

# Northwest North Carolina Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Davie County Economic Development Strategy

November 2003

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*The illustration on the cover of this strategy depicts art and craftwork created by Northwest North Carolina residents Audrey Hash-Hamm, Archie Powers, Elkland Handwerke, Delta Peterson, and Jeff and Betty Thomas.*

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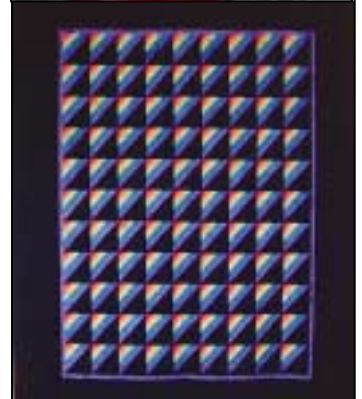
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## **Introduction**

Northwest North Carolina has suffered significant economic downturn during the past ten years. The U.S. transition away from manufacturing employment has been particularly hard on the Northwest North Carolina region – whose mainstay has historically been in the textiles, furniture, and tobacco industries. Davie, like the other Northwest North Carolina counties, has reached a point at which a change in direction is needed. Davie can take one of two paths. Should the county rest complacent with its current situation, job loss will continue and social disparity will increase, making it even more difficult to bring in new investment in the future. Alternatively, should the county acknowledge its economic problems and vow to engage in aggressive economic and community development, the situation can be reversed and positive change can start to take place.

This is a choice that Davie's leaders must make. This document maps out a strategy for taking aggressive action to remedy the current economic problems Davie faces. It calls for county leaders and all residents to proactively work to change economic conditions.

Three priority projects have been identified that are critical to jump starting economic development in Davie. These projects, as well as others recommended throughout this report, will take resources that the county does not have. For these projects, we have suggested possible outside funding sources. At the regional level, we have recommended the formation of a grants team that will assist all Northwest North Carolina counties with pursuing government and private foundation funding.

Other projects recommended in this report will require internal investment. They call for the entire community to assume a role in economic development. One of Davie's greatest strengths is the climate in which its public sector and local businesses to work closely together to solve problems. Throughout this strategic planning process, Davie's leaders have proven that they are committed to economic development. Improving the economic health of the county will require work from all sectors of the community. This plan contains ideas for volunteer initiatives that have the potential for making enormous change in the county.

## **Vision**

The vision for that Davie County aspires to is:

*Davie County is home to individuals who work together to improve their community, from preserving the county's beautiful natural environment to creating inventive new businesses.*

## **Goals**

The economic development strategy contains recommendations that will increase the region's opportunities for growing its target industries and other high impact businesses. AE has identified five goals for each county's economic development efforts. Each goal relates to each section of the ED plan. These goals are the same for each county in the 8-county area. They are:

- Goal One: **Workforce development and education** programs are focused on preparing the workforce for the County's target industries.
- Goal Two: **Entrepreneurship** and small business growth are significant drivers of the economy.
- Goal Three: Davie County offers a place for its residents to **live, play, and work**, and the County is an appealing place to live for young professionals and individuals employed by **target industry companies**.
- Goal Four: Davie County's **sites and infrastructure** meet the needs of target industries and a growing population.
- Goal Five: Davie County is engaged in a proactive, targeted **marketing** campaign to send a clear message that the county is dedicated to these goals and understands the importance of these strategies to improving the economy.

### **Implementation**

AE recommends that the county formalize the economic development initiatives by strongly supporting the Davie County Economic Development Council (EDC) as the county's single economic development organization. This plan calls for an overall strengthening of economic development in Davie, which may require the EDC to create a new staff position that is dedicated full time to economic development. The Davie County Chamber of Commerce, Davie County towns, and local businesses should continue to be strong supporters of the EDC.

### **County Priorities**

This plan recommends many initiatives designed to help Davie County create a healthy economy that will continue to grow for many years to come. We recognize, however, that local, state, and federal resources may be limited. Therefore, we have identified three priority projects that are designed to trigger economic growth and can be accomplished within one year. The impact of these projects will multiply throughout Davie County and provide a firm foundation for future economic development activities. Detailed information on each priority project is provided in the following sections of the report.

1. **Expand entrepreneurial education and innovation in the classroom. Promote programs that teach people of all ages the benefits of and how to start their own companies.**

**Cost estimate:** To be determined

**Funding sources:** Davie County Schools, Davie County government, EDA, National Foundations

**Primary Responsibility** Davie County Schools in conjunction with the Davidson Community College and Davie County government

**Timing:** Begin identifying programs in 2004. Implementation is ongoing and depends on the timing of project funding.

- 2. Develop a motor sports complex, centered on a practice track. The complex would include an office center for a professional motor sports team, light manufacturing and office space for equipment suppliers and testers, and a community college or engineering educational campus.**

**Cost estimate:** \$100,000 for the initial conceptual plan; Cost of constructing the facility should be determined in the conceptual plan.

**Funding sources:** Davie County government; the EDA

**Primary responsibility:** Davie County Government should oversee the conceptual study

**Timing:** 2004: Assemble project task force, visit other practice tracks, and identify potential sites; DCC researches appropriate curriculum to adopt; Davie County government hires a company to create the conceptual plan  
2005: "Shop" project concept to developers, hire internal consultant to assist with design and logistics.  
2006: Begin construction of the track.  
2007: Begin construction of educational facility.

- 3. Invest in improvements to tourism amenities and launch active tourism marketing campaign, both as a county and as the larger region.**

**Cost:** To be determined, varies depending on project

**Funding sources:** Davie County Government; Town Governments; Federal Historic Preservation Fund; National Parks Service; Federal Highway Administration; Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

**Primary Responsibility:** Davie County Government; Davie County Chamber of Commerce; towns of Coolemee, Bermuda Run, and Mocksville

**Timing:** In 2004, identify 3-5 tourism assets that could become the core of Davie's tourism industry (Raylen Vineyards, Coolemee, Joppa Cemetery,

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outdoor recreation such as golf and fishing, for example). By 2005, develop a Web site devoted to tourism in Davie County. Link this Web site into a regional Web site. In 2005, launch a tourism marketing campaign and participate in a regional campaign.

## **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

**GOAL: Workforce development and education programs are focused on preparing a workforce for Davie County's target industries.**

All counties in Northwest North Carolina are in economic transition, with many workers unemployed and home to aging workers who have inappropriate skills for future high wage, high impact employers. This problem presents the region with a tremendous opportunity: to start fresh and re-tune all workforce development and educational programs on preparing a workforce that meets the needs of its target industries. To meet this goal, it is imperative that investment in education becomes a top priority for all counties.

Helping Davie's workforce become better prepared for meeting the needs of its target industries can occur on several fronts. First, Davidson Community College can take steps to ensure that its curricula in Davie County are highly focused. Second, programs aimed at retraining displaced adult workers can be enhanced and new programs established to make sure that these workers can integrate into Davie's new economy. Finally, it is essential to provide students in Davie's school district – from kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade – with programs to help them learn to be entrepreneurial and prepared for target industry jobs.

Throughout this 10-month planning process, AE has conducted interviews, focus groups, and surveys with more than 300 county residents. From this input, several important workforce strengths and challenges have surfaced. Both residents and businesses agreed that Davie's K-12 educational system and family environment. The hard working nature of Davie workers was cited many times. Davie's workforce has higher educational attainment than other counties in Northwest North Carolina, although still below the national average.

Based on Davie's long-term goals, and AE's understanding of Davie's strengths and challenges, we offer the following major strategies to help craft strong workforce and education efforts:

1. **Ensure that K-12 education is as strong as possible.**
2. **Adopt programs that improve adult education for workers in transition that have not received a high school degree or who need to update their skills to prepare for new job opportunities.**
3. **Create and enhance programs at Davidson Community College that help workers transition into target industry occupations.**
4. **Develop workforce training programs geared towards Hispanic population.**

In the following pages, we have provided specific action steps, an estimated budget, and Timing to help Davie complete these strategies.

**Workforce Strategy 1:  
Ensure that K-12 education is as strong as possible.**

Basic education should be considered the foundation of successful economic development. Those regions across the U.S. who have invested in basic education are also the most successful in growing high tech, high wage employers. The two go hand-in-hand.

Northwest North Carolina has suffered significant job layoffs and economic decline in the past decade. Before an aggressive external economic development campaign is launched, it is essential that all NWNC counties invest in the core of their communities: K-12 education, the revitalization of their downtowns, and infrastructure that supports new economy businesses. This investment will have much greater payoff long term by helping each county retain its current employers and high skilled workers, as well as renew a positive spirit across the community. Businesses in the target industries that have been recommended by AE demand the best possible K-12 education system and workforce training programs to prepare the workforce for success in targeted industry businesses. This ensures that they will be able to recruit and retain young professionals who demand that their children receive excellent education. It also shows them that the community is willing to invest in itself, its future, and therefore will support them into the future.

**Action 1: Inform students, teachers, and parents of post-graduation options other than college. These programs will help keep graduates in the county, fill workforce needs and keep students from dropping out of high school.**

More emphasis should be placed on assisting those students who may not be on a track to community college or university after high school. Assistance needs to start early in a student's high school career.

