

# Pfeiffer

UNIVERSITY

As president of Pfeiffer University, it is my pleasure to welcome the readers of *Business North Carolina* to Stanly County – known for our beautiful Uwharrie Mountains, Morrow Mountain State Park, and hardworking, caring people who are a cornerstone of North Carolina’s piedmont.

Founded in 1885, Pfeiffer University is blessed to be anchored in Stanly County – with campuses in the northern village of Misenheimer and in the county seat of Albemarle. Business leaders, physician assistants, occupational therapists, nurses, teachers, local restaurant owners, realtors, lumber company executives, and bankers all call Pfeiffer “alma mater.” So does North Carolina’s Secretary of Commerce, multiple bishops of the United Methodist Church, and many leaders throughout our state.

Why has a small university had such a large impact? I believe the roots run back to two words: small towns. At Pfeiffer, innovative professors and students live alongside each other both inside and outside of the classroom. They come to understand each other – and no matter what they major in, they come to understand the motto of Pfeiffer’s founder, missionary Emily Prudden: Others before self. What could be more needed in today’s world?

Pfeiffer’s employees, who deeply impact students by day, have the pleasure to live and raise our children in a rare community: on Monday evenings our local leaders gather, working to recruit new industries – and new jobs. Our local bank champions small business owners and risk-taking entrepreneurs. Citing a dedicated local workforce, Charlotte Pipe and Foundry decided to build its newest plant here in 2023-2024. Similarly, last year, after seeing the beauty of the rolling foothills, visiting our strong community college, and meeting the hardworking people of our lakeside town of Badin, a submarine pipe manufacturer from New Jersey re-located here.

Unique, and unselfish, in Stanly County we believe our neighbor’s success is our success. We welcome you to come and visit. And stay if you like.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott W Bullard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Scott W. Bullard, Ph.D.  
President



Downtown Albemarle is undergoing changes, including more housing, educational opportunities and public space. They're opening the door to more events such as last fall's Stanly County Chamber of Commerce dinner.

# THE SWEET SPOT

Mostly rural Stanly County is only a hop, skip and jump from the state's most-populous city. It's investing in a future that supports growing businesses and expanding population while protecting its natural and cultural wonders.

Stanly County has had a couple busy years. Albemarle Paper Supply broke ground on a \$3.5 million expansion — a 30,000-square-foot warehouse — in its namesake city in May. And Florida-based Quality Enclosures announced a \$1.5 million factory expansion, which will add 36 jobs during the next five years, in Albemarle in June. They came on the heels of what Stanly County Director of Economic Development Elizabeth Underwood labels “the largest company announcement in Stanly County history” in 2019.

Charlotte Pipe and Foundry stepped outside the Queen City, where it started more than a century ago, to build what it calls one of the world's biggest and most-modern foundries. “The move to Oakboro will spur growth of other businesses, including vendors who supply and support the plant, opening a new window of economic growth for Stanly County,” CEO Hooper Hardison said in 2023, when the foundry opened. “Even better, the region is already home to many of the company's

associates, who will benefit from reduced commute times and increased amenities within their work environment.”

The foundry, a \$460 million investment, employs about 530 people and is serviced with a rail spur. That connects it with Aberdeen Carolina & Western Railway, a short-line that joins with two Class 1 railroads, opening rail access to North Carolina's ports and Midwest. Charlotte Pipe, along with Albemarle Paper Supply and Quality Enclosures, are only three examples of investment and construction that mark Stanly County's transition to an education and technology hub with a diversified industrial base. That's a big change from a history firmly rooted in agriculture and textiles.

Underwood, who took her position about six months ago, says regionalism makes Stanly County attractive to businesses. “We find value in being part of the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance's 14 counties, and we really use that to our advantage,” she says. “Say a business wants to be in the Charlotte

area, but they aren't a good fit, or they don't want to be in Lake Norman and be in traffic for an hour. Why not take an hour to come here and have a beautiful drive? We have something really special here, with our small-town charm.”

