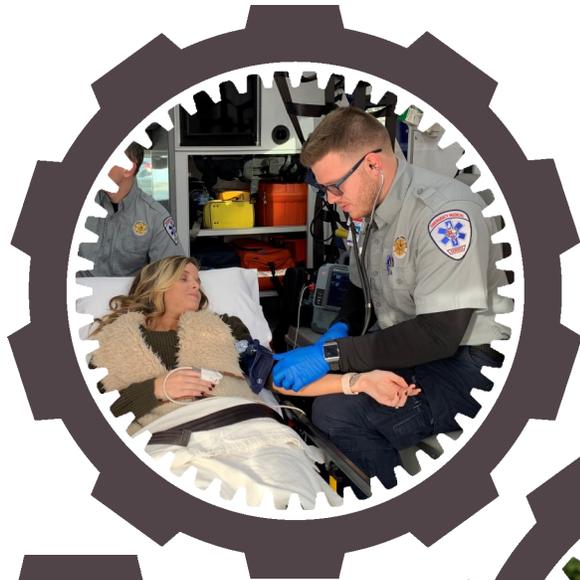


ANNUAL FINANCIAL

HIGHLIGHTS

2019



Fiscal Year Ended
June 30, 2019



catawba county
north carolina

MAKING. LIVING. BETTER.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



C. Randall Isenhower
Chair



Barbara G. Beatty
Vice Chair



Kitty W. Barnes



Sherry E. Butler



Dan A. Hunsucker

INSIDE THIS REPORT

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CONDENSED FINANCIAL STATEMENT

This publication provides you, the public, with an easy-to-read overview of the County’s finances.

The information is derived from the County’s 2019 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). The CAFR includes more detailed information, was prepared in conformance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), and was audited by the County’s independent auditors. The 2019 CAFR is available for review on the County’s website at www.catawbacountync.gov

MANAGEMENT'S MESSAGE

Citizens of Catawba County:

We are pleased to present the 2019 Catawba County Financial Highlights. This report is an opportunity to present the financial activity of Catawba County in an open and transparent manner.

In today's complex world of financial reporting, analyzing financial statements can be a challenge—especially for those without accounting backgrounds. This report was designed to address that issue by providing a recap of your County government's finances in an easy to read format.

The financial statements used in this report are simplified and condensed to reflect financial information regarding Catawba County's government-wide information. The County's government-wide financial statements provide information on revenues, expenses, and net position of Catawba County for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019.

Most of the information in this report is drawn from the financial information appearing in the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2019. The CAFR is a more detailed and complete financial presentation prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and was audited by the County's independent external auditors. While the financial data in this report conforms with GAAP, the statistical, economic and demographic data are taken from various sources and are not necessarily GAAP based. Additional financial information can be found in the CAFR, available at Catawba County public libraries and online at www.catawbacountync.gov/depts/finance/.

If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact the Chief Financial Officer at (828) 465-8210, or write to: Chief Financial Officer, Catawba County, P.O. Box 389, Newton, NC 28658.

Sincerely,



Handwritten signature of Mick Berry in black ink.

Mick Berry
County Manager



Handwritten signature of Robert Miracle in black ink.

Robert Miracle
Assistant County Manager/CFO

CATAWBA COUNTY GOVERNMENT

In 1937, Catawba County became the third county in the State to adopt the council-manager form of government. The Board of Commissioners is comprised of a five-member board elected at large on staggered terms in a countywide election. The Board of Commissioners is the policy-making and legislative authority for the County. It is responsible for adopting the annual budget, approving zoning and planning issues and other matters related to the health and welfare of the County. The Board makes appointments to various boards and commissions and appoints the County Manager.

The County Manager is the Chief Executive Officer and is responsible for enforcement of laws and ordinances, preparation and administration of the annual budget, delivery of services, implementing policies, managing daily operations and appointment of department heads.

Catawba County provides its citizens with a broad range of services that include public safety, environmental protection, health and human services, cultural and recreational programs, community and economic development, and education.

ABOUT CATAWBA COUNTY

Located in a peaceful valley just east of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Catawba County is conveniently located within a 1-hour drive to Charlotte, Asheville, and Winston-Salem, and affords easy access to both Interstate 40 and Highway 321. The County's mid-Atlantic location is halfway between New York and Miami and includes a land of scenic beauty and diverse cultures with a large industrial workforce. Three beautiful lakes are located within its 414 square miles, and the Catawba River winds along its western, northern and eastern border.

Early Catawbans were German and Scotch-Irish, who initially settled in Pennsylvania and migrated to the south when converging factors of crowding and under-employment evolved. The County is named for the river and the Catawba Indians who settled in the valley and welcomed the first German and Scotch-Irish settlers who arrived in 1747.

Catawba County was officially established on December 12, 1842 when Lincoln County was divided by an act of the North Carolina General Assembly. The County has eight cities and towns within its boundaries, and is home to a population of 158,579 residents, which positions it as the 18th largest county in North Carolina and one of the 28 urban counties with population of 100,000 or more.