- Early in high school, identify students who may be interested in a different track other than college. A good example is the Mountain Empire Community College's Talent Search Program. This program helps 12-18 year old students from low-income families define career and educational goals. It is designed to keep students on track throughout their education. Students work with educators to monitor their progress and stay focused on long-term goals.
- Track these students into apprenticeship programs for occupations that are growing but currently not being pursued (construction trades such as plumbing and electrical installation, for example).
- Over time, develop a Web site and printed information package containing resources for non-university bound youth. The Web site and package should contain information about non-college options, links with training organizations, apprenticeship programs, and the community college. The Web site could also contain job postings.
- Establish General Prep and Vocational Prep courses of study in Davie High School.

- Promote the resources of the new (future) Workforce Development Center in Davie High School.

*Funding: To be determined*

*Timing: Work should begin in 2004. New school programs will take 3-4 years to initiate.*

**Action 2: Invest in technological infrastructure within schools.**

- To bolster economic development, Davie's district should be cutting edge and nationally competitive. Look at innovative programs such as the Center for Advanced Research and Technology in the Fresno and Clovis Unified School Districts in California as a prime example of the future face of education. [www.CART.org](http://www.CART.org)
- The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation \$11 million grant recently awarded to the State of North Carolina. This is the first part of North Carolina's \$30 million initiative to create more than 40 redesigned high schools throughout the state. Davie County should attempt to be a recipient of a portion of these funds.
- Invite student teams to help school officials brainstorm about how to use new school bond revenue. Students can, for example, envision what an ideal computer laboratory would look like. This will help school officials plan facilities that are tuned into student needs while empowering students.
- Adopt a take home computer program. In this program, schools lend computers to parents for 4-6 weeks at a time. To be eligible for the program, parents are required to take an orientation workshop that teaches them the basics of operating a computer, common software packages, and using the Internet.
- Over time, create WIFI networks on the Davidson Community College and high school campuses.
- Evaluate arts programs and classes in K-12 education. Incorporate design-oriented activities into these programs. For example, arts training for elementary school children could include a segment on the rules of good design. As children progress through school, introduce computer-aided design, graphic design, and animation, for example.

*Funding: Davie County Schools, the Bill Gates Foundation Grant, and State of North Carolina*

*Timing: Ongoing*

## **Workforce Strategy 2:**

**Adopt programs that improve adult education for workers in transition that have not received a high school degree or who need to update their skills to prepare for new job opportunities.**

Workforce training programs need to be holistic, encompassing not just formal education and skill development but also healthcare, affordable housing, transportation, daycare, and a monthly stipend. To effectively transition displaced workers into target industries, coordinating workforce development programs with these other types of services will yield the most positive results.

Through Davidson Community College, Davie residents have good access to adult basic education, ESL, and GED programs.

### **Action 1: Examine initiatives of other communities for ideas on innovative new programs for Davie County. Good examples include:**

- **Project STRIVE** in Baltimore is an intensive three-week training program for employees. The STRIVE program develops skills for job seeking and job readiness. It helps people in need of finding a job gain skills for workforce behavior, appearance, and attitude through programs such as: group interaction, interviewing, and telephone usage. Many of Project STRIVE's participants have severe financial or personal difficulties and do not have time to enter a vocational training program. Project STRIVE helps these people acquire jobs quickly so they can get back on their feet.
- **Danville Community College in Virginia.** After a careful assessment of who utilized the college and who did not, Danville Community College (VA) established four Neighborhood Educational Opportunity centers that provide GED, computer literacy, and continuing education courses for underserved populations. Through the centers, residents have access to education, job training and placement, neighborhood revitalization work, economic development assistance, and leadership development activities for youth and adults.
- **Southeastern Community College (SCC) in Whiteville, North Carolina.** SCC in collaboration with the Columbus County Partnership for Children, Columbus County Schools, and Four County Community Services offers a Family Literacy Program. In this program, parents and children go to school together. Parents can improve upon their own basic education skills and then actively participate in teaching their children.

### **Action 2: Seek funding for program development**

- Although there are some federal and state funds to support some of this, philanthropic funds would be more flexible to use. The most successful programs (such as HOPE) are community-based approaches.

### **Action 3: Inform the community that these programs are available.**

- Encourage people in need to participate, and ensure that all leadership and economic development professionals fully understand the new workforce program delivery at all levels so that they can talk intelligently about these programs in their business development and expansion efforts.
- Include a brief discussion of how a community-wide informational program is needed to funnel these, often hesitant, older workers into new vocational programs. The reason they have not worked in the past is because these workers were forced back into a traditional educational environment in which they did not feel comfortable.
- Include details about where and how to distribute information throughout the community (e.g. libraries, churches, chambers, employers, local media).

Funding: To be determined.

Timing: As soon as possible.

**Workforce Strategy 3:  
Create and enhance programs at Davidson Community College that help workers transition into target industry occupations.**

The following chart illustrates a sample of Davidson Community College’s Davie campus course offerings and the target industries that they are most aligned with:

	Target Industries							
	Logi. / Distrib.	Biotech	Design	Transport. Equip.	Value-Added Ag.	Hospitality	Health Care	Small Business / Entrepreneurship
<b>Sample of DCC's Davie County Courses</b>								
AMA (Management training) Program (CT)	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Basic Computer Skills (CE)	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Computer training, Office 2000 and Windows (CT, CE)		⊙	⊙					⊙
CNC Training (CT)				⊙				
Customer Service (CT)	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Electrical (Code Qualification)				⊙				
Emergency Medical Services (CT)							⊙	
Law and Administration								⊙
Leadership Davie County (CT)	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Medical Office Administration (CE)							⊙	
Team Building (CT)	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Tool, Die, and Mold Making (CT)				⊙				
Truck Driver Training (CT)	⊙			⊙				
Welding (CT, CE)				⊙				

\* CT- Customized training; CE - Continuing education and code qualification programs

The course offerings in Davie County are a broad range of basic education courses to customized training for managers. Some classes, such as basic computer skills and leadership training, provide important basic skills for people entering almost any profession.

Davie has access to numerous continuing education courses that feed directly into target industries, particularly those occupations that fall within a traditional manufacturing economy – welding, CNC, and tool and die making, for example. As DCC expands or alters its Davie County course offerings in the future, we recommend that it enhances its curricula related to starting a business, design, hospitality, and biotechnology. (Forsyth Technical Community College recently created a biotechnology laboratory assistant program that is a good model for DCC to consider.)

**Action 1: Build programs that train people and position Davie County for the hospitality industry.**

Davie County has numerous tourist attractions, including the historic district in downtown Mocksville, the Hinton Rowan Helper House, the textile heritage museum in Cooleemee, and Raylen Vineyards. The number of tourists coming to Davie is expected to climb as the region begins to better package and promote its tourism assets, the Yadkin Valley viticulture region brand becomes more widely recognized, and the Yadkin Valley Craft Guild is established.

In examining Davidson Community College and other workforce programs in the county, it is apparent that potential hospitality workers have few places to turn for training. The hospitality industry offers a good short- to medium-term solution for displaced workers, because training takes a short amount of time and jobs will quickly emerge in Davie.

- Develop a Davie County civic center. The center can be used as a gathering place for community events and promoted outside of Davie to recruit small conferences. The design of the conference center should reflect Davie’s unique personality. Space in the conference center should be set aside to showcase fine craft, music, and other unique attributes of the county. Once complete, the center should be promoted to target industry conferences and training programs.
- Consider establishing an executive retreat. Davie County offers the beautiful natural environment, proximity to a major airport, and recreational amenities that will appeal to corporations looking for a location for executive retreats and training. The retreat would combine meeting rooms, a reception area, overnight accommodations, and a restaurant.
- Do not continue to build new facilities for the hospitality industry. When at all feasible, renovate vacant industrial and commercial properties.

*Funding: Consider increasing the occupancy tax by 1% to fund improvements to local tourism amenities, launch a countywide beautification effort, or raise funding for a civic center.*

*Timing: Conceptualization begins now. By 2005, a search for an appropriate civic center location should begin. The design of the convention center should be complete by 2006. The conference center should be open by the end of 2008.*

**Action 2: Adopt a community college program training people for the professional motor sports industry.**

The growth of the motor sports industry in Davie County will begin with the construction of a NASCAR training track. The county will receive the greatest economic return on the facility if it is accompanied by a community college program aimed at training people for the industry. An on-site professional motor sports training program will create a magnet for attracting equipment developers and suppliers – forming a strong motor sports cluster in Davie.

- Northwest North Carolina does not currently have a professional motor sports educational program.
- Work with Davidson Community College to adopt the program and locate it in Davie County.
- Invite DCC to be on the motor sports task force. Ask for their participation in the recommended Conceptual Plan for the facility.
- Examine the following successful motor sports engineering programs as good examples for the future DCC program:
  - Bobby Isaac Motor Sports program at Catawba County Community College in Hickory, North Carolina <http://cce.cvcc.edu/?a=racemain>
  - Central Piedmont Community College's machining and welding courses that teach students how to build the frames and engines of race cars <http://www.cpcc.cc.nc.us/default.htm>
  - Rowan-Cabarrus Community College <http://www.rccc.cc.nc.us>

*Funding: To be determined in the Conceptual Plan.*

*Timing: Begin investigating model programs and developing the conceptual plan in 2004.*

**Workforce Strategy 5:  
Develop workforce training programs geared towards Hispanic population.**

Davie County has seen a slight increase in Hispanic population during the past decade. The Hispanic population in Northwest North Carolina region will continue to rise, and in the future, Davie can expect to see its Hispanic population rise as well. Today, 4% of Davie's population is Hispanic, up from 0.3% in 1990. Migrant workers are typically undercounted by the Census, which may mean that the Hispanic population in Davie County is actually larger.