The EDC promotes Stanly County with a straight-forward phrase: “Close to Charlotte. Even Closer to Perfect.” The county, whose 2023 population of 63,752 was a fraction of Charlotte's 911,609, according to N.C. Office of State Budget and Management, is just up the road from the state's most-populous city. “You can be anywhere and everywhere in an hour or so,” Underwood says. “We also have the lowest tax liability in the Charlotte-metro region. We have lower prices, and we have land. You can own several acres here, and the price is about the same as a townhome in Charlotte.”

Stanly County Manager Andy Lucas says maintaining a rural identity within the hustle and bustle of the Charlotte region is important to residents and local elected officials. “The



Albemarle has earned awards for its strategic planning (1). It includes bolstering park and recreation opportunities and industrial site preparation such as Albemarle Business Center (2). It's a fact that the newest city council (3), which was sworn in Dec. 2, will continue.



sense of community that living in a rural area brings is paramount," he says. "Neighbors not only know one another; they are friends and often family. Our residents have access to multiple different housing options, including a rural landscape, suburban neighborhoods and lake living. Stanly County has one of, if not the lowest, costs of doing business in the Charlotte region when you consider median wage rates, land values, tax rates and local incentives. We have sites that offer efficient access to I-485, I-85 and I-77 and the Charlotte Douglas International Airport. Further, our rail infrastructure and access to intermodal and port facilities is significant. All of this coupled with the ability to attract over 1 million potential employees within a 30-minute drive time provides a solid business proposition for any business, industry seeking to locate in the Charlotte region."

## PREPPING ATTRACTIVE SPACE

Stanly County is putting out the welcome mat. Michael Ferris, who retired as

Albemarle city manager in February after a nearly 30-year career in local government, says in order to control its economic future, the region must stay relevant. "You have a lot of buildings and adaptive re-uses, but the requirements for the manufacturing industries are a lot different now, with buildings needing stronger floors, higher walls, that kind of thing," he says. "So, a lot of places may be missing out on opportunities. The city purchased the [Albemarle Business Center's] 282-acres and began developing the park, and it's something that will support the city's future long term. You can control your destiny."

Albemarle Business Center stands at the crossroads of U.S. 52 and N.C. 24/27. It's the latest hot-ticket item on the block, completing its first site about a year ago. "The utilities are in, the roads are in and it looks great," Underwood says. "We're 55 miles from Greensboro, so we're really close to the Toyota battery plant, and we'd be a great location for domino products, manufacturing and suppliers. And since we're an hour away, it wouldn't be the same workforce."

The ABC provides electric, water and wastewater services, so prospective companies can streamline their setup process, says Albemarle Mayor Ronnie Michael. "We offer one-stop shopping for prospective tenants," he says. "For years, it's been challenging to attract industry due to a lack of suitable properties. We recognized the need to address this issue to create greater economic opportunities for our residents. With the Albemarle Business Center, we now have space to attract industries offering careers not just jobs. The center can accommodate anything from a 20,000-square-foot facility to a million-square-foot facility, with parcels ranging from 5 to 121 acres."

Lindsey Almond, Albemarle's economic development director, says ABC's approach is forward thinking. "This 282 acre modern industrial park offers robust infrastructure that appeals to industries such as advanced manufacturing, logistics, technology and professional services," she says. "We aim to attract companies that share our vision of sustainable growth, job creation and community partnership."

Stanly County offers industrial sites beyond ABC, including Badin Business Park, which has 50 acres of shovel-ready land and 535,000 square feet of buildings. Lucas says Riverstone Industrial Park in Stanfield, 55 acres of greenfield served with utilities and within an easy commute of Mecklenburg County's Interstate 485 and Charlotte Douglas International Airport, has welcomed two tenants since 2020. They are expected to make \$11.1 million in taxable investments and create 120 jobs. "Further, there has been additional interest in the remaining available land in Riverstone," he says. "We have multiple active projects evaluating this park as a potential option."

