



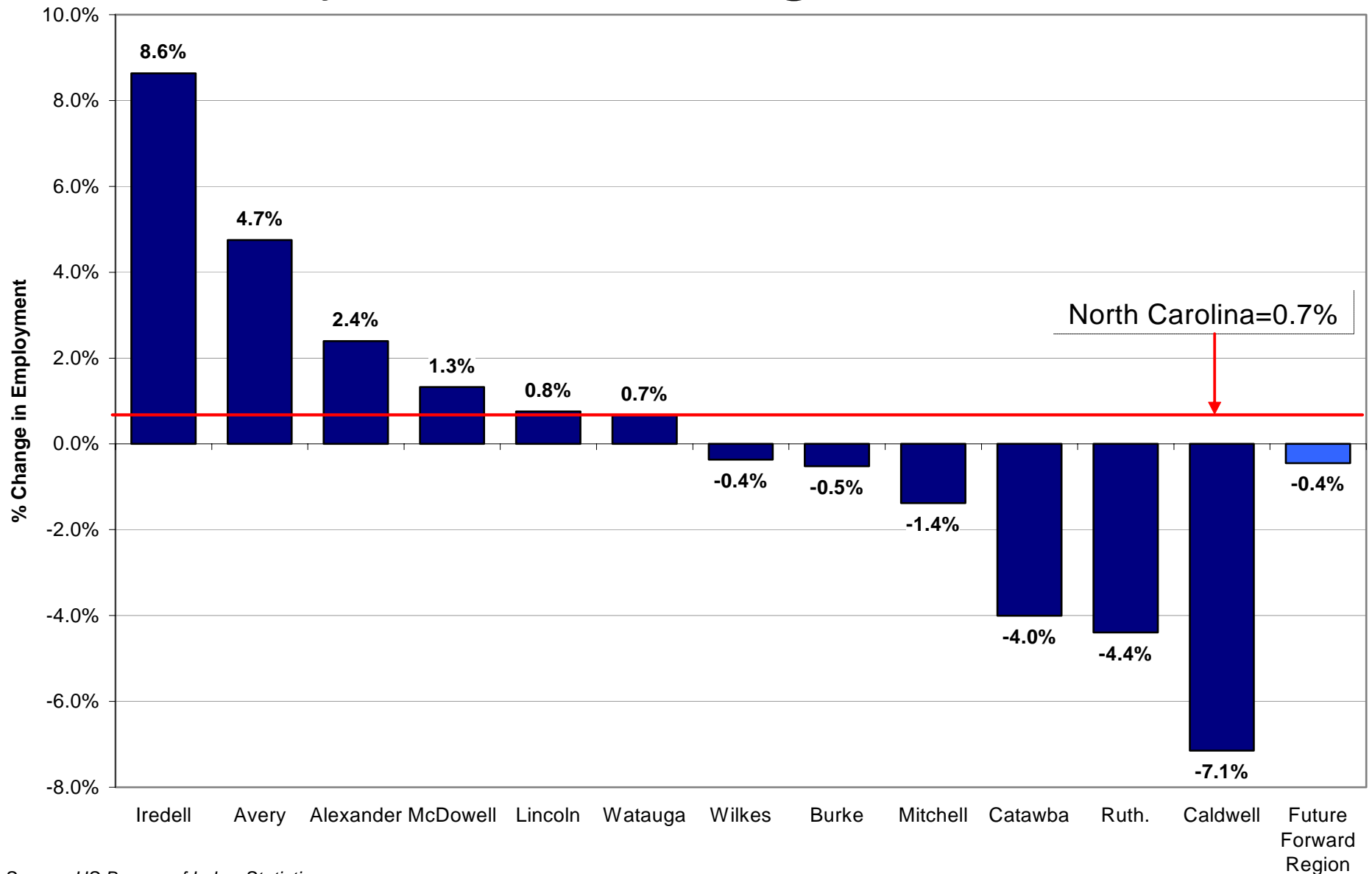
Monitoring the Future Forward Area's Progress:

