

Economic Indicators Newsletter

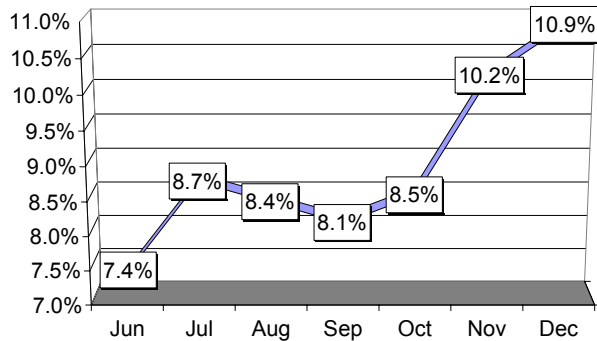
Reporting Economic Trends in the Hickory-Morganton-Lenoir NC Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)

Civilian Labor Force

The Hickory MSA's unemployment rate increased from 7.4% in June 2008 to 10.9% in December (Figure 1). During the last recession the region's unemployment rate peaked at 9.0% in July 2003. The number of unemployed and actively seeking work in the region grew from 12,767 in June to 18,593 in December. In December both the Hickory and Rocky Mount MSAs had unemployment rates greater than 10% (Table 1). Hickory MSA County unemployment rates for December were Alexander 10.4%, Burke 11.7%, Caldwell 10.7% and Catawba 10.7%.

Figure 1.

MSA Unemployment, Jun. 2008 – Dec. 2008



Source: NC Employment Security Commission, 2009.

Table 1.
MSA Unemployment Rate, December 2008

Durham	6.1%
Raleigh-Cary	6.5%
Asheville	6.7%
Jacksonville	6.8%
Winston-Salem	7.6%
Fayetteville	7.8%
Goldsboro	7.9%
Greenville	8.3%
Wilmington	8.4%
Greensboro-High Point	8.6%
Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord	8.9%
Burlington	9.4%
Hickory-Morganton-Lenoir	10.9%
Rocky Mount	11.7%

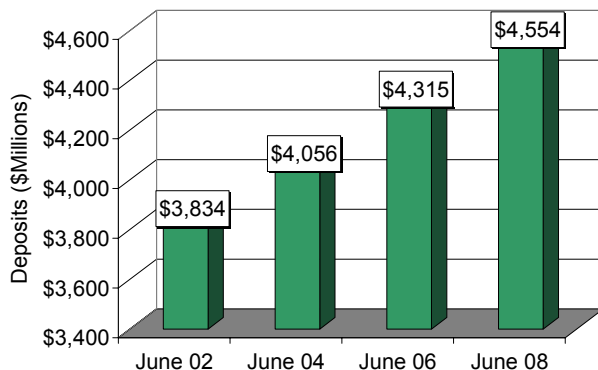
Source: NC Employment Security Commission, 2009.

Bank Deposits

Hickory MSA bank deposits have increased from \$3.83 billion in June 2002 to \$4.55 billion in June 2008 (Figure 2). The 18.7% increase in bank deposits over the past six years is slightly less than the rate of inflation (19.7%) between 2002 and 2008. Hickory MSA bank deposits increased by \$239 million between June 2006 and June 2008 compared to a gain of \$259 million between 2004 and 2006.

Figure 2.

MSA Bank Deposits (\$ Millions), June 2002 - 2008



Source: Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), 2009.

All four Hickory Metro counties had more bank deposits in June 2008 than in June 2006 (Table 2). With more than \$2.5 billion in deposits, Catawba County maintained its ranking as having the 8th most bank deposits of any county in North Carolina. Alexander County's deposit ranking improved from 67th to 65th. Burke County maintained its deposit ranking at 43 while Caldwell's slipped from 39th to 40th.

Table 2.
Bank Deposits (\$ Millions)

County	June 04	June 06	June 08	NC Rank 08
Alexander	\$325	\$334	\$350	65th
Burke	\$658	\$706	\$781	43rd
Caldwell	\$752	\$817	\$833	40th
Catawba	\$2,322	\$2,458	\$2,589	8th

Source: Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), 2009.



“EIN Spotlight”

Hickory MSA Employment Trends, 2007-2008

Employment is a key element to the economic vitality of any region. There is no question that the current economic downturn has had a dramatic impact on employment throughout the United States. Hickory MSA employment has also been hit hard by the current recession. This edition of the “EIN Spotlight” will examine trends in unemployment rates in 2008. The article will compare the Hickory MSA to other counties and metros in North Carolina to determine if the region is being impacted by job losses more than other areas in the State. The Spotlight will also examine which industry sectors are being hit hardest by the economic downturn.

Hickory MSA Unemployment Rates

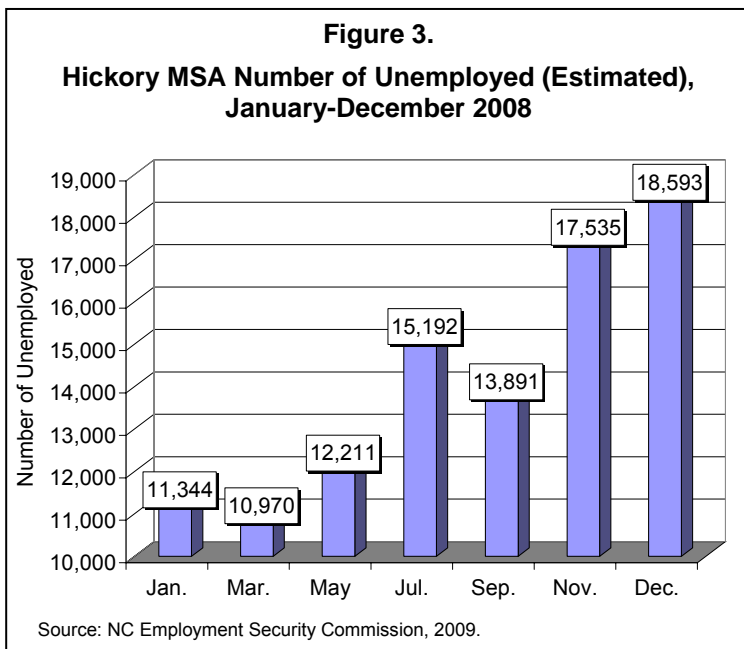
All Hickory MSA counties have experienced a dramatic increase in unemployment rates since January 2008 (Table 3). Alexander County’s unemployment rate has nearly doubled from 5.5% in January to 10.4% in December. In December 2008 Burke County’s unemployment rate approached 12%. Caldwell County’s unemployment rate has risen 3.5 percentage points since January to 10.7%. Catawba County’s unemployment rate has grown from 6.1% in January to 10.7% in December. The Hickory MSA regional average unemployment has risen from 6.6% in January to 10.9% in December 2008.

