Community Economic Development Readiness Assessment
Summary of Recommendations

June 28, 2004

For

Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Quality Growth
White County Economic Development (Chamber)

Prepared by:

Karen Fite

On June 7-10, Karen Fite of Georgia Tech Economic Development Institute conducted a community economic development readiness assessment interview with Judy Walker, Executive Director, White County Chamber of Commerce/Development Authority, and John Jordan, Economic Development Volunteer. Additionally, team members Nancy Johnson, DCA, and Cynthia Easley, DCA, reviewed the Comprehensive Plan, toured the industrial and commercial areas of the county and reviewed the economic indicators. These efforts were in conjunction with the Department of Community Affairs Quality Growth Initiative.   The assessment instrument contained three sections as follows:

- General Community Information
- Infrastructure
- Economic Development Processes

Attached is a completed assessment form containing answers that you provided to the Georgia Tech.   Based on these answers, the team has identified a set of key action items that White County should consider over the next year. There are other recommendations and comments under the section entitled Summary and Comments by Section that follows the Recommended Key Action Items section.

Recommended Key Action Items

1. White County Chamber of Commerce should continue its efforts entrepreneurial support such as training programs, loan packages, management and technical assistance. It is often difficult for small business owners to take time away from their business to enhance their skills. This chamber has done an excellent job in bringing training and assistance resources to the community. They have effectively utilized the resources of North Georgia College and the University of Georgia Small Business Development Center.

2. In order to grow the local industrial base, the Chamber should identify new entrepreneurial industries based on the needs of local industry and those in surrounding counties for example, pallet manufacturers, welders, milling, subcontractors, and others. Due to the county's limited industrial mix and limited infrastructure, the industrial base can be expanded by recruiting and/or developing support industries for the region.

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3. To further enhance the community support of entrepreneurs, the county should engage the Georgia Department of Economic Development (formerly GDITT) in conducting an entrepreneurial assessment. Many of the local entrepreneurs are hidden within the business community and not receiving appropriate and available support resources. This situation is especially true in White County since the business license requirements began in January, 2004. A major result of this assessment can be a support network of local small businesses to assist other small businesses.

4. The County should consider identifying a vacant building for an incubator. Providing a sense of place for entrepreneurs to create an environment for their business to mature and grow may be appropriate. This facility will allow sharing of resources such as copiers, telecommunication equipment, administrative support, etc. This recommendation should be considered only after a complete feasibility study has been completed.

5. .White County needs to place greater emphasis on understanding and addressing the needs of existing industry. Current unmet needs include international trade support and

technological improvements. Since 1990, five of seven major manufacturing industries have closed. Expansion opportunities with existing industries will typically create more jobs than new prospects. Additionally, with the limited infrastructure in the county, attracting a new major industrial employer may prove to be difficult.

6. White County should establish a Workforce Development Committee under the direction of the chamber. This committee should:
   ➤ Identify the workforce needs of existing industries (tourism, hospitality, manufacturing, construction, agriculture, etc.)
   ➤ Work with North Georgia Technical College and other educational partners to provide appropriate training.
   ➤ Establish a recruitment program of North Georgia Tech graduates.

The White County Board of Education as had great success with graduation rates, SAT scores and optional programs for their students. However, the county doesn't proactively retain these students. Likewise, local industries need to have confidence that their workforce is not only available but can confidently perform the needed job skills.

7. The County needs to increase the capacity of the water and sewer treatment plants. During the peak season (tourism), the county is at capacity for its water and sewer. Future development in commercial and/or industrial sectors is already limited.

8. White County should identify where it wants commercial, industrial and activity nodes (near schools). Install necessary trunk lines along those locations. Location decisions of smaller business entities are driven by market and immediately available resources.

9. The county should utilize available federal and state funding resources to assist in water and sewer needs. For example, GEFA and Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Programs. These are opportunities for funding that the county has not traditionally used.

10. The County should consider additional funding for economic development under the direction of the White County Chamber of Commerce. These efforts should focus on a comprehensive approach to economic development including the current activities with

tourism and entrepreneurs, while adding emphasis on existing industry and developing partners that will promote the county's interest. The county needs to invest in its future economic development. The county has not effectively marketed itself to state-wide partners and has not established effective partners within the region for purposes of promoting their county for tourism and/or business development.

