

Northwest North Carolina Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Forsyth County Economic Development Strategy

December 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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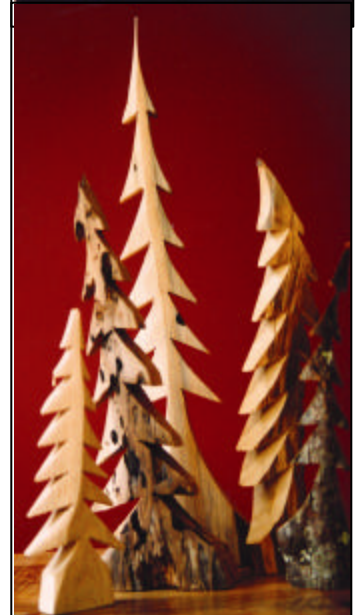
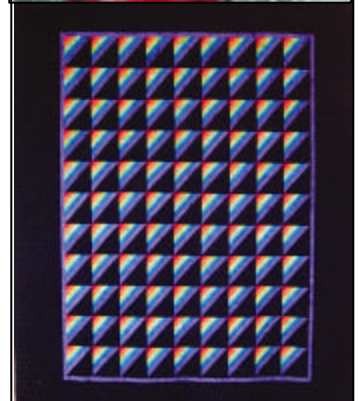
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Introduction

During the last decade, Forsyth County has experienced significant declines in certain business sectors, concurrent with significant progress in community development activities. Forsyth County also has a history of innovation and community support towards economic development initiatives. This last decade has been a trying and difficult time for leaders in Forsyth County, but the leaders have collaborated effectively on such premier projects as the Piedmont Triad Research Park (PTRP), the FedEx Hub, and numerous downtown improvement initiatives. Much of these recent successes are due to the commitment of the private sector, as evidenced by the formation of the Millennium Fund and Winston-Salem Alliance. Declines in industries such as tobacco, textile and furniture will continue to have an impact on Forsyth County. It is for this reason that **AE recommends that Forsyth County capitalize on its major strengths, in particular the PTRP, University/College collaboration, and Design.** AE recommends several projects that will strengthen the PTRP's impact on the county and accelerate the progress and impact that it will have on the county and region.

The strategy document for Forsyth County is slightly different in context and approach than the other counties. Forsyth County has a plan for how the County will grow. The *Legacy Plan* is the Comprehensive Plan adopted by Forsyth County and all 11 of its municipalities in 2001. This plan covers several areas from land development to transportation, and includes economic development. In addition, Forsyth County is rich in resources devoted to economic development (both financial as well as organizational). Therefore, this plan focuses on projects that will have the biggest impact on Forsyth County. Several strategies that are being recommended for other counties are already being addressed by organizations within Forsyth County and are therefore not strategic recommendations within this report.

Without a doubt, Forsyth and Guilford counties are the major economic drivers for the Region. As the economies of these counties go, so go Forsyth County and the region. A regional economy is as strong as the weakest link, so reducing disparities within the region, and understanding this regional dynamic and the role that Forsyth County has in the Region, is a critical issue for the county to understand and address.

Vision

The following are vision statements from the Economic Vitality section of the *Legacy Plan* that all Forsyth cities and the County have agreed to strive to achieve:

- Forsyth County's high quality of life makes it a great place in which to live and work.
- Sustainable development, striking a balance between current and future needs, is the goal of local business and industry.
- We have created a strong, diverse business community centered on banking, high-tech medical research facilities, and the film and visual communication industry.
- We have revised our site location policies to emphasize industrial and office sites in downtown Winston-Salem and at existing suburban activity centers.
- Corporations and small businesses thrive because of our well-trained and skilled labor force.

- We have embraced technology as a tool to sustain our quality environment and promote vigorous economic growth and vitality of our community.
- The transportation system in Forsyth County is one of the most advanced for a community of its size.
- Forsyth County is known for its pristine rural landscapes and network of open space as well as its aesthetically pleasing urban environment.
- We have embraced technology as a tool to our economic success.
- Environmental quality is a common, accepted objective among all segments of the community.
- Innovative policies have resulted in a high level of environmental quality.

Goals

This economic development strategy contains recommendations that will increase Forsyth County'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 eight-county area. The goals 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: Forsyth 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: Forsyth County's **sites and infrastructure** meet the needs of target industries and a growing population.
- Goal Five: Forsyth County is engaged in a proactive, targeted **marketing** campaign to send a clear message that the county is dedicated to these goals and the importance of these strategies to improving the economy.

Implementation

With several economic development organizations serving various aspects of economic development in the County, but not one overarching coordinating group, AE recommends that the Winston-Salem Alliance coordinate the implementation of this economic development strategy as part of its overall mission. Discussions have begun related to the Alliance bringing together these groups in an effort to coordinate economic development activities. AE supports this approach and recommends that this coordinating group spearhead the implementation of this plan. The Alliance should convene a stakeholder meeting to focus on the implementation of this plan. A facilitator should be used for this meeting and the outcome of the meeting should be to gain a consensus on the organizational strategy for implementation. Additionally, a consensus should be reached at

this meeting on which strategies outlined below should be priority projects and who will be responsible for each major strategy.

County Priorities

This plan is a roadmap for Forsyth County to use that will lead the county to a sustained, healthy economy. However, when resources are scarce within the county or at the state and federal level, the following prioritized project list will assist the county in directing resources to the most critical needs and to areas that will have the biggest impact in the county:

1. **Piedmont Triad Research Park (PTRP).** This park will undoubtedly have one of the biggest impacts in Forsyth County, not only in terms of wealth generation, but also job creation. As startups grow in size within the park, these businesses will seek space within Forsyth County and throughout Forsyth County for expansion. For this reason, the **PTRP is also listed in the Regional Strategy as the number one regional project priority.**

The purpose of the park is to diversify the economy through technology led initiatives from the strong academic resources in a state that is recognized world wide for technology development. The decline of existing manufacturing industries of textile and tobacco further substantiates the need to leverage the academic and technology resources, as well as connect with the Research Triangle Partnership to develop a state-wide biotech corridor. The mission of the PTRP is to promote academic, industry, and government collaboration to grow and sustain our core science in the areas of biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, nutrition, medical devices-instruments, imaging, and information technologies. The scope of technology development is balanced to diversify economic trends in any given area.

PTRP/Idealliance has obtained success in a very short period of time since 1996 and now have four buildings (342,240 square feet) and 20 companies with university and corporate employees totaling 368. Prior to that period, the area consisted of an old lumberyard, vacant tobacco buildings and a bails bondsman. Economic change has begun, and on August 13, 2002 the park announced a major expansion with the acquisition of an additional 180 acres in downtown Winston-Salem led by Wake Forest University Health Sciences in developing it's biomedical research campus in the park. **This expansion is expected to take place over the next thirty years (to full development) will require large capital investments by the private and public sectors.**

Plans have been developed to increase the size and effectiveness of the park. The incredible transformation of the Park now underway - led by Wake Forest University Health Sciences and the Idealliance - will create 5.7 million gross square feet of developed space, reclaiming 180 acres of the city's central core. It is an ambitious and well-thought out framework for redevelopment that will stimulate 62 acres of infrastructure improvements including new roads and road surface improvements, the relocation of railway tracks, bridges, new utilities and utility upgrades.