Table 3.
Hickory MSA Unemployment Rates (%), January-December 2008

Counties	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Change Jan.-Dec.
Alexander	5.5	5.8	5.6	5.9	6.6	6.9	8.7	8.3	7.9	8.0	9.8	10.4	4.9
Burke	7.4	7.4	7.2	7.1	7.6	7.8	8.8	9.0	8.6	8.6	10.7	11.7	4.3
Caldwell	7.2	6.9	6.4	6.3	7.5	7.5	9.5	8.4	8.3	8.9	10.6	10.7	3.5
Catawba	6.1	6.2	6.1	5.9	6.7	7.2	8.2	8.1	7.9	8.4	9.7	10.7	4.6
Hickory MSA	6.6	6.6	6.4	6.3	7.1	7.4	8.7	8.4	8.1	8.5	10.2	10.9	4.3

Source: NC Employment Security Commission, 2009.

Besides estimating the percentage of people which are unemployed, the North Carolina Employment Security Commission also releases data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) on the estimated population which is unemployed (*note: the estimates from BLS include only the unemployed who are actively seeking work*). Between January and December 2008 the number of unemployed in the region has grown from 11,344 to 18,593 (Figure 3). The 63.9% increase in the number of unemployed is the 4th highest among the 14 North Carolina MSAs. Only the Burlington (72.3%), Rocky Mount (68.2%) and the Charlotte (66.6%) MSAs had a higher percentage increase in the number of unemployed as the Hickory-Morganton-Lenoir MSA.



The increase in the number of unemployed by county in the Hickory MSA is shown in Table 4 on page 3. The number of unemployed in Alexander County increased from fewer than 1,000 in January to 1,860 in December. In Burke County the number of unemployed grew from 3,008 to 4,741. A net gain of 1,291 persons was added to the 2008 unemployment total in Caldwell County. The number of unemployed in Catawba County increased by 72.7% to 7,962 in December 2008.



Hickory MSA Employment Trends

Table 4.
Hickory MSA Estimated Number of Unemployed, January-December 2008

Counties	Jan.	Mar.	May	Jul.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Change Jan.-Dec.	% Chg. Jan.-Dec.
Alexander	988	1,012	1,196	1,606	1,414	1,439	1,772	1,860	872	88.3%
Burke	3,008	2,929	3,094	3,610	3,461	3,463	4,374	4,741	1,733	57.6%
Caldwell	2,740	2,441	2,872	3,721	3,127	3,386	4,074	4,031	1,291	47.1%
Catawba	4,609	4,587	5,049	6,255	5,889	6,344	7,315	7,962	3,353	72.7%
Hickory MSA	11,344	10,970	12,211	15,192	13,891	14,632	17,535	18,593	7,249	63.9%

Source: NC Employment Security Commission, 2009.

Comparison of Hickory MSA Unemployment with Other Regions in North Carolina

December 2008 unemployment rates for the North Carolina counties are shown in Figure 4. One-third of North Carolina counties had unemployment rates in December greater than 10%. Looking at the map in Figure 4, there appears to be three locations with the highest unemployment rates. The first area includes the Hickory MSA counties (Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba) as well as Cleveland, Gaston, and Rutherford counties. The second group of counties (Anson, Richmond, and Scotland) is located on the North Carolina-South Carolina border between Charlotte and Wilmington. The third group of counties (Edgecombe, Halifax and Martin) is located east of Raleigh near Rocky Mount. All three of these locations are similar in that they have a higher proportion of employment in manufacturing than the North Carolina or the national averages.

