



LAURENS COUNTY
Development Corporation

SOUTH CAROLINA, USA

2020

*Year
in
Review*

A NOTE FROM THE TEAM

What a year. Even with the many unexpected challenges and roadblocks that came along with the Covid-19 pandemic, the Laurens County Development Corporation (LCDC) continued to grow and prosper. We are extremely proud to report that, despite pandemic setbacks, capital investment and job creation for 2020 in Laurens County exceeded those of the previous year. Over \$56 million in capital investment and over 200 new jobs in Laurens County were announced. There are also many product development initiatives underway going into 2021.



We have plenty of reasons to celebrate, but there is much work to be done. In 2019, LCDC launched a strategic planning process, employing the consulting team at Ernst & Young (EY, formerly Avalanche Consulting). For the latter part of 2019 and into the spring of 2020, EY engaged nearly 600 stakeholders through interviews; focus groups; a community survey; and workshops with a 28-member Steering Committee, the Laurens County Council, and a broader community leaders' group. It has been a challenge to build upon the momentum from early 2020, having to go fully virtual in our meeting efforts, and in turn delaying the rollout of the plan, but we are going full speed ahead into our implementation phase now in 2021. Our hope through the strategy is to align our work with multiple partner organizations and together elevate economic growth and prosperity in Laurens County to its utmost potential.

We greatly appreciate your support, and we look forward to the opportunities that the future holds for our Community.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Coleman
President/CEO

Lynn Finley
Vice President

Whitney Lagrange
Director of Marketing

STAFF

2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



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Laurens Electric Cooperative
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City of Clinton

Dr. Ameca Thomas
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Rusty Denning
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2020 ANNOUNCEMENTS

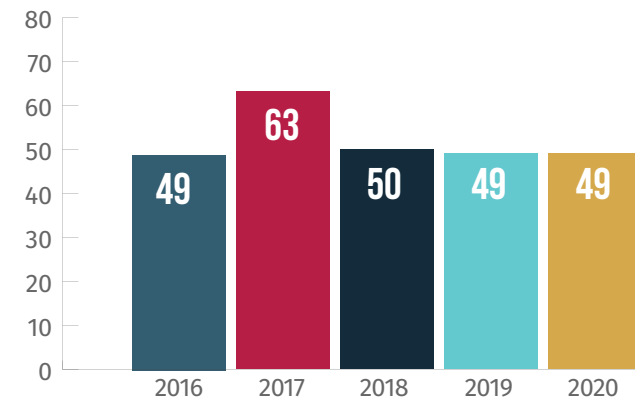
200
Total Jobs

\$56,970,000
Total Investment

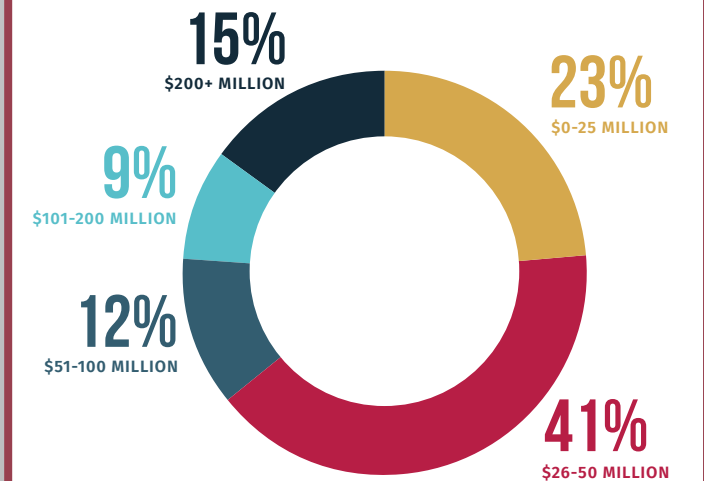
COMPANY	NEW OR EXPANSION	# OF JOBS	TOTAL INVESTMENT
Alupress	Expansion	79	\$20,570,000
Meiden America Switchgear	New	41	\$8,000,000
Pine Gate Renewables	New	0	\$11,700,000
CCL Label	Expansion	0	\$5,000,000
Setterstix Corporation	New	80	\$11,700,000

