



**FLORENCE COUNTY**  
**Economic Development**  
*Helping Business Grow*  
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## **2016 Economic Development Successes**

*By Wendy Gehlhoff – Florence County Economic Development Director*

- Tax Increment District (TID) assessed value grew by 12% for total of 25% growth since 2014
- TID projects leveraged \$3.8 million of new business spending and created 55 new jobs
- Recruited business to make an offer and reopen daycare that was closed for 2+ years
- Recruited pharmacist to open Florence Prescription Services business in our clinic via tele-pharmacy
- Managed 15 RLF loans with 2 new clients in 2016: Auntie M's Childcare and Spread Eagle Equip Sales
- Worked with legislators to solidify \$28,000 per year State funding for visitor center
- Implemented \$5,600 Dept. of Tourism JEM grant to promote Wild Rivers Waterfalls via new signage, a redesigned Waterfall Guide and extra advertising resulting in 32% more fall traffic to visitor center
- Partnered with school and regional industry representatives for first FHS Fab Lab Tech Fair to bring together students, industry and community members for workforce development
- Wrote grant to host Florence Forest Industry Day event to expose 381 students to forest industry
- Forest industry jobs grew from 131 in 2012 to 262 in 2014 generating \$45 million economic output
- Managed website, Facebook and regional PR for 7 tourism events plus others and ongoing content

## **2017 Economic Development Projects**

- Facilitate (w/UW-Extension and Chamber) Downtown Revitalization subcommittees to:
  - Expand Florence Market Days to include more vendors and new 'Music in the Park'
  - Pursue targeted retail recruitment for downtown business growth
  - Create downtown visual plan with specific look and feel
  - Update and/or redesign IT and media look and content
  - Evaluate housing supply and demand followed by developer recruitment
- Support local producers with online sales training, collective website creation and future store
- Continue to support Forest Products industry to enable more business and workforce growth
- Collaborate with school to grow Fab Lab community use, school curriculum and equipment funding
- Continue to promote county-wide events and recreational assets to grow visitor spending
- Find investors to build an AmericInn or Cobblestone Hotel project to address limited lodging supply
- Partner with residents and organizations to promote Florence as a great place to live and work