Conclusion

This readiness assessment is a snapshot of a community's current state of preparedness for economic development and is not meant to take the place of a strategic assessment and long-term plan.

Our findings indicate that, overall, White County can advance in its economic development. The county has a strong tourism base and the beginnings of entrepreneurial business climate.

Our recommendations are offered as immediate and beginning action steps your organization can take to further enhance your community's readiness for economic development. More guidance may be available based on the answers you provided. Georgia Tech can provide assistance to White County on completing some of the key action items. We can also assist by making referrals to other state resources and/or supplying a list of consultants as appropriate. If you would like additional information, please contact Karen Fite at Georgia Tech's Regional Office in Athens (706-542-8901 or Karen.fite@edi.gatech.edu).

Summary & Comments by Section

The Basics

❖ The White County Chamber Executive Director is fairly new in the economic development field (about two years). She has participated in local and regional leadership and development programs (White County Leadership and Georgia Academy) and is a member of state organizations: GEDA and GACCE. Attending the Basic Economic Development Course at Georgia Tech would provide a broad perspective for her leadership.

❖ The White County Chamber's Website is well developed and easy to navigate. The Chamber's mission statement is prominently presented. Business goals were going to be addressed at an upcoming strategic planning meeting.

❖ The Chamber has a good relationship with the County, the cities and the CVB. The county is a fiscally conservative entity, which is perceived as a strength.

General Community Information

❖ Most of the community population and business information in this section was readily available, indicating that the Chamber of Commerce is diligent about gathering the information and ensuring its availability to the community and prospects.

❖ White County's population had increased by 53.% from 13,006 in 1990 to 19,994 in 2000 which is higher than the region and state increases of 49.5% and 26.4%, respectively.

❖ White County per capita income was $22,598 in 1999 which is comparable to the region per capita income but less than the state average.

❖ The percent of people below poverty level declined from 12.5% in 1990 to 10.5% in 2000. The state average poverty rate is 13.0%. During this same time period, the number of persons living below the poverty rate rose by almost 500 from 1575 to 2042 persons. The decrease in percentage is likely from the influx of new residents who are not below the poverty level.

❖ A large number of residents (47.7%) travel outside of the county to their place of work; this is slightly higher than the state average of 45.5%. The average travel time for all working residents is 29.6 minutes.

❖ In White County, 79.2% of residents own their own home which is comparable to the region and is higher than the state average of 67.5%.

❖ White County unemployment rate has traditionally been lower than the state and region averages.

❖ The developer did not know the number of net new businesses or jobs created in recent years. This information is a key factor to understanding the community growth trends. The new county business license process will aid in obtaining this information.

❖ Manufacturing (24.1%), Retail Trade (15.9%), and Services (17.6%) comprise the major employment sectors. Government (5.6%) and Educational Services (8.4%) are the next highest employment sectors. The Manufacturing sector is on a decline and the numbers above does not reflect recent changes.

❖ There were two new entrepreneurial manufacturers identified that started operations within the last three years: Salsa Foods and A Touch of Country Magic. Three manufacturers have closed operations or downsized in the last three years: Mt Vernon Mills (Closed), NOK (downsized-productivity improvements) and House of Tyrol (Closed). No new businesses have relocated or expanded in White County in the last three years. No existing businesses have expanded their operations in the last three years.

Measuring Infrastructure

Physical Infrastructure

❖ White County is located within 25 miles to the Gainesville Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA). This location allows the county to take advantage of the employment, educational and medical resources within the area. The county should continue to monitor development trends within the region and explore opportunities to grow, recruit, and support industries that are potential suppliers or customers of the region.

❖ Further, White County is over 30 miles to the nearest interstate exchange: I-85 & 985.

❖ Additionally, the county has no four lane highways, airport, active rail service or trucking terminal. The county is limited in transportation infrastructure as a means to attract industry.

❖ The county's utilities, specifically water and wastewater, are at capacity during the peak of the tourism season and would probably have difficulty in handling one new large user. The county has reserved sewer capacity for industrial and commercial usage on Hwy 129 South.

❖ White County recently sold its industrial park to a local businessman. They had not had success in marketing the property.

