



AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BLUEPRINT FOR BRUNSWICK COUNTY

DEVELOPED IN PARTNERSHIP BY
BRUNSWICK COUNTY IDA &
BRUNSWICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

October, 2007
K. W. Poore & Associates, Inc.

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INTRODUCTION

Economic development in its simplest form can be defined as the creation of economic wealth so that all citizens have access to potential increased quality of life. It pertains to a sustainable increase in living standards brought about by an economic system of vital commerce and industry that generate and retain well paying jobs and sustain a growing tax base to support public services.

Brunswick County is currently faced with economic challenges resulting from a significant lost of businesses over the past decade and beyond; as well as having to transition from an economy strongly dependent upon agri-business, particularly tobacco farming. Further, like many other rural Southside Virginia communities and localities everywhere, Brunswick County must find ways to compete in a growing global economy where rapid changes in technology define virtually every aspect of commerce and industry.

In this project, *An Economic Development Blueprint for Brunswick County*, the focus is on examining the County's strengths and weaknesses, and working with the community to define a plan of action for setting and achieving economic development goals in the short-term and long-term. Visioning sessions were held to obtain broad-based community input; while one-on-one discussions were held with a number of political, community, and business leaders.

Research and analysis included exploring economic development practices from many different perspectives. While the impact of local commerce and trade is key to a strong economy, in order to achieve growth, it is important to look beyond this. One of the most important factors considered was the process whereby greater wealth is created in the community by bringing in new "outside" dollars. This is achieved by the retention, expansion, and recruitment of businesses that produce goods and provide services for customers that are predominately outside the community. This is defined by some as the "export" component of the economic base of a locality. This type of commerce and industry generate local jobs and expand the local tax base.

The "primary" jobs created by bringing new dollars into a community through the "export" sale of goods and services provide an important multiplier effect. An employer pays his employees and purchase necessary supplies which begin the turnover cycle of the dollars within the local community. These "primary" jobs could also help ease the tax burden on current residents and provide additional government resources for capital projects. With the ever increasing cost of providing public services and needed capital improvements, an expanding base of new jobs and new dollars helps spread that cost across a larger pool. Once these new dollars flow into the local economy, they also create "indirect" or "spin-off" jobs such as retail or professional services to meet the needs of the employees, once again helping spread out the tax burden.

Additionally, economic development that creates new jobs requires business creation and attraction and the investment of new capital. This typically involves the efforts of an “economic developer” that markets a community to targeted businesses and industries, provides information and assistance to companies that are interested in the community, and works with elected officials and community partners to create a positive business environment. As the economic developer for Brunswick County, the Brunswick County Industrial Authority (IDA) has to be constantly fine-tuning its strategies to meet the challenges within the County and those impacting it from the outside. The IDA and Brunswick County Government also have to look for opportunities to build consensus around economic development strategies that are workable and supportable by the citizens of the County.

In 2003 the IDA worked with Leak-Goforth, LLC and URBANOMICS, Inc. to examine the economic development atmosphere within Brunswick County. One of the recommendations of that report was for the County to develop a countywide vision through a community visioning process. In keeping with this recommendation, the IDA procured the services of K. W. Poore & Associates, Inc., a Richmond-based planning firm to assist in putting together a countywide economic development vision. The planning process followed to create *An Economic Development Blueprint for Brunswick County* is an intentional effort by the IDA and K. W. Poore & Associates, Inc. to build on the work of the Leak-Goforth team.

The purpose of this report is reflected in its format. First, because the intent of the visioning process was to engage the County's citizens, *An Economic Development Blueprint* is presented in a format easily accessible to the general public, both those that are well-versed in economic development and those that are not. Participants in the public input sessions will see their handiwork in this report and will recognize that its contents are intended to create common ground and common direction based on their input.

Second, is the way in which data is utilized. This report is not an attempt to repeat the data collection of the Leak-Goforth team. Compiled in 2003, much of the data assembled by the Leak-Goforth team is still accurate today. Where updated data was needed or particular data was added, it has been woven into this report in a number of places. The reader will not find exhaustive data tables on the following pages, but will rather find targeted data that helps zero in on particular issues of note.

Third, is the specificity of the strategies and action plans outlined in this report. The IDA and Brunswick County Government requested that this report not only provide answers as to what ought to be done to improve the economic development efforts of the County, but where, how, and when.

The planning work done to assemble *An Economic Development Blueprint* took place during June through October, 2007 and included:

- Three Visioning Public Meetings at:
 - Brunswick County High School in Lawrenceville on July 31
 - Southside Virginia Community College's Workforce Development Center in Alberta on September 5
 - Ebony Fire and Rescue Squad building on September 12
- Participation in two meetings of the Brunswick Chamber of Commerce as it worked to develop its priorities for the coming years.
- Conversations and interviews with:
 - Brunswick County Leaders
 - Alberta, Brodnax, and Lawrenceville Leadership
 - Business and Industrial Leaders
 - Educational Leadership
 - The Executive Director of the Southside Planning District Commission
 - Staff of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership
- A general field survey of the County examining general conditions, available community assets, obstacles that might hinder economic development, and the condition of residential, commercial, and vacant property.
- Research and data mining on Brunswick County and the economic challenges and opportunities it faces including a review of state, national, and international trends which might impact Brunswick County.
- Planning and coordination with a team from Virginia Commonwealth University's (VCU) Masters in Urban and Regional Planning program that had been engaged to update the County's Enterprise Zone program.
- Brainstorming sessions with the Brunswick County Administrator and the Executive Director of the IDA.

An Economic Development Blueprint is organized into five main sections:

- **Assets** found in Brunswick County that are supportive of economic development presented in nine categories.
- **Obstacles** to economic development faced by Brunswick County presented in eight categories.
- **Opportunities** for economic development within Brunswick County.
- An **Economic Development Vision** around which County residents can rally.
- **Strategies and Action Plans**, presented in outline form, in an implementation grid, and through a map outlining where key strategies and action plans are to be implemented.

An **Executive Summary** is provided immediately after this introduction for the reader's convenience. In the **Appendix** will be found the complete results of the Visioning Public Meetings.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE & METHODOLOGY

The Brunswick County Industrial Development Authority procured the services of K. W. Poore & Associates, Inc. to assist with developing a countywide vision for economic development through a community visioning process. This effort was undertaken as a follow-up to a recommendation made in a 2003 report compiled by Leak-Goforth, LLC and URBANOMICS, Inc. K. W. Poore worked from June through October, 2007 in putting together this report. Their work included:

- Three Visioning Public Meetings held on July 31, September 5, and September 12 in three different locations throughout the County.
- Participation in meetings of the Brunswick Chamber of Commerce.
- Conversations and interviews with community and business/industrial leaders.
- A general survey of the County.
- Research and data mining on the County and its economic challenges and opportunities.
- Planning and coordination with a VCU team reviewing the County's Enterprise Zone.
- Brainstorming sessions with Brunswick County Administrator and the Executive Director of the IDA.

ASSETS

The research and community input highlighted the sizable assets in Brunswick County that can be enhanced and built upon so as to spur economic development. They were summarized in nine categories:

- A Central Geographic Location
- An Extensive Transportation Network
- A High-Speed Broadband Network
- A Stable Industrial Base
- Strong Forestry Production
- Significant Educational Institutions
- Affordable Land
- Available Water Resources
- A Rural/Small Town Quality of Life
- Attractive Cultural & Recreational Amenities

OBSTACLES

The research and community input also identified that Brunswick County is facing significant obstacles to economic development. Those were summarized in eight categories:

- Limited Water & Sewer Utilities
- Lack of Available Industrial Buildings/Construction Ready Sites
- The Challenge of Developing the Workforce Needed for the County's Current & Future Economies
- Vacant or Underutilized Buildings
- Inadequate Housing Stock
- Insufficient Hospitality Services
- Lack of Market Visibility
- Lack of Coordinated Effort

An additional view of the assets and obstacles in Brunswick County was provided by scoring the County according to the Site Selection and Quality of Life Factors utilized in an annual survey conduct by *Area Development Magazine*. On a scale from 1 to 10 the County scored a 7.9 on Site Selection Factors and a 7.0 on Quality of Life Factors.

OPPORTUNITIES

The research and community input determined that there are a number of economic development opportunities on the horizon for Brunswick County. They are:

- Logistics, Warehousing, & Distribution
- Growth & Development in Neighboring Localities
- Tourism & Quality of Life Improvements
- Production, Storage, & Distribution of Biofuels
- Commonwealth of Virginia Resources to Assist with Affordable Housing Needs

AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION

A Vision for Economic Development in Brunswick County was formed based on community input as follows:

Brunswick County will proactively target economic development opportunities in high profile growth corridors and commit resources to strategic economic development projects that unite young & old, blue collar & professional, lifelong resident & newcomers, quaint town & lakeside community, farm & factory, small business & industrial giant for the success of the County and its residents.

STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS

The following strategies represent the Economic Development Blueprint for Brunswick County. The strategies and detailed action plans for each strategy are outlined and included in this report in outline form, via an Implementation Timeline, and as a map of Key Strategies and Action Plans.

Strategy #1: Create an Economic Development Coordinating Council to bring together private and non-profit leaders with public sector leadership to coordinate economic development efforts and to develop economic development partnerships.

Strategy #2: Develop a unified marketing plan and provide ongoing funding for marketing materials and recruitment efforts.

Strategy #3: Expand existing and develop new public water and sewer utilities to spur economic development in the four high profile growth corridors of greatest potential. (Exit #39 on I-85 for interstate oriented commercial use and hospitality; the Lake Gaston communities of Gasburg and Ebony for residential, commercial, and hospitality use; the U. S. Route 58 corridor east of Lawrenceville for large scale industrial use; the Alberta/I-85 Business Center Park area for warehousing and distribution.)

Strategy #4: Develop and expand the I-85 Business Center Park targeting warehousing and distribution industries.

Strategy #5: Gain control of key properties in the U. S. Route 58 corridor east of Lawrenceville targeting large scale industrial concerns.

Strategy #6: Develop low- and moderate-income housing and market rate housing in cooperation with non-profit, for-profit, and state housing and community development partners.

Strategy #7: Strengthen the tourism industry by targeting resources to strategic tourism venues and hospitality projects.

Strategy #8: Target the production, storage, and distribution of biofuels as Brunswick County's growth industry for the future.

ASSETS

Brunswick County already has many assets in place that provide a strong base for economic development. It has additional assets that can be enhanced and built on to create even stronger development and growth opportunities in the future. The County's assets are presented under the following ten categories.

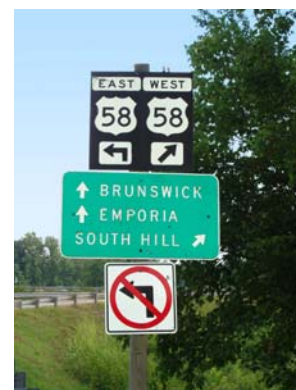
A CENTRAL GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Brunswick is in the very enviable position of being centrally located to and accessible from several major markets and close to important transportation hubs. It is only 75 miles to Richmond, including the Port of Richmond and Richmond International Airport, 100 miles to Norfolk with the multiple Port of Virginia facilities and the Norfolk International Airport, and 85 miles to Raleigh/Durham and the Raleigh/Durham International Airport.

