

# 1999 Annual Report Executive Summary

## Fayette Enterprise Community

The Fayette Enterprise Community (FEC) is made up of six census tracts throughout Fayette County, Pennsylvania totaling 84.37 square miles. The population of the entire FEC is 27,216 with an average poverty rate of 27%. The FEC also includes three developable sites totaling 1,499.34 acres.

The Fayette Enterprise Community's Strategic Plan included 69 benchmark activities totaling \$72.75 Million Dollars. In 1999 \$29.16 Million Dollars was received and an additional \$17.53 Million Dollars has been approved for benchmark activities. An additional \$26.5 Million Dollars has been requested from various Federal, State, Local and Private resources. Each of the 69 benchmark activities can be broken into seven sub-committees. The seven sub-committees included the following: Agriculture, Community Development, Economic Development, Education, Housing, Social Conditions and Transportation. The most significant accomplishments for each sub-committee have been listed below:

### Agriculture:

The farmer's within the FEC have historically been experiencing a loss on locally grown agricultural food and fiber materials. The goal of benchmark #6 is to establish a market facility for farm producers and consumers promoting these locally grown materials, specifically beef farmers. Numerous groups including the Pennsylvania Farm Foundation, the Pennsylvania Farmers Union, along with Local Farmers, the Fayette County Agriculture Improvement Association, the Penn State Cooperative Extension and the Keystone Development Center have banded together to form a co-operative to distribute "Certified Keystone Beef" at grocery retailers in the Pennsylvania, Northern West Virginia, Eastern Ohio and New York Regions. The project has made significant improvements in the past year, including the completion of a feasibility study for the project, the preparation of a business plan, and plans for marketing and the implementation of that business plan.

### Community Development:

The most tangible accomplishment that will become a reality very shortly is the development of the infrastructure for the FEC. As seen in benchmarks #16 and #17 significant improvements are being made to the public water and sewage throughout the EC. The projects have completed all of the necessary USDA environmental testing procedures and will be ready to break ground in the spring of 2000. These improvements will allow for unprecedented economic development and residential growth to the FEC.

### Economic Development:

The most significant accomplishment under the Economic Development sub-committee would be the growth of the manufacturing loan fund to \$6.04 Million Dollars. The original goal for Benchmark #26 was to build the loan fund to \$5 Million by the year 2000, however we have far surpassed that goal by \$1,040,000. The revolving loan fund enables local manufacturing companies to secure low interest loans of up to \$425,000. Specific guidelines have been developed and approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development to determine the project eligibility. Funding for the revolving loan fund was received in grants from the Department of Community and Economic Development totaling \$1.65 Million Dollars and interest from the existing fund totaling \$290,000.

### Education:

The overwhelming accomplishment for the Education sub-committee would be the ability for the school districts in the FEC, (Uniontown Area School District, Connellsville Area School District and Brownsville Area School District) to come together and partner in several grant applications. Although the first grant opportunity, the School to Work grant totaling over \$400,000 (Benchmark #42), was denied, a Youth Opportunity Grant worth as much as \$18 Million dollars over five years from the Department of Labor is pending. Funds from the Youth Opportunity Grant will be utilized to implement Benchmark #42.

Another significant accomplishment for the Education sub-committee would be the establishment of Rural Online Computer Centers (ROCC's) in the Enterprise Community (Benchmark #41). The center located in Searights Village (Menallen Township) services a subsidized housing community of 144 residents. The computers give access to job leads they might otherwise have trouble accessing. The computers are connected to the state employment services CareerLink network. Four residents of the community have found jobs online before being officially notified of the availability of the connection. Second year funding for this project was received via a \$50,000 grant through the Center for Rural PA.

Other notable accomplishments in education include; 172 EC residents receiving GED assistance and training (Benchmark #34), 45 residents have received post-GED testing assistance (Benchmark #35), this program provides follow up services to ensure that students will pass the GED the second time. In 1999, 53 residents received one-on-one career mentoring to motivate students to further their education in order to obtain a job (Benchmark #36), and 42 students from the EC attended after school tutorial assistance programs (Benchmark #37).

#### Housing:

The most significant accomplishment for the Housing sub-committee for 1999 was the processing of 81 total USDA Rural Development loans. Benchmark #52 set a goal of 100 total loans being processed in the first two years; we are fast approaching that goal. Currently 15 applications have been approved for residents in the FEC.

#### Social Conditions:

Based upon the diversity of the Social Conditions sub-committee, there are several benchmarks that stand out as being significant for the first year. The goal of Benchmark #52 was to develop additional health care services for the EC. The Fayette County Community Action Agency has stepped up to the plate to successfully implement this benchmark. Fayette County Community Action Agency owns and operates Community Action Medical Services (CAMS). One facility housed in Downtown Uniontown the heart of the FEC now has a dental component utilizing grant funds from the Eden Hall Foundation. The second facility located in the city of Brownsville, which is located less than one mile outside of the EC, will service Redstone Township. The CAMS facility is a Federally Qualified Health Center that provides a full range of services by staffing both a Pediatrician and a Family Practitioner on staff.

The second social condition benchmark that has shown an incredible amount of progress is the family recreational facility for Republic included in Benchmark #59. The anticipated cost for the facility was \$300,000 for the facility. To date an excess of \$335,000 in public and private funding has been received. The most remarkable aspect of this benchmark's success has been the continued support of the community with personal monetary donations totaling over \$47,000 in addition to the numerous hours of volunteer manpower to complete excavation work for the facility. The anticipated opening of the facility will be in the fall of 2000.

## Transportation:

The most significant transportation accomplishment would have to be the development of the Carnegie Mellon University Driver Training and Safety Institute (DTSI) which has located at the Connellsville Airport (Developable Site #1). Funding for the institute, a 3-year \$6,600,000 grant from the Department of Transportation will be utilized to provide the most advanced driver training and safety institute in the world. Facility upgrades have been made at the Airport Complex to house the facility. The institute's purpose is to produce better drivers for truck and emergency vehicles and to create a model center using the most advanced tools and techniques available focusing on ongoing proactive safety improvement to insure safer transport of goods and persons. (Benchmark #74)

The level of community and resident involvement in the Fayette Enterprise Community is very promising. In 1999 three Community Empowerment Board and six Implementation Committee meetings were held. The goal of the Implementation Committee is to oversee all of the sub-committees and ensure that benchmarks are being completed, as well as to make recommendations to the Community Empowerment Board for funding allocation, and the addition of new benchmark activities.

Five community meetings were held (one in each area of the FEC) to discuss with the entire community the Empowerment Initiative and the specific goals that have been set forth for their area, as well as the entire FEC. These meetings gave the community the opportunity to discuss with the FEC Manager first hand what is going on with their community. Seven sub-committee meetings were held in 1999 (one for each sub-committee), in total 42 residents serve on these subcommittees. The goal for the year 2000 is to conduct these meetings on a bi-monthly basis.

There are numerous long-range goals that have been planned for the Fayette Enterprise Community. These goals have been set to address current problems, opportunities and to anticipate potential future problems in a way that maximizes the positive impact by coordinating and utilizing every resource possible to achieve the community vision and to accomplish each and every individual benchmark activity.

The long-range goals will be accomplished by the creation of a marriage between residents, educational institutions, economic, industrial and community development organizations, health and human resource agencies, private businesses, local, state and federal government, regional organizations, civic, labor unions, churches and any other resource that might serve as a useful member of the Fayette Enterprise Community's revitalization team. There are significant resources and expertise in each of these entities, but even greater as a team. As a team working in unison, the community will have strength and power to meet any challenge and have the ability to accomplish any goal.