It is important that all Northwest North Carolina communities have programs in place that assist Hispanics in learning English, obtaining job training, job placement, and saving

money in local banking institutions. Along with this, it is important that non-Hispanic residents learn about the Hispanic culture so that incoming residents feel welcome and engaged in the community.

**Action 1: Continue to support English as a Second Language (ESL) programs.**

- ESL classes should be made available throughout the community to provide greatest access to all Hispanic and non-English speaking residents. The Workforce Development Center, local public school facilities, and churches provide accessible locations at little cost to the community.

**Action 2: Widely promote the availability and value of these programs.**

- A recent study shows that Hispanic residents tend to respond best to radio advertisements and word-of-mouth communication.
- Launch a countywide program to educate Hispanic residents about the options available to them, including ESL, other educational opportunities, and banking services. The program will involve a mix of public service announcements (PSAs), billboards, and flyers distributed at churches, restaurants, and other gathering places. Promotional materials should be in Spanish.

**Action 3: Develop cultural awareness programs for all Davie County residents and businesses.**

- Make learning about the Hispanic culture fun. Invite leaders from the Hispanic community within Davie, or the region, to co-organize a Mexican-American event at which cuisine, traditions, and artwork are showcased.

*Funding: Funding depends on the size of the event and should come from sponsorships from local businesses and media organizations.*

*Timing: The first event should be held in 2007.*

## **ENTREPRENEURSHIP STRATEGIES**

### **GOAL THREE: Entrepreneurship and small business growth are significant drivers of the economy.**

A critical aspect of building sustainable economic competitiveness is linking economic performance with social cohesion. The NWNC region is very diverse in terms of education, workforce skills and economic performance yet the region must strive to reduce disparities among the counties. The stimulation of entrepreneurship through the formation and development of new commercial businesses and social enterprises can play a key role in employing underutilized resources in the distressed areas of the region.

The entrepreneur in the community is a primary contributor and mobilizer of resources to develop the economy, a provider of employment for others, and a stabilizing factor in the society. **The following are some of the major benefits of entrepreneurship:**

- ✓ Provide a productive outlet for energies of enterprising and energetic people
- ✓ Creation of jobs at relatively low capital cost, especially in the fast growing service sector.
- ✓ Development of a pool of skilled and semi skilled workers who are the base for industrial expansion
- ✓ Small businesses are a source of innovation in products, services and techniques
- ✓ Contributing to increased participation of all communities in the economic activities of the region.
- ✓ Serve a social function by creating career opportunities and upward social mobility, and by preserving, in many instances, a set of values increasingly needed in these days of large impersonal firm

Several entities currently provide services for entrepreneurship within the NWNC region with programs ranging from training, technical assistance, funding, and networking. Although there are numerous groups providing an aspect of entrepreneur development, the most overarching organizations in the region are the **Triad Entrepreneurial Initiative (TEI)**, serving Forsyth, Davie, Yadkin, Surry, Stokes, and Rockingham Counties, and the **Blue Ridge Entrepreneurial Council (BREC)**, serving Western North Carolina and including Alleghany and Ashe counties.

TEI's primary mission is to promote economic development in the North Carolina Piedmont Triad region by fostering the start-up and success of high-growth companies. The Winston-Salem Alliance along with Action Greensboro fund the Triad Entrepreneurial Initiative with a focus on creating high-growth companies in the North Carolina Piedmont Triad region. Although most of the focus for this fledgling organization is within the immediate W-S/Greensboro/High Point MSA, a regional entrepreneurship program could be incorporated into their work plan after a few more years of success in the metropolitan area.

BREC is a nurturing organization for entrepreneurs in Western North Carolina, creating homegrown jobs and growing the region's economy. BREC supports entrepreneurs through the following four focus areas: education, mentoring and networking, communications and capital formation. BREC meets monthly, and provides quarterly opportunities for qualified entrepreneurial businesses to present plans before a group of local investors, the Blue Ridge Angel Investors Network.

Entrepreneurship should be viewed as a career path that all Davie County residents can pursue. Like any discipline, with proper education and resources, individuals can learn to be successful entrepreneurs.

The education process should begin by instructing the workforce that starting a business can happen in any field. Often, entrepreneurship is thought of an activity only engaged in by people in the high tech industry. This is not the case. Starting a small business can occur in any field. All of Davie's target industries – from biotechnology to design to tourism and hospitality offer opportunities for local residents to start a company.

Entrepreneurship has a long tradition in Northwest North Carolina. The majority of the region's major employers in tobacco and textiles, for example, were started by local entrepreneurs decades ago. It is this spirit of innovation and creativity that must be reinvigorated. Provided the proper tools, Davie County's residents can begin rebuilding its employment base one company at a time.

The following are the three major entrepreneurship strategies that we recommend for Davie County:

- **Provide Davie County residents with innovative educational resources to help them learn about entrepreneurship and start new businesses.**
- **Better connect venture capital, angel investors, and entrepreneurs within Davie County and the entire Northwest North Carolina region.**
- **Improve access to capital for startup and small businesses.**

Specific activities to support each of the above strategies are provided in the following sections.

### **Entrepreneurship Strategy One:**

**Provide Davie County residents with innovative educational resources to help them learn about entrepreneurship and start new businesses.**

In the future, entrepreneurship will be responsible for more than 70 percent of economic development in the U.S. As manufacturing jobs continue to be lost to overseas competition, the U.S. economy will be driven by small businesses. It is critical, therefore, to be preparing today's workforce for a future where they create their own jobs, rather than expect a job with a large employer to be waiting for them when they graduate or transition into a new career.

**Action 1: Think entrepreneurially in all K-12 school programming and investment.**

Seven out of ten high school students want to start their own businesses, according to the first national Gallup poll on entrepreneurship education commissioned and co-developed by the Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership (CEL) of the Ewing Marion Kaufman Foundation [1994]. Young people no longer believe that corporate America will take care of them. Today's high school students watched their parents invest years of hard work and loyalty in companies that promised job growth and security in return. These same youngsters are observing in dismay as corporation after corporation downsizes its workforce and drastically abandons the assumptions that used to constitute the unwritten contract between the long-term employee and the corporate employer.

- Entrepreneurship training can start at an early age.
- Start a school mentor program or Junior Achievement program in junior high and high schools. This program will invite local business owners to talk to students about why they started their own business, what they enjoy about it, and how they did it.
- Davie County's existing job shadowing, internship, and youth leadership programs should involve small, successful local businesses as well as major employers.
- Support an annual business plan competition for all high school students in Davie County. Invite local business leaders to conduct business plan instruction each fall semester. In the spring, launch a competition in which students conceive of a business idea and submit an executive summary of a business plan. Winners should receive college scholarships or seed capital. Invite previous year's winners to become mentors and judges in the competition.
- Over time, the high school business plan competition could be developed for the entire Northwest North Carolina region, with finalists from each county competing for larger prizes in the regional competition.
- Start a summer entrepreneurship program for teachers. Ask leaders at Davie's SBDC, local business owners, and teachers from DCC to lead a one day seminar for Davie K-12 teachers to provide them with tools they can use in their own classrooms to train students on entrepreneurship.

*Funding: To be determined. Mentoring, Junior Achievement, and internship programs rely on volunteer time. The business plan competition should rely on local donations. The amount of scholarship awards or start-up capital could range from \$500 per student to thousands of dollars.*

*Timing: Several of these recommendations have already started. All initiatives that are not currently underway should start by 2005.*

**Action 2: Enhance entrepreneurship resources at Davidson Community College's Davie campus.**

- Expand Davie's Small Business Development Center (SBDC) within DCC's future Workforce Development Center.
- Launch a **new small business management class** offered as an elective to all Davidson Community College students. Make the small business management class a requirement within target industry-related Associate's Degree curricula, both at the Davie and Davidson County campuses.
- Use the viticulture / winery incubator in Surry County as a model for a future Davie County small business incubator specifically aimed at a target industry. (See following recommendation.)

*Funding:* A new entrepreneurship class will require enough funding to hire one or two new faculty.

*Timing:* The new entrepreneurship class should be available by Fall Semester 2005.

**Action 3: Create a small business incubator that contains resources needed by Davie's target industries.**

Though Davie County contains ample industrial and commercial space, there are few locations that are appropriate size for small businesses. A business incubator could be developed, either adjacent to DCC's campus or in a location convenient to Davie's main population centers.

The most successful business incubators are those that provide more than just reduced rent office space and furniture for tenants. They combine office space with knowledge – such as an SBDC office or other mentoring organizations - and are closely connected with local community colleges and universities. They provide first-rate telecommunications infrastructure, conference facilities, and shared laboratory or manufacturing space. A good incubator will become a gathering place for the community for after hours networking events.

An incubator should be developed during the next 5 years to support start up and small businesses. The incubator should contain resources needed by Davie County target industries, for example:

- An incubator designed to support biotechnology companies. This incubator should contain a wet laboratory space shared by businesses in the incubator. Look at the Small Business Incubator and the Biotechnology Incubation and Training Center in Asheville as a good model. <http://www.asheville.cc.nc.us/business/sbc/sbc.htm>
- An incubator designed to support light manufacturing businesses, particularly in the transportation equipment industry. The incubator could be located in a vacant industrial building.
- A design business incubator used to spin design-oriented functions out of Davie manufacturing companies. The incubator could provide instruction

and shared resources to help skilled craftsmen build businesses for selling their products.