AN EXTENSIVE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK



Brunswick County is fortunate to have three major United States highways traverse the County. I-85, a major interstate corridor connecting Central Virginia to the central North Carolina metro areas and Atlanta, crosses the County from the northeast to the southwest with five intersections within the County. According to 2005 Virginia Department of Transportation tabulations, I-85 traffic counts in the County range from 10,000 to 13,000 vehicles per day, depending on location and direction, with 21% to 25% of the traffic being trucks with one or more trailers. U. S. Route 1 parallels I-85 and though no longer used as through highway, provides local access to many Brunswick communities and serves as a connector to the interstate. Just as busy as I-85 is U. S. Route 58, which serves as a major highway across Southside Virginia and connects points east of Brunswick County to the ports in Hampton Roads. Traffic counts range from 9,300 to 16,000 vehicles per day, depending on location and direction. The truck traffic on U. S. 58 is lighter than on I-85 with only 10% of the traffic being trucks with one or more trailers. An additional important highway route is State Route 46. Though it is only a 2-lane road, it serves as an important link to I-85 and as a north-south connector in the County. Its traffic count ranges from 1,500 vehicles per day at the North Carolina line to 8,900 vehicles per day at its downtown



Lawrenceville intersection with U. S. Business 58. Of growing significance, Route 46 connects Brunswick County to Roanoke Rapids, the site of the new Carolina Crossroads entertainment venue.

Norfolk Southern continues to maintain a rail line from the ports of southern Hampton Roads to just east of Lawrenceville that serves Lawrenceville Brick and Vulcan's Lawrenceville Quarry. It is significant that this important asset has been maintained because the line extends to the

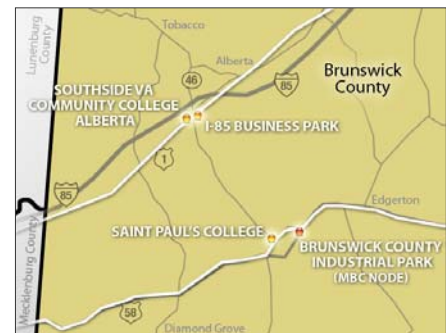


Port of Virginia in Hampton Roads and the many industrial sites on the south side of the port. Many rural communities have lost all of their rail connections, so the continued presence of Norfolk Southern gives the County a competitive

edge over other locations. This is particularly true, because when combined with the road network in place, intermodal transportation facilities become a strong possibility for the County.

A HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND NETWORK

Through funding provide by the Virginia Tobacco Commission the Mid-Atlantic Broadband Cooperative (MBC) was formed in 2003 as a public/private cooperative venture to install and operate an open-access broadband network throughout Southside Virginia in order to provide high-speed internet access to the businesses and residents of the area. Over 700 miles of broadband cable form the backbone of the network including sections along I-85 and U. S. Route 58. Con-nections have been established to the I-85 Business Center Park property and the Brunswick County Industrial Park which hosts one of the nodes of the system.



MBC Network in Brunswick County

A STABLE INDUSTRIAL BASE

Brunswick County has some very stable and successful businesses. Locally owned manufacturing facilities include Lawrenceville Brick, Inc., founded in 1946 during the post-WWII housing boom. Employing 140 and with exports to thirty states plus Canada, Lawrenceville Brick manufactures 1% of the brick used in the



United States annually in its highly mechanized facilities. Brunswick Ice and Coal Company, Inc., founded in 1929, continues to manufacture and distribute purified ice from its Lawrenceville plant. Pecht Distributors, a spin-off of Brunswick Ice and Coal, serves as the distributor of Anheuser Busch products. These two firms employ 35 people with 8 to 10 people added during the summer season.

Virginia-Carolina Forest Products, Inc., was founded in 1991 with the purchase of the former Ezell Lumber Company by Mr. Owen M. Strickler, III. Employing 70 people at its facility east of Lawrenceville, Virginia-Carolina also utilizes the services of numerous contract loggers throughout Brunswick County and the region. Depending on trends in the housing industry, Virginia-Carolina has produced as much as 22 million board feet of lumber annually, a portion of which is exported through the Port of Virginia. The Brunswick Box Company, Inc. was founded in 1952 originally to manufacture wooden boxes used in the export of tobacco. The company continues today under local ownership employing 90 people in the manufacturing of wood pallets, lumber, specialty wood products, and colorized mulch. Other locally owned and operated lumber manufacturers in Brunswick County include the Brodnax Lumber Company and Upton Lumber Company in Alberta.

Industrial facilities in Brunswick County operated by outside interests include the Lawrenceville Quarry operated by the Vulcan Construction Materials Company, a mulch plant operated by the Scotts Company, and the Brunswick County Landfill operated by Allied Waste Industries. Also, an INGENCO



facility that generates electricity from the gas produced at the landfill was recently completed. The presence of these successful industries are an asset for the community in and by themselves. They also provide an additional benefit in that their presence can attract other industries to the area because they indicate a climate that is conducive to industrial development. In particular, the lumber industry's presence in the County constitutes an industrial cluster that places Brunswick County in a leading position in Virginia in the forestry products industry.

STRONG FORESTRY PRODUCTION



Brunswick County has traditionally been an agricultural county. Agriculture has a smaller impact on the County than it once had, but is still an important part of the County's economy, particularly forestry production. According to the Virginia Department of Forestry, Brunswick County had the highest

average harvest value in Virginia with an average of \$12,905,170 added to the local economy annually from 1986 to 2001 through the harvesting of trees. The asset represented by this level of forestry production is also extended to those commercial enterprises that exist to process timber for the market and transport raw material and finished product. As noted previously, there is a sizable cluster of lumber businesses in Brunswick County relative to the population of the County because of the County's leading position in the timber industry.

SIGNIFICANT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS



SVCC Christanna Campus

Brunswick County is fortunate to have two institutions of higher learning. The Southside Virginia Community College (SVCC) Christanna Campus is the 26th fastest growing community college in the nation. Led by Dr. John J. Cavan since 1983, the school has sought to be flexible in order to provide the training needed by local industry. With emphases on dual enrollment students from local high schools, GED students, middle college students (those studying towards a Bachelor's degree), and students needing technical training, SVCC is able to provide diplomas, mini-certificates, certificates, and Associate of Arts degrees to a broad range of students in 65 different disciplines. SVCC, in partnership with the Southside Planning District Commission, created the Lake Country Advanced Knowledge Center, which provides classrooms, a computer lab, a distance learning classroom, a science lab, a high-performance manufacturing center, a welding lab, and an industrial training center at its South Hill facility, just west of Brunswick County. These are available to existing and new industries as a hands-on training facility. High school students from the area, including Brunswick County, participate in the Dual Enrollment High Performance Technology Program, which allows them to graduate with both their high school diploma and an Associate of Art's degree. The staff motto at SVCC is, "We'll do anything, go anywhere, at anytime...just get us 12 students." Dr. Cavan demonstrated how SVCC has lived out that value citing the occasion where it provided a course for nurses after the late shift at Community Memorial Healthcenter in South Hill.



**Lake Country
Advanced Knowledge Center**

St. Paul's College, led by Dr. Robert L. Satcher, Sr., is a private, liberal arts college associated with the Episcopal Church, USA and the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia. A historically black college, St. Paul's offers Bachelor of Arts degrees in six areas and Bachelor of Science degrees in



ten areas. Its strongest majors include Business Administration, Criminal Justice, and Education. Ninety percent of the students receive scholarships, grants, work-study, or loans, making the college experience within the reach of many needy students from across the state and Southside Virginia. As an example of how St. Paul's is a real

asset to the community, the College provides Presidential Scholarships to sixteen graduating high school students each year, one each from the sixteen Southside Virginia high schools. Coupled with Community Tuition Grants available to Southside Virginia residents and Tuition Assistance Grants available to Virginia residents who attend a Virginia private college or university, these students are able to attend St. Paul's at very little cost. St. Paul's enrollment goal for the 2007-2008 academic year is 800 students. In addition to its role as an educational institution in the community, St. Paul's is also a major employer in Brunswick County. Its 167 full- and part-time employees make it the fifth largest employer in the County.

AFFORDABLE LAND

One of the greatest assets in Brunswick County is the amount of undeveloped land, much of it adjacent to the transportation network already in place. While there are areas that have been subdivided into small lots, particularly in or near the County's three towns and near Lake Gaston, there are many larger parcels still

intact. Developers, whether retail, commercial, industrial, or residential, prefer to work with larger tracts of land because it makes the assembling of land for a project much easier to accomplish. Additionally, industries typically look for tracts of at least 25 acres with larger industries often starting their search at 100 acres and mega sites requiring 1,000 acres.



Undeveloped land is not only available, but is also reasonably priced. A search of land for sale in Brunswick County the first week of October 2007 yielded prices as low as \$1,250 per acre for forested land with poor access to \$7,000-\$8,000 per acre for developable residential lots. A significant amount of better situated land was available for between \$2,000 and \$5,000 per acre. A 9.9 acre parcel on

the edge of Brodnax with 540 feet of frontage on U. S. Route 58 was being offered at \$8,000 per acre. Other parcels are available on U. S. Route 58 including 29 acres near Lawrenceville for lease as a part of Brunswick Square Phase II and acreage between Lawrenceville and Brodnax. In contrast, parcels in more established industrial parks and in or near metropolitan areas typically sell at a premium. The rising cost of land in these locations will likely bring developers to Brunswick County in the future as they look for more affordable land.

Land near Lake Gaston is available as well, but the asking prices are much higher because of ongoing lakefront and nearby residential development. During the first week of October 2007, parcels in the Lake Gaston area ranged in asking price from \$36,600 per acre for a parcel near the Lake to \$289,000 per acre for a parcel on the Lake. Even with these higher prices, residential development in the area will continue because of the appeal of Lake Gaston and significant opportunities exist for retail and commercial development in support of the Lake Gaston residents on numerous vacant parcels.

The IDA also has land available in the two industrial parks it operates and in the park jointly operated with Mecklenburg County. The Brunswick County Industrial park with infrastructure in place has 46 acres available. The I-85 Business Center Park, with a total of 114 available acres and infrastructure in the planning stage, will have larger parcels



available with access to U. S. Route 1 and a nearby interchange with I-85. Additionally, the Southeast High Speed Rail corridor passes through the park and would offer additional transportation options in the future. The jointly owned Roanoke River Regional Business Park, just west of Brodnax, has 275 acres available ranging in price from \$20,000 to \$25,000 per acre. Land in the industrial parks is typically discounted if the new industry is making a significant investment and creating a sizable number of new jobs.

According to *Area Development* magazine's "21st Corporate Survey, 2006," the cost of land is ranked 11th and the availability of land is ranked 14th among 25 factors when selecting a new business/industry site. This puts Brunswick County in a very competitive position in regard to land availability and price.

AVAILABLE WATER RESOURCES

The most readily available water resource is Great Creek and the Great Creek Reservoir. The Town of Lawrenceville and Alberta currently draw their public water from Great Creek/Reservoir. It is estimated that Great Creek could supply an additional 1.2 MGD in water treated through the Lawrenceville Water Treatment Plant if called upon.



Great Creek Reservoir

Brunswick County is fortunate to have additional water resources upon which it can draw. At the writing of this report, the Timmons Group has just been asked to update a water and sewer study they did for the County in 2000 which should help delineate the availability of water from the County's various resources. Forming the northern border of the County is the Nottoway River. The potential for water from the Nottoway is limited because it is the source of public water for Blackstone, parts of Nottoway County, Victoria, Kenbridge, and parts of Lunenburg County. Downstream, it is also the source of Emporia's water. The Nottoway watershed does include the Fort Pickett Reservoir, originally built for the operations of the Army outpost, but now utilized by Blackstone's public utilities department. The reservoir is a potential source of water, but the distance to potential areas of development are sizeable.



Nottoway River at Route 46

The Meherrin River is untapped by a public entity in the County and has been designated as a State Scenic River. Though the Meherrin is subject



Canoeing on the Meherrin

to low flows during drought conditions, Brunswick County secured a Virginia Water Protection Permit in March, 2002 to withdraw 8.2 million gallons per day (MGD) from the river and construct a 250 million gallon reservoir in order to sell water to Kinder Morgan Virginia, LLC. In 2001-2002 Kinder Morgan was moving forward with plans for a 560 megawatt natural gas-fired power generating station in the southeastern corner of the County that would have required an average daily water use of 3.2 MGD, with a peak of 3.8 MGD during summer months. Unfortunately, Kinder Morgan abandoned its plans when the wholesale electricity market changed. Even

in dry conditions, the research conducted by Kinder Morgan and the County indicated that the flow of the Meherrin remained 16 MGD. With the Water Protection Permit still in force until March, 2017, this is an asset still available to the County.

