “They’ve been hit hard over the years” Workforce redevelopment – “Continue building programs with the Community College” Keep up current good work Need new business parks More promotion of the area Fix the street naming system
Business best-suited	Manufacturing – “It will always be important for them” Logistics / distribution – “highway access” Food service companies Data centers / tech industry A diversity of industry – “Don’t put eggs in one basket” Business services / offices Small businesses / entrepreneurs

	Past prospects/Regional professionals	Stakeholders
One Word	Business Diamond in the rough Gateway – “Great location” Up and coming ‘Doable’ – “Nothing special, nothing bad, just, ‘doable’” Furniture – “Will always be a part of them”	

One challenge is Hickory’s need for workforce redevelopment. How would you tackle that challenge?

- “More job counseling. Hold workshops. Get everyone in the workforce trained on computers at least. Need to engage residents. Don’t leave them out there by themselves collecting unemployment. Get their opinions, then get them involved.”
- “Need to attract more scientists and engineers. And for that, you need better higher education opportunities. Even more Associates Degree options would be a plus. “
- “Make training available to companies, technical training. Most important thing is to keep the conversation between program development and the companies they have open all the time.”
- “Keep working with Catawba Valley Community College.”
- “Focus on training for skills that are easily taught, and then attract those types of businesses. For example, logistics and distribution centers.”

How important is Hickory’s manufacturing (especially furniture) reputation important to Hickory’s future?

- “It should be used in promotion. You can’t get around it.”
- “It’s wise to move away from that industry since it will not ever be like it once was, but there are still some positives associated with it – like the workforce.”
- “It needs to be. It is certainly still the #1 thing that comes to mind for people. But it will have to be done carefully so that it can start to change the way people think about it. There are still dollars to be made with that image moving forward.”
- “Everything now is high performance manufacturing in this country. And those companies want high performance communities with expertise. That means 4-year institutions that can be partners in innovation with the companies, and they graduate the engineers and researchers the company needs to employ. So if they can move to that direction, it would make a lot of sense for them.”
- “I am a big believer in manufacturing. In the U.S. it is just evolving right now. It makes sense for Hickory to stay in that game, and maybe be an innovator of it.”

Tourism:

	Meeting Planners/Regional professionals	Stakeholders
Adjectives to describe Hickory	<p>Attractive Furniture – “Outside of Furniture, in my mind, Hickory is a blank slate.” Historical downtown Jon Reep Good people, hospitality Lenoir-Rhyne University</p>	<p>Beautiful/scenic Great recreation Abundance of rivers, streams and lakes Active, scenic downtown Small-town charm Natural beauty Authentic experiences For outdoor lovers</p>
Assets	<p>Furniture shopping (“Furniture Mart!”) Downtown SALT Block Lake Hickory Close to Blue Ridge Parkway Convention Center Affordable accommodations CVB staff</p>	<p>Furniture shopping SALT Block Scenic beauty Convention Center Location for pass-throughs Downtown Dining & other shopping (regional hub)</p>

	Meeting Planners/Regional professionals	Stakeholders
Challenges	<p>Need stronger presence/identity “Bubba” factor Thought of as a “pass-through” Signage Understanding different visitors No mountains, no beach Nothing unique outside furniture</p>	<p>Lack of identity Merging organizations Signage Understanding different visitors No mountains, no beach Lack of funds, resources</p>
Opportunities	<p>Scenery/environment could be a selling point Develop product – perhaps around furniture Wayfinding and signage Internet marketing strategies for high-impact, low-cost marketing Enhance hotel product Athletic competitions Shopping and entertainment attached to convention complex</p>	<p>Product development Emphasis on outdoor recreation Youth sports/athletic competitions Downtown tours Enhance hotel product More shopping, entertainment</p>

	Meeting Planners/Regional professionals	Stakeholders
Competition	Meetings – Raleigh, Greensboro, Asheville, Charlotte, Concord and even beach communities Winston-Salem Greenville Similar-sized communities on interstates like Statesville	Charlotte Asheville Greensboro Concord Greenville, SC High Point (for furniture)

	Meeting Planners/Regional professionals
Best thing currently to bring in visitors	Very involved, cooperative CVB Leveraging gateway location Aggressive in selling the area Friendliness of front line
How Hickory is different	Hickory Furniture Mart Nice downtown Customer service Beyond furniture – it's not Easy to access Tough product to sell

	Meeting Planners/Regional professionals
One Word	<p>Relaxed</p> <p>Peaceful</p> <p>Welcoming</p> <p>Vanilla, bland</p> <p>Home</p> <p>Chain (“Strip malls and chain restaurants”)</p> <p>Tradition</p> <p>Heritage</p> <p>Beauty</p> <p>Emerging</p> <p>Country (“Like sitting on your front porch”)</p>

Meeting Planners/Regional Professionals:

If you had \$20 million to spend on tourism in Hickory, what would you spend it on?

- “The arts community is so strong because they are their own community, their own regional leader. I would build events and awareness around the SALT Block and put money into downtown revitalization.”
- “Establish a tourism product development fund – to encourage people with ideas and put money back into the community. Many communities have funded soccer fields, other facilities that way and it brings in room nights.”
- “Build a museum or other product development. I wouldn’t spend it on marketing until I had another draw.”
- “Add on to the Convention Center.”

Hickory has a reputation for manufacturing, especially furniture. How important is this to Hickory’s tourism appeal?

- “Understand that there are leisure travelers influenced by that industry – whether you are talking about shopping or design. They should work to make it more relevant. It is unique. Articulate the old world industry and make it applicable to the new age with interactive media.”
- “Do like Charlotte and Concord – they leveraged Motor Sports into the Nascar Hall of Fame. Do something that takes advantage of your local tradition and product and package it up into something new.”
- “They do have that reputation and it links to quality, but what else does it mean to a visitor besides the Furniture Mall?”

CONSUMER AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION STUDY (CAP STUDY)

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into consumer awareness, visitation and perceptions of Hickory. Specifically, the survey measures:

- Overall top-of-mind perceptions of Hickory and immediate competitors
- Consumer visitation trends (frequency and nature of visitation)
- Consumer visitation drivers (business, leisure, friends and family)
- Strengths and weaknesses of Hickory identified within community attributes
- Consumer suggestions on what is missing from Hickory
- Measurements of Hickory delivery of hospitality
- Measurements of Hickory quality of life indicators

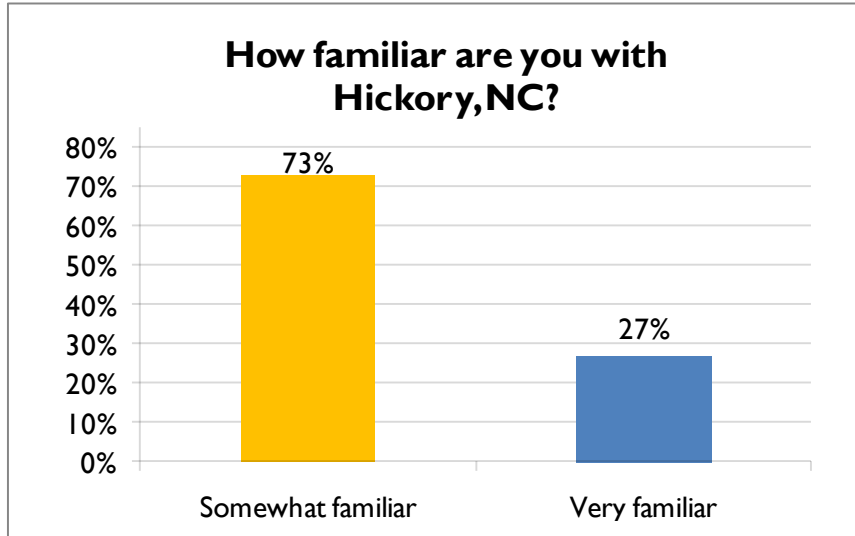
Methodology & Results

An internet survey was conducted among residents within Asheville and Charlotte, NC MSAs.

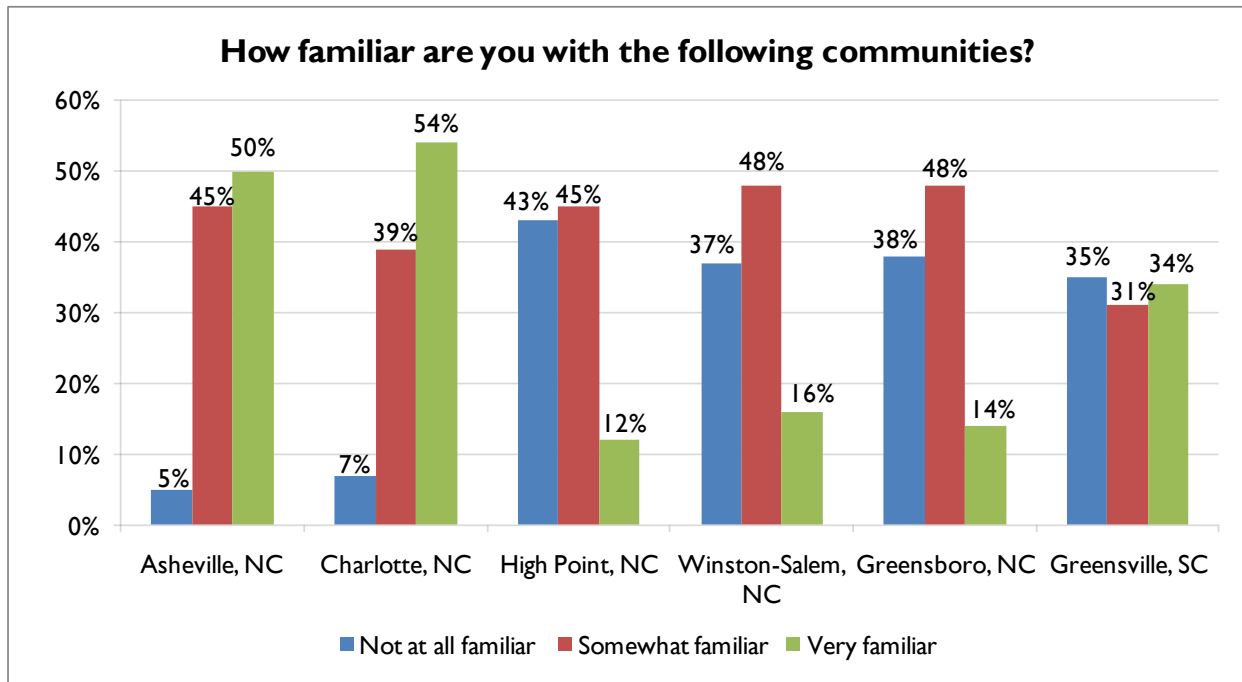
A total of 204 surveys were conducted, 103 respondents gathered in Asheville and 101 in Charlotte, allowing for a margin of error of +/- 6.86 at the 95% confidence level.

Note: To view all open-ended responses, please see **Appendix F**.

Awareness of Hickory: To get to our goal of 200 completes, 228 survey “starts” were allowed. 24 respondents were “Not at all familiar” and were therefore terminated. The combined termination rate was 11%, which is significantly lower than normal, suggesting people are quite familiar with Hickory.



Familiarity with competition

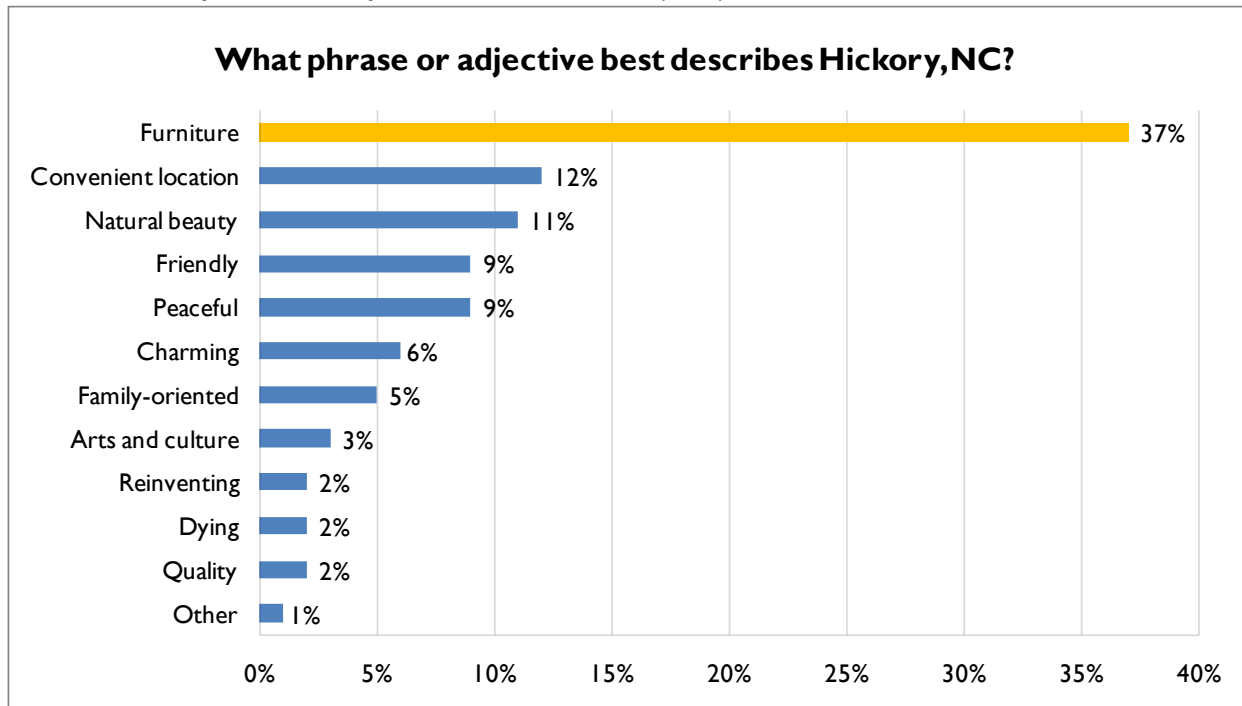


NOTE: Awareness levels of Charlotte and Asheville are expectedly higher, due to markets of study.

Top of mind perceptions: What comes to mind when you think of...

- **Asheville:** Biltmore Estate, scenic, mountains (Blue Ridge area), arts and crafts
- **Charlotte:** Carolina Panthers, banking, big city, NASCAR Hall of Fame
- **High Point:** Furniture, nothing, country, small town
- **Winston-Salem:** University (Wake Forest University), tobacco, historic, Old Salem
- **Greensboro:** Reddy River Falls area, Bilo Center
- **Hickory:** Furniture, close to mountains (foothills), nice small town, shopping and restaurants.

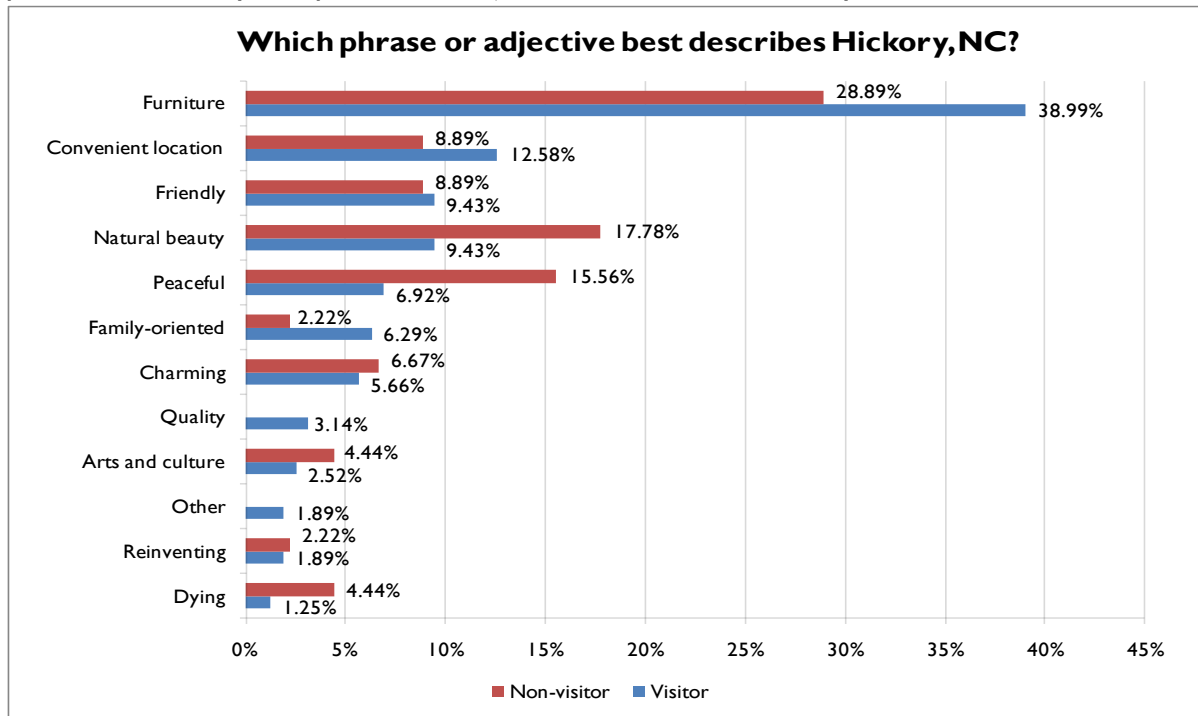
Best descriptor: Respondents felt that furniture (37%) was the best phrase or adjective to describe Hickory, followed by convenient location (12%).



Other: Race town, outlet furniture

Note: We examined the responses for several questions relative to the particular responses to other questions in this study. This process of cross-tabulation is a type of analysis that looks at the variability of a characteristic between two or more groups. In other words, it compares opinions, behaviors, perceptions, etc. between different types of people (respondents). Cross tabulating data reveals much more detailed information than simply presenting the means, or averages, of an aggregated set of data. We have shared the most compelling cross-tabulations in the following pages. We present the question and responses in aggregate form followed by the detailed cross-tabulations.

Visitors of Hickory said Furniture was its best description (38.99%). Non-visitors also felt that Hickory was best described by Furniture (28.89%); however, non-visitors were more likely to pick natural beauty and peaceful as adjectives to describe Hickory.

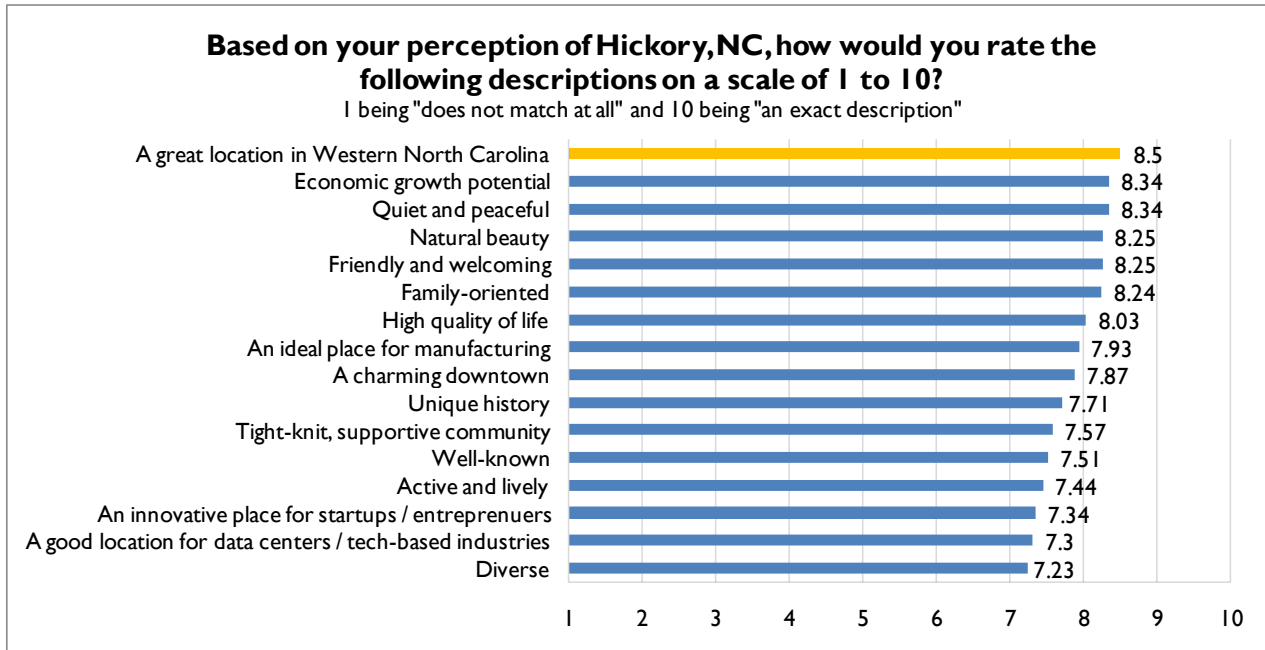


Other: Race town, outlet furniture

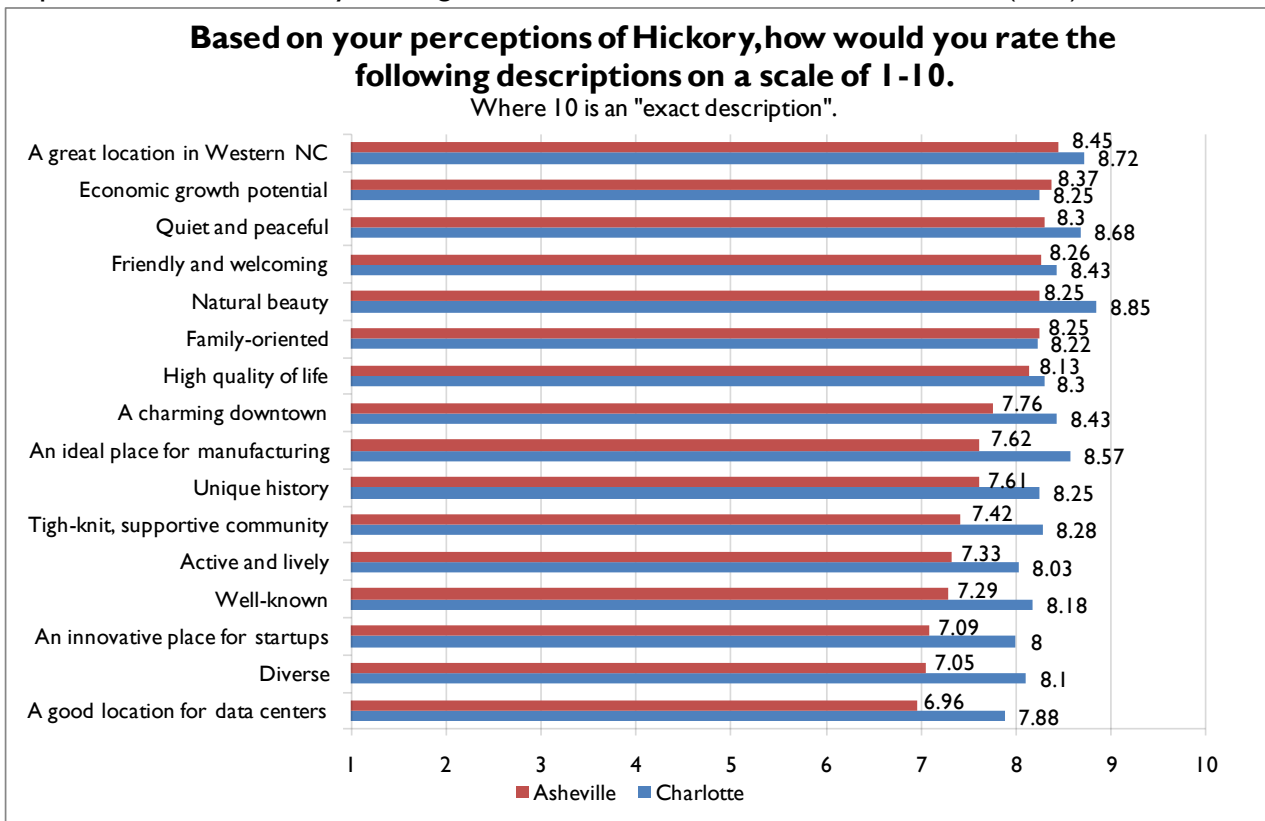
What differentiates Hickory, NC from the other communities in the Western Piedmont Region of North Carolina?

- Furniture industry
- Nothing / Don't know
- Easy access, excellent location.

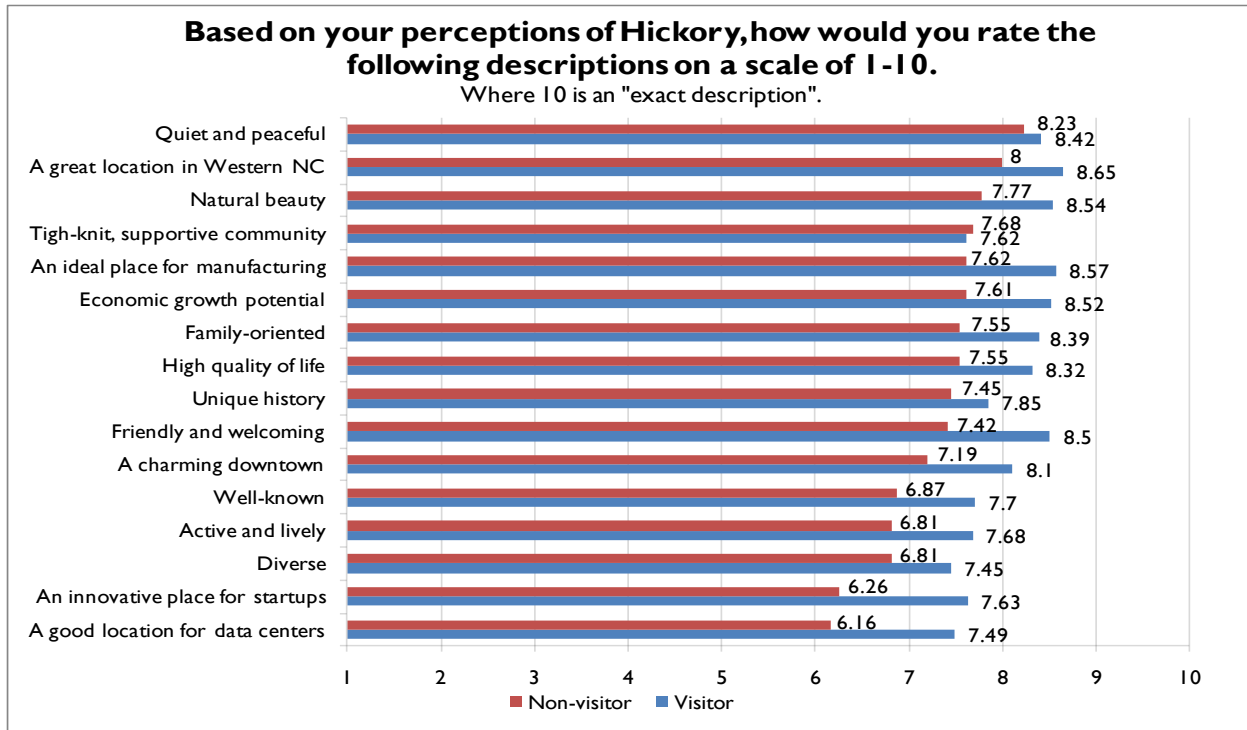
Describing Hickory: Respondents rated “A great location in Western North Carolina” (8.5) as the best description of Hickory, followed by “Economic growth potential” (8.34).



