

CORPORATE PROFILE:

Headquartered in scenic Franklin, North Carolina, Drake Software is a rapidly growing tax preparation software company. More than 30,000 tax professionals nationwide use Drake Software. Each year, Drake Software processes more than 9 million federal- and state-accepted returns. The company provides free electronic filing and excellent federal and state programming. Year after year, Drake develops the tools tax professionals need to build successful tax preparation businesses.

Drake Software employs more than 300 people who live in the area.

Drake's award-winning software was named a 2009 Reader's Choice Award winner by CPA Technology Advisor in three categories: Federal/State Income Tax Compliance, Website Builder for Accounting Firms, and Document Management & Storage. In other media rankings, Drake was recognized for its Client Write-Up program, Estate Tax, 1040 Tax, Business Tax, Overall Customer Satisfaction, and Technical Support.

A 2008 NATP (National Association of Tax Professionals) member survey shows Drake Software is an industry leader in customer support satisfaction. When customers need Support, they can expect their phone calls to be answered in less than nine seconds (average response time) by customer representatives and not by an automated answering system. More than 200 highly-trained representatives answer Support phones during peak tax season.



Phil Drake
President & CEO

“Macon County is both a gateway and a hub to the Great Smoky Mountains and is growing at a very rapid pace. Macon County is and will remain a very strong economic community for many years to come.”

DRAKE SOFTWARE

Software Development

Employees: 325+

Customers: More than 30,000



INTRODUCTION



Macon County at a Glance

**Macon County
North Carolina**

POPULATION

Population:	33,756
Projected 2013 Population:	36,414
Annual Growth Rate (2000 to 2008):	10.7%

LABOR

Labor Force:	16,308
2009Q1 Unemployment Rate:	12.2%
Labor Draw Area:	79,418
Average Weekly Wage:	\$551
Average Weekly Wage Manufacturing:	\$659

INCOME AND HOUSING

Median Household Income:	\$39,272
Home Ownership:	81.3%

EDUCATION

Percentage of Population that are High School Graduates:	77.4%
Average SAT Score (2400 Scale):	1,528
Percentage Bachelors Degree or Higher	16.2%
Community College - 1	
High Schools - 3	
Junior High - 1	
Elementary - 8	
Hospitals - 2	
Physicians / 10,000 population - 21	

TAXES

County Property Tax	\$0.245 cents per \$100 of evaluation
Franklin Property Tax	\$0.25 cents per \$100 of evaluation
Highlands Property Tax	\$0.18 cents per \$100 of evaluation

GEOGRAPHY

Land Area (Square Miles):	516.47
Persons Per Square Miles:	57.8
Located in Southern Appalachian Mountains	
Distance to Hartsfield Jackson International Airport in Atlanta, GA	
	139 miles (2 hours 35 minutes)
Distance to Asheville, NC	
	69 miles (1 hour 21 minutes)
Distance to Chattanooga, TN	
	137 miles (2 hours 43 minutes)
Distance to Knoxville, TN	
	108 miles (2 hours 16 minutes)
Distance to Charlotte, NC	
	182 miles (3 hours 17 minutes)

BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Top Private Employers:

Drake Enterprises	Software Development
Angel Medical Center	Healthcare
Highlands-Cashiers Hospital	Healthcare
Zickraf Enterprises	Flooring Manufacturer
Whitley Products	Auto Part Manufacturer
Caterpillar, Inc.	Auto Part Manufacturer
TekTone Sound & Signal Mfg. Inc.	Manufacturer
Wal-Mart Associates	Retail
Lowe's Home Centers	Retail

INTRODUCTION

History

The county was formed in 1828 and was named for Nathaniel Macon, who represented North Carolina in the United States House of Representatives from 1791 to 1815 (serving as Speaker of the House from 1801 to 1807), and in the United States Senate from 1815 to 1828. In 1839 the western part of Macon County became Cherokee County. In 1851 parts of Macon County and Haywood County were combined to form Jackson County.

County Makeup

Franklin, NC

Franklin is the County Seat and is surrounded by beautiful streams, waterfalls, mountains, hills and valleys. The people are friendly and organize lots of activities, including festivals and arts & crafts shows. There are plenty of trails for hiking including the Little Tennessee River Greenway and the views are breathtaking. There is also plenty of fishing, hunting, rafting and kayaking available. Franklin is home to approximately 3,600 citizens, but the population nearly doubles during the spring, summer and fall seasons due to our temperate climate and beautiful scenery. Franklin's geographical position enables us to enjoy cool summer nights and mild winters. With a healthy tourism industry and lots of local people taking an active roll in the community, there is always exciting activities and places to go. Visit the Franklin Main Street Program for more information.