The southern end of Brunswick County has a water resource in Lake Gaston and the Lake Gaston Pipeline that could possibly be tapped. The lake Gaston Pipeline draws up to 60 MGD per day from the Lake to provide water to the southern portion of Hampton Roads and communities on both the Virginia and North Carolina sides of Lake Gaston and Buggs Island Lake withdraw water as well, so additional permits to draw water from the Lake or the pipeline would be difficult to obtain. Treated water, however, could be purchased from the Roanoke River Water Authority or from Northampton County across the lake in North Carolina according to the 2000 Timmons study, with each of these resources having extra capacity. Participants in the Ebony Visioning Public Meeting indicated that their wells provide plenty of water in the lakeside communities and the greater need is public sewer services to encourage economic development. However, any larger scale development along the Lake would still require an adequate and reliable source of fresh water as well as a public sewer utility.

An additional source of water is the Lawrenceville Quarry operated by the Vulcan Construction Materials Company, particularly for industrial use. Vulcan has been very accommodating on the several occasions it was approached about tapping the water released through its mining operations for an industrial prospect.

A RURAL/SMALL TOWN QUALITY OF LIFE

Brunswick County has a land mass of 579 square miles and a population of 18,419 (31.8 persons per square mile) according to the 2000 Census. This provides an atmosphere of "quietude," as one Visioning Public Meeting participant described it. Not to be overlooked, this sense of a rural, peaceful setting dotted by small towns is a significant asset



Downtown Lawrenceville

that can be built upon. The Town of Lawrenceville with its National Register historic downtown district still maintains its small town charm. In the 21st century with the availability of high speed and wireless connections to the internet, many individuals are looking to work out of their homes either as an independent entrepreneur, connected to a home office an hour's commute away, or in retirement as a consultant continuing to work within their career field. Many of these home-based entrepreneurs are looking for quieter settings like that offered by Brunswick



Boats on Lake Gaston



Three Angels Inn



Welcome to Brunswick!



The "Gholson" Iron Bridge

County and its small towns. A number of comments were made during the Visioning Public Meetings about people moving to the County who continue to work as consultants, either full-time or in semi-retirement. This is particularly true of those moving down from Northern Virginia or returning home to Southside Virginia after a career away from home.

ATTRACTIVE CULTURAL & RECREATIONAL AMENITIES

Lake Gaston is probably the most widely known asset in Brunswick County. Its 20,300 acres and 350 miles of shoreline provide an unparalleled amenity to communities along its shore in both Virginia and North Carolina. Though the North Carolina side of Lake Gaston is more developed, the Lake has been a strong engine for the economy of Brunswick County, particularly on the southern end of the County, as residents moved into the area, homes were built, and businesses were created to serve them. Twenty-two percent of the real estate tax revenue for the County comes from the communities along the shore of Lake Gaston.

In addition to Lake Gaston, there are other cultural and recreational amenities scattered across the County. The County has numerous stops along the Civil Rights in Education Heritage Trail, the Civil War Trail, and the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail. One of the Civil Rights in Education Trail sites, Fort Christanna, which dates to 1713, is in the process of being improved and developed to be much more visitor friendly. Another stop, the former Hospital of the Good Shepherd at Sherwood Plantation, has been converted to a bed and breakfast called the Three Angels Inn. An additional bed and breakfast, the Brunswick Mineral Spring Bed and Breakfast Inn, is east of Lawrenceville. The old County Courthouse with its Greek Revival architecture serves as a historic cornerstone for Lawrenceville and Brunswick County. Altogether, the County has twelve sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The upgraded County Park at Great Creek is a wonderful location for a fishing expedition or picnic lunch situated just a few minutes from downtown Lawrenceville. It will eventually be connected by a walking trail to the Tobacco Heritage Trail, as it is constructed along the abandoned railroad right-of-way west of Lawrenceville. No discussion of Brunswick County's cultural amenities would be complete without mentioning that it is the "Original Home of Brunswick Stew," the history of which is featured on historical markers as you enter the County. This unique southern delicacy is served by Brunswick County's stew masters at the State Fair, special occasions at the Capital in Richmond, and at the Taste of Brunswick Festival in the fall of each year.

Even less obvious facilities serve as important amenities for the County. An abandoned quarry now known as Lake Rawlings has become known throughout the Mid-Atlantic for its scuba diving facilities. Novices and experts alike flock to Lake Rawlings during warm weather weekends to dive in its clear water, exploring "wrecks" placed in the water by the

proprietor and feeding the very friendly fish. Several underwater movie scenes have been filmed there. An intact, old iron bridge, the Gholson Bridge, on Route 715, Iron Bridge Road, south of Lawrenceville is not easily found, but is a rare structure treasured by historians and civil engineers alike. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it is worthy of being highlighted even more by being nominated as a National Civil Engineering Historical Landmark.

OBSTACLES

The assets delineated in the previous section of this report paint a positive picture of Brunswick County. It is by design that this report started with assets because building on existing assets provides quick return. Tackling obstacles to economic development is necessary, but a much slower, long-term process. The following eight broadly identified obstacles must be addressed in order to create a sustainable economic development atmosphere that continues on beyond just one or two successful projects.

LIMITED WATER & SEWER UTILITIES



Within Brunswick County there are only three areas with public water and sewer—Lawrenceville and the surrounding area which operates its own water and sewer utilities, Alberta which purchases water from Lawrenceville and operates its own sewage treatment plant, and Brodnax which receives its water and sewer services through the Roanoke River Service Authority. Even where these systems are in place, the expansions necessary for robust economic development are limited because of current treatment and/or delivery capacity according to the 2000 Timmons study,

The lakeshore communities around Lake Gaston in the southern end of the County are not served by water and sewer utilities, which limits the growth potential in the area, particularly as compared to the North Carolina side of the Lake, where water and sewer utilities are available. The greatest concern expressed by those attending the Visioning Public Meeting at the Ebony Volunteer Fire and Rescue Squad was the need for public water and sewer. The lack of public water and sewer in the County was also expressed as a major concern in both the Brunswick County High School and SVCC Visioning Public Meetings.

Of the five I-85 interchanges, public water and sewer is available only at the two Alberta interchanges. Growth is occurring at the Rawlings interchange at exit #39 with expansion of the older gas station into a larger Davis Travel Center, but future expansion is limited because of the lack of public utilities. Any public utilities put in place at exit #39 could also be expanded to serve the Warfield interchange at exit #34. As will be noted later in this section, drivers on I-85 don't notice that they are driving through Brunswick County because there is very little to attract their attention. Typically, commercial development at the interchanges



and their associated signage serve as “place markers” along interstate routes. Without major development around most of the County’s I-85 interchanges, Brunswick’s “place” has not been established in the traveling/tourist market utilizing the I-85 corridor.

LACK OF AVAILABLE INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS/ CONSTRUCTION READY SITES

While land is affordable and available in Brunswick County, very little is ready for quick use by incoming industry outside of the industrial parks. The Brunswick Industrial Park offers land with infrastructure in place, but the available acreage would restrict its use to smaller industrial concerns. The I-85 Business Center Park offers larger



parcels, but its infrastructure is just now being put in place. The Roanoke River Regional Business Park offers the best possibilities at the moment with sufficient acreage and infrastructure already in place. Those factors led to the recent addition of the first tenant to the park, the American Industrial Heat Transfer, Inc., which is building a new manufacturing facility at the site.

One area of Brunswick County that has been targeted for industrial development by the IDA and in the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan is land adjacent to or near U. S. Route 58 east of Lawrenceville. While ideal for industrial development because of road and rail access and the general topography of the area, none of this land has been optioned or is in public control so that it could be quickly made available to an industrial concern. This prime land has therefore not been cleared or graded for development and currently lacks public water and sewer (though Lawrenceville utilities could be extended east of Town). This is the case in other prime industrial locations in the County as well.

Also of concern is the lack of vacant commercial or industrial buildings on the market in Brunswick County. A search conducted the first week of October 2007 did not find any commercial or industrial space publicly listed. While some buildings might be for sale, their availability is not widely known. Even a quick search of industrial buildings listed as available across Virginia via the Virginia Economic Development Partnership website indicates that many are available in Southside Virginia with good access to the highway network. While some of those buildings are dated and inadequate, others are more modern with a few being located within an established industrial park. The availability of these buildings presents a challenge to Brunswick County’s desire to attract new industrial concerns. The IDA may need to construct a shell building to attract a new industry, or at a minimum, make sure it has the resources in place to assist a new industry with putting up needed facilities quickly.

THE CHALLENGE OF DEVELOPING THE WORKFORCE NEEDED FOR THE COUNTY'S CURRENT & FUTURE ECONOMIES



A common refrain in conversations with business and industrial leaders in the community was that they had a number of long-term, hard-working employees. However, they also indicated that finding new workers was a real problem. It was also indicated that the kind of job skills needed are no longer taught in vocational/technical education in the public schools. Even with the success of SVCC and its many training opportunities, the business/industrial leaders indicated that much of the training offered through SVCC was not what was needed for their workplace or much too advanced for their workforce, many of whom do not have a high school diploma. A lack of forestry equipment training was mentioned as one specific example of training that was needed for the workforce. Also mentioned was the significant number of residents driving out of the community for better employment opportunities even as jobs go unfilled in the County.

The available data supports these anecdotal reports as well. The following statistics highlight the employment and workforce problems in Brunswick County:

- The unemployment rate was 4.6% in Brunswick County in August 2007 as compared to 3.1% for the Commonwealth of Virginia as a whole.
- The labor force participation rate for Brunswick County was 46.4% in the 2000 Census, as compared to 53.5% for the surrounding labor area and 69.0% for the Commonwealth.
- The poverty rate for Brunswick County in 2004 was 18.1%, nearly double the statewide rate.
- Median household income for Brunswick County in 2004 was \$31,224, 61% of the statewide figure.
- The 2000 Census showed that fully 41.1% of Brunswick County's workforce commuted out of the County for work, roughly equivalent to those that lived and worked in the County (40.8%).
- The 2000 Census also indicated that 11.6% of the County's households did not have a personal vehicle.

On the opposite end of the spectrum is the cohort of well educated young adults on which many communities depend for their economic vitality. That cohort is missing in Brunswick County. In the Visioning Public

Meetings it was often said that the best and brightest don't stay in Brunswick County. If they go away for a college education, they don't come back because there are not that many jobs in the County requiring a college education. Dr. Cavan indicated that many of those earning Associate's degrees as a prelude to college don't come back to Brunswick County after graduation for lack of appropriate employment opportunities. Even those gaining technical skills through SVCC training programs are often tempted to seek work out of Brunswick County, either as a commuter or by moving to another locality, because of better employment opportunities and/or pay.

While perhaps sufficient for current employment needs, this shortage of workers at both the unskilled or semi-skilled end of the employment spectrum and the college educated at the other end of the spectrum creates a real obstacle to recruiting new businesses and industries to Brunswick County. According to *Area Development* magazine's "21st Corporate Survey, 2006," the availability of skilled labor is ranked 8th (a decline from previous surveys) and the availability of unskilled labor is ranked 17th (an increase from previous surveys) among 25 factors when selecting a new business/industry site.

VACANT OR UNDERUTILIZED BUILDINGS

While much of Brunswick County makes a positive impression on the first time visitor, one particular problem is the presence of numerous vacant or underutilized buildings, particularly within the corporate boundaries of the County's three towns. These buildings create a nuisance for the local population and serve as a very public reminder of the economic decline of the community. The poor condition of these buildings was an expressed concern at the Visioning Public Meetings.