GROWING LAURENS COUNTY

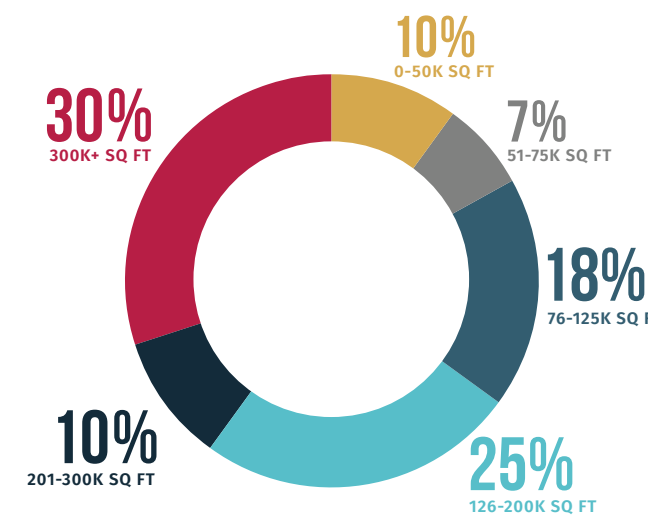
2020 RFIs



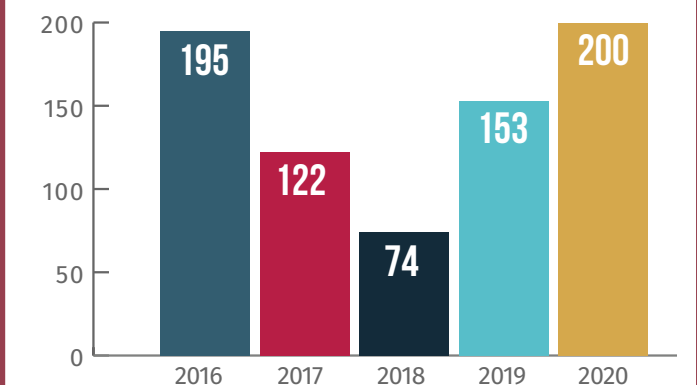
2020 CAP X



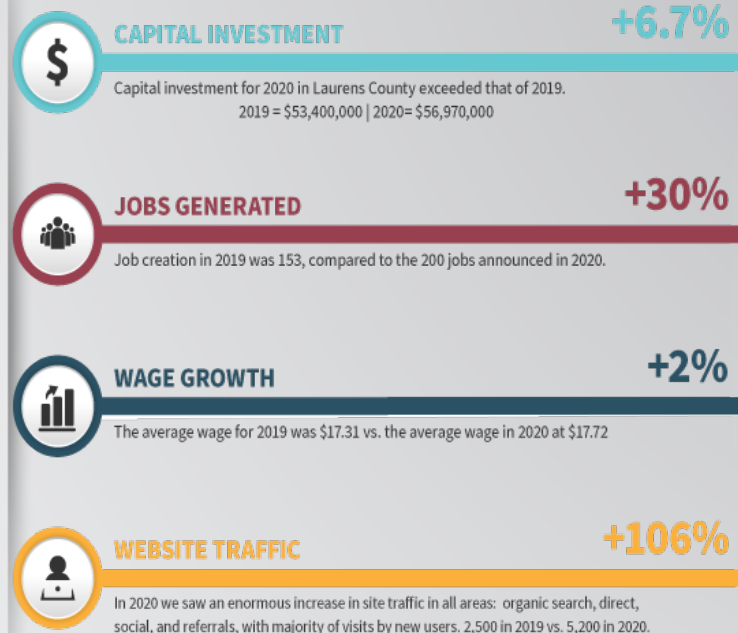
PROJECT SIZE BUILDINGS



2020 JOBS



2019



2020

GROWING LAURENS COUNTY

WELCOME NEW INDUSTRY

MEIDEN AMERICA SWITCHGEAR

In April 2020, Japan-based Meidensha Corporation opened its new Meiden America Switchgear manufacturing facility in Laurens County. The company, with an investment of \$8 million and the creation of 41 new jobs, expanded their operation to an existing facility in Gray Court. Utilizing green solutions such as solar power and lighting, Meiden America Switchgear produces high voltage vacuum circuit breakers.



SETTERSTIX CORPORATION



Setterstix Corporation (Setterstix) announced plans in November 2020 to establish operations in Laurens County. The more than \$11.7 million investment is expected to create 80 new jobs. Founded in 1938, Setterstix, a paper stick manufacturer, manufactures and ships more than 17 billion paper sticks throughout the United States, Canada and overseas every year.

The company manufactures paper sticks for candy, cotton swabs, health care and novelty items. The existing facility, located in Fountain Inn, will increase the company's manufacturing and shipping capabilities, which will allow growth into international markets. They are expected to be up and running by February.