Respondents from Charlotte rated Hickory as a place of “Natural beauty” (8.85); while Asheville respondents rated Hickory as “A great location in Western North Carolina” (8.45).

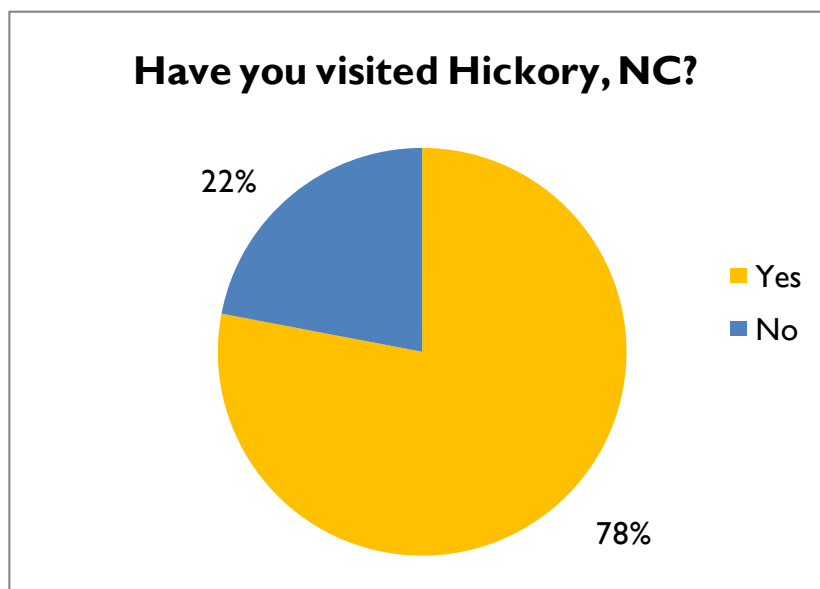


Visitors to Hickory described it as “An ideal place for manufacturing” (8.57); while non-visitors claimed that Hickory was “Quiet and peaceful” (8.23).

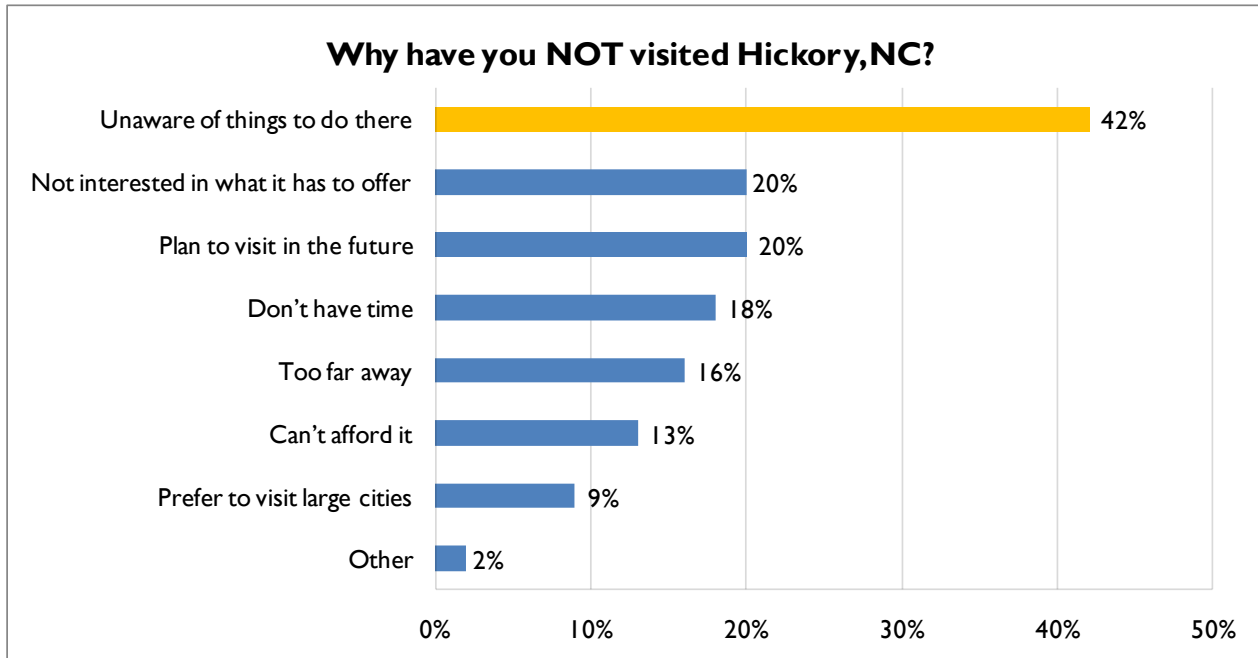


VISITOR INFORMATION: This section gives visitation frequency, purpose and trip activities; respondents’ perceptions of Hickory; and change in perception statistics.

Visitor frequency: The majority of the respondents (78%) have visited Hickory.

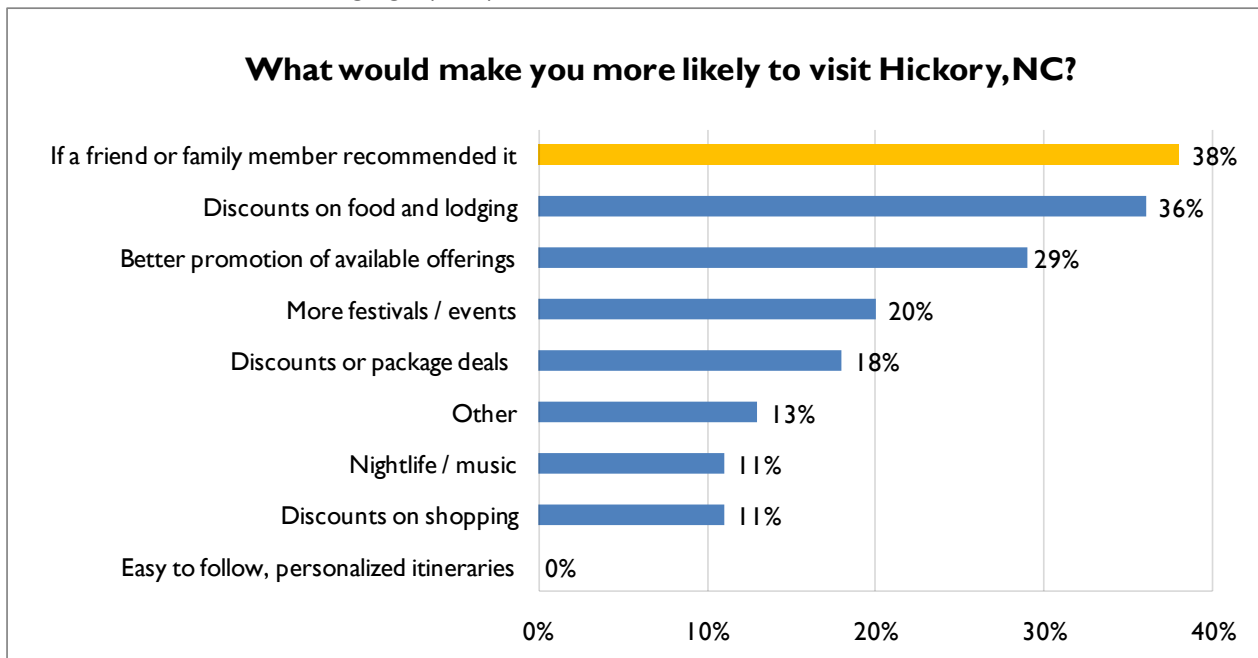


Reason for not visiting: Of those who had not visited, 42% said it was because they were unaware of things to do in Hickory.



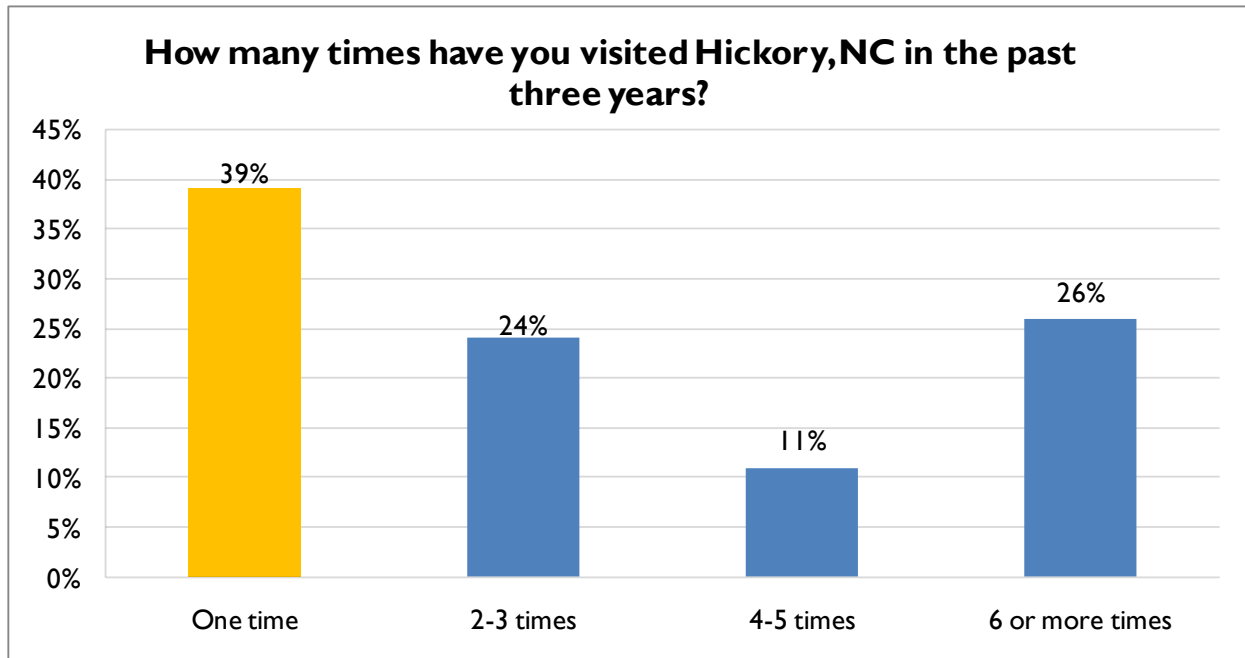
Other: Husband unable to

Attracting visitors: “If a friend or family member recommended it” (38%) was the primary response when asked what would make you more likely to visit Hickory, followed closely by, “discounts on food and lodging” (36%).

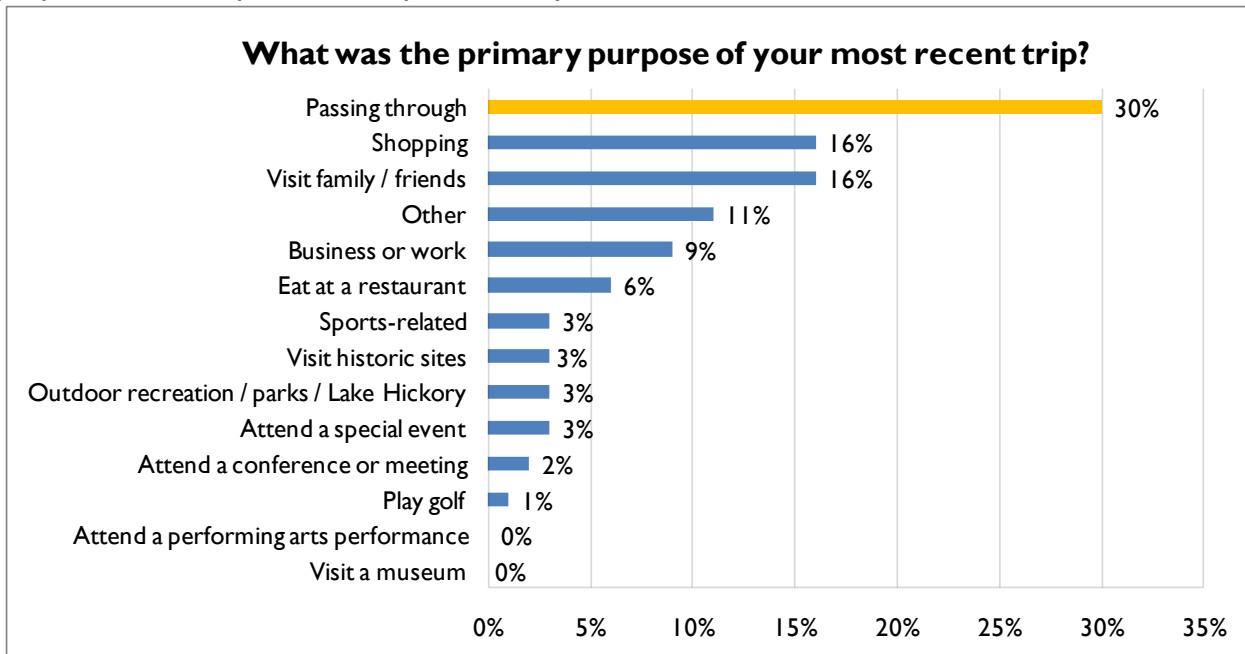


Other: More time off of work, nothing, need more money

Frequency of visits: 39% of respondents have visited Hickory, NC one time in the past three years.

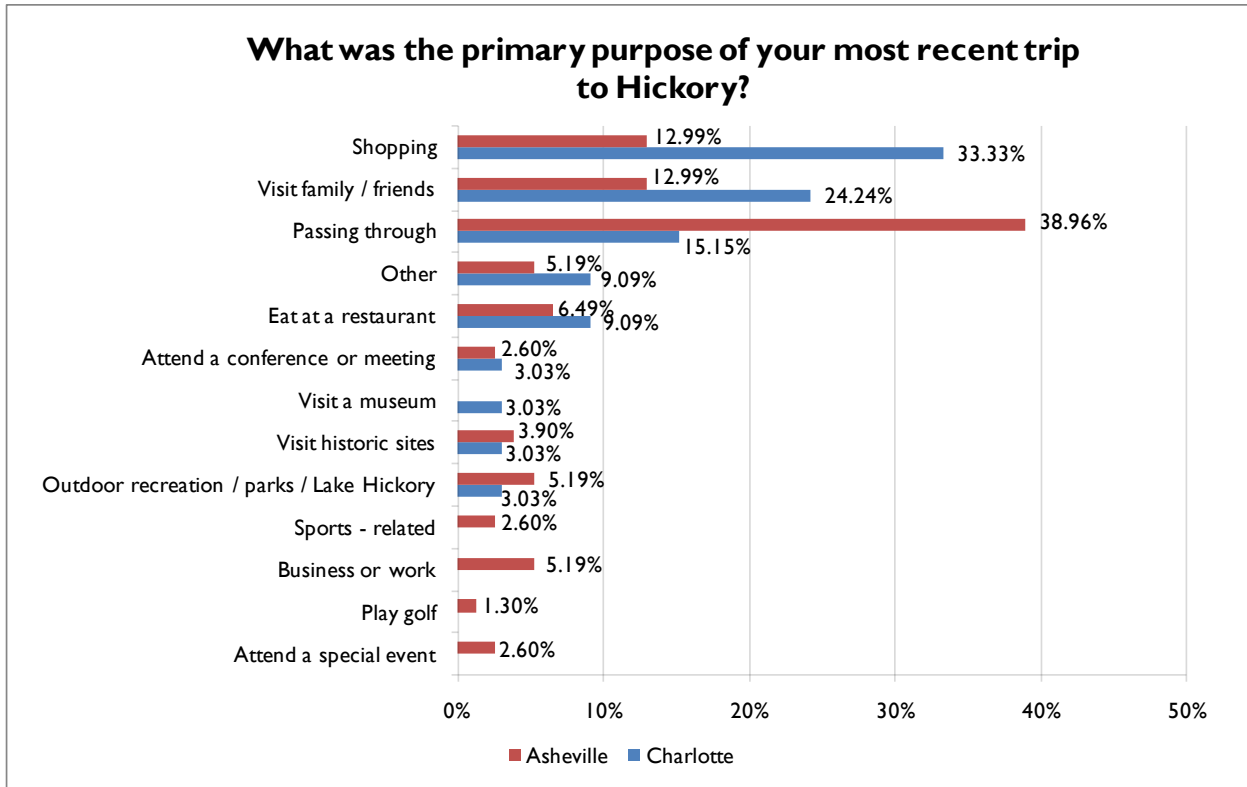


Primary purpose: Passing through (30%) was the most common response for the primary purpose of the respondent's trip to Hickory.



Other: Bought furniture, site seeing, fishing, doctors, dining, visitations

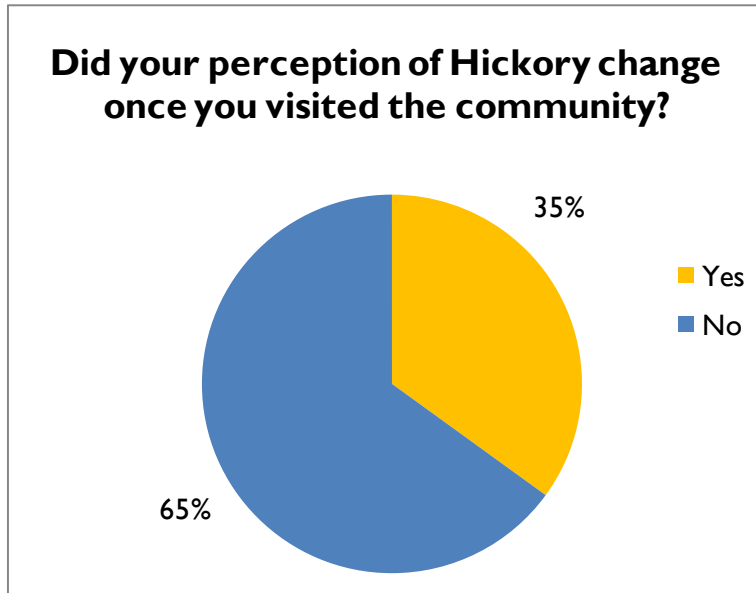
Respondents from Charlotte said that shopping (33.33%) was the primary purpose of their most recent visit to Hickory, while Asheville respondents said that passing through (38.96%) was the primary purpose of their most recent visit.



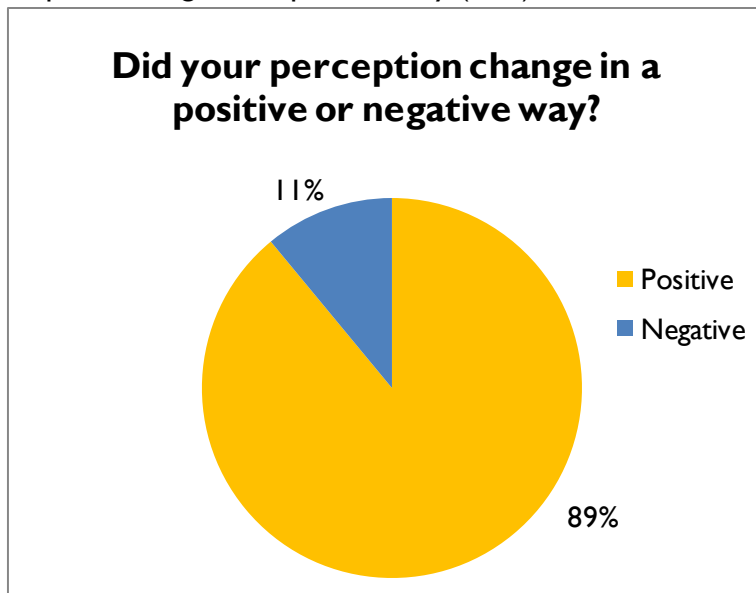
Perception of Hickory before visiting:

- Small town, friendly place
- Nice place
- No perception of Hickory.

Change in perception after visiting: 65% of respondents mentioned that their perception did not change after visiting Hickory. However, over a quarter of respondents' perceptions changed after visiting (27.5%).



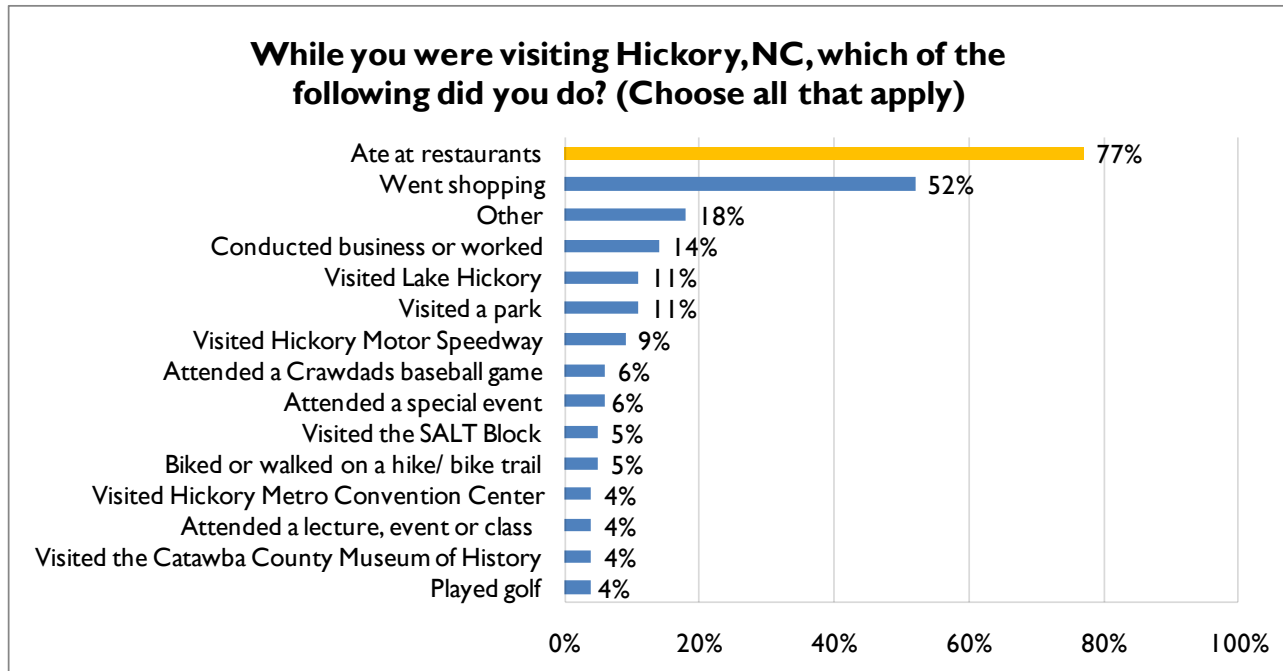
An overwhelming majority of respondents whose perception changed after visiting Hickory noted that their perception changed in a positive way (89%).



Respondents mentioned the following ways in which their perceptions changed after visiting Hickory:

- Friendly people, quaint area
- Actually going to see the city
- Great shopping and things to do
 - "Spending time there and shopping with friends. We have a great time when we visit. We can shop and have lunch at any number of good restaurants."

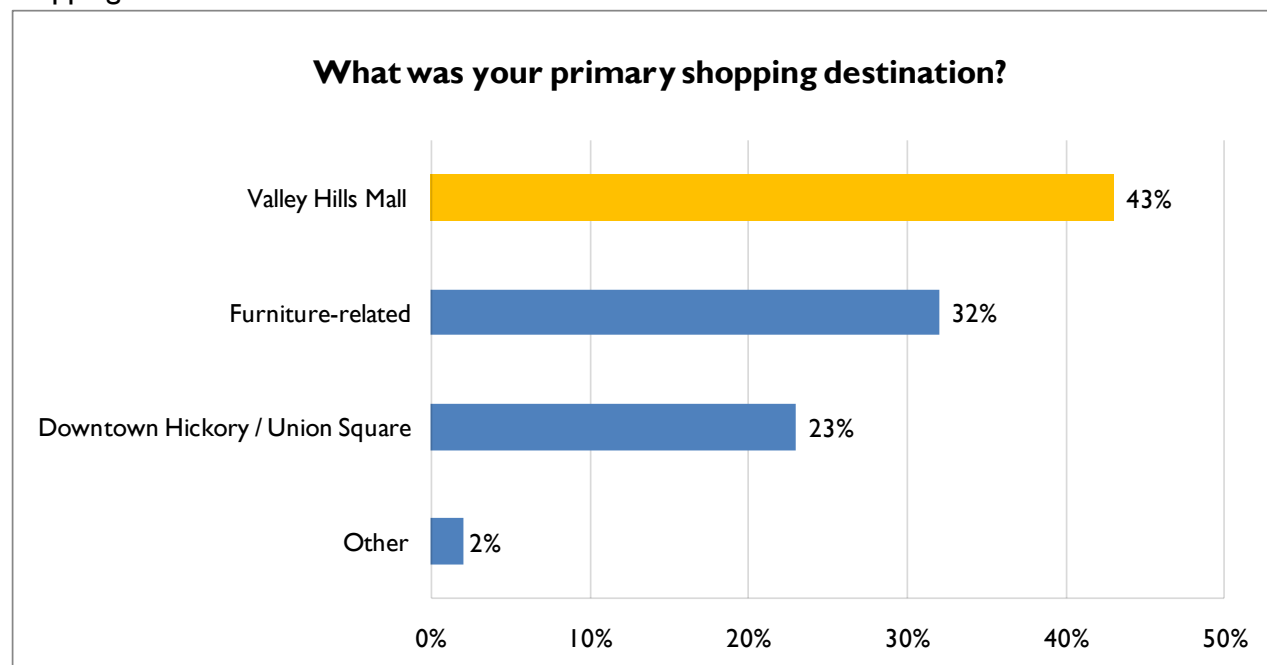
Trip activities: Over three-fourths of respondents mentioned that while visiting Hickory, they ate at restaurants (77%) and went shopping (52%).