Because the buildings are private property, the authorities are limited in the approach they can take in dealing with them. However, options for cleaning up these properties include enforcement of existing building codes, spot blight abatement procedures provided under the Code of Virginia, and the creation of formal redevelopment or conservation areas to deal with areas of concentrated blight. Both Brodnax

Brodnax and Alberta have current Community Development Block Grant-funded downtown revitalization projects underway and Lawrenceville has implemented a similar project in the past. However, these projects at best create incentives for reinvestment back into the community. If the overall economic growth of the community doesn't warrant reinvestment, it still doesn't happen.

INADEQUATE HOUSING STOCK



The housing stock in Brunswick County also creates an obstacle for future economic development in the County. During the sessions with the Brunswick Chamber of Commerce, one of the key concerns was the lack of decent, affordable housing for incoming

teachers. The Brunswick County Public Schools had a substantial turnover of staff heading into the 2007-2008 academic year (40+ new teachers) which meant many new, incoming teachers would be looking for housing. Dr. Oliver W. Spencer, Jr., the new Superintendent, confirmed that this problem was a real challenge for the public schools.



This is but a symptom of a larger problem; the turnover and availability of housing in general. The housing problem is illustrated by a number of factors:

- Of the 7,541 housing units counted in the 2000 Census, 849 units were vacant year-round in Brunswick County. This represents 11.3 % of all housing units, a very high percentage as compared to Virginia (5.2%) and the U. S. (5.9%). 415 additional units were also seasonally vacant, more than likely homes by or near Lake Gaston.
- Of the 6,277 occupied housing units in Brunswick County, only 235 units are in buildings with multiple units (2 or more). Assuming that apartments are one of the first rungs on the housing ladder, at 3.7% of all housing units, Brunswick County has very few of these “first rung” units.
- 4,871 (77.6%) of the housing units are owner-occupied, which is a very high percentage and a sign of stability. 1,406 (22.4%) of the units are renter-occupied. Hidden within this number, however, is a significant problem. With only 235 of the 1,406 rental units in buildings with multiple units, 83.3% of these renters are renting detached houses or trailers. Typically, homes in this situation are older and more poorly maintained because of the lack of resources available to the landlord and/or renter. The County's

high poverty rate of 18.1% would confirm this problem since many of those in poverty would likely be renters.

- Of the Brunswick County's housing units, 2,036 or 27.0% of the total are mobile homes. Some of these are nice units at or near Lake Gaston or newer units recently placed, but the field survey of the County indicated that a fair number are older trailers in poor condition.
- The field survey of Brunswick County revealed a significant number of houses, both occupied and vacant, to be in poor condition.
- A search of non-lakefront homes for sale in Brunswick County the first week of October 2007 yielded 58 properties ranging in price from \$1.5 million to \$39,000. Twenty of the listed houses were trailers or modular units, mostly at the lower end of the price range; 11 had less than 1,500 square feet of livable space; and 9 had less than 1,000 square feet of livable space. As would be expected, the more moderately priced homes tended to be in poor condition (based on their posted photos). List prices fell into the following categories:

Table 1
List Prices of Homes for Sale
1st Week of October 2007

List Price	Number	List Price	Number
\$500,000 and Up	5	\$200,000 to \$249,999	3
\$450,000 to \$499,999	1	\$150,000 to \$199,999	7
\$400,000 to \$449,999	2	\$100,000 to \$149,999	9
\$350,000 to \$399,999	1	\$50,000 to \$99,999	19
\$300,000 to \$349,999	2	Under \$50,000	4
\$250,000 to \$299,999	5		

Source: MLS Listing accessed through lake-gaston.net & realestateiii.com.

The median of these list prices is \$139,900 and the average is \$216,593. The most significant gap in the numbers above is homes priced in the midrange of \$150,000 to \$250,000, representing only 17.2% (10) of the homes available. The lack of market rate homes in this price range hinders the attraction of new business and industry to the County, which typically need housing for the core management team brought in during the start-up phase.

- Setting aside lakefront homes, with 58 of the County's 6,277 housing units listed for sale the first week of October 2007, only 0.9% of the available non-lakefront housing stock is in the process of turning over. A percentage this low would normally indicate a "tight" housing market with new home construction not keeping up with need due to natural increases and/or net in-migration of new residents. In Brunswick County, with little new construction and a stable or slightly declining population, this low percentage

would indicate a lack of demand in the County overall. Though not a problem in a static situation, employees would have a difficult time finding homes for sale if a major new employer were to relocate to the County.

Housing is in many ways a “Which comes first, the chicken or the egg?” proposition. There is a lack of housing due to a lack of demand. There is no demand, because new businesses are not locating to the County. A sizeable business might not come to the County for the lack of housing. As the County seeks to tackle this housing problem, the starting point should be a countywide housing plan which would delineate a vision and strategies for providing housing that meets the needs of current citizens and provides housing opportunities for future residents.

INSUFFICIENT HOSPITALITY SERVICES

The only motel in all of Brunswick County is at exit #39 on I-85, at the northern end of the County. The Nottoway Motel and Nottoway Restaurant are landmarks along I-85, the only notable ones visible along I-85 in the



County. There are restaurants in the County, but mid-range and higher end restaurants are lacking. While hotels and other restaurants are nearby in South Hill and Emporia, the lack of a vibrant hospitality industry in the County is a hindrance to the economic growth of the County. Joan Moore, the Executive Director of the IDA, indicated that this has made it difficult to host business/industrial prospects in the County.

Dr. Satcher at St. Paul's College indicated that alumni of the college are quite faithful in attending sporting events and other special occasions at the college, but must seek lodging outside of the County or return home at the end of the day. Even families attending commencement celebrations must seek housing elsewhere. Though only providing a seasonal market, St. Paul's College families and alumni are a viable market for a new hotel. Additionally, the lack of a hotel on the Brunswick County side of Lake Gaston is missing a market of occasional lake visitors. Participants at the Ebony Visioning Public Meeting indicated that many of the residents in the lakeside communities regularly seek hotel accommodations when hosting guests.

LACK OF MARKET VISIBILITY

Brunswick County, even with its central location and good road network, lacks market visibility. It is the county you drive through on I-85 without even realizing it. Without substantial development at the I-85 exits or along the length of I-85, the curtain of trees on both sides of the interstate offers nothing notable to catch the attention of a driver. A trip through

the County on U. S. Route 58 offers more visual variety and therefore visibility, but again, it easy to pass through Brunswick County on U. S. 58 without being attracted to stop. State Route 46 provides more options, particularly as it passes through Lawrenceville, but with traffic counts generally under 3,000 cars per day on most segments, Route 46 is a more local road. Along U. S. 58 and Route 46, the "Welcome to Brunswick County" signs and Brunswick Stew historical markers do help,



Visibility along the highways is only a part of Brunswick County's market visibility problem. The opinion was expressed often in the Visioning Public Meetings that the County has done very little to market itself and the IDA has only scratched the surface of the marketing opportunities available. Budgeted funds provided by the County to the Brunswick County/Lake Gaston Tourism Association are only \$26,200 for the current fiscal year. Significant expertise and resources are provided by the Commonwealth of Virginia through the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and the Virginia Tourism Corporation for marketing business/industrial and tourism assets. The County and IDA utilize these resources, but they are most effective when coupled with strong local resources and efforts, which are lacking in the County. Additional marketing resources are available through the Southside Planning District Commission and the Lake Country Marketing Council.

LACK OF COORDINATED EFFORT

Expressed repeatedly in the Visioning Public Meetings was the concern that Brunswick County is not united on where it wants to go and does not have a coordinated effort toward economic development. It was expressed that the County's towns were each working on their own growth plans without talking to each other. At the Visioning Public Meeting at the SVCC Workforce Development Center frustration was expressed that the County had not followed up on the 2000 Timmons water and sewer study.

A different set of concerns was also raised at the Visioning Public Meetings that would indicate a lack of coordinated effort toward economic development—a bias against growth that shows up in various forms. Not enabling economic development through the construction of additional water and sewer utilities was cited by a number of Visioning Public Meeting participants as one way in which this bias is expressed. Concern was also raised about the difficulty of getting the necessary approvals and permits for new development, particularly Health Department permits for private water and sewer. One participant mentioned a 700 acre distribution center project that was delayed too often by the Planning Commission and was subsequently abandoned by the developer. Concern

was raised regarding the Merchant's Capital Tax assessed by the County that keeps warehousing and distribution firms from wanting to locate to the County.

As indicated in the Introduction, the intention of this report and its recommendations is to provide the economic development vision needed by Brunswick County. Another step that might prove helpful is to create an ongoing forum where all the players in economic development have an opportunity to work together on bringing this vision to be. Even a strong vision will fall by the wayside if leadership goes in too many directions or encounter ongoing roadblocks to their efforts. Growth might come, but it will be in such a haphazard fashion as to have limited impact and not the larger impact needed by the County.

ASSETS & OBSTACLES FROM ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

Having previously referenced *Area Development* magazine's "21st Corporate Survey, 2006," it may be helpful to look at how Brunswick County scores on the Site Selection Factors and Quality of Life Factors utilized in that survey. Utilizing input provided by participants in the Visioning Public Meetings and collected data, the factors have been scored in Table 2 on page 26. Overall, Brunswick County scores fairly well with an average score of 7.9 on Site Selection Factors and 7.0 on Quality of Life Factors.

It was expressed at the Visioning Public Meetings and many times in reader's editorials in the *Brunswick Times-Gazette* that Brunswick County is not able to attract business/industry. Several of the assets and obstacles addressed in this report are not addressed via *Area Development's* two sets of factors. Scoring the County using their factors may be somewhat incomplete. Brunswick County does have its challenges. In balance, however, Table 2 shows that the County is not totally out of the running for business/industrial prospects.

Table 2
Ranking of Site Selection Factors
and Quality of Life Factors
for Brunswick County

Importance	Factor	Ranking	Comment
SITE SELECTION FACTORS			
1.	Labor costs	10	Wage rates are very low in County
2.	Highway accessibility	10	Excellent with U. S. 58 & I-85
3.	Corporate tax rate	7	Very good except for Merchant's Capital Tax
4.	State and local incentives	10	Very good within Enterprise Zone except for Merchant's Capital Tax
5.	Availability of telecommunications services	7	Basics are in place, but extensions needed
6.	Tax exemptions	7	Very good except for Merchant's Capital Tax
7.	Occupancy or construction costs	4	Lack of available buildings/construction ready sites; limited public utilities
8.	Availability of skilled labor	3	Much of the skilled labor has left the area
9.	Energy availability and costs	10	Virginia electricity rates run 72% of the national average
10.	Availability of high-speed Internet access	7	Backbone is in place, but extensions needed
11.	Cost of land	10	Excellent prices
12.	Low union profile	10	No union presence
13.	Proximity to major markets	8	Richmond, Hampton Roads, Raleigh/Durham are under 110 miles away
14.	Availability of land	7	Excellent availability of large tracts, but anti-growth attitude a problem
15.	Environmental regulations	5	Forbes.com's #1 state for regulatory environment; County regs a problem
16.	Right-to-work state	10	Virginia is a right-to-work state
17.	Availability of unskilled labor	5	Unskilled labor is present, but most motivated workers are employed
18.	Raw materials availability	7	Availability depends on the industry
18T.	Availability of long-term financing	9	CNBC.com ranked VA #12 for access to business capital
19.	Accessibility to major airport	8	Richmond, Norfolk, and Raleigh/Durham airports are within 110 miles
20.	Training programs	10	Excellent through SVCC and St. Paul's College programs
21.	Proximity to major suppliers	8	Richmond, Hampton Roads, Raleigh/Durham are under 110 miles away
22.	Proximity to technical university	7	VCU is 75 miles away; VT 190 miles; several UNC schools 175 miles
23.	Railroad service	10	County continues to have Norfolk Southern rail line
24.	Waterway or oceanport accessibility	8	Port of Richmond is 75 miles away; Port of Virginia 110 miles away
Average Ranking		7.9	
QUALITY OF LIFE FACTORS			
1.	Low crime rate	9	County has a relatively low crime rate
2.	Ratings of public schools	6	Very good advanced programs; general programs lagging but improving
3.	Housing costs	3	Very high near Lake Gaston; very low for poor housing; little in the middle
4.	Health facilities	5	Facilities are nearby in South Hill and Emporia, but lacking in the County
5.	Housing availability	3	Limited housing market in mid-range prices; poor low-cost housing
6.	Climate	10	Virginia's climate has something to offer for every season
7.	Colleges and universities in area	10	SVCC and St. Paul's College are real assets to the community
8.	Recreational opportunities	10	Lake Gaston puts the area in a good position
9.	Cultural opportunities	7	Those that are available are very good; but the variety is limited
Average Ranking		7.0	

Source: *Site Selection Factors & Quality of Life Factors from Area Development Magazine's "21st Corporate Survey, 2006".* Ranking by K. W. Poore & Associates, Inc., October, 2007.