However, one of **the most immediate needs consist of affordable lab space to grow new bio-medical companies.** This is a capital-intensive industry with cost

pressure on the development process in a market that has not recently been favorable. Therefore, in addition to the above capital costs, PTRP needs **low cost lab space** available to start-up companies. Capital to up-fit a lab can cost in a range of \$300 per foot with clean rooms at \$1,000 per foot. A shell building can cost from \$50 per foot to \$90 per foot. Estimates for a 45,000 square foot office/lab building could cost approximately **\$10 to \$16 million dollars**.

Grants for building cost and/or lab up-fits would reduce overall cost, thus reducing the lease cost to the start-up company. An EDA grant (or other federals, state, and foundation support) would be applied to accomplish this effort. This would be similar to EDA's support for life science development in other states such as the Fitzsimmons Redevelopment Authority in Aurora, Colorado which funds were used to build and up-fit a biotech building.

Funding: Estimated funding for the needs identified above is \$20 million (lab space and other infrastructure assistance). Potential funding sources include: Golden Leaf, Private Sector Investment, Participants in National Nanotechnology, Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of Treasury (DOTreas) , Department of Commerce (DOC), Department of State (DOS), National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Defense (DOD), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Department of Energy (DOE), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), Department of Justice (DOJ), National Institutes of Health (NIH), Intelligence Community (IC), Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), Department of Transportation (DOT), National Science Foundation (NSF), Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

Timing: Obtain funding in 2004/5 and begin developing lab space in 2005/6

- 2. Expand the School of Arts with Computer Animation and Digital Arts and Entertainment Design.** "Design" is the major new theme recommended by AE for Forsyth County. Bio-medicine will continue to be a major emphasis for the County, but Design will help the County and region distinguish itself from other areas of the country. Not only is the city and region rich with a history of activities in arts and culture, but the design industry (eg., furniture design) has also been an integral component of the economy. The North Carolina School of Arts, based in Winston-Salem, has been discussing the feasibility of developing programs into Design. AE recommends that this expansion of facilities (and accompanying lodging for the estimated 300+ students) be located close or within the PTRP. A feasibility study should be undertaken to estimate the potential costs for this program and facilities, as well as to estimate the potential positive impact to Forsyth County and the Region.

Funding: Estimated funding for a feasibility study is \$150,000. Potential funding sources: EDA, Golden Leaf, Private Sector Investment, NCDOC

Timing: Begin discussions with PTRP, WFU, NC School of Arts and potential funding entities immediately. The development of this program will hinge on state support for further program development but should begin during 2005/6

- 3. Minority Small Business Innovation Center (Smith-Reynolds Business Park Redevelopment).** The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funded this site as a Brownfield Pilot in 1999. This area of the county is also 83% minority and economically distressed. Winston-Salem has leveraged the EPA funding to educate and engage the community about the economic potential of this site as a mixed-use business and industrial park. The City of Winston-Salem already has a proposal to EDA for \$1.5million that the City can utilize for this type of a project. AE recommends funding of a building and infrastructure to support a state of the art Minority Small Business Innovation Center. *(This park and the existing airport could also serve as a satellite location for FedEx.)*

Funding: \$3-5 million (potential funding sources are: EDA, Golden Leaf, Private Sector Investment, NCDOC, NC Department of Education, Other foundations? Other state or federal)

Timing: Begin discussions and collaborations in 2004/5. Seek funding for the building during this time as well. Begin construction in 2005/6

- 4. Development of an Advanced Research and Technology Center for Youth.** The Center for Advanced Research and Technology (CART) in Fresno, California is the most comprehensive, state-of-the-art education reform effort at the secondary level in the United States. CART collaborates with businesses and community agencies to educate students in a cross-curricular, project-based environment that is academically rigorous, and facilitated through a business based instructional model. AE recommends that Forsyth County consider the development of a similar program at the PTRP. The CART combines rigorous academics with technical, design, process, entrepreneurial, and critical thinking skills and high school students who are participants in this program provide technical assistance to area businesses, while providing students with hands-on technical training in a unique environment.

Funding: Estimated funding is \$8-12 million. Potential funding sources: EDA, Golden Leaf, Private Sector Investment, NCDOC, NC Department of Education

Timing: Begin discussions with ISD, WFU, Forsyth Tech, Salem College, W-S State, and NC School of Arts during 2004.

- 5. Forsyth Tech Community College Expansion into PTRP.** An incredible opportunity exists to create one of the most dynamic and synergistic urban business park and incubator with the PTRP. Forsyth Tech CC already has a biotechnology training program but could expand this program at the PTRP. Forsyth Tech could also expand its computer design programs in a new building of the PTRP. AE recommends that this expansion occur within the PTRP.

Funding: Estimated cost is \$10 million. Potential funding sources are: EDA, Golden Leaf, Private Sector Investment, NCDOC, NC

Department of Education, Other foundations? Other state or federal

Timing: Begin discussions immediately between the PTRP, WFU, Forsyth Tech CC, and potential funding entities. Expansion should occur during 2005

- 6. Union Cross Park.** Within dwindling available land for industrial park development, this planned business/industrial park becomes a paramount focus for business development in Forsyth County. Union Cross Business Park is approximately 400-acres of light industrial business park space near Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The majority of funding has been earmarked, but there is an additional \$750,000 that is needed to complete infrastructure improvements at the site. Given the location of this site, the project will have an impact throughout the region.

Funding: Estimated cost is \$750,000. Potential funding sources are: EDA, Golden Leaf, Private Sector Investment, NCDOC.

Timing: Seek additional funding during 2004.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

GOAL: Workforce development and education programs are focused on preparing a workforce for Forsyth County’s target industries.

Increasingly, education and skills are seen as important determinants of the employability and income potential of the worker. The productivity of labor is becoming more and more a function of what the employee knows and can do. As the economy shifts to one in which the value of strong minds and appropriate skills increases, employers seek skilled and educated workers. The demand for education and workforce training thus increases.

Not all of the school districts in the Region are good performers. Several school bond funds have failed, while others have passed – increasing the disparity of educational attainment and skill development between NWNC counties. Businesses consistently rank both of these factors as their primary drivers in their relocation decisions. Not surprisingly, Forsyth County’s younger population places a high value on “Job availability” and “Career advancement” but rates these and other economic factors low in regional performance.

For much of the 20th Century, attitudes in the South about workforce development and education reflected a limited vision of business development – relying on low-skill, low-wage, and low-value-added industries. Many of these traditional manufacturing industries are no longer providing jobs in Forsyth County, underscoring the importance of changing Forsyth County’s perspective on education and workforce. The attitudinal change needs to come from within, and community leaders must also demonstrate their commitment to change. As economic development organizations in Forsyth County have already recognized, education and workforce training must be a top priority for County.