COUNTY SERVICES

Education

- 28 Catawba County Schools
- 7 Newton-Conover Schools
- 10 Hickory City Schools
- Catawba Valley Community College

Human Services

- Social Services
- Public Health
- Mental Health
- Medical Examiner

Public Safety

- Sheriff
- Emergency Services
- Fire/Rescue Services
- Veterans Services
- Animal Control
- E911/Comm. Center

Economic Development & Planning

- 3 County Parks
- Information Technology
- Planning & Zoning
- Utilities & Engineering
- Facilities

Culture & Recreation

- 7 County Libraries

Environmental Protection

- Cooperative Extension
- Soil & Water Conservation
- Forest Ranger

General Government Administration

- Board of Commissioners
- County Management
- Legal
- Budget
- Tax Assessor/Collector
- Board of Elections
- Human Resources
- Self Insurance
- Register of Deeds
- Finance & Purchasing

Solid Waste Management

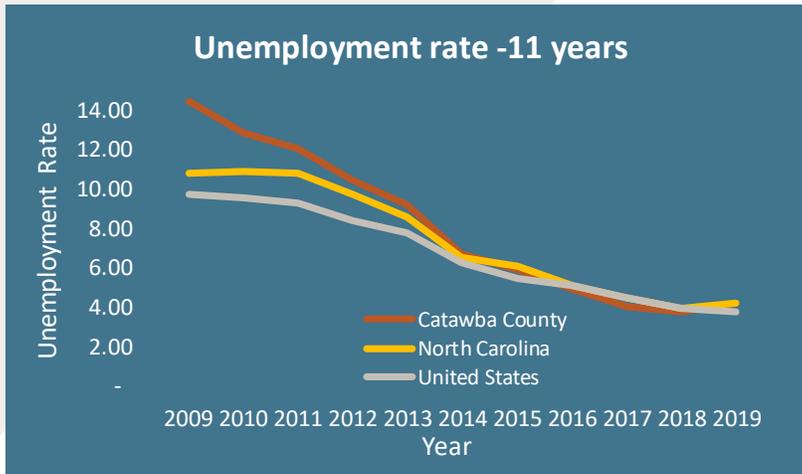
- Blackburn Landfill
- Recycling/Convenience Centers
- Household Hazardous Waste
- Methane Recovery

Water and Sewer

- Water & Sewer Management



ECONOMIC OVERVIEW



Local Economy

Catawba County's unemployment rate, 4.2%, has continued to decline. This unemployment rate is among the lowest in North Carolina, with only 22 of 100 counties having a lower rate.

Economic Development

Targeted efforts have been made to significantly add to the employment opportunities for county citizens, diversify the County's economic base from traditional manufacturing and textiles, and increase the tax base.

- **Corning Optical Communications**, a worldwide provider of fiber optic communication solutions, plans to build a new cable manufacturing facility in Hickory with a \$60 million investment and creating 110 new jobs.
- **Isotopen Technologiien Munchen AG (ITM)**, a group of specialized radiopharmaceutical companies announced plans to construct a new manufacturing facility for the production of a new generation of targeted radiopharmaceuticals for the treatment of cancer patients. ITM plans to create 37 jobs and invest \$17 million.
- **Shurtape Technologies, LLC**, an industry leading manufacturer and marketer of adhesive tape and office products, plans to construct a new distribution and manufacturing facility in the

Town of Catawba. The company plans to invest \$31.4 million and create 100 new jobs.

- **Design Foundry, LLC**, plans to invest \$3.1 million in building renovations and machinery and create 202 new jobs.
- **Star Snax**, a premier manufacturer of branded private label, better-for-you tortilla chips, is expanding its facilities investing \$5.8 million and creating 40 new jobs.

While Catawba County's economy is built upon a large industrial base, growth in several key sectors has resulted in a more balanced economic composition today than what existed a decade ago.

For more than a decade, the County has been a leader in the manufacture and development of fiber optics and telecommunications equipment, producing approximately 50% of the world's supply of fiber optic cable and providing significant employment opportunities for County residents.