OPPORTUNITIES

Both the assets and obstacles faced by Brunswick County, coupled with economic trends, provide the County with opportunities to be capitalized upon. Some economic development opportunities are immediate and need to be addressed quickly in order to take advantage of their full potential. Others are more long-term and require careful planning and hard work over many years before any economic benefit might be returned to the County. While it is tempting to go after the “quick fix,” short-term, medium-range, and long-term opportunities need to be pursued simultaneously—not a simple challenge. In conjunction with building on assets and tackling obstacles, seizing opportunities provides the platform for sustainable economic development and growth. The following represent the opportunities that can be seized upon by Brunswick County.

LOGISTICS, WAREHOUSING, & DISTRIBUTION

As noted in the Assets section of this report, Brunswick County is central to a number of large markets in Virginia and North Carolina and has a very good transportation network already in place. In recent years, logistics, warehousing, and distribution concerns have targeted other localities in Virginia because of its central location on the Eastern Seaboard and its



**Virginia Regional Commerce
Park in Suffolk**

interstate routes into the even larger metro areas of the Northeast. Warehousing and distribution facilities are low volume water and sewer users, but the water supplied to them must have sufficient pressure for fire suppression equipment. If sufficient water pressure was made available, warehousing and distribution firms would be viable targets for the IDA’s recruitment efforts even with the general limitation presented by the County’s current public water and sewer utilities. Apart from the traffic generated and the need to manage storm water run-off, they are fairly low in their impact on the environment, which makes them a friendlier neighbor if located near any residential communities.

Many modern warehousing and distribution facilities are very large and demand a lot of acreage. Assembling significant tracts of land, both within and outside of existing industrial parks, is an important part of recruiting their development in a locality. As noted earlier, Brunswick County has significant vacant land in large parcels, much of which is along I-85 and U. S. Route 58. The County’s recently adopted Comprehensive Plan indicates that overall, 96% of the County’s land is used for agriculture or forestry.

The existing I-85 Business Center Park is well situated for warehousing and distribution because of access to I-85 from U. S. Route 1 and State Route

46. Its current size and configuration limit its possibilities and expansion would need to be considered to attract larger firms. Expansion northeast and east along U. S. Route 1 and I-85 would have the added benefit of increasing the visibility of the Park and Brunswick County significantly. Further, warehousing and distribution facilities would be more acceptable neighbors to the SVCC Christanna Campus and the Town of Alberta.

The I-85 Business Center Park and the Town of Alberta are intersected by the corridor for the Southeast High Speed Rail (SEHSR). While construction of high speed rail is many years in the future, it will provide economic development opportunities to the area. Receiving less press than high speed passenger rail service, the IDA, its Southside economic development partners, and the departments of transportation for Virginia and North Carolina have been concentrating on the freight capacity of the system as well. Building a rail spur to serve the I-85 Business Center Park would be an expensive and complicated undertaking, but as plans move forward for high speed rail, the IDA and County will want to continue keeping abreast of its development in order to protect and capitalize on the opportunity coming because of the SEHSR project.



In order to fully take advantage of warehousing and distribution opportunities, Brunswick County would need to consider one general and one specific change in its approach to business attraction. The County continues to levy a Merchant's Capital Tax on inventory. This tax discourages warehousing and distribution concerns from locating in the County. The County may need to repeal the tax altogether or at a minimum, grant it back to new businesses/industries for a specified period of time as an additional incentive within the County's Enterprise Zone. Repealing the Merchant's Capital Tax would allow the County to adopt a Business, Professional, and Occupational License Tax (BPOL), according to the Code of Virginia; an action that would allow the County to recover at least some of the revenue lost by repealing the Merchant's Capital Tax (estimated to be \$94,000 in the current fiscal year).

Specifically, Brunswick County needs to look at using some of its Enterprise Zone acreage in the vicinity of Alberta, including the current and potentially expanded I-85 Business Center Park. The current Enterprise Zone encompasses approximately 2,900 acres in Lawrenceville, just west of Lawrenceville, and extending eastward from Lawrenceville along U. S. Route 58. The Code of Virginia allows each Enterprise Zone to include up to 3,840 acres, which can be in three non-contiguous areas. In order to fully realize the warehousing and distribution potential of the I-85 Business Park and other land available near Alberta, the County could

locate approximately 1,000 acres of its Enterprise Zone to that area if the County's Enterprise Zone were to contain 3,840 acres as the law allows.

GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT IN NEIGHBORING LOCALITIES

It is often hard to celebrate the successes of neighboring localities. In the hard fought competition for the next economic development "win," there are usually multiple losers for each winner. However, in the success of neighboring localities lies opportunity. As has already been outlined in this report, economic development successes in other areas have put upward pressure on land values. Over time this will push developers to look for similarly situated land that is more affordable. Brunswick County has numerous economic development opportunities created by growth in neighboring or nearby localities.

Fort Lee Expansion

Fort Lee in the Tri-Cities area is in the middle of a major expansion because of decisions made through the Base Realignment and Closure process. Ground has been broken on new facilities that will eventually accommodate over 8,000 new civilian, military, and contract personnel at Fort Lee. In addition to the new personnel, thousands of their family members are expected to move with them to their new duty posts. The Tri-Cities and Chesterfield, Dinwiddie and Prince George Counties will feel the greatest impact of this growth, but opportunities exist beyond the area immediately around Fort Lee for new housing and vendors to provide needed material and services to the base.



A Groundbreaking at Ft. Lee

Carolina Crossroads

The Carolina Crossroads music and family entertainment center being constructed on 1,000 acres along I-95 in Roanoke Rapids is but a short distance down State Route 46. Its greatest impact will be in the Roanoke Rapids area and north and south along I-95, but for those vacationers looking to couple a Carolina Crossroads experience with a lakefront vacation, Lake Gaston is nearby. At this point, only the North Carolina side of Lake Gaston is positioned to take advantage of the influx of tourists visiting Carolina Crossroads, but a new hotel and resort on the Brunswick County side of the lake could take advantage of their presence as well.



IKEA Manufacturing Plant

The new IKEA manufacturing plant under construction in Danville is IKEA's first manufacturing facility in America. Representing a \$281 million investment by Swedwood North America and with



employment to eventually reach 740 people, IKEA is one of the largest economic development projects to ever come to Southside Virginia. In addition to the employees who will benefit directly from IKEA's presence, nearby communities will benefit from the spin-off businesses/industries needed to support its operation. Of particular importance to Brunswick County will be the need for raw materials for the plant and potentially assistance with providing freight services for the finished product.

Additional Successes to the West



In addition to the IKEA manufacturing facility, Brunswick County's neighbors to the west have had other successes. The growth at Exit #12 on I-85, the main South Hill exit, and the development of the American Industrial Heat Transfer, Inc. facility in the jointly owned Roanoke River

Regional Business Park, just across the Mecklenburg County line, provide employment opportunities to Brunswick County residents because of the easy commutes on U. S. Route 58 and I-85. In Halifax County the Halifax County/South Boston Industrial Park has been very successful and the Riverstone Technology Park is in place with a shell building that can house multiple technology companies. The successes in these neighboring counties along the U. S. Route 58 corridor indicate that Southside Virginia is open for business, that its citizens are capable employees, and that the corridor's transportation network provides sufficient support for modern manufacturing. Their successes will help the IDA make its case that Brunswick County is a viable location for business and industrial development.

Successes along I-95 + the CSX Main Line

To the east, Emporia and Greenville County are experiencing economic development success because of their proximity to I-95, U. S. Route 58, and the CSX main north-south rail line. Two new hotels are in the



works along I-95, a new Love's Travel Center has



been built on I-95, the Greenville County Industrial Park landed a Toll Brothers Construction 86,000 square foot warehouse facility served by CSX, and a 1,500 acre site has

been designated a state certified mega site for automobile manufacturing. Additionally, planning is underway for large-scale intermodal facilities that take advantage of the proximity of I-95, CSX, and the Port of Virginia. With large tracts of available land in the eastern part of Brunswick County along U. S. Route 58 and the existing Norfolk Southern rail line, there exists within the County similar opportunities to take advantage of the evolution of intermodal transportation services.

TOURISM & QUALITY OF LIFE IMPROVEMENTS



Within Brunswick County there are a number of tourism projects under development or in the planning stages. Improvements are currently underway to improve parking and access at Fort Christanna, a Colonial era fort built in 1713 when the County was on the western frontier. The construction of the initial phases of the Tobacco Heritage Trail will get underway in late 2007 or early 2008, including sections in Brodnax and Lawrenceville. The Lawrenceville section will also include a spur trail to the lake at the County Park at Great Creek. In Lawrenceville, the trail will eventually include a park on the site of a former rail yard on the edge of downtown. Once fully implemented, the Tobacco Heritage Trail will consist of 174 miles of trails across five Southside Virginia counties. Planning is just starting on converting the old primary school on the edge of Downtown Lawrenceville into an artisan center.

Care should be taken to not overstate the number of tourists that might visit these new tourism assets and their economic impact on the community. Trails are most successful where there are strong destination points to pull the tourists in, such as the Town of Abingdon at the head of the Virginia Creeper Trail or Galax, the “World Capital of Old Time Mountain Music,” and the New River itself on the New River Trail. Also, trails usually require a strong regional marketing campaign that links together the tourism assets of the region near the trail.



That being said, the creation of these new assets will generate some additional tourism traffic and dollars. They will also contribute greatly to the quality of life in Brunswick County. Even as tourists hit the Virginia Creeper or New River Trails, they encounter local residents taking their morning jog or a family cycling the trail together. A successful artisan center would attract tourists and locals alike. Trails that allow equestrian

use, as some portions of the Tobacco Heritage Trail will, attract the development of new housing oriented toward families with horses.

An immediate tourism opportunity is the need for a hotel centrally located in Brunswick County. As has already been identified, the County's hospitality services are very limited. The only hotel in the County is on



the northern edge of the county. St. Paul's College alone would generate significant traffic for a new hotel during its major sporting events, commencement services, and other special programs. Lake Gaston residents indicated a need for a hotel on Brunswick's side of the lake and the arrival of Carolina Crossroads creates

additional opportunities to accommodate tourists on or near the lake as they visit that new venue.

PRODUCTION, STORAGE, & DISTRIBUTION OF BIOFUELS

One of the long-term opportunities for Brunswick County is the production, storage, and distribution of biofuels. The readily available biomass leftover from forestry production and/or from agriculture, both in the County and in neighboring counties, can be utilized for several possible fuel generation processes:

- The production of ethanol from agricultural feedstock or waste wood.
- The gasification of wood biomass.
- The production of methane/methanol from wood as a component of biodeisel fuel, a component of natural gas, or as the base component for the production of other manufactured goods.

