



**BULLETIN: For Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2025**  
[www.BelmontRotaryClub.com](http://www.BelmontRotaryClub.com)



### Club Meeting

**Belmont First Presbyterian Church**  
102 S. Central Ave.  
Belmont, NC 28012  
*Time: Wednesday at 12:30 PM*

### Events

**January 28th, 7:00-9:00 PM**  
**Belmont Abbey College - Haid Ballroom**  
[Opioid Forum 2025](#)

## OPIOID FORUM

College and high school students and the public are invited to attend this free forum at which a panel of speakers will present information in an attempt to combat rapidly increasing opioid use and resulting deaths. [Click here for more details](#) on this important forum, sponsored by the Rotary Clubs of Gaston County.

### Speakers

**January 15th**  
**[Harriett Porter](#)**  
**[Rotary Club of Charlotte](#)**

Harriett is Community Service Chair for Rotary District 7680 and a member of the Rotary Club of Charlotte. President Ken Pahon will host the program.



**January 22nd**  
**[Caleb Reese](#)**  
**[Keith Hawthorne Hyundai](#)**

Caleb is the finance and insurance manager at Keith Hawthorne Hyundai of Gastonia on Wilkinson Boulevard. He will provide information about the dealership and on Hyundai models. Rotarian Jim Davidson will host the program.



**January 28th, 7 -9 PM**  
**[Opioid Forum](#)**

**[A Panel of Speakers on Opioid Dangers](#)**  
Combating rapidly increasing opioid use and resulting deaths is the purpose of this free forum sponsored by the Rotary Clubs of Gaston County. Click the link above for more details.

**January 29th**  
**[Speaker and program topic TBA.](#)**

Rotarian David Demperio will host the program.

**February 5th**  
**[Speaker and program topic TBA.](#)**

Rotarian Kathy Gauger will host the program.

**February 12th**  
**[Speaker and program topic TBA.](#)**

Rotarian Mike Giang will host the program.

### Birthdays



**[Bradford R. Frazier](#)**  
January 18th



**[Michelle Petty](#)**  
January 20th



**[Rebecca Monk Johns](#)**  
January 28th



**[Mike Mckeever](#)**  
February 2nd



**[Jennifer Grant](#)**  
February 8th

### Wedding Anniversaries

No Wedding Anniversaries Found

### Club Officers



**[Kenneth J Pahon](#)**  
President-Elect  
President



**[Jennifer Grant](#)**  
Treasurer

[Ted B. Hall](#)



Public Relations/Image Chair



Membership Chair



iPast President

### District Officers



District Governor



DG - Elect



Assistant Governor- Gaston County

## LAST WEEK AT ROTARY

# Gaston in high demand for industrial development

Wednesday, January 8, 2025



Gaston Economic Development Commission Executive Director Donny Hicks (left) spoke recently at a meeting of the Belmont Rotary Club. Rotarian Dick Cromlish hosted the program and introduced the speaker.

**"We're one of three or four drivers of manufacturing in the Charlotte region now, and we rank seventh among all 100 North Carolina counties in manufacturing."**

*-- Donny Hicks, Executive Director  
Gaston County Economic Development Commission*

Gaston County is booming like never before in economic development, having built more industrial space in the past three years (8.7 million square feet) than in the previous 35 years (7 million). This is the message Gaston Economic Development Commission Executive Director Donny Hicks shared with members of the Belmont Rotary Club recently.

"We're one of three or four drivers of manufacturing in the Charlotte region now," he said. "And we rank seventh among all 100 North Carolina counties in manufacturing."

This is a major recovery for Gaston County after the rapid decline of the textile industry decimated what for decades had been the county's largest employer.

But the increase in manufacturing jobs also comes with new concerns. In Gaston County and globally, there's a shortage of talent. "We have 118,000 in the local workforce now, and we're adding about 2,000 more per year, but that's not nearly enough," Hicks said.



Because of technology and automation advances, new industrial companies opening here employ far fewer workers than in the past. Hicks cited the gigantic Newell Brands building, one of the largest in the region at 1.5 million square feet. Located in the Gateway 85 industrial park along I-85 in Gastonia, Newell Brands employs 175 workers. "Ten years ago, that number would be 700," he said.

Gaston County now has 28 international firms with operations here, Hicks said, the newest being a food manufacturing facility owned by the Japanese firm Hans Kissle in the Apple Creek Corporate Center on the Dallas-Cherryville Highway.

The demand for industrial sites in Gaston County has never been greater, Hicks said, and sites long passed over now are being developed. About one such site that recently sold, he said, "I've been in this job 40 years, four months and six days, and I had never before shown that site."

Noting that industrial and commercial property, in addition to providing jobs for residents, also pay a far higher return in tax revenue than residential property for the county and municipalities, Hicks said preserving land for industrial and commercial growth is a critical issue for the future. He listed these additional critical issues for future growth: transportation, housing developments for higher end buyers, workforce for the future and utilities.

For more information on economic development in Gaston County, visit the Gaston Economic Development Commission website at [www.gaston.org](http://www.gaston.org).