❖ The downtown vacancy in the City of Cleveland was listed as 0%-10% and 10% - 25% for the City of Helen. Efforts can be made to maintain a vibrant downtown area so that complacency does not occur. A viable downtown area complements the other economic development efforts in the community. Separate recommendations are included in the DCA Quality Growth report which addresses downtown retail, parking, re-development issues.

Human Resources Infrastructure

❖ The community has great access to post secondary educational opportunities with the Truett-McConnell located in the community, Piedmont College & North Georgia Technical College within 20 miles and Gainesville College within 30 miles.

❖ With recent building campaigns for the County, it is reported to have an ability to accommodate a reasonable growth in students without resulting in overcrowding.

❖ The White County School system has very positive measurements of their success. The student/teacher ratio is at the regional and state levels. There are significantly more teachers with Master degrees (or higher) than the state or regional data indicates. The students' SAT scores are higher than the regional average and at the state level. Plus, more than average students from White County go on the either Technical Schools or Colleges.

❖ In the general populations, White county has more adults as high school graduates but less with bachelors degrees or higher than the rest of the state.

❖ White County does have a high home ownership rate but the percentage of mobile homes in the area is higher than the rest of the state.

Local Government/Public Policy Infrastructure

❖ White County has a comprehensive land use plan which will be revised later this year. The county has recently enacted both a mobile home ordinance and building codes. Enforcement of the ordinances may have been inconsistent.

❖ The County has an active website that is easy to navigate. It appears that they are working to add new components such as calendars and meeting minutes.

❖ The community has active downtown business districts. Both Helen and Cleveland have reasonable occupancy rates.

Measuring Economic Development Processes

❖ The economic development functions within the county are handled through joint role of the Executive Director of the Chamber who also works with the Development Authority.

❖ White County does utilized volunteers – the board members of the Development Authority – who attend the appropriate Board training. Volunteers are also used on committees including: Tourism, Economic Development, Entrepreneurship, Marketing and others.

❖ Most of the basic information about the community was tracked, collected and maintained. Strategies for routine updates of the information should be coordinated within the community as the changes occur.

❖ The Chamber web site is an ideal way to communicate the county's assets. The website is easy to navigate and covers a broad array of information. Links to community/city sites would is beneficial to all; one example that White County chamber has is the link to the Telegraph for meeting minutes.

❖ The Development Authority does not have a written economic development plan for the community. Measurements against the plan may be improved.

❖ The Chamber has submitted a plan to the county and cities for enhancing Economic Development Planning within the region. The counties and cities would provide additional funding to assist volunteers in networking and promoting White County. Economic development is an ongoing process of learning and evolving so developing an active proactive program is advisable.

Community Economic Development Readiness Assessment (CEDRA)

Contact Name:	Judy Walker John Jordan (Volunteer, ED Chair – 706-348-7244)
Organization:	White County Chamber of Commerce
Telephone:	706-865-5356
Email:	judy@whitecountychamber.org
Web Site:	www.whitecountychamber.org
County:	White
State Development Region:	2
State Tourism Region:	

PART ONE – BASICS

1.1   Please indicate which of the following best applies to your position:
√   Full-time staff

1.2   How many years have you been involved in economic development?   **2 Years**

1.3   Do you have your professional economic development certification (e.g., CEcD or EDFP)?

√   No

1.4   Have you attended the Basic Economic Development Course?

√   No

1.5   Have you attended the Georgia Academy for Economic Development?

√   Yes

1.6   Have you attended any state or local leadership programs?

√   Yes

If yes, which ones?
White County Leadership

1.7   How do you spend your time?

25 % Business retention and expansion
15 % Entrepreneur development
 5 % Prospect recruitment and marketing
25 % Tourism development
30 % Other: Membership; Admin; programs; etc.

Community Economic Development Readiness Assessment (CEDRA)

1.8   Are you a member of the Georgia Economic Developers Association (GEDA)?

√   Yes

If applicable, are you a member of the Georgia Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (GACCE)?

√   Yes

1.9   What is your organization's mission?
The White County Chamber of Commerce will enhance the quality, growth and success of Our community while maintaining a commitment to the environment and concern for future generations.