Ethanol production has particular promise for Brunswick County because of four trends that are merging. First, is the looming shortage of oil across the globe. Biofuel production in general, and ethanol production in particular, have been ramping up to alleviate dependency on oil. Brazil has taken the lead in ethanol



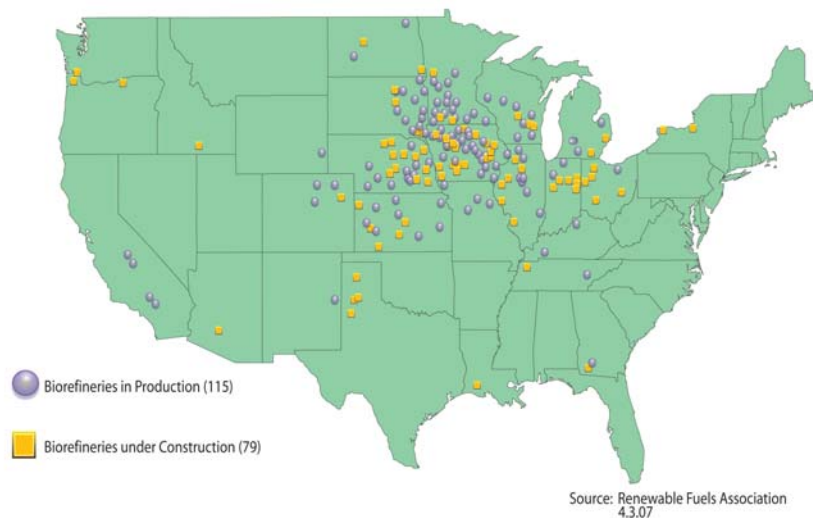
An Ethanol Plant in the Midwest

production since the oil crises of the 1970's through the production of ethanol from corn and sugar cane. American ethanol production has been recently ramping up because of the need to replace MTBE, a polluting fuel additive previously used to oxygenate gasoline. Also, the Energy Policy Act of 2005 put in place directives for ethanol fuel production in the United States. In 2004, 3.5 billion gallons of ethanol were produced in the United States. Production capacity is expected to reach 7.8 billion gallons by the end of 2007, well ahead of the Act's target of 7.5 billion gallons by

2012. The number of ethanol plants in America has increased from 81 in January 2005 to 129 today. The number of plants under construction has jumped from 16 to about 80 during the same time period. This has currently created a glut of ethanol on the market, leading to a decrease in the wholesale price in recent months according to New York Times report. However, the long-term trend is still in ethanol's direction.

Second, is the movement of ethanol production in the United States to the coasts. Ethanol production in America up to this point has mainly used corn as its feedstock. This has led to a concentration of ethanol production plants in the Midwest "corn belt" with very few along the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Ethanol can absorb water, creating the necessity to transport it by rail and truck rather than through pipelines, the traditional long-distance method of transporting refinery products. This adds significant cost to the ethanol by the time it reaches the gas tank of most Americans. Ethanol producers are now heading to the coasts to develop plants that are closer to the bigger markets situated on America's coastlines.

U.S. Ethanol Refineries, 2007



Ethanol plants have recently been proposed in Chesapeake, Chase City, and Hopewell. The Chesapeake plant would require 80 million bushels of corn annually and 1.5 million gallons of water daily to produce 235 million gallons of ethanol per year. The Chesapeake ethanol plant is meeting opposition because of its water usage, but the proposal continues to work its way through the approval process. Its sister plant, a biodiesel plant that will produce 320 million gallons of fuel, gained City Council approval on October 16, 2007. In neighboring North Carolina, three ethanol plants are planned that will produce 320 million gallons of ethanol.

Third, is the emphasis the Commonwealth of Virginia is placing on alternative fuels including ethanol. Governor Kaine recently announced the Virginia

Energy Plan, which calls for a 20% increase in in-state energy production. It includes recommendations to:

- Develop new fuel production and transportation facilities.
- Develop infrastructure to supply raw-material inputs, such as biomass supplies, to production facilities.
- Direct state funding to research and development efforts for alternate liquid fuel production from waste and cellulosic feedstock.
- Support development of two to three energy technology parks.



Gov. Kaine Announces the Virginia Energy Plan

Even before Governor Kaine's announcement, Virginia was offering a grant of \$0.10 per gallon of pure biofuels produced and sold in the Commonwealth. The combination of this incentive and the thrust of the new Energy Plan will continue to push ethanol producers to take a strong look at Virginia.

Fourth, is the development of 2nd generation technologies for ethanol production. The scientific community has raised significant concern regarding corn-based ethanol production. It is a very inefficient process requiring 1.0 units of fossil-fuel energy for every 1.3 units of energy produced. Growing corn also requires a large amount of nitrogen fertilizer and water, creating run-off of unwanted nitrogen, a significant polluter of Virginia and North Carolina's coastal watersheds. Researchers are looking for alternatives to corn as the primary feedstock of American ethanol plants. Research in the production of ethanol from cellulosic feedstock is progressing and in the future much of America's ethanol production might be fueled by these resources. The fossil-fuel energy input to energy output is much more favorable with cellulosic ethanol, with 1.0 units in input for every 2.0 units produced. Cellulosic feedstock includes agricultural residues (stalks, leaves, husks of corn plants, etc.), forestry wastes (wood chips, sawdust, tree bark), paper pulp, and fast-growing grasses like switchgrass.

Given Brunswick County's strong forestry production, the County should be looking to capitalize on these trends and the opportunity presented by cellulosic ethanol production. The County could work with the Commonwealth of Virginia and neighboring counties to create a "Biofuel Corridor" in Southside Virginia that concentrates on the research, production, storage, and distribution of biofuels, with a particular emphasis on



Sawdust – A Viable Feedstock for Cellulosic Ethanol Production

cellulosic ethanol. This would allow the County to recruit producers and transporters with the strength of the Commonwealth and a region behind it, instead of trying to go it alone. Because research is continuing on creating efficient cellulosic ethanol production methods, by concentrating on cellulosic ethanol instead of other forms of ethanol production, the County, Southside Virginia, and the Commonwealth would have a few years to let the ethanol market correct itself as plans were developed and needed infrastructure was put in place.

A word of caution regarding ethanol production should be given, however. Ethanol production requires significant amounts of water. Brunswick County will need to protect and make available its water resources in order for ethanol production to be a viable industry in the County. As noted previously, the water released by the Vulcan quarry could be tapped as an industrial water source. This makes the larger tracts of land available east of Lawrenceville along U. S. Route 58 a very viable location for an ethanol plant. Additionally, this area, with its U. S. Route 58 access to I-85 and I-95, would be ideal for the storage and distribution of ethanol as well.

Locating an ethanol plant, another biofuel plant, or any other industrial concern in the U. S. Route 58 corridor east of Lawrenceville may require reconfiguring the existing Brunswick County Enterprise Zone to shift additional acreage from west to east along the U. S. Route 58 corridor. Currently, the Enterprise Zone does not extend eastward to the area proximate to the Vulcan Quarry, the most likely location for such facilities. If 1,000 acres were added to the Enterprise Zone in the Alberta area as previously suggested, a second smaller portion of the Enterprise Zone could remain in or around Lawrenceville, with the remainder of the current 2,900 acres shifted further east along U. S. Route 58.

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA RESOURCES TO ASSIST WITH AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEEDS

The Commonwealth of Virginia has been very aggressive in providing to localities and developers resources to assist with developing affordable housing. The Virginia Community Development Block Grant (VCDBG) program operated by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development has been used successfully by many communities across Virginia to rehabilitate rental and owner-occupied housing for low- and moderate-income families (persons earning below 80% of the area median income). Unlike the stereotypes brought to mind when low-income housing is mentioned, communities rehabilitated through this program often become showcases of the locality.



Rehabilitated House in Braxton Court, a VCDBG-funded Project in Williamsburg

The Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA) provides construction and mortgage financing to assist with the development of rental and

affordable owner-occupied housing developed by for-profit corporations or by non-profit community and housing development corporations.



Groundbreaking for the Gateway at SoNo, a VHDA-financed Mixed-Use Project in Chesapeake

Additionally, VHDA assists first-time and low- and moderate-income home buyers with below market rate mortgage financing. A very new program recently added to VHDA's offerings is construction and mortgage financing to assist with the development of mixed-use/mixed-income projects as long as residential space will be a majority of the project.

A WORD ABOUT RETAIL

While it might be desirable that this report lists retail as a large opportunity for Brunswick County, it would be difficult to make that case given the current challenges. Retail may come to the Lake Gaston area over the next several years, particularly if the County constructs water and sewer utilities in the Gasburg and Ebony communities and is able to attract a hotel or resort development to the area. The challenge there, however, is the head start the North Carolina side of Lake Gaston has on Brunswick County with retail and commercial development growing south of the Lake.

In Brunswick's towns, retail will continue to be a challenge because of their stagnant growth and the fact that larger shopping opportunities are nearby in neighboring counties. The revitalization efforts underway in downtown Alberta, Brodnax, and Lawrenceville will pay dividends over time, but they must be paired with growth in population in order to fill vacant storefronts. One of the sayings in the retail community is that, "Retail follows rooftops." Even the fixing up of rooftops with people moving in and renovating older housing can have a positive effect on retail development, if it is happening on a large scale.

Stemming population losses and creating population growth in Brunswick County so that significant advances in retail and commercial development occur ultimately depends on turning around the overall economy of the County. The Vision, Strategies, and Action Plans that follow will hopefully be the genesis of that turnaround.

AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION

Often in planning documents there might be listed a vision, goals and objectives, and then strategies and action plans. In order to target that which is most important and that which is most strategic, this report will concentrate on specific strategies and action plans that implemented on the ground, will make the biggest difference in the economy of Brunswick County. At the same time, as expressed repeatedly in the Visioning Public Meetings, there is the need for a unifying vision for the County. The best planning documents are always a combination of vision and workable plans that help make that vision attainable.

Simply stated, the Vision for Economic Development in Brunswick County could be:

Brunswick County will proactively target economic development opportunities in high profile growth corridors and commit resources to strategic economic development projects that unite young & old, blue collar & professional, lifelong resident & newcomer, quaint town & lakeside community, farm & factory, small business & industrial giant for the success of the County and its residents.

This statement pulls together several themes that were repeated in the Visioning Public Meetings and interviews of community leaders. First, was the desire for the County and its citizens to become united toward a common vision. Second, was the concern about maintaining a rural/small town quality of life. Third, was a lament about giving up so many citizens to employment or residency in other localities, particularly younger persons. Fourth, was the need to use the County's limited resources to implement actions that really accomplish something.

There are two seemingly opposite demographic trends in America today—people moving back to the cities to be close to where the action is and people moving to the country for its rural amenities. With its proximity to several urban areas and its rural/small town quality of life, Brunswick County can take advantage of this latter trend. However, these new “rural pioneers” typically keep one foot planted in the city and bring with them a high level of demand for entertainment/recreation, commercial/retail services, housing, technology, local government resources/public utilities, and, if not retired, jobs. To not move forward or to move forward in a haphazard fashion will leave the County well behind as other communities win the competition for these new residents through providing needed services, attracting new housing, and securing employment opportunities.

STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS

The following strategies and action plans represent the Economic Development Blueprint for Brunswick County. Following the text portion of this section, there is a planning grid that includes implementation years for all action plans and an Economic Development Blueprint map that shows the locations of key strategies/action plans.

Strategy #1: Create an Economic Development Coordinating Council to bring together private and non-profit leaders with public sector leadership to coordinate economic development efforts and developing economic development partnerships.