WEAR IT SC

LCDC partnered with the Laurens County Chamber of Commerce to promote the SC Chamber of Commerce's #WearItSC campaign, attempting to slow the spread of Covid-19. A complete media kit was provided to the public, including social media messaging, images, videos, as well as signs to print to promote mask wearing and social distancing.

Laurens County elected officials, leaders, and others also banded together to provide a strong, unified county message. Appearing in videos and images, these local leaders and representatives encouraged the community to do its part in keeping Laurens County safe.

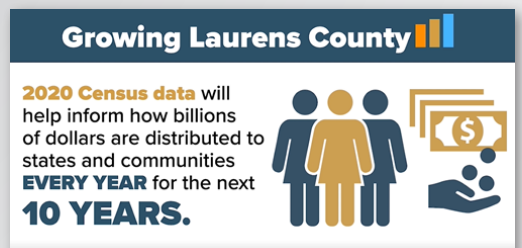
Due to a rise in Covid-19 cases, LCDC is once again partnering with the Chamber and community leaders on an updated campaign called "Fight the Spread". This latest campaign includes all the same components as before--community messaging, social media images/posts, videos, billboards, business signage, and more.



2020 CENSUS



LCDC partnered with other community organizations and leaders to push the crucial message that taking part in the 2020 Census count would help Laurens County prosper. Along with schools, highways, support for firefighters and families in need, and so much more, an accurate census count also strongly contributes to economic development. Municipalities and private developers use the data when deciding where to build facilities that can bring jobs and retail opportunities to communities, and more. Laurens County's final self-response rate to the decennial census was 58.2%.



INITIATIVES & PROGRAMS

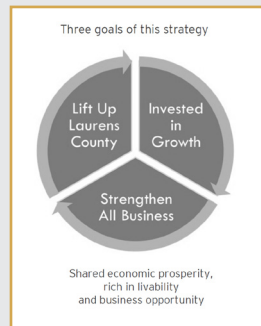
 STRATEGIC PLANNING



In late 2019, we began a strategic planning process to create a unified vision for economic development in Laurens County. Guided by national economic development strategists, Ernst & Young (EY—formerly Avalanche Consulting), this plan will help create this vision by identifying our top economic development opportunities and developing an action plan for increasing economic growth and prosperity over the next five years.



The first phase was the Discovery Phase and involved widespread community participation—through a county-wide survey, several focus groups, stakeholder interviews, as well as forming a steering committee. In quarter one of 2020, community leaders as well as our steering committee gathered and EY presented the key themes that arose out of the Discovery Phase. They presented ideas on target industries, which later included open discussion with a more widespread group of representatives from the community. From these meetings and workshops, goals related to each of the themes were developed, followed by the creation of specific actions to achieve said goals.



At the arrival of the pandemic in early March, our hope was to put only a brief hold on the rollout of the strategy. But as its impact continued throughout the summer (and beyond), we made the decision to delay the rollout until further notice. Because of this hold/delay, in September, the LCDC team—with guidance from the EY consulting team—began activating a short-term implementation plan to hone in on high priority elements within the plan, while identifying ways to educate and engage core partners in refining their future roles.

While the staff continues to work on these high-priority items within the short-term implementation plan, they are also working to put together implementation teams for when all parties and partners will be able to participate fully. In early 2021, the LCDC will be forming these implementation teams, and continue onward in the planning process.

 PRIME AVAILABLE BUILDINGS



CONNEXIAL CENTER SPEC BUILDING
GRAY COURT, SC 29645 | **150,660** SqFt
For Sale \$7,920,000 | Lease \$3.50 to \$10.00/sqft/year



101 MICHELIN RD.
LAURENS, SC 29360 | **1,170,972** SqFt
For Sale \$46,000,000 | Lease \$3.45/sqft/year



CLINTON SPEC BUILDING
CLINTON, SC 29325 | **60,000** SqFt
For Sale \$3,000,000



400 S. NELSON DRIVE
FOUNTAIN INN, SC 29644 | **68,500** SqFt
For Sale \$5,200,000 | Lease \$1.00 to \$6.00/sqft/year

COMPLETED IN 2020: THE CONNEXIAL CENTER SPEC BUILDING

Laurens County's newest industrial park, the Connexial Center, was announced in March of 2018. Work began in February 2019 on Phase I. The 150K+ sq ft speculative building was recently completed in 2020 and has drummed up tremendous prospect interest already, as well as other parcels in the park. LCDC, Laurens Electric Cooperative, Inc., & SC Power Team are the development partners for the Connexial Center.