The following are the most critical areas for the NWNC region to focus its workforce and education efforts:

- **Expand the role of the PTRP**
- **Ensure that K-12 education is as strong as possible.**
- **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.**
- **Create and enhance programs at Community Colleges that help workers transition into target industry occupations.**
- **Develop workforce-training programs geared towards Hispanic population.**

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

Workforce Strategy One: Expand the role of the PTRP.

The PTRP has a tremendous amount of academic and private support for an initiative that will be one of the most significant economic drivers for the County and the Region. To

expand on these efforts, AE offers the following suggestions that could enhance and compliment the current efforts for the PTRP and accelerate its impact:

Action 1: Expand Forsyth Tech Community College into the PTRP

An incredible opportunity exists to create one of the most dynamic and synergistic urban business parks and incubators with the PTRP. With Forsyth Tech Community College looking to expand, AE recommends that the College look to expand within the PTRP. Having the college (in particular their new Biotech and computer design programs) within the PTRP will only have a positive impact on the PTRP and the College.

Funding: Estimated cost is \$3-5 million. Potential funding sources are: EDA, Golden Leaf, Private Sector Investment, NCDOC, NC Department of Education, Other foundations? Other state or federal

Timing: Begin discussions immediately between the PTRP, WFU, Forsyth Tech CC, and potential funding entities. Expansion should occur during 2005

Action 2: Develop the North Carolina School of Arts Computer Animation and Digital Arts and Entertainment Design into the PTRP

“Design” is the major theme recommended by AE for Forsyth County and the Region. Not only is the city and region rich with a history of activities in arts and culture, but the design industry (eg., furniture design) has also been an integral component of the economy. The North Carolina School of Arts is based in Winston-Salem and has been discussing the feasibility of expanding programs into Design. AE recommends that this expansion of facilities (and accompanying lodging for the estimated 300+ students) be located close or within the PTRP. A feasibility study should be undertaken to estimate the potential costs for this program and facilities, as well as to estimate the potential positive impact to Forsyth County and Forsyth County.

Funding: Estimated funding for a feasibility study is \$150,000. Potential funding sources: EDA, Golden Leaf, Private Sector Investment, NCDOC. Development for this expansion should come from private sector donors who could become namesakes for the program.

Timing: Begin discussions with PTRP, WFU, NC School of Arts and potential funding entities immediately. The development of this program will hinge on state support for further program development but should begin during 2005/6

Action 3: Develop the Advanced Research and Technology Center for Youth in the PTRP

The Center for Advanced Research and Technology (CART) in Fresno, California is the most comprehensive, state-of-the-art education reform effort at the secondary level in the United States. CART collaborates with businesses and community agencies to educate students in a cross-curricular, project-based environment that is academically rigorous, and facilitated through a business based instructional model.

AE recommends that Forsyth County consider the development of a similar program at the PTRP. The CART combines rigorous academics with technical, design, process, entrepreneurial, and critical thinking skills and high school students who are participants in this program provide technical assistance to area businesses, while providing students with hands-on technical training in a unique environment.

Funding: Estimated funding is \$1million. Potential funding sources: EDA, Golden Leaf, Private Sector Investment, NCDOC, NC Department of Education

Timing: Begin discussions with ISD, WFU, Forsyth Tech, NC School of Arts during 2004.

Workforce Strategy Two: Ensure 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 the most successful in growing high tech, high wage employers. The two go hand-in-hand.

Northwest North Carolina has suffered significant job lay offs 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 pay off 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 that the best possible K-12 education system and workforce training programs are in place that are preparing the workforce to succeed 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.

The following chart shows the current technological training offered through the high schools in Forsyth County:

County and Name of School	Vocational Program (K-12)					
	Agriculture	Business Education	Family and Consumer Sciences	Health Occupation Education	Techonology Education	Trade and Industrial Education
Forsyth						
Carver HS						
Forsyth Vocational HS						
Glenn HS	X	X	X		X	X
North Forsyth HS	X	X	X	X	X	
Parkland HS		X				
West Forsyth HS		X	X		X	

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.

- 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 all high schools.
- Promote the resources of the Community College in all high schools.

Funding: To be determined; Possible sources: Private business, chamber of commerce, ISD, NC Department of Education.

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

Action 2: Invest in technological infrastructure within schools.

W-S/Forsyth County have invested more than \$38million on technology infrastructure and have based their strategies related to technological infrastructure on the Education Technology Blueprint that the Chamber and WS/Forsyth County schools developed in the mid-1990s. Nevertheless, AE recommends that the county investigate other programs and concepts throughout the county to remain cutting edge, including the following:

- To bolster economic development, all school systems 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
- 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.

Action 3: Develop Adopt-A-School Programs in every school in Forsyth County.

Forsyth County has a well-developed adopt-a-school program and should continue to engage the business community in this endeavor. Also, continue to research/benchmark how Forsyth County's program is compared to other benchmark

communities across the nation, so as to remain cutting edge and innovative with this program.

Workforce Strategy Three:

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.

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

- **Project QUEST** in San Antonio and **STRIVE** in Baltimore
- **Danville Community College in Kentucky.** 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 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. TBD (after program proposal has been developed)

Timing: Begin in 2004

Workforce Strategy Four:

Create and enhance programs at Forsyth Tech Community College that help workers transition into target industry occupations.

The following chart illustrates the target industries that have been recommended by AE to Forsyth County and what programs are currently being offered at Forsyth Tech Community College that addresses the skills needed for these target industries:

	Target Industries			
	Logistics, Distribution	Biotech	Design	Hospitality
Forsyth Technical Community College				
Architectural Imaging/CAD/Digital Imaging (C)			○	
Architectural Technology (A)			○	
Biotechnology (A)		○		
Broadcasting and Production Technology (A)			○	
Computer Engineering Technology (A)		○		
Electronics Engineering Technology (A,D,C)		○		
Film and Video Production Technology (A)			○	
Graphic Arts and Imaging Technology (A,D)			○	
Global Logistics Technology (A)	○			
Machining Technology (A,D)	○			
Manufacturing Engineering Technology (A)	○			
Mechanical Engineering Technology (A)	○			
Welding Technology (D,C)				
*A-Associate's Degree; D-Diploma; C-Certificate				

Action 1: Economic Development groups and Forsyth Tech should become familiar with target industry skill requirements in further developing programs to meet current and future needs.

- **Hold quarterly workshops with Community College Leaders to develop regional strategic plans geared towards this initiative.**
- **Build programs that train people and position Forsyth County for the hospitality industry.** Forsyth County has numerous tourist attractions, major annual festivals, and historic downtowns. The number of tourists coming to the Region is expected to climb as Forsyth County begins to better package and promote its tourism assets and the Yadkin Valley viticulture region brand becomes more widely recognized. In examining the Community Colleges 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 Forsyth County.

Funding: NA

Timing: Begin immediately

Workforce Strategy Five: Develop workforce-training programs geared towards Hispanic population.

