



A Commitment to Quality Living

The City of Gastonia recently adopted a new branding slogan, “Gastonia. Great Place. Great People. Great Promise.” that succinctly describes why people and businesses that move to Gastonia rarely leave. Strategically located just minutes west of Charlotte and mid-way between Atlanta and North Carolina’s Research Triangle, Gastonia is recognized as one of the area’s best places to live and work with an ideal combination of location, size, stability and liveability. With those factors attracting both industry and new residents, Gastonia has grown to become the largest of Gaston County’s 15 municipalities, 13th largest city in the state, and the second largest in the booming Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill Metropolitan Area. Twice designated as an All America City, Gastonia’s desirable quality of life is a product of friendly neighborhoods, responsive city and county government, an award winning educational system, a vibrant retail environment, state-of-the-art health care facilities, and “picture postcard” natural surroundings.

Today, Gastonia is connected to all the major markets in the eastern United States by an exceptional highway, air and rail network. Even in its early history, Gastonia’s prime location and accessibility to other areas of the state and region played a key role in its growth and development. The City was established in the late 1800s at the spot where two railroad lines crossed and the location of an early steam-powered textile mill gave rise to the City’s renowned textile industry. Gastonia was incorporated in 1877, and was voted as the county seat of Gaston County in 1911.

By 1910, Gastonia was a thriving industrial center with eleven mills and a population of nearly 6,000. Within the next 25 years, Gastonia became known as the “fine combed cotton capital” of the world. The lasting impact of Gastonia’s historical dominance in the textile industry is reflected in the fact that Gaston County still leads the nation both in the number of spindles in operation and in the number of bales of cotton consumed.

With its strong manufacturing heritage and the work ethic, skill and productivity of its workforce, the City and County’s industrial component has evolved into a modern, highly diversified base with more than 4,000 businesses employing nearly 95,000 workers. As industry has diversified and transportation corridors have developed and multiplied, the service and trade sectors have also become important segments in the mix of businesses, creating a healthy and balanced economy.

Incorporated: 1877
2006 population: 71,349
County: Gaston
www.cityofgastonia.com

Gastonia Utilities:

- Electricity
- Water
- Wastewater

Major Employers:

- Caromont Health Care
- Freightliner
- Wix Filtration Corp.
- Parkdale Mills
- Stabilus
- Wal-Mart
- Gaston County Schools
- Gaston County
- City of Gastonia

Transportation:

- Major highway routes serving Gastonia: I-85, I-77 (25 mi E), I-40 (35 mi N), US 321, US 74, US 29, NC 274, NC 279, and NC 161
- Air: Gastonia Municipal Airport (general aviation), Charlotte-Douglas International Airport
- Rail: Amtrak, Norfolk Southern Railroad



INTERESTING FACTS

Crowder's Mountain State Park, with its breathtaking scenery and sheer vertical cliffs, encompasses more than 5,000 acres, some of it within Gastonia's city limits. The highest point in Gaston County, the park includes streams, wooded areas, and rock outcroppings that create a natural oasis for campers, naturalists, hikers, and rock climbers alike.

Loray Mill, located several blocks west of Gastonia's downtown district, was the largest textile mill under one roof when it was constructed in 1901. The 582,000-square-foot main building is the hub of a surrounding mill village of 343 homes and other structures, which together occupy a total of more than 550 acres. The Loray Mill and Mill Village are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the main mill building is being renovated into a mixed-use community of apartments, condos, retail businesses and a charter school.

Gastonia's Schiele Museum of Natural History features the largest collection of mammal specimens in the Southeast as well as an impressive collection of mineral specimens and cultural artifacts. The Schiele houses five permanent galleries with true-to-life natural history exhibits and outdoor replicas of an Indian village and an 18th century farm. The Museum is also home to the largest planetarium in the Charlotte region, the James H. Lynn Planetarium.

Unity Place, across the street from Gastonia's City Hall, is home not only to St. Stephen's AME Zion Church, but it is also the hub of the arts community in Gaston County. On any given weekday, hundreds of students of all ages stream in and out of classrooms that offer lessons in oil painting, pottery, ballet, voice, and musical instruments from trombone to Celtic fiddle. The restoration of the original 1920s building – and the partnership between the church and the City's art community – played a significant role in the award of the All America City designation to the City of Gastonia.



Downtown Revitalization

Like in many other cities, Gastonia's downtown lost retail stores and businesses during the 1960s, 70s and 80s to a suburban exodus. However, in recent years, fueled by a renewed interest in urban redevelopment, an increasing number of retailers and other small businesses are moving back into Downtown Gastonia. In addition, City investment in renovated office buildings is bolstering and expanding the downtown initiative.

The Gastonia Downtown Development Corporation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation established to support and assist in downtown revitalization, works with property owners, prospective businesses, planners, consultants and others interested in restoring Downtown Gastonia as a desirable and attractive business and community hub. The ultimate goal of downtown revitalization is to reclaim a significant portion of the City's architectural history by producing a vibrant mix of quality retail shops, professional offices, restaurants and entertainment establishments in the heart of the City's downtown historical district.

Attracting 21st Century Jobs

The 350-acre Gastonia Technology Park is a showcase for both the City of Gastonia and Gaston County, demonstrating the community's proactive commitment to future economic development. The Park's high-capacity transportation access – it sits just off US 321, is just one mile north of I-85, 30 miles south of I-40 and 20 miles east of I-77 – enables the Park's tenant businesses to receive and transport goods easily and attract labor from a three or four county area. In addition, the Charlotte Douglas International Airport is only 15 miles away and the City of Gastonia Municipal Airport only 10 miles away.

The Gastonia Technology Park is also an ElectriCities Prime Power Park™ – one of only two in the state – providing standby backup generation, in case of a power outage, at no cost to tenants. Developed by the Gaston County Economic Development Council (EDC) with a campus-like design, the Park features beautiful landscaping, winding roads, sidewalks and seating areas that create a pedestrian-friendly environment. Nearby is Gaston College, a highly rated community college that offers a wide variety of technology education programs and training. All of these amenities are attracting businesses such as Ortronics, the Park's first tenant, a manufacturer of electrical components, that will provide jobs for the City and County's residents well into the 21st century.