Action Plans:

- a. Create the Economic Development Coordinating Council by resolution of the County Boards of Supervisors. Organizations to be represented on the Council include the IDA, Brunswick County, each of the County's three towns, the Southside Planning District Commission, the Brunswick County/Lake Gaston Tourism Association, SVCC, St. Paul's College, the Brunswick Chamber of Commerce, and local housing and community development organizations.
- b. Establish the Executive Director of the IDA and the County Administrator as co-chairs of the Economic Development Coordinating Council.
- c. Meet on a quarterly basis to provide coordination to the economic development efforts of the various organizations and conduct an annual planning retreat to establish and update short-term, medium range, and long-term objectives, strategies, and action plans.

Strategy #2: Develop a unified marketing plan and provide ongoing funding for marketing materials and recruitment efforts.

Action Plans:

- a. Secure the services of a private vendor to develop a unified marketing plan that provides branding/marketing strategies and marketing materials useable by multiple public and private entities within the County. (Funded and supervised jointly by the County and IDA with additional coordination provided through the Economic Development Coordinating Council.)
- b. Increase the funding available through the County and IDA budgets to include sufficient resources to support ongoing marketing and recruitment efforts.

Strategy #3: Expand existing and develop new public water and sewer utilities to spur economic development in the four high profile growth corridors of greatest potential.

Action Plans:

- a. Designate four high profile growth corridors of greatest potential by IDA and County action as follows:
 - Exit #39 on I-85, the Rawlings interchange for interstate oriented commercial use and hospitality.
 - The Lake Gaston communities of Gasburg and Ebony for residential, commercial, and hospitality use.
 - The U. S. Route 58 corridor east of Lawrenceville for large scale industrial use.
 - The Alberta/I-85 Business Center Park area for warehousing and distribution.
- b. Secure the services of the Timmons Group to update its Brunswick County water and sewer study centered on the four high profile growth corridors.
- c. Develop a phased plan of public water and sewer development based on the findings of the Timmons Group study, the availability of financial resources, and current economic conditions. (Phasing should allow for 10, 20, and 30 year windows of opportunity and development.)
- d. Commit local funding; secure funding (grants/loans) from the Virginia Department of Health, the Southern River Watershed Enhancement Program of the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, the Virginia Tobacco Commission, the Southeast Rural Communities Assistance Program, USDA Rural Development, and the Federal Home Loan Bank; and utilize Virginia Resource Authority loans to fund the construction of the phased public water and sewer improvements.
- e. Implement the first 10-year phase of the expansion and development of public water and service utilities.

Strategy #4: Develop and expand the I-85 Business Center Park targeting warehousing and distribution industries.

Action Plans

- a. Reconfigure the existing Brunswick County Enterprise Zone to allow for two non-contiguous areas including an area of approximately 1,000 acres centered on the current and expanded I-85 Business Park.
- b. Construct infrastructure for the current I-85 Business Center Park sufficient for the recruitment of new industrial concerns with a primary target being the warehousing and distribution sector.
- c. Repeal the Merchant's Capital Tax assessed by Brunswick County. (With its repeal, the Code of Virginia would allow Brunswick County to implement a Business, Professional, and Occupational

License Tax (BPOL) to help recover some of the lost tax revenue.)

- d. Purchase additional land east of the current I-85 Business Center Park fronting U. S. Route 1, fronting Liberty Road (Route 634) which would provide access to the expanded park, and providing visibility from I-85.
- e. Construct infrastructure for the additional I-85 Business Center Park property sufficient for the continued recruitment of new industrial concerns with a primary target being the warehousing and distribution sector.
- f. Re-launch the I-85 Business Center Park with a new name and a strategic marketing campaign once additional land and infrastructure are in place.
- g. Become engaged in the Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor development process in order to explore and protect the feasibility of adding a freight rail spur to the I-85 Business Center Park and a passenger platform in Alberta.

Strategy #5: Gain control of key properties in the U. S. Route 58 corridor east of Lawrenceville targeting large scale industrial concerns.

Action Plans

- a. Reconfigure the existing Brunswick County Enterprise Zone to shift additional acreage from west to east along the U. S. Route 58 corridor.
- b. Create a land bank of at least 1,000 acres with no portion less than 250 acres in contiguous parcels along the U. S. Route 58 corridor east of Lawrenceville (generally in the Edgerton community) through fee simple purchase or the purchase of options.
- c. Work cooperatively with Greensville County and the City of Emporia to target intermodal industrial concerns that might locate along the U. S. Route 58 corridor in the eastern portion of the County.

Strategy #6: Develop low- and moderate-income housing and market rate housing in cooperation with non-profit, for-profit, and state housing and community development partners.

Action Plans

- a. Develop a countywide housing plan that meets the needs of current citizens and provides housing opportunities for future residents.
- b. Implement a minimum of two low- and moderate-income housing rehabilitation projects in key areas in partnership with non-profit community and housing development corporations and property

owners utilizing grants provided through the Virginia Community Development Block Grant program.

- c. Support the construction of a moderate-income housing development with rental and for sale housing in or near Lawrenceville by non-profit community and housing development corporations and/or for-profit builders utilizing construction loans and mortgage financing provided through the Virginia Housing Development Authority.
- d. Encourage the construction of market rate housing (middle- and upper-income) in various localities within the County by simplifying and expediting the approval and permitting process, and where planned, the construction of public water and sewer utilities.

Strategy #7: Strengthen the tourism industry by targeting resources to strategic tourism venues and hospitality projects.

Action Plans

- a. Continue efforts to develop the Tobacco Heritage Trail, the Lawrenceville Artisans Center, and Fort Christanna for cultural heritage tourism and to enhance the quality of life of local residents.
- b. Recruit and provide incentives to a developer to construct a hotel in the Lawrenceville area and utilize Virginia Tobacco Commission funds and other grants to construct an on-site center for hotel management training provided through a partnership with SVCC and St. Paul's College.
- c. Encourage the construction of hotel and resort facilities in the Lake Gaston area by simplifying and expediting the approval and permitting process and, where planned, the construction of public water and sewer utilities.

Strategy #8: Target the production, storage, and distribution of biofuels as Brunswick County's growth industry for the future.

Action Plans

- a. Work with the Commonwealth of Virginia and Southside Virginia economic development partners to potentially create a "Biofuel Corridor" in Southside Virginia focused on the research, production, storage, and transportation of biofuels, with a particular emphasis on cellulosic ethanol.
- b. Utilize the County's historic position as the leading county for forestry products in the Commonwealth to recruit and provide incentives to a concern that will develop and construct a biofuel production plant that utilizes forestry production by-products as its feed stock.
- c. Recruit and provide incentives to a concern that will develop and construct a biofuel storage and distribution center.

This page is left blank and the Implementation Timeline will be substituted with Location of Key Strategies & Action Plans Map and Appendices to follow.

Table 3
An Economic Development Blueprint for Brunswick County, 2007-2015
Strategies and Action Plans Implementation Timeline
Brunswick County Industrial Development Authority and Brunswick County Government

Strategy/Action Plan	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
STRATEGY #1: CREATE AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATING COUNCIL									
a. Create Council by Board of Supervisors resolution.									
b. Establish IDA ¹ Executive Director & County Administrator as Co-Chairs.									
c. Meet quarterly & conduct annual planning retreat.									
STRATEGY #2: DEVELOP A UNIFIED MARKETING PLAN WITH ONGOING FUNDING									
a. Develop a unified marketing plan with professional assistance.									
b. Increase funding for marketing and recruitment efforts.									
STRATEGY #3: EXPAND PUBLIC WATER & SEWER UTILITIES									
a. Designate four high profile growth corridors of greatest potential.									
b. Update Timmons water & sewer study.									
c. Develop a phased plan of public water & sewer development over 10, 20, & 30 years.									
d. Commit local funding & secure outside grants/loans.									
e. Implement first 10-year phase of public water & sewer expansion.									
STRATEGY #4: DEVELOP AND EXPAND THE I-85 BUSINESS CENTER PARK									
a. Reconfigure the existing Enterprise Zone to provide 1,000 acres in the Alberta area.									
b. Construct infrastructure for the current I-85 Business Park.									
c. Repeal the Merchant's Capital Tax.									
d. Purchase additional land to expand the I-85 Business Center Park.									
e. Construct infrastructure for the additional land purchased for the I-85 Business Center Park.									
f. Re-launch the I-85 Business Center Park with a new name & strategic marketing campaign.									
g. Become engaged in the Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor development process.									

¹ IDA = Brunswick County Industrial Development Authority

² VCDBG = Virginia Community Development Block Grant

³ VHDA = Virginia Housing Development Authority

Table 3
An Economic Development Blueprint for Brunswick County, 2007-2015
Strategies and Action Plans Implementation Timeline
Brunswick County Industrial Development Authority and Brunswick County Government

Strategy/Action Plan	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
STRATEGY #5: GAIN CONTROL OF KEY PROPERTIES IN THE RT. 58 CORRIDOR									
a. Reconfigure the existing Enterprise Zone to shift acreage from west to east along Rt. 58.									
b. Create a land bank of 1,000 acres through fee simple purchase & purchase of options.									
c. Work with Greenville County/Emporia to target intermodal industries.									
STRATEGY #6: DEVELOP LMI & MARKET RATE HOUSING									
a. Develop a countywide housing vision & plan.									
b. Implement two VCDBG ² -funded low- & moderate-income housing rehabilitation projects.									
c. Support VHDA ³ -financed construction of moderate-income housing in/near Lawrenceville.									
d. Encourage the construction of market rate housing by easing the approval/permitting process & where planned, the construction of public water & sewer utilities.									
STRATEGY #7: STRENGTHEN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY									
a. Continue efforts to develop the Tobacco Trail, Lawrenceville Artisans Center, & Fort Christanna.									
b. Recruit & provide incentives toward developing a hotel & on-site center for hotel management training in the Lawrenceville area.									
c. Encourage the construction of Lake Gaston hotel & resorts by easing approval/permitting process & where planned, the construction of public water & sewer utilities.									
STRATEGY #8: TARGET THE PRODUCTION/STORAGE/DISTRIBUTION OF BIOFUELS									
a. Work with the Commonwealth of Virginia & Southside economic development partners to potentially create a "Biofuel Corridor" in Southside Virginia.									
b. Recruit & provide incentives toward developing a biofuel plant that utilizes forestry production by-products as its feedstock.									
c. Recruit & provide incentives toward developing a biofuel storage & distribution center.									

¹ IDA = Brunswick County Industrial Development Authority

² VCDBG = Virginia Community Development Block Grant

³ VHDA = Virginia Housing Development Authority

A P P E N D I X

Brunswick County High School Visioning 2007 Public Meeting InputA

Workforce Development Center Visioning 2007 Public Meeting Input..... B

Ebony Volunteer Fire Department Visioning 2007 Public Meeting Input..... C

Appendix A

Brunswick County Industrial Development Authority and County Administration **VISIONING 2007 PUBLIC MEETING** **“Developing an Economic Development Blueprint for Brunswick County”**

July 31, 2007
Brunswick County High School

Input Provided by Participants

- There was an initial protest that this meeting had not been advertised adequately and far enough in advance. [Note: As a public meeting, not a public hearing, no specific notification requirements are outlined by law.]
- One of our assets is our passionate people.
- We need to have more tradesman training such as a truck driving institute.
- An obstacle is the lack of water and sewer (example: the larger sawmill east of town needs water).
- We need to reclaim/recycle our old buildings, vehicles, etc. for materials.
- We need to manage our money resources well so there is less pressure to bring more dollars into the county and county budget.
- An asset/opportunity is the new folks moving in from Northern Virginia and other places for the rural lifestyle; we need to get them involved.
- Retirees moving in and buying/renovating older home work part-time or on contract. They have the time; we need to involve them more in County affairs. We need to advertise to them. We need acceptable businesses for them.
- Development will bring more demands on county dollars and resources.
- The business climate here is not very favorable because of the permits and zoning requirements.
- There are too many hoops you have to jump through to get a development done (example: a distribution center on 700 acres was delayed repeatedly by the Planning Commission).
- More expertise is need on County committees; we need to recruit people to serve on them.
- Water and sewer in adjoining North Carolina communities is countywide.
- We need to encourage agricultural production for ethanol based fuels.
- There is an Advanced Vehicle Research Center being constructed in Northampton County, NC with 50 engineers to research bio-fuels.
- Alberta is a viable transitional area with excess water and sewer capacity, SVCC, the Tobacco Trail coming, and available land.
- We need to upgrade Lawrenceville to bring more people in.
- SVCC is training people for earning a living wage, but they live here and have to work elsewhere.
- If people with a strong vested interest commit to work together the County will grow.
- The library has turned into a positive though new librarian had a tough time at first; a strategic planning process helped.
- Economic development can be enhanced through the library.
- There are no workers available; the Pizza Hut had to close.
- There is a lack of confidence in IDA; according to reports businesses with interest have been identified, but is there no follow-up contact?
- The Leak-Goforth report came out in 2003; it is now 2007 and nothing has been done.
- The IDA needs to do more marketing and be represented at trade shows.
- There is lots of negativity in the County.