***Funding:** A small business incubator and wet lab space will require its own facility. Ask local businesses to donate used equipment for offices, a wet laboratory, or light manufacturing space. Seek grant funding from the EDA. It might be possible for one of the companies owning a vacant industrial site in Davie to be persuaded to donate the facility for the creation of the incubator(s).*

***Timing:** Begin conceptualizing the incubator in 2004, visiting other successful incubators in the region and state to gain ideas. Seek funding for the design and construction of the incubator space(s) in 2005.*

### **Entrepreneurship Strategy Two: Better connect venture capital, angel investors, and entrepreneurs within Davie County and the entire Northwest North Carolina region.**

Funding for business startup is also one of the biggest impediments to furthering entrepreneurship in Davie County. The Piedmont Angel Network is one of the only angel investor groups in the Piedmont Triad region, yet seems to be under funded to be able to have a large impact on entrepreneurship development.

According to a recent article by Erik Pages and Shari Garmise in the *Economic Development Journal*, “networks are a central component of an entrepreneurial climate – a cultural, social, and economic milieu that encourages and nurtures the creation of new business ventures.” The objective of an entrepreneurial network is to provide a forum in which business executives and people who seek to become executives of their own companies can share ideas, do business together, and build relationships.

#### **Action 1: Form the Davie County Entrepreneurs’ Association.**

- The mission of the Association should be to become the lead organization in (1) educating the community about entrepreneurship and (2) creating an atmosphere that embraces entrepreneurship and helps small businesses thrive.
- Promote membership to small business owners, aspiring entrepreneurs, professional service providers, local civic leaders, economic developers, and investors.
- Offer memberships at a low annual cost (less than \$200).
- Ask the Chamber of Commerce, county and city government, local libraries, churches, Rotary Club, and other community organizations to post flyers and online announcements about the foundation of the Association and the date/time of the first networking event.
- Examine the Council for Entrepreneurial Development at Research Triangle Park ([www.cednc.org](http://www.cednc.org)) as a good example program and statewide resources for entrepreneurs.

**Action 2: Create an Entrepreneurs' Association Web site.**

- The Web site should be of professional quality and contain information such as:
  - Links to entrepreneurial and small business assistance in Davie County and Northwest North Carolina
  - Links to local service businesses (accountants, law firms, banks)
  - A simple guide on steps required to start a business in Davie County
  - Tips on writing a successful business plan
  - Links to sources of capital in Davie County and the region
  - Links to helpful articles and Web sites
  - Current news related to entrepreneurship
  - A calendar of events for Davie and Northwest North Carolina
- Annual membership dues provide access to the Web site.
- Look at the following excellent Web sites as examples:
  - UCSD Connect - San Diego, CA ([www.connect.org](http://www.connect.org))
  - Pioneer Entrepreneurs – Bozeman, MT ([www.pioneerentrepreneurs.com](http://www.pioneerentrepreneurs.com))
  - ACENet – Athens, OH ([www.acenetworks.org](http://www.acenetworks.org))
  - Netpreneur – Reston, VA ([www.netpreneur.org](http://www.netpreneur.org))

**Action 3: Host a monthly Entrepreneurs' Association event.**

- The event should include 20-30 minutes of networking time and a 20-30 minute educational presentation.
- Speakers for the event could include: successful entrepreneurs from the region, venture and angel capitalists, representatives from the SBDC and (future proposed) business incubator, instructors from DCC's recommended entrepreneurship class.

**Action 5: Host a one-day entrepreneurial education workshop in conjunction with the SBDC and Davidson Community College.**

- The workshop should occur every six months.
- Present topics such as how to write a business plan, small business finance, and marketing.

**Action 5: Davie County's Entrepreneurs' Association should become members of regional entrepreneurial networking organizations.**

- Davie's Entrepreneurial Association Web site should be linked within a Northwest North Carolina regional entrepreneurial resources directory.
- Members of Davie County's Entrepreneurial Association should receive discounted membership within other regional organizations.
- Invite neighboring counties' entrepreneurs' associations to engage in joint programs and events.

*Funding: Funding for Web site development and maintenance should come from membership dues. Charge members a small admission price*

*to attend monthly networking events (to cover the cost of the facility and refreshments).*

*Timing: Begin forming the Association in early 2004. The first networking event should be held in Q2 or Q3 2004. The Web site should be on-line by Q4 2004.*

### **Entrepreneurship Strategy Three: Improve access to capital for startup and small businesses.**

#### **Action: Create a Small Business Loan Program.**

- The Davie County Commissioners should draft a positioning paper examining a possible structure for a countywide small business loan program.
- The County, the Chamber, and private companies could jointly fund the loan program.
- Ideally, the loan will be funded at \$100,000 - \$200,000 per year to start.
- Companies receiving loan funds should be required to meet specific goals during the first after receiving the loan. If all objectives are met, then convert the loan into a grant to the company.
- With additional funding and staff, the EDC could be responsible for managing the fund.

*Funding: \$100,000 - \$200,000 per year in the beginning, with funding increasing over time.*

*Timing: 2005*

### **Entrepreneurship Strategy Four: Support a virtual arts market for arts and crafts created in the Greater Winston area.**

One of the top priorities for the region is to generate a national and international recognition of the region (see the Regional Marketing Strategy). An online market (similar to Ebay © in how transactions occur) offering only quality products that are made in the region would bring recognition to the region as an arts and crafts center for the U.S. This has tremendous potential as a private sector initiative, but should be started with the public sector (e.g., the CEDS Committee or Council of Governments) developing the framework and contracting it to a private entity for profit.

Work with a select group of premier IT individuals to develop the infrastructure to support such a system. Once the infrastructure is developed, "lease" the concept to a private entity who will run the system, in exchange for return profit that will go to support regional marketing efforts.

*Funding: \$500,000*

*Timing: National Arts Council, EDA, Golden Leaf, Private Sector Investment, Foundations*

## **QUALITY OF LIFE STRATEGIES**

### **GOAL FOUR: Davie County is an appealing place to live for young professionals and individuals employed by target industry companies.**

The most successful economic development regions in the U.S. also contain strong quality of life amenities. In addition to quality education, a quality environment plays a large part in the choice of young, skilled professionals in where they move. It also plays a significant role in retaining good citizens.

A high quality of life is also directly connected to the region's ability to attract tourists. Through the choice of investments in quality of life amenities, the region will be able to target the specific type of tourist that visits. Tourists should be considered an economic development audience. Oftentimes, tourists are the very decision makers around which economic development campaigns are targeted. To get the highest return, economic development and tourism promotions should be closely connected. The audience of both should overlap.

One of the easiest ways for NWNC to become top of mind for its target industries is for executives from those industries to visit the region for vacation. Therefore, tourist activities should portray a certain image of the county, one that is appealing to those executives and other decision makers. Make sure all tourist attractions showcase the county's creativity, natural beauty, and unique lifestyle.

The recommendations offered within this section are aimed at improving the quality of life for two audiences: young professionals and target industry companies. As addressed in the Workforce Development recommendations, both audiences look for cities with high performing primary and secondary schools. Both groups are also attracted to locations with good healthcare, quality housing, safety, ample parks and green space, art and cultural amenities, vibrant downtowns (any size), and environmental cleanliness.

The following are the three quality of life strategies that we recommend for Davie County:

- **Preserve Davie County's natural environment and scenic beauty.**
- **Improve recreational amenities for Davie residents and tourists.**
- **Invest in the beautification and revitalization of downtown Mocksville and Coolemees.**
- **Become nationally known as a center for fine craft and design.**

Specific activities to support each of the above strategies are provided in the following sections.

From the urban culture of Forsyth County to the scenic beauty and mountainous terrain of more rural counties, NWNC contains many qualities that will be appealing to young

professionals. The region, however, continues to lose this population. Although Davie County contains ample amenities that should be attractive to a young, creative population, its population continues to age. Much of the migration into the county has been from people 45 years of age and older. The median age of Davie County residents is 38, three years older than both the national and North Carolina median age of 35. The median age is expected to reach 40 by 2015. As this group begins to retire, the need for services throughout the county will change

Retaining young professionals is as important as recruiting them. In this section, we recommend improvements to existing quality of life features and the creation of new amenities that will show Davie's young families that the county is progressive and paying attention to their needs. The projects we recommend are designed to generate a new energy in the county that appeals to a younger population.

### **Quality of Life Strategy One: Preserve Davie County's natural environment and scenic beauty.**

#### **Action 1: Launch a countywide beautification and clean-up program.**

The Davie County Chamber of Commerce should receive funding to organize a countywide beautification and clean-up program. The beautification program would contain three components:

- Internal marketing to persuade residents to keep their county clean. The internal marketing campaign would include the development of a catchy campaign name and tagline, marketing message, billboards, flyers, postcard mailers, and local media coverage. (See the "Don't Mess with Texas" campaign as an example of an extremely successful campaign. [www.dontmesswithtexas.org](http://www.dontmesswithtexas.org))
- Assembling a volunteer "Keep Davie Pretty" team that convenes on a Saturday, for four hours once a month, to physically clean up key areas of the community. This could include re-painting, picking up trash, or canvassing residents to pick up yard trash or junk cars.
- Reviewing current county and city policies and working with elected officials to tighten ordinances related to keeping the community clean.

*Funding: \$10,000 per year for marketing materials; volunteer and staff time. The beautification committee could initiate fund raising activities to secure donations from local residents and businesses.*

*Timing: 2004*

#### **Action 2: Extend and improve existing hiking and biking trails.**

Outdoor recreation is an important factor impacting the location decisions of young professionals. With today's technological infrastructure, skilled workers are more flexible in where they live, no longer as tied to the location of a major employer. Connecting Davie's greenways will create quality of life amenity that is marketable to a younger population.