Other: Passing through, visited relatives, furniture shopping

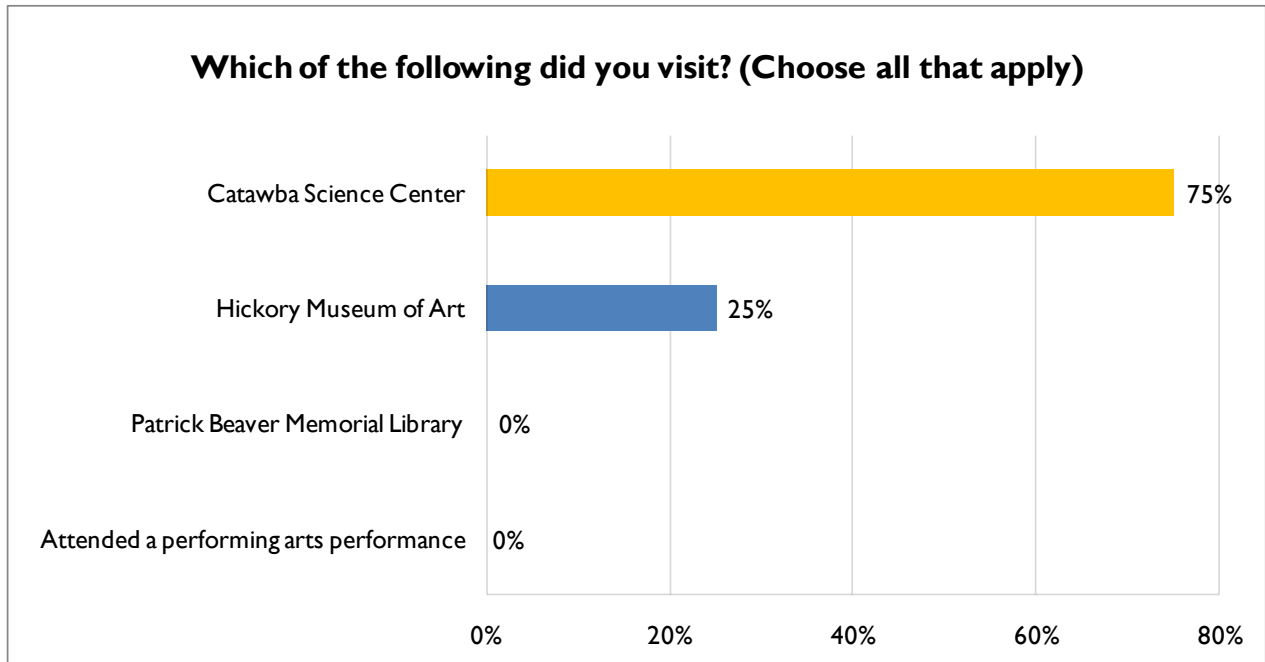
The following questions were answered by respondents who answered “shopping” and “SALT Block” on the previous question.

Shopping: 43% of those respondents answered that Valley Hills Mall was their primary shopping destination.

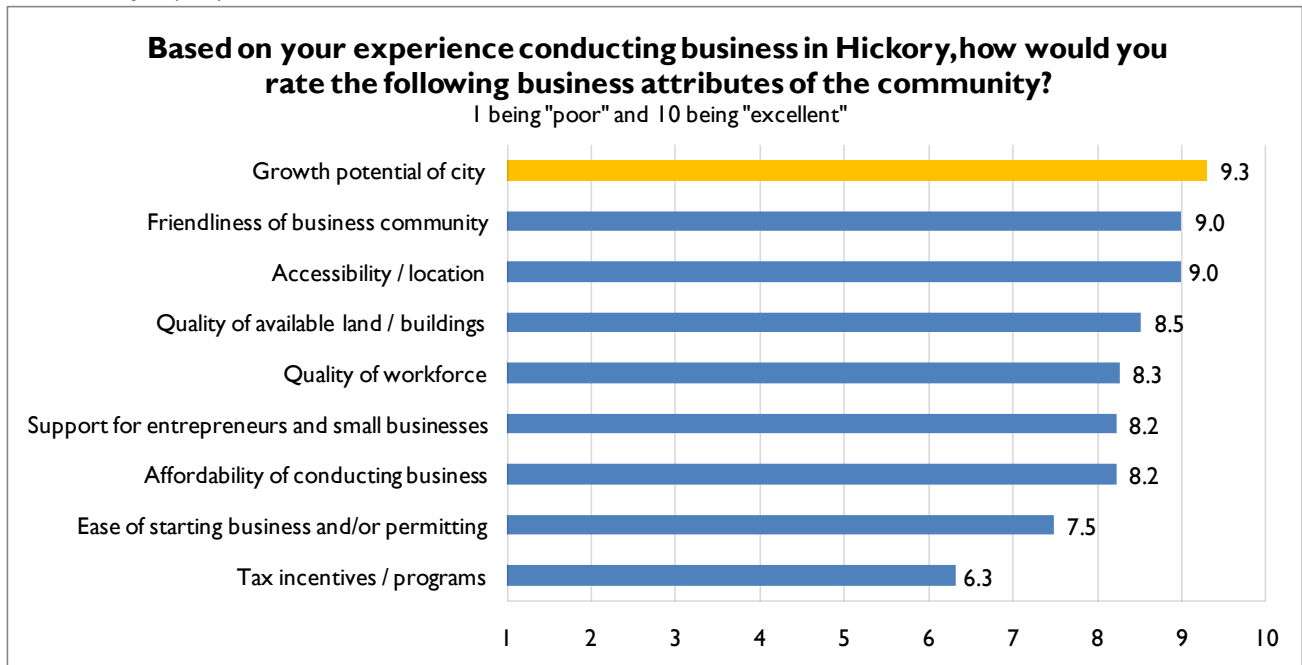


Other: Lowes and other retail stores, Wal-Mart

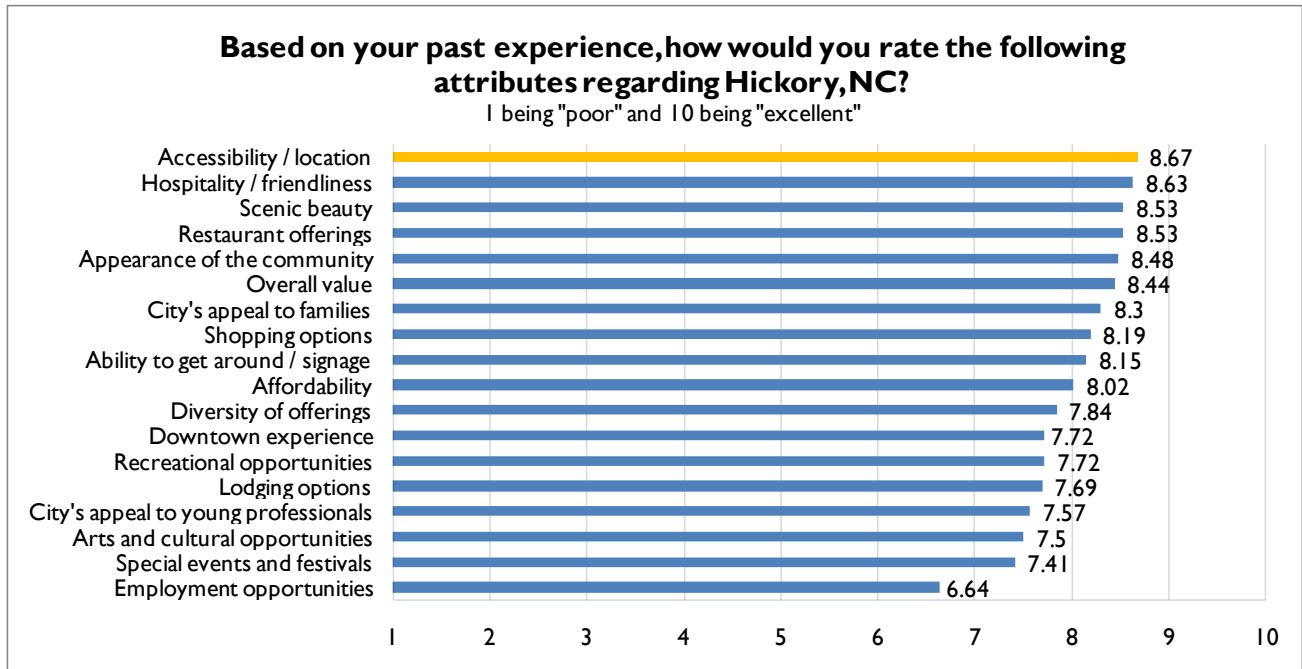
SALT Block: 75% of respondents visited the Catawba Science Center while 25% visited the Hickory Museum of Art.



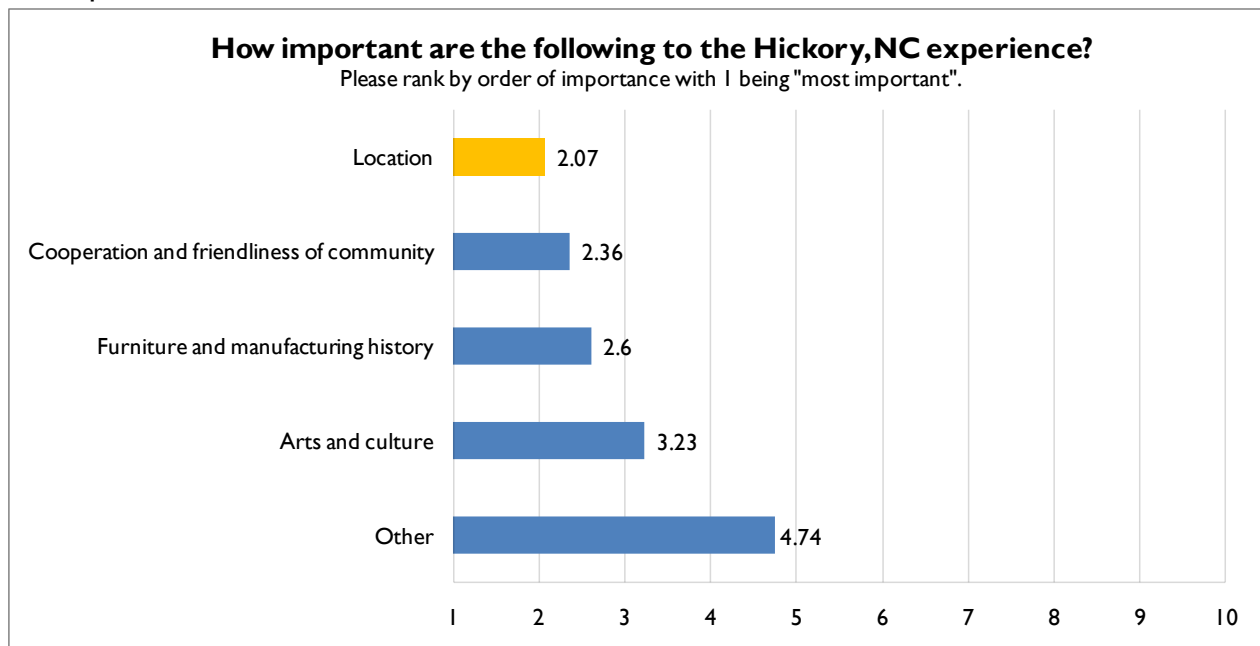
Conducting business: Respondents mentioned “Growth potential of the city” (9.3) as the highest rated attribute for conducting business, followed closely with “Friendliness of business community” (9.0).



Attribute rating: Respondents gave accessibility/location a rating of 8.67 when ranking their past experiences with various attributes.



Hickory experience: Respondents felt that location (2.07) is most important to the Hickory, NC experience.



Other: Shopping, restaurants and entertainment, mountains

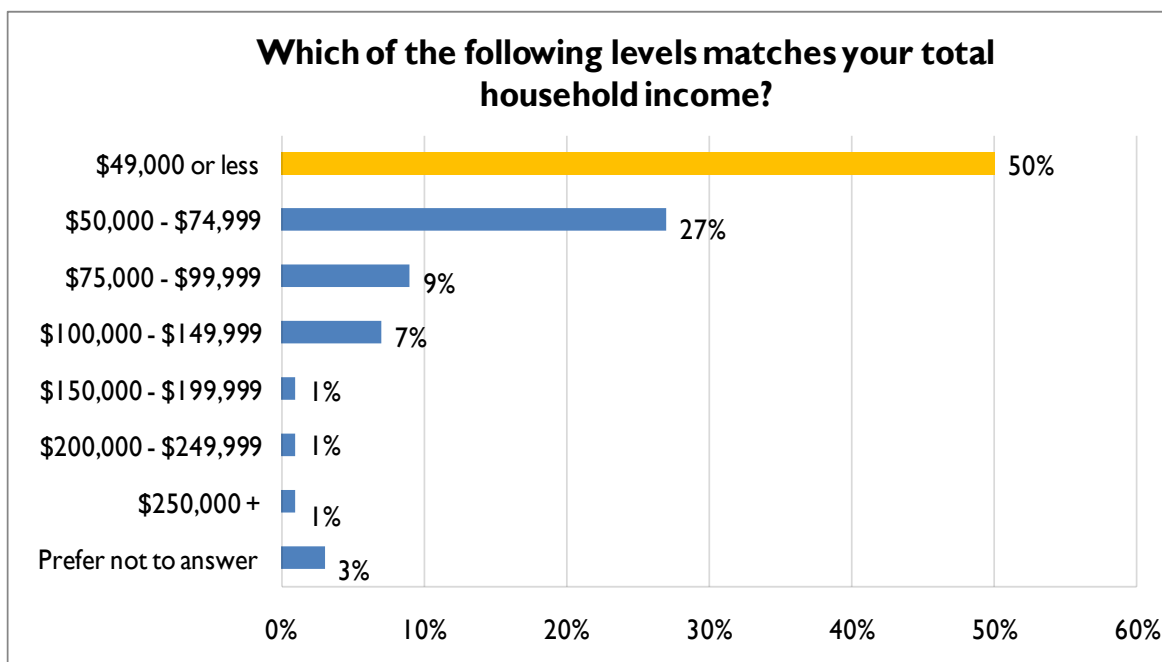
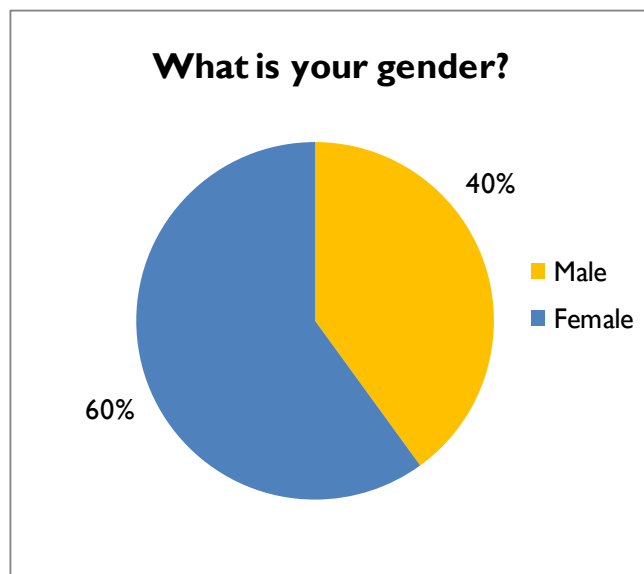
Observation: As you can see, there was no strong rank for first place among the given choices. This indicates disagreement among outsiders as to what Hickory's most important assets are.

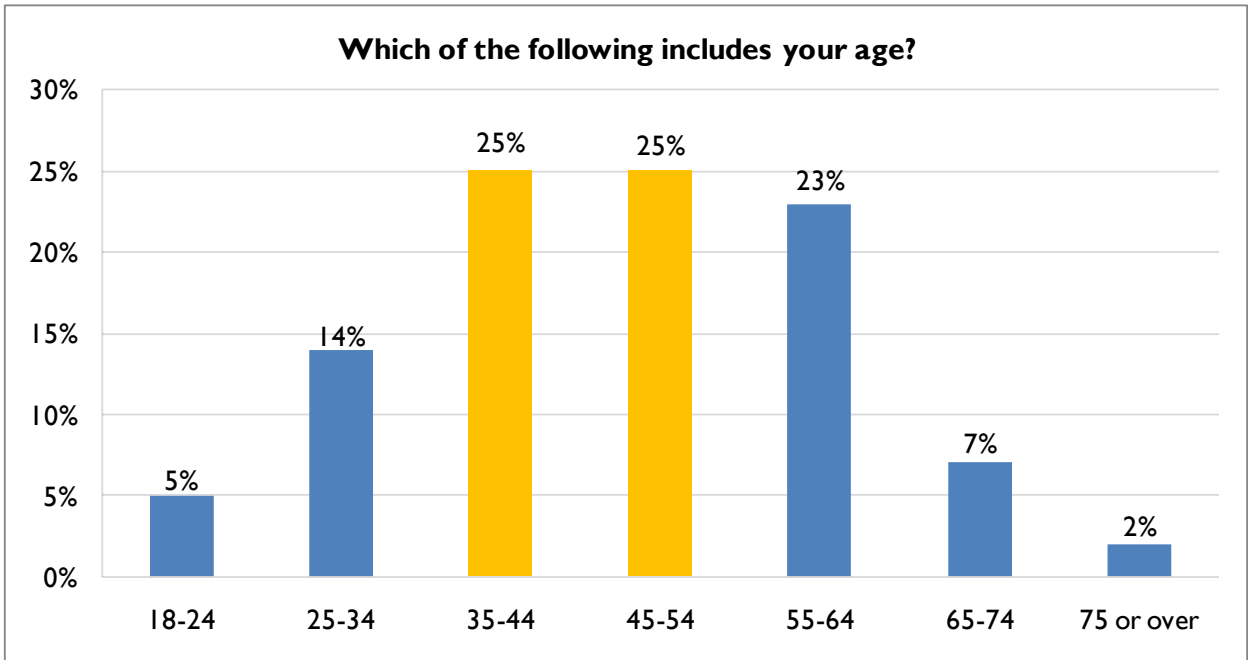
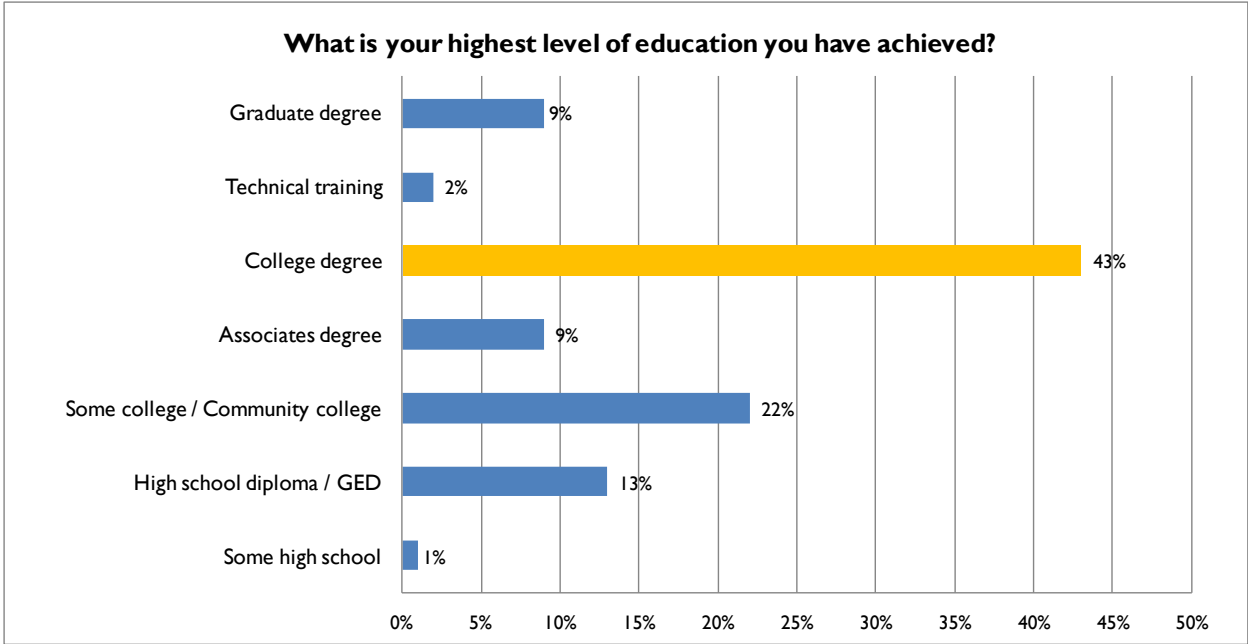
TOP OF MIND PERCEPTIONS:

How can Hickory improve its reputation and increase awareness in North Carolina and beyond?

- Advertise and promote assets other than furniture
 - “More advertising about their local craftsmen.”
 - “More advertising about what Hickory has to offer a person or groups of people.”
- Don’t know
 - “I’m not sure, its a beautiful, country place with lots to offer.”
- Better job opportunities and employment options
 - “Let the world know that that have a huge experienced unemployed textile workforce.”

DEMOGRAPHICS:





CAP STUDY INSIGHTS SUMMARY:

- Interestingly, outsiders of your community highly rate Hickory's economic growth potential. With respondents identifying Hickory synonymously with furniture manufacturing, one would initially believe the perception of economic growth in Hickory to be grim. However, visitors to the area are experiencing the work the community has done to entice data centers and technology firms in the area. Continuing your efforts here will continue to combat negative perceptions of the area as a place for growth.
- A large opportunity exists to attract visitors to the area. 42% of respondents are unaware of things to do in Hickory. Aside from furniture shopping, Hickory has an assortment of arts and culture, downtown charms and other assets that would encourage visitors to the area. 29% of respondents would be more likely to come to Hickory if there was better promotion of available offerings.
- 68% of those respondents who shopped while in Hickory, did so for items other than furniture.

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

Purpose

To better understand what Hickory's competition is currently offering in terms of economic development and delivering the tourist experience.

Methodology & Results

North Star reviewed each of the following cities' communication materials to compile a short synopsis of their tourism and economic development attributes. The materials reviewed include but are not limited to the city's website, the CVB website, chamber website, area attraction websites as well as other communication materials such as brochures and visitors guides.

TOURISM & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

- Charlotte
- Asheville
- High Point
- Greensboro
- Concord
- Greenville, SC

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS | TOURISM

Charlotte, North Carolina

Positioning Line:

- “We’ve Got a Lot”
- “Sometimes the difference between ordinary and amazing is where it happens.”



Tourism Assets: *What are they selling*

- *Play:* Billy Graham Library, NASCAR Hall of Fame, Carowinds, U.S. National Whitewater Center, and Discovery Place
- *Dining:* Restaurants featuring “Hole-in-the-Wall” and “Farm-to-Fresh” cuisine
- *Shop:* Largest and most accessible city between Washington D.C. and Atlanta, GA
- *Sports:* Carolina Panthers, NFL
- *Convention Center:* separate site, lots of space, ballroom holds 1,800 people, location near NASCAR Hall of Fame.

Marketing Messaging:

- Color scheme is black with orange and other bright colors
- On the homepage of the website there are pictures of the NASCAR Hall of Fame, EpiCenter, and the NC Music Factory.

Strengths:

- The black background and bright colors of pictures makes the website attractive
- The site offers 10 sample itineraries for visitors
- The accommodations, attractions, nightlife, dining, and shopping tabs offer easy and accessible searches
- Gives the impression of a lively city with many options for entertainment.

Weaknesses:

- The pictures are so eye-catching; however, the text is not appealing to read
- The link for the convention center is hard to find.

Summary: The website is a great representation of the infinite things to do in Charlotte. It captures the visitors attention and vies to be a great vacation spot. However, it does not highlight the convention center.

Asheville, North Carolina



Positioning Line:

- “Any way you like it.”

Tourism Assets: *What are they selling*

- *Shopping:* Arts and crafts galleries, antique shops, and specialty stores
- *Dining:* Hot chocolate tasting tours, foodtopian society and farm to table dining, Brews Cruise of the acclaimed “Beer City of USA,” touring various of the city's nine breweries
- *Play:* Biltmore Estate, skiing, snowboarding, hiking
- *Convention Center:* None featured; highlight other venues to use for conventions, and reviews from previous conventions.

Marketing Messaging:

- Colors are sage, deep blue and red
- Activities marketed towards married couples without young kids
- For the outdoors or history oriented visitors.

Strengths:

- Activities appeal to the mountain landscape
- “Small Town” feel with local shoppes and dining.

Weaknesses:

- Does not feature the Biltmore Estate predominately
- Marketing only to married couples; need to highlight activities for children or young adults
- The basic design of the website makes it easy to navigate; however the website looks a bit elementary.

Summary: The website of Asheville highlights activities targeted mainly to married couples. The “small town” feel of the city seems to be a good weekend getaway. There doesn’t seem to be a connection with the tag line, “Any way you like it.”

High Point, North Carolina



Positioning Line:

- “Home Furnishings Capital of the World.”

Tourism Assets: *What are they selling*

- *Shopping:* Furniture stores, largest furniture store in the nation, over 50 discounted retail stores, and malls
- *Attractions:* World’s Largest Chest of Drawers, Museum of Old Domestic Life, Doll Museum, Ballet and Theatre
- *Dining:* Nine “down home” barbeque restaurants and others featuring southern favorites such as fried chicken

- *Conventions:* Three Places to meet- Centennial Station, Showplace, and Suites at Market Square.

Marketing Messaging:

- The furnishings capital of the world is the main focus of the High Point CVB website. The color scheme is blue and gold.

Strengths:

- Focus on furniture stores, largest store in the nation
- Showcase a video of the city
- Links to Facebook and Twitter pages.

Weaknesses:

- Only one main attraction – furniture. Difficult for other assets to fit under this umbrella.
- Difficult website to navigate with little information about the attractions, dining, and shopping.

Summary: High Point claims to be the furnishing capital of the world, and this is the main focus for marketing this city. The claim is well-supported, but other activities are left out.

Greensboro, North Carolina



Positioning Line:

- “Chosen Center.”

Tourism Assets: *What are they selling*

- *Shopping:* Farmer’s Market, Pottery Center, Fanta City International Shopping Center
- *Attractions:* 2011 U.S. Figure Skating Championships, Natural Science Center, Greensboro Children’s Museum
- *Sports:* Grasshoppers (baseball team), Carolina Dynamo (soccer), and the Wyndham Championship (golf)
- *Dining:* Barbeque and Asian, European, Greek, Italian, Mexican, Indian, Vietnamese cuisine
- *Conventions:* Lists over 40 meeting spaces by square footage, many of which are hotels.

Marketing Messaging:

- Green and Blue color scheme highlighting the main events the city hosts such as the figure skating championships and seasonal sporting events.

Strengths:

- The website is visually appealing with the pictures on the front page
- There are many options for meetings and conventions
- Hotel reservations are easy to access and located at the top left corner of the website
- Color and theme of the website are consistent.

Weaknesses:

- Hard to navigate the website
- Lists all 178 attractions in alphabetical order. Figure skating is the only attraction highlighted.

Summary: Greensboro’s website was hard to navigate although it highlighted the Figure skating championships mainly. The site was visually appealing and listed meeting and convention spaces in an easy to read format.

Concord/Cabarrus County



Positioning Line:

- “Where racing lives.”

Tourism Assets: *What are they selling*

- *Shopping:* Over 30 Race Shops, 90% of all race shops, Concord Mills Mall
- *Attractions:* Race tracks, Motorsports Museums
- *Restaurants:* Brand name national chain restaurants such as Applebee’s, Texas Roadhouse, and Ruby Tuesday
- *Conventions:* Showcases four main meeting spaces- Cabarrus Arena and Events Center, Embassy Suites Charlotte- Concord Convention Center, Charlotte Motor Speedway, and The Great Wolf Lodge.

Marketing Messaging:

- The black and orange logo and theme communicates a clear message that Cabarrus County is all about racing.