Forsyth County, as well as all the other CEDS counties, has seen an increase in Hispanic population during the past decade. The Hispanic population in Northwest North Carolina will continue to rise. Migrant workers are typically undercounted by the Census, which may mean that the Hispanic population in Forsyth County is actually much 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 residents and businesses.

- Continue to make learning about the Hispanic culture fun. Invite leaders from the Hispanic community within Forsyth County, to co-organize a Mexican-American event at which cuisine, traditions, and artwork are showcased.
- Continue to work with local banks to become more flexible to the needs of Hispanic workers. Provide information on banking in Spanish. Be more flexible on the type of identification required to open a savings account.

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

Timing: Continue current programs every year.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP STRATEGIES

GOAL: 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 Forsyth County 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 Forsyth County.

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 Forsyth County.
- ✓ 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 Forsyth County are **the Triad Entrepreneurial Initiative (TEI)**, serving 12 counties including Forsyth, Davie, Yadkin, Forsyth, Stokes, and Rockingham Counties (as well as other counties outside the study region), 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, TEI has approximately 13% of business plan competition entries from outside the MSA.

BREC is a nurturing organization for entrepreneurs in Western North Carolina, creating homegrown jobs and growing Forsyth County'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 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 Forsyth County'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 Forsyth County'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, Forsyth County's residents can begin rebuilding its employment base one company at a time.

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

- **Develop innovative programs centered on the strengths of the County.**
- **Provide residents in Forsyth County with innovative educational resources to help them learn about entrepreneurship and start new businesses.**
- **Better connect venture capital, angel investors, and entrepreneurs within Forsyth 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: Develop innovative programs capitalizing on the strengths of the County.

Forsyth County has developed some very good and innovative entrepreneurial programs including TEI and the PTRP. In addition, efforts are already underway to develop a regional entrepreneurship conference in the near future. What follows are suggestions that could compliment these efforts:

Action 1: Create a national design institute / innovation center at PTRP

With the NC School of Arts Digital Design program at the PTRP, an institute that collaborates in system design and integration, combining the knowledge and skills of design with engineers and others to solve complex problems would be a tremendous asset to the PTRP. Individuals from the Arts Council, the Chamber of Commerce, Idealliance, NC School of Arts and others should visit the Santa Fe Institute or IC2 Institute in Austin to better understand how this could enhance the PTRP.

Funding: \$3-5 million (National Arts Council, EDA, Golden Leaf, Private Sector Investment, Foundations)

Timing: Begin 2005/6

Action 2: Develop clean room innovation center and wet lab space at PTRP

One of the greatest needs of the PTRP is approximately 45,000 square feet of wet lab space. This is an immediate need that will help expedite the positive impact that the PTRP will have on the County and Region. See *Project Priorities* section above for more detail.

Funding: \$15 million (EDA, Golden Leaf, Private Sector Investment, Foundations)

Timing: Begin 2004/5

Action 3: Develop Minority Small Business Innovation Center at Smith-Reynolds Airport

The redevelopment of the Smith-Reynolds Airport into a mixed use, business park will present numerous opportunities to the >80% minority and underprivileged population living in this area. The development of a Minority Small Business Innovation Center would help individuals in this area of Winston-Salem incubate business ideas into profitable venture. Several model minority small business innovation programs exist, such as in Denver, Tennessee (see Resource Section for further details).

Funding: \$3-5 million (potential funding sources are: EDA, Golden Leaf, Private Sector Investment, NCDOC, NC Department of Education, Other foundations. Other state or federal)

Timing: Begin discussions and collaborations in 2004/5. Seek funding for the building during this time as well. Begin construction in 2005/6

Action 4: Develop a Youth in Philanthropy project throughout the County.

Youth want to be involved in improving a community, but are rarely given the opportunity to do so. A model for this type of project exists in Fort Bend County, Texas. This project is

sponsored by the George Foundation, the Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce, and local business leaders. Highlights of this effort include:

- Student organized philanthropy – researching, planning, and *implementing* community service projects
- Winners receive cash awards to be donated to charity of their choice
- Select scholarship awards are provided for exceptional work for community
- Total of \$25,000 in scholarships awarded by community minded and committed leaders and businesses

Funding: \$1million (Golden Leaf, Private Sector Investment, Foundations)

Timing: Begin discussing with ISD, Chamber and private sector early 2004

Action 5: Create a Virtual Arts Market
(Described in more detail in Regional Strategy)

One of the top priorities for the region is to generate a national and international recognition of Forsyth County and the region (see Regional Marketing Strategy). An online market (similar to Ebay © in how transactions occur) and offering only quality products that are made in the region would bring recognition to Forsyth County and 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 (ie., CEDS Committee) developing the framework and contracting it to a private entity for profit. Some of the benefits include:

- Regional brand and product recognition
- Expanded market for artists
- Increased sales, and local sales tax revenue
- Spillover effect for support businesses, including shipping, insurance, finance, IT (eg., system integration of “cash registers” with online systems)

Handmade in America (based in Asheville) has begun a similar effort by AE feels that this initiative can become much more sophisticated and as such recommends that a new initiative be developed from within the NWNC region.

The CEDS committee should work with a select group of premier IT individuals to develop the infrastructure to support such a system. The Committee can then “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. Chambers of Commerce should also be looked to for assistance in implementation of this initiative.

Entrepreneurship Strategy Two: Provide residents in Forsyth County 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 Kauffman 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.

- **Continue the Junior Achievement program in every middle and high school in Forsyth County.** 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.
- **Develop a youth leadership training program in 10th/11th grade for every high school in Forsyth County.** Look to the John Ben Sheppard Institute, or the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA, utility company in Austin, Texas) as model programs for youth leadership.
- **Support an annual business plan competition for all high school students in Forsyth 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. TEI should lead this initiative.
- **Start a summer entrepreneurship training program for teachers.** Ask leaders at TEI, Community Colleges, and private businesses to lead a 1 day seminar for 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 2004.

Entrepreneurship Strategy Three: Better connect venture capital, angel investors, and entrepreneurs within Forsyth County.

Funding for business startup is also one of the biggest impediments to furthering entrepreneurship Forsyth 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: Continue to Expand Triad Entrepreneur Initiative to a Regional Scope

- 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, 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) as a good example program and statewide resources for entrepreneurs.

Action 2: 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 Forsyth County, venture and angel capitalists, representatives from the SBDC (and SBTDC) and business incubator, instructors from Community Colleges' recommended entrepreneurship class.

Action 3: Host a one-day entrepreneurial education workshop in conjunction with the Chambers, SBDC and Community Colleges.

- This event is already being planned for the region and should be continued annually.
- The workshop should occur every six months.
- Present topics such as how to write a business plan, small business finance, and marketing.

Action 4: Develop a Regional Entrepreneurs' Association.

- Action Greensboro and Winston-Salem Alliance are already funding the TEI with similar large contributions. This type of regional collaboration towards entrepreneurship is an excellent start.
- Seek assistance of the newly formed NC Rural Entrepreneurship Initiative

Funding: Charge members a small admission price to attend monthly networking events (to cover the cost of the facility and refreshments), but obtain private funding to support association events during first year.