*Funding: The State of North Carolina may have funding to expand Davie County greenways and bikeways along existing sewer easements.*

*Timing: Full regional connectivity of greenways could take up to 10-15 years to complete. Survey Davie residents to help prioritize segments of the trails to be developed first, and develop a schedule for completing the county / region wide trails.*

## **Quality of Life Strategy Two: Improve recreational amenities for Davie residents and tourists.**

Improved recreational amenities will help Davie entertain current residents and increase the possibility of retaining a younger population. Tourists will be drawn to Davie's new recreational amenities, spending longer amounts of time and more money in Davie establishments. Recreational amenities fall within Davie's target industry, Hospitality and Tourism, and have good job creation potential.

### **Action 1: Organize and attract major regional and national sporting events.**

- Sporting events will attract young people to Davie County and expose Davie and the region to a national audience.
- Davie should develop a NASCAR training track, educational program, and equipment suppliers' complex. Once complete, the NASCAR program will attract people from across the U.S. to Davie County. (See below recommendation for additional details.)

### **Action 2: Develop a motor sports complex, centered on a practice track.**

The complex would include an office center for a professional motor sports team, light manufacturing and office space for equipment suppliers and testers, and a community college or engineering educational campus.

*Funding: \$100,000 for the initial Conceptual Plan; Cost of constructing the facility should be determined in the conceptual plan.*

*Timing: 2004: Assemble project task force, visit other practice tracks and identify potential sites; DCC researches appropriate curriculum to adopt; Davie County government hires a company to create the conceptual plan  
2005: "Shop" project concept to developers, hire internal consultant to assist with design and logistics. 2006: Begin construction of the track.  
2007: Begin construction of educational facility.*

### **Action 3: Include Davie County's parks and recreational amenities as part of a larger regional marketing packaged aimed at attracting vacationing outdoor enthusiasts.**

- Support the creation of a Northwest North Carolina Sports Promotion Agency. This agency would coordinate marketing efforts aimed at bringing regional and national sporting events to the region. The agency

would also be responsible for providing each county and city with guidance on developing its own sporting venues.

### **Quality of Life Strategy Three: Invest in the revitalization of downtown Mocksville and Cooleemee.**

Active, beautiful downtowns are an essential quality of successful regions. They provide a space in which locals can convene, create an immediate, visual impression of the health of the local economy, and draw in tourists. A thriving, interesting downtown keeps residents living close and reduces sprawl, helping a community accomplish another important goal – preserving the natural environment and green space.

Creating an active downtown requires hard work and determination. It cannot occur overnight. Complete downtowns, no matter the size, offer a place to work during the day as well as places to live, to learn, to eat, to shop, to experience arts and culture, to attend community events, and to enjoy sports and recreation. To build a complete downtown, community leaders must commit to inducing as many activities as possible to locate downtown. Long-term, new government and public facilities should be located in downtown locations, new civic and recreation centers are located or relocated within walking distance of downtowns, and city and county agencies gear downtowns with ample infrastructure to support small business expansions – attracting even the highest tech companies.

#### **Action 1: Incentivize business growth in Davie County downtowns.**

Incentives come in many forms, from financial inducements to developing soft infrastructure such as educational resources and business incubators. Several good downtown incentives are already available in Davie County, but can be expanded upon.

- Waive permitting fees for businesses that locate downtown.
- Create design standards for all four downtown areas and offer incentives (such as paying ½ of the cost of façade improvements) for businesses to comply with standards.
- Mocksville should lobby local telecommunications providers to set up a wireless Internet network downtown.

#### **Action 2: Encourage residential development in downtowns by allowing mixed-use development in all city and county zoning ordinances.**

#### **Action 3: Renovate historic buildings and market them for target industry uses.**

Grants totaling \$4,800 in federal assistance and \$80,000 in state appropriations have been administered by the Historic Preservation Office to support the Davie County architectural survey and nominations of historic districts in Mocksville, to assist work at the Hinton Rowan Helper House (a National Historic Landmark), and to aid the textile heritage museum in Cooleemee. Davie is home to 180 prehistoric Native American and early historic archaeological sites. Davie has 14 listings in the National Register of Historic Places including Center Arbor,

Cooleemee Plantation, Davie County Jail and Courthouse, and three historic districts in Mocksville. The Cooleemee Plantation and the Hinton Rowan Helper House are also National Historic Landmarks.

For the purposes of this report, “historic buildings” is used within a broader context than properties that are listed in the national or state register of historic places. We are referring to sites that have architectural significance or buildings that have served as important educational or employment centers throughout Davie County’s history.

- Reuse old buildings rather than tear them down. For buildings that are no longer in a condition to renovate, keep the original façade of the building intact and construct the new building around it.
- Promote vacant buildings to local wineries as tasting rooms. This provides the wineries an affordable space that is located closer to the flow of tourists and daily traffic from residents.
- Encourage Davidson Community College, public sector organizations, and non-profits to expand future programs into downtown buildings.

*Funding: There are many possible funding sources for historic and downtown improvements, including the EDA. Others include the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation’s Historic Preservation Fund Grants-In-Aid program; Save America’s Treasures Grants funded by the Federal Historic Preservation Fund; Transportation Enhancement Funding by the Federal Highway Administration; and the National Parks Service’s National Center for Preservation, Technology, and Training.*

*Timing: This is a process that should be started today, but will be ongoing into the long-term horizon.*

### **Quality of Life Strategy Three: Become nationally known as a center for fine craft and design.**

Northwest North Carolina’s rich tradition in fine craft, arts, and design is what truly differentiates the region from other communities. Each county in the region has a role to play in ensuring that the region becomes nationally recognized for its abundant cultural amenities. This is, in part, a function of marketing. It is also a function of rallying the community around a few, specific projects that will unite the county and region’s artistic resources and form a beacon for fine craft and arts enthusiasts around the world.

The activities recommended here will improve the quality of life for Davie residents by enhancing local arts and cultural amenities. At the same time, these activities will result in attracting higher end tourists - executives and their families who will come to the region as tourists, recognize the value and beauty of the region as a business location, and place Davie County on their list of future site locations.

Expand local arts and crafts festivals. Invite jury panels to select the art and crafts that are sold. Nationally promote these events, a festival that is selling work that has passed

a jury selection will bring in serious collectors – individuals who will likely stay longer and spend more money in Davie County. Schedule festivals across counties to be near each other to retain tourists.

**Action 1: Recognize local artists and artistic ventures as economic development prospects.**

- Art schools, artists, and skilled crafts workers are each their own engines of economic development and entrepreneurship.
- Invite local artists and organizations to become a part of community organizations, such as economic development boards, Chambers of Commerce, or Convention and Tourist Boards. Their creativity will add spark to event planning and marketing efforts.
- Invite local craftspeople and musicians to participate in Davie County farmers' markets. Promote the farmers' markets to neighboring counties, to draw in weekend shoppers from the entire region.
- Workforce developers and other community organizations should organize a series of evening workshops designed to teach Davie County residents about fine craft. Invite local artists and organizations to be guest lecturers at the workshops. These events should cover topics about the history of fine craft in the region, introduce the fine craft marketplace, and show residents examples of fine craft products developed in Davie County.

*Funding: No cost. Activities are organized by volunteers.*

*Timing: Immediately*

**Action 3: Support and promote the Yadkin Valley Craft Guild and the Piedmont Craftsmen for the region.**

- The Yadkin Valley Craft Guild, currently being established in Surry County, will become the “brand name” for all (juried) products originating in the region.
- Promote the Yadkin Valley Craft Guild and the Piedmont Craftsmen organizations to Davie residents. Provide information about these organizations on community Web sites and at community events.

*Funding: The Craft Guild will initially be funded by private donations. As it develops, the Craft Guild will earn revenue from membership dues and by taking a portion of revenue from galleries at the future Fine Craft Center and the future I-77 / Welcome Center location (recommendation follows).*

*Timing: The Craft Guild is currently being established.*

**Action 4: Support a virtual arts market for arts and crafts created in the Greater Winston area.**

One of the top priorities for the region is to generate a national and international recognition of the region (see the Regional Marketing Strategy). An online market (similar to Ebay © in how transactions occur) offering only quality products that are made in the region would bring recognition to the region as an

arts and crafts center for the U.S. This has tremendous potential as a private sector initiative, but should be started with the public sector (e.g., the CEDS Committee or Council of Governments) developing the framework and contracting it to a private entity for profit.

Work with a select group of premier IT individuals to develop the infrastructure to support such a system. Once the infrastructure is developed, "lease" the concept to a private entity who will run the system, in exchange for return profit that will go to support regional marketing efforts.

*Funding: \$1 million*

*Timing: National Arts Council, EDA, Golden Leaf, Private Sector Investment, Foundations*

## **SITES AND INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGIES**

### **GOAL FIVE: Davie County's sites and infrastructure meet the needs of target industries and a growing population.**

When firms are queried as to which factors are musts when selecting a state or region while making location decisions, labor and education considerations are often the most important, followed by proximity to markets, operating cost environment, and residential amenities for managers and engineers. The only infrastructure that is often mentioned in a regional context is transportation.

When choosing a specific development location within a state or region, however, the availability of infrastructure grows in importance. As infrastructure is available in almost every city, business prospects will compare the availability and pricing of sites that come fully equipped with utility infrastructure and roadways. The availability of a shovel ready site allows a company to move quickly into the community, saving time and energy. It also indicates that the community is business friendly and forward thinking.