Strengths:

- The website features great pictures of attractions and is visually appealing
- Consistent message throughout the website
- Flickr showcases pictures of all meeting and convention spaces
- Lists attractions and restaurants alphabetically as well as by location.

Weaknesses:

- There are two separate websites for Concord, and the website for Cabarrus County is the CVB website.
- Information overload on restaurants and attractions.

Summary: Cabarrus County communicates a consistent message and theme throughout their website. It is the perfect destination for racing fanatics and provides different options for meeting and convention locations. This website is full of information.

Greenville, South Carolina



Positioning Line:

- None Found.

Tourism Assets: *What are they selling*

- *Shopping:* Designer boutiques, eclectic shops, major chains and department stores
- *Attractions:* Greenville Zoo, Upcountry History Museum, Children's Museum of the Upstate, The Peace Center for the Performing Arts, and BMW Performance Center
- *Dining:* 'Southern Hospitality,' Soby's New South Cuisine, The Lazy Goat, and Mary's Restaurant at Fall Cottage
- *Conventions:* Lists many different options including the BILO Center and Caroline First Center; has an additional sections specifically for conventions.

Marketing Messaging:

- The website is a clean and organized description of Greenville, SC, with a green theme playing off of the city name. It depicts a town of both history and upcoming attractions as well as a great place for meetings and conventions.

Strengths:

- The website is visually clean and appealing and uses tabs to make navigating the site much easier
- Wealth of information on convention and meeting spaces
- Many attractions for those young and old.

Weaknesses:

- No specific target market or identity for the city
- Colors blend into the background.

Summary: Greenville is a city that is a great combination of both old and new. However, there is not a specific target market or identity for the city to stand out. The convention and meeting spaces are easily accessible and formatted in a user-friendly way.

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS SUMMARY | TOURISM

What do these communities share in common?

- Most use color schemes of dark colors such as blue, red, green and black.
- Most feature traditional southern dining such as barbeque and fried chicken as well as a variety of cultural dining options offered, such as Asian, Mexican, and Mediterranean cuisines.
- Most highlighted the possible meeting and convention spaces offered in an easy-to-read format.
- Some highlighted their location and scenery as a part of their marketing position.

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Charlotte, North Carolina

Positioning Line:

- “Charlotte Chamber”-Growing the economy, advocating pro- business public policies and delivering innovative programs and services.

Economic Development Assets: *What are they selling*

- In the past 10 years, 7,309 new firms have invested \$12 billion
- Charlotte is the 19th largest U.S. city with a population of 757,000
- With more than 2.3 trillion in assets, it is the 2nd largest financial center in the nation
- The region has 1800 manufacturers that employ over 60,000.

Marketing Message

- Charlotte’s main focus is expanding their economic development through business programs and various services
- Logo is noticeable and stands out.



Strengths:

- Social networking links available on website along with introducing a “My Chamber Application”
- 7 International pages available to view on website
- Nice color scheme- easy on eyes and easy to navigate through sections.

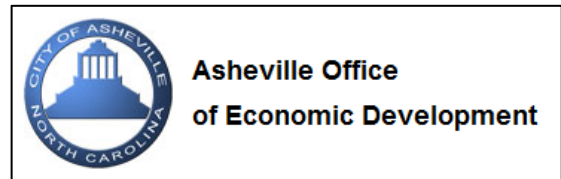
Weaknesses:

- Would like to see more photos
- Too much advertisement on a page.

Asheville, North Carolina

Positioning Line:

- “City of Asheville”-Our quality of service, your quality of life.



Economic Development Assets: *What are they selling*

- The city is located in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains and is known for its natural beauty
- Top ranked status best place to live
- Unemployment rate has steadily increased since 2007
- Ranked by Forbes magazine as “Best Places for Business and Careers”
- Low crime rate
- Economic development brochure and video available on website.

Marketing Message:

- Two websites use two separate lines: “Our quality of service, your quality of life and “Succeed where life’s a pleasure”
- The city of Asheville page focuses on everything that it has to offer ranging from government, visitors, future residents, and news and events.

Strengths:

- Substantial amount of information can be found on either website
- Social network links are available on the website
- Photos of prominent stakeholders are seen on Chamber of Commerce homepage.

Weaknesses:

- City of Asheville page is too busy and there is no main focus
- Color scheme appears business professional and not an all around inviting web page
- No photos of prominent women stakeholders on Chamber of Commerce homepage.

Lincoln County



Positioning Line:

- Lincoln County is where *business* and *industry* reside comfortably side-by-side with the best of small town, country and lakeside living.

Economic Development Assets: *What they are selling*

- Population 5,000
- Known for agriculture base of farming and ranching
- Strategic location in Mid-Atlantic region of U.S.
- Rapid growing renewable energy industry
- New manufacturing facility (12/21/10)
- The regional learning center is being developed as place for academic, trade, and technical training.

Marketing Message:

- Strong use of color blue but in different shades.
- Focus of emphasizing harmony in business and high quality of life.

Strengths:

- Lincolncounty.org has website available to view in 6 different languages
- Lincolncounty.org seems like a website more viewable for tourism
- Strategic location map on home page.

Weaknesses:

- Lincolncounty.org website lacks a tagline message and logo
- Website could also use work in layout and design.

Summary: The run-of-the-mill positioning line and unorganized feel of Lincoln County's websites leave much to the imagination when envisioning Lincoln County's economic and business atmosphere.

Gaston County



Positioning Line:

- "The first choice location for your business in the Charlotte region."

Economic Development Assets: *What are they selling*

- Major employers include county schools, Caromont Healthcare, Wal-Mart Associates, Dole
- First class Air, Interstate, and Rail Transportation
- Strong incentives for new jobs and investment
- 52 public schools
- Fact book and annual reports available on website.

Marketing Message

- Gaston County offers your business many advantages
- Logo represents a dominant business structure.

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS SUMMARY | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

What do these communities share in common?

- Almost all use blue color schemes, typically with a green complementary color. Many logos have either a square (building block) or pathway motif.
- Many of these communities (particularly Asheville and Charlotte) market through a coalition of organizations. However, these organizations are not always co-branded nor do they even share a similar message.
- Most communities tout the state's pro-business reputation and are looking to attract companies in growing tech-related fields.

WHERE THE BRAND SHOULD BE

The Insights portion of this process comprises the emotional and subjective sparks – gleaned from our intellectual and objective research – that point like a compass to the strategic position that best supports Hickory’s goals.

Hickory’s primary goals include:

- Conduct research to determine existing attitudes, have guidance on a strategy moving forward, and recommendations for specific elements to deliver the message.
- Resident pride.
- Economic Development: Improve the efficiency of our marketing, retention and recruitment efforts in an economically feasible manner.
- Have the City, CVB and Economic Development share a similar style and brand.

With these objectives in mind, we need to focus the branding strategy in the markets that will be most receptive to the brand communication. Furthermore, the brand strategy must differentiate Hickory from surrounding markets using a position that is relevant to its core customer base. This differentiation must remain in keeping with the personality perceived by stakeholders, visitors and perspective businesses alike.

Using the research gathered as fodder for thought, our insights come from asking a number of provocative questions: What emotional attachments can the brand hold for the consumer? How does the brand fit into his or her lifestyle? How can the brand best be used to redefine perceptions? How can the brand stand out in the marketplace? These insights will become the framework of our creativity on behalf of the brand.

INSIGHTS ABOUT HICKORY

Hickory, NC is many things, depending on what audience you are talking to, and when you ask. Words used to describe Hickory in North Star’s research include: booming, declining, manufacturing, furniture, fiber optics, textiles, health care, arts & culture, I-40 location, foothills, well-connected, regional hub, modern-day Mayberry, All American City...

However, one particular perception was more widespread than others.

“I describe Hickory as the former furniture capital of the world.”

- Vision Survey response

“I was always familiar with it as the furniture capital. That is what always comes to mind.”

- Perception Study interview

“Unfortunately I still think of furniture, but the industry is in decline.”

- Perception Study interview

“The main reason to go there is the furniture shopping.”

- Tourism Perception Study interview

“We are a small Southern town that once relied on furniture and textile mills and is now searching for a new identity.”

- Stakeholder interview

Throughout our research, it was clear that people do have perceptions of Hickory. Your community is not a blank slate in the minds of people familiar with your part of the state.

“Furniture” is:

- Most-mentioned word that comes to mind for Hickory on the Vision Survey
- #1 reason visitors are attracted to Hickory, according residents who took the Community Survey
- Un-aided **and** aided top-of-mind perception with outsiders on the CAP Study
- In the conversation of nearly every interview, whether talking with stakeholders or outsiders.

Overwhelmingly, the image most have in their minds for Hickory is of furniture. But let’s take a moment to step back from the furniture perceptions of today and revisit the moment when this community began...

Furniture is made of wood, which comes from trees. Hickory is named for a tree near a tavern at a railroad stop long ago. How is Hickory like the tree of its namesake?

“Hickory is like the tree: it has all the good qualities that make it the best – it’s a combination of different characteristics. And like the tree, our growth may be slow at times, but that’s because we are ensuring the quality; our core doesn’t change.”

-Stakeholder interview

The hickory tree is characterized by extremely **strong** and **tough** wood. Its **lovely** grain makes the tree’s wood sought-after for flooring, decorative purposes and...furniture. Strong, tough yet lovely. The community of Hickory could be described just as well.

▶ **Hickory “Strong”: Location**

- *“Our greatest strength is our location”* – Stakeholder interview
- Hickory’s “strong” is its base, where its rooted; it is its location.
- Hickory’s location has been the reason for much of its growth over the past century. Favorable geography made this location a strong trade route, which eventually led to railways.
- Proximity near forests provided the fuel for the furniture industry.
- Easy access to power drove new industries like fiber optics and today, data centers.
- Its location 1 hour from Charlotte and Asheville makes it close enough to enjoy the amenities of these bigger cities; but it is just far enough away to allow Hickory to be the hub of its own region, to be its own city out of the shadow from any other.
- *“We do have a superior geography here.”* – Stakeholder interview

*“Hickory is self-contained because it is separate from other metros and that allows it to be a **strong** center of commerce and activity for the Unifour area. Here in Concord, we are too close to Charlotte. We are often in its shadow.”*

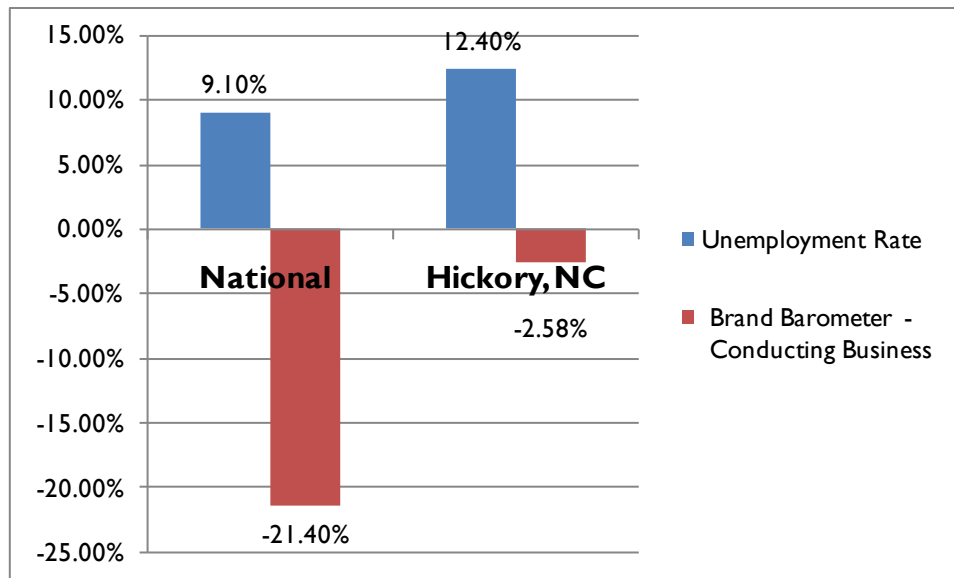
- Perception Study interview

▶ **Hickory “Tough”: Resilience**

- *“We have a strong cultural toughness. My one word would be ‘resilient’.”*
- Hickory’s toughness is the resolute work-ethic that fueled its manufacturing economy for so long.
- It is why the community is always striving for the next incarnation of itself. It is the “get to it” attitude that causes residents and leaders to roll up their sleeves in times of trouble.
- For example, the Miracle at Hickory – where the entire community built a hospital to care for the children suffering from polio in the region. From the time the decision was made until equipment, doctors, and patients were in a new facility, took less than 54 hours. This is just the first example of the community’s ongoing giving spirit, hospitality and collaborative nature...

▶ **Hickory “Lovely”: Cooperation, collective positive outlook**

- The Miracle at Hickory showed a great resilience but also a collaborative, positive spirit.
- More currently, that mindset is most obvious in the Brand Barometer. Hickory’s unemployment rate is 12.4% (as of Dec ‘10) while the national average is 9.1%. Why then, does Hickory outperform the National Average in brand advocacy for the city as a place to do business?



🔑 **Hickory “Lovely”: Cooperation, collective positive outlook**

- “Positive attitude of the people” was second only to “location” as Hickory’s best asset on the Community Survey.
- “We’ve been riding a rollercoaster, but we are staying positive. The community always comes together and we know we will make it through.” ~Stakeholder Interview

The U.S. Forestry Service says this of the wood of a hickory tree – There are woods that are stronger than hickory and some that are harder, but the **combination of strength and toughness** is not found in any other commercial wood but hickory.”

The Community of Hickory has a blend of strength and toughness that form its base, like the roots of a tree. And there is a lovely grain that runs through the community – a positive, cooperative spirit. The name is more fitting than city founders could have imagined – a community resilient, strong, and lovely. It’s no surprise that the industry which long fueled the economy was based on trees.

So yes, Hickory is strong in its location and toughness, but this community is not just a tree by itself. It’s what it *has done* with its tree.

The tree has provided the materials – desirable location, strength of will, inherent beauty. But it is the people who continue to craft that material into the society they desire for the future.

“Hickory is like a mature hickory tree which represents its strength, furniture heritage and natural resources.”

- Vision Survey response

What has Hickory made with these resources? The tree provides the material, but who provides the skill to create something new?

Under the guiding hand of the right craftsman, hickory wood can be repurposed for myriad uses. It is used for tool handles, bows, wheel spokes, carts, drumsticks, lacrosse stick handles, golf club shafts, the bottom of skis, walking sticks and even firewood for cooking.

Hickory the community has transformed itself from lumber town, to wagon manufacturing to furniture to textiles to healthcare to education to arts and sciences to fiber optics and data centers.

It has taken its strength of location, toughness of resilience and the lovely quality of cooperation and applied these qualities with great skill.

This great skill is achieved through a combination of quality workmanship, detail and artistry; of **Craftsmanship**.

Craftsmanship is a skill and expertise in doing or making

Craftsmanship is concentration and attention to detail

Craftsmanship is artistry.

▶ **Skill and expertise in doing and making**

- Hickory’s workforce is expert in manufacturing. The skills acquired from the creation of something real, something tangible, means proof of a job well-done. Potential employers are aware of this advantage.
- “The textile and furniture industries are very hands-on type of work. Yes, they might need retraining for certain fields but my theory is that these types of people are the best types of employees. They train well and take pride in their work.” – ECD Perception Study interview
- But it isn’t just manufacturing, skill is used to “make” things happen in Hickory.

▶ **Concentration and attention to detail**

- Leadership in the community is seen as progressive, thorough and detailed.
- Plans are in place (2030 Comp Plan) to address many concerns which were mentioned in North Star’s research including unemployment (economic development plan), blight/empty buildings (vacant structures are being reused for new business development), and focusing on downtown revitalization.
- The Catawba County Economic Development Corporation, of which Hickory is the a lead, is seen as an aggressive, thoughtful organization that is responding to industry changes.
 - “They are doing what is right, just need to keep it up.” – *Past business prospect, Perception Study interview*
- The greatest strength of the Hickory Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau was seen as its attention to detail in handling and planning meetings for the Convention Center.
 - “We left and then came back because we know we can expect the best service in Hickory.” – *Meeting planner, Perception Study interview*

▶ **Artistry – creativity applied to a craft**

Artistry is abundant in the Hickory community. It is present in:

- The artistic skill of upholsters, fine furniture crafters
- The inspiration that the landscape provides
- Lenoir-Rhyne University and the Catawba Valley Community College bring creative minds to the community
- Creative problem solving
 - Banding together as a community to win another All-American City designation in 2007, due to creative grassroots programs like the partnership which formed the Hickory Metro Higher Education Center, the nonprofit Exodus Home providing housing for disadvantaged residents, and the scholarship program Project Potential
- A community undeniably supportive of the arts, as evidenced by SALT Block

It is this **collective spirit of craftsmanship** that makes Hickory so special, so unique.

Other communities might be as tough or strong and may cooperate well, but none has the combination of these attributes that Hickory does. And none has the craftsmanship attitude to take that raw material and make it into a high-quality, well-rounded community.

It is a **craftsmanship** mindset that may have started with the furniture industry because it attracted skilled, determined, detailed and creative craftspeople.

But now those people have, in turn, crafted a community for doers and makers like themselves, where there is an importance placed on **not just production, but on quality and artistry, too.**

“An identity would seem to be arrived at by the way in which the person faces and uses his experience.”
-James Baldwin

It’s not about furniture. Or even just manufacturing. It is about ideas, creativity, industries of the mind, artistic outlets, and crafting a superior **quality of life** for the future.

It is **quality**. And that is the result of fine **craftsmanship**.

It is reflected in the high quality of the city’s...

- Cultural assets
- Downtown
- Outdoor recreation
- Lake
- Safety
- City services
- Affordability
- Scenery and setting
- Accessibility and convenience
- Arts assets
- Schools
- Shopping and dining
- Climate

As evidenced by receiving high ratings on the Community Survey.

*“When a work lifts your spirits and inspires bold and noble thoughts in you, do not look for any other standard to judge by: the work is good, the product of a master **craftsman**.”*

-Jean de la Bruyere (17th century French essayist)

It's about quality because Hickory's name still means a standard to by which to judge...

“They will always be a leader for their region and the one the others look up to. They have the location and the quality assets.”

-Perception Study interview

“Hickory is like a handmade community. It is quality and built with pride.”

-Stakeholder interview

“There is something both solid and creative about Hickory. It is not a mass-produced community...they have assets we wish we had...”

-Perception Study interview

“To me, quality craftsmanship is something made in Hickory, NC.”

-unaided CAP Study response

STRATEGIC BRAND PLATFORM:

North Star funnels these strategic insights for the brand into a single sentence, the brand platform. The brand platform is used as a filter for the formation of creative concepts and implementation initiatives. All communications, actions and product development should connect to the essence of this relevant and defining statement.

Target Audience:	<i>For doers and makers seeking a well-rounded community</i>
Frame-of-Reference:	<i>Hickory is a bridge between Asheville and Charlotte at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains along I-40</i>
Point-of-Difference:	<i>where a collective spirit of craftsmanship</i>
Benefit:	<i>strengthens any endeavor with detail, artistry and quality.</i>

RATIONALE:

▶ ***For doers and makers seeking a well-rounded community***

- Doers and makers don't just talk, they act. Hickory has citizens and leaders who are trying to make a difference and plan for the future, even in these difficult times.
- It is not meant to be exclusive of thinkers and dreamers; rather, Hickory should attract only the dreamers who will also then work to bring their dreams to life.
- Hickory has many quality assets, as illuminated in the Insights, which make for a very well-rounded community.

▶ ***Hickory is a bridge between Asheville and Charlotte at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains along I-40***

- Proximity to Charlotte and Asheville gives those who live and work in Hickory more options and flexibility.
- As shown in the Insights, Hickory's strength of location is that it is just far enough away from these other metropolitan areas so that the city can be itself, but still close enough that residents can enjoy the amenities of a larger region.
- Hickory's position along I-40 has long driven the economy here.
- Hickory's scenic beauty was a strong research theme. It is time to take ownership of the foothills to provide added depth to your identity.

▶ ***where a collective spirit of craftsmanship***

- The Insights section has laid out the rationale regarding the use of craftsmanship.
- Hickory shouldn't outrun the furniture image. But you want people to understand that the community is so much more than manufacturing. The idea of craftsmanship allows use of the positive associations of the furniture identity, and applies them to all the other assets of the community.
- Craftsmanship takes the idea of Hickory's heritage and plays off the most timeless attributes of it: strength, beauty, detail...
- Hickory has an opportunity to define craftsmanship in terms of not just goods, but of ideas and of its future.

▶ ***strengthens any endeavor with detail, artistry and quality.***

- The natural benefit of fine craftsmanship is quality.
- Hickory's numerous quality assets are the fruits of the community's labor.
- This quality can be taught and handed down, like a craft, so that anyone can create their own quality future.

WHAT WILL GET US THERE?

In this section, we discuss which elements of communication need to be created or altered – and in what ways – to influence the responses and behavior of Hickory’s various target audiences toward its brand. A number of brand-shaping issues often must be confronted: overall positioning, packaging, budget allocation, stakeholder participation, sponsorship association, cooperative efforts and of course, advertising and promotions.

Several major initiatives occur at this point:

- A logo and strapline are created
- A Brand Identity is developed
- Brand Action Ideas are developed.

CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS OF THE BRAND

A Word about the Creative Expressions of the Brand

You are about to see several creative expressions that will help bring the Hickory brand to life. The creative expressions serve as “guides” only – our recommended creative approach to the brand – and do not represent finished work. Many communities choose to work with local talent for the actual refinement and production of creative communication pieces. This allows for true customization and also brings local perspective to the work.

How you choose to use these elements is up to you! You may choose to reproduce the work exactly as shown, or take the “seed idea” in a different direction. Whatever you choose to do, we encourage you to turn the ideas outlined here into reality and connect your residents, visitors and businesses to the Hickory brand.

All creative files are included in the attached Final BrandPrint CD. Also, the Hickory Graphic Standards Guide is attached as the final **Appendix M** to this report. In addition, North Star has included two copies of the Hickory Final Logo CD for distribution to vendors or anyone requesting a copy of your logo.

Hickory’s chosen creative concept is represented in the following expressions to position the community as a place where craftsmanship in all its meanings – creativity, attention to detail, strength, knowledge of resources, and care is applied to all facets of the community, not just manufacturing.

Layouts allow for a storytelling approach. Each features a craftsperson from Hickory and follows that person as they work to build, shape, create, make and do. Photos are representative of the different elements required to have craftsmanship – a craftsperson, a tool and a result. Colors are used to evoke Hickory’s combination of strength and beauty – greens, blues and browns. The result is an approachable, memorable picture of Hickory.

Note: North Star ran a search for Hickory recommended strapline on the United States Patent and Trademark Office’s Trademark Electronic Search System (TESS).

We also searched variations of the line and all searches found no relevant live or dead results.

Searches are only accurate for that moment in time of the search. North Star has recommended that Hickory pursue trademark protection of the strapline.

North Star’s trademark search is documented in **Appendix G**.

CREDO COPY:

Craftsmanship – it’s more than a way of doing something. It’s a way of seeing, being and creating anew. Hickory, North Carolina, has a history of craftsmanship – a long tradition of making something of itself and the world around it. Attention to detail, pride in precision, doing a thing well, dedication to a craft and knowledge of natural resources are all strengths ingrained in Hickory. They’re all part of a past that serves and shapes its future.

Hickory’s past and future prospects have drawn to this place a people with an eye for detail and a hand for hard work, a passion for making something of themselves and of the future. From furniture capitol to fiber optic center, natural wonder to fine arts splendor, recreational heaven to entertainment haven, small town values to big city drive, the people of Hickory have crafted a living and a life that’s rich both in tradition and promise. They’ve made Hickory more than a wonderful place at an advantageous location. They’ve made a living and a life here. Hickory - Life, well crafted.

DESCRIPTIVE VOCABULARY:

Craftsmanship
Natural
Resourceful
Ingrain
Hard work
Promise
Skill
Spirit
Partner
Concentration
Artistry
Craftsmanship

Creativity
Beauty
Resilient
Shape
Passion
Demonstrate
Technique
Collaborate
Joint
Lovely
Quality
Creativity

Strength
Depth
Flexible
Detail
Tradition
Precision
Care
Pass down
Art
Solid
Inspiring
Strength

STRAPLINE

“Life. Well Crafted.”

RECOMMENDED LOGOS



Life. Well Crafted.

ALTERNATIVE LOGOS



BUSINESS-FOCUSED AD

"Em si te omniam sit auda net mi, optati tem re est, sam fuga.
Ratiust alignam ellupta tionect atibeatusam liquassed est, con
pro is excerro ipsum, illaut volorem onect atibeatusam "

Mary Jones ~ Mary's Flower Creations



There's making a living
and there's making a life.



HICKORY
North Carolina

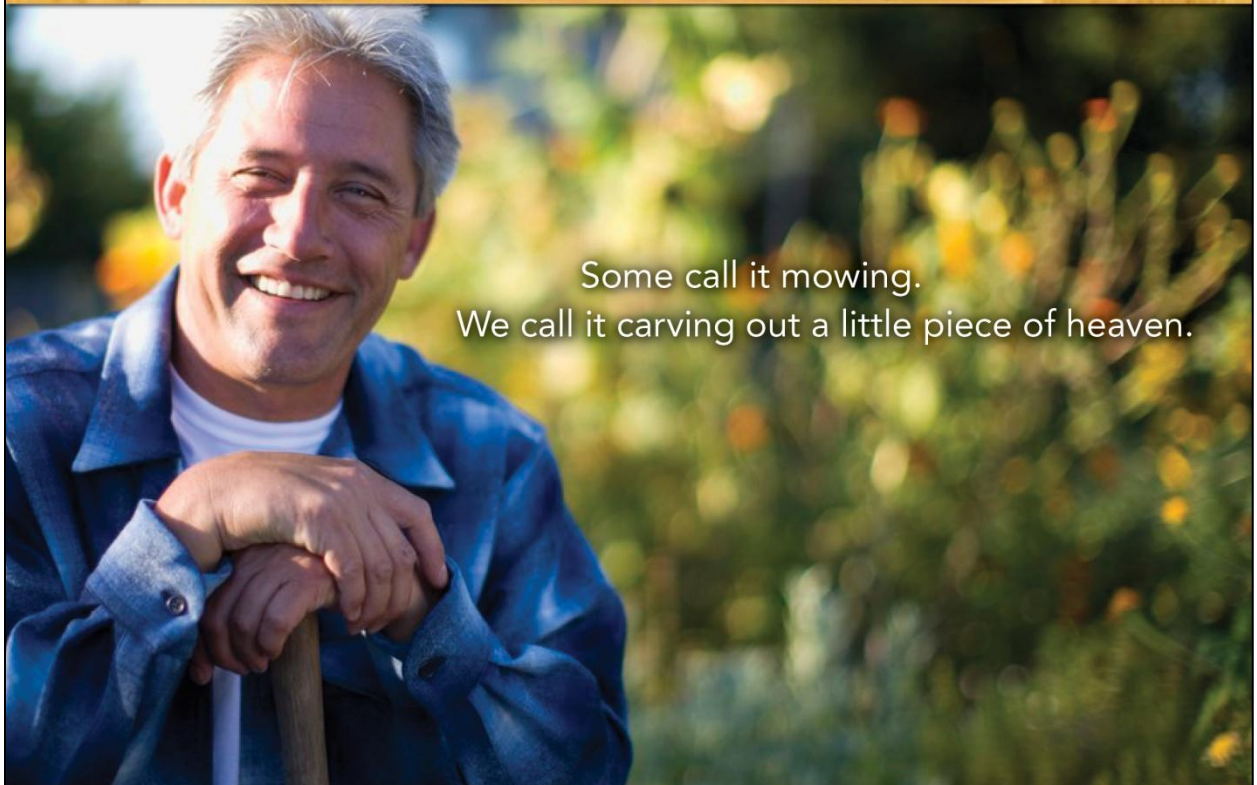
Life. Well Crafted.

hickorywellcrafted.com

RESIDENT-FOCUSED AD

"Em si te omniam sit auda net mi, optati tem re est, sam fuga.
Ratiust alignam ellupta tionect atibeatusam liquassed est, con
pro is excerro ipsum, illaut volorem onect atibeatusam "

Joe Williams ~ Maple Street



HICKORY
North Carolina

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HOSPITAL PARTNER AD

"Em si te omniam sit auda net mi, optati tem re est, sam fuga.
Ratiust alignam ellupta tionect atibeatusam liquassed est, con
pro is excerro ipsum, illaut volorem onect atibeatusam "

Dr. Beth Williams ~ Cardiology



Practicing medicine is one thing.
Creating a healing environment
is quite another.



