

FOR REFERENCE

Do Not Take From This Room

I. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Vance County Commissioners
Henderson City Council
Henderson-Vance Chamber of Commerce
Gateway Community Development Corporation
The North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center
MDC, Inc., Chapel Hill, N.C.

The following people served as members of the AdVance Strategic Planning Commission:

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Dennis Tharrington — *Vice-Chairman*
Andrea Harris — *Secretary*
Nancy Bobbitt — *Chairman, Education Committee*
Braxton Poythress — *Chairman, Government Committee*
John Watkins — *Chairman, Economic Development Committee*

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Staff of MDC, Inc., Chapel Hill, North Carolina, served as facilitators and resource people for the planning effort.

II. VISION STATEMENT

Vance County in the year 2000 will be a county remarkable for its success in capitalizing on the strengths of its location, its size, and the talents of its residents. This success will be reflected in the quality of life that has become possible in a moderate-sized community with easy access to all of the resources in the nearby Triangle area. Vance County's quality of life will be considered the best of any community within an hour's drive of the Triangle area.

By the year 2000, our economy will be diversified and will capitalize on the technological sophistication of neighboring communities. It will be an economy that attracts people to the community through developing opportunities rather than forcing them to leave due to lack of opportunity.

Our labor force will be prepared for the changes taking place at the beginning of the 21st century. There will be a lower level of poverty in the community, with the types of human service programs, educational system, and job opportunities that will enable the poor to climb out of poverty.

We will have a comprehensive educational system characterized by strong links between public schools and our community college. This system will meet the needs of both industry and residents, offering an education equal to the best system in the state. Our schools will prepare students for vocational — community college, and university requirements, whatever the student's abilities and ambitions allow. The community will be known for its support of the educational system and its insistence that the system continue to improve. The system will be among the most desirable for both administration personnel and teachers. It will be filled with students that are aware of the value of an education.

Our government will capitalize on the growing resource of talented individuals in the private sector who volunteer their time and expertise in solving problems and helping plan for the County's future. The government will have systems to plan for and manage growth, incorporating strategic planning as a routine function. It will make the best use of fiscal resources to meet needs in housing, social services, education, and other areas. Our leaders will understand that social, education, and economic development issues are intertwined. Our governmental bodies will be admired for seeking solutions to problems through methods that unite our community, insuring success and developing a sense of community pride that is reflected in all residents.

III. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an intensive citizens' effort to carry out a strategic plan for the future of Vance County. In late 1987, the Vance County Commissioners appointed the AdVance Strategic Planning Commission and charged it with developing "strategies for the future growth and progress of Vance County".

Over the last two years, a group of 52 citizens representing business and industry, education, local government, churches, and community organizations has worked intensively to assess Vance County's strengths and challenges in light of emerging regional and national trends and to develop strategies to address the critical needs in the county. The group considered the changing conditions facing public education, local government, and the local economy, and developed strategies to help Vance County meet the challenges posed by those conditions.

Strategic planning is an action-oriented planning process that helps a community focus on critical issues that it can address with existing or limited new resources. In Vance County, we followed a process with the following steps:

- Environmental Scan.
- Selection of key issues; organization of committees
- "SWOT Analysis" — an assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in each issue area.
- Development of a Vision for the future of Vance County.
- Determination of goals.
- Research and selection of strategies to address goals.
- Development of an overall implementation plan.

We first hired consultants to carry out an Environmental Scan of Vance County. This document provided us with a base of information about the county's position relative to the state and surrounding counties in demographics, the economy, education, government, and human services. In January 1990 the Strategic Planning Commission began the process of meeting to develop the strategic plan.

Based on the results of the Scan, we recognized that to achieve our mission we would have to improve educational and economic opportunity. Also, we recognized the importance of local government's allocation of resources to build the type of community we envision. Thus, we selected three key issues and divided into three committees: (1) Education; (2) Government; and (3) Economic Development.

Each committee carried out a SWOT Analysis — analyzing Vance County's strengths and weaknesses, and considering the opportunities and threats facing us in the coming years. In order to set our sights on the future and to ensure that we were unified in our

vision as a group, the Commission as a whole developed a vision statement to guide and inspire us in planning for the kind of community we want for the future. (See Page 2.)

Based on priority issues that emerged from the SWOT analysis, each committee developed a number of goals. During this stage, the Commission members met together to share goals and to identify common and overarching goals. The Commission members agreed that three goals stand out as priority issues for the county as a whole. These are:

1. Support for a high quality public education system.
2. Long-range planning for governmental finances, growth management, and economic development.
3. Visionary leadership that unifies the community across racial and economic boundaries.

Once goals were identified, the committees set about identifying specific strategies to address goals. During this stage, MDC assisted the committees in researching strategy options that have been tested in other communities. Committee members also carried out research to learn more about specific needs and existing resources in the county. In addition, a community-wide public forum was held to share committee goals and preliminary strategy ideas and to get input from the public about other goals or strategies that the committees should consider. The result of this research and deliberation is a list of recommended strategies for each goal.

With the plan now completed, the next step is implementation. The AdVance Strategic Planning Commission decided on a plan for implementation that is described in Part VII of this report. The strategic plan calls on many institutions and individuals in Vance County to take part in new initiatives to improve the quality of life for all of our citizens. Members of the AdVance Strategic Planning Commission will meet with city and county officials and other community leaders on a regular basis to monitor progress in the implementation of the strategies recommended here. In addition, members of the Commission will periodically reassess conditions inside and outside Vance County and refine or change the strategies as needed. We hope you, the reader of this report, will find one or more strategies that you can make a personal commitment to work on, to help the bright future we envision become a reality.

What follows are summary reports from each of the three Committees — Education, Government, and Economic Development. Each of these includes a description of goals, key findings, and strategies. Key findings are based on three sources: data from the Environmental Scan; analysis of regional and national trends provided by MDC, Inc.; information generated by committee members as part of the SWOT Analysis; and public comment.

IV. EDUCATION

GOALS

Overarching goal: By the year 2000, Vance County will be a place where youth and adults master the skills and possess the attitudes required to succeed at work and in life.

1. Strengthen and support families so that they are able to promote educational achievement in young people.
2. Increase community support and involvement in the schools through the establishment of a formal organization dedicated to that goal.
3. Enable children to enter school ready to learn.
4. Launch a comprehensive strategy to reduce teen pregnancy to a rate at or below the state average by 1995.
5. Ensure that every child completes elementary, middle, and high school having mastered appropriate educational and life skills.
6. Strengthen school-to-work and school-to-college linkages to ensure that students leave school appropriately educated and with challenging and productive plans for their lives.
7. Ensure an adequate financial base for exemplary public education.

KEY FINDINGS

Trends

Economic changes are occurring in the region and the nation that demand a response from our local education system. The global economy is bringing changes in the organization of production and the nature of work: It is forcing American industry to shift from high-volume, standardized production, to flexible, specialized precision production. As a result, the jobs of the future will require higher levels of skills and education. They will demand not just manual dexterity, but mental dexterity. Basic literacy, numeracy, and problem solving skills are increasingly becoming minimum standards for employment.

The changes in the last five years foretell future trends. The chart below describes the shift in job availability nationally, according to education levels, in a mere five year period.

Education Requirements for Jobs, 1985,1990

Years of Education	% of Jobs	
	1985	1990
8 yrs.	6%	4%
1-3 yrs. high school	12%	10%
4 yrs. high school	40%	35%
1-3 yrs. comm. college	20%	22%
4 yrs. college	22%	30%
MEDIAN YEARS OF SCHOOL	12.8	13.5

Source: *Workforce 2000*, The Hudson Institute, 1987.

Low education levels already have severe economic consequences for individuals and communities. Male dropouts of prime working age will earn on average 50% less than their peers who complete school. At the community level, Southern rural counties show notable differences in growth rates and income levels, corresponding to the number of adults with less than an 8th grade education:

% Adults with < 8th Grade Ed.	Ann. Empl. Growth, 1977-84	Per Capita Income, 1985
<24%	2.81	\$9245
24-30%	2.2	8122
31-36%	1.7	7678
36-42%	1.3	7141
>42%	1.3	6466

Source: Stuart A. Rosenfeld and Edward M. Bergman, *Making Connections*, Southern Growth Policies Board, 1989.

In the future, the average worker will change jobs or careers four to seven times during his or her lifetime. Consequently, educational institutions need to provide a solid foundation that enables people to adapt to a variety of jobs, not simply to qualify for a specific job.

In addition to these changes in the economy, there are a number of emerging changes in education philosophy and practice that demand our attention:

- Whereas formal education was formerly completed during youth, today we need lifelong learning.
- Traditionally, our education system has been comprised of discrete institutions — public schools, community colleges, four year schools. Today there is a need for educational continuums that help students move from one level of schooling to the next.
- There are wide urban-rural disparities in the amount spent on education, the ability of communities to finance their public schools, and the quality of education. Counties like Vance with a comparatively weak property tax base must tax themselves harder than wealthier urban counties to produce the same amount of revenue per student.
- State-local and public-private partnerships are increasingly important, as state government moves away from its role as the primary fiscal and regulatory paver for public education. At the same time, public school systems will have to become more accountable to the local community and the private sector in exchange for increased local and private support.
- There is a growing recognition of the importance of strengthening families to help students achieve in school. In fact, the most reliable predictors of student failure are the educational status and stability of the student's family.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Our assessment of public education in Vance County encompasses four issues: school administration and funding; school performance and programs; community support for education; and community-wide problems and resources.

School administration and funding.

The greatest strength of our public schools is the quality of our teachers, administrators, and clerical staff. However, the schools have suffered from the high teacher turnover rate of 25% and frequent turnover in the superintendent's position over the past fifteen years.

School finance has been a perennial problem in Vance County. For many years we neglected capital funding for school construction and repair, and our facilities deteriorated. A North Carolina Board of Education study of school districts' capital outlay between 1981 and 1987 ranked Vance County third lowest in the state, with an

average annual capital outlay of just \$34 per pupil. Now that we have issued our first school bond since 1973, we have begun to address the capital needs of our schools, but there is much more to do.

We also rank poorly in funding for school operating expenses. Out of approximately 140 school districts in North Carolina, our overall rank in expenditures per pupil ranged from 100 to 127 in the 1980s, with #1 being high expenditures. The following table compares per pupil expenditures in Vance County to selected neighboring counties.

**Per Pupil Expenditures and Ranking,
Selected Counties, 1985-86*
(Operating Expenses Only)**

County	STATE		FEDERAL		LOCAL		TOTAL	
	PPE	Rank	PPE	Rank	PPE	Rank	PPE	Rank
Vance	\$1,913	121	\$159	67	\$415	85	\$2,487	113
Franklin**	\$1,907	123	\$172	52	\$399	93	\$2,478	115
Granville	\$1,960	91	\$135	92	\$430	79	\$2,525	109
Person	\$1,987	75	\$161	65	\$606	33	\$2,754	50
Lee	\$1,927	116	\$109	121	\$535	50	\$2,572	93
NC	\$1,968		\$144		\$575		\$2,688	

* Figures exclude food service expenditures.

** Franklin County data excludes Franklinton School System

Source: *North Carolina Public Schools Statistical Profile*, North Carolina Board of Education, 1987.

We rank particularly low on state funding per pupil, stemming mainly from a teaching staff with less experience and fewer graduate degrees than in other counties, who therefore receive relatively low salaries on the state pay scale.

Our local supplements to teacher salaries are also low. In 1988, Vance County raised its supplement from \$225 to \$337 per year. At that time, Person County was offering teachers a supplement of \$400-450, and Granville County offered up to 4% of salary, with an average of about \$630.