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 Four: Improve access to capital for startup and small businesses.

Action 1: Market existing regional loan programs.

Action 2: Provide local banks with resources that educate them on the best way to support small and start up companies.

Action 3: Link in to regional venture capital and angel investor networks.

- TEI could expand the business plan competition to include/reach other counties outside the MSA. It should encourage and assist its members in development business plans for submission into regional and statewide business plan competitions.

Funding: TBD, depending on scope of project

Timing: 2004/5

QUALITY OF LIFE STRATEGIES

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

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 Forsyth County contains ample amenities that should be attractive to a young, creative population, its population continues to decline (**Forsyth County's share of individuals between 25-44 declined from 34% in 1990 to 31% in 2000**). So why, with all of its amenities, does Forsyth County lose young people age. The problem mostly lies in job opportunities for this demographic, but also lies partially in Forsyth County's external image, which does not convey a message that entices a younger population. Future marketing efforts, for example, could be aimed at attracting younger tourists to Forsyth County by promoting Yadkin Valley wineries or by promoting the county and region's tremendous outdoor recreation opportunities, world-class entrepreneur programs, and accessibility to the other areas in the southeast.

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 Forsyth County's young families that Forsyth 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.

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 Forsyth County's ability to attract tourists. Through the choice of investments in quality of life amenities, Forsyth County 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 Forsyth County 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 quality of life strategies that we recommend for Forsyth County:

- **Create opportunities for young professionals to communicate, recreate, and collaborate.**
- **Expand parks and recreation, preserve green space and improve trail connectivity.**
- **Improve upon tourism efforts related to Arts/Culture/Entertainment**
- **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.

Quality of Life Strategy One: Create opportunities for young professionals to communicate, recreate, and collaborate.

Several actions have been taken during the last five years to better understand young professionals in Forsyth County. However, AE has continued to hear that young professionals feel left out of decision-making and that there are very few opportunities to meet with other young professionals.

Action 1: Organize a Forsyth County Young Professional's Association.

- Create and administer a survey of college and university students to determine what they do and do not like about the region. Ask participants to state what they would require to remain in Forsyth County following graduation.
- This association should develop their own strategic plan based on survey input and on 3-5 priorities for this demographic.
- Work with both public and private collaborators to secure funding to implement/develop these priorities.

Action 2: Launch a regularly scheduled young professionals' networking event.

Action 3: Empower young professionals to participate in leadership organizations.

Action 4: Economic development organizations should invite young professionals to participate. Forsyth County will receive fresh ideas for the development of the region. Their involvement will help retain young workers.

Quality of Life Strategy Two: Expand parks and recreation and preserve green space.

Action 1: Develop a premier Hike and Bike Trail throughout W-S, connecting the major new housing developments and/or major civic improvement areas

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 and are no longer as tied to the location of a major employer. Connecting Forsyth County's greenways will create quality of life amenity that is marketable to a younger population.

Forsyth County already has a plan for a bike trail system throughout the County. This plan should be reviewed and modified with significant input from young professionals. This could also be a major initiative for the young professionals group to secure private sector funding to match with public sector participation.

Successful programs have used "rails to trails", floodways, electric transmission and other and utility easements as opportunities for potential trails.

Funding: Funding should come from partnering cities and counties, but this effort is most successful as a private initiative. Models to examine include the Land & Greenspace Initiative of the Austin-San Antonio Corridor Council,

Timing: Full regional connectivity of greenways could take up to more than 20 years to complete. This is a long-term initiative but planning should begin now.

Action 2: Create active city parks where young professionals can play Frisbee football, sand volleyball, and other similar types of active recreation.

Action 3: Organize and attract major regional and national sporting events.

- Sporting events will attract young people to Forsyth County and expose Forsyth County to a national audience.
- Support the creation of a Northwest North Carolina Sports Promotion Agency. A similar organization exists within the Triad Partnership, but this entity could be expanded with a fiduciary role to fund certain strategies. This agency would coordinate marketing efforts aimed at bringing regional and national sporting events to Forsyth County. The agency would also be responsible for providing each county and city with guidance on developing its own sporting venues.
- Work with local bicycle shop owners and neighboring counties to organize a road or mountain bike race.

Funding: TBD (funding sources could include user taxes as well as foundation funding)

Timing: Planning should begin immediately.

Action 4: Include Forsyth 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.

Quality of Life Strategy Three: Improve upon tourism efforts related to Arts, Culture, and Entertainment

Winston-Salem often refers to itself as the “City of the Arts”, yet there is not a cohesive effort to promote arts, culture and entertainment in Forsyth County. The CVB has a good calendar of events, the Downtown Partnership helps in promoting events, the W-S Alliance assists in promoting events by providing resources, and several private individuals assist with other related efforts. AE recommends that the Arts Council and CVB collaborate on promoting these types of events.

AE recommends that Forsyth County economic development groups (and including the Arts Council) convene a meeting to discuss how to better take advantage of the arts asset within the County (and region) and to identify how to reduce any duplication of fundraising efforts geared towards arts and tourism.

Additionally, the Arts Council should consider enlarging its sphere of influence and leadership role in:

- Promoting Arts as Tourism: Promote specific events, places and activities in arts, entertainment and culture as destinations for both residents of Winston-Salem and the whole 8-county region.
- Arts Trade Organization: Engage in dialog with corporate, community and government leaders about arts and culture as an industry.
- Economic development: Develop a leadership role and convene the region's arts councils, arts leaders and C&V Bureau leaders to establish the cultural tourism program and lead regional funding campaigns geared towards Arts and Culture.
- Cultural Policy: Become more active in the area of cultural policy and help define government's role in arts and culture. Begin discussions on establishing an office of cultural affairs, which could be part of the Arts Council or a separate public-private partnership.
- Arts District and Individual Artists: Focus energy on the emerging Arts District in W-S. Arts Council could help establish an incubator for emerging entrepreneurial efforts in arts and culture. (Music in the Streets, PS 211, The Warehouse, the Garage, the Film series, etc.).

Quality of Life Strategy Four: 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 Forsyth County from other communities. Each county in Forsyth County has a role to play in ensuring that Forsyth County 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 all 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 Forsyth County as tourists,

recognize the value and beauty of Forsyth County as a business location, and place Forsyth County on their list of future site locations.

As Forsyth County's Marketing Strategy suggests, each county has a role to play in the overall regional messaging whether it be arts and crafts festivals, wine festivals, extreme sport events, art exhibitions, or bake sales. 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 Downtown / Main Street organizations, economic development boards, Chambers of Commerce, or Convention and Tourist Boards. Their creativity will add spark to event planning and marketing efforts. If legislative mandates prevent artist involvement on boards, consider including them as advisory members for specific projects related to the arts.
- Chambers of Commerce and other community organizations should organize a series of evening workshops designed to teach Forsyth 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 Forsyth County, introduce the fine craft marketplace, and show residents examples of fine craft products developed in Forsyth County.

Funding: No cost. Activities are organized by volunteers.

