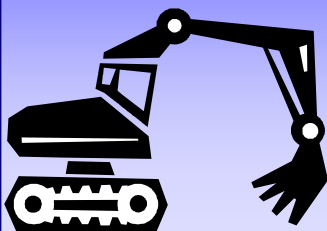


Understanding the Local Labor Market

Promising Career Pathways In North Carolina's High Country*

Focus: Construction



Understanding the Local Labor Market: Promising Career Pathways In North Carolina's High Country is intended as a useful resource for workforce professionals who help jobseekers make informed decisions about careers and training opportunities. Featured industries are selected on the basis of industry growth, wages and benefits, and opportunities for advancement.

*The High Country workforce region includes Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey Counties.

What do workers in the construction field do?

There are all kinds of opportunities in the construction field, ranging from hands-on trades (such as masonry and carpentry) to professional degrees (for example, architecture). Techies or number crunchers might also find a career in the construction field. The jobs most people think of when construction is mentioned are those such as carpentry, bricklaying, and painting.

What are wages, benefits, and work conditions?

In the seven counties of North Carolina's High Country region, monthly earnings in the building construction industry averaged \$2370 from July 2003-June 2004. Specialty trade contractors earned \$2172 on average during the same period.

Some occupations in the construction industry, such as carpentry and roofing, require outdoor work in varied weather conditions. Workers must be in good physical shape and have good manual and finger dexterity. Electricians, drafters, or software developers, work mostly indoors.

What do people in this field like about their jobs?

People in the construction field often say that what they like about their work is being able to use their skills and being able to see results. For some, being out-of-doors is a plus, as is the physical aspect of the job.

What are related jobs and advancement opportunities?

Landscaping, iron and steel working, glass installation, masonry, painting, tile setting, and plumbing are just a few of the occupational fields related to the construction industry.

With experience, training, and the right skills and attitude, you can go from a laborer position to a site manager or owner of your own company in the construction field.

How many construction openings are there?

According to America's Career InfoNet, job openings for carpenters in NC are expected to increase by 19% between 2002 and 2012. Construction is the fastest growing industry in the state.

How do I find out about construction jobs?

- Go to your local **JobLink Career Center** (see next page or www.ncjoblink.com).
- Many employers use the want ads in **local newspapers**.
- You may find job opportunities at area **job fairs** throughout the year.

How can I become a construction worker?

You can often get a job as a laborer with little or no experience. But for better paying jobs and advancement opportunities you need training, which is available through career and technical programs in high schools, occupational degree programs or continuing education courses at community colleges, or through apprenticeship programs where you earn while you learn.

All three community colleges in our region (Caldwell, Mayland, and Wilkes) offer training programs in the construction field. The NC Department of Labor offers formal apprenticeship training. Once you successfully complete an apprenticeship program, you become a journeyman in your field. For information: kcastelloes@direcway.com.

What skills and knowledge do I need to work in construction?

In the building construction trades, workers need the following skills, in addition to the specialized **trade** skills required for their particular field:

- **Mathematics** - Using mathematics to solve problems.
- **Time Management** - Managing one's own time and the time of others.
- **Critical Thinking** - Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.
- **Active Listening** - Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- **Judgment and Decision Making** - Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.

High Growth Industries
Top 10 Industries Ranked on the Greatest Employment
High Country WDB Workforce Area
(July 2003-June 2004)

Rank	Industry	Average Quarterly Employment	Average Quarterly New Hire Employment	Average Monthly Earnings	Earning Growth	Average Earning Growth	New Hire Earnings
	All NAICS Subsectors	-----	-----	\$2,463	\$241	10.0%	\$1,538
6	Construction of Buildings	2,024	178	\$2,370	\$201	8.6%	\$1,779
8	Specialty Trade Contractors	1,808	134	\$2,172	\$102	4.7%	\$1,733

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Local Employment Dynamics

NAICS: North American Industrial Classification System
Male and Female
Ages 14-99



Remember . . .

Labor markets are affected by economic, social, and institutional factors that are difficult to predict. No one can forecast perfectly how many jobs will be available or if there will be too many or too few workers for those jobs. The truth is--employment is never a guarantee, even when you prepare for a career in a high growth field.

High Country JobLink Career Centers

Alleghany	115 Atwood St, Sparta 336-372-WORK	Watauga	207 Winklers' Creek Rd, Boone 828-265-5385
Ashe	626 Ashe Central School Rd, Ste 3, Jefferson 336-982-JOBS	Wilkes	312 Midtown Plaza, North Wilkesboro 336-651-2540
Avery	175 Linville St, Newland 828-737-7230 or 828-733-3901	Yancey	24 Highway 19E Bypass, Burnsville 828-682-6618
Mitchell	100 Kim Thickets Rd, Spruce Pine 828-765-7758 or 828-765-7376		

The High Country Workforce Development Board (HCWDB) advocates the development of an adaptive workforce system by convening relevant stakeholders to respond to the demands of a globally competitive economy. The Board's responsibilities include promoting a coordinated and accountable workforce system in the seven-county High Country region; chartering JobLink Career Centers; and directing federal Workforce Investment Act programs and services. Board members are appointed by each county's Chair of County Commissioners.