

## Furniture Company Will Open Plant In Catawba County

By Administrator

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Design Foundry, LLC, will open a new furniture manufacturing facility in Catawba County, creating 202 new jobs over five year. The company plans to invest more than \$3.1 million in the project. “North Carolina is the international home of the furniture industry with leading manufacturers, designers and events,” said Governor Roy Cooper. “Our state’s experienced furniture talent is the reason for our success. Design Foundry’s decision to open a new facility in Hickory both underscores our reputation and sets the industry up for future growth.”

Design Foundry will manufacture upholstered furniture in partnership with a major furniture and home goods retailer. The company will emphasize the strong tradition of handmade furniture combined with technology in manufacturing to create new methods of manufacturing through supplier partnerships and internal research and development.

“We are excited to make Catawba County our home,” said Eric Fulcher, CEO/President of Design Foundry. “The community has a strong tradition of being makers of great things, with furniture being an important part of that history. Investments in STEM programs within Catawba County helped affirm our decision to select Hickory, N.C. as the location for this new company. We believe Catawba County can be at the forefront of combining innovative technology with the artisan craft. We are excited about the opportunities this will create for everyone. Together, with our skilled men and women, new generations will be introduced to upholstery manufacturing. We look forward to partnering with suppliers, other businesses and community organizations to make this happen. The foundation of everything we do, is to enhance the lives of those in our community. Design Foundry – Building People, Making Furniture.”

Design Foundry will hire craftspeople, in addition to those with education or experience based in science, technology, engineering and math. The company plans to use advanced equipment and practices in their manufacturing processes. Salaries for the new jobs will vary by position and experience with the average salary of \$57,995. The average salary is higher than the Catawba County average of \$41,531.

“Workforce needs in every industry are changing rapidly, and furniture manufacturing and design is no different,” said North Carolina Commerce Secretary Anthony M. Copeland. “I look forward to partnering with Design Foundry to make sure we are investing in our world-class furniture talent and offering opportunities for students and workers to gain new skills as the industry innovates.”

The North Carolina Department of Commerce and the Economic Development Partnership of

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N.C. (EDPNC) led the state's support for the company's selection.

The Design Foundry facility in Catawba County will be facilitated, in part, by a Job Development Investment Grant (JDIG) approved by the state's Economic Investment Committee earlier today. Over the course of the 12-year term of this grant, the State expects the project will grow the state's economy by an estimated \$320 million. Using a formula that accounts for the new tax revenues generated by the new jobs, the JDIG agreement authorizes the potential reimbursement to the company of up to \$1,545,300 spread over 12 years. State payments only occur following performance verification by the Departments of Commerce and Revenue that the company has met its incremental job creation and investment targets. JDIG projects result in positive net tax revenue to the state treasury, even after taking into consideration the grant's reimbursement payments to a given company.

Because Design Foundry chose to designate its corporate headquarters in Catawba County, classified by the state's economic tier system as Tier 2, the company's JDIG agreement also calls for moving as much as \$171,700 in new tax revenue generated through the grant into the state's Industrial Development Fund – Utility Account. The Utility Account helps rural communities finance necessary infrastructure upgrades to attract future business. Even when new jobs are created in a Tier 2 county such as Catawba, the new tax revenue generated through JDIG grants helps more economically challenged communities throughout the state. More information on the state's economic tier designations is available [here](#).

“Design Foundry is bringing 202 new, well-paying jobs to Hickory, and it's our community's world-class furniture craftsman and furniture manufacturing training opportunities that sealed this great deal for Catawba County and North Carolina as a whole,” said N.C. Representative Mitchell Setzer.

“Catawba County has the experienced craftsman that furniture manufacturers need to succeed,” said N.C. Senator Andy Wells. “I am proud to welcome Design Foundry's new project in Hickory.”

Partnering with N.C. Commerce and the EDPNC on this project were the North Carolina General Assembly, the North Carolina Community College System, Catawba County, the City of Hickory and the Catawba County Economic Development Corporation.