## STRIKING A BALANCE

Stanly County had 649 farms on 109,164 acres — 43.1% of the county — according to U.S. Department of Agriculture's 2022 Census of Agriculture, the latest available. Top crops and



# PFEIFFER IS HOME

Pfeiffer University, a mainstay in Stanly County, is educating healthcare professionals, teachers, business leaders and entrepreneurs who are making a difference across North Carolina.

***Pfeiffer – a small university with a big impact.***

To support Pfeiffer, and make our state stronger, go to [pfeiffer.edu/give](https://pfeiffer.edu/give) or ***scan the QR code.***



# Pfeiffer

UNIVERSITY

CONNECT WITH US |



[pfeiffer.edu](https://pfeiffer.edu)



“ ”  
***Community makes all the difference, and Pfeiffer University is a great place to live, learn and grow.***

*- President Scott Bullard*

“ ”



livestock are soybeans and chickens, and agriculture makes a \$91 million annual economic impact. “Both livestock and row crops are a significant part of our economy,” Lucas says. “The actual farming, feed and seed companies, farming equipment suppliers, cotton gin operations, milling operations, poultry and cattle production and sales, and much more, such as vineyards, honey bee hive management and agritourism, definitely impact our economy.”

Even with industry recruitment, population growth and other factors, there is a plan to contain clutter and congestion. Michael says the county is updating its Comprehensive Land Use Plan, which will guide land use and development for the next 20 years. “[It] outlines goals, policies and a vision for the community’s future, helping us manage growth in a way that aligns with residents’ needs,” he says.

“Additionally, we’re working on a

parks and recreation master plan to help us prioritize upgrades to existing parks, new facilities and expanded programs,” Michael says.

Lucas says the Land Use Plan, which was approved in November 2022, emphasizes rural land preservation. “The rural preservation area extends to most land outside of a municipal area,” he says. “This new rural preservation area requires a 3-acre minimum for new land subdivisions. The goal is to limit subdivision sprawl into rural areas that do not have the infrastructure to support the growth.”

Businesses and people are picking Stanly County for reasons other than economic. “In addition to affordability, we’re blessed to be surrounded by natural beauty,” Michael says. “Morrow Mountain State Park is minutes from downtown, the Uwharrie National Forest is nearby, and we have two beautiful lakes, Badin Lake and Lake

Tillery, right in our backyard. It’s an outdoor enthusiast’s paradise.” Add to that hiking trails, campgrounds and wineries. They’re summed up in a second slogan: “Water. Air. Land. Success.”

Stanly County’s attractions, which also include history museums and railroad museums in Albemarle, Badin, Locust, New London and Norwood, helped bring \$108.2 million in visitor spending in 2023 — 4.2% more than the year prior — according to Visit North Carolina, the state’s tourism booster. That puts it 52nd among the state’s 100 counties. “Our natural resources provide ample opportunities for outdoor recreation such as hunting, fishing, golf, boating, kayaking and so on,” Lucas says. “Yet, we are only a short drive from accessing the Charlotte Douglas International Airport and all the conveniences it offers. Additionally, our residents and businesses can access the Charlotte market for a plethora of entertainment, shopping and dining options.”

## THE ‘PFEIFFER EFFECT’

Stanly Community College in Albemarle serves almost 10,000 students annually in curriculum and continuing education courses and offers programs in business, computers, engineering, health and public service. Its apprenticeship program works with several local businesses in fields of automotive, child care, education and emergency services.

A similar journey is being made in Stanly County’s northwest corner, where Pfeiffer University’s main campus in Misenheimer offers 27 undergraduate programs; the most popular are business, education and nursing. Its four-year students participate in a mentorship — Pfeiffer Journey. “Seminars, retreats, faculty and peer mentors, and community connection are all a part of the program outline,” says Gary Veazey, the university’s interim director of marketing and communications. “The Pfeiffer Journey culminates in senior year career preparation, ensuring graduates can confidently step into their professional lives.”

We proudly serve our five-county service area, delivering power with a **99.9% service reliability rating**.