Benchmarking Economic Performance

Center for
Regional
Economic
Competitiveness

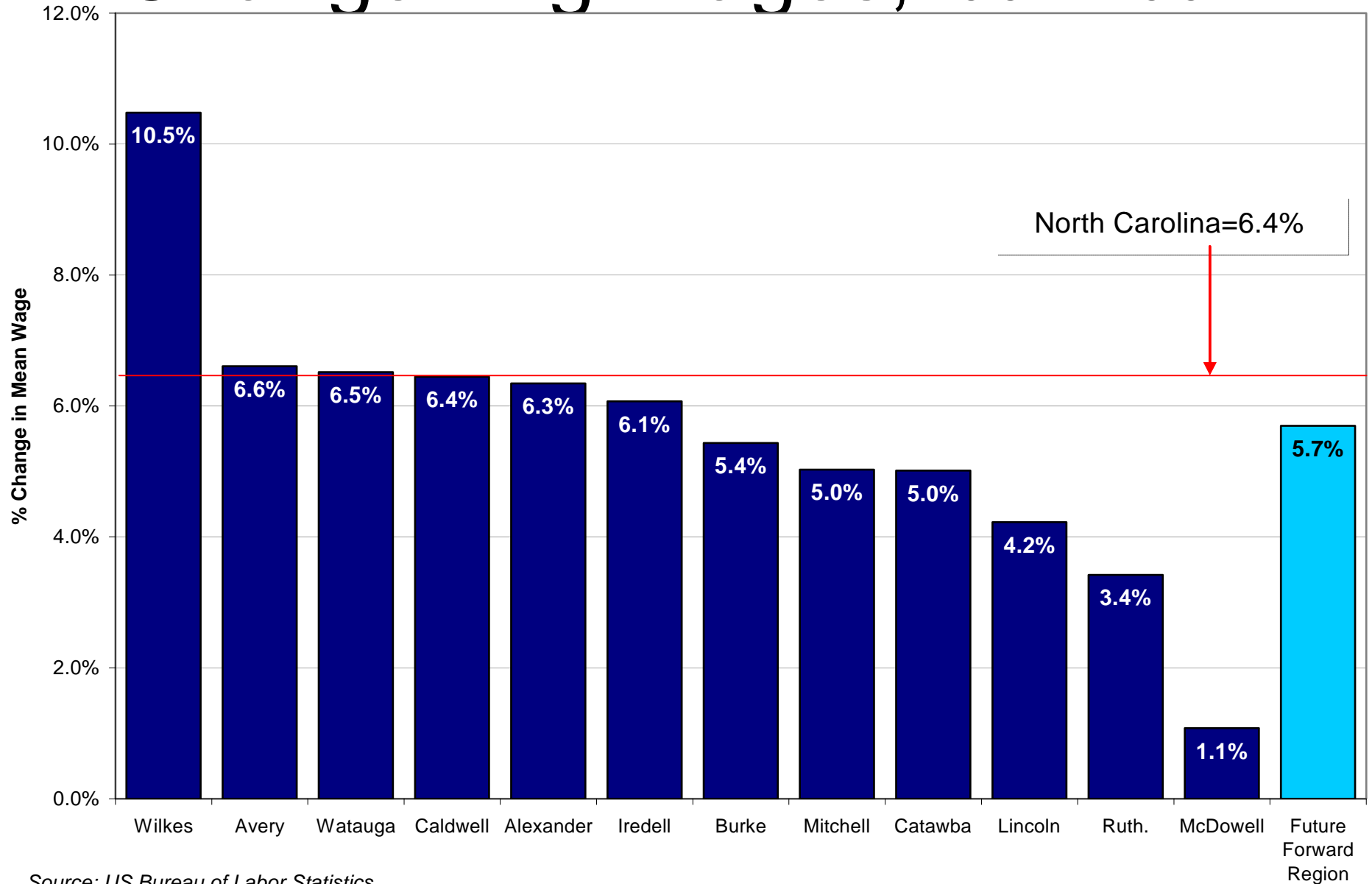
Dr. Kenneth E. Poole
Dr. Mark C. White

Employment Change, 2002-2004



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

Change Avg Wages, 2002-2004



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics



Vision Elements to Be Monitored

- Promote a more diverse economy
- Foster a renewed sense of entrepreneurship and business innovation
- Improve workforce education and skills
- Develop and protect amenities that appeal to young adults and active retirees
- Coordinate the area's governance to enhance regional collaboration