- The Chamber of Commerce can be a vehicle to work collectively.
- We need to do additional sessions like this one hosted by the Supervisors in their districts.
- Lake Gaston has new housing, a bank, off-lake development, growth in sales in businesses, and other new businesses.
- We need a bed and breakfast and other hospitality facilities at Lake Gaston.
- New comprehensive plan has a vision piece created from numerous County meetings using a SWOT analysis.
- We need to get high-speed internet throughout the County.
- There is a lack of coordinated effort.
- There is no such thing as a community standing still; it will go up or down so we must plan for 50 years from now.
- How will you let us know we have been heard?
- The Merchants Capital Tax is a problem for warehousing/distribution operations; change it if it is an impediment.
- Asset – highest dual enrollment rate in the state.
- We have one of the only purified ice companies in the U.S.
- Tourism is a large growth opportunity and it doesn't cost much.
- We must market our strengths more.
- You must invest in your own growth; it is not free!
- Reach beyond your normal boundaries; be creative.
- We need a centralized phone system.
- An asset is our young people, but they leave (an obstacle).
- An asset is that we are the original home of Brunswick Stew.
- An asset is our airport.
- We need to create a brochure directing I-85 and U.S. 58 traffic to businesses in the County.
- We need to provide better directional signage.
- We need to formulate effective partnerships with educational institutions.
- We need to reopen the cannery on the old school grounds.
- An obstacle is the lack of jobs to bring young people back.

Appendix B

Brunswick County Industrial Development Authority and County Administration **VISIONING 2007 PUBLIC MEETING** **“Developing an Economic Development Blueprint for Brunswick County”**

September 5, 2007
Southside Virginia Community College
Workforce Development Center

Input Provided by Participants

- There is a lack of coordinated effort.
- Stop dealing with historical issues and develop and work a plan.
- Need to deal with clients by providing them affordable land.
- Should we buy and assemble land? –this is a critical issue. Get proactive. Provide incentives for willing land owners. Is there a will or money to do this? No! No? Not takings, but rather proactive partnerships and financial incentives. Planning and zoning won't be a problem here. Look at the development corridors outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.
- The County and towns have growth plans, but the leaders haven't come together for one single plan. There needs to be consensus and support from the entities.
- Create a group of leaders from each entity (IDA, town councils, Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, etc.) to work together as a countywide Economic Development Council.
- We need to spend the money for water and sewer. Either we meet the current demand only or invest ahead of the development in the right locations.
- The 2000 Timmons water and sewer study outlined specific plans for identified growth areas including Alberta south and north through 2040.
- We need the Timmons study updated carefully to 2007 dollars and make portions of it available, particularly on the website.
- Water and sewer could be available for some commercial and residential requests, but it is expensive to extend the lines.
- We need to look at other water resources. A hog processor got a permit to draw 200,000 gallons a day of water from the Meherrin River. The Kinder Morgan power plant project (a \$300 million investment) had its water source worked out. [Note: The plant was to use 1.6 million to 3.8 million gallons a day provided through a Meherrin River water intake, reservoir, and pipeline constructed by Brunswick County. Kinder Morgan ultimately abandoned its plan because of decreasing demand in the energy market.]
- Vulcan is open to its water being used by another industry (other quarries as well).
- Wastewater is a bigger concern.
- Workforce training is available.
- The issue is lack of motivation to work.
- Forestry equipment training is lacking and represents an opportunity.
- There are workers that lack work experience and better work retention skills.
- Some of best brick masons work north of here. Masonry used to be taught in our schools, but most vo-tech training has been dropped.
- But Lawrenceville Brick offered training for brick layers, but nobody came.
- The current generation of farmers was trained in Future Farmers of America in school, but not now.
- Can we benefit from carbon credits? [Note: carbon credits are extended for leaving trees in place, not harvesting them so the answer is probably “no”.]

- The landfill originally looked at three sites simultaneously so is available land the issue?
- Regarding shell buildings, are they necessary?
- But we are competing with other communities and industries don't want to wait.
- Our labor area is a 50 mile radius according to the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- Use money for other issues we have identified, not for a shell building.
- What kind of jobs will we create? For immigrants? Will the jobs move overseas?
- Learn from the IKEA experience.
- There have been prospects in Alberta, but the industrial park has yet to have infrastructure. [Note: The IDA Executive Director indicated that the issues there are being resolved and will soon be addressed.]
- Do we have the product that sells?
- An objective ought to be to build a better image for the County.
- The IDA needs to keep its signs in repair.
- Immigrant labor isn't necessarily a bad thing; Canada has benefited from immigrant labor.
- The best use of economic development funds may not be jobs for immigrant labor.
- Be sure we emphasize bringing in payroll dollars.
- "Park-n-Ride" workers bring money back to home locally.
- A commuter van could be run to Fort Lee to take advantage of the expansion there.
- We don't do a good job of dealing with vacant, dilapidated properties.
- Localities can use spot blight abatement law to address the issue.
- Additional housing and hospitality industry is needed in the southern part of the County. Image building would be important to this.
- "The World Is Flat" – internet connectivity is making it more possible to live and work in rural communities.
- We should capitalize on tourism more.
- The County is not very friendly to retirees; hard to get permits and new residents are paying \$650 to a vendor for assistance.
- Retirees would spend \$35,000 annually in our economy.
- In North Carolina they cater to Lake Gaston residents, we don't.
- We should emphasize Brunswickians coming home.

Appendix C

Brunswick County Industrial Development Authority and County Administration **VISIONING 2007 PUBLIC MEETING** **“Developing an Economic Development Blueprint for Brunswick County”**

September 12, 2007
Ebony Volunteer Fire Department

Input Provided by Participants

- It was requested that overhead projection be utilized in future public meetings because it was hard to see the presentation boards from the seats of the participants.
- Brodnax has potential because of U.S. 58, the nearby airport, available land for housing and industrial development, the downtown revitalization effort that is underway, and access to water and sewer. It is hindered by the presence of the scrap yard in town.
- The County was able to secure a 10 year permit for drawing water from the Meherrin River intended for the Kinder Morgan power plant. Is that permit still valid and available to meet water demand?
- Shell buildings are a thing of the past. Infrastructure to the site is more important. Industry wants to design and build their own buildings.
- Lake Gaston properties represent 22% of the County's real estate tax revenue. Two of the fastest growing areas in the County are Gasburg and Ebony. The club/bowling alley/golf course didn't ask for anything but infrastructure (water and sewer). It is very hard to get Health Department permits needed for private water and sewer.
- The Board of Supervisors and the IDA need to support regional industrial parks; think regional and not be isolated. Small industrial parks are going to be a thing of the past.
- Keep our industrial parks cleaned up.
- Brunswick County tax payers can't fill every store in Lawrenceville. Owners of building should give breaks on rent to entrepreneurs to start businesses. Stores will need to extend hours.
- Through the Lawrenceville Industrial Park has any industry come to Brunswick in 10 years that has really helped? The shell building there has been a problem with failed businesses and having to buy back the building.
- Tourism and recreation could be one of the job creators in the County.
- Other tourism assets include Civil War Trail stops, the off-track betting parlor, birding/wildlife stops, and the Lawrenceville/Brunswick Museum.
- What is our branding? Brunswick Stew and then recreation.
- \$36 million in tourism dollars in Brunswick in 2005.
- Halifax County has a tote bag with listing of restaurants, racetracks and other sites, brochures, and a sample of jelly made in Halifax County.
- Branding and marketing is very important.
- We need to do a survey asking residents what they love about the County. But be careful to not let development overwhelm our open space and quietude.
- Vermont tourism which emphasizes the rural/small town life is an example.
- Brunswick County was built on farm labor and cheap labor. That is what employers are going to look for when needing labor. Nobody will come here to build a business on smart people.
- Timmons study from 1998 and 2000 points out growth in Ebony/Gasburg and no growth in Lawrenceville, Alberta, or Brodnax. Comprehensive Plan growth data doesn't match up.
- Growth in southern part of the County has come from retirees, not from industry.
- I would love to see industry come to Brunswick, but don't know what to change to get them here. There are no shell buildings!

- Housing is needed for low-income and top salaried people/management, but developers need to step forward. Need a vision for a good, balanced housing market. Concentrate on developers that can do this.
- We need 20 small entrepreneurs each employing 15-20 people with decent salaries instead of going after larger industries, that way if we lose one it won't hurt too much.
- Encourage current and future small businesses.
- Don't encourage new housing without impact fees in place in order to keep infrastructure costs down.
- Assist new businesses through a facilitated process. Get water and sewer out there to them.
- Lawrenceville has lost lots of businesses recently.
- Support the growth in Gasburg and Ebony with water and sewer.
- Cater to retirees and support retirement communities. They need services which represents jobs. North Carolina has catered to them and it is no wonder the Lake Gaston Wal*Mart is located there.
- Many Lake Gaston retirees are on a fixed income. But there are doctors, lawyers, and professionals there as well. Get our neighbors involved in our community and get to know their businesses and networks.
- Lake Gaston residents/retirees are looking for restaurants, hotels, and other services. They drive out of the area for services.
- Our residents have resources that can help.
- Put in place incentives to kick-start needed businesses/services. There is a trend for retirees to start new businesses and to buy old farms to produce niche agricultural products.
- The new IKEA plant near Danville cost local government \$10 million in incentives.
- Need to stop giving industry dollars up front. They need to have the start-up dollars in place.
- The Fort Lee Committee from Brunswick County didn't have a military person on it even though we have many retired officers in the area.
- Get the Lake Gaston people involved in the community.
- The majority of counties in Virginia don't have an IDA set up like we do. Their IDA and staff is under the county administrator led by and there is an economic development director supervised by the county administrator.
- The area is primed to go forward, but running our small store (Main Street Station) has been hard because we can't get employees. We have to hire retirees. Small businesses on this end of the County need support and incentives or they go across the lake.
- It is hard to change habits. People rather go to Hardee's than to our nice, special restaurant.
- Water and sewer is key. I'd grow my business to a 50 seat restaurant if water and sewer came. I'd find a hotel, a doctor, etc. to come to the area.
- Four projects happening in Gasburg now, but growth would explode with water and sewer whether it came from the Roanoke River Authority or Lawrenceville. Townhouses would come. The north Carolina side has public water and lots of restaurants, businesses, etc. Water tank is just across the line.
- The Lake Gaston residents are paying their County taxes, but not getting their due in County services.
- On weekends there are car after car driving by. They are going to spend their money somewhere. The small businesses near the lake have folks stopping in from all over the United States.
- Build a water and sewer system here instead of bringing the service in from elsewhere. Tap the Virginia Beach pipeline.
- Tap into the retiree market via a marketing program.
- Need to address the poor property maintenance in the County.