Timing: Immediately

Action 2: Support a virtual arts market for arts and crafts created in the Greater Winston area. (See Strategy under Entrepreneurship Section above and Regional Strategy)

SITES AND INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGIES

GOAL: Forsyth 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 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 (Stokes, 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 the following major strategies for improving Forsyth County’s infrastructure:

- **Meet resource needs of the PTRP**
- **Develop a Trolley System and/or Bus System (get students downtown)**
- **Build the remainder of I73 and I74, as well as both legs of the Northern Beltway**
- **Look to the Smith-Reynolds airport as a satellite facility for FedEx**
- **Develop Union Cross Business Park**
- **Continue to make improvements in Telecommunications Infrastructure**

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

Sites and Infrastructure Strategy One: Meet resource needs of the PTRP

These strategies were discussed above in the priority project section. AE recommends that funding be attained in the short term to expedite the progress of the PTRP to be able to realize the impact that the PTRP will have on the County and Region.

Funding: \$20 million (lab space and other infrastructure assistance) EDA, Golden Leaf, Private Sector Investment, NCDOC

Timing: 2004/5

Sites and Infrastructure Strategy Two: Develop a Trolley System and/or Bus System (get students downtown)

A study by the City's transportation staff has recommended reviving streetcars to connect downtown with residential areas, tourist locales, universities, medical facilities and job centers. The system, modeled on the Portland Streetcar, would be built in phases and cost an estimated \$130 million. The rail lines would be part of an effort to revitalize the city center with more retail outlets, upscale restaurants, trendy clubs and apartments. The initial route would have a price tag of approximately \$45 million and would link the Piedmont Triad Research Park with Wake Forest University Medical Center along Fourth and Fifth streets. The proposal still must be approved by the city council, which would have to identify funding sources. Among those suggested include the private sector, bonds, higher parking fees, federal grants and tax revenue. The study calls for creating a not-for-profit civic group to manage the project, which appears to have strong support from the business community.

Funding: \$TBD (the scope of this project is still being finalized) DoT, USDA, EDA, Golden Leaf, Private Sector Investment, NCDOC, Foundations,

Timing: 2004/5

Sites and Infrastructure Strategy Three: Build the remainder of I73 and I74 and both legs of the Northern Beltway.

(This project is described in further detail in the regional strategies section)

Completing I73 and I74 could be the most important project to Forsyth County and the region. This will not only positively impact the FedEx operation, but it will also create better accessibility for commuters and trucking operations.

Action 1: Continue to strengthen local and state delegation for this project.

Since most of the money for this project (90%) will come from the federal level, the State of North Carolina must first demonstrate that this project is a top priority by elevating this project to the top of the State's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) list.

Action 2: Obtain private sector support for project (particularly FedEx since it will benefit them greatly)

The state and federal government needs to understand how this project will have an impact on the public and private sector. The region's and State's position on this

roadway will become bolstered by obtaining testimony from key private sector companies, such as FedEx.

Sites and Infrastructure Strategy Four: Look to the Smith-Reynolds airport as a satellite facility for FedEx

FedEx generally needs a satellite facility to have as a backup for air traffic (in the event of the Greensboro/W-S Airport being temporarily shutdown) as well as a facility to do certain type of maintenance on FedEx planes. AE recommends that the Smith-Reynolds airport supply this need.

Action 1: Determine required funding for this initiative

Funding: \$75,000 (feasibility Study)

Timing: 2005/6

Action 2: Seek legislative support if necessary (state and federal)

Get FedEx to support this effort so that federal agencies see the private sector supporting it.

Funding: NA

Timing: 2005/6

Sites and Infrastructure Strategy Five: Develop Union Cross Business Park

Within dwindling available land for industrial park development, this planned business/industrial park becomes a paramount focus for business development in Forsyth County. Union Cross Business Park is approximately 400-acres of light industrial business park space near Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The majority of funding has been earmarked, but there is an additional \$750,000 that is needed to complete infrastructure improvements at the site. Given the location of this site, the project will have an impact throughout the region.

Funding: \$75,000 (feasibility Study) EDA, Golden Leaf, Private Sector Investment, NCDOC,

Timing: 2004-7

Sites and Infrastructure Strategy Six: Continue to make improvements in Telecommunications Infrastructure.

Forsyth County has made significant advances in its telecommunications infrastructure including the Wi-Fi system downtown and WinstonNet – a 25 mile fiber-optic ring connecting Wake Forest with Forsyth Technical College, Winston Salem State University, and the K-12 School System. However, as is mentioned in the Regional Strategy, telecommunication infrastructure (including cellular phone reception) should continue to be a top priority for the region. As such, AE recommends Forsyth County continue to make improvements and remain cutting-edge with its telecommunications infrastructure.

MARKETING STRATEGIES

GOAL: Forsyth County is engaged in a proactive, targeted marketing campaign to send a clear message that the county is dedicated to these goals and the importance of these strategies to improving the economy.

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. In order for Forsyth County to enhance its prospects for economic growth, a more proactive targeted 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 Winston-Salem Alliance (W-S Alliance). 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

Of all the eight counties in this study, Forsyth has the most sophisticated marketing efforts. However, there is an opportunity to unify the marketing and present a stronger, targeted message. Forsyth County has numerous organizations marketing to tourists and businesses, within the region and outside of the state. These organizations include the:

- Chamber of Commerce
- Downtown Winston-Salem Partnership
- City of Winston-Salem
- Forsyth County
- Winston-Salem Business, Inc.
- Piedmont Triad Partnership
- Triad Entrepreneurship Initiative
- Winston Salem Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Northwest Piedmont Council of Government



The Winston-Salem Business Inc. (WSBI) markets and recruits new businesses. It primarily uses a Web site for communication, which is the most preferred vehicle for recruitment prospects. It has a vibrant Web site that provides succinct information. The Piedmont Triad Partnership effectively markets 12 counties, including Forsyth, for business expansions and relocations. It does a good job of promoting the region and Forsyth's assets. However, there is an opportunity for more collaboration. For instance, the Partnership and Forsyth can provide on-line information about the newly identified target industries.

The Winston-Salem Convention and Visitors Bureau (WSCVB) markets to tourists and meeting planners. The WSCVB's brochure theme "Morning Noon and Night – Find it in Winston-Salem" communicates that Winston-Salem is always happening. However, the Web site offers a different look compared to WSBI, the Chamber, and other organizations. The tagline "O! W•S – Now That's Living," presents a different message to external audiences. This is confusing to an audience that receives thousands of messages and doesn't differentiate the County.

Winston-Salem and Greensboro have received positive national publicity. Expansion Management August 2003, lists Winston-Salem as one of the Top 40 Hottest Real Estate Markets. The area was rated number seven on the list for lowest rents in CBD and Industrial/Warehouse, and number three for suburban office. In one simple Internet search, three articles appeared that discuss the economy of Forsyth County: Plants Sites & Parks 2002 created a promotional supplement "North Carolina: A State of Minds", Plants Sites & Parks 2003 Regional Review of North Carolina, and Southern Business & Development's spring 2003 issue featured Winston-Salem as a preferred southern site. Forsyth should strive to triple the amount of articles in industry publications to compete aggressively.