More Diverse Economy

Measurements

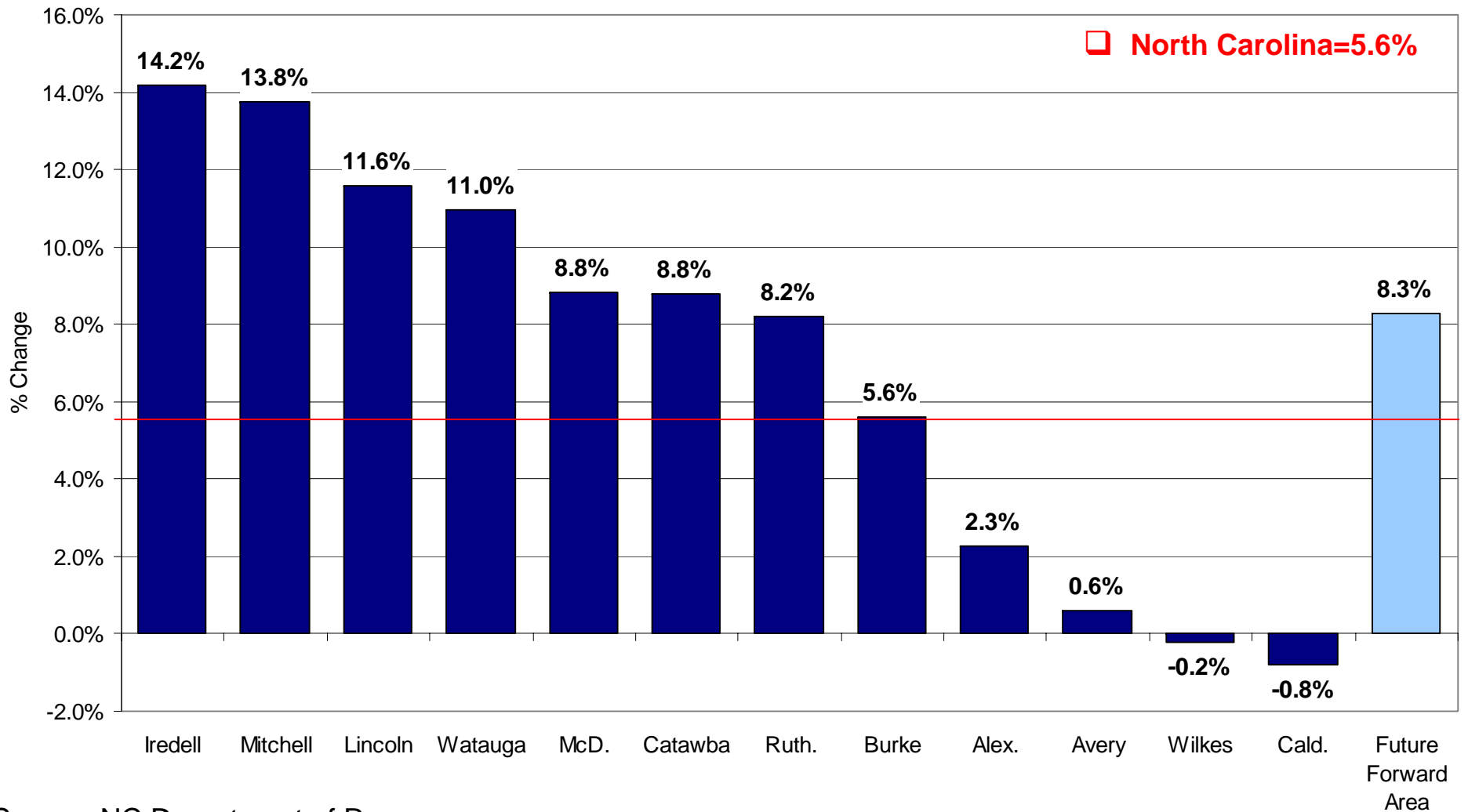
Future Forward Job Creation: Turning the Corner in 2004

Industry	Net Jobs Created/Lost 2003-04	% Change, 2003-04	Average Wages
ALL INDUSTRIES	6,280	1.9%	\$29,206
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,718	9.5%	\$30,833
Accommodation and Food Services	2,153	9.2%	\$10,967
Retail Trade	2,133	5.5%	\$20,317
Educational Services	2,043	7.7%	\$28,035
Transportation and Warehousing	2,040	18.1%	\$30,083
Mgt of Companies and Enterprises	636	27.9%	\$51,797
Professional and Technical Services	532	9.0%	\$34,710
Information	493	14.1%	\$26,529
Construction	27	0.2%	\$28,678
Manufacturing	-4,703	-4.7%	\$32,304

Source: NCESC. Above average wages are highlighted in yellow.