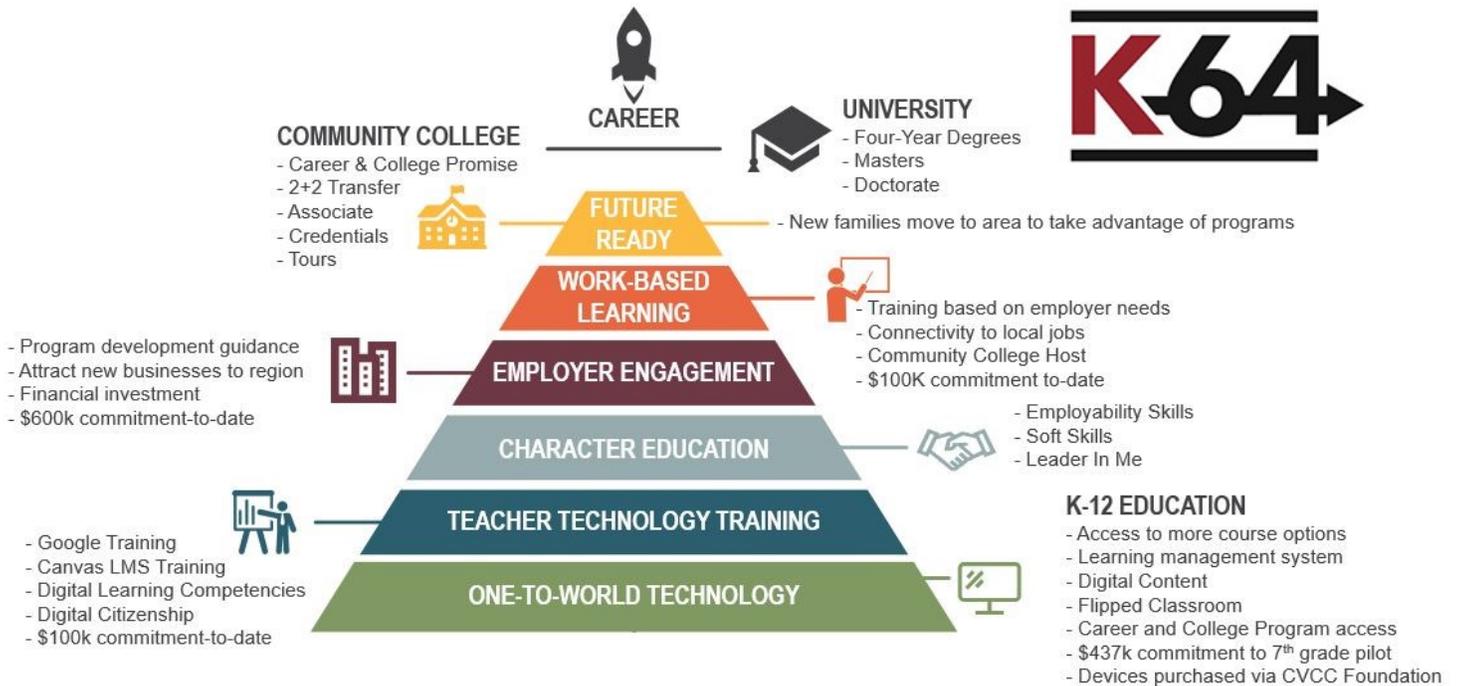
Deliberately Driving Workforce Development

Catawba County has made significant strides in preparing its workforce with the skills to meet current and future labor needs of local employers. Programs have been designed to target high-school students as well as college-aged students and adult learners to ensure the County's workforce is poised to help local businesses thrive. Several key initiative include:

2019

Top 10 Employers

- Catawba County Schools
- Catawba Valley Medical Center
- Corning Optical Communications
- CommScope
- GKN Driveline Newton
- Catawba County Government
- Dip Partner Frye
- Wal-Mart Associates
- Target Stores Div.
- Century Furniture



K-64

K-64 is a systemic approach to shaping future careers and meeting workforce demands by connecting students and employers throughout the educational curriculum. K-64 increases student and employer engagement in educational programs proven to prepare a qualified workforce by collaborating with employers to align courses of study with workforce needs, connecting students to real-world careers and related curriculum choices from early on, and empowering adults to enhance employability in a dynamic work environment.

Catawba County Promise

In September 2018, **Lenoir-Rhyne University** announced an innovative, new program to provide a minimum of 50 percent off tuition for any first-year undergraduate student with a 3.5 or higher high school GPA who is a Catawba County resident or to a transfer undergraduate student from Catawba County with more than 30 attempted hours from an accredited college and a 3.5 GPA. The program will reward local high school and transfer



students who have a B+ average with a guaranteed—and significant—minimum level of financial aid.





Manufacturing Solutions Center (MSC)

A branch of Catawba Valley Community College (CVCC), MSC is focused on helping manufacturers increase sales, and improve product quality and production efficiency. To assist manufacturers in increasing sales, MSC develops marketing materials, identifies new or expanded export opportunities, and positions companies to market products at trade shows. MSC brings all of the resources needed to launch a product together, under one umbrella. This combination of expertise and equipment has enabled the development of innovative products such as wearable technology that measures and regulates blood circulation, delivers active ingredients to the skin through fabric and integrated QR codes in the material so it can be scanned and tracked through the production process.

The MSC has helped over 1,000 entrepreneurs and worked with companies in all 50 states and 32 countries to conduct product testing or prototyping, or to find domestically-produced production inputs.

Medical

The County is home to a prospering medical and healthcare community and two large medical centers.

Catawba Valley Medical Center (CVMC) is the largest not-for-profit community hospital in the region. While technically owned by the Catawba County, CVMC is completely self-supporting. Based on the quality and consistency of medical care provided, CVMC has recently received multiple awards:

- Women's Choice Award—America's Best Hospitals for Orthopedics (each yr. 2013-16; 2018-19)
- Women's Choice Award—America's Best Hospitals in Obstetrics (2013-19)
- Women's Choice Award—America's Best Hospitals in Cancer Care (2016-19)
- American Nurses Credentialing Center—Magnet Designation (2018)
- The Joint Commission Top Performer Quality Measures in Heart Attack, Pneumonia, Surgical Care, Stroke and Perinatal Care





Education

Catawba County has 44 public schools across three school systems with approximately 23,000 combined students. For 2018, the average 4-year graduation rate for the three systems increased to over 90 percent, exceeding the statewide rate of 86.5 percent. Individually, **Newton-Conover City Schools** had the highest graduation rate in the State for the 3rd consecutive year at over 94 percent, **Catawba County Schools'** rate was over 89 percent, and **Hickory Public Schools'** was over 87 percent.