**99.9%**  
SERVICE RELIABILITY

**EXCEPTIONAL VALUE**  
TO OUR MEMBERS

Union Power Cooperative

UNION-POWER.COM

*Banking that stays in the*

# COMMUNITY

When you do business with Uwharrie Bank, your money provides capital for new businesses, creates jobs and improves the quality of life for families. We want what's best for our communities, friends and neighbors...

*Together, we can Make a Difference.*



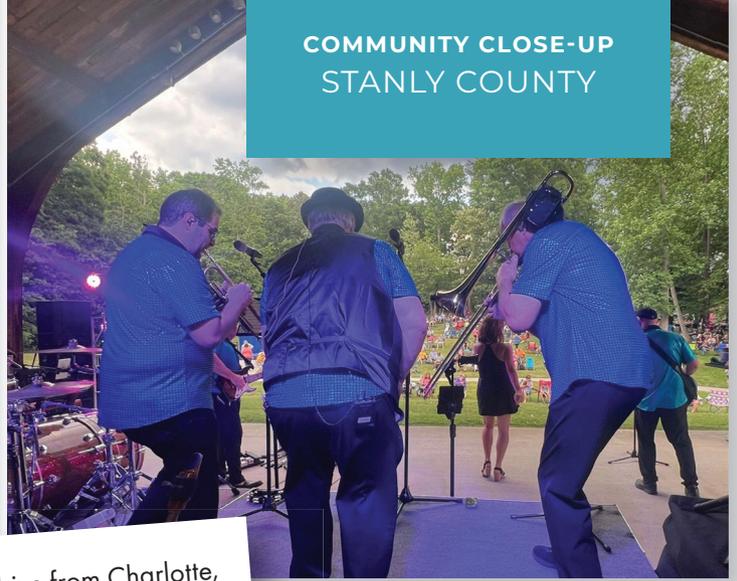
*making a difference<sup>®</sup>*

Member FDIC

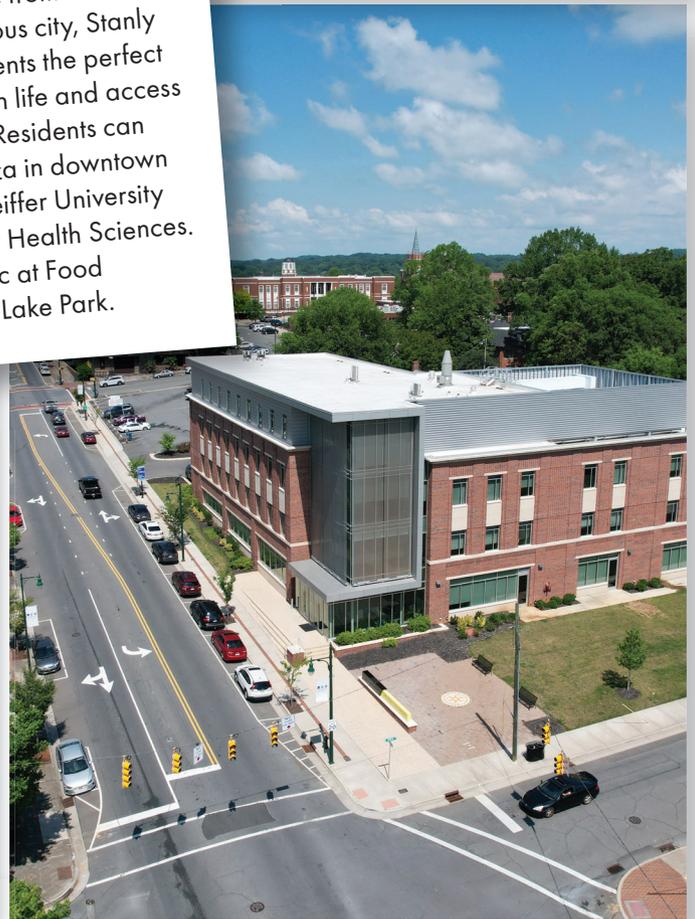
[uwharrie.com](http://uwharrie.com)



COMMUNITY CLOSE-UP  
STANLY COUNTY



Less than an hour drive from Charlotte, the state's most-populous city, Stanly County offers its residents the perfect mix of quiet smalltown life and access to big city amenities. Residents can stroll Courthouse Plaza in downtown Albemarle, where Pfeiffer University opened its Center for Health Sciences. They also enjoy music at Food Truck Fridays in City Lake Park.