The reason for the apparent contradiction in the importance of regional infrastructure versus specific sites is that most larger areas such as regions or states possess sufficient infrastructure somewhere, so it is not a major corporate consideration until after the general location is picked. Therefore, although not the top priority to get a company to choose a region, once they have chosen the NWNC region, it is imperative that adequate infrastructure - water, sewers, bridges, streets and mass transit – be available to support business growth and development – and that this infrastructure fair competitively with that of another region.

Several counties in the region (Surry, Rockingham) have several sites available for business, while others such as Forsyth, Yadkin and Alleghany are limited in their available sites. This is another area where there is a significant disparity among the NWNC counties – and potential opportunities for collaboration. Additionally, several projects can foster a regional economic impact. These include transportation projects as well as multi-jurisdictional projects – taking advantage of new legislation that the State of North Carolina has given counties. All infrastructure projects should follow the policies of cities and counties that have been developed in comprehensive plans for these counties. For example, the *Legacy Plan* for Forsyth County clearly indicates a need to reduce sprawl. Therefore, infrastructure should be planned and developed so that development is directed to growth areas identified in the *Legacy Plan*.

We are offering two major strategies for improving Davie County's infrastructure:

- **Complete a countywide land use plan and allow the plan to drive future development decisions.**
- **Work with Forsyth County to provide employers with first class business sites.**

Detailed activities to support these strategies are provided in the following section.

**Sites and Infrastructure Strategy One:  
Complete a countywide land use plan and allow the plan to drive future development decisions.**

Davie County recently began creating a countywide land use plan. The plan should specify areas of the county for residential, office and industrial uses. It should also preserve ample green space to keep the county's quality of life strong for many years to come.

The land use plan will help Davie determine the placement of a future wastewater treatment plant in the eastern portion of the county. The east part of the county has experienced high residential growth in the past 10 years and will require additional capacity be created in the next few years. The exact placement of that facility will drive where new neighborhoods and offices are developed. It is critical that a utility plan be included in the land use plan.

*Funding and Timing: Project is currently underway and being sponsored by the Davie County government.*

**Sites and Infrastructure Strategy Two:  
Work with Forsyth County to provide employers with first class business sites.**

With its close proximity to Forsyth County and high portion of residents commuting to Winston Salem every day for work, Davie is a natural choice for Forsyth business expansion or companies moving into the region that want to be close to a larger population center.

Helping Davie (and all Northwest North Carolina counties) become a strong business location is in Forsyth's best interest. In time, the supply of large business sites in Forsyth will decline, or prices increase. Davie provides an excellent alternative location for Forsyth business expansions. The region benefits when local employers are able to expand nearby, retaining local employers and keeping the impact of the new investment close to home.

Long-term, Davie should partner with Forsyth in the development of new sites or infrastructure to help retain businesses in the area. The initial project could be the future wastewater treatment facility- that will benefit developers on both sides of county lines. Consider tax sharing agreements so that both counties benefit from their investment in infrastructure or site improvements.

## **MARKETING STRATEGIES**

### **GOAL SIX: Engage in a targeted marketing campaign.**

In this fierce time of corporate and economic development competition, winning marketers create a strong brand, communicate a unique message, and commit to a targeted marketing plan that leverages technology. For Davie County to enhance its prospects for economic growth, a business-oriented marketing campaign is required.

Communities benefit from a well-orchestrated marketing strategy that is managed by a single organization and well-integrated team, in this case, the Davie County Economic Development Council (EDC). Before marketing, a community needs a marketing strategy to guide efforts. First and foremost, communities need to market internally. Internal marketing informs citizens and business leaders of the economic development vision and trains individuals to promote the community with a single message, rather than numerous confusing messages. Internal marketing builds local awareness and buy-in so that when a community markets outside of its region, it has a strong team to get the message out. The use of local media and personal meetings are good avenues for “building local awareness.” With strong internal support, the chances of successful external marketing increase considerably.

Once a community succeeds with internal marketing efforts, it should incorporate external marketing activities aimed at recruiting targeted businesses outside of the region. External marketing, for most communities, should begin one to two years after internal efforts are complete. Then, the trick is to balance both internal and external activities to get the most return – awareness and business. External marketing is vital to diversifying an economy. It can make huge impacts on a community by attracting high quality development, diversifying the tax base, providing more jobs, and creating more quality of life amenities for citizens. For communities today, it is important to have a Web site as primary collateral and to also have material to distribute at conferences and meetings. An integrated approach to external marketing that includes the right frequency of word-of-mouth, publicity, and personal meetings is the key to successful marketing.

### **Review of Existing Marketing Efforts**

**Davie County has some internal marketing, for economic development in place, but has an opportunity to build upon this.** For instance, once county leaders agree to the target industries, information about the industries should be communicated to all residents through community-wide campaigns. The goal should be to create buy-in and excitement.



Davie County has minimum efforts dedicated to external economic development marketing - promoting the County to businesses outside of the community. **The organizations that market to external audiences include Davie County government, the Davie Chamber of Commerce, and the Piedmont Triad Partnership.**

Davie County Chamber of Commerce provides the majority of marketing communication to residents and local businesses. Davie Chamber of Commerce's Web site, <http://www.daviecounty.com/>, is the primary vehicle for internal communication. The Chamber Web site corresponds to the public by providing a community calendar, a job center, and links to the town Web sites. The Chamber can improve this site by incorporating the new countywide marketing theme, adding target industry specific content, and keeping facts and figures about the county as up-to-date as possible.

**The Davie Chamber of Commerce** operates a professionally constructed Web site that provides an outside business with information about the county. The Chamber site includes a new comer's guide, business guide, recreational activities, schools, demographics, activity calendar, and a community profile. The Web site also has a page dedicated to economic development. This page provides visitors with an overview and highlights about the county's assets, available sites and buildings, a link to the States incentives Web site, and provides a job center. The Chamber of Commerce's current tagline "A Connected Community...with the stability of the past and the promise of the future" is similar to many in the region and does not differentiate it from its competing communities or enhance its distinctive character.

**Davie County government** has a Web site for marketing to new companies and local businesses. There is helpful information on the site, but the layout, organization, and content can be improved and updated more often. Providing a links to the county, state, and country government sites is a step in the right direction. Davie County has some internal marketing, for economic development in place, but has an opportunity to build upon this. For instance, once county leaders agree on the target industries, this should be communicated to all residents through community-wide campaigns. The goal should be to create buy-in and excitement.

The Piedmont Triad Partnership markets 12 counties, including Davie. This is an asset to external marketing efforts, however the one-page datasheet on Davie can be more targeted to the newly identified industries. Davie County economic development leaders should provide the Partnership with specific messaging to use when promoting the community.

Overall, economic development organizations in Davie use Web sites as a primary communication tool, which is the preferred tool for site selectors. Each organization should make sure contact information is easily available, link to each other's Web site, and agree to a consistent marketing message.

## **Marketing Strategies**

The remaining section provides a description and steps necessary for Davie County to engage in a targeted marketing plan, beginning with internal marketing, external activities, and readjusting the plan.

Seven marketing strategies are recommended:

- 1. Commit to and support a single organization to lead marketing efforts.**
- 2. Brand the region and each county**
- 3. Better understand the needs of the target audiences**
- 4. Gain local media support**
- 5. Launch internal marketing campaign**
- 6. Implement external marketing campaign**
- 7. Measure and readjust the plan**

AE is providing a Marketing Guide that contains information to assist the Northwest North Carolina region and each county in implementing the economic development strategies over the next five years. It is meant to be used in conjunction with the NWNC Economic Development Strategy and specifically to support leaders who will execute the marketing campaigns.

### **Strategy 1:**

#### **Commit to and support a single organization to lead marketing efforts.**

Davie County leaders recognize the importance of economic development and have supported the EDC and Chamber for several years. The county's internal and external marketing efforts, however, could be increased. Today, leaders recognize the importance of having a unified plan, led by one economic development organization, to retain and welcome appropriate types of businesses. The County needs to commit to a long-term vision and marketing strategy to shape its economic future. Although several local organizations have been charged with various elements of marketing, no single marketing message is in place for the county.

Davie County Economic Development Council (EDC) should be Davie County's primary economic development organization leading its marketing efforts. All other economic development entities such as the Davie Chamber of Commerce, the City of Mocksville, and the City of Bermuda Run should participate and support a unified message. The EDC will need to obtain \$45,000 funding for implementation of this marketing plan during the first year.

Davie County's marketing strategy should be to promote a single message, create community-wide marketing ambassadors, and then to market to target industry businesses through the right combination of publicity, direct marketing, and collateral.

**Action 1: Local economic development leaders should acknowledge the EDC as the organization to coordinate and lead economic development marketing activities.**

**Action 2: The EDC and Davie County officials should adopt this economic development strategy and agree to utilize its marketing recommendations as a guide for future marketing efforts.**

**Strategy 2:  
Brand the county.**

Communities that establish a marketing theme that differentiates them from their competitors, have greater chances of attracting economic growth. Davie County is primarily marketing to make consumers aware of the region as a location for business investment and entrepreneurship.

A brand theme conveys “who”, “where” or “what” the county offers. Local leaders feel that the most marketable attributes of Davie County is the **“local leadership, innovative individuals, and supportive nature of its residents.”**

With Design being a recommended target industry that differentiates the region, it is an appropriate position to build upon. As a theme, **“inventive,”** reflects a unique aspect of Davie – it is home to entrepreneurial individuals and businesses. Davie’s residents are creative and have the ability to invent the future – whether it’s through a new product or community initiative.