Our low level of funding for education can be summed up by the following: between 1982 and 1987, the average county of Vance's size spent close to \$70 per capita on the public schools. Our per capita expenditure averaged under \$50.

School performance and programs.

Overall, our schools need much improvement in satisfying students' education needs. However, we do have a number of exemplary programs that we can be proud of.

The Kenan Family Literacy project, with a site based in Vance County, has gained national recognition for its success in bringing preschoolers and their mothers to school together to learn parenting skills and encourage a love of learning, while improving the mother's academic skills. Through its mini-grant program, the County provides motivational awards for teachers. We have a pilot Student Assistance Program at the high school and Project Outreach at the junior high — a model program to combat adolescent pregnancy. The Chapter 1 pre-kindergarten program brings four-year olds into the public schools. We have a Head Start program, although early childhood education and support needs to be strengthened: only 20% of eligible children are enrolled in Head Start. In addition, we have a good community college, which works collaboratively with the public schools.

Still, our schools are characterized by a low level of basic academic skills. The California Achievement Test (CAT) has been administered in the past to all North Carolina students in grades one, two, three, six, and eight. (It should be noted that test scores such as these are often criticized as measuring socio-economic conditions in a county rather than student achievement.) The Environmental Scan revealed that Vance County scores consistently lower than the state as a whole: In 1987, eighth graders scored in the 44th percentile, while in North Carolina — a low-scoring state in national terms — the average was the 52nd percentile.

And that same year, Vance High School seniors performed at 8% below the state average on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).

In addition to our weaknesses at basic skill performance, our support for and guidance of at-risk youth as well as talented, non-problem students is not adequate. We lack an adequate number of school counselors and psychologists.

Community support for education.

Community support for education is evidenced by the increasing strength of PTA groups, and by support for education on the part of business. Our cooperative education program operates in partnership with local industry.

However, there is much room for improvement. In the past Vance County has suffered from citizen apathy, resulting in (or accompanied by) weak support for education on the part of government, business, and the school board. We need more parental involvement in the schools. We also need a stronger school-business partnership for the cooperative education program and other school programs.

Community-wide problems and resources.

A number of community-wide problems impact on education in Vance County. Many of these are nationwide problems such as drug abuse, violence, and the over-consumption of television and video games. We see these problems as linked to the erosion of parental and teacher authority. Also related are parents' failure to instill in their children a sense of the value of education, and youths' lack of awareness of the changing economy and the resulting need for education.

Certain societal problems are particularly severe here in Vance County. Among North Carolina counties we rank third in teen pregnancy and fifth in child abuse. Because of low wages, we have a high proportion of working poor families where both parents work (as well as single-parent families where the parent works). This puts stress on family relations and creates a need for child care which has not been met in the community. Finally, conflict and tension among racial groups is a community-wide problem that sometimes surfaces in the schools.

There are, however, some excellent resources in the community that strengthen our education system and can help us address the problems summarized above. We have a good health department, hospital, and mental health services. We have an active county drug task force. We have good recreational facilities. And our location near three major universities is a potential resource for improving local educational opportunity.

STRATEGIES

GOAL 1: STRENGTHEN AND SUPPORT FAMILIES SO THAT THEY ARE ABLE TO PROMOTE EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT IN YOUNG PEOPLE.

Goal 1

Strategy 1: *Establish and support Vance United for Families and Children (VUFC) to plan, coordinate, and monitor the progress of collaborative efforts to address factors that put families and children at risk.*

GOAL 2: INCREASE COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT IN THE SCHOOLS THROUGH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FORMAL ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO THAT GOAL.

Goal 2

Strategy 1: *Establish and support Vance Citizens for Educational Excellence (VCEE) to plan, coordinate, and monitor efforts to strengthen public education in the community.*

Note: Both VUFC and VCEE organizations would be chartered as 501(c)(3) organizations in order to be eligible for charitable grant support.

GOAL 3: ENABLE CHILDREN TO ENTER SCHOOL READY TO LEARN.

Goal 3

Strategy 1: Strengthen preschool programs.

- 1(a) VUFC and VCEE should make certain that Head Start is fully subscribed. City and County government should petition federal representatives to increase funding for Head Start. In addition, current levels of Chapter I programming for at-risk, low-income youth should be maintained and expanded.
- 1(b) Vance County Schools should expand their plans to establish preschool learning centers in the elementary schools. In addition to the six school-based learning centers to be introduced in the fall of 1990, Vance County should commit to opening centers in all eleven County elementary schools by fall 1992. The centers would provide programs and classes to preschool children unable or ineligible to attend Head Start. Mobile preschool learning centers offer an alternative to school-based sites. (A mobile program exists in McDowell County, North Carolina ("McSmiles") and serves 135 preschool children in nine locations; a forerunner program is Ruth Bowden's Classroom on Wheels in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.)
- 1(c) Vance County Schools or Department of Social Services should inventory and disseminate through the media, church, civic, and public health and welfare organizations a complete inventory of all child-care and after-school resources for preschool children in Vance County.

Goal 3:

Strategy 2: Identify and support at-risk children and their families.

- 2(a) Vance County schools, hospital, social services, and public health agencies should develop a collaborative program to identify and strengthen at-risk children and families, using data and resources currently available within each system (e.g., hospitals identify teenage mothers at the time of birth; public agencies note families with young children on AFDC). Once at-risk families have been located, sponsoring agencies should mount a concerted program of outreach and support consisting of:
 - Home visitation teams, composed of professionals and trained lay volunteers, that instruct parents on good nutrition, child-rearing and discipline skills, and methods to stimulate learning in young people. As a component part of this

effort, a "Family Friends" group could be established to train and mobilize elder volunteers to "mentor" at-risk families and parents. Rural churches can house or sponsor mobile or "roving" parent education programs.

- Community, school, and family based seminars on child-rearing techniques and issues, such as those provided by Effective Parenting Information for Children (EPIC), a nonprofit service institution in Buffalo, New York.
- Referrals of eligible parents to existing programs with proven success records in rehabilitating adults for productive parenting and work—Kenan Family Literacy Program, Human Resources Development Program at Vance Granville Community College.

2(b) The Kenan Family Literacy Program should be maintained and expanded to serve existing and projected demand. In addition, the program should be expanded to serve mothers with older, kindergarten-aged children, who are now ineligible for the program.

GOAL 4: LAUNCH A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY TO REDUCE TEEN PREGNANCY TO A RATE AT OR BELOW THE STATE AVERAGE BY 1995.

Goal 4

Strategy 1: Provide a strong, school-based program of information and professional, clinical counselling that is easily accessible to all Vance County youth, to provide young people with a trusted, secure environment where they can learn about the negative consequences of premature sexual activity from informed adults.

- 1(a) Maintain and expand Project Outreach, a school-based education and referral program, and expand its advisory board to make it more representative of the community.
- 1(b) Supplement Project Outreach with a home visitation program that uses clinical public health experts and trained volunteers to instruct teenage parents in parenting skills. (An excellent model exists in Orange County, under the administration of the UNC Department of Pediatrics and the Orange County Public Health Department.)

Goal 4

Strategy 2: VUFC should launch a major community education effort to acquaint adolescents with the dangers and costs of premature sexual activity. In order to target the education effort, data should be collected from schools, public health

offices, and the hospital to develop a profile of those Vance County youth most at risk of conceiving children prematurely. As a "reality check", teenage parents should be consulted and involved in developing the community education strategy.

GOAL 5: ENSURE THAT EVERY CHILD IN VANCE COUNTY COMPLETES ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL HAVING MASTERED APPROPRIATE EDUCATIONAL AND LIFE SKILLS.

Goal 5

Strategy 1: *Make student attainment of clear and challenging educational goals the measure of success for Vance County schools.*

- 1(a) The Vance County school board should measure the quality and success of the schools by how well their students perform against the highest standards set by the labor market (e.g., employability and employer satisfaction, mastery of basic intellectual and interpersonal skills) and post-secondary educational institutions (e.g., high school graduation and post-secondary acceptance and matriculation rates). Where the schools' performance lags, the Board should support a clearly defined and comprehensive program to produce the desired results.
- 1(b) Vance Citizens for Excellence in Education should pledge itself to assist the School Board in defining the benchmarks of "successful schooling" and to keeping the board and the system accountable for reaching their stated goals.

Goal 5

Strategy 2: *Promote exemplary teaching at all grade levels in Vance County. Good teaching is the centerpiece of a strong educational system. To create good schools, Vance County must recruit and retain the best teachers it can and provide them with the support they need to excel.*

- 2(a) Employ strong financial incentives for recruiting and retaining exemplary teachers. These incentives should be structured to reward excellence in teaching as well as longevity and commitment to the job. The current practice of hiring North Carolina Teaching Fellows with Vance County roots to work as summer interns in the schools should also be maintained.
- 2(b) Institute a merit pay plan for all instructional and administrative personnel that ties compensation increases to building-level improvements in student performance and achievement. Such a plan would recognize the school as a "community of learning." School personnel should be rewarded whenever the community achieves its educational goals.

2(c) Launch an intensive program to increase the ranks of minority teachers and administrators to increase the presence of good educational role models for African-American youth.

2(d) Relieve pressures on teachers that inhibit their effectiveness on the job:

- Make the reduction of class size in grades K-3 a fiscal and programmatic priority.
- Strengthen and expand Vance County's existing "mentoring" program. Encourage three to five civic groups to adopt the mentoring program as their main community service project for each of the next five years, with the goal of having mentors for all students declared educationally at-risk by 1995. Businesses should also commit to providing paid release time for employees who commit to being mentors for a full academic year. A priority should be placed on serving elementary children who have been held back in school for academic or other reasons.
- Develop a program to use trained volunteers and retired persons as classroom teacher aides, especially in 4th grade classes—a critical year where student learning often falls off and where no teacher aides now exist.
- Reward exemplary teaching. Vance Citizens for Excellence in Education should assume control of the emerging county school public foundation and commit to raising \$100,000 over three years to support a program of competitively awarded mini-grants for teachers. These grants should be used to fund special continuing education programs, special research projects, and the development of innovative curricula.

Goal 5

Strategy 3: *Expand and improve educational and career guidance in the schools.*

3(a) Vance County Schools should introduce a comprehensive educational guidance program for grades K-12 that helps students (and their families) develop challenging, individualized education plans. A model for such a program exists in New Hampshire's Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling Program now being tested in that state. The program could be phased in, starting with high school, beginning in 1992 and should be in place in all schools by 1995. The program should also provide an early introduction to career exploration, as is done in New Hampshire.

3(b) Vance County Schools and VCEE should jointly sponsor a program to help parents learn how to be better educational and life "coaches" for their children,

especially in the critical late elementary and middle school years when formative decisions are made. One model for such a program is the Parents and Counselors Together Program (PACT) of the National Association of College Admissions Counselors, a collaborative process between schools and families which helps parents promote educational success in their children. In addition, business could sponsor a "Parent University," for the community; as an incentive, graduates of the program would be given one day off with pay by their employer.

- 3(c) VCEE and VUFC should explore methods for promoting "character development" in young people, both through curriculum offerings in the schools and through activities sponsored by community youth organizations, churches, and other groups. The purpose of these programs would be to cultivate an ethic of personal and social responsibility in young people and to encourage reflection on their rights and responsibilities toward others and toward the community.

Goal 5

Strategy 4: Strengthen school and community efforts to stem learning loss in all students, particularly the educationally at-risk.

- 4(a) VCEE should initiate a collaborative community effort to create an "after-hours learning center" for county youth that contains a full range of educational resources in an attractive, accessible environment. Strong after school and summer educational programs can reinforce in-class learning and keep educational momentum going after children leave the classroom. For the educationally at-risk, effective after-school and summer remediation can provide educational bootstraps that children need to get back on track.