Uwharrie Brewing, Albemarle's first brewery, opened in 2023. It has become a popular destination and meeting spot for residents.



PHOTO CREDITS: CITY OF ALBEMARLE

In 2020, Pfeiffer opened its Center for Health Sciences on East Main Street in Albemarle, two blocks from from the community college's Small Business Center. "The addition of Pfeiffer University [downtown] has spurred a revitalization known around here as the 'Pfeiffer Effect,'" Michael says. "We've seen new places to eat, shop and live. For instance, the historic Albemarle Hotel, once vacant, has been fully renovated and now features over two dozen apartments, a restaurant and retail space. The former Lowder Hardware building has also been renovated and now provides new residential and retail spaces. Moving forward, we'd like to continue seeing underutilized storefronts and spaces repurposed."

Ferris says talks with Pfeiffer about a downtown location began about 2015. "They knew it was in their best interest to invest in our downtown," he says. "When people think about a city, they think about a downtown. It sets the tone

for the community. Every area of a town is important, every neighborhood and commercial area. With Pfeiffer, if other businesses are looking at Albemarle's downtown, they can see the college's presence and see that someone cared and supported that investment."

Lindsey Almond says Albemarle has welcomed small businesses, cultural activities and community events during the past five years. "Albemarle is evolving into a vibrant live-work-play destination, with an energy that's attracting college students, young families and professionals," she says. "Our vision is a city where everyone feels a sense of belonging and opportunity, no matter their stage of life."

The city of Albemarle is designated a North Carolina Main Street Community, accredited by Main Street America.

"The 'Pfeiffer Effect' continues to be a tremendous asset to our downtown," says Joy Almond, who served as the city's Main Street Manager until

mid-December, when she accepted a similar role with the state. "The Pfeiffer Effect' continues to be a tremendous asset to our downtown," she says. "The graduate students at the Center for Health Sciences have different needs from a traditional college student, as the demographic is largely adults in their early 20s. I have gotten acquainted with several students here who have shared some of their experiences with me. A comment I have heard from more than one graduate student is that they feel more comfortable continuing their studies in a smaller city like Albemarle."



Scott Bullard, Pfeiffer University president

ONE OF THE MOST ADVANCED  
FOUNDRIES  
IN THE WORLD

BUILT RIGHT HERE ON  
AMERICAN SOIL

The industry is evolving, and we're leading the way. Our new foundry in Oakboro, North Carolina, is a \$460 million investment set on about 700 acres — making it one of the largest and most modern foundries in the world. The opening of this state-of-the-art foundry ushers in a new era of growth for Charlotte Pipe and Foundry and demonstrates our care and commitment to our associates, the plumbing industry, and American manufacturing.

Learn more at  
[CharlottePipe.com/Oakboro-Foundry](https://CharlottePipe.com/Oakboro-Foundry)



**CHARLOTTE**  
PIPE AND FOUNDRY COMPANY

## INVESTING IN ALBEMARLE



Lindsey Almond,  
economic director for  
the city of Albemarle

Albemarle's Downtown Catalyst Grant Program began in 2022. "[It's] a game-changer for entrepreneurs and small businesses looking to call downtown Albemarle home," Lindsey Almond says. "This

program provides critical support to help businesses launch, expand and thrive in our historic downtown."

Joy Almond says the grant money accomplishes several goals. "Grant supported improvements that encourage reuse of vacant or underutilized properties can improve the appearance

of existing buildings, improve seating and productivity, and support the long-term viability of downtown Albemarle," she says. "Over time, the taxable valuation of the improved properties increases, which leads to the availability of additional funds available to continue the revitalization of downtown Albemarle. On another level, we saw the Downtown Catalyst Grant Program as a chance to help entrepreneurs take their businesses to the next level. The program is another tangible way for the city to demonstrate our strong support for the renewed vibrancy of downtown."