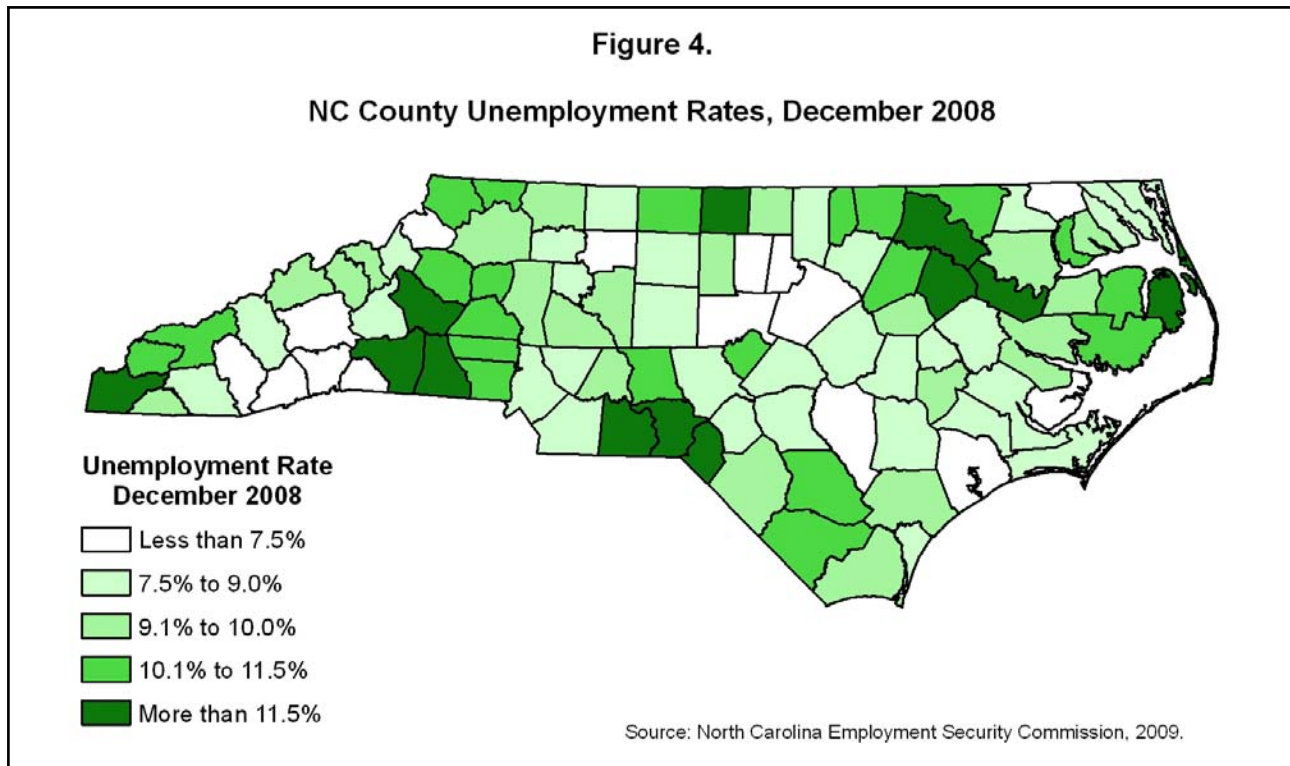


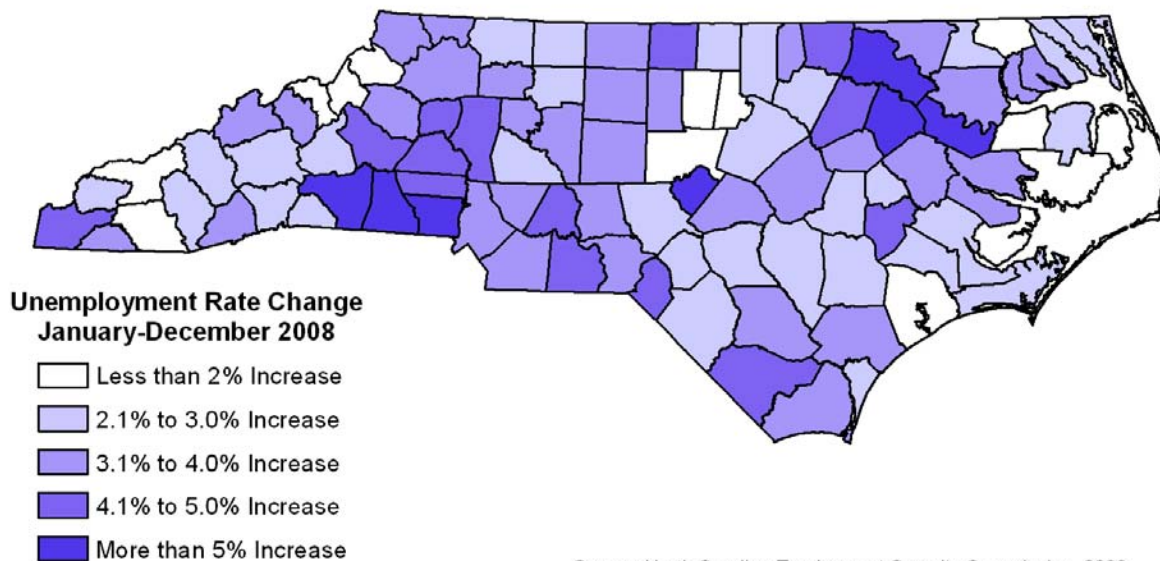
Figure 5 on page 4 shows the percentage change in unemployment from January to December 2008 for the North Carolina counties. All but one North Carolina county has experienced an increase in the unemployment rate between January and December 2009. More than 25% of North Carolina counties saw an increase in unemployment rates of 4% or more over the past 12 months. The greatest increases in the unemployment rate occurred in the North Carolina foothill counties (including the Hickory MSA counties) and east of Raleigh close to Rocky Mount.



Hickory MSA Employment Trends

Figure 5.

Change in NC County Unemployment Rates, January-December 2008



Source: North Carolina Employment Security Commission, 2009.

Hickory MSA Employment Patterns

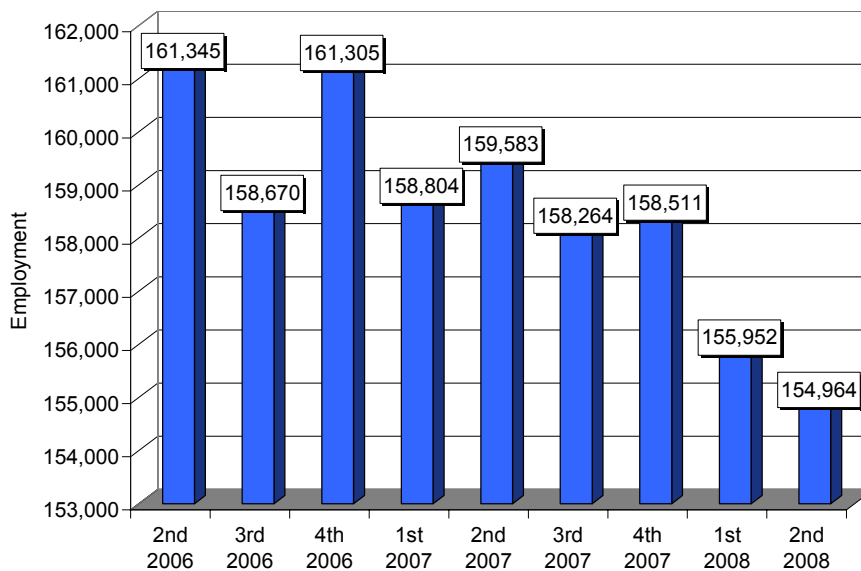
Hickory MSA employment levels have dropped over the past two years, particularly between second quarter 2007 and second quarter 2008 (Figure 6). Between 2006 and 2007 employment in the region fell from 161,345 to 159,583. Over the past 12 months total employment, after increasing slightly in fourth quarter 2007 due to the Christmas shopping season, decreased to 154,964 by second quarter 2008.

Table 5 on page 5 examines employment trends by sector between second quarter 2007 and second quarter 2008. Total employment during the 12 months fell by a net of 4,619 workers.

Approximately 68% or 3,137 of the losses are in the manufacturing sector as the region continues to shed jobs in the apparel, furniture and textile sectors. A net of 1,088 jobs were cut in the "administrative and waste services" industry between second quarter 2007 and 2008. This result at first seems somewhat surprising since companies might be interested in hiring temporary workers, which makes up the majority of administrative and waste services category, to accomplish some business services tasks rather than hire full time help. It would appear, however, that the recession is reducing business activity to the point that less temporary workers are currently needed in the Hickory MSA. During the last recession

Figure 6.