The center could be supported by corporate contributions and public funds and staffed by paid professionals with the help of volunteers drawn from civic clubs and citizens at large. (High school students could also be encouraged to volunteer as "homework helpers" with special recognition (e.g., a special film showing at the mall) shown them for their volunteer effort.) A major purpose of the center would be to provide a stimulating educational atmosphere for "latchkey" children during the school year. The center could also sponsor the proposed summer remediation and enrichment program. Special attention would be given to programs for students entering 4th and 7th grade who are prone to the 4th and 7th grade "slump."

- 4(b) VCEE should collaborate with Vance County schools, the "after hours learning center," and other agencies to develop a strong year-round educational remediation program for youth at-risk. A model exists in the program for middle school children operated by the Thompson Island Education Center in Boston, which combines a six-week summer course that combines academics, enriching field trips, and outdoor activities. During the school year the summer's

achievements are reinforced through after school tutoring and a contract system that pledges students to meet the goals they set for themselves during the summer. The self-paced, computer-based Comprehensive Competencies Program (CCP) offers another possible approach to academic remediation for educationally weak students. Like the "mentor" program, this program should focus on reducing the number of students who are retained and suspended from school—two leading predictors of long-term school failure.

- 4(c) VCEE and the schools should also initiate a series of summer academic enrichment programs for gifted youth who wish to advance their language, math, science, and artistic abilities. The programs could be underwritten in part by the business community with fees set on a sliding scale to guarantee access by all students. The resources of Vance Granville Community College and Triangle-area universities could also be exploited for the program.
- 4(d) VCEE and the Vance County Schools should initiate a cross-age tutoring program that pairs high-school juniors and seniors with younger students with academic needs. (A program pairing middle school and elementary students already exists and could be expanded.) Such programs develop the educational and leadership skills and self-esteem of the older youth while helping younger children sharpen their skills.

Goal 5

Strategy 5: Launch a comprehensive community-wide effort to reduce the school dropout rate and raise the school completion rate to 95 percent by the year 2000. The program should set interim, incremental benchmarks in order to guarantee a sustained pace of progress toward the goal.

- 5(a) Vance County Schools should mount an immediate and sustained effort to target intensive guidance, counselling, and remedial assistance to all potential dropouts. Efforts should build on the County's existing capacity for early identification of future dropouts. Programs should begin with preschool age children and their families and be structured to address the developmental needs of youth as they mature.
- 5(b) Recommendations for after-school and summer enrichment and education programs should be implemented swiftly.
- 5(c) If the dimensions of the problem warrant it, Vance County Schools should conduct a study to determine whether the county's alternative school program should be modified or expanded.

GOAL 6: STRENGTHEN SCHOOL-TO-WORK AND SCHOOL-TO-COLLEGE LINKAGES TO ENSURE THAT VANCE COUNTY STUDENTS LEAVE SCHOOL APPROPRIATELY EDUCATED AND WITH CHALLENGING AND PRODUCTIVE PLANS FOR THEIR LIVES.

Goal 6

Strategy 1: *Launch a comprehensive, community-wide effort to educate parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and students to the educational requirements of the workplace of the future and to the advanced educational opportunities available to Vance County High School graduates. This effort should include but not be limited to:*

- 1(a) A regular, formal program of industry tours, visitations, and professional exchanges for teachers and counselors that emphasizes the emerging skill demands of business and industry. Consolidated Diesel Company in Rocky Mount has an exemplary program.
- 1(b) The joint development by the schools, Vance Granville Community College, and industry of an information bank on current and future employment opportunities available to high school and Community College graduates.
- 1(c) The development of an annual "Jobs of the Future" fair where local and regional industries present students with their projections of the workplace requirements of the coming decade and the skills required of workers.
- 1(d) A regular, formal program to introduce high school freshmen and sophomores (and their families) to the opportunities presented by Vance-Granville Community College and other area and regional schools. This effort should be linked to the family guidance initiative (PACT) described earlier. College alumni organizations could be encouraged to volunteer to educate students about college opportunities.

Goal 6

Strategy 2: *Launch a comprehensive effort to strengthen technical and vocational education in Vance County.*

- 2(a) Institute a Tech Prep program immediately. This program provides a blended higher-level academic and technologically current vocational education course of study. Students in the Tech prep program begin in the 9th grade to take top-level high school courses to prepare them for a two-year technical program at a community college.
- 2(b) Create a formal process by which local and regional industry can communicate their emerging skill needs to Vance County schools and Vance Granville

Community College. A Business/Education Advisory Committee should involve the community's most technically demanding and high-growth employers and could be an arm of the Chamber of Commerce or of the VCEE.

Goal 6

Strategy 3: *Strengthen the formal and informal incentive systems for educational attainment in Vance County.*

- 3(a) Create a "Vance County Compact" between industry and students and undereducated workers. The local business community would encourage students to complete their high school education by hiring them for part-time jobs with the promise of higher-wage or full-time employment at graduation. A similar incentive could be used to encourage workers to get their GED or students to complete technical education. Bonus offers of higher wages or better employment could be made to students in Tech Prep or community college programs that develop critical occupational skills. In McDowell County, North Carolina such a community compact now involves over 150 local businesses. Initial efforts by the Vance Business Education Council to develop such a program should be supported vigorously.
- 3(b) As an alternative, the proposed Business/Education Advisory Committee should oversee a rejuvenated and expanded program of cooperative education. Participation should be granted to students who maintain strong academic standing and the incentive of full-time summer employment extended to those students who perform well in school and on the job during the academic year.
- 3(c) Establish a program of scholarship awards for academic achievement. Scholarships would be administered and awarded by the public school foundation arm of VCEE.

GOAL 7: ENSURE AN ADEQUATE FINANCIAL BASE FOR EXEMPLARY PUBLIC EDUCATION.

Goal 7

Strategy 1: *Continue current support for capital spending for the schools; over time develop a contingency fund for future investments in capital facilities.*

Goal 7

Strategy 2: *Overtime, raise per pupil spending in Vance County to the level spent in comparable counties.*

NOTE: See government Committee Goal 2 and related strategies as they relate to county revenues and expenditures.

V. GOVERNMENT

GOALS

In carrying out its SWOT Analysis, the Government Committee focused its attention broadly and did not limit itself to a narrow view of local government issues. Based on the SWOT Analysis, the Committee developed a list of goals. Some represent issues that local government has complete authority over, while others are issues that the government has some but not all responsibility for addressing. While the list of goals is broad, the Committee is convinced that all of these issues warrant attention if Vance County and its people are to reach their full potential.

1. Develop ongoing, intergovernmental, long-range land use and economic development planning systems that will result in (1) managed growth, so that development is encouraged and the environment is protected; (2) development that makes the best use of existing buildings, structures, and resources, in order to preserve the County's heritage; (3) job creation strategies that respond to emerging trends.
2. Plan for and provide adequate levels of government revenues to meet the needs of the community (including education, social services, and capital facilities). Plans will be created with public involvement and communicated to the public once they are set, and monitoring systems will be established to ensure that planning is working.
3. Develop an expanded pool of elected and appointed leadership that is broad-based, well-trained, and visionary, with a commitment to meet the vital needs of the whole community and unify the community across racial and economic boundaries. At the same time, have a citizenry that demands these qualities of its leaders and trusts them to meet the community's needs.
4. Increase the availability of affordable, quality day care available to families.
5. Develop positive systems of response to serve persons with AIDS.
6. Meet and/or exceed the standards set forth in SB 111(1989 Act to Improve the Management of Solid Waste) through regional planning and widespread public involvement, with a particular emphasis on developing recycling systems in the county.

7. Develop safe, decent, affordable housing for county residents of all income levels.
8. Reduce child abuse and neglect, community-wide.
9. Increase services to fulfill the health, housing, recreational and day care needs of the elderly in Vance County.
10. Reduce drug abuse in Vance County.

Note: Trends, strengths, and weaknesses are discussed below for seven issues: finance; planning and intergovernmental relations; leadership; infrastructure and the environment; day care, housing, and social and health issues. These issues do not correspond precisely to the above goals; the list of goals was developed after discussing the topics below.

KEY FINDINGS

Finance

Trends

In the past decade, federal assistance to local government has diminished, and this is expected to continue. Declines in federal spending have struck local education and health care particularly hard. While state government has raised the sales tax twice in the last ten years with a portion of those funds earmarked for county spending, it has not been able to make up the difference to counties.

At the same time, the North Carolina General Assembly has repealed other taxes, which in the past aided local government (such as the inventory tax). While the state currently reimburses counties for the loss of those taxes, counties cannot count on continued state reimbursement. This could mean a loss of additional revenues. Declines in federal and state revenues for local purposes are coupled with increases in the number of services that the state mandates local government to provide. The bottom line is that there are fewer dollars and more demand for services.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Vance County has a number of strengths in its financial makeup. The County has a strong "A" bond rating. Our level of indebtedness is low, which will allow us to assume more debt if necessary. Our property tax valuation per capita is low, which leaves room for raising property taxes, if necessary. Also, a relatively high proportion

of our revenue comes from sales tax, due to the fact that we attract shoppers from outside of the county. This latter factor can also be considered a weakness: a relatively high level of sales tax revenues can leave us more vulnerable in a recession.

Historically, Vance County voters and elected officials have opted for low levels of taxation and corresponding low levels of public services. For example, over a five-year period (1982-87), Vance County's annual per capita expenditure averaged \$232, while the average for 25 North Carolina counties of comparable size was \$312. Our expenditures per capita were well below average in the areas of public schools, general government, culture and recreation, and debt service. The chart below details comparative spending over a ten year period for Vance County and other counties of similar size.

At the same time, our property valuation per capita is low: of six counties of comparable size that last revalued property when we did (in 1984), our property value per capita was the lowest, at \$19,993. Also our ratio of assessed value to market value was lowest. This suggests that we have sufficient real property value to generate much more county revenue without undue burden to taxpayers.

In the past, many of our citizens and local leaders have had the attitude that "we can't afford the things we need," not recognizing that public investments can benefit us in the long run. And, like most counties in North Carolina, Vance County citizens and our elected officials are averse to long-term debt that results from issuing bonds. It

Average Per Capita County Expenditures, FY's 1980 - 1989

	Average of all Co. 25-50,000 Pop.	Vance	Franklin	Granville	Lee	Person
General Government	\$34.27	\$22.87	\$23.73	\$34.44	\$43.26	\$39.09
Public Safety	34.33	37.98	27.41	21.77	33.76	38.54
Transportation & Utilities	13.09	1.13	0.00	3.85	17.45	22.50
Environmental Protection	11.11	10.23	8.70	7.71	9.97	2.62
Planning & Development	8.97	6.47	13.38	7.66	11.88	13.13
Human & Social Services	72.37	69.44	79.87	55.29	65.15	84.06
Culture & Recreation	8.28	3.39	5.25	5.97	24.77	7.38
Education (Includes) Pub. Schools & Comm. College	93.09	73.34	97.93	82.60	153.28	110.02
Debt Service	18.92	7.48	20.08	5.39	33.04	25.10
Miscellaneous	8.41	11.15	1.29	9.66	4.75	20.30
TOTAL*	\$303.05	\$243.52	\$277.70	\$234.40	\$397.74	\$362.00

* Totals do not add up due to rounding.