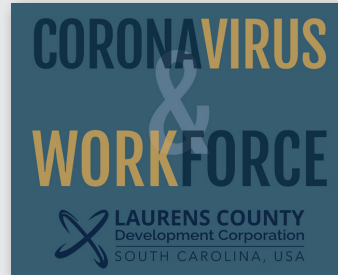


COVID-19

INDUSTRY & WORKFORCE

IMPACT ON INDUSTRY

Other than a small few in other sectors, most of our manufacturers outside of the automotive area held up well. Our LCDC team worked hard to assist these local industries and were in continual contact as well as providing resources. We created a "Coronavirus and Workforce" resources section on our website, as well as an online forum/discussion board for industry leaders to communicate and share information with each other. Several Laurens County industries and suppliers were fortunate to have strong business conditions amidst the pandemic.



At a glance:

- Our local labor market has steadied after an unemployment spike in May due to Covid-19.
- The Unemployment rate went to 14.4%, but has come back down to currently 4.2% (was at 3.1% before the pandemic)
- We have several companies in the County hiring currently, which has been a constant.
- We see the market continuing its steady climb with increasing job growth and increasing population growth in the community.

INDUSTRIES ANSWERING THE CALL

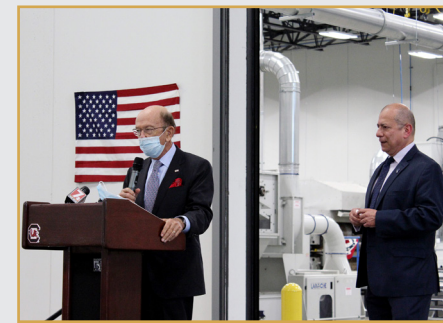
Several Laurens County businesses and industries answered the call for much-needed medical supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE) starting in the first days of the coronavirus pandemic. These industries and their contributions were highlighted in the media, across our social media platforms, and included as news features on our website. These businesses and industries have been a critical part of our nation's response in preventing the spread of the coronavirus and we are proud that they call Laurens County home.



COVID-19

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

LCDC was honored to be invited to meet Governor Henry McMaster and US Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross in June 2020 at Fibertex Nonwovens in Gray Court. Governor McMaster and Secretary Ross were visiting Upstate SC to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on business and industry. Since Fibertex was one of several industries manufacturing products to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, they chose to make the

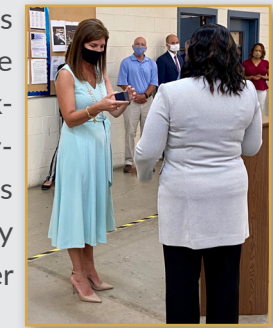


plant one of their stops. After applying PPE, the Governor and Secretary reviewed some displays of products, took tours of production lines in two facilities, and then gave remarks. In conclusion of the visit, Governor McMaster presented the plant with the South Carolina Seal. We are proud that Fibertex received this recognition, and we were honored to have these special guests visit our county.

In August, Lt. Governor Pamela Evette visited Jostens in Laurens, and the LCDC team was invited along. Lt. Governor Evette toured a few places in upstate SC to discuss how companies acted quickly to ensure proper procedures during COVID-19 to keep their workforce working. Because Jostens was one of the first companies during the pandemic to shift production to manufacturing PPE and helping to slow the spread of COVID-19, she chose to make the plant one of her stops. Led by plant manager Nickey Reddix, Lt. Gov Evette reviewed product displays, and learned about



the typical products made by Jostens, as well as the new PPE being produced. She was then led by Reddix and other Jostens leadership on a tour of the facility, gave remarks thanking Jostens and all employees for their efforts, and was presented a special ring by Jostens, commemorating her visit.



INDUSTRY & WORKFORCE



INVESTORS

To accomplish much of what was done in 2020, we want to **acknowledge** and **thank** our Investors who supplement our marketing and recruitment budget on an annual basis.

PARTNER LEVEL



ADVOCATE LEVEL



SUPPORTER LEVEL

BL Harbert International
 Bunnell-Lammons Engineering, Inc.
 Carlisle Associates, Inc.
 Carolina Power
 Carroll Daniel Construction Co.

Harper General Contractors
 Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd
 Hipp Engineering & Consulting
 Marcus Cook Farms
 MCA Architecture

McMillan Pazdan Smith Architects
 Miller HVAC
 Mumford Industries
 Pattillo Construction
 S&ME, Inc.

Synovus Bank
 Terracon Consultants
 Thomas Mechanical
 Windsor Aughtry Company

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