1.10   What are your organization's economic development objectives for the next year?

Increase number of new businesses by _____ % over next year
Increase number of entrepreneurial start-ups by _____ % over next year
Increase number of manufacturers by _____ % over next year
Increase number of new jobs by _____ % over next year
Increase number of visitors / tourists by _____ % over next year

Or:

Don't have these. Will be meeting tomorrow on a board retreat to develop next year's

program. Have hired a facilitator to guide the process

1.11   What is your organization's greatest achievement in the past THREE years?

Efficient Operations – Fiscally responsible; Good Board participation
Business Friendly

Reputation in Community – Good support for citizens; Good relationship with 3 governments; working with Helen CVB

Involvement of Agriculture: Agribusiness focus

1.12   Who are the THREE most influential people in your community, and are they engaged in your economic development activities?

Name or Position	Engaged in economic development?
Dennis Bergen	Yes
John Eberley	Yes
	❑

1.13   What are your community's THREE greatest strengths for economic development?

Quality of Life: Live, Work & Play; Unicoi; Federal Properties

Land Prices are reasonably affordable

Proximity in NE Georgia: to TN, NC, ATL

Fiscally conservative Government

1.14   What are your community's THREE greatest weaknesses for economic development?

Water/Sewer

Traffic Congestion in Cleveland (Square & Hwy 129 S); Helen during season

Labor Force: Number and education

1.15   Describe the THREE most serious economic development problems faced by your community.

History of communications in White County – Up and Down

Community Economic Development Readiness Assessment (CEDRA)

PART TWO – GENERAL COMMUNITY INFORMATION

2.1   Do you track any of the following information on your community?

	Do you track?		If yes, indicate source:
Population	√	Yes	Census; UGA; DCA
Population by race	√	Yes	
Population by age	√	Yes	
Population by gender	√	Yes	
Net migration rate	√	No	
Per capita income	√	Yes	
Poverty rate	√	Yes	
Commuting patterns	√	No	
Homeownership rate	√	No	

2.2   For each of the following attributes about your community, please indicate whether it is above, at, or below the average for the <u>region</u> and <u>state</u>.

	Region			State			Don't know
	Above	At	Below	Above	At	Below	
Population growth	√			√			❑
Per capita income	√					√	❑
Poverty rate			√			√	❑
Note: Below is good							

2.3   Do you track any of the following information about your community's economic base?

	Do you track?		If yes, indicate source:
Employment	√	Yes	
Employment by industry sector	√	Yes	
Unemployment rate	√	Yes	
Labor force participation rate	√	No	
Average weekly wage	√	No	
Number of new businesses	√	No	
Number of home-based businesses	√	No	
Number of new jobs created	√	No	

2.4   For each of the following attributes about your community, please indicate whether it is above, at, or below the average for the <u>region</u> and <u>state</u>.

	Region			State			Don't know
	Above	At	Below	Above	At	Below	
Unemployment rate		x					
Average weekly wage			x			x	
Number of new jobs created							X

Community Economic Development Readiness Assessment (CEDRA)

2.5   **Please list and describe your community's largest employers.**

Employer Name	Year	Jobs	Product or Service	Growing, Declining, OR Stable?	Started by Local Entrepreneur?
White Co BOE		463	Education		❑
Freudenberg – NOK		400	OilSealValveSteam		❑
Truett McConnell		136	Education		❑
Mt Vernon Mills*		100	Textiles		❑
Ingles		100	Grocery		❑
No Ga Hardware		86	Hardware		

2.6   **Please list and describe any local manufacturing entrepreneurs that have started in the past THREE years.**

Employer Name	Year	Jobs	Product or Service	Growing, Declining, OR Stable?
Salsa Foods	2000	5	Salsa	Growing
A Touch of Country magic	1998?	58	Cinnamon Brooms	Growing

2.7   **Please list and describe any new businesses that have relocated or expanded to your community (from outside the community) in the past THREE years.**

Employer Name	Year	Jobs	Product or Service	Growing, Declining, OR Stable?
NONE				

2.8   **Please list and describe any existing businesses that have expanded within your community in the past THREE years.**

Employer Name	Year	Jobs	Product or Service	Growing, Declining, OR Stable?
NONE				

2.9 **Please list and describe any existing businesses that closed or downsized within your community in the past THREE years.**