Hickory MSA Employment, 2nd Quarter 2006- 2nd Quarter 2008



Source: NC Employment Security Commission, 2009.



“administrative services” was one of the first sectors to bounce back, so it will be interesting to see how quickly the industry will recover.

The transportation and warehousing sector lost 495 workers (7.6%) between second quarter 2007 and 2008. Reducing consumer and business demand, and perhaps higher fuel prices in 2007 and early 2008, contributed to layoffs in this sector. Employment fell in the construction industry by 284 jobs as new residential and commercial activity declined in the region. A total of 265 jobs were lost in the finance and insurance sector since second quarter 2007.

It is important to note that not all industry sectors in the Hickory MSA experienced job losses over the past 12 months.

Several industries in the region have been adding employment despite worsening economic conditions. The biggest increase was in health care and social assistance which grew by 509 workers to 20,985. As baby boomers continue to age and retirees migrate to the Hickory Metro, the need for medical services continues to increase. Of course, the region’s economic conditions have contributed to growth in social assistance employment. Another sector that has gained employment is retail trade. A net gain of 241 workers occurred in this sector since second quarter 2007. New Wal-Mart locations in Conover and Granite Falls have helped in increasing retail employment in the region.

The “Management of Companies and Enterprises” industry grew by 291 workers, or 10.7% since June 2007. The North Carolina Employment Security Commission defines the Management sector as “establishments that hold the securities of (or other equity interests in) companies and enterprises for the purpose of owning a controlling interest or influencing management decisions or establishments (except government establishments) that administer, oversee, and manage establishments of the company or enterprise and that normally undertake the strategic or organizational planning and decision making role of the company or enterprise.” The growth in this industry is very good news for the Hickory MSA since the average weekly wage (\$1,483) is much higher than the average regional weekly wage (\$627).

Comparison of Hickory MSA Employment with Other Regions in North Carolina

The Hickory MSA had the greatest loss of jobs of any Metro area in North Carolina from second quarter 2007 to second quarter 2008 (Figure 7, page 6). Between second quarter 2007 and 2008 Hickory MSA employment has fallen by 4,617 workers or 2.9% of its workforce. The 4,617 job loss is nearly 2,000 more jobs than the Metro area with second highest job loss (the Greensboro-High Point MSA had a net job loss of 2,723). Four other Metro areas (Goldsboro, Rocky Mount, Wilmington, and Winston Salem) also suffered a net decline in jobs since second quarter 2007.

In contrast to the Hickory MSA, more than 6,000 jobs were gained in both the Charlotte and Raleigh-Cary MSAs between second quarter 2007 and second quarter 2008. A total of 3,617 jobs were gained in the Durham MSA. It will be interesting to observe whether or not these MSAs continue to gain employment or if they start to lose employment when third quarter and fourth quarter 2008 data are released.

Hickory MSA Employment Trends

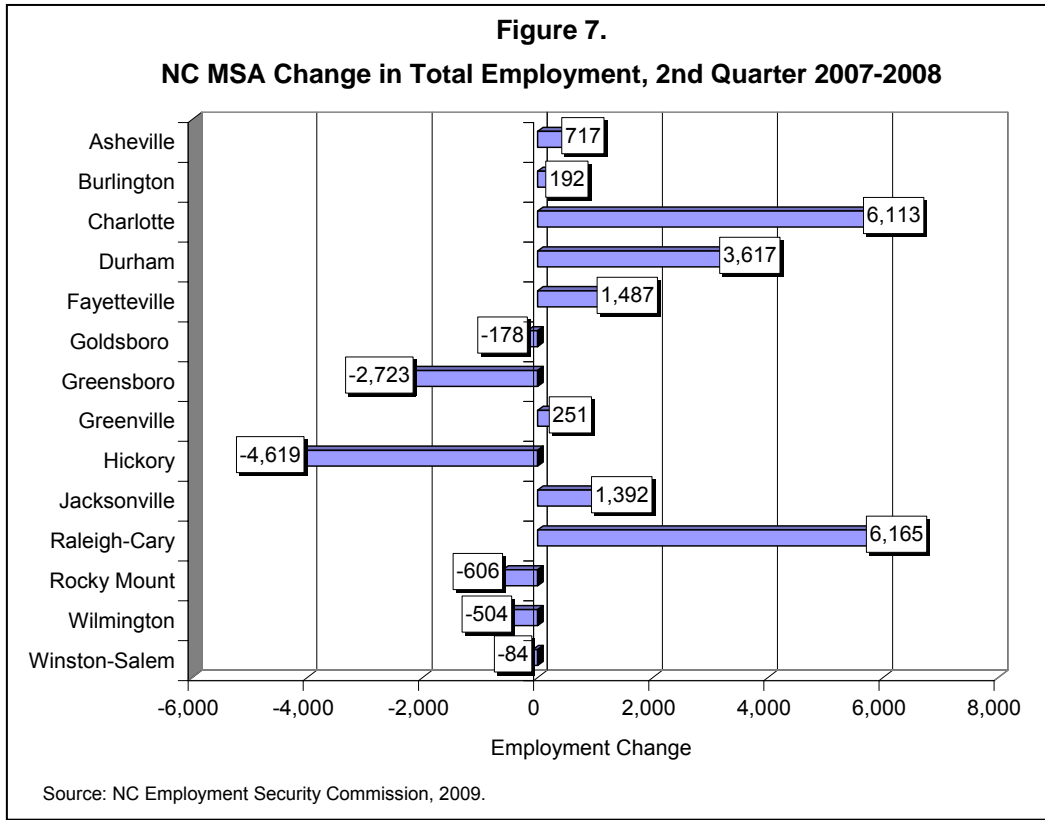
Table 5.
Hickory MSA Employment Change by Industry,
2nd Quarter 2007 – 2nd Quarter 2008

