

Wilmington’s Real Estate Future Is in Manufacturing

A $149M expansion in Hickory is reshaping North Carolina’s industrial landscape.

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THE DATA

$149.7 million

Capital Investment

US Conec's expansion in Hickory marks the largest single industrial investment in Catawba County in over a decade.

This investment will fund a 200,000-square-foot advanced manufacturing facility, research and development center, and distribution hub. The scale of the project signals a strategic shift toward high-tech industrial infrastructure in North Carolina's inland regions, not just coastal real estate.

Source: North Carolina Department of Commerce · Published October 22, 2026
https://www.commerce.nc.gov/news/press-releases/2026/10/22/governor-stein-announces-149-million-expansion-us-conec



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Industrial Growth Drives Real Estate Demand

The expansion at US Conec is not just about jobs—it’s about the creation of a new class of industrial real estate. With 224 new high-skilled jobs and a $12.7 million annual payroll impact, the project will fuel demand for specialized industrial and corporate campuses in the Cape Fear region. This is not a coastal migration story; it’s an inland industrial renaissance that will reshape real estate investment priorities.

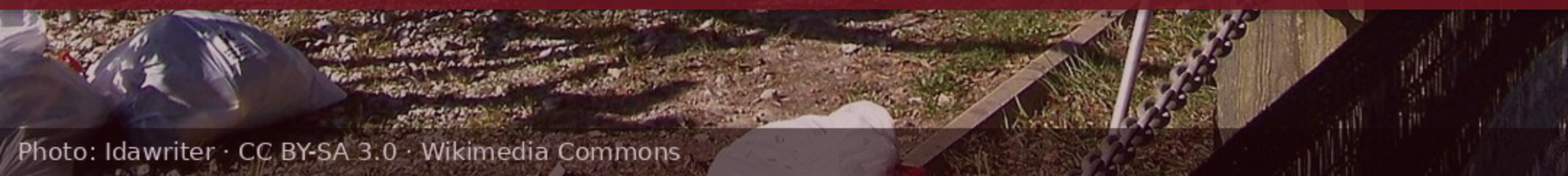


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Wilmington's Strategic Position in the Supply Chain

While the facility is in Hickory, its success depends on regional logistics and workforce integration. Wilmington's port, rail access, and growing tech workforce make it the natural hub for distribution, talent recruitment, and supply chain coordination. This project isn't isolated—it's a node in a larger network where Cape Fear's real estate assets are becoming critical enablers of North Carolina's advanced manufacturing economy.

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