Several businesses already have benefited from the Catalyst Grant program. It funded interior and exterior remodeling at 704 Photography, a patio renovation and seating expansion at Second Street Sundries and new equipment and expanded operations at Albemarle Sweet Shop.

The federal American Rescue Plan Act is funding a project in Albemarle.

"Courthouse Plaza is Albemarle's newest public gathering space in a former alleyway, which stretches from West Main Street to King Avenue," Joy Almond says. "[It] is part of a downtown streetscape masterplan, which has produced several upgrades to the downtown area, including new navigational signage, new banners on light poles, new outdoor furnishings and other beautifications. The project was completed in June of 2024; we celebrated the grand opening on June 15 with a ribbon cutting and an art walk featuring artists from the Stanly County Arts Guild. Courthouse Plaza was funded with ARPA money as well as contributions from Electricities and Albemarle Downtown Development Corporation."

The Albemarle City Council approved about 4,000 housing units during the past few years. Michael says while they all might not be built, the potential is there if needed. "People see Albemarle as a destination because of the quality of life we offer," he says. "Our city council and city staff have worked hard to maintain a low tax rate and affordable fees for services. Our electric rates are also low, because we're a public power provider, meaning we're not for profit and can put customers first without focusing on shareholders or investors."

Location is key to Albemarle's success, as it is countywide. "Being just 40 miles from Charlotte, our residents enjoy the best of both worlds — a peaceful community-focused lifestyle with easy access to the opportunities and amenities of a bustling metropolis," Lindsey Almond says. "For those commuting to Charlotte or Mecklenburg County, the drive is manageable and allows them to return home to a serene and supportive environment. Our proximity to Charlotte enhances our appeal for businesses and families looking for a close-knit community near major urban centers." ■

— Kathy Blake is a writer from eastern North Carolina.

let's **SUCCEED**

At Stanly Community College, you matter most. Whether your passion lies in computer technology, law enforcement, healthcare, or any of our other dozens of programs, we are dedicated to supporting you from registration to career placement and beyond. All our experience, skills, and energies are focused on helping you SUCCEED. That's our promise and our legacy.

**stanly** COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
stanly.edu | 704.991.0123

# OPPORTUNITY EVERYWHERE.

In the City of Albemarle, there's opportunity for everyone. From the 282-acre **Albemarle Business Center**, for large-scale manufacturing operations to our **historic downtown**, where you can follow your small business dreams.

We're here to help you find the opportunity that fits you.

Let's get started today. Call 704-984-9419 or

Email [econdevelopment@albemarlenc.gov](mailto:econdevelopment@albemarlenc.gov)



## RIGHT NEAR IT ALL

We're 30 minutes from Uptown Charlotte, central to all points on the East Coast, yet miles away from urban sprawl and high business costs.



Whether you're seeking large tracts of land for a build-to-suit or existing sites for sale or lease, Stanly County can ease your search. Regardless of your business size, from growing small enterprises to global industry leaders, we're valued for our low land costs and low property taxes. With aggressive incentives and the lowest tax liability in the Charlotte region, you'll find a wide variety of options to make relocation or expansion in our community an incisive economic decision.

[www.stanlyedc.com](http://www.stanlyedc.com)

-   
**Lowest sales tax in the Charlotte region**
-   
**Affordable land values**
-   
**Low effective property tax rate**
-   
**Lower avg. weekly manufacturing wages**

To learn more about how Stanly County can be a fit for you, please contact:

**Elizabeth Underwood**, Director  
 1000 North 1st Street, Suite 11  
 Albemarle, NC 28001  
 704-986-3682 | Fax 704-986-3685  
[eunderwood@stanlyedc.com](mailto:eunderwood@stanlyedc.com)