The Winston-Salem Chamber is successful at promoting assets and services to local businesses. The use of a Web site as the primary communication tool is excellent. The "employer resources" section does a fantastic job of providing information on the community's key asset, workforce development programs. An area to improve is testimonials. By feature local business successes, the community becomes more aware and excited about growth. The business networking and newcomer orientation programs are a great way for business owners and employees to meet more people in their community.

The Triad Entrepreneur Initiative (TEI) does a great job of promoting, locally and nationally, the region's entrepreneurial talent. The TEI is a great example organization, which provides tools to

help individuals successfully grow their companies. They are in the process of enhancing their website which could become a premier website for entrepreneur discussion forums.

The Downtown Winston-Salem Partnership does an effective job of promoting downtown festivals to North Carolinians. The Partnership also has a marketing task force that does a great job of bringing investment to the city. Forsyth County's Web site is used for marketing to county residents. There is very little information about what the county is doing to help local or new businesses. The phrase "We hope you visit us often" is weak and does not support the enthusiasm of Forsyth County. This site should be revamped. The Northwest Piedmont Council of Governments is a good central regional source providing direction and information on workforce training, emergency medical services, housing assistance, criminal justice, economic development, and technical assistance.

Overall, economic development organizations 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 actions necessary for Forsyth County to engage in a targeted marketing plan, beginning with internal marketing, external activities, and readjusting the plan.

There are seven recommended strategies, including:

- 1. Establish a lead economic development organization and commit to a marketing strategy**
- 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 (MG) 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 Strategic Report and specifically to support leaders who will execute the marketing campaigns.

Marketing Strategy One: Establish a lead economic development organization and commit to a marketing strategy

In the past, Forsyth County has executed economic development marketing, but it can be improved. Today, leaders recognize the importance of having a unified plan, led by one economic development organization, to retain and attract 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 body is responsible for overseeing activities. W-S Alliance should be Forsyth County's primary economic development organization leading its marketing efforts. All other economic development entities such as the Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Partnership, Triad Entrepreneurial Initiative, Winston-Salem Convention Visitors Bureau, and Winston-Salem Business, Inc. should participate and support a unified message. W-S Alliance will need to obtain \$46,500 funding for implementation of this marketing plan during the first year. By year three, the county should double its marketing budget.

Forsyth County's marketing strategy should be to align economic development organizations and promotes a single message, to create community-wide marketing ambassadors, and to market to target industry businesses through the right combination of publicity, direct marketing, and collateral.

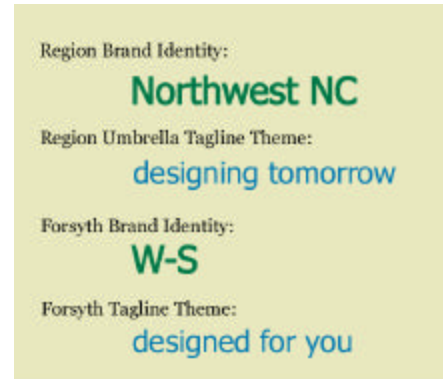
Action 1: Local economic development leaders should agree on W-S Alliance being the lead organization to implement marketing.

Action 2: W-S Alliance and other local economic development leaders should approve the marketing strategy.

Marketing Strategy Two: Brand the county

Communities that establish a marketing theme that differentiates itself have greater chances of attracting economic growth. Forsyth County is primarily marketing to make consumers aware of the region.

A brand theme conveys “who” and “where” the county is, as well as “what” the county offers. Local leaders feel that the most marketable attribute of Forsyth County is “the artistic, technological, and entrepreneurial spirit.” “*Designed for You,*” reflects the most unique aspect of Forsyth – it founded the first Arts Council in the U.S., has a premier arts college, the North Carolina School of Arts, and has a tradition of inventing world-class businesses such as RJ Reynolds, Hanes, Krispy Kreme, Targacept, and Out of Your Mind. Forsyth’s workforce is comprised of creative individuals that incorporate design traits into their profession. From designing Emmy and Tony-Award winning shows, to creating biomedical advances, and developing racecar technologies. With Design being a recommended target industry that differentiates the region and with design also being a key descriptor of Forsyth, it is the most appropriate position to build upon. Winston-Salem (W-S) is the county’s brand identity.



The proposed theme is meant for economic development leaders to use when developing the logo and a marketing message to use in communication.

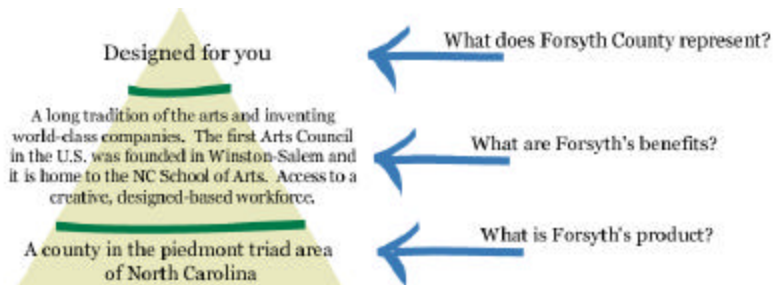
The three essences, or positives attributes, that best describe Forsyth County are:

- Design - Forsyth founded the first Arts Council in the U.S.
- Depth - Recognized for passionate business and academic leaders
- Evolving - Economy is transitioning to technology

A mission statement says “Who Forsyth is today.” AE views Forsyth economic development mission to be, “To foster creation, retention and expansion of high-impact technology and design related jobs that will lead to improving our economy.”

To stand out compared to competitors, Forsyth County (W-S) should communicate a primary message centered on a unique quality of the community, such as **Forsyth County (or W-S) is designed for you.** A

positioning pyramid is a technique used to determine the message. 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: W-S Alliance, Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Partnership, Triad Entrepreneurial Initiative, Winston-Salem Convention Visitors Bureau, Winston-Salem Business, Inc., and other economic development organizations should discuss and approve a county theme.

Action 2: Local economic development organizations should agree on using a consistent message to promote the county to local businesses, tourists, and new businesses.

Action 3: W-S Alliance should hire an advertising firm to develop a logo.

Action 4: All economic development organizations should revamp marketing collateral to convey this primary message.

Marketing Strategy Three: Better understand the needs of the target audiences

Understanding how Forsyth 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 detailed 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. TEI addresses this audience's need and can continue to connect venture capital and angel investors with local entrepreneurs. The W-S Alliance should improve relationships 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 and external audiences, and identify target industry champions. 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 MG list industry associations that can be a resource on target industry trends and prospects. The target audiences include: logistics and distribution, hospitality and tourism, design, and biotechnology.

Forsyth County should use the targeted messaging in the MG and the main "proof points" in this section when crafting secondary messaging for marketing communication.