Highlands, NC

Highlands is the highest incorporated town east of the Mississippi River at 4,118 feet and is located in one of the few temperate rain forests in North America. Population ranges from 3,200 year round residents and swells to over 18,000 during the summer and early autumn. Highlands is well known for its cooler climate year round and magnificent golf courses. Natural wonders also abound including waterfalls and scenic vistas. Highlands is listed as the 499th most expensive zip code in the United States in Forbes Magazine.

Nantahala, NC

The name in Cherokee means "Noon Day Sun". This virtually unspoiled paradise west of Franklin features lake and mountain living at its finest. The Nantahala area features superb fly fishing waters, waterfalls and whitewater river rafting. This community offers a great way to truly enjoy the four seasons from the wildflowers in the spring to magnificent color in the fall.

CORPORATE PROFILE:

BalsamWest FiberNET is a fiber optic-based, wholesale and enterprise telecommunications carrier in Western North Carolina. Founded in 2003, BalsamWest is jointly owned by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and Drake enterprises, Ltd. and is the leading provider of broadband services via SONET & Ethernet service as well as the leading provider of collocation and Interconnection Services in the region. With over 300 miles of underground fiber serving 10 counties in NC, GA & TN, BalsamWest is the first provider in the region to offer protected services that are not only redundant but geographically diverse with connections to major data hubs in Atlanta and Charlotte. The primary backbone is made up of Cisco SONET equipment operation at OC-192.

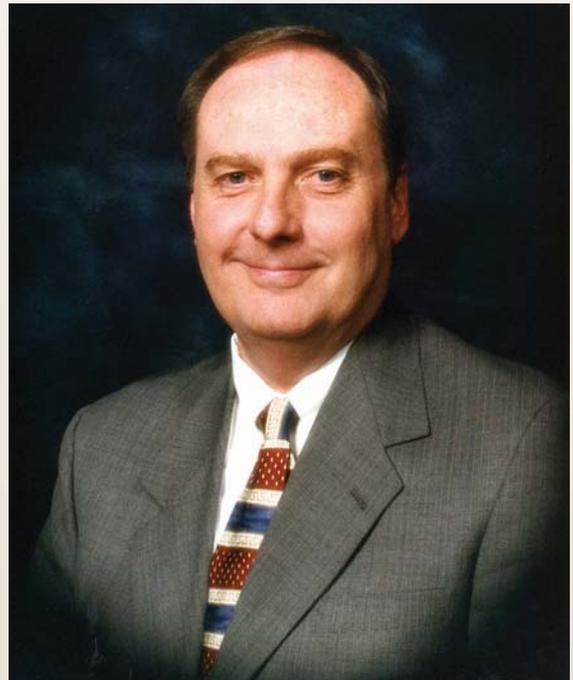
BalsamWest has enabled low-cost access to high capacity bandwidth for Internet service, security and phone services as well high demand applications such as video, data and distance learning. The mission of BalsamWest is to bring 21st century communications to Western North Carolina that previously has not been available in rural areas. In 2010 BalsamWest will establish additional fiber connections to Asheville and Knoxville and also deploy DWDM technology, further insuring the regions redundancy and availability for 21st century business.

"I am excited about the technology opportunities that BalsamWest brings to the businesses and citizens of our mountainous region. Our BalsamWest network infrastructure has been engineered to provide the level of connectivity that is typically only available in larger urban areas. Businesses and organizations now have access to greater bandwidth capacities and reliable connectivity for high speed Internet, data applications, and voice services at more affordable rates. I am extremely proud and excited to be associated with an initiative that impacts so much of western North Carolina, eastern Tennessee, and northern Georgia, by allowing us all to live and work in one of the most beautiful parts of the world and having the same access to connectivity and technology found in larger cities."

BALSAMWEST FIBERNET

Fiber Optic Based Broadband Company
Employees: 12

- Provides 10 counties in NC, GA and TN with uninterrupted data services with connections to primary data hubs located at 56 Marietta Street in Atlanta, Charlotte, and Knoxville
- Deployed more than 300 miles of underground fiber made up of Cisco 15454 operating OC-192 the blazing speed of 10 gigabits.