Source: N.C. State Treasurer, State and Local Government Finance Division,
Annual County Financial Information Form LGC-36-87

Average Per Capita County Expenditures, Fiscal Year 1989

	Average of all Co. 25-50,000 Pop.	Vance	Franklin	Granville	Lee	Person
General Government	\$50.36	\$34.76	\$34.57	\$58.01	\$64.19	\$50.41
Public Safety	52.89	65.17	46.47	38.84	49.76	57.28
Transportation & Utilities	16.29	1.02	0.00	5.42	20.38	30.00
Environmental Protection	17.31	17.35	20.66	11.24	13.73	5.84
Planning & Development	11.90	13.22	31.81	15.34	14.42	9.37
Human & Social Services	99.41	91.36	88.06	65.57	77.46	116.42
Culture & Recreation	10.36	4.41	8.01	8.29	30.80	7.7598
Education (Includes) Pub. Schools & Comm. College	132.08	119.59	147.69	143.17	185.61	131.25
Debt Service	33.09	6.31	6.00	9.94	48.01	43.77
Miscellaneous	9.70	10.89	0.00	9.92	2.05	12.98
TOTAL	\$433.45	\$355.05	\$383.27	\$360.75	\$506.43	\$464.93

* Totals do not add up due to rounding.

Source: N.C. State Treasurer, State and Local Government Finance Division, Annual County Financial Information Form LGC-36-87

now seems that the business community and others are willing to invest (through higher taxes) in the services needed for Vance County to develop to its fullest potential.

Our budgetary planning process has also been inadequate in the past. City and county government have not always anticipated future expenditures, which has resulted in major and sometimes inefficient dollar outlays. There is limited public involvement in budget decisions. Finally, some decisions, such as property tax cuts, have been governed by political considerations rather than county needs.

Planning and Intergovernmental Relations

Trends

State and federal legislation to protect land and water is on the rise, which has major implications for the need for planning in North Carolina counties. The 1989 General Assembly passed a watershed protection act that will require local governments to adopt ordinances to enforce state watershed protection guidelines. And the controversial issue of siting of hazardous waste landfills has implications for land use planning as well.

North Carolina state law extends most of the authority for land use planning to local

governments, which have the option to decide whether to exercise it. Local governments are responsible for managing most community resources through a number of vehicles such as zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, comprehensive transportation plans, watershed protection ordinances, and wetlands protection. Many rural counties in North Carolina have traditionally opted for a laissez-faire approach to land use.

More recently, businesses and other citizens have become increasingly aware of environmental issues, and as these emerge as real concerns, rural counties are beginning to enact regulations to manage growth in some ways. At the same time, state policymakers are becoming more interested in and concerned about issues of land use, capital facilities, and economic development planning, and some analysts predict that some sort of land use planning will be mandated in the future.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Vance County is typical of rural North Carolina counties in the area of land use planning. We have no subdivision regulations or zoning, which threatens new and existing residential and commercial developments. We have not done long-range land use planning. There is growing recognition of the need for county-wide planning and zoning, although there is still much resistance to zoning.

Henderson, by contrast, has had a full-time planning director for at least four years, and has zoning and subdivision regulations in place. Zoning regulations are complex, and members of the town zoning board could benefit from training to help them master the issues they need to understand in order to make decisions.

Intergovernmental relations between Vance County and Henderson are improving, as the two governments cooperate on more issues. However, there is room for improvement. There is consistent controversy over funding formulas, and some tensions between the county commissioners and school board remain. Relations between Vance County and its neighboring counties are good, and the Kerr-Tar Council of Governments is a solid regional organization. The counties generally focus on their common interests rather than their differences. However, cooperation is hindered by a "small pie", which may lead to increased competition with our neighbors in the future.

Leadership

Trends

The issue of leadership is difficult to describe in terms of quantitative trends. There are a few indicators for the state as a whole, however, that are relevant to Vance County. In its report *Halfway Home and a Long Way to Go*, the Southern Growth Policies Board noted that "in challenging situations, it is difficult to lead farther than you have gone yourself...to find potential leaders and develop them into its best leaders, the South must start its talent search in earnest." When the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center commissioned MDC, Inc. to do a survey of existing leaders across the state to determine the critical issues that should demand the Rural Center's immediate attention, leadership was among the top three concerns.

One specific concern of many in the state is the lack of diversity in political and economic development institutions, which can lead to a narrowness in perspectives about problems and a lack of accountability to people outside of the traditional leadership base. Specifically, while the population in North Carolina is 52% female and 24% non-white, the governing structure at the local and state level are predominantly white and male:

- 16% and 11% respectively, of all municipal and county elected officials in North Carolina are women; 10 and 11% respectively and black;
- 15% of the North Carolina General Assembly is composed of female members; 10% of the members are black.

Strengths and Weaknesses

While we see positive changes occurring in local leadership, we have experienced gaps in leadership in the community in the past. The establishment and broad participation in Leadership Vance is an indication of a growing recognition that strong, competent leadership is vital. There is a sense of real potential to create an upward spiral — a sense of a community on the rise, which in turn will encourage youth to stay here and contribute their energy to carry the spiral upward further.

Still, there are a number of problems with local leadership. We have suffered from lack of unity, trust, and communication among racial and economic groups. We lack broad representation in leadership positions. There are few women or minorities in elected or appointed positions, and the same people tend to get appointed to advisory boards. The "good old boy" network dominates electoral politics, and people outside

that network often feel it is futile to get involved. The public is not adequately informed or included in critical decisions.

Furthermore, some elected officials do not have the technical information or knowledge needed to run a county, and there is a lack of long-range thinking or planning on the part of elected bodies. Finally, the city, county, and school board often work at cross purposes, to the detriment of the whole community.

Infrastructure and the Environment

Trends

In the area of solid waste, recent state and federal regulations demand changes in local practice. The 1989 North Carolina General Assembly adopted a major package of waste initiatives through the Solid Waste Management Loan Fund and the Solid Waste Law. Specific provisions of the laws include a goal of 25% reduction of waste through statewide recycling by 1993. New U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regulations will make the construction and operation of new landfills very costly.

Water supply in the 1990s may become a scarce commodity. In North Carolina, both surface water and groundwater are vulnerable to the impacts of growth. Despite the state's relatively abundant water resources, North Carolina has experienced water shortages in several primarily urban areas. In the future, water shortages may lead to increased tension between urban and rural areas.

Protecting raw water supplies is primarily the responsibility of state and local governments in the South. Both are turning new attention to the need to protect water supplies after being faced with millions of dollars in clean-up costs for contaminated sources. Local areas are also being forced to pay more attention to water resources due to increased standards under federal programs such as the Safe Drinking Water Act. An issue that can be expected to be of particular relevance in Vance County in the future is the possibility of restrictions on pollution caused by agriculture, as it relates to water quality.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Overall, our infrastructure and the quality of our natural environment are strong points in Vance County. We are fortunate to be situated near Kerr Lake, Interstate 85 and U.S.1, and to have good rail service. We looked at three general areas of county responsibility in infrastructure and environmental protection: solid waste, water and wastewater, and community facilities and redevelopment.

In Vance County, some local recycling has already begun, and there is a growing awareness at the local of the need to recycle. The county's landfill is at capacity, and trends show that our volume of solid waste will increase in the short run before it begins to decrease through recycling and other efforts. County government leaders have been working with surrounding counties on the siting of a landfill.

In general, we have good water and wastewater facilities. We have an excellent water supply and a good regional water delivery system, thanks to good planning. However, city water lines and storm sewer systems are in need of maintenance, and our sewage capacity is limited. In the future we will face major costs in bringing wastewater treatment facilities at five schools up to standard.

We see potential to improve and upgrade community facilities and blighted areas if the city and county work together and utilize the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Some low-income and minority neighborhoods need improvements such as sidewalks, curbs, gutters, and adequate drainage.

Day Care

Trends

North Carolina has one of the nation's highest proportions of mothers in the workforce. In 1980, 57% of women with preschool children worked, as did 70% of women with school-aged children. Based on the proportion of working mothers in Vance County in 1980, there are now an estimated 1,500 women in our county labor force who have children under age six.

A report of child care in rural North Carolina issued by North Carolina Equity in March, 1990 identified three basic issues facing families who need child care: availability, affordability, and quality. While day care is in short supply and not affordable for many families throughout the state, in rural areas these problems are compounded by high rates of poverty and fewer child day care slots. In addition, in small towns and rural areas more of the available care is unregulated, raising questions about the quality of care children receive.

The average cost of child day care in North Carolina is \$2200 a year per child, representing the fourth largest item in the family budget after housing, food, and taxes. For minimum wage workers, the cost is out of reach. The state has a limited number of day care subsidies available for low-income families, but funding is vastly inadequate — in 1990 there were 14,000 children on the waiting list.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Vance County has a substantial need for child day care. Sixty-one percent of mothers who work have children under six, and 170 children are currently on waiting lists for day care slots. The lack of day care can prevent single mothers from working, as does the cost of day care. For a mother working at a minimum wage job, day care is affordable only if it is subsidized.

We see several opportunities for expansion of day care in Vance County. The increasing recognition of the need for day care (both adult and child care) may lead to increases in state and federal funding, as well as funding from private employers. The new JOBS program, part of the federal Family Support Act, will provide day care services for AFDC mothers who enroll in education or training or who get a job. However, it will not help the large number of working poor families in Vance County. In addition, structural barriers to day care will remain. These include low wages for day care workers, low profit levels of day care businesses, and difficulty of obtaining start-up capital for day care centers. In fact, some day care facilities in Vance County have recently shut down.

Housing

Trends

Like day care, housing problems fall into three general issue areas: availability, affordability, and quality. In rural North Carolina, affordability and quality are the most severe problems. Housing for low and moderate-income families is scarce, and much of the housing that is affordable is in poor condition.

During the 1980s, the cost of housing rose beyond the reach of more and more families in North Carolina and nationwide. The trends that led to problems of housing affordability here and nationwide are expected to continue. These include high land prices and rising construction costs. The nation's home ownership rate declined steadily throughout the 1980s, as the housing affordability crunch affected families at all but the highest income levels. However, low-income families have been hardest hit, caught between declining real income and rising housing costs.

In the 1970s, poor families spent 30 percent of their income for housing; by 1985 they were spending 58 percent. This is due in part to the weakening of federal housing policies and assistance programs during the 1980s. Federal budget outlays for housing assistance declined by 68% between 1981 and 1986, from \$32 billion to \$10 billion. Subsidized housing, which averaged 14% of all housing starts in the 1970s, accounted for just 5% of housing starts in 1984.

In rural areas, the persistence of substandard housing has remained a serious problem as well. In 1980, nearly one in four poor households in the US lived in a substandard home. In rural North Carolina counties, over 6% of all households lacked complete plumbing facilities; in Vance County the figure was 9.6%.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Housing needs in Vance County run the gamut from inadequate supply of low- and moderate-income housing to poor housing conditions, especially in rural parts of the County. The dimensions of our housing gaps include the following concerns: 20% of our population lives in low-income housing, yet we still need more decent, low-income housing; for moderate-income families, affordable housing is becoming less and less available; few houses are available costing less than \$60,000; there is a lack of moderate-income rental units; a lack of financing options is a barrier to home ownership; and rising land prices represent a barrier to developing affordable housing.

To address these challenges, we do have several programs and resources in place to assist in the development or provision of low- and moderate-income housing. We have an active Section 8 program, and we have been successful in obtaining Community Development Block Grants. The city-county Anderson Project converted a hospital to elderly housing. The Gateway Community Development Corporation is engaged in housing development, as is Habitat for Humanity. The Center for Community Self-Help, a statewide development institution based in Durham, is another potential resource for housing development and home ownership.

In addition, our subsidized housing and public housing are well maintained and have low levels of crime. Ongoing neighborhood improvement programs should lead to a turnaround in some deteriorating neighborhoods. Finally, at the state level there is increasing awareness of housing problems, and more resources are being committed to help low- and moderate-income people own homes and improve housing conditions.

Social and Health Issues

Trends

While North Carolina's poverty rate fell during the 1970s, it has risen during the 1980s. According to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, an estimated 14% of the population of North Carolina lived in poverty in 1985. Vance County's poverty rate is estimated at 24% — substantially higher than the state average. In addition, it is estimated that 40% of all single-parent families with children under 18 live in poverty, and 52% of single-parent families with children under 6 live in poverty.