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

- Hip, metropolitan city with rich culture and arts
- Wealth of many unique talented professionals from entrepreneurs to senior executives
- Access to a creative and innovative workforce

- Piedmont Triad Research Park, Forsyth Tech, and several renowned universities with programs to support targeted industries' workforce needs
- Beautiful natural resources – Over 44 million people visited the state in 2002, making North Carolina the sixth most visited state in the country
- First Art Council in the U.S. was formed in Winston-Salem

Action 1: The WS Alliance and other local economic development leaders should get familiar with the characteristics and needs of each target audience. *Refer to the MG for industry association information.*

Action 2: Revamp marketing communication with targeted message.

Action 3: Identify target industry champions.

Action 4: Become industry experts.

Marketing Strategy Four: Gain local media support

Forsyth County needs media champions to gain support of all local news companies. Local newspapers, radio stations, company newsletters, and Web sites are good tools for communicating information about the economic development initiative to residents. Throughout this project, Forsyth economic development leaders strengthened relationships with the local media and we encourage this to continue. It is imperative that local media companies speak positively about the county and provide coverage. Accomplishing the strategy requires publicity that educates and creates excitement within Forsyth County. Private and public leaders should regularly meet with the media and provide updates on economic development successes. The local media is the first avenue for “building the local buzz.”

Forsyth County should continue to leverage Winston-Salem Journal, Winston-Salem Chronicle, Business Journal, and Greensboro News & Record to get the message out. The Winston-Salem Journal has taken the initiative to support AE's economic development planning process by writing several editorials with updates on “big” issues. W-S Alliance should persuade a local media company to dedicate a weekly section to economic development news.

Action 1: W-S Alliance and the Implementer Committee should identify local media champions that can assist with persuading the local media to communicate economic development stories to the public.

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

Marketing Strategy Five: Launch internal marketing campaign

Forsyth 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 out the message. With strong internal support, the chances of successful recruitment increase considerably. For many communities, internal marketing take a year or two to accomplish.

Internal marketing activities should be launched during a roll out event. At a local rollout event, Forsyth County should announce its three major goals:

- Expanding the Piedmont Triad Research Park
- Expanding School of Arts with Digital Arts and Animation Programs
- Collaboration and commitment from ED organization to work together

Publicity, promotion, and collateral are the three vehicles recommended to reach Forsyth 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 vehicle to cost effectively reach Forsyth County's internal audience and generate a buzz. By distributing press announcements and persuading news companies to "pick-up" a story, Forsyth County can gain more publicity and improve its image. Other ways to communicate to the public include: delivering newsletters 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 a good thing.*

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 Forsyth County, and calling prospects to provide information on why do business in Forsyth County, available business park space, and the benefits of operating a business in the county. Some regional organization events to consider attending include North Carolina Textile Manufacturing Association, North Carolina Arts Council, and the Western North Carolina Film Commission.

The primary economic development collateral piece should be a Web site that is used for all economic development organizations. By revamping the Web site to contain the new marketing message, this can be a strong piece to reach both internal and external audiences. The Web site should have section dedicated to offering information to local businesses, tourists, and businesses outside of the region. Forsyth County should ask local businesses to mention this Web site to employees, on local businesses Intranet, and in their corporate material when appropriate.

Action 1: W-S Alliance and other economic development organizations approve the internal marketing plan.

Action 2: W-S Alliance 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 apart of the marketing team.

Reference the MG 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 W-S Alliance 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 W-S
Contribute \$8,000 a year to hiring a PR firm.
 - Discuss powerful topics in newsletter and on Web site. See page 13 in the MG.
 - Negotiate with the local newspaper to get a weekly section dedicated to economic development. For instance, 50 words on important economic development topics.
 - Implement a utility billing campaign. (E.g., use this to announce special projects, successes, and news Web links.
2. Develop a primary ED Web site
Hire Web design firm and budget \$12,000 – \$25,000
3. Develop a Recruitment Ready Team
W-S Alliance and each ED organization should create a standard protocol for managing prospects. *The Triad Partnership could provide mock prospect visits to Forsyth County and critique the county on how well they "received" the prospect.*
4. Speak at local business associations and provide updates on Forsyth County's economic development and marketing efforts
5. Establish an "Alliance" program
This is a program for the county's economic development teams to improve their relationships. Once the alliance is strong, ED members should meet with local businesses in person to talk about this unified ED approach.
6. Create a youth entrepreneurship group
To better connect youth and assist them with starting companies locally, ask TEI to be on the board of this newly formed group. Consider calling the group "E-power"

Marketing Strategy Six: Develop and implement external marketing campaign

External marketing promotes Forsyth County to identified targeted industry business whom complement the current economy and help Forsyth County meet its economic development vision. Most likely for Forsyth County, external marketing campaigns will begin in 2004.

Web sites, publicity, and targeted direct marketing are the most cost effective for communities to "get their message out." Forsyth 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, Forsyth 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. Forsyth County could significantly increase the amount of publicity the city receives in publications, and ultimately reach the city'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 promote economic development in Forsyth County and better linking 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 Forsyth County.

Marketing Missions

Forsyth 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 Forsyth County's great location for business. For example, visit regional neighbor benchmark cities such as Charlotte, NC and Raleigh, NC, and Greenville, SC. In the second year, consider visiting national benchmarks such as Memphis, TN and Atlanta, GA.

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. Forsyth 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. Forsyth can attend, sponsor, and exhibit at conferences.

Action 1: W-S Alliance and other economic developments organizations approve external marketing plan

Action 2: W-S Alliance should approve 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 MG for more information on these vehicles.

Forsyth 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: \$5,000*

2. Continue to take marketing missions to markets with heavy concentrations of industry prospects. Spend face time with prospects. *Estimated cost \$2,000 per person, per mission.*
3. Obtain a target business database and send electronic campaign mail.
4. Develop collateral (annual report) piece and continue to revamp and update the Web site. *Estimated cost: \$10,000*
5. Attend industry events locally and nationwide (as part of a regional delegation). *Estimated cost: \$2,000 per event outside of Northwest North Carolina.*

Marketing Strategy Seven: Measure and improve 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 Forsyth 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 Forsyth 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, Forsyth County's W-S Alliance 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 1:
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
Forsyth County**

	Job growth (CAGR) 2000-02	Non-mftg job growth (CAGR) 2000-02	Average Wage 2002	Unemploy- ment Rate 2002	Poverty Rate 2000	Per Capita Income 2001
Forsyth County	-0.6%	-0.6%	\$36,717	5.4%	11.0%	\$32,213
North Carolina	-1.3%	0.2%	\$32,696	6.8%	12.3%	\$27,308
United States	-0.6%	0.7%	\$36,744	5.8%	12.4%	\$30,413
Forsyth as % of U.S.	0.0%	0.0%	99.9%	92.7%	88.7%	105.9%
Forsyth Target Benchmarks as a Percent of U.S.						
1997			103%	55%	--	116%
2000	108%		95%	68%	89%	108%
2002	0%		100%	96%	--	106%
2007	100%		105%	90%	--	112%
2012	110%		110%	85%	86%	120%
2017	120%		115%	80%	--	125%
2022	135%		120%	75%	83%	130%