FUTURES FACTORY

ADVANCING DIGITAL MANUFACTURING FOR WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

THE PROBLEM

The devastating impacts of Hurricane Helene revealed cracks in Western North Carolina's economy. In the months following the storm, the region saw the largest employment shift in the country - moving from the lowest unemployment in North Carolina to the highest. Average wages in the region are lower and growing at a slower pace than the state and nation, while the cost of living is escalating faster.

THE OPPORTUNITY

860

manufacturing facilities in WNC

North Carolina has seen industrial revolutions before. But at today's pace of change, an investment in innovation is necessary so we aren't left behind. We have an incredible base of employment in the manufacturing sector. But, the race is constant and advancing at exponential rates. We are working with five universities and six community colleges to bring all the state's resources together to advance our manufacturing sector.

THE VISION

There is an opportunity to create a more resilient economy and workforce for Western North Carolina. We can create innovation assets to reposition our manufacturing base, reskill our workforce, and boost economic opportunity for the region. To do so, we must align workforce, industry partnerships, research/development, and academia to create a world-class innovation center for Western North Carolina.

DIGITAL MANUFATURING

Future-proofing our workforce requires a focus on the core competencies of digital manufacturing.