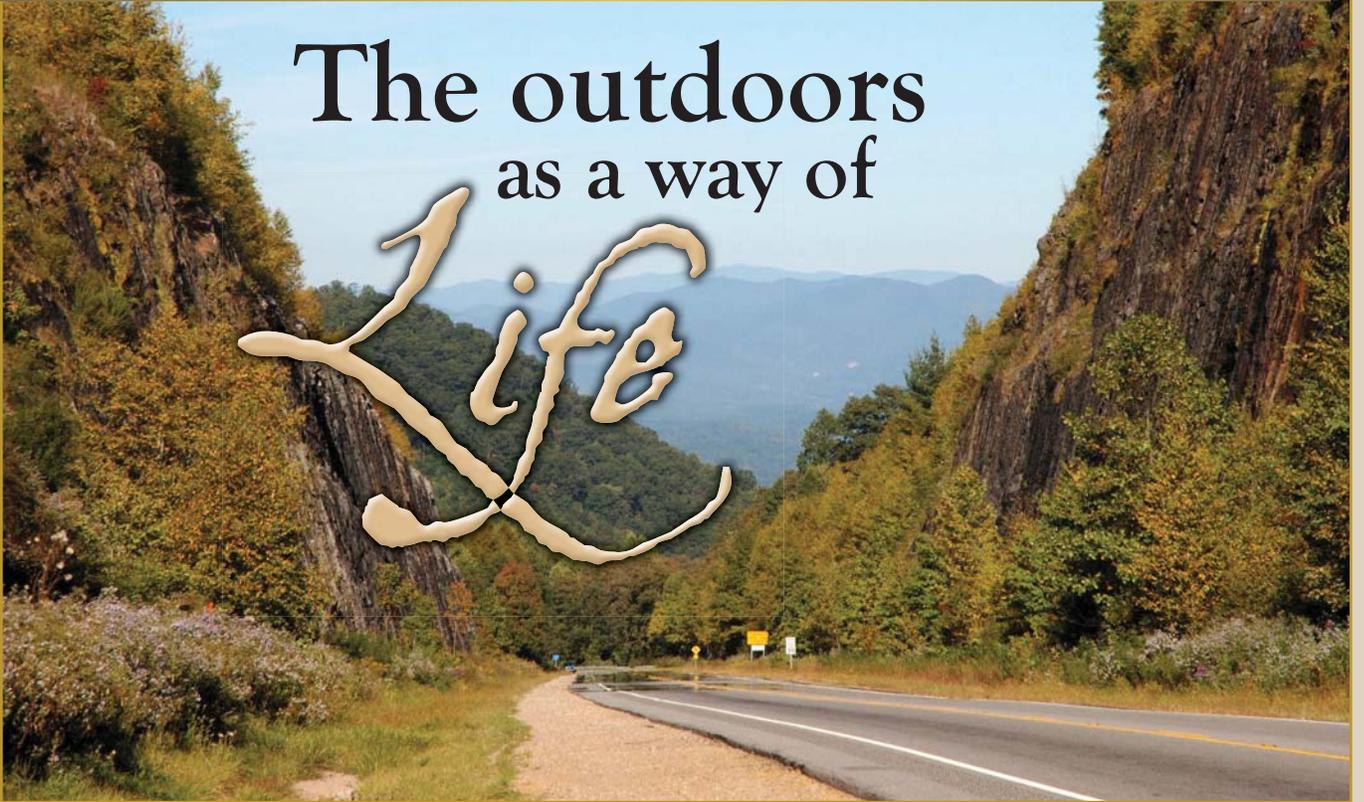
Jim Campbell, CTO
Vice President of Network Operations


BalsamWest FiberNET
Access to Advancement

QUALITY OF LIFE

The outdoors as a way of

Life



Nearly half of Macon County lies within the Nantahala National Forest. Comprised of over a half-million acres of unspoiled beauty, this magnificent forest is just waiting to be explored. The Nantahala is the largest of the four national forests in North Carolina.

The rolling mountains rise to a series of peaks over 5,000 feet high from the valley of the Little Tennessee River, creating spectacular vistas and a richness of natural beauty that have entranced visitors since the 18th Century.

You are steps away from canoeing on the Little Tennessee River; kayaking or rafting on the Nantahala River; or fly fishing in hundreds of pristine creeks, streams and rivers that call Macon County Home. If hiking is your passion, Macon County is home to 60 miles of the Appalachian Trail and another 40 miles of side trails that interconnect with the "AT."

A rare and hidden gem in Macon County is the Bartram Trail. Named for American Botanist William Bartram, who documented the native flora and fauna of the area in 1775, Bartram Trail climbs into the mountains, inviting hikers to take the steps of one of the areas most notable explorers.