Industry	2007	2008	Chg	% Chg
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing/Hunting	417	446	29	7.0%
Mining	90	84	-6	-6.7%
Utilities	464	533	69	14.9%
Construction	5,324	5,040	-284	-5.3%
Manufacturing	49,953	46,816	-3,137	-6.3%
Wholesale Trade	6,383	6,309	-74	-1.2%
Retail Trade	16,259	16,500	241	1.5%
Transportation and Warehousing	6,495	6,000	-495	-7.6%
Information	991	968	-23	-2.3%
Finance and Insurance	2,839	2,574	-265	-9.3%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,008	994	-14	-1.4%
Professional and Technical Services	2,834	2,685	-149	-5.3%
Management	2,732	3,023	291	10.7%
Administrative and Waste Services	7,291	6,203	-1,088	-14.9%
Educational Services	12,293	12,375	82	0.7%
Health Care and Social Assistance	20,476	20,985	509	2.5%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,612	1,431	-181	-11.2%
Accommodation and Food Services	10,939	10,816	-123	-1.1%
Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	2,941	2,874	-67	-2.3%
Public Administration	7,825	8,054	229	2.9%
Unclassified	415	254	-161	-38.8%
Totals	159,581	154,964	-4,617	-2.9%

Source: NC Employment Security Commission, 2009.



Hickory MSA Employment Trends



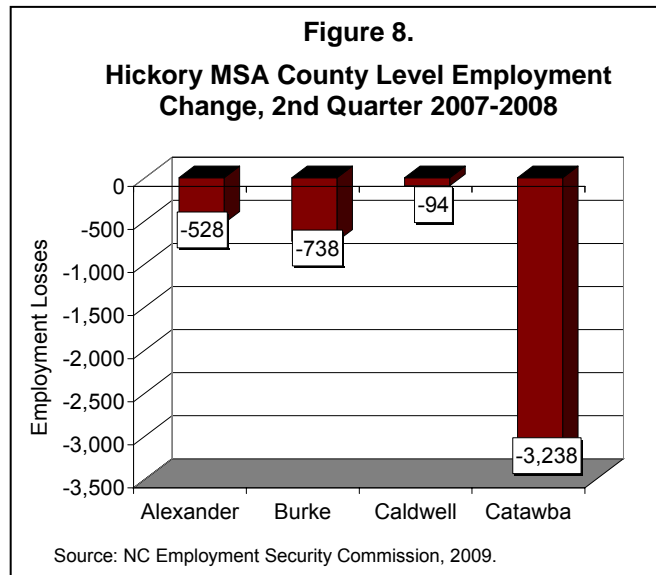
Change in Hickory MSA County Level Employment

Change in county employment levels from second quarter 2007 to 2008 is shown in Figure 8. All four Hickory MSA counties lost employment over the past 12 months of available data. Net job losses in Catawba County totaled 3,238 or a decline of about 3.6%. Job cuts in Burke County totaled 738. More than 500 jobs (5.1% decrease) were lost in Alexander County. This correlates with the rise in the County's unemployment rate in 2008. The smallest employment decline between second quarter 2007 and second quarter 2008 occurred in Caldwell County. Only a net loss of 94 jobs occurred during the 12 month period.

Table 6 on page 7 examines industry employment by changes within each of the four counties from second quarter 2007 to second quarter 2008. Alexander County had net job losses in all industries except public administration. In Burke County the largest industry losses were in manufacturing (682) and administrative and waste services (284). Burke County did gain 180 positions in health care and social assistance and 82 each in the construction and transportation and warehousing sectors.

Caldwell County lost a net of 444 manufacturing jobs, 148 construction jobs and 133 jobs in transportation and warehousing due to the economic downturn. Counteracting these losses, Caldwell County did gain 414 jobs in retail trade and 137 jobs in administrative services. Caldwell was also the only County in the Hickory MSA to gain employment in the "accommodation and food services" category.

Catawba County lost employment in most, but not all, industry sectors between second quarter 2007 and 2008. The manufacturing sector lost 1,827 jobs,





Hickory MSA Employment Trends

Table 6.
Hickory MSA County Employment Change by Industry, 2nd Quarter 2007-2nd Quarter 2008

Industry	Alexander			Burke			Caldwell			Catawba		
	2007	2008	Chg	2007	2008	Chg	2007	2008	Chg	2007	2008	Chg
Construction	287	271	-16	806	888	82	1,085	937	-148	3,146	2,944	-202
Manufacturing	4,483	4,299	-184	9,301	8,619	-682	7,542	7,098	-444	28,627	26,800	-1,827
Wholesale Trade	127	120	-7	578	511	-67	2,179	2,171	-8	3,499	3,507	8
Retail Trade	798	735	-63	2,582	2,582	0	2,633	3,047	414	10,246	10,136	-110
Transportation/ Warehousing	186	173	-13	888	970	82	1,251	1,118	-133	4,171	3,739	-432
Administrative/ Waste Services	320	275	-45	1,163	879	-284	700	837	137	5,109	4,212	-897
Education	959	955	-4	3,252	3,275	23	2,961	2,883	-78	5,122	5,262	140
Health Care/ Social Assistance	691	598	-93	7,090	7,270	180	3,341	3,357	16	9,355	9,760	405
Accommodation/ Food Services	622	599	-23	2,153	2,096	-57	1,489	1,535	46	6,675	6,586	-89
Other Services*	912	774	-138	2,148	2,111	-37	2,378	2,379	1	9,517	9,285	-232
Public Admin	871	940	69	2,586	2,622	36	1,275	1,327	52	3,094	3,165	71
Other Industries**	175	164	-11	244	209	-35	235	286	51	730	657	-73
Total	10,431	9,903	-528	32,791	32,032	-759	27,069	26,975	-94	89,291	86,053	-3,238

Source: NC Employment Security Commission, 2009.

*Other Services includes information, finance, insurance and real estate, professional/technical services, management, repair, and veterinary services.