Retail Sales Growth

(FY 02/03 to FY 03/04)



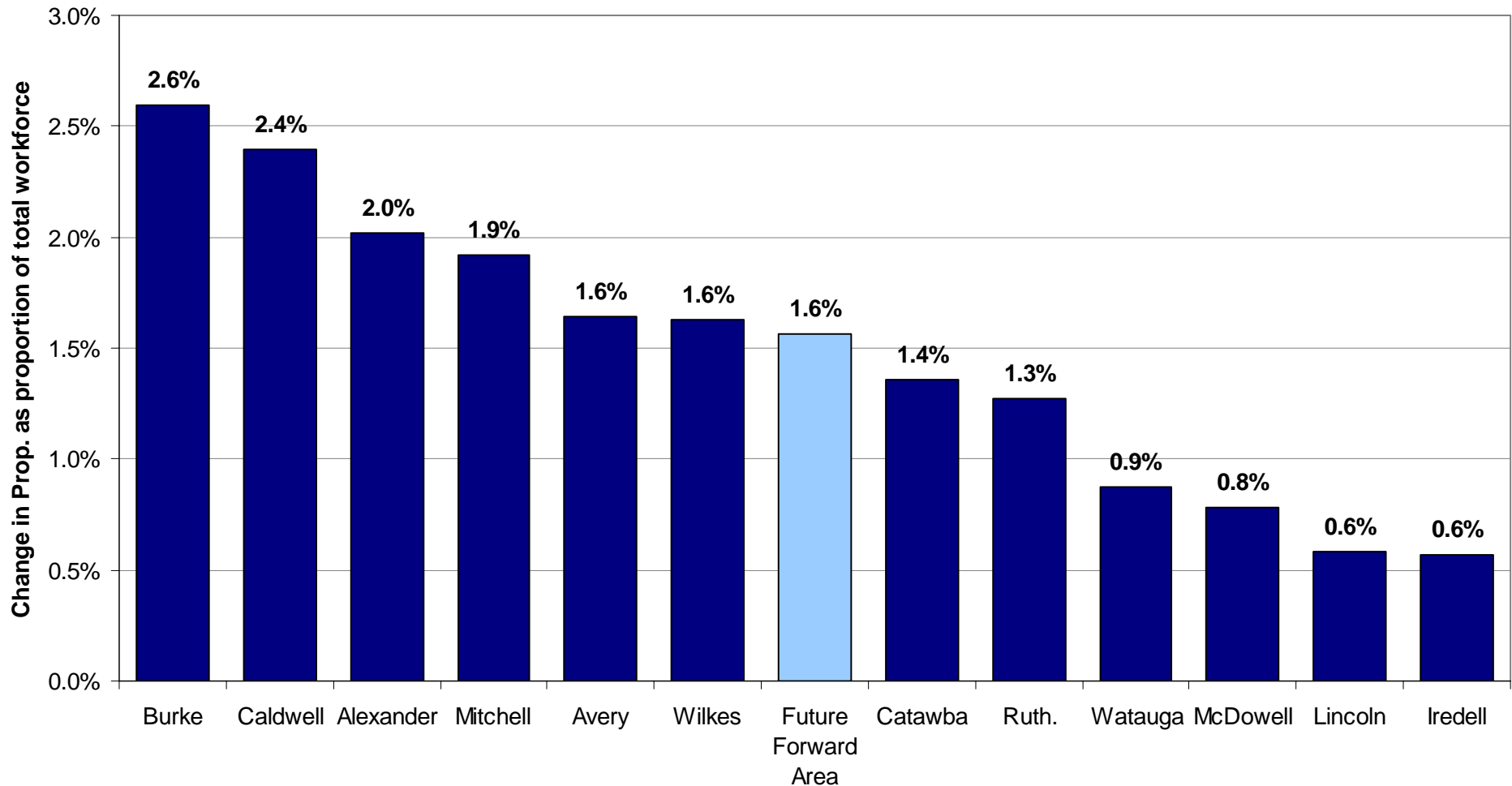
Source: NC Department of Revenue



Renewed Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Measurements

Change in self-employed entrepreneurs as a proportion of total workforce, 2001-2003



Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis

Number of Manufacturing Firms receiving assistance from NC State University, 2004

County	# of Firms	# of Projects
Alexander	0	0
Avery	0	0
Burke	2	7
Caldwell	3	13
Catawba	15	39
Iredell	9	20
Lincoln	4	27
McDowell	4	27
Mitchell	1	11
Rutherford	3	23
Watauga	1	21
Wilkes	3	5
<i>Future Forward Area</i>	45	193