The majority of poor people in North Carolina live in families in which someone is working. Estimates from the North Carolina Employment and Health Survey reveal that 34% of jobs held by rural North Carolinians pay wages below the poverty line for a family of four.

At the same time, the "safety net" of services is not adequate to pull families out of poverty. For example, North Carolina's level of AFDC cash assistance to single-parent households ranks 42nd among all states, and our food stamp participation rate ranks 46th. A mother with two children receiving full AFDC and food stamp benefits still receives benefits equal to less than two-thirds of the poverty line. In Vance County, 1,002 families rely on AFDC for financial support.

As in the state and nation, our population is aging. People over age 65 represent the fastest growing segment of our population and are projected to comprise 16% of the population by the year 2010. Given our high proportion of elderly and high level of poverty, we have (and will have in the future) many elderly poor.

Over the past decade the federal government has substantially cut back its funding for human services, forcing state and local government to shoulder more of the load. The public does not sufficiently comprehend the impact of the "new federalism" on local government. Exacerbating federal cutbacks, the state continues to mandate that the county provide more services, without providing more state funding.

Another social issue of concern to Vance County is child abuse. The North Carolina Child Advocacy Institute (NCCAI) defines child abuse as physical neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional neglect, and medical neglect. In North Carolina, child abuse and neglect rose by 37% between 1984 and 1987, and, according to the North Carolina Child Advocacy Institute, it is estimated that only one of every three cases is reported officially. The table below details reports of child abuse in Vance County and other surrounding counties.

Child Abuse, Selected Counties, 1987

	# Children in County	Cases Reported	Cases Substantiated
Vance	10,568	382	170
Franklin	8,762	156	60
Granville	9,250	158	58
Person	7,909	155	36
Lee	11,157	239	54

Source: The State of the Child in North Carolina, 1988, North Carolina Child Advocacy Institute, Raleigh.

The rise in the incidence of AIDS is also of particular concern. According to the AIDS Control Branch in the North Carolina Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources, the number of reported cases of AIDS in North Carolina has risen from 95, in June, 1985 to 1,503, in September, 1990. In Vance County, there are currently 10 reported cases of AIDS. The epidemic is expected to grow worse before the number of cases begins to drop.

Strengths and Weaknesses

To our credit, the City of Henderson is more involved in addressing these issues than are most cities of its size. Also, several churches are active in addressing social issues, although other churches could be doing much more. The Vance County Department of Social Services does a good job in meeting its required duties, such as disbursing AFDC checks and enforcing child support requirements. However, DSS does not do as well with initiating programs to address severe local problems, and the Department is understaffed in key areas. In particular, even though the County's child abuse rate is high, the Department of Social Services is understaffed in this area, leading to case loads significantly higher than the State average and a slower response time in intervention. In addition, the Family Prevention Project, a program that operates out of the Vance County Mental Health Department to assist families in parenting and other skills, is underfunded.

In general, Vance County has good health care facilities, but we nonetheless have some severe health-related problems. As in the nation, our per capita spending for medical care is high. Due to rising health insurance costs, some employers are cutting back on levels of health insurance coverage for their employees. The county is responding to the health care needs of the poor through a case management approach. However, our high poverty rate and increasing elderly population will place increasing demands on the county-funded health care system.

Fortunately, our local hospital, Maria Parham, is a financially sound private nonprofit hospital that provides good care. It can treat the indigent for emergencies, and operates a dialysis center. The regional transportation system headquartered in Vance County makes for easier access to health care services.

In general, our community has good awareness of the value of staying healthy. More and more local no-smoking policies are going into effect. Still, there is a lack of recognition that government and private spending on preventive health care pay off in the long run. The general public, and especially the indigent, could benefit from more information on preventive health care and the availability of health care services.

Four health-related issues of particular concern in Vance County are teen pregnancy, infant mortality, AIDS, and drug abuse. Our teen pregnancy rate is among the highest in the state. As can be seen in the table below, in 1989 Vance County reported teen pregnancy at the rate of 138 per 1,000 adolescents (ages 15-19), while the state rate was 101 per 1,000.

Teen Pregnancy, Selected Counties, 1989
(Rate of Pregnancies per 1,000 adolescents, aged 15-19)

	Total	White	Nonwhite
Vance	138	98	172
Franklin	91	51	138
Granville	95	73	118
Person	99	67	149
Lee	114	81	212
NC	101	79	152

Source: Division of Statistics and Information Services, North Carolina Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources.

There is growing awareness of this problem and increasingly the schools are getting involved in prevention programs. These include Project Outreach in the junior high and high schools, Teen Line, and the Pregnancy Coalition. However, more preventive action is needed. We still face an unwillingness among some people to talk about facts relating to pregnancy and birth control. The lack of recreational opportunities for teenagers and the number of latch-key children further contribute to our high rate of teen pregnancy.

Vance County also has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the state. This places us at the bottom of the nation, since North Carolina has the worst rate in the United States. The County's infant mortality rate among whites is 10.2 deaths per 1,000 live births, only slightly above the state average. The rate among blacks, however, is extremely high: 23.4 deaths per 1,000 live births. There is one positive note on infant mortality: the heightened public awareness of this issue at the state level may lead to more state resources to address the problem.

The AIDS epidemic has hit Vance County, with 10 cases reported so far. This is a new issue we will have to plan for; currently, we have no system in place to deal with housing, school, foster care, and other issues related to people with AIDS. We can, however, take advantage of the services of the AIDS Service Project and the Clearinghouse and Network Center for AIDS Education. These two Durham-based organizations have funding to serve Vance County with educational outreach services.

Drug and alcohol abuse are another problem of national dimensions that we must respond to at the local level. Drug abuse in the United States is expected to get worse before it recedes. Increases in drug and alcohol abuse lead to higher health costs and can exacerbate violence and crime. Citizens in Vance County have begun to step up drug prevention efforts, particularly through the efforts of Vance Against Substance Abuse (VASA). The Vance County Mental Health Department is involved in substance abuse treatment. More efforts are needed, however, in treatment and prevention.

STRATEGIES

GOAL 1: DEVELOP ONGOING, INTERGOVERNMENTAL, LONG-RANGE LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING SYSTEMS THAT WILL RESULT IN: (1) MANAGED GROWTH, SO THAT DEVELOPMENT IS ENCOURAGED AND THE ENVIRONMENT IS PROTECTED; (2) DEVELOPMENT THAT MAKES THE BEST USE OF EXISTING BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES, AND RESOURCES, IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THE COUNTY'S HERITAGE; (3) JOB CREATION STRATEGIES THAT RESPOND TO EMERGING TRENDS.

Strategy 1: Appoint a citizens' land-use planning commission to oversee a countywide land use planning process, the implementation of appropriate land use controls, and the staffing of a county planning office.

Strategy 2: Explore the advantage and disadvantages of a joint city-council planning office; establish a joint city-county planning office if the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. A number of larger cities and counties in North Carolina have consolidated city and county planning departments.

Strategy 3: Strengthen city and county code enforcement (including building inspections, housing code, weed ordinance) in order to achieve greater efficiency and uniform enforcement in the city and county.

3(a) Investigate the benefits of consolidating city and county inspections departments, and consolidate them if that will improve the service and level of enforcement.

3(b) Hire an attorney to focus on code enforcement in both the city and the county.

Strategy 4: Establish a Historic Properties Commission to oversee a Historic Properties Ordinance, in order to preserve "historically significant" properties. Such

an ordinance would offer the incentive of reduced property taxes to property owners that commit to preserving their historical property.

Strategy 5: Update the city Sign Ordinance to allow for enforcement of more restrictive and aesthetically beneficial sign regulations.

Note: Economic development planning strategies are included in Economic Development Committee's strategy recommendations.

GOAL 2: PLAN FOR AND PROVIDE ADEQUATE LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT REVENUES TO MEET THE NEEDS (INCLUDING EDUCATION, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND CAPITAL FACILITIES) OF THE COMMUNITY. PLANS SHOULD BE CREATED WITH PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED TO THE PUBLIC ONCE THEY ARE SET, AND MONITORING SYSTEMS SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED TO BE SURE THAT PLANNING IS WORKING

Strategy 1: Establish an ongoing capital facilities planning process in the city of Henderson and Vance County so that the county and city will anticipate and plan for needed expenditures for maintenance and construction of capital facilities, such as schools and water and sewer systems.

Strategy 2: Develop 2-5 year operational plans for county and city budgets to insure that local needs (e.g., education, human services) are met by local government budgets in a timely manner; maintain formally written operational plans and communicate these plans to the public regularly.

Strategy 3: Conduct or commission a study to determine additional revenue sources for the city and county, such as: fees for the maintenance of vacant lots; downtown municipal service district; or special tax districts for schools.

Strategy 4: Ensure that property values are assessed realistically and fairly in 1992, and set appropriate tax rates to allow for increased revenues to the county and city. Develop a public education and outreach plan to support elected officials in this effort. (See Goal 3, Strategy 4.)

Strategy 5: Hire a county purchasing agent, and/or develop a joint city/county purchasing office. Encourage the city and county to use local vendors.

GOAL 3: DEVELOP AN EXPANDED POOL OF ELECTED AND APPOINTED LEADERSHIP THAT IS BROAD-BASED, WELL TRAINED, AND VISIONARY, WITH A COMMITMENT TO MEET THE VITAL NEEDS OF THE WHOLE COMMUNITY THROUGH ITS EXPERTISE AND ITS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE TRUST IN THE COMMUNITY. AND AT THE SAME TIME, HAVE A CITIZENRY THAT DEMANDS THESE QUALITIES OF ITS LEADERS AND HAS TRUST IN THEM TO MEET THE NEEDS OF A COMMUNITY WHICH IS UNIFIED ACROSS RACIAL AND ECONOMIC BOUNDARIES.

Strategy 1: Continue to support and promote Leadership-Vance. Encourage elected officials to view graduates of the program as a potential pool of citizen leaders for governmental boards and commissions.

Strategy 2: Encourage the Vance County Human Relations Commission to develop training and educational opportunities in race relations for local governmental staff people and board members of other organizations. Consider approaching businesses to underwrite some of the costs for this effort.

Strategy 3: Advertise for openings in appointed boards and commissions, and offer printed job descriptions for each board or commission to interested applicants.

Strategy 4: Establish a committee of the Henderson-Vance Chamber of Commerce to carry out the following efforts. This Committee should be broad based, representing a diverse array of community interests.

- Organize and carry out annual "emerging issues forums" that address critical issues facing elected officials and the citizens of Vance County.
- Serve as a clearinghouse for training opportunities for elected and appointed officials on issues that those officials must be knowledgeable of in order to do their jobs well.
- Reach out to and recruit a broad base of citizens to serve on governmental and other advisory boards and committees. Educate applicants about the function of these boards and committees.
- Ensure that job descriptions are available for all city and county appointed positions.
- Assist in recruiting participants for Leadership - Vance.
- Offer seminars in "trusteeship" — how to be an effective board member.
- Serve as an information broker between volunteer organizations and committees and the media to encourage positive attention to efforts to improve the quality of life in Vance County.

- Use the resources of the media, including community television to educate the public on various issues as well as the availability of programs and services. (And ensure that the county establishes an agreement with the Cable TV company.)

GOAL 4: INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF AFFORDABLE, QUALITY DAY CARE AVAILABLE TO FAMILIES.