Long Term Financial Planning

The Board of Commissioners adopted a strategic plan aimed at enhancing and promoting the County's quality of life in order to attract working-age families and to continue to grow the economy. In the coming years, the County will continue to focus on anticipating future service pressures and delivering responsive services to the community.

In looking towards the future, the strategic plan invests in services and infrastructure related to many of the 10 major focus areas as well as general service needs. Some of the highlights of these investments include:

- Education (K-64)
- Economic Development
- Health & Safety
- Housing
- Arts & Culture
- Water & Sewer
- Parks
- Broadband
- Branding & Marketing



Catawba Valley Community College (CVCC), offers over 60 programs of study

with one and two-year degree programs, a two-year college transfer program and continuing education classes. CVCC was recognized as 1 of only 4 of the 58 community colleges, in the State, to achieve Excellence Level on 4 or more of the 8 performance measures for student success.



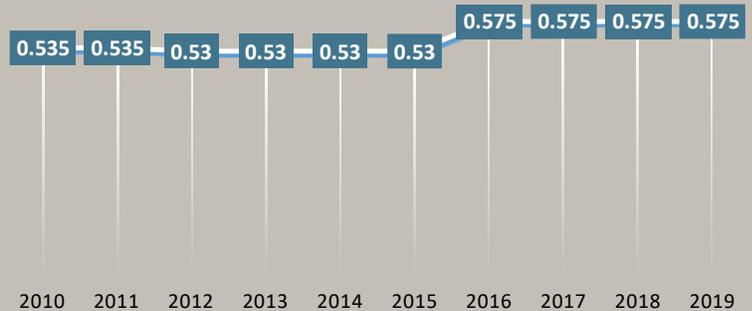
2019 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS (Revenues/Expenses)

REVENUES - Monies the County receives from a variety of sources to provide services to citizens.

Local governments rely heavily on tax revenues for operating governmental and business-type activities. Catawba County is no exception, 75% of the total operating revenue is attributed to taxes, which consist mainly of property tax and sales tax.

- Property tax, the County's largest single revenue source, accounted for \$107.8 million or 51% of governmental revenue. The property tax rate of \$.575 for every \$100 of value is below the State average of \$0.6786 making Catawba County's tax rate the 22nd lowest of all 100 counties in North Carolina.
- Sales and other taxes accounted for \$41.0 million or 20% of revenue. Catawba County remains a retail magnet. In 2019, taxable sales increased by 4%, on top of a healthy 9% increase the year before. Shopping in Catawba County helps support local business and keeps property taxes low.

PROPERTY TAX RATES



EXPENSES - Monies the County spends to provide services.

The County incurs a number of expense to provide a variety of quality services to its citizens. Expenses increased by \$4.9M from the prior year. Public Safety increased \$1.8M as the County added additional patrol and EMS personnel. Other significant variances include: (a) Human Services increase of \$1.5M, (b) \$1.4M increase in Economic and Physical Development, and (c) \$1.8M in the business -type activities as construction of the water sewer lines continues and construction of a new cell at the solid waste facility begins.

| | 2019 | 2018 | 2017 |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| ALL FUNDS | | | |
| Assets and Deferred Outflows | \$ 466,042,334 | \$ 465,432,377 | \$ 433,653,162 |
| Liabilities and Deferred Inflows | <u>251,998,564</u> | <u>260,002,987</u> | <u>225,033,238</u> |
| Net Position | \$ 214,043,770 | \$ 205,429,390 | \$ 208,619,924 |
| REVENUES | | | |
| Governmental Activities | \$ 197,610,111 | \$ 188,333,204 | \$ 189,403,207 |
| Business-type Activities | <u>12,001,079</u> | <u>10,506,570</u> | <u>8,620,651</u> |
| Total | \$ 209,611,190 | \$ 198,839,774 | \$ 198,023,858 |
| EXPENSES | | | |
| Governmental Activities | \$ 191,209,490 | \$ 188,105,599 | \$ 182,578,388 |
| Business-type Activities | <u>9,787,320</u> | <u>7,929,946</u> | <u>7,649,047</u> |
| Total | \$ 200,996,810 | \$ 196,035,545 | \$ 190,227,435 |
| CAPITAL ASSETS - net of depreciation | | | |
| Governmental Activities | \$ 139,105,513 | \$ 130,025,133 | \$ 122,258,095 |
| Business-type Activities | <u>72,539,992</u> | <u>70,231,993</u> | <u>67,731,181</u> |
| Total | \$ 211,645,505 | \$ 200,257,126 | \$ 189,989,276 |
| LONG-TERM DEBT OUTSTANDING | | | |
| Governmental Activities | \$ 175,393,380 | \$ 189,593,688 | \$ 159,727,269 |
| Business-type Activities | <u>8,012,447</u> | <u>9,275,503</u> | <u>10,528,106</u> |
| Total | \$ 183,405,827 | \$ 198,869,191 | \$ 170,255,375 |