Source: NCSU Industrial Extension Service



Education and Skills Improvement

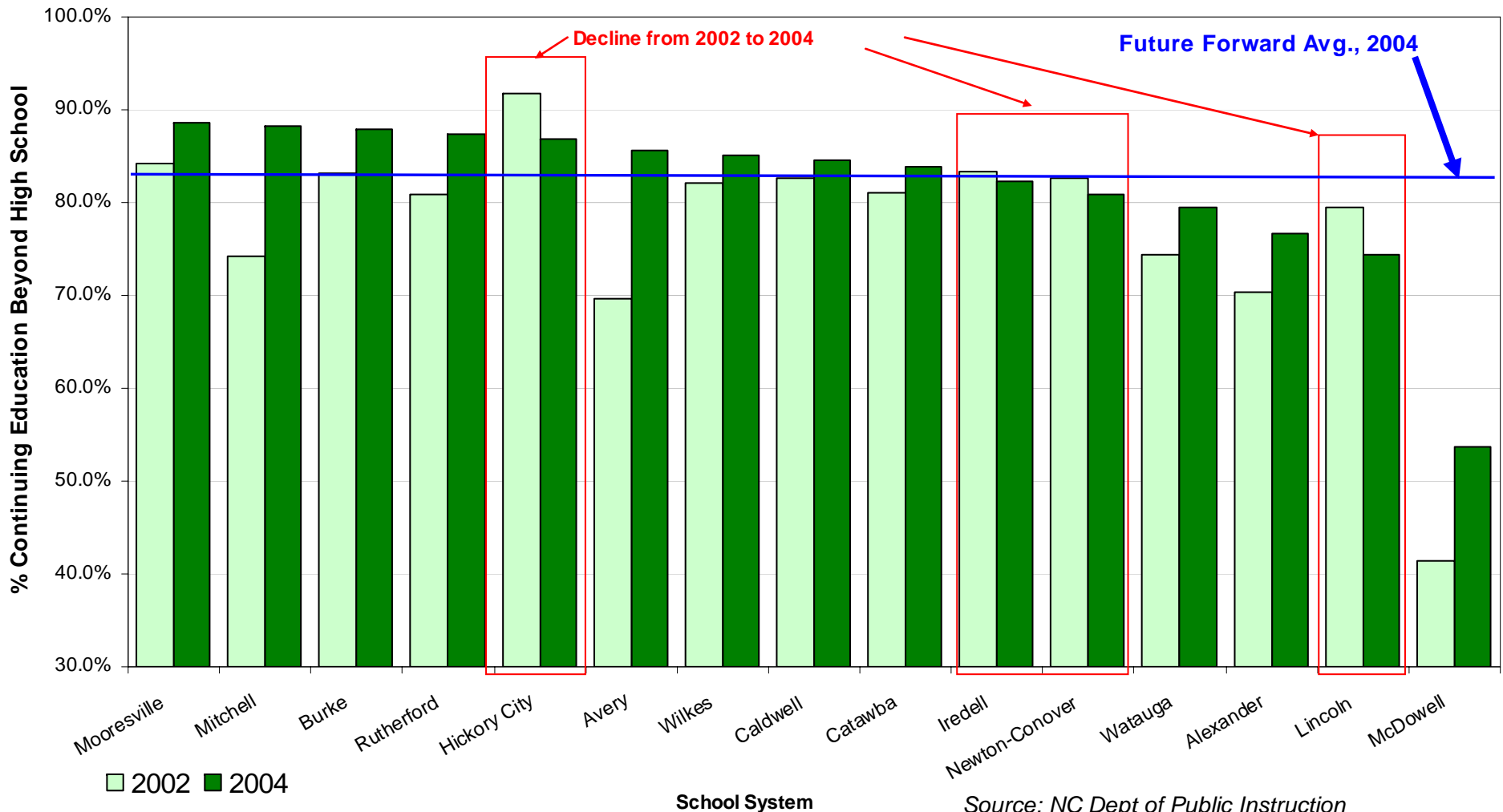
Benchmark Measurements

Number of Dropouts in Region School Districts

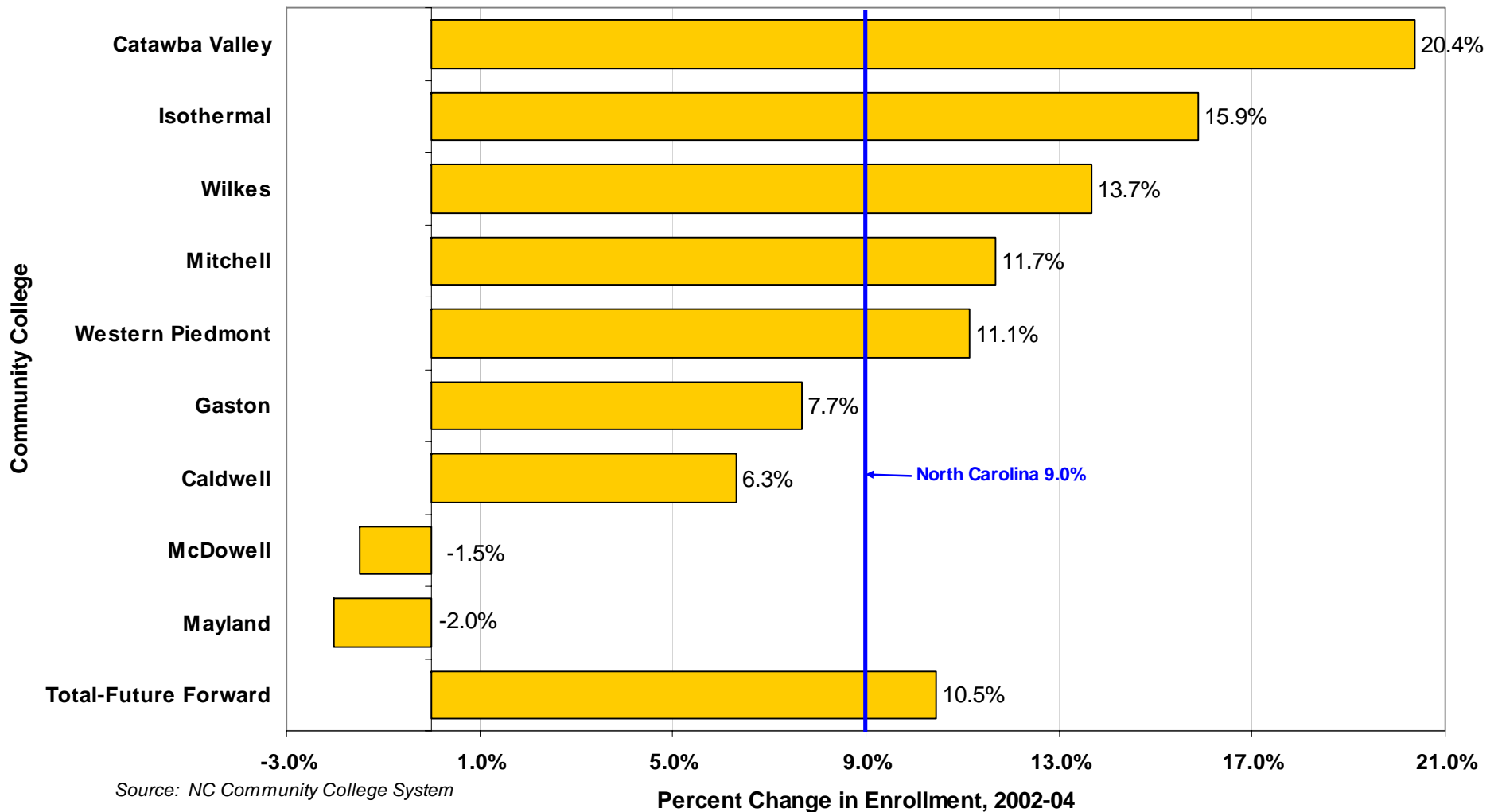
District	01/02 Grades 9-12 Duplicated Dropouts	02/03 Grades 9-12 Duplicated Dropouts	Change
Rutherford	227	155	-72
Caldwell	216	150	-66
Iredell-Statesville	310	277	-33
Alexander	124	91	-33
Hickory City	122	91	-31
Mooreville City	80	50	-30
McDowell	128	98	-30
Catawba	268	246	-22
Watauga	76	65	-11
Newton-Conover	32	27	-5
Avery	32	27	-5
Wilkes	202	199	-3
Lincoln	178	177	-1
Burke	221	230	9
Mitchell	23	44	21
Future Forward Area	2,239	1,927	-312