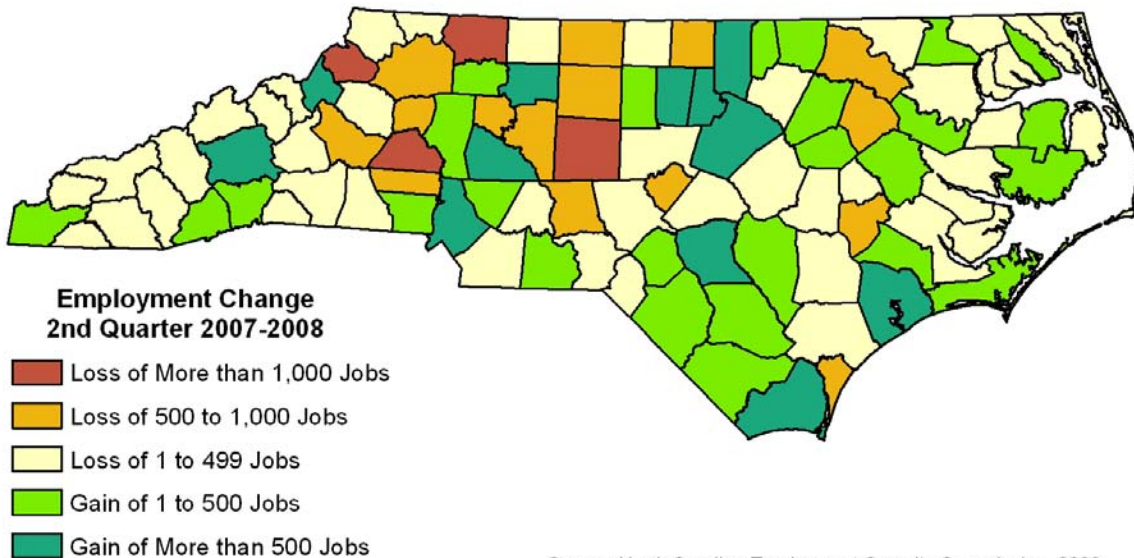
**Other Industries include agriculture, forestry, mining and utilities.

mostly in furniture, apparel and textiles. Administrative and waste services employment fell by 897 workers while a slowdown in construction activity in the region led to job cuts of 202 construction jobs. Catawba County did gain substantial employment in health care and social assistance (405 workers) and education (140) between second quarter 2007 and quarter 2008.

Employment changes in North Carolina by county from second quarter 2007 to second quarter 2008 are shown in Figure 9. Catawba County's net job loss of 3,238 was the most of any county in North Carolina during the past 12 months of available data from NCEC. Only three other counties in the state (Randolph, Surry, and Watauga) lost more than 1,000 jobs from second quarter 2007 to 2008.

Figure 9.

Change in Total Employment, 2nd Quarter 2007 to 2nd Quarter 2008



Source: North Carolina Employment Security Commission, 2009.



Hickory MSA Employment Trends

Alexander and Burke were among 15 counties in the State that lost 500 to 1,000 jobs in the second half of 2007 and the first half of 2008. A total of 38 North Carolina counties gained employment between second quarter 2007 and 2008. Wake County gained the most employment (6,988) followed by Mecklenburg County with 5,749 and Durham with 3,388. Based on the rise in unemployment rates across the state since July, it is likely that many of the counties that gained jobs in 2007 and early in 2008 are currently losing employment.

Summary

The Hickory MSA's unemployment rate grew from 6.6% in January to 10.9% in December 2008. During the year the estimated number of unemployed (those actively seeking work) has increased from 11,344 to 18,593. All four Hickory MSA counties experienced a sharp increase in the number of unemployed during 2008. As a result the Hickory Metro counties currently have one of the highest rates of unemployment in North Carolina.

Between second quarter 2007 and 2008, the number of jobs in the region has decreased 2.9% from 159,583 to 154,964. This decline was the most of any metro area in North Carolina. The bulk of these losses were in manufacturing (3,137 jobs), administrative and waste services (1,088 jobs) and transportation and warehousing (495). Employment gains occurred in health care and social assistance (509), management (291) and public administration (229).

All four Hickory MSA counties lost employment from second quarter 2007 to second quarter 2008. Catawba County's 3,238 job loss was the most of any county in North Carolina due to decreases in manufacturing and administrative services employment. Less than 100 jobs were lost in Caldwell as declines in manufacturing and construction were offset by gains in retail trade and accommodation and food services.

Hickory MSA Ethnicity Patterns

Besides examining total population growth in the Hickory Metro, it is also important to study the types of population growth occurring in the region. The Census Bureau Population Estimates Program generates data for each county and metro area in the United States on changes in population by ethnic groups each year between decennial censuses. Please note that the numbers seen below are estimates and do not represent the 100% count of the population that will not occur until the 2010 Census.

As of July 2007 African Americans were still the largest minority group in the Hickory-Morganton-Lenoir MSA with 25,744 persons representing 7.1% of the Hickory Metro's population. The Census Bureau estimates, however, that the region's African American population has increased by only 1,724 persons between July 2000 and July 2007.

Hickory MSA	July 2000 Population	% of 2000 Population	July 2007 Population	% of 2007 Population	Change 2000-2007	% Change 2000-2007
Whites	307,267	89.6%	322,179	89.4%	14,912	4.9%
African Americans	24,020	7.0%	25,744	7.1%	1,724	7.2%
American Indians	994	0.3%	1,227	0.3%	233	23.4%
Asian & Pacific Islander	8,603	2.5%	8,343	2.3%	-260	-3.0%
Mixed Race	2,210	0.6%	2,978	0.8%	768	34.8%
Total Population	343,094	100.0%	360,471	100.0%	17,377	5.1%
Hispanics (Any Race)	13,988	4.1%	22,256	6.2%	8,268	59.1%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2008.

Hispanics have experienced the biggest population increase over the past seven years in the Hickory Metro (*note: Hispanic can be any race*). Between July 2000 and July 2007 the US Census Bureau estimates that the Hickory MSA's Hispanic population grew by 8,268 persons to 22,256 (Figure 10, page 9). Approximately 47.5% of all population growth in the Hickory Metro since 2000 has come from Hispanics moving into the region. Hispanics are currently 6.2% of the region's population. If the Hispanic population growth rate

continues at its current pace, Hispanics could replace African Americans as the largest minority group in the Hickory MSA by 2011. Economic conditions and employment losses, however, could impact future growth of the region's Hispanic population over the next couple of years.

Rates of ethnicity change vary widely among the four Hickory MSA Counties. In **Alexander County** over 91% of the population is white. The white population in the County has increased by 1,864 to 33,352 in 2007 (Table 8).