Strategy 1: Establish a day care working committee, made up of representatives of the Department of Social Services, the private sector, Vance County Schools, Vance-Granville Community College, the Vance County Economic Development Commission, and the citizenry at large to carry out a day care plan for Vance County. This plan should examine the current need for day care and the resources available to meet the need, and should highlight the unmet needs in the county. And the plan should make specific recommendations for how to address those unmet needs. These might include:

- Developing incentives for employers to develop day care facilities for their employees.
- Encouraging local banks to participate in regional loan pools for day care businesses.
- Developing a clearinghouse of potential physical sites for day care.
- Developing incentives for churches to provide day care.

Strategy 2: Communicate support for the following, through the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, the League of Municipalities, and the North Carolina General Assembly:

- State efforts to develop educational programs for pre-school-age children.
- Legislation that would provide subsidies to low- and moderate-income citizens for day care.
- Increased funding for Head Start.

GOAL 5: DEVELOP POSITIVE SYSTEMS OF RESPONSE TO SERVE PERSONS WITH AIDS.

Strategy 1: Establish a committee to create guidelines for the treatment, housing, hiring, and schooling of people with AIDS. Such a committee might include schools, government, PTA, the religious community, the legal community, and health professionals and would work to recommend guidelines to various agencies. Draw on

the resources of The AIDS Services Project and the Clearinghouse and Network Center for AIDS Education, based in Durham.

GOAL 6: MEET AND/OR EXCEED THE STANDARDS SET FORTH IN SB111 (1989 ACT TO IMPROVE THE MANAGEMENT OF SOLID WASTE) THROUGH REGIONAL PLANNING AND WIDESPREAD PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, WITH A PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON DEVELOPING RECYCLING SYSTEMS IN THE COUNTY.

Strategy 1: Employ a solid waste manager in county government to initiate countywide recycling programs, work on developing a regional landfill, and address the weaknesses in the County Collects program.

Strategy 2: Support the Region K Solid Waste Task Force in its efforts to develop one or two landfill sites in the region.

Strategy 3: Develop and support businesses that will do "front-end" or "back-end" recycling, in order to meet or exceed the recycling goals set forth in SB 111.

Strategy 4: Investigate the feasibility of curb-side recycling and/or community-wide recycling collection points.

Strategy 5: Investigate possible incentives for recycling other than reduction of solid waste, such as contributing earnings from recycling to good "causes".

Strategy 6: Create a Vance County Solid Waste Advisory Committee to: (1) oversee implementation of county solid waste strategies; (2) educate the public about the need for recycling and other solid waste issues; and (3) initiate other recommendations that will improve solid waste management in the County.

GOAL 7: DEVELOP SAFE, DECENT, AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR COUNTY RESIDENTS OF ALL INCOME LEVELS.

Strategy 1: Appoint (jointly, by county commissioners and city council) a Vance County Housing Advisory Commission with members from the city and county that will do the following:

- *Increase the awareness of local government about the severity of the housing problem, and the links between housing development and other benefits (including job creation, health and safety).*

- See that more information about available federal, state, and local housing programs is gathered and disseminated in the county.
- Research the potential for issuing bonds at the local or regional level to support low-income housing, including the potential pay-back to local tax coffers.

This Commission should be staffed by the City Manager and the County Manager.

Strategy 2: Step-up condemnation processes of dilapidated houses in order to allow more land for new housing construction.

Strategy 3: Provide financial support from city and county government funds for some of operational costs of Gateway.

GOAL 8: REDUCE CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT, COMMUNITY-WIDE.

Strategy 1: Appoint a task force to conduct a State of the Child Conference in conjunction with the North Carolina Child Advocacy Institute. Ensure the participation of DSS staff, law enforcement personnel, community based organizations, and educators. (This may be carried out by Vance United for Families and Children — described in Education Committee strategies.) Use this conference to do the following:

- Educate citizens in Vance County about child abuse and develop specific ongoing public information mechanisms to educate citizens about what they can do to help when they suspect child abuse.
- Develop specific interagency responses required or new programs required to meet the problems identified.
- Build support for existing education programs targeted at children, such as "Lunch With Easter Bunny".

Strategy 2: Raise the level of awareness and response skills of city and county law enforcement agencies in the following ways:

- Provide law enforcement personnel with basic information and training concerning how to respond to cases of suspected or actual child abuse.
- Research the potential costs and benefits of creating special units or teams to respond to situations of potential or actual child abuse (e.g., domestic violence conflicts).

GOAL 9: INCREASE SERVICES TO FULFILL THE HEALTH, HOUSING, RECREATIONAL, AND DAY CARE NEEDS OF THE ELDERLY IN VANCE COUNTY.

Strategy 1: Expand the Council on Aging to include a broader base of membership, including representation from the Senior Citizens Federation, to carry out a State of the Elderly Conference for Vance County, in order to do the following:

- Educate the public about the problems facing the elderly, including poverty, abuse, and the need for day care.
- Establish programmatic responses to the needs, including a plan for researching approaches to attracting developers to establish adult day-care programs.

Strategy 2: Develop a resource and referral system and handbook for programs that serve the elderly, and ensure that all relevant agencies have copies of the handbook, including ministers of churches. This system could build on the ongoing efforts of the Volunteer Services Center.

Strategy 3: Establish a community-wide outreach system to educate the elderly about federal, state, and local services they may be eligible for (including such programs as food stamps, SSI), and ensure that community based organizations work with government agencies to reach the widest possible audience.

Strategy 4: Expand the Title 5 program for the employment of senior citizens.

GOAL 10: REDUCE DRUG ABUSE IN VANCE COUNTY.

Strategy 1: Support the efforts of Vance Action Against Substance Abuse (VASA).

- 1(a) Encourage VASA to research successful models of drug education, intervention and treatment from other communities. The Southeast Regional Center for Drug Free Schools and Communities Electronic Information Service is a useful resource for such information, as is the National Civic Leagues Civitex data base.

Strategy 2: Build the level of recreational programs offered to young people, in the following ways:

- Sponsor more social events, such as dances and picnics, in addition to ongoing sports activities.
- Develop a system for covering the costs of medical exams and registration fees

for needy families. (Research the willingness of doctors to perform free medical exams for this purpose.)

- Improve current outreach methods to encourage more minority children to participate in activities.
- Develop a volunteer "phone-a-ride" program, to allow children without transportation access to recreational programs.

VI. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOALS

Overarching goal: To improve the quality of life for all Vance County citizens by creating more and better job opportunities, raising incomes, and reducing poverty.

1. Mobilize public and private resources for economic development.
2. Increase employment opportunities and expand the tax base through development of business and industry. This includes retention and expansion of existing industry, diversifying the employment base, and promoting a thriving, growing small business sector.
3. Develop a workforce with a solid basic literacy level, strong work ethic, adaptability to change, and job-specific skills for a broad range of occupations.
4. Increase the number of "good quality" jobs.
5. Reduce drug abuse in workplaces.
6. Increase awareness of the importance of improving race relations to foster economic development. Improve trust, understanding, openness, and respect between racial and ethnic groups.
7. Encourage government leadership, community leadership, and public services that promote economic development and a better quality of life for all citizens.

KEY FINDINGS

Trends

There are a number of national and regional trends that are likely to affect our local economy over the next decade. Several have already made themselves felt.

The first of these trends is the shift to a global economy, bringing opportunities for international trade and the threat of foreign competition. International trade has grown from 4% of the GNP in 1969 to 20% today. North Carolina is a major exporter of chemicals, paper, and tobacco. However, foreign competition has hurt the state's base

of traditional manufacturing, as much textiles and apparel production has shifted to the third world.

Another major trend relates to shifts in the manufacturing sector. Rural North Carolina is heavily dependent on manufacturing jobs: four of every ten jobs in rural counties are manufacturing jobs, the highest rate in the nation. Most of these jobs are in four industries — textiles, apparel, tobacco, and furniture. Today, jobs in those traditional industries are declining due to slow growth nationally (caused partly by foreign competition) and mechanization (which makes production more efficient but usually eliminates jobs.)

Four specific manufacturing trends affect North Carolina:

- **Slow growth.** Between 1977 and 1984, manufacturing employment in the state grew just 1.2% per year. Nearly half of the state's nonmetropolitan counties had a net loss of manufacturing jobs. In fact, the four industries that have been the mainstays of North Carolina manufacturing are projected to be among the five slowest growing industries in the state during the 1990s.
- **Shift to higher skilled jobs.** Due to increasing mechanization, the jobs that remain require higher skills and a more flexible, better educated workforce. The Hudson Institute reports that today 40% of manufacturing jobs in the United States are low-skilled and 24% are high-skilled. By 2000, the reverse will be true.
- **Changes in buyer-supplier relationships.** Small to mid-sized firms that produce products for sale to other firms are at risk unless they change to meet new conditions in the marketplace, such as meeting certification requirements of buyers. At the same time, some changes in manufacturing practices present opportunities to small suppliers, such as the preference of some large companies to contract with nearby suppliers.
- **Decline in the success of industrial recruitment as an economic development strategy.** Although many counties continue to emphasize industrial recruitment at the expense of other economic development strategies, the payoff for "smokestack chasing" is declining. In the past, branch plants were attracted to the rural South because of inexpensive land, low wages and taxes, and a ready workforce. Today, companies looking for these conditions often choose locations overseas. Companies looking to relocate within the United States now look nationwide for communities with conditions less prevalent in rural North Carolina, including good schools, a well-educated workforce, and environmental and cultural amenities.

A third major trend facing our economy is the growth of service sector jobs. More than one in three jobs in rural North Carolina is in the service sector, and this sector is growing at the rate of 3.6% a year, three times as fast as manufacturing. The fastest growing component of the service sector in rural areas is "residential" services — retail and service establishments that cater to households and businesses in the community. These establishments are important in that they keep local dollars circulating in the local economy. Ultimately, though, a community cannot live on these services alone, unless it becomes a "bedroom" community. A solid local economy needs services that support the economic base — those that bring in dollars from outside the area, such as a regional hospital or shopping center.

A fourth trend with ramifications for Vance County is the decline in agricultural jobs and income. In general, North Carolina and the nation are experiencing trends toward fewer farms and larger farms. Black farmers in particular have suffered a high rate of land loss in the past decade. Tobacco has been replaced by poultry and eggs as the state's top income crop.

Fifth, small business is increasingly being recognized as a major source of new jobs. A recent study by the Kenan Institute of UNC has documented the key role of small business and new business in job creation in North Carolina. Between 1983 and 1987, companies with under 20 employees created 43% of the net new jobs in the state. Locally owned, independent businesses created 58% of net new jobs. New businesses, or start-ups, are an especially important part of the economy: They created 65% of net new jobs, while expansions of North Carolina firms created 34% and out-of-state firms moving to the state were responsible for only 1% of new jobs.

In the past decade, the state has recognized the importance of small business and has taken steps to remove barriers to small business development. It has created a number of programs and institutions, including the Small Business and Technology Development Centers at state universities, Small Business Centers at community colleges, and the Technology Development Corporation which, among other functions, funds small business incubators. Yet more could be done, especially to encourage minority and women business owners: North Carolina ranks 36th among the states in business incorporations per capita, but only 43rd in minority business enterprises and 44th in women-owned businesses.

In recent years, lack of financing has been identified as a barrier to business development in North Carolina. The NC Rural Economic Development Center commissioned a study of capital gaps in rural areas. It found two areas of particular need: "mezzanine financing," or subordinated, unsecured financing for the expansion of small to mid-sized firms; and "microenterprise financing," or small loans for very small businesses.