Employer Name	Year	Affected Jobs	Product or Service
Mt Vernon Mills	2004	Will close in	Six weeks
NOK	2001		Productivity increase
House of Tyrol	2003	50-100	Mail Order Distribution

2.10 **Are any of your local industries exporting their products outside the United States?**

√ Yes ❏ No ❏ Don't know

If yes, please provide examples:

NOK, Mt Vernon Mills, Plastic Works; White County Molding; Babyland

2.11 **What tourism destinations are in your community?**

Helen	Appalachian Trail
BabyLand General	National Forest
Unicoi	Smithgall Woods
Anna Ruby Falls	

Community Economic Development Readiness Assessment (CEDRA)

PART THREE – MEASURING INFRASTRUCTURE

Physical Infrastructure

3.1 **How many miles is your community from a:**

	Miles	Name	Don't Know
Metropolitan statistical area (MSA)	25	Gainesville	❑
Interstate highway interchange	30	985 in GNS	❑
Navigable river	350	Savannah	❑
Deepwater port	350	Savannah	❑
Airport with scheduled commercial service	80	Athens	❑
	80	Greenville	

3.2 **Which of the following transportation services are available in your community?**

	No	Don't know
Local airport	√	❑
Active rail service	√	❑
Local trucking terminal	√	❑
Locally operated public transportation (e.g., bus)	√	❑
Intercity bus or passenger rail service	√	❑

If your community has a local airport:

Do you have a fixed base operator? ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Don't know
How long is your longest runway? _____ feet

3.3 **Which of the following telecommunications services are available in your community?**

	Yes	No	Don't know
Local internet dial-up access	√		
Dedicated long distance services (e.g., T-1/DS-1, T-3/DS-3) at rates similar to major metropolitan areas	√		
Broadband communications services (e.g., cable modem, fixed wireless, DSL)	√		
Local telecommunications services from more than one provider	√		
Digital wireless telephone service	√		

3.4 **Please provide the following information about your community's water and wastewater services.**

	No	If yes, how much?
Excess water capacity	√	Abundant in off-season
Excess wastewater capacity	√	

Community Economic Development Readiness Assessment (CEDRA)

3.5   **Has your community had any water or wastewater restrictions during the past THREE years?**

√   Yes

3.6   **How much of your industrial and commercial areas are served by public water and sewer systems?**

√   All
√   Most   Sewer capacity has been reserved; City wouldn't pay for it; Private owner of Park will
❑ Some
❑ None
❑ Don't know

3.7   **Please indicate any problems or concerns with your wastewater system.**
(Skip if wastewater service is not available.)

Capacity; Location; Availability

 Hwy 129   South-   Commercial   North of Helen: NONE;

 Nacochee _   NONE

3.8   **Is your community in a non-attainment area?**

❑No ❑ Don't know

If yes, what is your community doing to address non-attainment issues?

3.9   **Please provide the following information about your community's electricity and gas services.**

	Yes	No	If yes, who provides it?
Natural gas available?		√	AmeriGas & 6 others
Electricity available?	√		Ga Power, Habersham EMC

3.10   **Does your community have a county landfill?**

√   No Closed Landfill

If yes, what is the expected life of the landfill? _____

3.11   **Please indicate which of the following types of business parks are in your community?**

❑ Heavy Industrial
√   Light Industrial
❑ Mixed Use
❑ Research and Development
√   Small Business

❑ Technology
❑ Other: _____
❑ None
❑ Don't know

Community Economic Development Readiness Assessment (CEDRA)

3.12 **Please check any of the following services offered in each park.**

Park 1: Telfair-Hulsey	Park 2: Whitehall	Park 3:
√ Roads ❑ Rail √ Water √ Sewer ❑ Natural Gas √ Electricity √ High-capacity telecom service √ Speculative or available building FOR RENT ❑ Other: Now Privately owned_	√ Roads ❑ Rail ❑ Water ❑ Sewer ❑ Natural Gas √ Electricity ❑ High-capacity telecom service ❑ Speculative or available building ❑ Other: _____	❑ Roads ❑ Rail ❑ Water ❑ Sewer ❑ Natural Gas ❑ Electricity ❑ High-capacity telecom service ❑ Speculative or available building ❑ Other: _____