Africans Americans are the largest minority group in Alexander County, although the group makes up only 6.2% of the County's total population. The US Census Bureau estimates that the African American group has grown by 658 persons to 2,249 in 2007. In 2000 a total of 840 Hispanics lived in Alexander County. During the past seven years the Hispanic population has increased 41.1% to 1,185 persons. In 2007 Hispanics comprised 3.3% of Alexander's total population, or slightly more than half of the African American population.

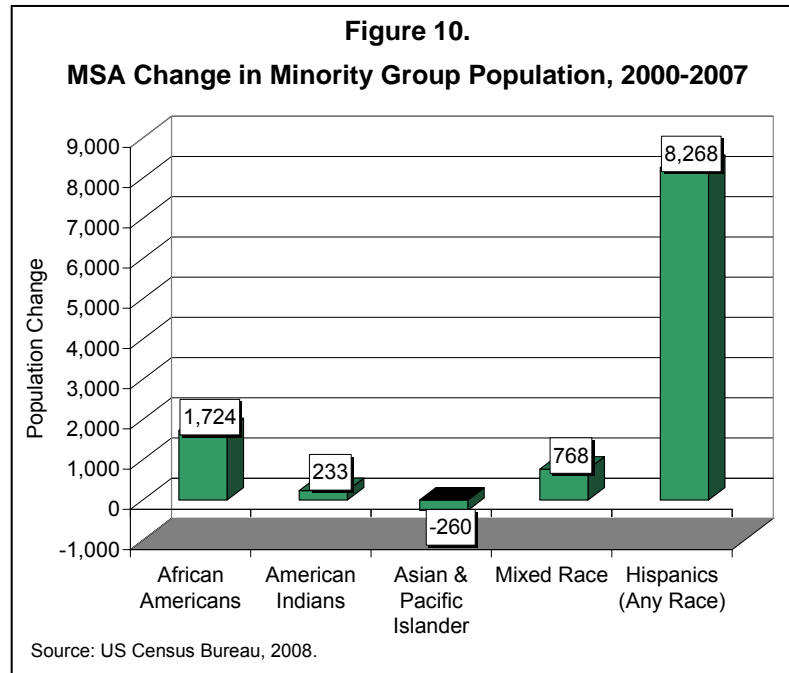


Table 8.
Alexander County Population by Ethnic Group, July 2000-July 2007

Alexander County	July 2000 Population	% of 2000 Population	July 2007 Population	% of 2007 Population	Change 2000-2007	% Change 2000-2007
Total Population	33,673	100.0%	36,396	100.0%	2,723	8.1%
Whites	31,488	93.5%	33,352	91.6%	1,864	5.9%
African Americans	1,591	4.7%	2,249	6.2%	658	41.4%
American Indians	47	0.1%	104	0.3%	57	121.3%
Asian & Pacific Islander	362	1.1%	372	1.0%	10	2.8%
Mixed Race	185	0.5%	319	0.9%	134	72.4%
Total Population	33,673	100.0%	36,396	100.0%	2,723	8.1%
Hispanics (Any Race)	840	2.5%	1,185	3.3%	345	41.1%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2008.

Burke County estimates show a net loss in total population of 307 (-0.3%) due to job losses leading to the out-migration of residents (Table 9). The County's white population has remained virtually unchanged since July 2007. Burke County's Hispanic population, meanwhile, has increased by 1,356 persons to 4,552 in 2007. Considering that most Hispanics count themselves as "white" according to the US Census Bureau (recall that Hispanics can be any race) and that the white population did not increase between 2000 and 2007, the conclusion can be drawn that over 1,300 white non-Hispanics have left Burke County since 2000.

Table 9.
Burke County Population by Ethnic Group, July 2000-July 2007

Burke County	July 2000 Population	% of 2000 Population	July 2007 Population	% of 2007 Population	Change 2000-2007	% Change 2000-2007
Whites	78,761	88.2%	78,756	88.5%	-5	0.0%
African Americans	6,070	6.8%	5,967	6.7%	-103	-1.7%
American Indians	351	0.4%	430	0.5%	79	22.5%
Asian & Pacific Islander	3,498	3.9%	3,103	3.5%	-395	-11.3%
Mixed Race	602	0.7%	719	0.8%	117	19.4%
Total Population	89,282	100.0%	88,975	100.0%	-307	-0.3%
Hispanics (Any Race)	3,196	3.6%	4,552	5.1%	1,356	42.4%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2008.

African Americans are still the largest minority group in Burke County with an estimated population of 5,967 persons as of July 2007. The African American population, however, has actually declined slightly (103 persons or a 1.7% decrease) over the past seven years. If this trend and the growth in Hispanic population continue at their current pace, it is possible that Hispanics could become the largest minority group in Burke County by 2015.

Burke County's Asian and Pacific Islander population (comprised mostly of Hmong) was the second largest minority group in the County in 2000. As of July 2007 the Asian group is the third largest due to growth in Burke's Hispanic population. Data in Table 9 shows a decline in the Asian population between 2000 and 2007. This estimated decrease in the Asian population is being caused by economic conditions as well as fewer Hmong immigrants to the United States since 2000.

The Census Bureau estimates that **Caldwell County's** population has increased 1,827 persons (2.4%) between 2000 and 2007 (Table 10). About 60% of Caldwell's population growth since 2000 is attributable to gains in the County's Hispanic population. The Hispanic population has risen by 1,093 persons from July 2000 to July 2007.

Table 10.						
Caldwell County Population by Ethnic Group, July 2000-July 2007						
Caldwell County	July 2000 Population	% of 2000 Population	July 2007 Population	% of 2007 Population	Change 2000-2007	% Change 2000-2007
Whites	72,450	93.3%	73,930	93.0%	1,480	2.0%
African Americans	4,270	5.5%	4,287	5.4%	17	0.4%
American Indians	191	0.2%	210	0.3%	19	9.9%
Asian & Pacific Islander	342	0.4%	461	0.6%	119	34.8%
Mixed Race	374	0.5%	566	0.7%	192	51.3%
Total Population	77,627	100.0%	79,454	100.0%	1,827	2.4%
Hispanics (Any Race)	1,945	2.5%	3,038	3.8%	1,093	56.2%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2008.

African Americans currently make up 5.4% of Caldwell County's population and are the largest minority group in the County. Little population growth, however, has occurred in this ethnic group over the past seven years. Caldwell's Asian population has increased from 342 persons in 2000 to 461 in 2007. The second largest percentage increase in population behind Hispanics in Caldwell County is in the "mixed race" group. This population has grown 51.3% since 2000 to 566 persons.