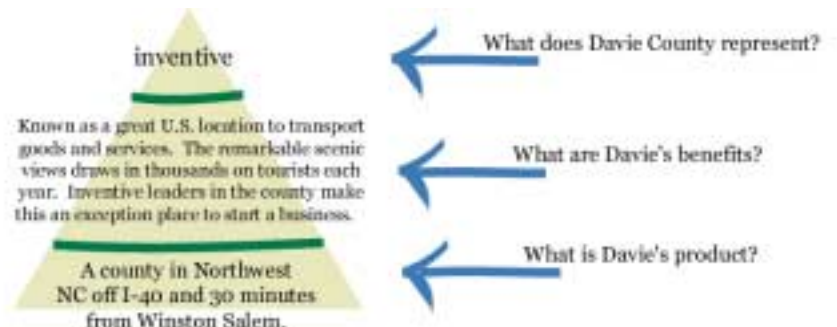
People are progressive, creative, and sophisticated. They recognize the value of education and continue to invest in local schools. (The November 2003 school bond referendum passed, providing local schools funding to reinvent themselves.) Davie’s location is an asset for distribution companies, like Fed Ex. There’s a sense of energy within the community. The scenic landscaping makes Davie a place that tourists want to visit.



The three essences, positives attributes, that best describe Davie County are:

- **Inventive** – progressive, entrepreneurial, and creative people
- **Scenic** - beautiful views
- **Talented** - a community of successful individuals

To stand out compared to competitors, Davie County should communicate a primary marketing message centered on a unique quality of the community. **The county is a place where people have the freedom and resources to invent.**



The positioning pyramid shown here illustrates Davie's recommended marketing messaging. It answers three questions and is the foundation of all future promotional activities, although the idea or words themselves might not be specifically stated in marketing materials.

**Action 1: The EDC, local chambers, county, and city leaders should agree to a single economic development brand, tagline, and marketing theme.**

**Action 2: Davie County EDC should hire an advertising or graphics design firm to develop a new logo and create common images that are utilized in future print and on-line collateral.**

**Action 3: Over time, all county and economic development-related organizations should revamp their collateral (brochures, business cards, letterhead, Web sites) to incorporate the new logo, images, marketing themes, and / or design style.**

*Timing: Commit to the new marketing brand, tagline, and themes in Q1 2004. Hire a graphic design firm to create the new logo (and future collateral) in Q2 2004.*

*Funding: \$5,000 in 2004 for new logo and updated collateral.*

### **Strategy 3: Better understand the needs of the target audiences.**

Understanding how Davie County satisfies the needs of each target audience will help economic development leaders craft the secondary message for marketing communication. A secondary message occurs after initial inquiry and provides more valuable information.

First, understand the needs of internal audiences and inform them of the county's economic development vision. Local employers, the current workforce, influencers, and entrepreneurs are an important aspect to economic development. Recognizing these segments as a target audience and understanding their needs, is sometimes overlooked. For instance, entrepreneurs residing within the county desire information on how to start a business. This audience also prefers to stay in its "home" location. Economic development marketing should communicate that Davie County is less costly, has a strong workforce, and balance to life and work. The Davie County EDC should continue its strong relationship with local businesses and provide additional services that can help them be more successful. The use of local media and personal meetings are good avenues for building awareness and demand for economic development services.

Once the county succeeds with addressing internal audiences' needs, it should become familiar with targeted industry businesses, external audiences. Identify target industry champions, who are business leaders that have expert knowledge of a particular industry. These champions understand industry players, trends, challenges and opportunities. These individuals have powerful connections within an industry and are willing to be called on to meet with site selectors, volunteer to speak at events promoting

the county, and share industry knowledge with economic development leaders. The county should have at least three industry champions for each target industry. The Marketing Guide lists industry associations that can be a resource on target industry trends and prospects. **Davie’s target audiences include: biotechnology, design, logistics and distribution, transportation equipment, value-added agriculture, hospitality and tourism.** Secondary target industries include businesses such as health care specialists, retailers, restaurants, entertainment venues, and bed and breakfasts.

Davie County should use the targeted messaging in the Marketing Guide and the main “proof points” in this section when crafting secondary messaging for marketing communication.

Davie County can use these selling points in secondary marketing messaging:

- Davie’s outstanding transportation infrastructure and close proximity to Forsyth County provides businesses and residents close, easy access to major markets.
- Davie’s is home to a strong, diverse workforce.
- Davie’s beautiful, scenic landscape and historic sites makes it an ideal location for visitors and residents alike.
- Davie’s entrepreneurial-minded, inventive residents.
- Davie’s and the entire region’s appeal to crafts workers and artists.
- Davie contains ample business and industrial park space that is ready to move in to.

**Action 1: Davie County EDC and other local economic development leaders should become familiar with the characteristics and needs of each target audience.** *Information about each recommended target industry is provided in the Target Industry Analysis report portion of this CEDS.*

**Action 2: Address Davie’s ability to address the needs of its target industries in future marketing communication and collateral.**

**Action 3: Identify target industry champions.**

**Action 4: Become industry experts. Track news about Davie’s target industries. Maintain a database of news and industry reports. Ask local media to write articles or create radio / television broadcasts featuring the target industries. These reports will help Davie residents become familiar with the target industries.**

#### **Strategy 4: Gain local media support.**

**Action 1: Davie County EDC should identify local media champions that can assist with persuading the local media to communicate economic**

**development stories to the public. Regionally, work closely with the CEDS Implementation Committee to identify regional and state media champions.**

**Action 2: Local media champions should assist the county with writing and distributing press announcements to local news companies.**

### **Strategy 5: Launch an internal marketing campaign.**

Davie County needs to market internally. Internal marketing informs citizens and business leaders of the economic development vision and trains individuals to promote the county with a single message, rather than numerous confusing messages. Internal marketing builds local awareness and buy-in so that when a community markets outside of its region, it has a strong team to get the message out. With strong internal support, the chances of successful recruitment increase considerably. For many communities, internal marketing takes a year or two to accomplish.

Davie County has a history of very strong community volunteerism. This type of dedication can greatly benefit economic development efforts. Successful economic development marketing teams with low budgets have one thing in common and that is a community of numerous volunteers that promote the area. With these efforts already in place, it should be easier for Davie to communicate its new vision and get the community behind these efforts. Davie could launch, for example, an internal campaign that provides examples of design and fine crafts businesses. County leaders may also consider an internal campaign that encourages residents to “keep Davie pretty” as part of a countywide beautification campaign.

Internal marketing activities should be launched immediately during a roll out event or economic development county meeting. Davie County should announce and discuss its three priority economic development projects:

- Expanding entrepreneurial education and innovation in the classroom. Promoting programs that teach people of all ages the benefits of and how to start their own companies.
- Developing a motor sports complex, centered on a practice track. The complex would include an office center for a professional motor sports team, light manufacturing and office space for equipment suppliers and testers, and a community college or engineering educational campus.
- Invest in improvements to tourism amenities and launch active tourism marketing campaign, both as a county and as the larger region.

Publicity, promotion, and collateral are the three vehicles recommended to reach Davie County’s internal audience. The goal is to build awareness among each target audience in a cost effective and quick manner.

Publicity is one of the best vehicles to cost effectively reaching Davie County’s internal audience and generating a buzz. By distributing press announcements and persuading news companies to “pick-up” a story, Davie County can gain publicity. Other ways to communicate to the public include: delivering newsletters (with calendar of events) to residents and businesses, posting news in church bulletins, high school papers, regional

business journals, bylined articles, and community Web sites. Newsletter topics can be stories that inform residents and create awareness about: “How to promote the county,” “Planning for our youths’ careers,” and “Why diversifying an economy is important.”

Promotion includes spreading information by word-of-mouth, attending regional industry events with local businesses, speaking at business networking events with key influencers, forming relationships with regional E.D. teams to sell Davie County. Promotion also includes calling prospects to provide information on *why do business in Davie County*, available business park space, and the benefits of operating or starting a business in the county.

The primary economic development collateral piece should be the Davie County EDC’s Web site (<http://www.daviecounty.com/econdev/>). By updating the current Web site to contain the new marketing message, the county will create a strong piece to reach both internal and external audiences. The Web site should have sections dedicated to offering information to local businesses, tourists, and businesses outside of the region. The Marketing Guide provides additional information for Davie to consider incorporating into the Davie County EDC Web site. The EDC and other Davie leaders should ask local businesses to mention this Web site to employees, on local businesses’ Intranet, and in their corporate material when appropriate. Consider simplifying the Web site name so that it becomes more directly connected to economic development, [www.DavieCountyED.com](http://www.DavieCountyED.com), for example.

**Action 1: Davie County EDC and other economic development organizations should approve an internal marketing plan.**

**Action 2: Davie County EDC should ask for volunteers to assist with implementation.**

**Action 3: Individuals from the community with a passion for economic development and marketing should volunteer and become part of the marketing team.**

*Reference the Marketing Guide for more detailed recommendations including Web site layout and content and PR headlines and distribution vehicles.*

During the first year of receiving this plan, the Davie County EDC should implement activities that increase local awareness:

### **Internal Activities**

1. Develop a publicity campaign
  - What economic development is, why it’s important, and how to market Davie County  
Ask for local marketers and writers to volunteer to assist with this activity during the first year. Annual budget should be approximately \$15,000 for hiring a PR firm.
  - Discuss powerful topics in newsletter and on Web site. See page 13 in the Marketing Guide.
  - Negotiate with the local newspapers to get a weekly section dedicated to economic development.