2019 Top 10 Taxpayers (15% of the assessed value)

- Apple, Inc.
- Duke Energy Carolinas
- GKN Driveline Newton
- Corning Cable Systems
- CommScope, Inc.
- Draka Comteq Americas, Inc.
- Target Corporation
- DPL Frye Regional Medical Center, LLC
- Piedmont Natural Gas Co.
- ZF Chassis Components

2019 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS (Net Position/Capital Assets)

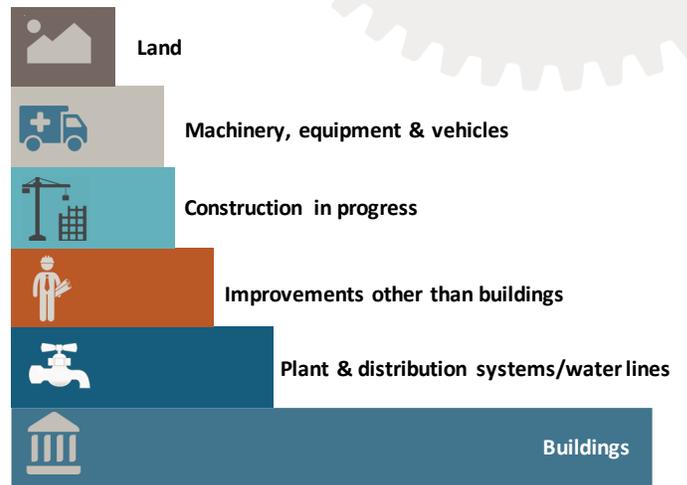
| | 2019 | 2018 | 2017 |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| NET POSITION - Primary Government | | | |
| Invested in capital assets | \$ 167,539,957 | \$ 163,888,226 | \$ 149,381,797 |
| Restricted | 47,104,886 | 26,520,247 | 32,848,390 |
| Unrestricted | (601,073) | 15,020,917 | 26,390,737 |
| Total Net Position | \$ 214,043,770 | \$ 205,429,390 | \$ 208,620,924 |

The difference between revenues and expenses/transfers represent the Change in Net Position. One of the most important questions asked about the County's finances is, "Is the County, as a whole, better off as a result of the past year's activities?" The Statement of Net Position presents information on of the County assets, deferred outflow of resources, liabilities, and deferred inflows of resource with the difference reported as net position.

As of June 30, 2019, the County's net position totaled \$214M. The three components of net position are:

- The largest component, approximately \$168M or 78%, represents the County's **investment in capital assets** less any related debt used to construct or acquire those assets. The County uses these capital assets to provide services to citizens, consequently, they are not available for future spending.
- The second component, **restricted net position**, represents resources that are subject to external restrictions on how they may be used. External restrictions include those imposed by grantors, regulators, or restrictions imposed by legislation. Total restricted net position is approximately 22%.
- The final component of net position is **unrestricted**, which is (.3%) of the total net position. Unrestricted net position consists of resources that the County may use to meet its ongoing obligations to citizens and creditors. Because the County funds school capital needs through long-term borrowing but does not carry the resulting assets on the financial statements, we report a deficit in unrestricted net position.

Catawba County's Total Capital Assets (net of depreciation)



Catawba County continues strategic investments in the high priority areas of education, public safety, economic development and quality of life. These assets include land, buildings, infrastructure, machinery & equipment and vehicles.

As of June 30, 2019, the County's capital assets (net of depreciation) totaled \$211.6M an increase of \$11.4M over the prior year.

- Purchase of new public safety vehicles including ambulances
- Improvements to branch libraries
- Increase in construction in progress for the jail expansion and new parks
- Construction of water and sewer infrastructure
- Construction of new landfill cells and equipment

Below are highlights of a few major projects in progress or completed in fiscal year 2019.



WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS CENTER - CVCC

Opened early 2019, the 83,000 square-foot facility created state-of-the-art classrooms and laboratory spaces to teach advanced manufacturing skills and other technical skills. Along with housing K-64 administration, it houses technology and engineering programs, including Computer Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Computer Integrated Machining, Electronics Engineering, Automotive Systems Technology, Welding, Mechanical Engineering, Mechatronics and Robotics, and Heating/Ventilation & Air Conditioning.



JAIL EXPANSION

It is the County's responsibility, as required by State law, to house all inmates. A 320-bed expansion is currently under construction to expand the detention center in Newton to meet current and future needs.

MOUNTAIN CREEK PARK

Planning has begun for the development of a new County Park. Developed over several phases, when complete the 588-acre site will include amenities such as canoe portage, pickleball courts, adventure playground, picnic shelters, hiking trails, and multi-use buildings.