Catawba County's total population increased 9.2% from 142,512 in July 2000 to 155,646 in July 2007 (Table 11). The population increase has been driven by growth in African Americans, Hispanics and white non-Hispanics. About 42% of all population growth in Catawba since 2000 is from Hispanics. The County's Hispanic population has grown 68.4% from 8,007 in 2000 to 13,481 in 2007. In 2007 for the first time, Hispanics became the largest minority group in Catawba County (Figure 11, page 11).

Table 11.						
Catawba County Population by Ethnic Group, July 2000-July 2007						
Catawba County	July 2000 Population	% of 2000 Population	July 2007 Population	% of 2007 Population	Change 2000-2007	% Change 2000-2007
Whites	124,568	87.4%	136,141	87.5%	11,573	9.3%
African Americans	12,089	8.5%	13,241	8.5%	1,152	9.5%
American Indians	405	0.3%	483	0.3%	78	19.3%
Asian & Pacific Islander	4,401	3.1%	4,407	2.8%	6	0.1%
Mixed Race	1,049	0.7%	1,374	0.9%	325	31.0%
Total Population	142,512	100.0%	155,646	100.0%	13,134	9.2%
Hispanics (Any Race)	8,007	5.6%	13,481	8.7%	5,474	68.4%

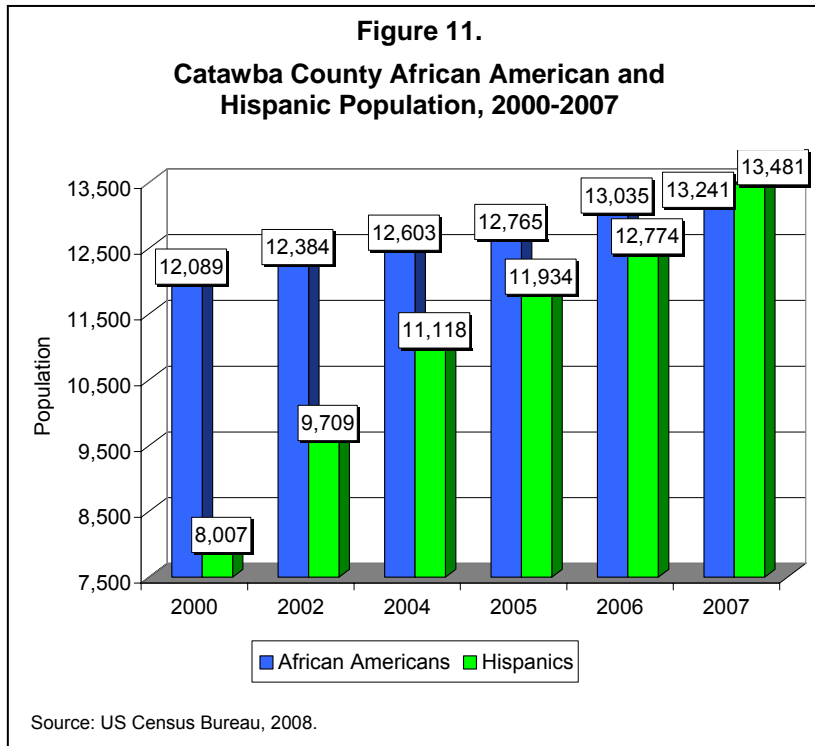
Source: US Census Bureau, 2008.

Hispanics are not the only group experiencing population growth in Catawba County. Based on the difference between total white population growth (11,573) and total Hispanic growth (5,474), it appears that a significant number of white non-Hispanics are moving into Catawba County. These persons most likely are retirees or younger couples.

The African American group is now the second largest minority group in Catawba County. The African American population in the County has grown from 12,089 in 2000 to 13,241 in 2007 (Figure 11). Asian and Pacific Islanders are currently the third largest population group in Catawba County with 4,407 persons. Data in Table 11 show that the Asian population in Catawba County has changed little since 2000.

Summary

The US Census Bureau Population Estimates Program produces estimates by ethnic group for each metro area and county in the United States. The numbers generated by the Estimates Program for the Hickory MSA are probably the best estimates available until the 2010 Census.



In 2007 African Americans were the largest minority in the region with 7.1% of the total population. Hispanics, however, are by far the fastest growing minority group in the Hickory MSA. The number of Hispanics has grown from 13,988 in July 2000 to 22,256 in July 2007. Hispanics are already the largest minority group in Catawba County and could become the largest minority group in the region in 2011 or 2012. It will be interesting to examine how current economic conditions will impact future population estimates of ethnic groups by the Census Bureau.

Subscribe to the best source of economic data for the Greater Hickory Metro – the Economic Indicators Newsletter (EIN)!

The EIN is packed with current financial data and demographic trends tailored to Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba Counties. Recent issues have included:

- **Building Permits & Housing Growth** • **Tourism & Hotel Use Data** • **Retail Sales Data** • **Effects of Hispanic Population Growth on Local Economy** • **Health Insurance in the Hickory Metro** • **Employment, Wage and Inflation Data in the Hickory Metro**
- **“Spotlight” Feature in Each Issue**

✂ Be in the know! Subscribe to the Economic Indicators Newsletter today!

SUBSCRIPTION OPTIONS:

Subscriber: \$50 Yearly (1 COPY PER ISSUE)
Supporter: \$200 Yearly (25 COPIES PER ISSUE)
Sponsor: \$500 Yearly (50 COPIES PER ISSUE)
(Supporters & Sponsors are listed in each issue.)

Contact Name: _____

Company/Organization: _____

Billing Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Economic Indicators Newsletter
 P.O. BOX 9026
 Hickory, NC 28603
 www.westernpiedmontworks.org

Writer Taylor Dellinger, GISP
 taylor.dellinger@wpcog.org

Contributing Editors John T. Kenny, AICP
 John C. Tippet Jr., AICP

Future EIN Topics:

- ✿ Hickory-Morganton-Lenoir MSA Age Group Trends
- ✿ Hickory-Morganton-Lenoir MSA Retail Sales
- ✿ Hickory-Morganton-Lenoir MSA American Community Survey Results

EIN Sustainer



Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board
 An Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

EIN Sponsors



EIN Supporters