Source: NC Department of Public Instruction

Post-secondary Intentions of Future Forward HS Grads, 3% since 2002



Change in Community College Enrollment, 2002-2004

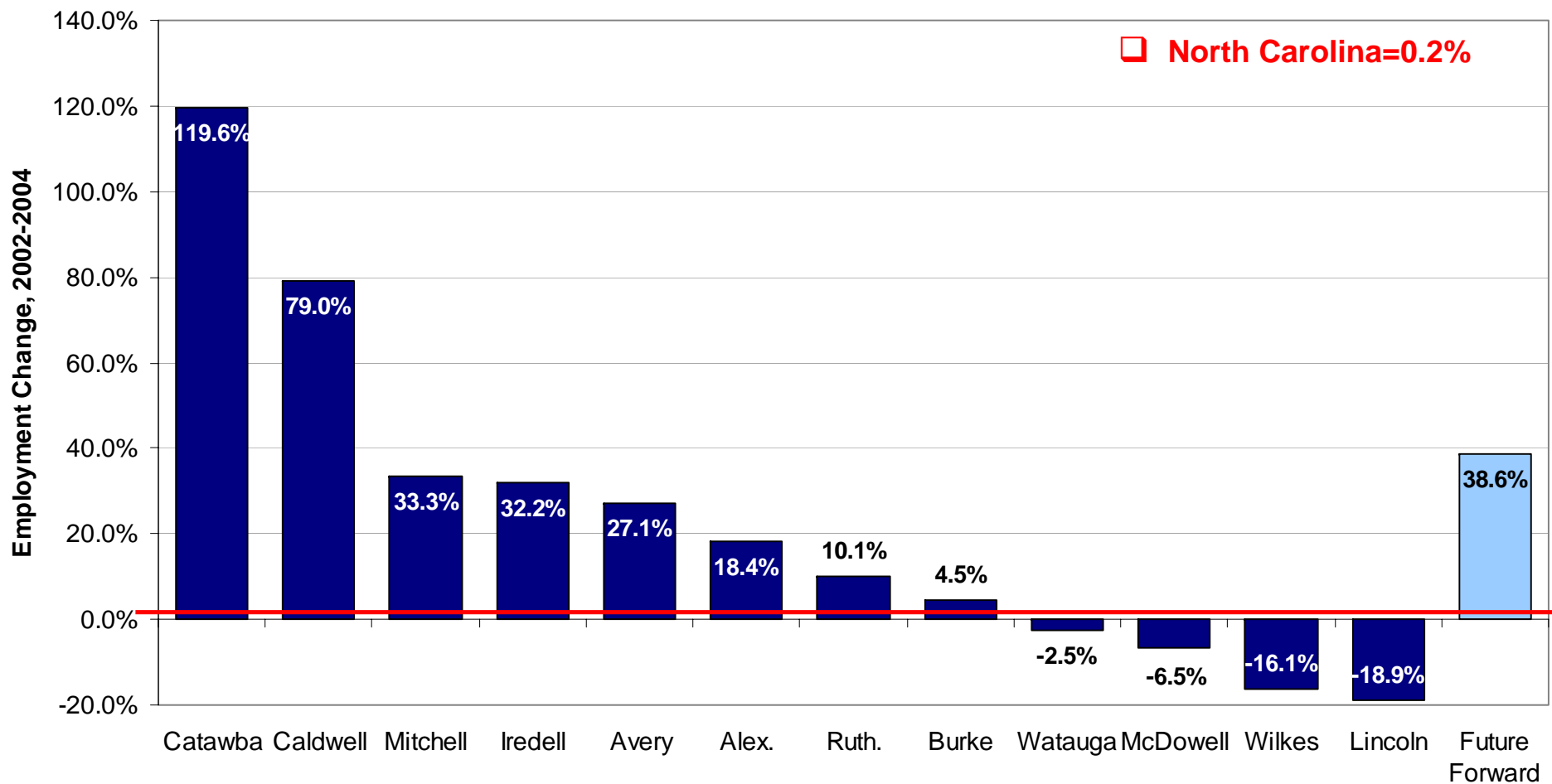




Amenities Protection

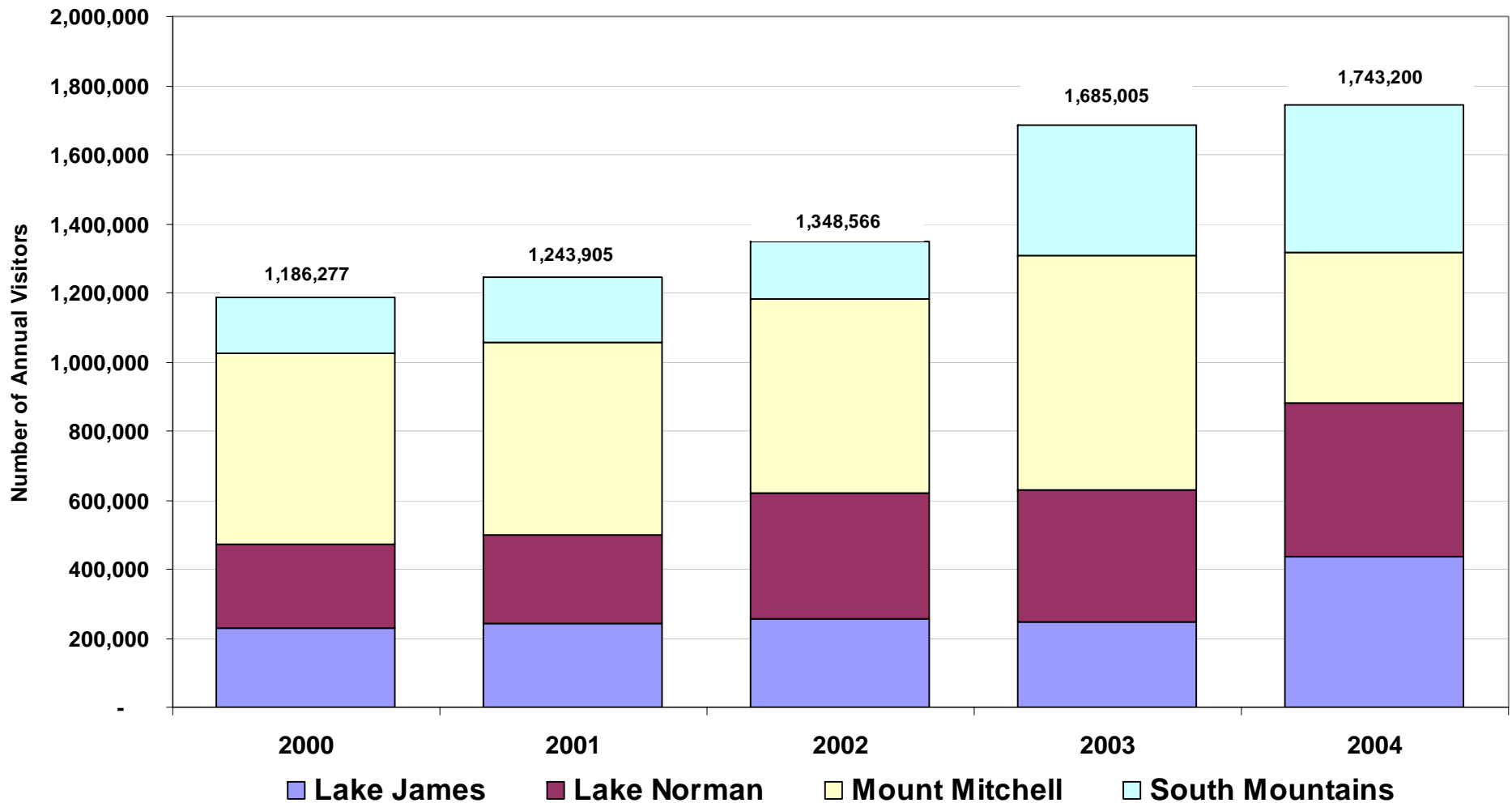
Measurements

Employment Growth in Arts, Recreation & Entertainment, 2002-2004



Source: NCECSC

Total Future Forward Area State Park Visitors, 2000-2004



Source: N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation



Coordinated Regional Governance

Measurements



Major Regional Initiatives Currently Underway

- Advanced engineering program
- Hickory Higher Ed Center
- 5-county “Hickory Metro” tourism effort
- Collaborative workforce development board retreat (planned)
- Brownfields initiative
- Certified sites initiative
- Planned development of a Mega-site
- Development Corridors Planning
- Industry Growth Analysis



Monitoring Plans

- Maintain database of benchmarks
- Examine other possible measures
- Report to region later in the year