Finally, we note several additional and related factors that enhance economic development in rural areas, identified by Southern Growth Policies Board. Over the past 15 years, rural communities with the healthiest, fastest growing economies have several common characteristics:

- **A metropolitan connection.** The counties with the fastest job growth tend to be those near metropolitan areas. These are the communities that have benefited from the boom in the Southern urban economy.
- **Higher education level.** Fast growth counties also tend to have high education levels and low levels of illiteracy, as shown in the following table:

Education Levels and Employment Growth, 1980-85
Counties in the Nonmetro South

Education Levels	Annual Employment Growth
% adults with <8th grade:	
<24%	2.8%
>42%	1.3%
% adults with high school education or more:	
<40%	1.2%
>60%	2.9%

Source: Rosenfeld and Bergman, *Making Connections*, Southern Growth Policies Board, 1989.

- **Other factors.** Rural counties with strong tourism and/or retirement economies are growing rapidly, as are counties with a four-year college or university. Proximity to highways and airports continues to be a positive factor in growth. Finally, there are rural counties with no particular advantages that nonetheless have vibrant economies, due to strong, visionary local leadership.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Our local economy has many strengths that we can look to in facing these trends. First is the fact that our two largest employers are locally owned firms that have a commitment to Vance County. These and other local companies are interested in

developing more buyer-supplier links within the county and the region. Many local businesses have participated in efforts such as the "Show and Sell" trade fair.

Second, we have excellent natural resources and industrial infrastructure. Vance County is well-served by highways and rail lines; we have an abundance of water, adequate waste treatment facilities, and a local government willing to address water and sewer needs. We have a growing industrial park and natural gas lines.

Third, our proximity to both Kerr Lake and the Research Triangle Area provides Vance County with the potential to be an extremely desirable place to live and work. There is opportunity for long-term economic development linked to the growth of the Research Triangle, as well as tourism, retirement, and residential development linked to the lake.

Fourth, we have several organizations and institutions in place to stimulate and assist economic development. Vance-Granville Community College is one of the best in North Carolina and has an excellent relationship with local business. The community college's Small Business Center offers an active program of workshops and individual counselling for small businesses.

The Economic Development Commission recently had a major success in recruiting a \$30 million branch plant of the Iams Corporation, a pet food manufacturer. In addition, it is currently conducting a business visitation program (in conjunction with the Agricultural Extension Service and Chamber of Commerce) to promote retention and expansion of existing industries.

The Gateway Community Development Corporation, a relatively new organization, has focused its first efforts on housing development, but plans to get involved in business development in the future. Other local organizations and institutions that are resources for economic development include the Chamber of Commerce, Henderson Main Street Program, and the Kerr-Tar Council of Governments' 504 Certified Development Corporation and revolving loan fund.

Fifth, our retail sector is growing steadily. Retail sales in 1987 were \$272 million, or \$695 per capita. This was higher than any of the surrounding counties, but below the state per capita of \$890. Vance County seems to be a retail center for the surrounding rural counties, but loses potential sales to Raleigh and Durham.

Counterbalancing these strengths, Vance County has a number of conditions which impede economic development. These relate to the community climate, our workforce, our vulnerability to downturns in the economy, and resources for business development.

Community climate.

Certain elements of the community climate have been a serious problem in the past but seem to be improving today. In the past, county leadership has been described as conservative, divisive, and resistant to change. As a result, economic development has been discouraged by the lack of county planning and zoning, lack of aggressive and competitive industrial recruitment, and a weak public school system.

The county has also suffered from poor race relations. Separation and mutual mistrust between the black and white communities has carried over into our schools and workplaces, where blacks feel they get little encouragement to achieve or opportunity to advance. Fortunately, new community leadership with openness and willingness to face these problems is beginning to make changes in the community climate.

Other problems hardly unique to Vance County but nonetheless detriments to economic development include drug abuse in the workplace and the community, and the relative sparsity of cultural amenities, typical in most rural counties.

Workforce.

A second impediment to economic development has been the condition of our workforce. We have a large pool of available labor, evidenced by our high unemployment rate of 7.6% in 1987 (compared to a statewide rate of 4.5%.) Unemployment is especially high among blacks: white men and women experienced unemployment at close to the state average in 1986 (5.1% and 4.4% respectively), while 8.8% of black men and 16.4% of black women were unemployed.

Despite the large pool of available labor, employers have trouble filling jobs. They have found a dearth of workers with personal discipline, job-specific skills, and basic workplace literacy, including solid reading and math and ability to learn skills on the job. This may be due to a number of factors. One is education and training: inadequate preparation in the public schools, mismatch between high school vocational education and local job opportunities, and poor use of employment and training resources.

Another root of the weak labor force has to do with the declining work ethic in society at large, and low motivation of the labor force. This is related to workplace relations — lack of commitment on the part of workers and lack of appreciation on the part of employers — which in turn is related partly to wage levels.

Wages in Vance County are low: in 1986, the average annual wages per worker were \$13,899, just 82% of the state average and lower than wages in Granville or Person counties. Our wages are below the state average in virtually every sector, including construction, manufacturing, transportation, and wholesale trade. The only sectors

with above-average wages are retail trade and lumber and wood, most likely due to Roses' headquarters and our mobile home manufacturers.

Economic vulnerability.

Two factors that make our economy vulnerable are our dependence on a few large employers and the makeup of our manufacturing sector. Roses and Harriet-Henderson together employ over 3,000 people, accounting for 18% of the county's jobs. While both companies are locally owned and committed to Vance County, they are both in high volume, low margin industries which are vulnerable to competition and downturns in the economic cycle.

The manufacturing sector supplies 6,310 jobs in Vance County, or 34% of all jobs. Manufacturing employment declined in the early 1970s from a high of 6,850 jobs, but in the late 1970s and 1980s it has held steady. Nonmanufacturing jobs, meanwhile, have steadily increased during the 1970s and 80s, and today account for 63% of all jobs in the county. Agriculture accounts for the remaining 3% of our employment. Today, Vance County's mix of manufacturing, nonmanufacturing, and agricultural jobs closely matches the statewide mix. The surrounding counties, by comparison, rely more heavily on manufacturing and agriculture.

Our manufacturing is concentrated in textiles and apparel. Nearly two-thirds of all Vance County manufacturing employment is in these sectors, which are ranked among the five slowest growth industries in the state. Among other Region K counties, only Person County is as dependent on textiles and apparel as Vance; statewide, these industries now account for only about one-third of all manufacturing. The two tables below illustrate these conditions:

Manufacturing Employment, Vance County, 1975-1986

	1975	1980	1986	% change 1975-86
Manufacturing	6050	6100	6310	4.3%
Food	400	80	100	-75.0%
Textiles	3410	3240	3100	-9.1%
Apparel	380	580	850	123.7%
Lumber/wood	*	270	550	*
Stone, clay, glass	*	700	570	*
Other Mfg	1860	1230	1140	-38.7%

*included in other manufacturing prior to 1980

Source: 1986 information from North Carolina Employment Security Commission, Labor Market information. Other data from KerrTar Regional COG, *Population and Economic Characteristics*, 1987.

Nonmanufacturing Employment Vance County, 1975-1986

	1975	1980	1986	% change 1975-86
Nonmanufacturing	7550	9030	11430	51.4%
Construction	430	450	450	4.7%
Trans, comm, pu	440	500	580	31.8%
Trade	3190	3860	5180	62.4%
FIRE*	290	280	270	-6.9%
Service	1460	1890	2530	73.3%
Government	1690	1980	2230	32.0%
Other nonmfg	50	70	190	280.0%

*Financial, Insurance, Real Estate

Source: 1986 information from North Carolina Employment Security Commission, Labor Market information. Other data from KerrTar Regional COG, *Population and Economic Characteristics, 1987*.

Resources for business development.

A final issue that needs to be addressed concerns resources for small business and new business development. While small businesses are the greatest source of new jobs, Vance County's major economic development strategy is industrial recruitment. This suggests that we should concentrate more resources on encouraging small business and new business development, as well as expansion of existing businesses.

Vance County does have a solid network of support organizations for small business, as described above. However, our economy could benefit from more intensive, proactive initiatives to encourage business development. In particular, there is a need for more investment capital. In Vance County as in most small communities, a significant portion of our bank deposits are invested elsewhere. And here, as in most communities, it is often hard for new businesses, small businesses, minority-owned businesses, and others perceived as high risk, to obtain financing.

STRATEGIES

Note: The Economic Development Committee ranks as highest priority and recommends immediate action on the following strategies: Goal 1, Strategies 1 and 2; Goal 2, Strategies 2 and 4; Goal 3, all Strategies; Goals 5, 6, and 7, all Strategies.

**OVERARCHING GOAL: IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF
LIFE FOR ALL VANCE COUNTY CITIZENS BY CREATING
MORE AND BETTER JOB OPPORTUNITIES,
RAISING INCOMES, AND REDUCING POVERTY.**

**GOAL 1: MOBILIZE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE RESOURCES FOR ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT.**

Goal 1

Strategy 1: Increase the level and effectiveness of local government's support for economic development.

- 1(a) Develop a long-range plan for economic development and a process for ongoing economic development planning, endorsed by both the county and city. The plan should be developed by a joint government-business committee, with input from education, employment and training, and human services agencies as well as economic development organizations. It would include such things as:
- Periodic assessment of regional and national trends and their effect on existing industries, in order to identify potential opportunities and problems in existing industries.
 - An assessment of the business and industrial sectors that have potential for growth in Vance County, to target sectors for recruitment and development.
 - Recommendations for local government actions in support of economic development, based on consideration of the costs and benefits of developing the physical and civic infrastructure. Such actions could include investment in the public schools, modifications in water and sewer rate schedules, or other public actions or investments to influence the location decisions of businesses.
- 1(b) Hold regular forums with economic development resource people from state and regional agencies in order to keep economic development leaders in Vance County up to date on emerging trends and opportunities for innovative county programs. Possible resource organizations include the Rural Economic Development Center, Southern Growth Policies Board, Small Business Technology Development Center, and Center for Community Self-Help. This could be done on a regional basis, through the Kerr-Tar Council of Governments.

Goal 1

Strategy 2: Expand the Economic Development Commission (EDC) and charge it with spearheading, coordinating, and monitoring implementation of the Economic Development Strategies. The expanded Commission would include representatives from local organizations involved in economic development: the Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Center, Gateway Community Development Corporation, Downtown Development Commission, and Henderson Industrial Development Corporation.

The expanded Economic Development Commission would develop an action plan based on the goals and strategies presented here and would then coordinate the implementation of that plan. It would initiate some strategies itself and would help other organizations implement other strategies. It would encourage collaboration among local economic development organizations and local businesses to initiate projects.

GOAL 2: INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPAND THE TAX BASE THROUGH DEVELOPMENT OF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY.

(This goal includes retention and expansion of existing industry, diversifying the employment base, and promoting a thriving, growing small business sector.)

Goal 2

Strategy 1: Increase retention and expansion efforts within Vance County's overall economic development program.

Strategy Options:

- 1(a) Use the information gathered through the Business Visitation Program currently underway to develop a system for responding to the needs of existing businesses. The expanded EDC (see Strategy 2 under Goal 1) could take the lead in working with businesses to resolve problems identified and help businesses with expansion needs.
- 1(b) Institute an ongoing business visitation program, to check in with a broad range of businesses annually on their needs, problems, and expansion plans.
- 1(c) Identify market opportunities to help existing businesses expand and to help develop new businesses.

- Develop a buyer-supplier plan that identifies: (1) potential new linkages between local businesses and (2) opportunities for recruitment or development of new businesses that could have vendor relationships with existing businesses. (This could be done using information from the Business Visitation Program, as well as by regularly bringing together a group of people from local industry to "brainstorm" ideas for linkage.)
- Aggressively market the products and services of local firms at Department of Commerce events and directly to potential buyers.
- Strengthen the commitment of city and county government to purchase from local businesses.
- Conduct a market study to identify opportunities for retail and service businesses, downtown or county-wide. This could be used, along with the results of the current Chamber consumer survey, to advise businesses on new market opportunities. Disseminate findings from the market study and help businesses gear up to fill gaps identified in the local economy.
- Identify growth sectors for small business and provide technical, financial, and management assistance to take advantage of growth opportunities. An example is the likely opportunity for construction contracts with the Department of Transportation regional office in Henderson. Contractors should be made aware of this opportunity and offered technical assistance on bidding for state contracts.