Healing. Well Crafted.

hickorywellcrafted.com



“Handcrafted in Hickory” program takes shape

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Well crafted life Resident Spotlight

Mary Williams:



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New Pole Banners arrive in downtown Hickory

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Vendors come together to support Skate Park Project

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Salt Block begins planning for Fall Art Fest

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▶ Events

Citizens Advisory Committee
Thursday, August 04, 2011
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Community Relations Council
Monday, August 08, 2011
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Recycling Advisory Board
Tuesday, August 09, 2011
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Public Art Commission
Wednesday, August 10, 2011
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WEBSITE HOMEPAGE

City of Hickory, North Carolina

http://www.

Google

HICKORY

North Carolina

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CONTACT US

Government Residents Business Visitors Tools

SEARCH GO

Quick Links

- HICKORY, NC STREET MAP
- PAY UTILITY BILL ONLINE
- LIBRARY
- PARKS & REC CENTERS
- HICKORY WELL CRAFTED

Agendas & Minutes
Enter Service Request
Employment Opportunities
Hickory City Codes
Business Licenses
City Snippets
City Forms & Applications
Boards and Commissions
Hickory GIS System
Treasured Trees Program
2011-12 Fee Schedule
2011-12 Budget
Citizens Guide to City Services
2010 Hickory Highlights
Zahra Playground Project
New Ward Map

YouTube f t

StartSomethingHere
It's a great place to begin, or begin again.

Welcome to a life well crafted

Craftsmanship – it's more than a way of doing something. It's a way of seeing, being and creating anew. Hickory, North Carolina, has a history of craftsmanship – a long tradition of making something of itself and the world around it. Attention to detail, pride in precision, doing a thing well, dedication to a craft and knowledge of natural resources are all strengths ingrained in Hickory. They're all part of a past that serves and shapes its future. [\(more\)](#)

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Vendors come together to support Skate Park Project

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Makers & Doers

Mary Williams:

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Events

- Citizens Advisory Committee
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WEB PORTAL TREATMENT

Hickory, North Carolina | Live Something Here

Hickory, North Carolina | Live S...

http://www.startsomethinghere.com/live/communities/hickory/

Google

Live Work Learn

StartSomethingHere
It's a great place to begin, or begin again.

HOME LIVING HERE COMMUNITIES OUR REGION SPOTLIGHT

Home » Communities in the Catawba Valley, North Carolina » Hickory, North Carolina

Hickory, North Carolina

Life. Well Crafted.

Like 12 people like this. Be the first of your friends.

Life. Well Crafted.

Craftsmanship – it's more than a way of doing something. It's a way of seeing, being and creating anew. Hickory, North Carolina, has a history of craftsmanship – a long tradition of making something of itself and the world around it. Attention to detail, pride in precision, doing a thing well, dedication to a craft and knowledge of natural resources are all strengths ingrained in Hickory. They're all part of a past that serves and shapes its future.

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Business. Well Crafted.

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The Arts. Well Crafted.

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Search

Spotlight

Hickory Community Theatre-[Read Story](#)

News

- Contest picks name for donated sculpture
- Frye Regional Medical Center recognized for 5-star status
- Hickory's Ned Jarrett humbled by induction into NASCAR Hall of Fame

Upcoming Events

- July 22, 2011 – Hickory Alive! Hyndsytte 7:00 pm, Live
- July 23, 2011 – Conover Farmers Market 7:30 am, Live
- July 23, 2011 – Downtown Hickory Farmers Market 8:00 am, Live
- July 24, 2011 – Jazz on Tap 8:00 pm, Live
- July 27, 2011 – Downtown Hickory Farmers Market 12:00 pm, Live

Tags

5-star Art **Arts** Bars Baseball Biking Birdwatching Bluegrass Boat Docks Bob Trotman **Catawba County** Chris Spencer Conover Conover Station Continuing Education CVCC Downtown Downtown Hickory Education entertainment Exhibitions fair

**Headlines should be in
Avenir LT Std 95 Black**



Life. Well Crafted.

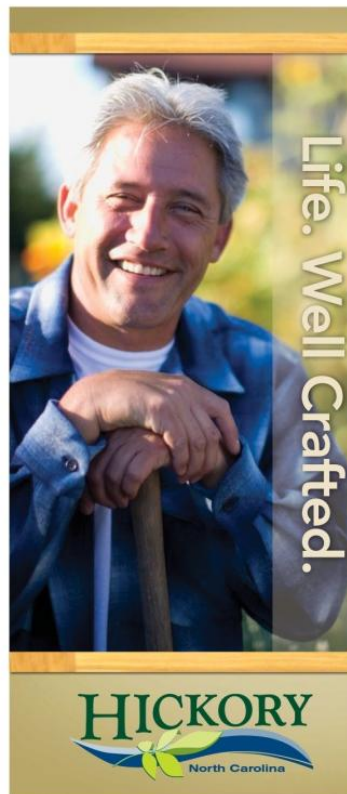
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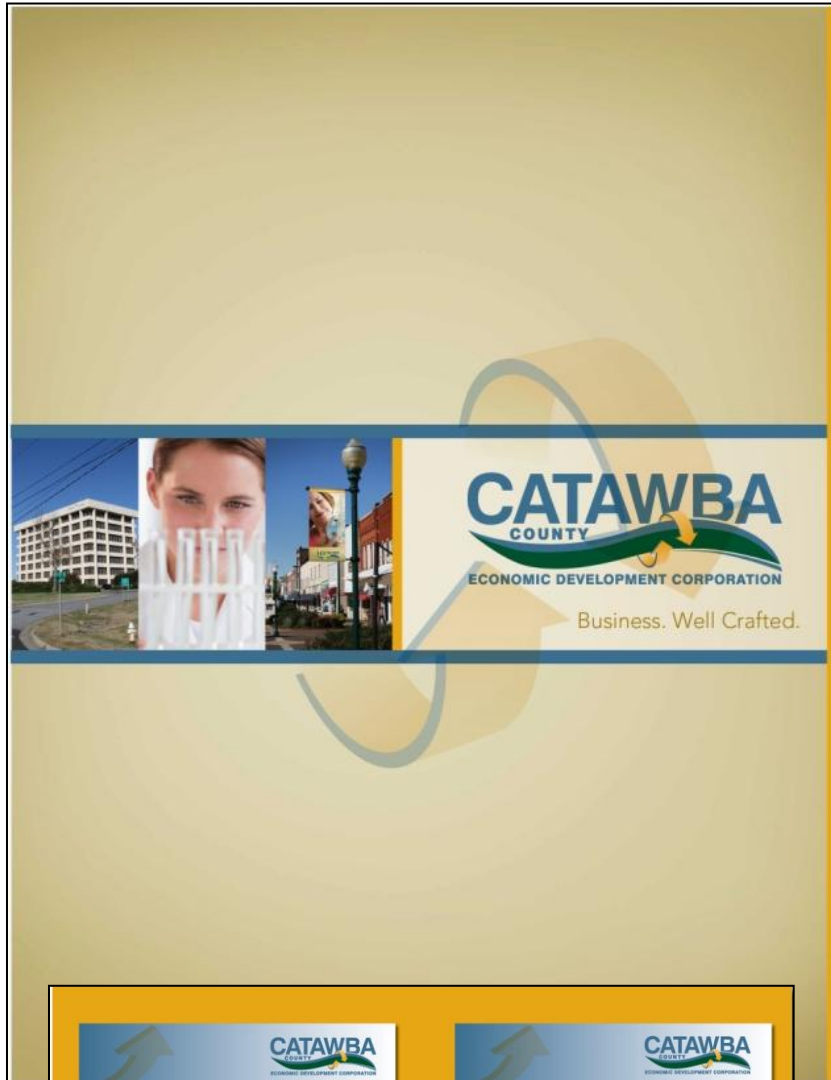


Life. Well Crafted.

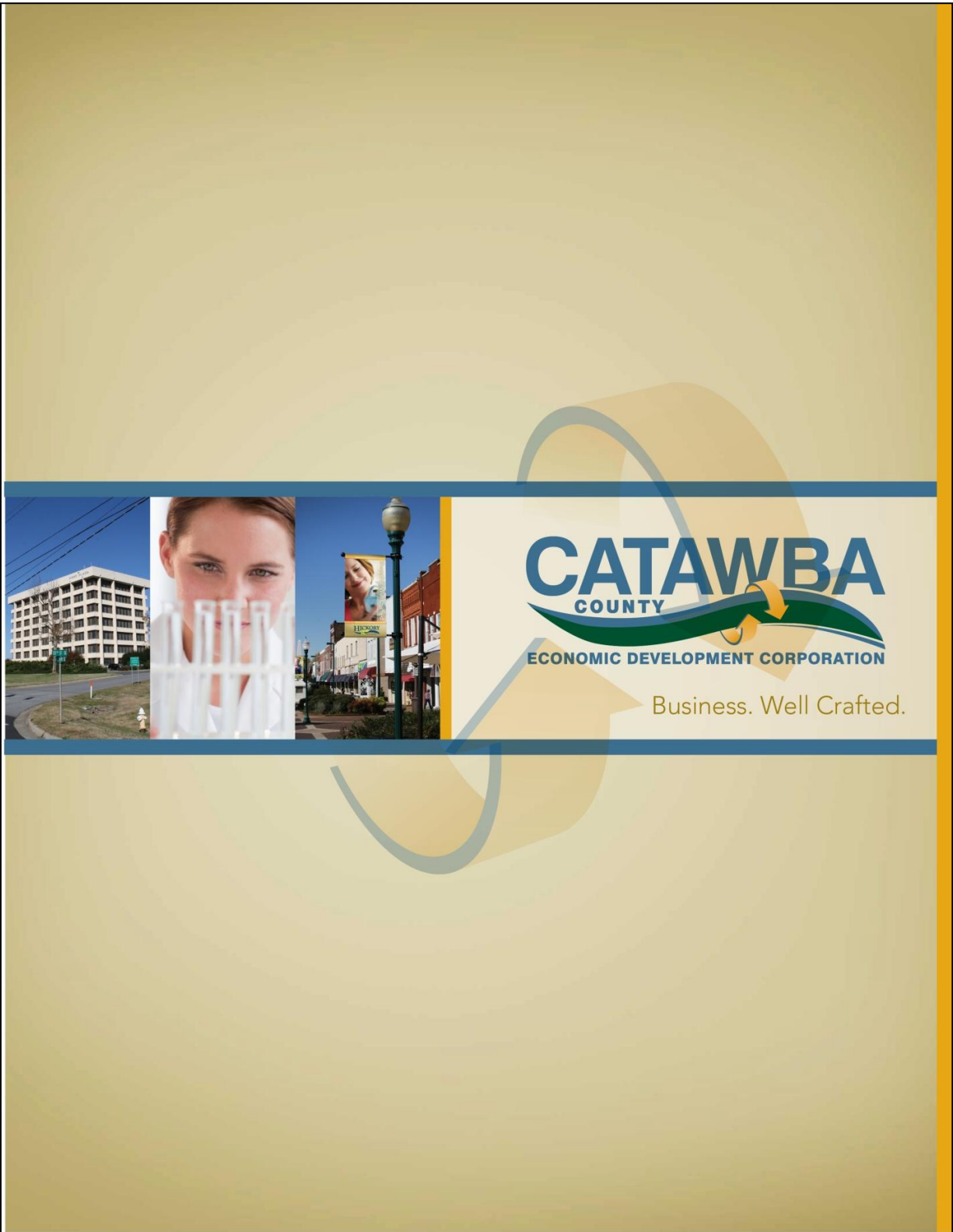
POLE BANNERS



CATAWBA CO. EDC FOLDER



CATAWBA CO. EDC FOLDER - FRONT





Business. Well Crafted.

Data Center Sites

Datacentersites.com



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Work Force

CATAWBA COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Business. Well Crafted.

Labor Availability

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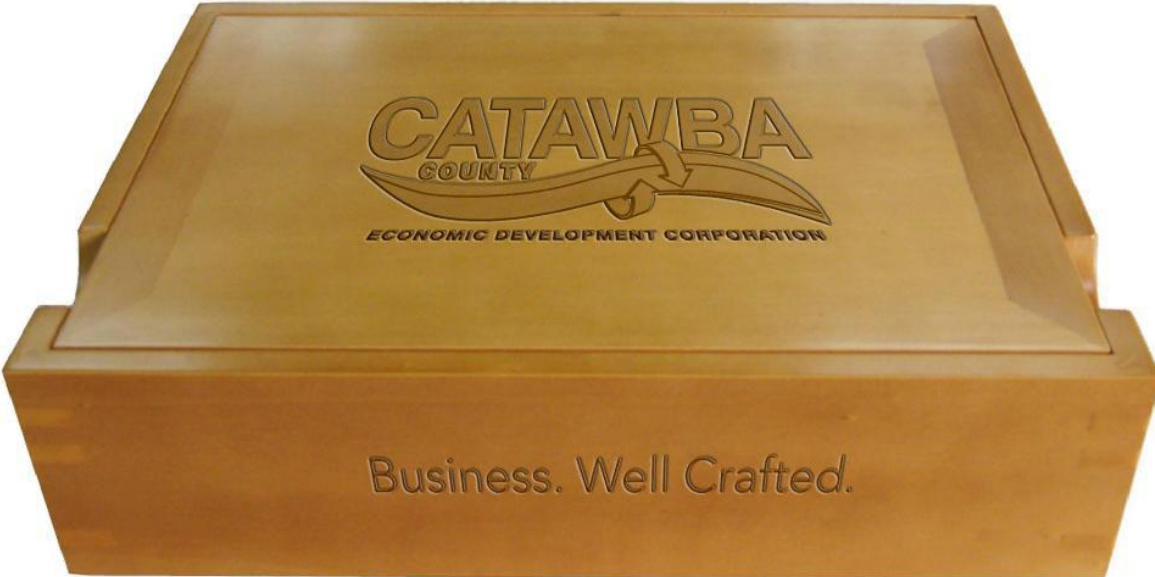
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CATAWBA CO. PREMIUM ITEM



VISITOR GUIDE COVER



HICKORY METRO

Convention & Visitors Bureau

2012 VISITORS GUIDE



- SALT BLOCK is...
- Science Center
- Art Museum
- Arts Council
- Symphony
- Library

Life. Well Crafted.



HICKORYMETRO.COM/VISITOR

VISITOR GUIDE DIVIDER



Life. Well Crafted.

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VISITOR GUIDE LISTING

Life. Well Crafted.

AREA INFORMATION

VISITOR INFORMATION

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hickorymetro.com

MEETING PLANNER GUIDE

2012 MEETING PLANNER'S GUIDE



HICKORY
METRO
Convention & Visitors Bureau
Meetings. Well Crafted.



VEHICLE APPLICATION



WATER TOWER APPLICATION



MERCHANDISE – T-SHIRT



MERCHANDISE – MATERNITY T-SHIRT



MERCHANDISE – HAT BACK



MERCHANDISE – HAT FRONT



BRANDED GIFT APPLICATION



HAND CRAFTED HICKORY POTS



COLOR PALETTE



Brand Action Ideas

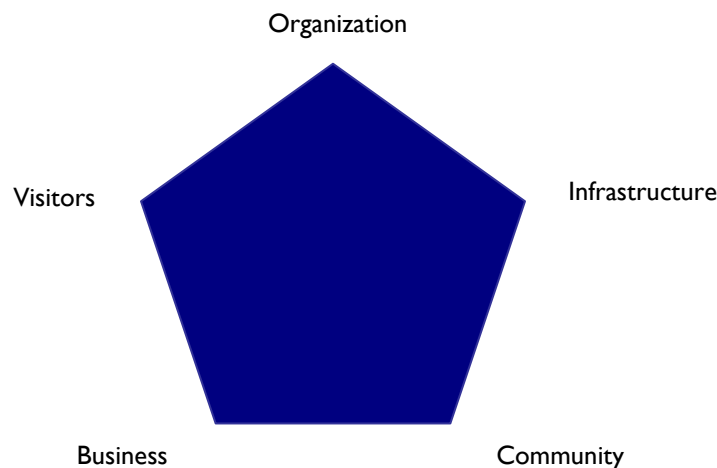
Putting your brand to work from launch to longevity

So you've got a distinct and relevant brand, now what? Strategic implementation is the most critical, and sometimes the most challenging, aspect of community branding. Community brands are not just about strap lines and logos. They are about emotion and experience. True branding requires strategies and tactics aimed at getting your brand off the page, onto the street and into people's hearts and minds. Specifically, your brand is about demonstrating how Hickory is a place where craftsmanship is more than a way of doing something, it's a way of life. In a premade, prepackaged, prefab world, Hickory is still a place where attention to detail, pride in precision, doing a thing well, dedication to a craft and knowledge of natural resources are all valued. And the Hickory brand celebrates this dedication to craftsmanship in every capacity from furniture to fiber optics to families to fun.

Your brand is most vulnerable during the 24-month period following launch simply because both support and awareness are low while skepticism is high. (As you know, this is the nature of many public initiatives.) The main goal of this time period is to convert the "players" and the community of Hickory into brand ambassadors through education and information sharing. While numerous other brand marketing and communication initiatives can take place concurrently, this incubation period is primarily devoted to strategies that reinforce and demonstrate the value of a strong Hickory brand. Once everyone is on board the brand team, there is no end to the powerful things you can do with your brand. We have seen it happen in other communities across the country and we are excited about seeing it happen in Hickory.

Strategies and Tactics

North Star recommends that the strategies and tactics associated with brand implementation generally fall into five distinct categories (below).



Within these categories, North Star has developed standardized and customized brand action ideas to address specific Hickory concerns.

◀ **Organization**

Brands cannot grow and thrive if no one takes responsibility for them. Successful implementation of the Hickory brand will require accountability, passion, understanding and respect for the branding effort. It will also require cooperation and partnership with other organizations, businesses and individuals. Tactics should address the creation and funding of brand support positions as well as the development of public and private entity organizations for marketing your community in the context of the brand.

◀ **Infrastructure**

This strategy addresses the unique opportunity Hickory has to use your infrastructure as a three-dimensional medium for showcasing the brand to residents, businesses and visitors. As you consider this category, we encourage you to think outside the box (or beyond the building!). Your infrastructure includes water towers, public vehicles, sidewalks, parks, building facades, signage, lighting, airwaves, the sky . . . even the backs of your citizens.

◀ **Community**

Community brands are not created; they are discovered within the spirit of a place – from the history, the attractions, the culture, the geography and the society. Brands uncovered in this manner are endorsed and absorbed by their communities due to their fundamental truth. And citizens who believe in the brand are ultimately the best brand ambassadors. However, it is not enough for a brand to just be “of the people,” strategies must be developed for taking the brand into the community with programs and initiatives that have meaning for the citizens.

◀ **Visitors**

Your community’s relationship with its visitors (be they tourists, business people or visiting family) occurs at three distinct points on the time continuum – before, during and after the visit. Communities that desire to grow their visitation market using their new brand need a distinct set of strategies and tactics for attracting and educating potential visitors, for impressing and entertaining current visitors and for influencing past visitors (who are spreading their impressions to others). Tactics address website strategies, reunion planning, internet marketing, promotions, events, signage, visitor’s centers, transportation, lodging, retail, conventions, meeting planners and more.

◀ **Business**

There is a direct relationship between the success of your community brand and the businesses that call Hickory home. Strategies and tactics in this section are two-pronged. Some address the need to reach out to economic development prospects with branded messages. Others work to involve existing businesses in the growth of the brand. Specific tactics address communications, events, promotions, merchandise, messaging, policy, public relations and more.

Brand Implementation Schedule

North Star divides its brand action ideas into two implementation schedules:

- ▶ **MUST-DO Year 1 ideas** to get your brand going. This is a list of 10 tasks that should be accomplished in the first year after brand development to ensure the brand maintains momentum. Many of these tasks fall into the “organization” category on the pentagon above and are designed to evoke the cooperation that will propel your brand forward.
- ▶ **Year 2 ideas.** Once you’ve accomplished the MUST-DO ideas, you can dedicate time and resources to some of the tactics on this list. Some are very specific; others are broad in scope. They are designed to give your brand the richness, texture and three-dimensionality it needs to be fully integrated.

YEAR 1

(Must do ideas in order of importance)

1) Assign a brand manager

Bottom line: your brand will go nowhere if no one takes responsibility for it. In fact, the most important contribution the city of Hickory can make to the ongoing success of your brand is appointing/hiring a brand leader to champion the process.

This brand manager can be:

- A brand manager whose sole job is to implement the brand. Hired from inside or out.
- An existing position such as marketing manager or PIO who will take on brand management tasks as part of an existing position. (However, North Star cautions against assigning this job to an individual who already manages full-time job responsibilities. Establishing a brand – especially during the first two years – can require a great deal of time.)
- A volunteer with marketing experience and passion.
- The individual currently assigned to manage the brand development process.
- The City’s Communications Director, Mandy Pitts, would make an excellent choice, but thought needs to be given to adding brand management duties to an individual who already has full-time status.

We will provide you a job description for brand manager (See **Appendix H**). If hiring, this will give you a framework within to make your decision. If appointing or assigning, the job responsibilities will give you a feeling for the tasks this individual should manage. And remember, avoid brand management by committee. The brand will fall through the cracks.

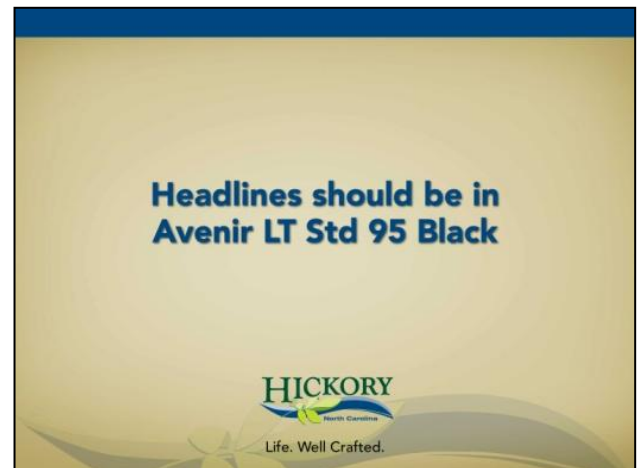
2) Create a brand PowerPoint

The branding process is complex. For most people it takes multiple presentations to understand branding’s process, purpose and plan. You can’t expect residents, businesses and stakeholders in Hickory to grasp the potential for your brand without a carefully considered presentation. The presentation is what you will use over and over to recruit help, support and

funding. Hire professionals, use color and graphics, use intriguing and inspirational language (the brand narrative should help!) and follow the content recommendations below. Important points:

Use the brand presentation to tell your story. This branding initiative was developed with a long-term vision in-mind. Others need to understand that vision. Show a few slides of valuable insights gleaned from the research. Build up what you learned from the process.

- Why was this project started?
- Who else was involved?
- What did you learn from the research?
- Share and explain the strategy – your strategic brand platform.
- Show the creative work. Tell others what it allows you to do. Why were the colors/images/words used?
- How do you plan on using it immediately and long-term?
- Focus on planned initiatives that take the brand beyond just a logo and line.
- Finally, provide your audience with a list of ways they can participate in and benefit from the new brand.



Once you have developed this PowerPoint, distribute it to the brand manager, brand drivers (Business Development Committee) and members of the Market Hickory Partnership (for more on this, see Tactic 7, p. 157). Charge these individuals with meeting one-on-one with leaders from Hickory communities as well as other stakeholders to reinforce and answer questions about the brand (using the presentation). Meet with SALT Block organizers, newspaper editors, church leaders, the board of education, developers, etc. The goal is to create a strong support base for the brand amongst community leaders.

Such meetings pay off in unexpected ways. In McKinney, Texas, the brand manager met with a local developer to explain the branding initiative and various ways it could come to life in the community. Months later, the developer contacted the brand manager, interested in flying a flag with the McKinney brand logo in his upscale retail area as well as throughout the parking area.

North Star client, Lima-Allen County, Ohio, chose to implement their new community-wide brand through economic development channels first. They produced a compelling DVD targeting CEOs and other economic development leaders explaining the branding process, goals, and how the business leaders could participate and benefit. Please follow the link below to the DVD presentation.

<http://northstarideas.blogspot.com/2010/03/lima-Walton County-county-branding-video.html>

3) Work as a team

Regardless of your day-to-day tasks, the ultimate goal of every community in Hickory and every organization involved with the Hickory brand is to improve the future of this wonderful place you call home. Maximum efficacy for your brand will occur only if you combine budgets, manpower, passion and purpose across all involved organizations in the public sector. But don't forget the brand hierarchy. The brand manager should always manage the process, calling and leading meetings and assigning (with input) responsibilities.

Initially, we recommend bringing all involved public sector organizations together on a quarterly basis. This approach may be met with resistance at first, but some North Star clients say that teamwork across the public sector is one of the most valuable outcomes of the brand over time. A great ice breaking task for your first meeting is to make a comprehensive list of initiatives, activities and programs currently in place. How can the brand be integrated into these initiatives? In the programming? Their marketing? Their names?

These programs should then be prioritized and a schedule developed for incorporating the brand philosophies and graphics into signage and information/marketing pieces. Start by looking at the printing schedules for brochures and information pieces, as well as sign production schedules.

