

2000 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.

Currently, the FEC Strategic Plan includes 65 benchmarks totaling \$72.75 million dollars. In 2000 \$28.53 million was received, \$25.71 million has been requested from various federal, state, local and private sources, and an additional \$13.6 million has been approved for benchmark activities. Each of the benchmarks falls into one of the seven categories that make up the FEC Strategic Plan. Those categories are: Agriculture, Community Development, Economic Development, Education, Housing, Social Conditions, and Transportation.

AGRICULTURE:

Many of the benchmarks associated with the agricultural part of the plan aim at expanding the local economic impact of the farming industry. For example, benchmark #6, the formation and implementation of a farmers co-op, is making positive advancements in that respect. A feasibility study was completed in 1999 and numerous groups including the Pennsylvania Farm Foundation, the Pennsylvania Farmers Union, local farmers, the Fayette County Agriculture Improvement Association, the Penn State Cooperative Extension, and the Keystone Development Center formed a co-op to distribute "Certified Keystone Beef." In 1999, the groups were preparing a business plan and were making plans for the marketing and implementation of that plan. The work on the business plan is ongoing and it has an anticipated completion date of February 2001. The group began working with 84 Packing in Washington to test market beef sales and that relationship is still ongoing. They have hopes of implementing and marketing home cooked meal services to senior centers and nursing homes among other possibilities. The completion and success of benchmark #6 will directly affect benchmark #7, the creation of a producer organization to coordinate production, sale and marketing of locally grown agricultural food and fiber materials. Two other important accomplishments that deserve to be mentioned are benchmarks #10 and #11. Benchmark #10 deals with the establishment of an agriculture revolving loan fund. Bob Junk of the Pennsylvania Farmers Union is investigating this. The Michigan Farmers Union is currently working on a revolving loan fund. After its completion, Pennsylvania will have a model to go by. Although the Regional Farmer Market is located in Allegheny County, Fayette County will position itself to possibly become a satellite market in the future (benchmark #11).

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

The 1999 annual report stated that the most tangible accomplishment in this category would be the development of infrastructure. As significant improvements continue, the hopes of unprecedented economic/residential growth rest on the future. For example under benchmark #15, expansion of the sewage system capacity, the City of Uniontown currently has a combined sewer system. They are using Community Development Block Grant (CDGB) funds to separate sanitary/storm water and 30% of this system has been completed successfully. Chester Engineering is working with the city in preparing a system hydraulic minimization report that will be a long-term control plan for complete separation. This project will cost \$7 million to implement over a 10-year time frame that will begin after acceptance from DEP, City, Joint Sewage Authority, and all significant other parties. Although the project has a 10-year

time frame, a large amount of the separation will occur in the next three years. Funds will be sought from PENNVEST, CDBG, etc. Gannett Flemming Engineering out of Pittsburgh is undertaking the expansion. The expansion will be from four million gallons per day to eight million gallons with an anticipated completion date of summer/fall 2004. The whole project will total \$12 million. Benchmark #16, the extension of sewage and treatment facilities in Redstone and Menallen is also continuing. With most of Redstone complete, progress of this benchmark will be determined by progress in Menallen, Luzerne and Jennings Run. FEC funds amounting to \$50,000 have been approved for the Jennings Run project, this project has hopes of creating 80 potential jobs as it attempts to bring infrastructure to the area bordering Franklin, Menallen, and North Union Townships. Benchmark #17, the expansion of sewage in Connellsville/Dunbar is also progressing. Work on the Dunbar Borough/Township sewers is continuing as well. This \$7.3 million project is being made possible through Rural Utility Service and PENNVEST. This project will provide sewage to 985 households in the borough and outer-lying areas. Completion date is September 2001.

Two other significant accomplishments that should be mentioned are benchmarks #20 and #21. Benchmark #20 is the expansion of the Uniontown Library. After it receives its \$20,000 year two funds from the FEC, the library will be upgrading its technological capabilities by adding Internet workstations and a network printer. This addition will allow approximately 624 additional members of the community to be served. The library will also be preserving some rare historical and genealogical collections by placing them on microfilm. The \$20,000 FEC grant was matched by The Eberly Foundation. Benchmark #21, the establishment of a microloan fund for low-income residents is also ongoing. Once approved, it will permit at-risk residents that do not have access to the benefits of a local credit union, to take out loans of up to \$3,000 for the purchase of appliances, vehicles, etc. Application was made to the National Credit Union Association from Frick Tri-County Federal Credit Union and it is expected to be approved by the end of February 2001.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

The development and marketing of four new business parks is benchmark #22. Fay-Penn continues to work diligently in attracting businesses to locate here. The Springhill Township site was awarded year one money for site surveys and the fall of 2000 saw that project bid out and the awardance of that bid is forthcoming. As work continues, a sincere interest has been expressed from several businesses regarding the Springhill site.