- Implement a utility billing campaign. Use this to announce Web site URL, news Web page with PR.
- 2. Revamp the EDC Web site to reflect Davie's new brand, marketing messages, and tagline.  
*Hire Web design firm \$3,000*
- 3. Assign volunteers to a Recruitment Ready Team  
Davie County EDC should create a standard protocol for managing prospects.
- 4. Design an Entrepreneurial resource guide (in a PDF format) that can be downloaded from the EDC Web site. Print a version of this guide for distribution. Promote this tool to local entrepreneurs. Print copies of the guide and distribute at regional entrepreneurial association meetings and events. Send copies to the Triad Entrepreneurship Initiative to make people in the region more aware of Davie's entrepreneurial resources.
- 5. Speak at local business associations and provide updates on Davie County's economic development and marketing efforts. Davie County should coordinate monthly forum meetings for county business leaders to meet and discuss economic development plans, progress, and new ideas.
- 6. Establish a "Meet and Greet" program.  
This is a program for the county's economic development team to improve its relationship with local businesses by meeting with them in person and conducting business "needs" surveys.
- 7. Invite high school groups to provide input for economic development efforts.  
Ask high schoolers to provide input on what teens are looking for when it comes to working in Davie County in five years.

**Strategy 6:**  
**Develop and implement an external marketing campaign.**

External marketing promotes Davie County to identified targeted industry businesses that complement the current economy and help Davie County meet its economic development vision. Most likely for Davie County, external marketing campaigns will begin in 2005.

Web sites, publicity, and targeted direct marketing are the most cost effective for communities to "get their message out." Davie County should balance these activities, be consistent in the message it conveys, and focus on campaigns that will directly reach prospects. The primary vehicle and one that should be used throughout external efforts is publicity. Then, Davie should begin to incorporate collateral (Web site and brochure), marketing missions, and industry associations & conferences.

**Publicity**

Publicity may be the most effective form of economic development promotion. Davie County could significantly increase the amount of publicity the county receives in publications, and ultimately reach the county's target industry

companies by having a PR firm on retainer or a PR Manager to develop and distribute releases and bylined articles.

### **Collateral (Web site and Brochures)**

Resources should be invested in redeveloping the primary Web site that promotes economic development in Davie County and better links content on regional economic development Web sites. The county's main economic development organization's URL and phone number should be incorporated in every activity that promotes Davie County.

### **Marketing Missions**

Davie County leaders need to engage in marketing missions to recruit target industry companies from other regions and to see first hand benchmark communities efforts. Schedule marketing missions each year to a region with a high concentration of its target industries and to benchmark cities to view first hand what is working and not working in their business community. Volunteer representatives from business, government, and academia should attend marketing missions. The missions should involve a series of meetings with local companies to sell Davie County's great location for business. For example, visit regional neighbor benchmark cities such as Charlotte and Asheville. In the second year, consider visiting national benchmarks such as Fort Collins or Chattanooga.

### **Industry Associations and Conferences**

Industry associations offer the opportunity to learn and track trends and they are also a trusted source of information for member companies, prospects. Davie County should consider joining top associations of its target industries. Place articles in industry association newsletters and sponsor two industry conferences per year to get face time with prospects. Face-to-face marketing is recommended to supplement other marketing efforts. Davie can attend, sponsor, and exhibit at conferences.

An example of a campaign to grow tourism is targeting travel agents in South Carolina and Virginia with an electronic promotion. Book "X" vacations to Northwest North Carolina and win a 5-day trip for yourself and a companion. Try to reach the end consumer by placing an article on Northwest North Carolina or Yadkin Valley wine and crafts in publications such as *Travel + Leisure*, *Gourmet*, *Conde Nast Traveler*, or *Food and Wine* publications. This will be expensive, and should be a regional effort, but is wonderful technique for building the region's image as a design center and tourist destination.

**Action 1: Davie County EDC and other economic development organizations should approve this external marketing plan.**

**Action 2: Davie County EDC should initiate local campaigns and ask for volunteers to assist with implementation.**

**Action 3: Individuals from the community with a passion for economic development and marketing should volunteer and become part of the marketing team.**

*Reference the Marketing Guide for more information on these vehicles.*

Davie County should consider implementing activities that increase awareness for the county with external audiences.

### **External Activities**

1. Publicity campaign that targets national publications. *Estimated cost: \$10,000.*
2. Obtain a target business database and send electronic campaign mail.
3. Develop collateral (annual report) piece and continue to revamp and update the Web site. *Estimated cost: \$10,000*
4. Attend industry events locally and nationwide (as part of a regional delegation). *Estimated cost: \$2,000 per event outside of Northwest North Carolina.*

### **Strategy 7: Measure and improve the economic development plan.**

In the long term, a successful marketing initiative will result in an increase in the number and quality of companies expanding and starting operations in Davie County. The economic development leaders should establish metrics to monitor the success of its marketing activities. These numbers should be calculated at least twice a year to assess whether Davie County's identity is better recognized at a local, regional, and state level. Performance measures are included in the regional report (Metrics) to provide guidelines for progress made on this goal.

Initially and each year, Davie County EDC needs community leaders to volunteer. Volunteers from the public, private, media, and academia (Implementation Team) should help implement this plan. Volunteers will donate time and participate in business development, public relations, and marketing missions. Some of these activities will require volunteers to make personal investment. For instance, 20 or more individuals should take a mission each year to a benchmark and be willing to pay for their accommodations. Budget figures are included in the regional report (Table of Strategies, Funding, Timing, and Responsibility) to provide guidelines for progress made on this goal.

Appendix:  
**Performance Metrics**

## Performance Metrics

An important component of the implementation of the Northwest North Carolina Strategic Plan is a monitoring system to track regional performance in the future. AngelouEconomics has identified several data sets that have been used during the strategic planning process that we believe will be good measures of economic performance. These data are easily found at state and national sources, are available at the county level, and should be considered good indicators of the overall economic health of the community and its citizens.

Many state and local economic development organizations already use performance metrics. These data are also called “benchmarks,” as local data is usually placed side-by-side state or national data for comparison. By committing to measuring its achievements, NWNC will be joining the ranks of communities in Oregon, North Carolina, Minnesota, and Indiana who have developed successful benchmarking systems to monitor their economic performance. The performance metrics proposed in this plan provides NWNC leadership an excellent opportunity to demonstrate positive results of their efforts and policies and build confidence among the general public that the economy is heading in the right direction.

AngelouEconomics has identified several performance metrics for each recommendation area of this plan that could be used by county leaders to track progress:

### Workforce Development

- Job growth in non-manufacturing industries
- Average wage growth
- Unemployment rate
- SAT scores
- Educational attainment
- Drop out rates

### Entrepreneurship

- Net firm creation
- Venture capital inflows
- Membership in entrepreneurs associations

### Infrastructure & Sites

- Existence of business parks and sites
- Available developable acreage (with utility service)
- Commuter congestion
- Office and industrial vacancy rates

### Quality of Life

- Percent of population in the 25-34 age group
- Net migration of new people to the county/region
- Poverty rate
- Per capita income
- Parkland acreage per capita

**Marketing**

- State or national media mentions relating to economic development
- Prospect activity (info requests or visits)
- Tourism revenues

Each county may choose some or all of these metrics, and may have additional metrics that fit well with the county’s goals. AngelouEconomics recommends that performance be measured on a county-by-county basis and that each metric is benchmarked against the U.S. where possible (or to North Carolina if not). Metrics are best used when they are calculated as a share of the U.S. average. For example: Forsyth County’s average wage is currently \$31,700 (2002), or 93% of the U.S. average. Forsyth can then set goals to bridge the gap over time with the U.S.

Performance metrics work best when they are easily updated on an annual basis, are easy to understand by the general public, and are measures of results not activity (such as measuring marketing calls or conference visits).

Most of this data can be easily found online at the North Carolina LINC system website: <http://linc.state.nc.us/> This site is extremely comprehensive and monitors hundreds of social, economic, and political progress measures. Most data, but not all, is available on an annual basis.

AngelouEconomics recommends that NWNC counties identify the set of benchmarks that they will track, set goals for when the county will reach parity with U.S. levels, and monitor their progress. We provide an example table with actual benchmark data that can be used to start this discussion:

**Potential Performance Metrics  
Davie County**

	Job growth (CAGR) 2000-02	Non-mfg job growth (CAGR) 2000-02	Average Wage 2002	Unemploy- ment Rate 2002	Poverty Rate 2000	Per Capita Income 2001
<b>Davie County</b>	-4.7%	-2.4%	\$31,397	5.4%	8.6%	\$29,511
<b>North Carolina</b>	-1.3%	0.2%	\$32,696	6.8%	12.3%	\$27,308
<b>United States</b>	-0.6%	0.7%	\$36,744	5.8%	12.4%	\$30,413
<b>Davie as % of U.S.</b>	0.0%	0.0%	85.4%	92.7%	69.4%	97.0%
<b>Davie Target Benchmarks as a Percent of U.S.</b>						
1997			87%	49%	--	106%
2000	126%		81%	106%	69%	100%
2002	0%		85%	93%	--	97%
2007	75%		90%	88%	--	102%
2012	100%		95%	84%	60%	107%
2017	110%		100%	80%	--	112%
2022	120%		105%	75%	55%	118%