Types of initiatives that could work because they demonstrate all the dimensions of strength:

- Recycling
- Historical preservation
- Reading
- Fitness
- Neighborhood revitalization
- Charitable outreach
- Arts programs
- Downtown revitalization
- Education

For example, Hickory frequently honors its volunteers for service to the city. Rename the entire volunteer program, "Hickory Doers and Makers." Consider giving all volunteers a t-shirt when they sign up to serve that says, "Hickory Doers and Makers". In addition to honoring all those who serve, select individuals who go above and beyond and recognize them specifically. This program can move beyond those who serve on Boards and Commissions to other types of volunteers communitywide.

4) Brand your stationery

It's obvious, but vitally important. Every letter, every envelope, every business card, every memo and every invoice that is issued by Hickory should reflect the brand's graphic identity. Give all involved organizations a designated number of weeks/months to use up existing stocks of stationery. Require reprinting to occur in the spirit of the brand. Another quick peek at your new look.

5) Identify easiest consumer touch points and brand them

Every time you and your employees interact with the public, it is an opportunity to build the brand (see suggested list of obvious “touch points” below). Some of these touch points are easy and should be branded immediately. For example, answering the phone. Change any recorded outgoing message as well as the language that employees use when they answer the phone. “You’ve reached Hickory, where life is well-crafted.” One of our clients went so far as to write and record a jingle based on their brand that plays whenever callers to their offices are on hold!

Some touch points, such as utility bill stuffers, will take a little more time and cooperation among organizations. Some of the more critical touch points (i.e., stationery) have been addressed in more detail elsewhere in these action ideas.

Review and augment the following list of touch points during your first public sector brand team meeting. Divide the list into four categories: 1) Easy, do immediately; 2) Moderate difficulty, implement within the first year; 3) Difficult, revisit later (designate a time).

- Employees
- Employee identification (nametags, ID badges)
- Telephone
- Services
- Web site (portal and public sector organizations)
- Voice mails
- E-mails
- Word of mouth
- Letterhead
- Publications
- Packaging
- Signage
- Business forms
- Newsletters
- Products
- Proposals
- Collateral
- Experiences
- Environmental applications
- Public relations, press releases
- Public affairs
- Annual report
- Utility bill stuffers
- Marketing and advertising
- Sales promotions
- Networking
- Direct mail
- Trade shows
- Exhibits
- Maps
- Presentations
- Speeches
- Vehicles
- Social media
- Billboards
- Posters
- Buttons/Pins
- Gifts
- Brand extension
- Marketing partner resources
- Sponsors
- Community development
- Tours
- Local, state, national websites/communications
- Private sector partner websites

Important Note: Some of these touch points will require little more than a change in the logo and line they bear (i.e., public service vehicles). Others will require much more than switching out the logo. For example, economic development recruitment pieces should be written entirely within the framework of the brand. Community outreach programs should be developed that support the idea of helping citizens realize that Hickory is a place that values, rewards and supports exceptional craftsmanship and standards in everything from raising children to growing a business.

6) Revamp low-hanging signage.

Okay, we understand that a total re-haul of all signage (entryway, directional, etc.) may be cost-prohibitive at the moment. Even if budgets don't allow all signage to be implemented immediately, do take inventory of all existing signage and create a roll-out plan for unifying all signage. (Signage can be implemented on a staggered roll-out schedule if necessary.) The brand should be included in the plan's design and intention. Stretching unified signage through the entryways, corridors, downtowns, attractions, historical venues and major crossroads of your community will do a great deal to elevate the aesthetic, image and presence of Hickory as a whole. As you consider signage, also consider additional elements like landscaping.

One area identified in the research as needing revitalization is Hickory's entryways/corridors. Specifically, numerous entrances to the city (with various degrees of signage, none of which is consistent) make it difficult to create a strong impression with visitors upon arrival. Identify which of these entryways is most high profile and heavily trafficked and tap into local artists and artisans to design and create something truly memorable and worthy of Hickory's legacy of skilled work. For example, the entryway structure could take the form of an incomplete masonry wall with bronze statues of workers working on the wall. The idea is that they are still in the process of crafting the wall. The final product, although still "under construction" would look complete and finished.

Create lower cost – but complementary signage – for less traveled entryways. Signs to direct people downtown from different locations in the community are also an opportunity to make an impression. One fun idea for entryway signage is to use the hickory leaf from the logo to point people in the right direction.

In the meantime, create signage visibility for the brand via pole banners and signage on Hickory's government buildings. Branded pole banners allow you to craft a consistent and unified brand message throughout all your municipalities and downtowns more cost effectively. Dual pole banners provide the opportunity for co-branding with various organizations, events and businesses throughout the community.



Because they are so cost-effective and flexible, we like to include some detail on other ways to use the brand on pole banners. Some issues to take into consideration:

- Overall visual feel and look, i.e., what kind of design guidelines will be needed to achieve a coordinated, attractive overall visual?
- Meshing brand banners and outside event/organization banners
- Optimal banner coverage: geographically and quantitatively
- Use of pole banners to achieve other communication objectives (see sample below of a children's interactive play center's banners). Some questions to ask:
 - Would Hickory like to require or encourage banner signage in redevelopment areas?
 - What about historic/iconic venues?
- What other opportunities currently exist for branded pole banners throughout the County? Schools? Museums? Shopping centers? Bike paths? Parks? Libraries? Major parking lots? Major arteries in and out of the County? Develop a banner installation priority plan with guidelines on how and where banners are to be used and placed.
- Do any of your new guidelines need to be reinforced via Council vote?
- When you have completed your strategy, formalize it in a pole banner standards guidebook.
- Partner with other public or private sector entities or organizations including members of the Medical Mile, members of the SALT BLOCK, retail areas such as a Union Square Emporium and Valley Hills Mall; parks; Highland Recreation Center; Hickory Convention Center; libraries; schools; colleges and universities including Catawba Valley Community College, Lenoir Rhyne University and Appalachia State University; Hickory Crawdads, Hickory Motor Speedway and the Hickory Furniture Mart and Catawba Furniture Mall to promote their interests under the banner of your new brand.



Branded banners on a school in Shawnee, KS

- Partner with major events including sports tournaments, Oktoberfest, Hickory Alive!, tree lighting, the Art Crawl, etc. to promote their interests under the banner of your new brand.



Branded city banners in St. Louis used in conjunction with banners for the Final Four basketball tournament



Double branded banners ensure maximum exposure and impact.

7) Engage the private sector

The resources and manpower to accomplish the goals of the Hickory brand will be increased exponentially by marshalling the power of your private sector. Establish a Market Hickory Partnership including all involved public sector organizations as well as large and small businesses, SALT BLOCK organizations, Medical Mile organizations, colleges and universities, retailers, developers, museums, media and even individuals. Start initially with Hickory’s Business Development Committee Membership. Open up membership to anyone who is interested and willing to contribute – time and funding – to the idea of marketing Hickory for future growth and success. Hold regular meetings under the guidance of the brand manager. We even have a charter to give you that seals member commitments in writing (see **Appendix I**).



Members of the Market Gainesville Partnership signing a brand charter

A team approach (including the private and public sector) to managing the brand furthers the buy-in and adoption of the resulting work. It keeps in mind the big picture for the community, and it weathers changes in political administrations. Most importantly (and this is key!) this group can solicit funds for brand implementation from its members (typically the bigger the member, the bigger the financial support). Ultimately partnerships with private sector companies and organization will be the primary funding source that drives the brand.

Well-crafted idea! Have each member of the Market Hickory Partnership bring a print-out of their company's website homepage to the first meeting. Discuss ways to integrate ideas and language that support the brand strategy into these homepages. Use your brand narrative as a guide. How do the characteristics of a fine craftsman translate to a doctor's work, to banking, teaching, real estate, etc? Ask each member to craft branded language that works with the spirit of your brand and incorporate it into their website home page. If a major corporation or organization is not in attendance at the meeting, go through this exercise for them. Just by threading a consistent message about craftsmanship through the messages of all the major players, you can establish a strong brand presence . . . absolutely free!

In subsequent meetings of the partnership discuss public sector initiatives and identify opportunities for cooperative efforts. Co-branded pole banners, downtown facades, signage, public art, events, merchandise, music, programming, products, etc. are just a small sampling of branded projects you can undertake in partnership with the Hickory private sector. Also, develop a simple branding toolkit that partners can use to put the brand to work in their businesses. Include history and explanation of the brand, camera-ready art of the logo(s) and strap line, bumper stickers, window decals and a premium item such as a t-shirt or pin. Also include the brand narrative with an explanation of how businesses can incorporate that language into their own marketing and signage. A guide for working with your businesses can be found in **Appendix J**.

For many communities, forming the partnership (along with other Year 1 activities) can take the better part of a year.

8) Brand your Hickory Website and Social Media

The first place most people will go to learn more about your community – for any reason – is the Hickory website. They will use Social Media to share ideas and opinions about Hickory. Therefore it is absolutely critical that your brand’s graphic identity and messaging be integrated into all digital media.

Understanding that Hickory manages its City website internally with limited resources, North Star is recommending minimal changes to the site with the primary goal of integrating the brand into the site’s content and appearance. A few ideas:

- Incorporate the newly refined logo, color palette and strapline.
- Review the content on your homepage and on all landing pages (economic development, tourism, city departments, etc.) with an eye toward integrating brand messaging wherever there is a natural fit. Use your brand narrative and brand vocabulary as a guide. Copy should focus on the idea that Hickory is authentic, a custom crafted place where people still take care with the things they do and care about the outcomes. A place with a long tradition of making something of itself and the world around it. Here’s an example of how that could work for your tourism homepage:

Fun. Well-Crafted.

There’s an art to having fun. Not everyone can do it and not every place can make it happen. Of course here in Hickory we’re as well-known for our hospitality as we are for our furniture making. In fact, you might say that Hickory is custom made for good times and making memories. Nestled in the foothills of the breathtaking Blue Ridge Mountains, we’ve crafted (with a little help from Mother Nature!) a destination that is everything from a recreational haven to entertainment heaven. A place where your biggest decision will be whether to build your day around water sports, fishing and picnics on beautiful Lake Hickory or antiques, culture and authentic dining in our charming Downtown/Union Square.

- Consider a consumer-friendly URL that is both easier to remember and helps establish the brand. North Star has reserved the URL hickorywellcrafted.com for your use for one year. (See **Appendix K** for instructions on how to transfer this URL from North Star to Hickory.)
- Establish a regular column called “Makers and Doers” that showcases the people who make things happen every day in Hickory. Allow residents to nominate “Makers and Doers” on your website and via various social media outlets.
- Include a link to Hickory Well-Crafted in the list of links on the left. The pull-down menu should have a landing page for Furniture Traditions, Textiles, Culture, Data Centers, etc.

- Also, consider links to one or more of the following:
 - All members of the Market Hickory Partnership
 - The network of businesses and artisans who participate in the “Handcrafted in Hickory” initiative (for more on this, see p. 184)
 - Major events and attractions like the Ensure Classic at the Rock Barn, Oktoberfest, Hickory Alive!, tree lighting and the Art Crawl
 - Events, performances and activities in the SALT Block
 - Game schedules for the Hickory Crawdads
 - Education sites particularly colleges and universities
 - An interactive map of all outdoor recreation including parks, golf courses, biking and hiking trails, etc.
 - Major business initiatives
 - Major employers
 - Doers and Makers volunteer opportunities
 - The Hickory Well-Crafted Cache geo-cache site. For more on this see p. 179.
- Make sure to integrate your brand into social media sites like Facebook, Twitter and You Tube. The logo and line are the most obvious ways to do this. In addition consider content that supports your strategy. For example, consolidate all You Tube videos under the category of Hickory Well Crafted or Well Crafted Living and ask residents to submit more. Sponsor a photo contest via Facebook or Flickr called Capturing Hickory Well Crafted or Snap Life Well Crafted. Include regular tweets about your makers and doers.



9) Develop at least one item of branded merchandise.

Whether it’s a lapel pin, t-shirt or handcrafted wine stopper, branded merchandise is a tangible, memorable way to keep the brand top-of-mind with residents, visitors and businesses. North Star has included a number of ideas in your BrandPrint. **Some of our favorites:**

- **T-shirts and hats:** Traditional wearables like t-shirts and ball caps are always great ways to spread a community branding message. They have the additional value of unifying groups (i.e., a group of volunteers, City ambassadors, City employees, etc.) into a branded entity. Consider both standard designs and something a little more fun such as a series of shirts that say things like, “Made to Last” and “Crafted with Care” along with the logo and line.

- **Welcome gift:** A little something memorable for new businesses and residents in Hickory.
- **Wine and beer-related products:** Wineries and microbrews have a proud tradition in Hickory. Offer merchandise and custom products that support this custom crafting. Ideas include wine glasses and beer mugs imprinted with the logo, wine charms, handcarved wooden wine stoppers that replicate the swoop and the hickory leaf from the logo, Hickory Craft Microbrew Kits and coasters.



- **License plates:** Showcase your brand on every car in the community with branded license plates.
- **Smarts and Craft kits for kids:** Private label a series of smarts and craft kits that show kids how to do everything from building a birdhouse to making jewelry to designing a kite.
- **Keepsake chests:** Made from beautiful wood with a burned imprint of the logo and line.
- **Games:** Small wooden versions of games like “jump the peg” and checkers imprinted with the logo and line.
- **Reusable shopping bags:** In keeping with your emphasis on sustainability, help your residents and visitors go green with eco-friendly, reusable shopping bags imprinted with your logo and line. A fun version of a bag could read, “Shopping is an Art!” with the Hickory logo and line.



- Other branded merchandising options are listed below:

- Bottled water
- Temporary tattoos of the logo
- Bumper stickers
- Post-it notes
- Digital cameras
- Headbands, wristbands
- Coffee cups
- Work out bags that read “This Body Crafted with Care”
- Umbrellas
- Stickers



10) Infiltrate your infrastructure

Your infrastructure represents a unique, city-owned, three-dimensional palette for displaying your brand. As you evaluate your infrastructure for branding feasibility consider large structures and wide open spaces that embody the essence of your brand. Typical options include water towers, public vehicles, sidewalks, parks, building facades, signage, lighting, airwaves and the sky.

Obviously, you can't do it all. Within the first year, pick just one area of your infrastructure to proudly bear the brand. A couple of basic ideas include your water tower (a no-brainer but high-impact) and public vehicles. Other ideas:

- Use the leaf graphic element from your logo to create one-of-a-kind crosswalks that shepherd walkers across intersections.
- Create wood burned signage (can be done less expensively with sandblasting) on walking, biking and running trails that give users different tips on running, walking, cycling and even dog walking. Tips can cover stretching, breathing, water consumption, safety, increasing speed, etc. The idea is to help each user of the trails craft the perfect recreational experience.
- Brand all public service vehicles including police cars, vans, parks and recreation vehicles, etc.
- Bus shelters are a practical, visible way to bring the brand home to your residents. Partner with local businesses to feature the perfect handcrafted meal or a beautifully constructed concert by the symphony. Such co-branding partnerships help extend the brand into



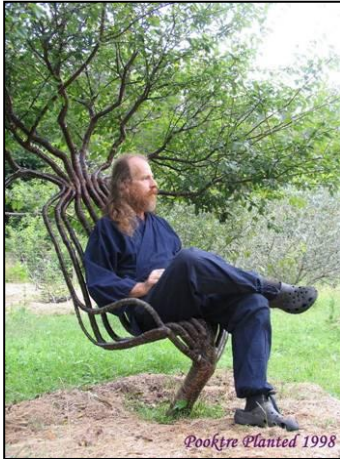
- your business environment and reduce costs for the City.
- The Hickory brand is custom-made for supporting and promoting the idea of functional public art. In fact, you already have a start on this with your art benches located throughout town.

Expand on this idea with a communitywide functional public art program featuring one-of-a-kind benches and chairs throughout areas with high foot traffic including downtown, the SALT Block, neighborhood parks, hiking and biking trails, etc. Invite all local artists to contribute ideas for the program. Select the best benches (or you may want to use them all!). The City provides the materials but the artisan builds the bench. A small plaque should give the artist's vision for the piece. Develop an art trail map that shows where the benches are located and gives a little info about each including the artist's name. Include the map on your website. A few examples:



- ▶ Consider a different take on this same idea, creating benches and tables out of living trees. These living works of art epitomize the idea of fine craftsmanship. Develop these trees in high-traffic areas where they will receive the attention they deserve.

Include a map of these trees online. As they are being made, use stop-motion so the video can be used for Hickory.



Year 2

Okay, so now you have a brand leader and a branding team of public and private sector folks working together. You have branded your website, stationery, relevant signage and your outgoing message. You have identified and branded *at least* one element of your infrastructure. And you have two items of branded merchandise that you can give away or sell. That is a busy and successful first year!

Now comes the fun part. Carefully review the balance of the brand action ideas in this BrandPrint for some exciting, high-impact tactics that address organization, infrastructure, community, visitors and businesses.

During the second year of the brand, aim to get three or four of these initiatives underway. Work closely with your Market Hickory Partnership to raise the funds to accomplish these ideas.

🔺 Organization

Brands cannot grow and thrive if no one takes responsibility for them. Successful implementation of the Hickory brand will require accountability, passion, understanding and respect for the branding effort. It will also require cooperation and partnership with the leadership of all organizations, businesses and individuals within Hickory. In fact, inclusive organization is the key to making all of the entities served by this brand part of and responsible for its success. Tactics should address the creation and funding of brand support positions as well, as the development of public and private entity organizations for marketing your community in the context of the brand.

Create a media plan

A single source of contact for media relations should exist within the community. This centralized approach will help you control the brand message and helps guarantee that the story you want to see in the media is actually the story that runs in the media. Develop a series of talking points and graphics to use for every brand-related encounter with the media.

Remember, proactive media and public relations is one of the most cost-effective ways to manager your community's reputation. Allowed to grow organically, your community's reputation in the media will be as focused, positive and relevant as the last "media-worthy" occurrence that garnered attention. Use the following mediums for distributing information about the brand:

- News releases, electronic and paper
- Fact sheets
- Media advisories
- Social media
- News conferences
- Fam tours
- Roundtables
- Briefings
- Special events

Take your show on the road

The Brand Manager or other passionate ambassadors of the brand should meet one-on-one with community stakeholders to reinforce and answer questions about the brand. (Use the brand PowerPoint presentation.) Meet with businesses, newspaper editors, church leaders, the board of education, manufacturers, developers, etc. Look for organizations whose goals support the ideas of attention to detail, pride in precision, doing a thing well, dedication to a craft and knowledge of natural resources. These are Hickory's ingrained strengths and the foundation of your brand. In your presentations focus on how embracing the philosophy of the brand can help promote Hickory (for the good of all). The goal here is to create a strong support base for the brand amongst community leaders.

Such meetings pay off in unexpected ways. In McKinney, Texas, the Brand Manager met with a local developer to explain the branding initiative and various ways it could come to life in the community. Months later, the developer contacted the Brand Manager, interested in flying a flag with the McKinney brand logo in his upscale retail area as well as throughout the parking area.



Develop a sleuth creative group

Assemble a group of some of Hickory's most creative brain power. This group of "Creative Detectives" is charged with meeting "undercover" at various attractions and activities around town and developing additional creative ideas for telling the Hickory story. Remember to include some young people from your three colleges and universities in this group to gain a youthful perspective.

Welcome the group with a quick brand overview and an inventive, fun premium item. (One idea: a compressed t-shirt with a light bulb, the group name and the brand logo.) Ask them to develop a fun name for the group representative of the task at hand such as Creativity Crafters, Crafty Creatives or Creative Craftsmanship Coalition (3c)

Focus on the arts

Hickory has received accolades and recognition for its abundance of arts, which are a point of community pride. In general, the health of the arts in a city can be representative of the health of that city. And as more and more communities focus their energies on attracting and retaining the creative class, strong arts programs are becoming increasingly critical. Make sure your brand is represented fully in all SALT Block programming and activities. Include these important organizations in the sleuth creative group and the Market Hickory Partnership. Brainstorm the ways that craftsmanship can be incorporated into their art (we have scattered ideas on this topic throughout the various categories of action ideas). A few ideas:

- Partner on an interactive exhibit about creativity/crafting to get kids excited about building and making things. Exhibit ideas could include woodworking, knitting, sewing, constructing buildings with an erector set, etc. Turn this into a traveling exhibition as a way to connect the SALT Block with other areas of town in order to increase visibility (i.e., library branches, farmers market).
- Partner to create video biographies of artists who are local to Hickory. The video should essentially be a guided tour of their work, serving as an ad for the artist, a way to connect the arts with the city, and a way to showcase the SALT Block.
- Partner with the Catawba Science Center to create a permanent collaborative exhibit that talks about the science behind furniture building. Design activities that let children design their own furniture. Could actually have various pieces they can put together to see what the end result is like. Another idea for the exhibition, feature various tools of different trades. Children can get the opportunity to experiment with some tools (when not dangerous) and learn the science behind how they work. A simpler idea is to sponsor a birdhouse building station somewhere within the museum.
- Work with a local or regional composer to write a symphony reflective of the values and emotions associated with your brand. North Star client Lima, Ohio, commissioned a work for its local symphony based on its brand, which explores the many sides of American Strength found in the community. The head of the school board then asked the composer to modify and shorten the symphony for play by their regional high school orchestras.

Share a grant writer

If Hickory does not already have the appropriate expertise on board to pursue grant funding for the brand and other initiatives, explore the idea of adding a grant writer (full or part-time) to the staff to assist with sourcing funds. To defray costs, other public sector organizations can contribute financially to this individual's salary. Government funds are available for a wide variety of well-crafted initiatives including:

- Historical preservation and promotion
- Arts and cultural attractions and programs

- Diversity promotion and training
- Sustainability.

◀ Infrastructure

This strategy addresses the unique opportunity Hickory has to use your infrastructure as a three-dimensional medium for showcasing the brand to residents, businesses and visitors. As you consider this category, we encourage you to think outside the box (or beyond the building!). Your infrastructure includes water towers, public vehicles, sidewalks, parks, building facades, signage, lighting, airwaves, the sky . . . even the backs of your citizens.

Identify opportunities

Successful brand implementation requires the best use of available resources. In addition to your wide open spaces, Hickory owns a number of assets ideally suited for high-profile presentation of the brand. Display the brand on those City-owned physical assets that would be most relevant. Water towers, downtown corridors, city-owned vehicles, sidewalks, light posts and government buildings are good selections. You can also extend the brand through the time-honored tradition of painting the logo and line on the side of a barn or outbuilding.



Recognize history

Create a history trail featuring your heritage of craftsmanship including furniture manufacturing sites, historical buildings, museums and other attractions. Make sure to commemorate the “Miracle of Hickory” on this history trail. To identify spots on the trail develop a high-end plaque. Plaques should be prominently displayed on buildings and sites. In conjunction with this historical signage create an interactive history trail for display on your portal and City website.

Develop brand strength through local sports facilities

Introduce the brand to new markets by adding the brand logo to local athletic facilities. City-owned skate parks, swimming pools, basketball courts and athletic fields all provide

opportunities to display the brand. Consider partnering with the Hickory Parks and the Highland Recreation Center to provide exposure to new users. The logo can be sprayed onto grass or manufactured and inserted into turf fields. See examples below of logo use with athletic facilities.



Make Downtown and Scenic Union Square centerpieces for the brand

The charm and walkability of your downtown and Union Square make them ideal canvases for brand integration. A sampling of ideas:

- Make downtown the starting point for your “Well-crafted Bench” public art trail. Placing interesting functional art with a story throughout the area encourages visitors to linger.



- Add a unique and authentic touch, by placing handcrafted wooden handles on the doors of all downtown businesses.
- The Union Square emporium can offer re-usable handcrafted baskets to help shoppers carry items while they browse.



- Partner with establishments offering outdoor seating (cafes, coffee shops) to design outdoor table umbrellas shaped like the leaf from the logo.

- Place “Craft your thoughts here” boards near seating areas throughout downtown encouraging impromptu outdoor meetings and brainstorming.

- Design hickory leaf shaped chairs for high-profile seating areas.

- Embed leaf shapes into the concrete or brick of downtown sidewalks.

- Create directional signage using the leaf from the logo pointing in a certain direction.

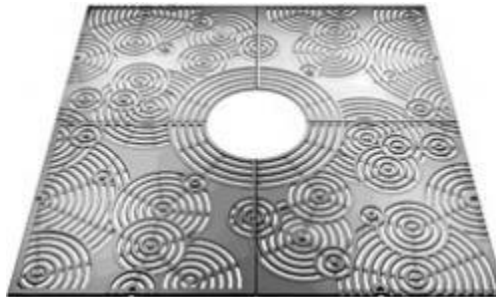
- Develop an interactive public art project using hickory wood to shape a bare tree that can be “leafed out” using handcrafted leaves made by residents, businesses and organizations. Leaves can be crafted out of various mediums (cloth, metal, wood, etc.)



- Allow local businesses to craft their own section of downtown by sponsoring a brick in the cobblestone walkway in the main union square. Have the city design a kit to guide the size, shape, etc, but they can choose color and write their name and year.

- Use the hickory leaf or swoop from you logo to create custom bike racks that serve as functional public art. An added bonus, these memorable racks support Hickory’s emphasis on crafting a sustainable future.

- Turn your standard public fixtures (trash cans, tree grates into works of art that are uniquely Hickory. For instance, Encinitas, California, commissioned a local artist to develop custom designed tree grates for downtown. Other communities feature custom designed manhole covers and trashcans. See some samples and links to artists and fabricators below.



Tree grate

<http://www.ironagegrates.com/>

<http://www.lefevrestudios.com/>

- In any former industrial or manufacturing city, there are always a variety of functional structures such as tanks, towers, walls and overpasses that are ripe for transformation into works of art. When considering possible locations for beautification, don't forget these structures. If they are privately owned, approach the business owner to cover the cost of production.
- As in wall murals, these structures can be wrapped with a grand format poster (see the Busch Gardens Sesame Street example), or painted by a muralist (Pistons Basketball and Columbus, Ohio tanks by Eric Henn).





(Busch Gardens)



(Columbus, Ohio)



(Detroit, Michigan)

You can also use art to transform functional structures around the city into a part of your public art collection. See the example below of a basic wall around the Lexington, Kentucky airport that has been turned into a three dimensional piece of art focusing on their thoroughbred brand (mural by Henn).

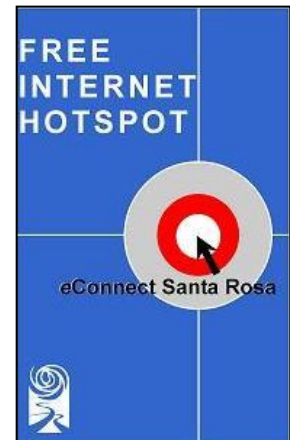




(Lexington, Kentucky airport)

Craft better connections

Place WiFi hot spots in parks, open spaces, the SALT Block and downtown allowing residents and businesses a chance to craft an entirely different work experience. Widespread WiFi also represents the City's commitment to technology. Identify and brand Wi-Fi spots with appropriate signage. Install weatherproof versions of signs in outdoor locations. Install indoor versions at downtown coffee shops, cafes and office building lobbies where people use the internet and Wi-Fi is available (Free Wi-Fi. Well-crafted connections.). See sample sign below from the City of Santa Rosa.