Work is continuing on the County Property site as well as the University Technology Park, once infrastructure is completed these sites can begin to attract/accommodate tenants. The completion of benchmark #30 (image video) and benchmark #31 (quality of life brochure) will be instrumental in marketing our county. A very significant accomplishment to mention here is the increase in the manufacturing loan fund (benchmark #26). The original goal was to expand the fund to \$5 million by 2000, and in 1999 we reported the fund at \$6.04 million. Currently the fund is at \$6.475 million with a revised goal of \$10 million by year 2005.

Another project that is off to a good beginning, and one from which we can expect to see great things, will be benchmark #33 -- the Republic incubator facility. With hopes of creating a small business incubator, promoting self-sufficiency, the incubator was awarded \$50,000 in year two FEC money and that was matched by \$50,000 from National City Bank. National City Bank also contributed another \$363,000. In addition, the incubator acquisition/ renovation work is also being financed through a Health and Human Services Grant of \$250,000 and they are waiting to hear on a request for \$346,500 from another Office of Community Service Grant to begin an e-commerce warehouse. With a project total of \$1 million, funding will continue to be a major issue of the completion of this benchmark (tapping into foundations and local donors is anticipated). The incubator will be located in Republic and

will be able to accommodate warehousing, manufacturing, food service, or office-based businesses. A minimum of 75 new jobs are anticipated for their target population which includes: low-income women, small/mid-size businesses, local/existing businesses, and at-risk youth.

EDUCATION:

The education category has several notable accomplishments. To update 1999 annual report figures, 369 residents received GED assistance and training (benchmark #34) and 80 residents have received post-GED testing assistance (benchmark #35). A total of 49 students attended after-school tutorial assistance programs (benchmark #37).

Another important achievement in this category is benchmark #40, administrative/financial assistance to the East End Community Center. East End presently targets youth aged 5 to 13 who are economically/socially disadvantaged. Programs are marketed to the public through newsletters, local churches, local businesses and through mailers placed in low-income housing projects. East End was awarded \$25,000 of Year Two FEC money to purchase equipment necessary to operate the center. Programs consist of an after-school program, summer enrichment program, tutorial program, pre-teen support groups, and a woman's support group. They also include: Boy/Girl Scouts, 4-H Clubs, adult computer classes, a nutrition program, a drug elimination program, a drill team, adult education-GED, parenting classes, and Project Brotherhood. In order to meet/serve their current population and waiting list, the East End Community Center recently applied for a \$913,000 grant from the Community Facilities Program to construct a new building.

The Rural Online Computing Centers (benchmark #41) are doing extremely well in the county. To date a total of 13 centers are up and readily accessible for public use. Located in high-traffic areas, the centers are Internet capable and connected to the state employment services CareerLink Network. The centers are funded through a grant from the Center for Rural Pennsylvania; however, many local organizations also contribute.

Benchmark #42, the implementation of multi-faceted K-12 career development curriculum for students, is ongoing. A previous Youth Opportunity Grant that was pending in 1999 has been declined; however the school districts did make it into the top 20. As funding continues to be a major issue along with adequate needs assessment, school districts in Fayette are turning to the assistance of QZAB's. To date, Uniontown School District is the only one with formal application to the program, with other schools in the Uniontown District, not necessarily in the Enterprise Community, considering application.

HOUSING:

Benchmark #52 had the goal of processing 100 rural development/rehab housing loans. In 1999, 81 were processed with 15 residents in the Enterprise Community being approved. In 2000, an additional 36 were processed with one Enterprise Community resident being approved.

An important addition to this category will be the Housing Consortium formed March 2000 in Fayette County. The Consortium will consist of three members of the Redevelopment Authority, members from Community Action, Threshold Housing, Fayette Board of Realtors, plus several other housing entities. This group will ensure everyone is on the same page as they work on housing/market analysis (benchmark #43) among other issues.

Benchmark #45 (increase the availability of three new affordable homes) and benchmark #46 (improve housing through the construction of nine affordable homes) have been combined due to the similarities.

Also combined were benchmark #44 (financial assistance to homeowners to bring 24 homes into compliance with local building codes), benchmark #48 (expand low-interest loans to rehabilitate/renovate 14 units) and benchmark #49 (provide 0% interest loans to 10 residents in the Redstone/Menallen Zone). The combinations will make for easier reporting and aid in task achievement.