RIVERBEND PARK EXPANSION

Summer 2019, The County dedicated an additional 209 acres expansion to Riverbend Park, bringing the park total to 659 acres. The addition adds seven miles of trails to the 12 miles that already exist.



LONG-TERM DEBT OBLIGATIONS

The County's large capital improvement projects normally require long-term financing. The outstanding debt obligations consist of the following purposes: Education, Public Safety Jail Expansion, Water & Sewer Projects, Economic Development Data Center and new County Park.

As of June 30, 2019, the County's long-term debt totaled \$183.4M, an decrease of \$15.4M over prior year.

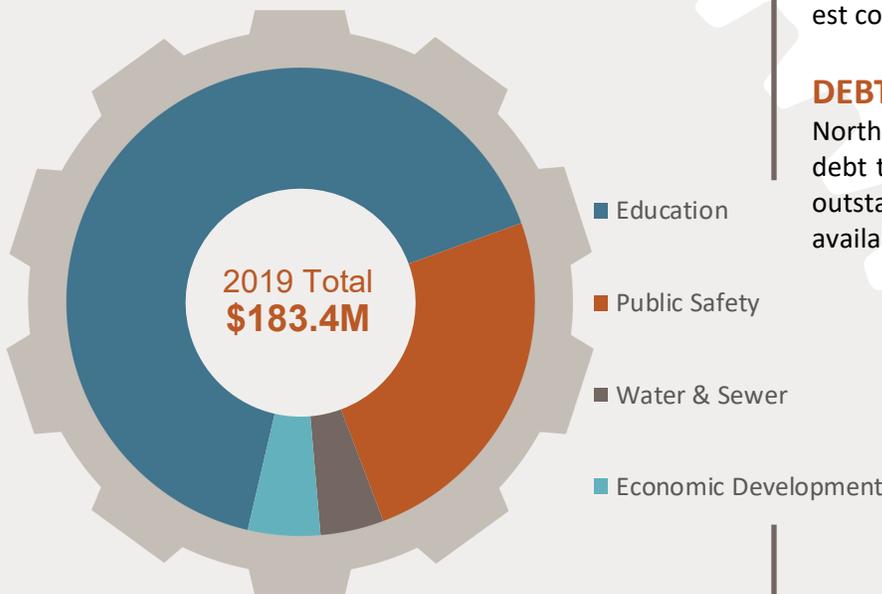
BOND RATING

The County obtains a credit rating or evaluation of its credit-worthiness by an independent rating agency. Standard and Poor's maintained the Catawba County's general obligation debt bond rating of AA+, for the 2nd consecutive year. Also, for the tenth consecutive year, the County maintained its Aa1 bond rating from Moody's Investor Service.

AA+

This stable bond rating is a clear indication of the sound fiscal condition of the County, keeping interest costs low on the County's outstanding debt.

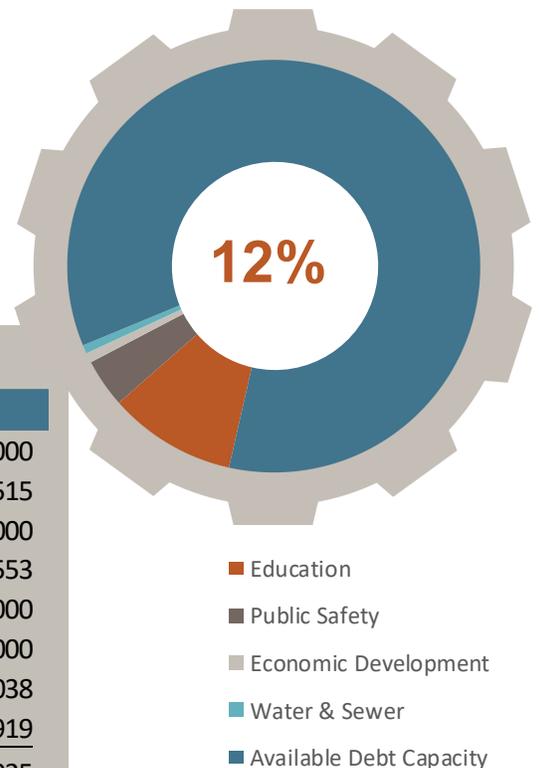
Uses of Outstanding Debt 2019



DEBT CAPACITY

North Carolina general statutes limit the amount of debt that a unit can issue. The County's total debt outstanding of \$183.4M is 12% of the legal debt available by general statute.