Bring the brand to gardens

Work the symbol that is representative of your brand into public gardens and plantings outside government buildings and in parks. For example, a fabulous changing perennial garden could be shaped like the Hickory logo. Or, groom trees and hedges to well-crafted perfection!



Turn former industrial areas into masterpieces

One of Hickory's major challenges is how to reincarnate the major industrial and manufacturing buildings that are a nod to the community's manufacturing heritage. Until it is determined how these structures will be used, explore way to turn their prominent exteriors into works of art that become a point of pride for the city. For example:

- Sometimes, all it takes is one person with a big vision to create a site that has a profound effect on an entire community. In St. Louis, a remarkable spot called The City Museum opened in 1997. Reclaimed from a former shoe factory, the museum is carefully crafted out of industrial remnants, building parts and pieces, airplane fuselages, an old school bus and other reclaimed objects too numerous to count. It is a building made of parts from everyday life and from the city itself that houses everything from museums to artist's studios to childcare. It is one of St. Louis' most popular tourist attractions hosting more than a half-million visitors every year. And its development resulted in a ripple effect of revitalization for several square blocks surrounding it.

- In Seattle, a nine-acre industrial zone has been transformed into a municipal Sculpture Park filled with larger-than-life macroscopic pieces that invite visitors to touch, feel, and walk around and around for a better view. The Garden has become a source of community pride and an easily recognizable landmark.
- Hickory has a rich history of doers and makers. Showcase your many doers and makers with a large format poster program. Posters should be placed on the sides of vacant manufacturing buildings where they can be seen from the road. The purpose of the initiative is multifold: 1) to foster civic pride, 2) to reinforce the brand message and 3) to provide visual interest and a fresh look for buildings or structures that may currently be an eyesore. A similar program has proved a huge success in the Louisville area over the last 10 years.

http://www.bizjournals.com/louisville/stories/2007/05/07/editorial4.html?jst=s_cn_hl.

You may want to select your celebrated doers and makers via a public nomination and voting process. Remember, not all posters have to be huge. Smaller posters can be used in more intimate venues that need some sprucing up.



- Warehouse are also good candidates for unique, eye-catching, artistic updates. You can turn to contemporary approaches like the one featured below, that uses a combination of grand format poster and actual 3-D object to turn a piece of advertising into a work of op-art. Or be creative with your banner design, using multiple smaller panels to make one big impression as in the portico below!



- Or, you can take a traditional approach and use trompe l’oeil painting to transform a blank wall into a piece of art (see Huntington Bank in Franklin, Ohio and pumpkin show mural in Circleville, Ohio. Both these buildings were painted by Eric Henn, a muralist who does a lot of work in the Ohio area – website below). Use your murals to depict Hickory’s history of craftsmanship.



(Huntington Bank; Franklin, Ohio)





(Pumpkin show; Circleville, Ohio)

<http://www.erichenmurals.com/index.htm>

Consider new channels

As you take inventory of infrastructure opportunities, think outside the box to relationships Hickory has with cable, satellite and cellular providers. In exchange for what you provide them, request weekly time on their stations and frequencies to promote Hickory events and attractions.

◀ Community

Destination brands are not created; they are discovered within the spirit of a place – from the history, the attractions, the culture, the geography and the society. Brands uncovered in this manner are endorsed and absorbed by their communities due to their fundamental truth. And citizens who believe in the brand are ultimately the best brand ambassadors with tourists. However, it is not enough for a brand to just be “of the people,” strategies must be developed for taking the brand into the community with programs and initiatives that have meaning for the citizens.

Help them with their health

Health and wellness is essential to the vibrancy of any community. Work with organizations from the Medical Mile to develop a multi-tiered program called “Health. Well Crafted.” that gets the community involved in walking, running cycling, etc. Use a similar program developed by Vicksburg, Mississippi called “Shape Up Vicksburg” as a guide.

<http://www.shapeupvicksburg.com/>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/08/06/cnn-hero-linda-fondren-ai_n_672573.html

Start by inviting the entire community to a weekly walk (or series of walks) sponsored by a particular health care facility and attended by doctors and nurses. Patients recovering in hospitals could have their own version of the walk where they walk the halls together as they heal. As your walks become established, organize a weekly run and bike ride, again led by doctors and nurses with interest in those areas. Over time, participants may graduate from the walks and move up to the runs or rides. Or, they may choose to stay with the walks and go longer distances. As your communitywide walks, runs and rides gain momentum, integrate a series of preventative health and wellness lectures from Hickory health professionals. The three levels of the programs are:"

- “Hickory Heals” (for those on the mend)
- “Hickory Walks” (for beginning athletes, older athletes or those with mobility or joint problems)
- “Hickory Runs” (for more advanced athletes)
- “Hickory Rides” (for those with an interest in cycling).

As part of the program, an annual race gives participants a chance to show off all they have gained. A race is also a tangible event that can inspire people to participate in the weekly walks/runs in order to meet the annual race goal. Consider making the race a fundraiser with all money raised going towards the medical bills of Hickory residents who are unemployed and with no health insurance. Various race options for participants:

- Medical Mile (sponsoring hospital patients who are healing: goal is walking 1 mile through the halls/Medical Mile complex)
- Walk 5K (culminating event for Hickory Walks)
- Run half marathon/marathon (culminating event for Hickory Runs).

Hold events for residents

Capitalize on Hickory’s close neighborhoods and sense of community with a series of community-based events that emphasize craftsmanship in fun and engaging ways. A few ideas:

- Dog shows featuring the most “well-crafted” grooming and haircuts.



- Host neighborhood chess tournaments that combine craftsmanship with strategic playing skills. Prior to their match or matches, participants are responsible for crafting their chess pieces in some unique way. Any medium – wood, wire, soap, molding clay – is acceptable. Prizes will be awarded in two categories: level of play and creativity and craftsmanship of chess pieces.
- Each fall, host a communitywide pumpkin-carving contest with an emphasis on creativity and craftsmanship.
- Partner with local Boy Scout troops on their pinewood derby contest. Or, host your own soapbox derby culminating in a race with style points for car creativity. Make it a community event with prizes for best-designed cars as well as fastest cars.
- Remind people that neighborhood beautification starts at home. Every quarter present those homeowners with the most beautifully landscaped yards with the “Well Crafted Landscape” award. In addition to a mention on the city website, place a branded award sign in their yard announcing the honor. Do something similar with Christmas lights and decorations.

Build a playground to remember

A community that has a reputation for craftsmanship and quality should boast a one-of-a-kind playground experience worthy of national recognition. The playground should be located in an easily accessible, central area. The playground design should be one of a kind featuring both indoor and outdoor structures. Explore the idea of treehouses, quality crafted indoor and outdoor furniture, mazes, unique climbing structures, splash fountains, etc. along with more traditional playground equipment. Have local and regional playground designers and artists collaborate on the design. Sponsor a work day where resident volunteers help construct the structure. Dedicate the park with a sign that reads “This playground crafted with love for the children of Hickory.”



Columbus, Indiana designed a climbing structure using the dancing “C’s” and color palette from their brand’s graphic identity.

Recruit ambassadors

Use the internet, newspaper, radio and special events such as the roll-out event to recruit enthusiastic residents to become “Hickory Makers and Doers.” This group would sign up on-line for an ongoing series of “Life. Well Crafted.” e-blasts designed to educate them on all the great things about the community and turn them into positive spokespeople for their town. In addition, hold special get-togethers and briefings to create unity and purpose within this group. Challenge ambassadors to “pass on” the positive vibe to other members of the community. Give all ambassadors a lapel pin or t-shirt. Instruct them on different tactics for spreading the spirit of collective craftsmanship about Hickory.

This approach is often recommended by Richard Florida as a method for recruiting the creative class.

Start geocaching to uncover area treasures

Geocaching is a high-tech form of treasure hunting perfect for discovering new things about Hickory. Adventurers use handheld GPS devices to find hidden treasures using latitude and longitude coordinates. Interesting riddles about the location can spice up the hunt. Caches can take place downtowns, in different neighborhoods, in parks, at schools, at the Furniture Mart, etc. Caches must be waterproof – army surplus ammo boxes, film canisters, plastic food container – and should be cleverly hidden (in hollow trees or under park benches). In the caches place some interesting facts or trinkets associated with the location (i.e., a cache hidden near the park where the Hickory Crawdads play could have a miniature wooden baseball bat, a team roster and a ball cap; the hollow tree might have plastic insects, some botanical information or a short essay by a local schoolchild about nature; a history cache might include a picture of some of the historic architecture in Hickory, an old furniture making tool or an article of clothing). All caches have a logbook where “cachers” sign when they discover the spot.

When you're ready to launch the program, offer a "how-to" class on geocaching. Rent the handheld GPS devices to the public during specific times (be sure to get a deposit to cover damage or loss). Post the clues on the web portal and publish them in the newspaper. Give a branded premium prize to those who find all locations on the "Well-Crafted Cache". For more information about, visit www.geocaching.com.

Reach out a helping hand

Work with local churches and other charitable organizations to coordinate volunteer and giving efforts in Hickory via a "Well-Crafted Caring" initiative (could also be called "The Art of Caring", "Crafting a Caring Community"). Encourage schools, individuals and businesses to donate their time to help others. Consolidate all volunteer needs, opportunities and successes on a single website. (One of the volunteer opportunities could be a "Clean up the entryways day".) Another relevant idea, sponsor the world's most well-crafted Habitat for Humanity house. Finally, have a "Well-Crafted Caring" bus that transports teams of volunteers to areas in need of community service or assistance. The bus can also transport food and other donated items to their destinations. See link for more info: <http://www.good.is/post/next-stop-volunteering-the-do-good-bus-makes-community-service-easy-and-fun/>

Educate residents

Develop a historical initiative to educate residents on your community's rich history and roots. Offer the program through schools, the library, senior centers, etc. Also offer the information on-line.

Another educational opportunity for your citizens is to conduct a quarterly Hickory University. Hold a series of sessions covering Hickory history, local government organization, municipal finances and other topics of interest. Again, place the information on-line for those who can't attend.

Introduce the brand in schools

Children living in Hickory can make a huge contribution to promoting the brand. For example, consider giving each local child a disposable camera and inviting them to capture pictures of craftsmanship in their daily lives. Such photographs make a powerful exhibition for display in your museums or empty buildings downtown especially when coupled with the children's poetry or other writing.

Other approaches for school:

- Partner with colleges and universities on a program where art students mentor younger students on various art projects. Mentoring can take place one on one or in groups. College students should get class credit for the project.

- Similarly, college-aged art students could develop an interactive craft hour, which they conduct at elementary schools or youth centers. Again, the students could get credit for their work, either for teaching hours or community service hours. Crafts created by the kids could be displayed in local coffee shops.
- Art students from local colleges could participate with the younger members of the community by having a “craft hour” at elementary schools or youth centers. The students could get credit, either for teaching hours or community service hours. Crafts created by the kids could be displayed in local coffee shops, empty storefronts and at the Farmer’s market.
- Similarly, the city could recruit art teachers and students to staff an interactive crafts table at local festivals, the YMCA, the Recreation Center and the Farmers Market. The table should be sponsored by the City; make sure to include your logo and line on signage and volunteer name tags.
- Hold a “juried” Crafting Creativity art show for different ages of children in Hickory. Include categories for woodworking and furniture making. High school students should be the jury for elementary and middle school aged students; college students should judge high school entries.
- Sponsor an “Invention Convention”. Initially this contest should stay local, although eventually you could invite students from around the regions. Entrants would be required to address a specific problem with an invention that is created out of materials from a certain category (wood, plastic, metal, mixed medium, etc.) Winners could be selected in various categories and age groups.
- Or, the City could pose a specific problem to middle and high schoolers, asking them to form teams and submit creative solutions. Top entries present their ideas to the community in a forum and the winning team is given money to bring the solution to life. Such competitions promote creative thinking and tap into the many makers and doers in Hickory.
- Sponsor a “Well Crafted Sentence” poetry or essay contest. Ask local school children to craft the perfect essay on a specific topic related to Hickory . For example, you can ask students to write on why craftsmanship is important. Judge entries on creativity, content, relevance, sentence structure, interest, etc. Snippets of the best work can be included on a series of postcards, on the city website, on billboards, etc. Print the winning essays on your website and in the local paper. Consider expanding this program to other mediums of expression including art and music.

Create a civic award

Develop a communitywide “Makers and Doers” civic award to recognize those regular citizens who go above and beyond in helping others or helping make the community a better place to live. Recognize winners on your city website, in the Hickory Daily Record and in an annual awards dinner. Businesses, organizations, school classes, neighborhoods, etc. should also be eligible for the award.

Tell stories of success

Approach the newspaper about running a series of articles showcasing makers and doers. A couple of ideas:

- People and businesses that have stretched out of their comfort zone in some way to overcome obstacles and succeed. Stories could focus on individuals who have overcome health issues or businesses that have made it through the recession.
- “Well-Crafted Success” featuring successful companies in the region including Google, Apple, Commscope, Hickory Springs Manufacturing, Corning Cable, Century Furniture, Sherill Furniture, Pierre Foods, Adecco USA, Manpower Temporary Services, Tailored Chemical Products, Vanguard Furniture, and more. Use these innovation and craftsmanship stories for economic development recruitment as well.

Reach out to all your college students

Brain drain and brain gain are top issues for communities across the country. Clearly there are tremendous financial and creative benefits to having graduating college seniors stay in your town. The key is to interact with them in meaningful ways prior to graduation. A few ideas:

- Welcome new freshmen to campus at Lenoir-Rhyne University, Appalacia State University and Catawba Valley Community College with a “Welcome to Hickory: Life. Well Crafted” goodie bag. Place bags in freshman dorm rooms or hand out at registration. Include coupons and goodies from local merchants that depend on the college market including restaurants, movie theatres, book stores, drug stores, local retail, etc.
- As part of Freshman Orientation, ask area schools to require all members of the freshman class to participate in one Hickory region learning experience. Allow students to preference which attractions/events they would prefer to attend and have the school divide students into groups. Options might be:
 - Touring the Furniture Mart & Catawba Furniture Mall
 - Attending a Hickory Crawdads game
 - Visiting the Hickory Motor Speedway
 - Visiting a local festival or event
 - Attending a performance of the Hickory Community Theater or the Western Piedmont Library
 - Touring the Catawba Science Center or the Hickory Museum of Art

- Visiting the Farmer's Market
- Entice students out into the community with discounts. Approach local movie theatres near college campuses and ask them to sponsor a free movie night for the students from a specific college. Tickets are free, students pay for their own refreshments. Aim for one free movie night per semester/per college or university. Consider coordinating with restaurants and retail near the movie theatre for before or after the show discounts. Another idea: introduce area students to the vibrant Hickory arts scene through an organized discount program.
- Downtown should serve as the gathering spot for students from area colleges to meet and mingle. Schedule special events downtown that will be of interest to students. Roll out the red carpet from day one:
 - Midnight Madness Treasure Hunt: teams of students gather and fulfill treasure hunt requirements in and around downtown to find all of Hickory's treasures. Treasure hunt items can be based on history, culture, sport, trivia, art, local folklore or just plain fun.
 - Host a Welcome Back event at the beginning of each year. Include activities downtown such as a free concert, skateboarding contest, voter registration, graduate student mixers, community service sign-up.
 - Hold a Battle of the Bands downtown with bands representing each school.
 - Host a film festival with entries from all the schools.
 - Hold a pumpkin carving contest for art and engineering students from all three schools. Invite the public to attend and bid on the pumpkins. Use it as a charitable fundraiser.
 - Host college student nights at the Olde Hickory Tap Room and at Hickory Crawdads games.
- Start a summer internship program that encourages college students to stick around during the summer. Research indicates that the likelihood of a student staying after graduation goes up considerably if he or she has interned in the area.

Visitors

Your community's relationship with its visitors (be they tourists, business people or visiting family) occurs at three distinct points on the time continuum – before, during and after the visit. Communities that desire to grow their visitation market using their new brand need a distinct set of strategies and tactics for attracting and educating potential visitors, for impressing and entertaining current visitors and for influencing past visitors (who are spreading their impressions to others).

Create an informational CD

Create a CD that includes interesting facts and history about the heritage, memorials, attractions, events, festivals, downtowns, sports tournaments, shopping, neighborhoods, natural beauty and outdoor recreation throughout Hickory. Visitors can download the information off the website onto a CD or MP3 player. The tour allows visitors to learn more about your history on an individual basis as they are driving, biking, walking or hiking around town.

Launch a Handcrafted in Hickory campaign

For the vast majority of people, 49 weeks out of the year are spent in the same place with the same friends, family, colleagues and neighbors. In most cases, this means that the residents would *prefer* to show some “local love” in their shopping and spending habits. For instance:

- 63% of consumers across 10 different countries would pay extra to support local merchants. 47% would pay extra for products 'made close to home'. (Source: Communispace, September 2010)
- A national survey of 1,800 independent businesses in the US found that 80% said public awareness of the value of choosing locally owned businesses had increased in the last year (16% said it had stayed the same). (Source: ABA, January 2010)
- 83% of US consumers choose to patronize a small, local independent business over a larger chain. (Source: WebVisible, May 2010)
- 41% of US consumers want their grocery stores to stock more locally grown foods, second only to those who want price savings (46%). (Source: National Grocers Association, February 2010)
- The number of farmers' markets in the US has more than doubled in the past 10 years. (Source: US Department of Agriculture, August 2010).

Consumers have a basic desire for authenticity, community and exclusivity that can best be satisfied by local products and services. Locally produced goods offer better status stories and provide consumers a feeling of association with the producer. Think of the ongoing appeal of artisan products, consumer excitement when products are exclusively available in specific locales, the many new local information services, the celebration of local pride and the many ways that consumers can connect to fellow residents.

This “local love” trend means that Hickory is right on track with its new brand and represents a real opportunity to leverage the brand for businesses. For example:

- Create a “Handcrafted in Hickory” program for all locally owned or operated businesses, retailers or individual that MAKE anything authentic, original and handcrafted.
- Products that are selected to represent “Handcrafted in Hickory” receive a series of stickers or tags that creators can place on them. Use a QR code on the tags to tell the story of the item.
- In addition to typical sales mediums for these items, sell them at your Visitors Center in gift shops, at the Convention Center, etc. One unique trend that is gaining some traction is to place locally handmade items in the minibars of hotel rooms.

- Bundle items together into baskets (handmade, of course!) of “Handcrafted in Hickory” items. Present baskets to VIPs, economic development prospects, etc.
- Link from your City and portal website to a “Handcrafted in Hickory” site that features all of the different handmade items along with the creator’s name and business information and the back story of the item. Be sure to keep track of any demonstrations that these businesses might have regularly.
- Give businesses that make handcrafted items a window decal or slick that reads “Part of the Hickory Craftsmanship Network” or “Proud Partner in Hickory Craftmanship.”

Leverage the popularity of The Valley Hills Mall

The Valley Hills Mall is another primary attractor for visitors. However, research showed that visitors who come to the mall aren’t likely to go to Union Square or other parts of town. Utilize any empty real estate within the mall to create a Handcrafted in Hickory store. This store should sell samples of any locally made products (that are small enough to sell in a mall space). Work with the vendors providing merchandise to help staff the store on a rolling basis, along with CVB volunteers. Be sure to cross sell both locations – at the mall, the clerks should let visitors know where the flagship store is and the flagship store should mention the mall.

Connect with visitors emotionally

Research has shown the destinations that make an emotional connection with their visitors are more successful. Hickory was named after a Hickory Tree at a train stop that eventually became the City of Hickory. Consider having a talented writer in the community (or use resources that the Lenoir-Rhyne Visiting Writing Series may know of) write up this story with an emotional overlay. Consider telling the story from that tree’s point of view. What has the tree seen since those early days? How has it watched Hickory change? Use this story on the website to explain Hickory’s history, use it in the Visitors Guide and consider sending it proposal packets, etc., along with branded gifts to help people connect with the Hickory story. For reference, think of “The Giving Tree.”

Reach out to spouses in the meetings market

For the Meetings market, the CVB already helps to coordinate spouse activities. Take this current program a step further by preparing hand-crafted tours for spouses. At the time of conference registration (typically online, in advance of meeting) there should be a place for spouses to give some preferences and interests. Based on the interests of the majority of the spouses, the CVB can set up custom tours during one of the meeting days. Some ideas:

- *Handcrafted tour:* Includes Hickory Furniture Mart and the Furniture Museum included there, a tour of one of the wineries in the region and an opportunity to work with a local craftsperson to create handmade art in conjunction with the Caldwell Arts Council or the United Arts Council of Catawba County. In the evening participants can receive a discount on handcrafted beer or eats at Hickory Tavern.
- *Manufacturing tour:* Includes a tour of at least one manufacturing company in Hickory, a visit to Catawba County History Museum (to learn about the area’s history of manufacturing) and (weather permitting) a trip to Lake Hickory for a lakefront picnic.

- *Artistry tour:* Includes the Hickory Museum of Art, a downtown tour of all independent and art-related shops, and voucher to enjoy a handcrafted beer at a local brewhouse. In the evening, offer an opportunity to see a performance by the Ballet, Chorale Society or Community Theater based on availability and show times.

Introduce the brand in the Convention Center

Hickory's popular Convention Center is considered one of the community's greatest assets. Currently the breakout meeting rooms are simple and basic, and do not communicate the flavor or essence of Hickory. If funding can be found, consider the following ideas to bring Hickory's personality into meeting spaces. These ideas can help your conference attendees start thinking about all the things in Hickory they can't wait to do after their meetings are over!

- Consider placing a single, unique piece of Hickory-crafted furniture in each of your meeting rooms (every room would have a different piece). Each piece can either represent a certain time period, a certain movement within furniture manufacturing history, or simply different types of furniture (chair, table, armoire, etc.)
- Feature the piece of furniture in a special area of the room. Consider placing a large, wall-covering black and white photo behind the furniture of that piece (or one just like it) being used in an actual room.
- Ask different home furnishing retailers and decorators within Hickory to redecorate each meeting room to match the style and feel of the showcased piece of furniture.
- In smaller breakout rooms, feature custom made meeting tables and chairs.
- Name your meeting rooms after the piece of furniture featured, the style of furniture (i.e., Shaker) or the type of wood from which the piece is crafted.
- Include a branded Hickory kiosk in the entry hall of the Convention Center offering info about the community as well as "Crafted with Care" goodies. This kiosk could also be where visitors take purchases to be shipped back home.
- On breaks feature the "Handcrafted in Hickory" food and beverage products.

Repackage and promote existing events with the brand in mind

Review your existing events, looking for ways to include the brand through messaging, activities, partnerships and content. Every event with City financing should include the brand logos on signs and banners and promotional items. Whenever possible, ask event organizers to include brand language in event promotions, "The art of fine dining", "The best beer requires handcrafting", "Oktoberfest . . . Custom Crafted Fun."

- *Oktoberfest:* Meet with the Downtown Development Association to identify ways to integrate the brand message and philosophy into this uber-popular three-day event.
 - Make sure your updated logo and strapline are included on all signage and marketing materials.
 - Sponsor a booth with information on Hickory where you sell branded merchandise and hand out branded bottled waters. Give away branded recyclable bags.
 - Sponsor a crafts booth for kids at the KidsFest where every hour local artisans guide kids in creating a masterpiece including birdhouses, jewelry, kits, bags and more.

- Host an Oktoberfest Culinary Crafts food competition where vendors submit their best items for judging.
 - Make sure the Hickory Crafted Brew is served in one of the beer tents. Design a special Oktoberfest label just for this event.
 - Make sure the City of Hickory is represented in Oktoberfest Footrace goodie bags. Consider a Hickory window decal or lanyard.
 - Sponsor one of the bands . . . maybe the Hickory Jazz Orchestra. Ask them to wear branded Hickory t-shirts for their performance.
 - Make sure all volunteers who are city workers wear branded t-shirts.
- *Tree lighting:* Beautifully decorated holiday trees epitomize the idea of craftsmanship. Integrate your brand into this cherished event by asking shops and businesses downtown to handcraft their own holiday trees for display in their store or business. Award prizes for the most original, creative tree with quality workmanship. Another version of this idea is to ask all organizations, businesses, neighborhoods, school classes or even individuals to create a one-of-a-kind tree decoration to be placed on a large city-sponsored tree.
- *Hickory Hops BrewFest:* Really, what better place to integrate your brand than a festival dedicated to craft breweries. Following are a few ideas for amping up the brand in this super fun environment.
 - Give this fun festival name a strapline, Beer. Well Crafted.
 - Every year, release a new crafted brew at the festival (ask local microbreweries to compete for the honor), including a handcrafted label and beer tap handle. Have Hickory employees volunteer wearing aprons, t-shirts or pins that say Hickory . . . Beer. Well Crafted.
 - Consider napkins, matches and placemats that read Beer. Well-Crafted. for the Olde Hickory Brewery to use during the event.
 - Partner with the Olde Hickory Brewery to continue serving the Hickory Hand Crafted even after the festival.
 - Give away sets of your branded Hickory beer mugs during the event.
 - Sponsor a station or booth that walks visitors through the process of crafting a beer.
- *Art on the Avenue and International Spring Fest:* Billed as a festival to celebrate culture, cuisine and community, this arts party is custom made for furthering the ideas of Hickory's commitment to craftsmanship. For example:
 - Create signage or unique pieces of art that feature the brand narrative and place it in intriguing spots around the festival
 - Sponsor an information booth or children's craft table
 - Present a City of Hickory award for quality craftsmanship
 - Host a building station where people can work with Legos, Lincoln Logs, blocks, KNEX, etc. to craft their own vision

- Extend the festival by one day and invite residents to flex their creative and craftsmanship muscles. This is a time for all doers & makers in Hickory to come together sell their handmade/crafted goods. Encourage local arts organizations, private artists and the college and university to hold classes and how-tos for different types of crafts in the months leading up to the event. Consider approaching larger employers in town to see if they will offer a “half-craft day” where employees get to take a half day off to work on their crafts in preparation for the fair. In time, this final day of this existing arts festival could break off and become an event of its own.
- *A Hickory Holiday:* As part of this event, have local volunteers and service organizations give away free Well Crafted Wrapping for holiday gifts.

Work with restaurants and bars

Work with your broad selection of local restaurants and bars on branded products and activities that appeal to visitors and residents. For example:

- Challenge local chefs to create signature Hickory dishes that combine craftsmanship in cooking and in plating/presentation. Designate worthy dishes as Well Crafted Cuisine and develop a bug, icon or logo that restaurants can use on their menus and website to indicate this dish.
- Compile a community cookbook that includes both the local chef’s well-crafted cuisine as well as contributions from residents. Call it “Hickory Eats! Well-Crafted Cuisine”.