Another housing achievement will be related to benchmarks #47 and #48 (stabilize neighborhood deterioration/expand low interest loan programs). Fayette County Community Action Agency is set to build its new senior apartment building. This apartment building will serve the elderly who need supportive services to continue to live independently. It will house 59 one-bedroom apartments and provide services such as housekeeping/laundry, transportation, on-site meal options, health screenings/services, and 24-hour emergency call service. The apartment building should be completed by the end of this year.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS:

November 16, 2000 marked the opening of the Redstone Recreation Center (benchmark #59). To date, the family recreational center has received over \$424,248 in public and private funding; and community support (in the form of donations) totaled \$58,090, not inclusive of the many volunteer hours. Fundraisers in the form of ticket sales, oldies dances, and basketball games are on going. The Recreation Center will receive \$25,000 of Year Two FEC money.

Other accomplishments in this category include benchmark #53, the rehabilitation of the State Theatre/Union Trust Building. In the summer of 1999 the theatre underwent considerable renovations to its HVAC and electrical systems. To date, new seats have been installed, painting and ductwork have been completed, and some inside areas have been remodeled. With \$15,000 Year Two FEC money, the theatre was able to complete Phase I renovations which included the purchase of a house curtain, teaser, borders, back curtain, bounce drop, auditorium rear window curtains, box curtains, box curtain headers and flame-proofing of these items. The theatre is a vital cultural resource to our community and school children.

Wesley Health Center, a free clinic in Connellsville, (benchmark #55) has come a long way in the past year. The center is now open five days a week (40 hours) and also will receive \$15,000 Year Two FEC money. The money from the FEC will be matched by a gentleman from Pittsburgh who plans to purchase and install \$15,000 in medical software to enable the center to respond to its clientele now and in the future more adequately. Numerous funding avenues have been pursued by the Wesley Health Center with local donations by doctors/staff being the most crucial in terms of helping to keep the center open (volunteer hours or medical supply donations). However, in terms of actual monetary grants, one of the most important is their application to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Out of 297 applications, Wesley was chosen to be one of the 76 selected to submit a full proposal. That proposal, submitted in the winter of 2000, is still pending. If approved, Wesley would be eligible for \$400,000 over the next four years.

Before closing this section, another significant accomplishment is benchmark #65, a \$1.1 million community foundation in the first two years. The fall of 2000 saw this task completed when the foundation was unveiled to the public. By mainly serving the non-profit sector, the foundation will try to aid the most current and future needs facing the community.

TRANSPORTATION:

Many developments have occurred in the area of transportation (benchmarks #71 and #72). Fayette Area

Coordinated Transportation (FACT) is actively involved in coordinating all of Fayette County's transportation. A campaign requesting additional routes was launched and resulted in six new fixed-route bus routes throughout the county. Although the new system experienced some start-up difficulties, increased publicity and ridership is assisting to remedy this. There is also talk of FACT relocating to the Connellsville Airport. Although details still need to be worked out, if this occurs, a major transportation hub will be located in the center of the county. The future may also see FACT partnering with another county transportation source – Greyhound Bus Lines (benchmark #73). If this happens, FACT will be responsible for the coordination of Greyhound transportation, including ticket sales, etc.

The Connellsville Airport is benchmark #74. The airport was awarded \$25,000 Year Two FEC money and will be utilizing the money in conjunction with a Bureau of Aviation Grant to complete Phase II of the airport renovations. The renovations will be necessary for future airport developments and to ensure that the airport will be able to provide improved services to its existing clients.

Community and resident involvement continues to be promising. In 2000 four Community Empowerment Board and four Implementation Committee meetings were held. The goal of the Implementation Committee is to oversee all of the sub-committees and to ensure that benchmarks are being completed. The Implementation Committee also made recommendations to the Community Empowerment Board with regard to funding allocations and the addition of new benchmark activities. An additional three one-on-one meetings were held with each benchmark task leader.

Five community meetings were held (one in each area of the FEC) to gain community input on additional benchmark activities as well as to advise on current benchmark progress. Seven sub-committee meetings were held so each committee could discuss benchmark progress and aid where necessary.

The FEC Strategic Plan currently consists of 65 benchmarks with projects totaling \$72.75 million. Community input has resulted in the potential to add approximately ten new benchmarks for years three and four of this program. Those new projects will add another \$1 to \$2 million to the total FEC Strategic Plan project budget; however, the goals/projects continue to address the current needs facing our residents. With our current support system in place with our residents; educational institutions; economic, industrial and community development organizations; health-human resource agencies; private businesses; local, state and federal governments; regional organizations; civic organizations; labor unions; churches; and any other potential partnering sources we will work together to achieve the benchmarks determined to be important through our community members.