2019 County Debt Capacity

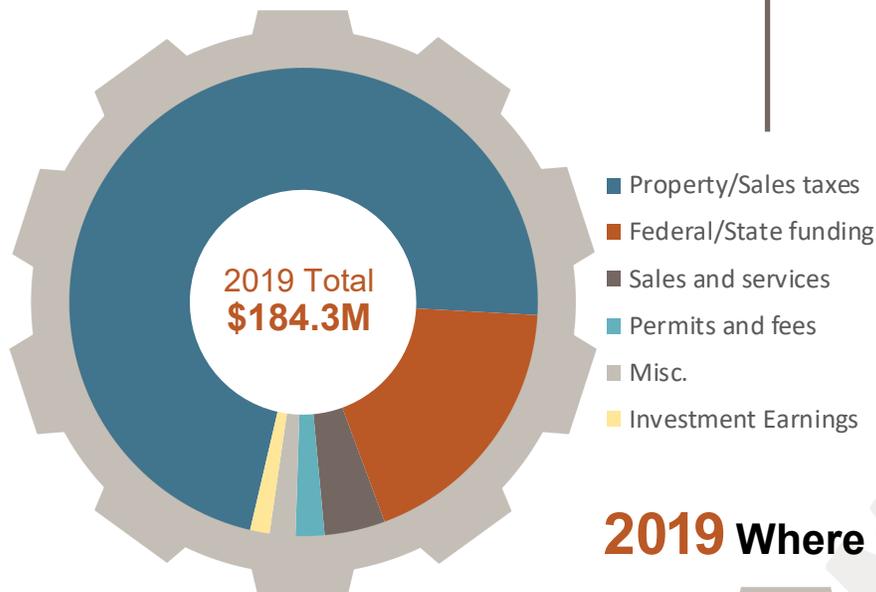


| | 2019 | 2018 | 2017 |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| TOTAL DEBT OUTSTANDING - Primary Government | | | |
| Certificate of Participation | \$ 6,015,000 | \$ 7,115,000 | \$ 8,245,000 |
| Installment Purchases | 62,808,302 | 70,527,799 | 78,263,515 |
| Qualified Zone Academy Bonds | 150,000 | 200,000 | 250,000 |
| Qualified School Const. Bonds | 27,808,553 | 27,808,553 | 27,808,553 |
| Limited Obligation Bonds | 75,730,000 | 80,960,000 | 47,115,000 |
| Federal Revolving Loan | 825,000 | 900,000 | 975,000 |
| NC Department of Commerce | 1,070,988 | 1,590,784 | 210,038 |
| Premium on long-term debt | 8,997,984 | 9,767,055 | 5,497,919 |
| Total Debt Outstanding | \$ 183,405,827 | \$ 198,869,191 | \$ 168,365,025 |

The General Fund is the primary operating fund of the County and supports the regular day-to-day operations. This fund captures the general revenues and expenditures of primary governmental activities including education, public safety, human services, parks, libraries and general government. Unlike the information presented earlier, which focused on the government as a whole, the General Fund is presented using a current resources focus (amounts to be collected or paid in the near term).

In 2019, the General Fund expenditures of \$173 million were lower than budget by \$17.7 million. This conservative approach to spending is a hallmark of the County.

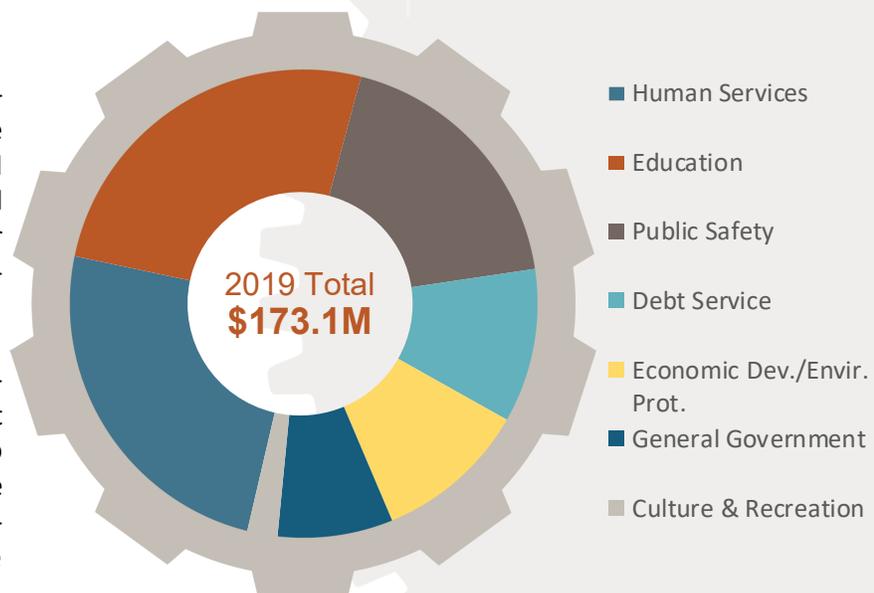
2019 Where the Money Comes From



2019 Where the Money Goes

Property and Sales Tax represent the most significant source of revenue for the General Fund representing 72% of the total revenue collected. Other major sources of revenue, in the General Fund, are shown above.

Once the County collects revenues, the funds must be spent efficiently to provide services to citizens and businesses. The General Fund finances the regular day-to-day operations of the County.



FUND BALANCE (General Fund)

2019 Fund Balance



Fund Balance is the difference between what is owned (assets) and what is owed (liabilities).

At June 30, 2019, the ending fund balance of the General Fund was \$89.6M.