Build on your furniture history

North Star research showed that one of the biggest tourism draws in Hickory is the furniture shopping at both Catawba Furniture Mall and the Hickory Furniture Mart. While your furniture manufacturing heyday may have passed, your furniture heritage and retail are still huge assets and a core factor in the Hickory brand. Using the brand, look for ways to further leverage this important asset for purposes of tourism. A few ideas:

- Work to create an atmosphere at both of these locations with demonstrations from furniture-related artisans in any open/gathering places on the property. Even if the demonstrations only take place a few times of year, this will help visitors further engage with their experience as opposed to just shopping.
- Bring this idea to the Convention Center as well during highly attended meetings. Consider offering package deals with the Furniture Mart or Furniture Mall for attendees to have discounts on shipping, etc. for any items purchased.

Craft the perfect golf swing

There is definitely an art and craft to the game of golf! Partner with your local golf courses to promote the idea of crafting the perfect golf swing. Have the pros at all the courses come together to film a video that breaks down the golf swing step by step. The tone should be light and fun but also instructional. Place the video on You Tube and make sure it has branded language.

Create an Etsy site

In conjunction with your arts festival, create an Etsy channel for Hickory. (See Etsy.com – a marketplace for all kinds of handmade/crafted goods. Like an EBay for arts & craft people.) Organize all items tagged with Hickory as their location to the Hickory channel. Promote the channel by linking it from the CVB website and eventually, the Hickory hub website. In this way, visitors and potential visitors can find their own handcrafted piece of Hickory to own!

The most engaged crafters from your arts festival and your Etsy channel will become evident over time. This highly engaged group of craftsman and artisans should become the CVB's "craftsmanship experts" for the demonstrations mentioned previously to hold at both the Convention Center and the two main furniture shopping areas.

Bring families together

Tourism data shows that most people come to Hickory to visit family. The strong family values held by Hickory residents are perfect for proactively recruiting family reunions. Well-crafted reunions are a great way to bring back people who have left the community and introduce new visitors to all your charms. In addition, from an economic perspective, reunions generate strong revenue.

- Average attendance of a family reunion is 50 people.
- Average spending is between \$100 and \$200 per person.
- Over 70% of reunion attendees drive to the location.
- Most reunions last two to three days and are held annually.

Support is the key to making reunions a success. Your residents are the people who will entice their families to come to Hickory. Support should include:

- "Your Reunion. Well Crafted." Planning guide with helpful timelines, checklists and suggestions
- The Well-Crafted Reunion organizing classes and workshops (at local churches)
- Communication pieces to send to family members
- Contact information for parks, pavilions and other locations to host the event
- Genealogy reports.

In addition, a designated Hickory CVB employee could help residents plan their reunions including coordinating of events, assisting with planning materials and providing a list of services families can use (photographers, catering services, decorators, etc.).

Business

There is a direct relationship between the success of a community brand based on the qualities of excellence in craftsmanship and the businesses that call Hickory home. Strategies and tactics in this section are two-pronged. Some address the need to reach out to economic development prospects with branded messages. Others work to involve existing businesses in the growth of the brand. Specific tactics address communications, events, promotions, merchandise, messaging, policy, public relations and more.

Hold a brand roll-out meeting for businesses

- Host a meeting within the business community that introduces the brand and explains the importance and impact of a strong, unified brand to Hickory's growth. Lunch at a nice restaurant can increase attendance (charge per attendee).
- Do not roll out the brand publicly until there is visible evidence of it throughout the community. The more businesses can see the brand being put to good use, the more likely they are to use it themselves.
- Hang banners at the event locale with the brand color palette, logo and strap line. At every table, include tent cards with the brand narrative on one side and the logo and strap line on the other.
- Customize the brand Power Point presentation for the business audience. REMEMBER, a roll-out is for sharing what you've learned about the new brand direction, it should not be about unveiling the new logo and strap line.
- Keep it short and simple. The presentation should be about 35-45 minutes with questions afterward.
- Don't make this roll-out about one person. Involving others sends a public message that everyone is united and excited about moving forward. Distribute sections of the event among the Brand Manager, downtown representatives, City government, the Chamber, Economic Development or the Business Development Committee, the Market Hickory Partnership, etc.
- Showcase volunteer opportunities for businesses. Give businesses a way to sign up to help that day.
- Encourage businesses to pay homage to their community in marketing, signage, product packaging, etc. Give them examples of how this could work. (Keep reading for some examples we came up with.) Also give them low-cost ways of supporting the brand including understanding its purpose and spreading the good word about what it can do for the community.
- Supply businesses with a brand toolkit to help them bring the brand to life. In the brand toolkit include the camera-ready logo, brand narrative, event and product ideas and information about brand merchandise.
- Following the event, email each attendee thanking them for coming and quickly reviewing the goals of the new brand. Attach the PowerPoint presentation for their use.

Focus on the process

Part of the fascination with custom craftsmanship is the process taken to arrive at the product. It is this process that elevates the barista in a coffee shop or the pizza maker in the pizzeria into artisans. Work with local businesses to showcase that process by demonstrating for customers HOW their product is “crafted”. Ideally this craftsmanship would take place live, in real time. If that isn’t possible, businesses could make a video of their magic. All videos should be grouped together under Hickory. Well Crafted on You Tube. A few ideas of how companies could make this work.

- Advertising companies could videotape a late night brainstorming session for a campaign.
- Microbreweries could offer craft beer tours allowing visitors to view the various stages of beer making or feature an open glass viewing window to let people see the process.
- Theater performing groups could videotape a rehearsal, costume fitting and set designing. Or, a rehearsal could be open to the public.
- Restaurants could feature open kitchens. Also encourage restaurants to prepare dishes at the table (debone a fish, prepare homemade guacamole, light Baked Alaska, cook on an open grill, etc.).
- Artist’s studios could be open to the public on certain days.
- Hair salons can demo how to cut your bangs or color your own hair.
- Pet groomers can show how to cut certain dog styles (poodle, puppy cut) and how to trim dog nails.
- Photography studios can show how to print pictures.
- Coffee shops can show how to put together a fancy coffee drink or make a French press cup.
- Bakeries can show how to decorate a wedding cake.
- Real estate agencies should have a design studio where potential buyers can design certain aspects of their new home
- Local spas can allow clients to design their own spa day around their particular interests or watch a particular treatment like a facial or massage to learn more about how it is done.
- Yoga studios can promote – Your body. Well crafted
- Restaurants can craft a perfect meal – well-crafted meal made from locally grown produce and meats that is complemented by a local beer suited to that individual’s taste
- Wineries can expand their wine tastings to include demos on picking and crushing grapes.

Involve local breweries

Hickory is known for crafted beers as is evidenced by the growing popularity of the Hickory Hops Brew Fest. Involve local breweries with the brand by commissioning a beer that embodies the persona of Hickory. This could be a lager which is the hardest beer to make because of the fermenting process - OR a strong beer that is more complex such as a stout. Hold a contest with local artisans to design a label for this beer. Roll out the new beer at the beer festival and feature it at the Olde Hickory Brewery.

Partner with downtown and Union Square

The Market Hickory Partnership and Downtown Development Association should work cooperatively to revitalize their aesthetic and increase retail traffic for downtown merchants. For example:

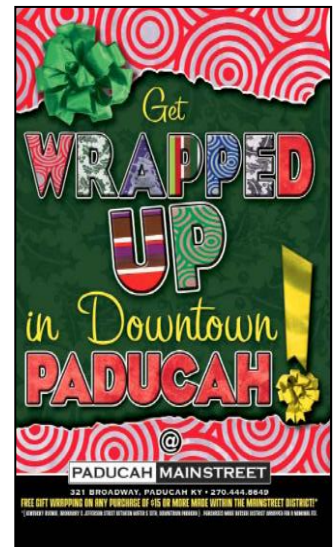
- The first step toward improved and inviting downtowns is to review assets and issues with an honest and open mind. A Downtown Inventory or Survey establishes an understanding of the present condition of downtown and provides a foundation for objective decision-making in the future. One of the major purposes of evaluating the physical attributes of downtowns in Hickory is to identify the challenges and opportunities which you face.
 - Walk-Through Survey: Stroll through downtown and look closely at the details of its appearance.
http://www.cdtoolbox.net/community_benchmarking/walkthru_inventory.pdf
 - Visual Imaging Survey. Photographs are worth a thousand words (and can be kept for reference in the future). Create a photographic inventory of the downtown in Hickory. Analyze and record your observations.
 - For retail recruiting purposes, conduct a Commercial Space Inventory.
http://www.cdtoolbox.net/community_benchmarking/commspace_inventory.pdf
 - A Business and Service Inventory will provide insight into which goods and services are available in Hickory and which have to be purchased out of town.
http://www.cdtoolbox.net/community_benchmarking/business_avail_inventory.pdf
http://www.cdtoolbox.net/community_benchmarking/purchasing_survey.PDF
- Start a façade program. Assist downtown merchants with improving the look of business exteriors by providing a range of grant monies. Offering standardized façade options can help lower costs and control the look of the aesthetic.
- Sponsor a well-crafted business forum for downtown merchants that focuses on all the components of a successful business and how they come together. This could be an online forum where vendors can speak with one another on strategies for the future. If you tape the workshops and post them on YouTube, merchants can watch them at their leisure. Downtown Long Beach, California merchant's group offers a YouTube library of small business seminars on such topics as Retail Visioning, Sales and Marketing and Social Media. View the library at: <http://vimeo.com/8122099>.

Visit the Downtown Long Beach website at:

<http://www.downtownlongbeach.org/residents/Home>

- Start a match program for marketing: Help stretch merchant dollars with a 50/50 match program for cooperative brand-based image marketing. This program allows businesses to customize their message while promoting the downtown and the city in the context of the brand.

- One area in which many local retailers struggle is attractive window merchandising. Bring in a consultant (graphic designer or professional merchandiser) to conduct a workshop/demonstration for downtown retailers. To increase participation, put the names of all those who pre-register in the pot for a chance to be the store that serves as the demonstration project. Negotiate discounts with area home improvement and fixture stores to provide further incentive for improving windows.
- Create a Linked In group forum for Hickory merchants and other groups to share ideas, issues and compare notes. A forum is also an easy method for retailers to connect for cross-promotions and co-op marketing opportunities.
- Entice shoppers downtown with a selection of fun and engaging shopping promotions such as:
 - Dinner and a show packages. Restaurants offer discounts (or free appetizer) when patrons show a ticket stub from a local movie or live performance. OR pre-sell as a package which discounts both show and dinner. An off shoot of this would be the School Pride promotion: discounts at restaurants after major school athletic events, musical performances or plays.
 - Pajama Party early bird discounts. On a Saturday morning, discounts for everyone who comes out to shop in their pajamas. Include fun events as part of the promotion like a professional bird caller to walk around downtown teaching “early birdcalls”, free mimosas in some stores and pastries in others. Live music in some venues.
 - Merry Midnight Madness. During the hectic Christmas season, choose a weekend evening where all merchants in town stay open until midnight to accommodate harassed Christmas shoppers. Create a festive atmosphere with music and refreshments. Cross promote with local restaurants – shoppers who show a receipt from Midnight Madness hours receive a free drink to help them unwind after shopping. (This is not unlike Hickory’s existing holiday shopping initiatives.
 - Encourage Christmas shopping in Hickory’s downtowns by offering free well-crafted gift wrapping on any purchase over \$15. Establish a gift wrapping center on each side of town for shopper convenience. Recruit a high school club or organization that needs to raise funds and pay them a nominal fee for supply the labor (consider allowing them to put out a tip jar, as well).



- Help shoppers stretch their dollars over the holiday season (or during a slow time to encourage sales). During a specific time period (two weeks perhaps), have participating merchants give shoppers who make a purchase over \$20 a ticket. Then shoppers turn in their tickets for a drawing offering \$250 in merchandise from downtowns. Couple the drawing with a special event downtown – parade, Candle Light Shopping or other activity.
- Hold weekly Senior Community Strolls. Seniors walk the downtown areas for exercise. Set a weekly meeting spot. Each week seniors walk a different route around town, browse a different block and have coffee and snacks at a different restaurant. Retailers/restaurants provide senior discounts. Engage a local historian or architect as a volunteer to provide interesting tidbits of local lore as the group walks.
- Host a Dogs Night Out called “Well-Crafted Canines”. Establish one night a week/month where dogs are welcome in downtowns. Encourage residents/visitors to bring their dogs with them to shop or dine. Allow mannerly dogs to sit by their owners in all fresco dining areas. Encourage retailers and restaurants to provide doggie treats and to put water bowls out on the sidewalk. Provide discounts for those who bring their dog downtown. Take complementary photos of owners and dogs. Allow dogs to come into stores to browse briefly. Sponsor supporting events like Dog Days 5Ks (run with your dog), Canine Costume Parade, Look Alike Contests or demonstrations by Frisbee or agility dog teams.
- Downtown restaurants could come together to offer a “Crafted Cuisine Dinner.” Choose three to four establishments to host interesting signature cocktails or a wine tasting, a second group to do appetizers, a third group to do a small plates main course and a final group to create fabulous desserts and coffee or after-dinner drinks/wine. Sell a ticket to the entire meal or to a specific course (at a reasonable price).
- Not all promotions have to involve shoppers. Schedule promotions and contests for the retailers, as well. Sponsor quarterly awards for “Well-Crafted Window Display”. Or to promote a more welcoming shopping experience, stage a pot planting contest. Merchants purchase pots for their front doors and plant annuals. Shoppers vote for the most appealing pots. The winner receives a plaque and award. (For best cost efficiency, order pots and plants in bulk from an area nursery.) Retailer should have cards available that list the plantings in the pot so that shoppers can duplicate at home.

- Develop a “Craft Your Savings” frequent shopper’s card program to encourage shopping local. Loyalty cards are a common retail promotion tactic. The program be structured in many ways:
 - As a gift card. A straight forward and convenient method of encouraging shopping in Hickory.
 - As a resident discount card. Show your card and receive a discount at participating stores. Available to all local residents as a perk for living in Hickory!
 - As a loyalty card for frequent purchasers. Shoppers are awarded points for each purchase. Points can then be redeemed for services or discounted merchandise.

Brand ribbon cuttings

Make a production out of new business development and new business openings in Hickory – large and small. Brand the shovels for groundbreaking by painting handles and using ribbons in the brand color palette. Display a banner or erect a sign using the brand logo with “Your Business. Well Crafted.”. Do the same for ribbon-cuttings. Supply plaques, certificates and pictures to participants in these kinds of events. The mementos should also carry the positioning line.

Brand your EDC website and prospect recruitment package

Develop an economic development website and mobi-site called Tech Styles that challenges expectations that Hickory is just furniture and textiles (with a well-crafted design worthy of Apple and Google). Have compelling maps and virtual tours of assembled parcels or locations. Have an area focused on data centers. Introduce business and talent recruitment area as well.

Similarly, create a high-end updated economic development recruitment package that focuses on all the ways that Hickory can help businesses craft success and profits. One approach you could take focuses on the idea of Hickory offering businesses well-crafted numbers.

- XX new businesses in 2010
- XX in proposed growth in the next decade
- XX acres of available land
- XX shovel ready sites
- XX colleges feeding the work force
- XX housing stock for your employees

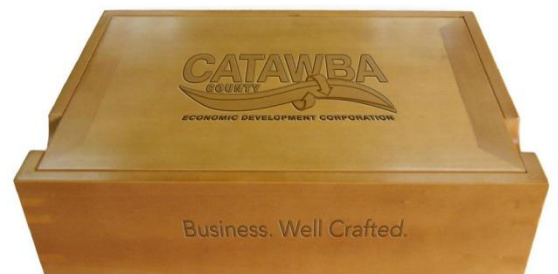
Send prospects a branded present

Send prospects a premium item that reminds them in a creative way of benefits that come from choosing Hickory. Include a card with the following quote and your logo and line

“When a work lifts your spirits and inspires bold and noble thoughts in you, do not look for any other standard to judge by: the work is good, the product of a master craftsman.” [Jean de la Bruyere](#)

A few ideas:

- Executive gift or business relocation thank you: for large projects/significant prospects consider a generous incentive or thank you such as a custom-built conference table or executive desk by an area artisan. (Executive suite design assistance also an option for premier services offered to HQs or offices moving to Hickory).
- Hickory money clip (executive gift),
- iPad or tablet preloaded with EDC info (Tech Styles messages) and Hickory imagery,
- Wall art with message inscribed in natural wood piece (showing rings of wood) communicating craftsmanship and history of innovation in Hickory,
- High-end beautiful handcrafted wooden box.
- Hand-turned bowls.



Have fun with data

Give data a persona in order to recruit data centers. Develop an entertaining, humorous video with a charismatic, exaggerated real estate agent who is showing locations for a new home (new home for your data).

"It is safe and has a great quality of life. It has areas to play and grow and be around interesting people. There are lots of learning opportunities so it can grow."

The video should communicate the benefits of housing your data but also sell the quality of life available to data center managers and tech employees. Call the video, "Data's favorite zip code?" or "The perfect place for data to call home." Promote the video through social media.

Form partnerships for economic development

Explore unique and interesting partnerships to help grow everything from sustainability to tech business.

- The Living Workshop: In the same vein as The Rural Studio, a program of [Auburn University's](#) College of Architecture, Design and Construction, develop a program devoted to building sustainable homes and community buildings for impoverished families. Partner with area colleges and universities including UNC Charlotte Art and Architecture College and Appalachian State University Department of Technology and Environmental Design.

This could introduce grade school students (and continue through college) to becoming doers and makers. It can include design and building principles as well as the importance of community service and community building. Efforts can include building homes affordably out of reclaimed or green materials as well as the interior furnishings. Connections with sustainable programs are options as well (<http://tec.appstate.edu/appropriate-technology/>). These programs can attract enterprises to where the research, design, and successful application of ideas take place.



- Research has shown that life sciences companies and industry grow when they are located in close proximity to each other. Develop a tech transfer partnership (like www.cortexstl.com (life sciences) in St. Louis area) focused on engineering and plastics. Appalachian State University has a tech (engineering) campus in Hickory and there is an existing partnership between ASU in Hickory and area community colleges. Expand the partnership to include the private sector so research and design can be included in the mix. North Carolina (particularly Research Triangle) has impressive commercialization programs so the Hickory partnerships should be distinct (among others in the state) and targeted to its strengths and unique history.
<http://nccet.appstate.edu/>
<http://hickory.ghp.appstate.edu/>
<http://ghp.appstate.edu/>
<http://tec.appstate.edu/>
- *Sawdust Program*: Launch a green tech and byproduct innovation effort. Recognize firms for the best re-use programs or innovative ideas to take byproducts of a process and find an environmental and/or profitable use for them.

- Breaking the Mold Competition (with connection to plastics and a metaphor for breaking the mold for young minds): Connect the Hickory brand with the school engineering camps and robotic camps offered by Appalachian State University, Catawba County Champions of Education and NC State University each summer. The programs provide students with a fun and positive introduction into various fields of engineering by using hands-on, creative investigations and real-world building activities. They also represent the new ideas and youthful vitality that is so critical to the future of Hickory and they demonstrate how a heritage of craftsmanship can meld with even the most high-tech science. Consider sponsoring and branding the competition that is the culminating event at the end of these weekly camps. Awards/trophies should be branded as Our Future. Well Crafted. Or Robotics. Well Crafted.
<http://nccet.appstate.edu/future-engineers-camp>

Create an Idea Space

Partner with colleges and universities, economic development, the chamber, developers, etc. to create a well-crafted, architecturally interesting and inspiring third space called The Joinery (possible organization name as well) where different business sectors, entrepreneurs, mentors, students, and creatives come together to collaborate and exchange ideas in an “idea workshop”. One of your empty warehouses is the perfect venue for such a creative being space.

Take this idea one step further by recruiting “Artisans in Residence” to live on one floor of the warehouse. A craftsmanship take on the familiar artists in residence concept, this approach would allow Hickory to get some creative and craftsman brainpower for brand integration in exchange for paying these artists a living stipend. The Joinery would then become a place for ideas, creativity and craftsmanship 24/7.

Provide recognition and visibility for those who support the brand

Develop a designation (and logo) to recognize those organizations, entities and individuals that support your branding efforts. Partner logos should be featured on the websites of those who are assisting with the brand and on the Hickory web portal. In addition, produce a recognition award that can be displayed in their place of business. For example, the logo could read, “Proud Partner in a Well-Crafted Hickory”. To the right are two examples of partner marks, one from Kansas City and one from Columbus, Indiana.



HOW IS THE BRAND PERFORMING?

Evaluation yields new information which may lead to the beginning of a new planning cycle. Information may be gathered from concept pre-testing, campaign impact in the marketplace and tracking studies to measure a brand's performance over time.

Ideally, two basic questions will be answered: Have responses to the brand among target audiences changed in the way the BrandPrint intended? And have these changes resulted in consumer action that will achieve the desired objectives of the brand? Turnkey or do-it-yourself programs are recommended depending on the needs of the community.

To begin the process of brand evaluation, North Star has set up a schedule to discuss Hickory's brand progress. This schedule begins immediately after the delivery of your BrandPrint.

- Immediately – North Star recommends that Hickory continue to focus efforts on growing its inquiry database for both visitors and business prospects. In addition, the city should strive to create a resident database of email addresses
- Six months – North Star's Research Director will conduct an assessment call to outline a plan for measuring brand performance moving forward
- One year – Hickory will be contacted to determine specific measurement goals including re-measuring awareness and perception of the community amongst intended audiences.

Building your databases and keeping them current ensures future success measurements can be calculated. These leads will be the best data start point for future brand evaluation.

As stated above, North Star will consult with the community at the above times to evaluate your specific needs. Keep in mind that many of the research pieces in your BrandPrint were created to act as benchmarks by which future improvements can be measured. Based on what we now know of the community, likely recommendations for success measures at Hickory's one-year mark may include:

- Resident and Inquiry Tapestry Profile Who and What Reports update (Community Tapestry Study)
- Economic Opportunity Analysis update
- Community Brand Barometer
- Online Community-wide Survey
- Consumer Awareness and Perception Study
- Business Development Awareness and Perception Study

HICKORY TAPESTRY PROFILE STUDY

Purpose

A Community Tapestry Study is conducted to understand the target audience's lifestyle in detail. This included profiling reports for Hickory residents, area attraction visitors, overnight guests and inquiries.

Methodology & Results

Tapestry represents the fourth generation of market segmentation systems that began 30 years ago. This powerful tool classifies U.S. neighborhoods by lifestage and lifestyle in addition to traditional demographics.

The results from the Tapestry studies can be classified into two main reports:

- **Who Report:**
 - Profiles the demographic and lifestyle segmentation of the population
 - Classifies the population in each of the ways outlined above and indexes the population under study against national averages

- **What Report:**
 - Provides a detailed profile of the core population for 37 separate lifestyle and media groups in over 2,200 sub-categories
 - Each category is indexed against the average U.S. resident to determine whether a member of the population under study is more or less likely to exhibit the specific behavior (100 represents the national average)

Key findings from the Community Tapestry reports allow for greater understanding of your residents and consumer groups. The more you understand about your target audiences, the better you can target your message to them.

Timing

The Community Tapestry Study should be conducted every one-three years.

ESRI ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

Purpose

The Economic Opportunity Analysis is conducted by the Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI) – a national leader in business information systems and analysis. The information associated with this analysis, including data on Hickory and select competitive markets, enable data driven decision making and provide supporting evidence for attracting investment into the community.

Methodology & Results

The results from the Economic Opportunity Analysis can be classified into four main reports:

- **Market Profile:**
 - Economic statistics, demographics and consumer spending data
- **Business Summary:**
 - Information on supply in a community. Lists numbers of businesses and employees by industry sector
- **Retail Goods and Services Expenditures**
 - Information on a community's demand. Gives demographic data and lists consumer expenditures by household and sector
- **Retail Marketplace Profile:**
 - Compares demand with supply within a community.

Key findings from Economic Opportunity Analysis allow for clearer economic picture of your community. Combined with your community's resident Tapestry What Report, you can pinpoint underserved sectors where your community is not meeting demand, and cross-reference those with the activities and habits of your resident base.

Timing

The Economic Opportunity Analysis should be conducted every one-three years.

HICKORY COMMUNITY BRAND BAROMETER

Purpose

The Community Brand Barometer™ measures strength of the Hickory brand according to:

- Resident satisfaction/advocacy with the brand as a place to live, work and play
- Brand satisfaction/advocacy relative to the nation.

Methodology & Results

The methodology for the Brand Barometer has been carefully developed and determined to be statistically significant. Participants answer three questions:

- Would you recommend living in Hickory to a friend or colleague?
- Would you recommend traveling to Hickory to a friend or colleague?
- Would you recommend conducting business in Hickory to a friend or colleague?

More information about the study has been provided in **Appendix L**.

Resident advocacy is one of the strongest measures of brand success. Successful brand implementation will energize the resident base, making them more likely to recommend their community to others.

Timing

The Community Brand Barometer should be conducted annually. The first Brand Barometer should be conducted no sooner than one year from brand launch (when there is visible implementation of your brand in the community).

HICKORY ONLINE COMMUNITY-WIDE SURVEY

Purpose

The purpose of the Online Community-wide Survey is to gain a quantitative measure of the community's perceptions of Hickory.

Methodology & Results

This qualitative survey is fielded online and is open to all residents of the community. The study measures the following:

- Overall top-of-mind perceptions of Hickory
- Strengths and weaknesses of Hickory
- Resident suggestions on what is missing from Hickory
- Measurements of Hickory quality of life indicators.

Positive resident perceptions are a strong indicator of brand success. Successful brand implementation will energize the resident base, making them more likely think of the community in a positive light.

Timing

The Online Community-wide Survey should be conducted annually. The first survey should be conducted no sooner than one year from brand launch (when there is visible implementation of your brand in the community).

CONSUMER AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION STUDY (CAP STUDY)

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into consumer awareness, visitation and perceptions of Hickory.

Methodology & Results

This quantitative survey is fielded online outside of Hickory's city limits in order to obtain an outsider's perspective. The survey measures:

- Overall top-of-mind perceptions of Hickory and immediate competitors
- Consumer visitation trends (frequency and nature of visitation)
- Consumer visitation drivers (business, leisure, friends and family)
- Strengths and weaknesses of Hickory identified within community attributes
- Consumer suggestions on what is missing from Hickory
- Measurements of Hickory delivery of hospitality
- Measurements of Hickory quality of life indicators.

Timing

The CAP Study should be conducted annually. The first survey should be conducted no sooner than one year from brand launch (when there is visible implementation of your brand in the community).

BUSINESS AWARENESS AND DEVELOPMENT STUDY (BDAP STUDY)

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into how business leaders in the region make site selection decisions. It also tests consumer awareness, visitation and perceptions of Hickory.

Methodology & Results

This quantitative survey is fielded online outside of Hickory's city limits in order to obtain an outsider's perspective. The survey measures:

- Behavior and decision patterns of consumers (prospective businesses)
- Overall top-of-mind perceptions of Hickory and immediate competitors
- Consumer visitation trends (frequency and nature of visitation)
- Consumer visitation drivers (business, leisure, friends and family)
- Measurements of Hickory business attributes
- Measurements of Hickory quality of life indicators.

Timing

The BDAP Study should be conducted annually. The first survey should be conducted no sooner than one year from brand launch (when there is visible implementation of your brand in the community).