Goal 2

Strategy 2: *Open up and/or develop more financing opportunities for small business.*

Strategy Options:

- 2(a) Conduct a regional "deal stream analysis" to help banks analyze their reasons for rejecting small business loan applications and to help make more deals bankable. This type of analysis was done by Western North Carolina Tomorrow for a 17-county region.
- 2(b) Convene a forum of local bankers who would meet quarterly to discuss how to meet small business finance needs. The forum would invite representatives from the Center for Community Self-Help, the North Carolina Enterprise Corporation, and other alternative sources of capital to meet with bankers to encourage joint lending.
- 2(c) Work with local banks to create a loan fund to provide higher risk business loans. This initiative could result from a deal stream analysis. It could perhaps be carried out as a partnership lending program in conjunction with a statewide lending institution such as the Center for

Community Self-Help. In Rocky Mount, North Carolina, for example, six banks extended a line of credit to the Community Development Foundation, a local organization affiliated with the Chamber of Commerce, to make small business loans.

- 2(d) **Actively market and utilize the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) small business loan program.** CDBG loans of up to \$60,000 are available to businesses that create jobs for low- and moderate-income people. Application is made to the state by local government, on behalf of an individual business. One million dollars was available statewide in 1989. (Larger CDBG loans are available to local governments to provide infrastructure for new and expanding businesses.)
- 2(e) **Support and utilize the Henderson Industrial Development Corporation** for investment in industrial land and buildings.
- 2(f) **Identify organizations or individuals to organize a private investment club** which would solicit business plans from entrepreneurs interested in locating their businesses in Vance County.

Goal 2

Strategy 3: *Promote entrepreneurship and new business creation.*

Strategy Options:

- 3(a) **Research the potential benefits of participating in youth entrepreneurship programs.** Example: The REAL Enterprises program, based in Chapel Hill, works with high schools and community colleges to teach business skills to young people and to encourage them to start businesses which, if successful, become permanent employers in the community. The program provides teacher training, technical assistance, and business loans. REAL Enterprises has operated demonstration programs in a few North Carolina counties, successfully starting a restaurant and a recycling business. It is currently expanding to sixteen counties. The program operates through the public schools and community colleges.
- 3(b) **Inventory vacant buildings and investigate the potential for converting them to mini business incubators.** If this strategy appears viable, help the building owners to set up incubators. Mini-incubators promote new business activity by reducing the costs of business start-up. The NC Technological Development Authority and/or Small Business and Technology Development Center (SBTDC) could provide advice on the

viability of such incubators. The Small Business Center and/or SBTDC could provide business counseling and help the tenants arrange for shared services, including clerical and bookkeeping. A mini-incubator like this was initiated by the redevelopment authority in Kinston.

3(c) **Initiate local forums in which the SBTDC would make its services for inventors more accessible to residents in Vance County.** The SBTDC helps draw home tinkerers out of their workshops and gives them advice on patenting, marketing and/or manufacturing their inventions.

3(d) **Expand on existing business counseling services to help more small businesses start up and thrive.**

- Expand the use of volunteers to augment the services of the Small Business Center. This could include increased use of volunteers from local banks and businesses and/or retirees.
- Create a multi-racial advisory board to recommend strategies to ensure that business assistance programs reach minority businesses and address their needs.

Goal 2

Strategy 4: More actively target recruitment efforts to industries that are likely to locate in Vance County and which will diversify and contribute most to the economy. Expand recruitment efforts to include businesses in service, retail, and other sectors in addition to manufacturing and distribution.

Strategy Options:

4(a) **Target for linkage.** Further research the opportunities identified in the Business Visitation Program and the industry brainstorming session (Strategy 1 under Goal 2) to target industries with linkages to existing businesses. For example, there may be potential to recruit or develop a hosiery mill and/or cotton gin linked to the Harriet and Henderson Company

4(b) **Target sectors identified in the long-range economic development plan (Goal 1 Strategy 1a) with growth potential in Vance County.** Possibilities might include:

- Medical-related businesses, including health care services and medical supply firms.
- Tourism, including: identifying opportunities for new businesses that cater to tourists; making more tourists aware of existing county businesses; development of recreational facilities.

- Businesses that recycle non-hazardous materials.
- Emerging agriculture-related businesses, such as fish farming.

GOAL 3: DEVELOP A WORKFORCE WITH A SOLID BASIC LITERACY LEVEL, STRONG WORK ETHIC, ADAPTABILITY TO CHANGE, AND JOB-SPECIFIC SKILLS FOR A BROAD RANGE OF OCCUPATIONS.

Goal 3

Strategy 1: *Improve workplace literacy.*

- 1(a) Convene a committee made up of employers, employees, community college representatives, and others involved in workforce remedial education and literacy training to assess current literacy levels in the workforce and the literacy requirements of local employers. Use the findings to develop a specific strategies to improve workplace literacy.

Goal 3

Strategy 2: *Match employment and training resources to workplace needs.*

Strategy Options:

- 2(a) Explore the programming and funding benefits to Vance County in joining the Kerr-Tar Service Delivery Area (SDA). Explanation: The County might improve its Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) services and funding arrangement through participation in a more regionally oriented Private Industry Council. For example, some chambers of commerce operate JTPA's on-the-job training program via contracts with local SDAs. Chambers have an excellent track record in this regard due to their strong awareness of employers' needs.
- 2(b) If the county chooses to remain part of the statewide SDA, improve communication between Vance County's representatives on the state Private Industry Council, local employers, and local government officials, in order to improve the local utilization of JTPA and other employment and training resources. Ensure that Vance County gets its fair share of funds and that those funds are used effectively.

Goal 3

Strategy 3: *Target employment and training resources to segments of the unemployed population that, with help, can become productive workers.*

Strategy Options:

3(a) Develop employment and training programs targeted to groups experiencing high rates of unemployment, including women on welfare and young people. For example, the County might explore the feasibility of initiating a program based on the Women in Electronics welfare-to-work model operated under the auspices of the Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce. This program offered job readiness and vocational training for women with limited education and work experience. The model is adaptable to other industries besides electronics.

3(b) Assess the Human Resources Development (HRD) program at Vance-Granville and other programs for the chronically unemployed to ensure that they are fully funded and effectively utilized. For instance, determine whether such programs might be more effectively used to serve groups experiencing high unemployment; assess methods for increasing employer use of such programs as sources of employment-ready applicants.

Goal 3

Strategy 4: Reestablish high expectations and work ethic in our community and workplaces.

4(a) Establish a mentoring program at local companies to help and encourage young employees who are taking GED or other literacy classes. Mentors could act as tutors or role models and could help entry level employees set career goals.

GOAL 4: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF "GOOD QUALITY" JOBS.

Goal 4

Strategy 1: Create more jobs with good wages, benefits, and other desirable characteristics. Good quality jobs require and sustain healthy, capable, aware workers, who in turn form the basis for a vibrant community and a healthy economy.

1(a) In recruiting and developing businesses and industries, emphasis should be placed on overall job quality. This can include such benefits and job characteristics as:

- Employer-assisted child care.
- Work environments which raise self-esteem through responsibility, higher expectations, and recognition of workers' contributions to the company.
- Career growth and advancement opportunities.
- Educational opportunities.

- Joint health insurance plans for small businesses.
- Personal development and workforce/community relations training.
- Cafeteria benefits plans.

GOAL 5: REDUCE DRUG ABUSE IN WORKPLACES.

Goal 5

Strategy 1: Educate employers about the problem of drug abuse and how to deal with it. Encourage employers of all sizes to become involved with Vance Against Substance Abuse (VASA), and to use its services.

- 1(a) The Chamber of Commerce should take a leadership role in developing, initiating, and supporting programs and activities to reduce substance abuse among adults and youth throughout the community: in the workplace, schools, and recreational outlets.

GOAL 6: INCREASE AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF IMPROVING RACE RELATIONS TO FOSTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. IMPROVE TRUST, UNDERSTANDING, OPENNESS, AND RESPECT BETWEEN RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS.

Goal 6

Strategy 1: Support and encourage the Human Relations Council to initiate community-wide programs to continue to improve race relations.

Strategy Options:

- 1(a) Initiate a joint business-community effort, with contributions from local businesses, to foster communication between racial and ethnic groups in the community and the workplace. This can include workshops and training sessions, community improvement projects, church activities, and other approaches.
- 2(b) Leadership should emerge to set specific goals and methods for building on the human relations achievements that have been realized over the past decade-plus. (See Government Committee's strategies on leadership.)

GOAL 7: ENCOURAGE GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP, COMMUNITY
LEADERSHIP, AND PUBLIC SERVICES THAT PROMOTE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND A BETTER QUALITY OF
LIFE FOR ALL CITIZENS

(This subject is covered in detail under Government goals and strategies, but is included here to underscore its importance to economic development and overall community well-being.)

Goal 7

Strategy 1: Implement county planning to encourage and manage growth. Plan for infrastructure to meet future development needs; preserve natural resources and build on development opportunities related to those resources.

Goal 7

Strategy 2: Encourage leadership that is progressive, representative, informed, fair, proactive, and willing to take leadership risks.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION AND FUTURE PLANNING

With the completion of this report, the strategic planning process does not end. On the contrary, the biggest challenge begins: implementation. In addition, the planning and monitoring process is an ongoing one. Someone needs to consider new conditions in the country and external trends that call for changes in strategies or changes in emphasis.

A real danger is that this report (along with the recommended strategies) could be placed on a shelf somewhere and forgotten. Problems might go unsolved, and valuable citizen input ignored. It is believed that the County Commissioners were sincere in their original resolution establishing the commission and charging it with "setting specific timetables, resources and responsibilities for carrying out strategic actions" and "monitoring the achievement of strategies and adapting them as necessary to the changing environment, updating the plan when major changes occur in the area."

In order to make Vance County the type of community we all want, the AdVance Commission believes we must have the participation of all citizens in the process. Our strategies are designed to identify and solve problems through citizen involvement. Only through such participation can we hope to succeed.

With this in mind, the Commission recommends the following implementation strategies:

Strategy 1: The Executive Committee of the AdVance Strategic Planning Commission will meet with the Vance County Commissioners, the Henderson City Council, the Henderson-Vance Chamber of Commerce, and the Vance County School Board to discuss the implementation of the strategies. A smaller, representative group will be formed with representatives of each governing body. This committee will research costs and set timetables for the implementation of the strategies. The group will monitor progress in all areas and report to the AdVance Commission, the governing bodies, and the public on at least a semi-annual basis. In addition, the committee will meet periodically with other implementing organizations (including Vance United for Families and Children, Vance Citizens for Educational Excellence, the Vance County Economic Development Commission, etc.) to monitor their progress in implementing strategies and to offer assistance where needed.

Strategy 2: Oversight for the implementation of the strategies of the Education, Government, and Economic Development Committees will be carried out by Vance United for Families and Children and Vance Citizens for Educational Excellence; a new Government Oversight Committee; and the Economic Development Commission, respectively.

Strategy 3: After one year, the entire AdVance Commission will reconvene to assess the status of implementation. At this time, changes in local conditions or external factors that call for new directions and/or the modification of any strategies will be discussed. This same process should occur after two years of implementation, at which time the Commission should discuss how to "institutionalize" the strategic planning process, so that local leaders and elected officials build strategic planning into the routine functions of local leadership and governmental organization.