Of this fund balance, \$41.9M is available for spending at the Board's discretion (referred to as unassigned fund balance.) The Board of Commissioners have determined that the County should maintain an available fund balance of at least 16% of general fund expenditures. This equates to 2 months of operating expenditures in case of unforeseen needs or opportunities, in addition to meeting the cash flow needs of the County. The County has consistently exceeded this goal.

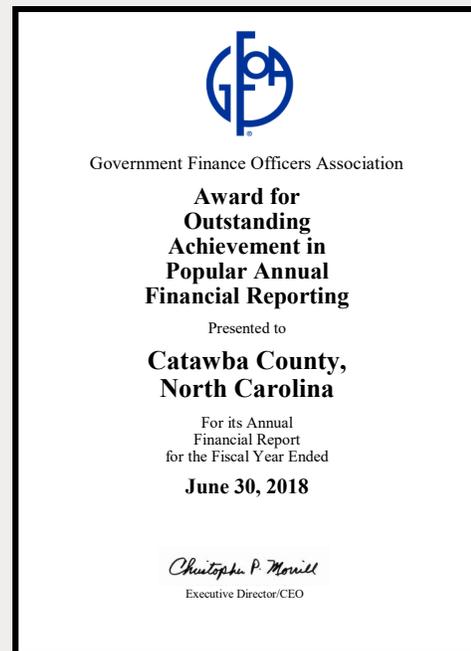
For FY19, the County has available fund balance of 39.29% of total general fund expenditures.

Awards and Achievements

Catawba County is known across the nation as the home of an innovative county government. Our innovation is reflected in numerous awards. These awards are won in completion with thousands of other outstanding programs across the state and nation. Here are several of the most significant awards for FY2019.

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) of the United States and Canada has give an **Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting** to Catawba County for is Annual Financial Highlights report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2018. This is a prestigious national award recognizing conformance with the highest standards for preparation of state and local government popular reports. Catawba County has received this award for the past eleven years.

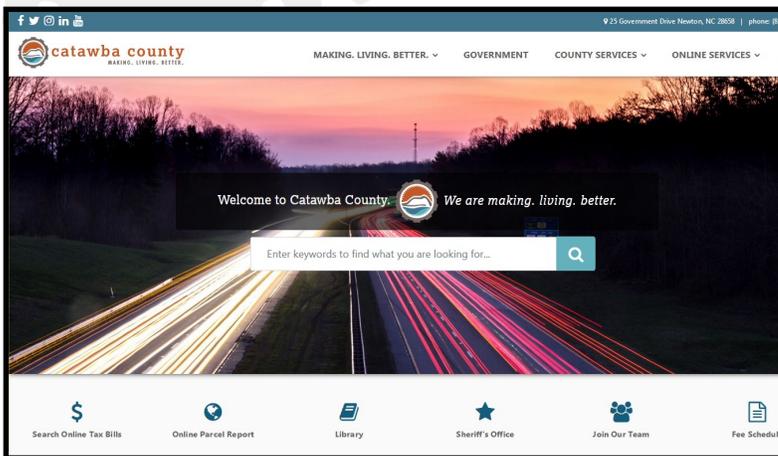
The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) of the United States and Canada presented the Finance Office the **Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting** for the creation of an easily readable and understandable comprehensive annual financial report covering all funds



AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS

and financial transactions. This is the 37th consecutive year in which Catawba County has received the award.

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) of the United States and Canada presented the Budget Office the **Distinguished Budget Presentation Award** for the development of an easily understood budget document which can be used by other government units or the average citizen. This is the 30th consecutive year in which Catawba County has received the award.



The County's website is an excellent source for information about County policies, services and events 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Find information on employment opportunities, community events, Board of Commissioner agendas, meeting hours, tax information and much more.

Visit Catawba County's Official Website
www.catawbacountync.gov



My Catawba County Mobile App

Log on to take advantage of many online services:

- Pay a tax bill
- Search the County library catalog
- Pay permit fee
- Review your property information
- Sign up for community alert system
- Use the online deed search
- Subscribe to the County newsletter
- Find the County on Facebook
- Follow Catawba County on Twitter
- Sign up for RSS feeds
- Access County forms...and more!



Finance Department

For more information on financial matters of Catawba County, please call the Finance Department at (828) 465-8210.



ABOUT THE COVER

Making. Living. Better.

- *Making* refers to the community's legacy as makers and doers: we make things happen.
- *Living* refers to quality of life: we enjoy our location, our amenities, and our people.
- *Better* refers to the community's 'can do' spirit; we work together to make a difference.

That story is enhanced by a graphic logo that visually represents many of these same themes:

- The *outer circle* resembles a gear, which symbolized Catawba County's legacy as makers and doers.
- The *inner circle* resembles a second gear, because two gears working together drive things forward. This represents Catawba County's collaborative spirit.
- The *nature scene*, with the foothills and the river, creates a sense of place for the County and symbolized its good quality of life.
- The *foothill* is an outline of Bakers Mountain, the highest and most visible peak in the County, and the *water* represents the Catawba River—two natural assets that speak to the County's remarkable outdoors.

Catawba County, North Carolina
Popular Annual Financial Report
Year Ended June 30, 2019