3.13 **What percentage of each park is built-out / occupied?**

Park 1: Telfair-Hulsey	Park 2: Whitehall	Park 3:
❑ 0-10% ❑ 10-25% ❑ 25-50% √ More than 50%	√ 0-10% ❑ 10-25% ❑ 25-50% More than 50%	❑ 0-10% ❑ 10-25% ❑ 25-50% More than 50%

3.14 **What percentage of your community's downtown business district is vacant?**

√   0-10%, Cleveland
√   10-25% Helen
❑ 25-50%
❑ More than 50%
❑ Don't know

Over the past THREE years, what has been the prevailing trend in vacancy?

❑ Growing more vacant
❑ Becoming less vacant
√   Staying pretty much the same

3.15 **Does your community house any of the following developments that serve the region?**

❑ Military base
❑ State or federal correctional facility
√   Major tourism destination
❑ Regional industrial park
√   Other: Hardman Farms: 2006-2008; Home with Museum; Working Farm; State owned; Interactive Educational component; At Sautee across from Indian Mounds

Community Economic Development Readiness Assessment (CEDRA)

Human Resource Infrastructure

3.16 **How far is the nearest four-year college or university from your community's town or city center?**

√   0-10 miles
❑ 10-20 miles
❑ 20-30 miles
❑ More than 30 miles

Name(s):
Truett-McConnell transtioning to 4-yr; Music program is now

North Georgia College (Dahlonaga) 20 miles

Piedmont College (Demorest) 20 miles

3.17 **How far is the nearest community college, technical college, or other two-year postsecondary educational institution from your community's town or city center?**

❑ 0-10 miles
√   10-20 miles
√   20-30 miles
❑ More than 30 miles

Name(s):
North Georgia Tech – Clarkesville – 20 miles

Gainesville College – Gainesville – 30 miles

UGA – 80 miles

3.18 **Can the public school system absorb 10 percent more students without overcrowding classrooms or needing new buildings?**

√   Yes ❑ No ❑ Don't know

3.19 **For each of the following measures for the public school system, please indicate whether it is above, at, or below the average for the <u>region</u> and <u>state</u>.**

	Region			State			
	Above	At	Below	Above	At	Below	Don't know
Student-teacher ratio		X			X		
% Teachers w/ master's degrees	X			X			
High school dropout rate			X			X	
Average SAT score	X					X	
% High school graduates going on to vocational or technical training				X			
% High school graduates going on to two-year or four-year college				X			

Community Economic Development Readiness Assessment (CEDRA)

3.20 **Which of the following programs are available in your community's public school system?**

- ❑ Advanced placement program
- √ Apprenticeship program
- √ Arts program
- ❑ Business partners program NO
- √   Computer science program
- ❑ Entrepreneurship program NO
- ❑ Internship program
- √   Joint high school / vocational technical school program
- √   Leadership program With the Chamber
- √   Local scholarship program
- ❑ Magnet school / specialty program
- ❑ Mentoring program with local businesses
- ❑ Music program
- ❑ Other: _____
- ❑ Don't know

3.21 **How do you rate the availability of quality early childhood programs in your community?**

	Poor	Adequate	Excellent	Don't know
Licensed day care programs		√	❑	❑
Licensed after school programs		√	❑	❑
Licensed family day care programs		√	❑	❑
Pre-K programs		√	❑	❑

3.22 **Is an adult literacy program available in your community?**

√   Don't know

3.23 **For each of the following measures for your community, please indicate whether it is above, at, or below the average for the <u>region</u> and <u>state</u>.**

	Region			State			
	Above	At	Below	Above	At	Below	Don't know
Adults with bachelors degrees or higher			X			X	
Adults with high school degrees	X						x
Crime rate	X					X	
Food stamp participation rate		X				X	
Homeownership rate				X			
Infant mortality rate							X
Juvenile arrest rate							X
Physicians per 1,000 population			X			X	
Teenage pregnancy rate			X			X	
Voter participation rate	X			X			

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3.24   Does your community have a locally operated hospital or medical center?

√   No ❑ Don't know

If yes, what specialty services are available to the community?

_____

_____

3.25   What percentage of your community's housing is comprised of mobile homes?

❑ 0-10%
❑ 10-25%
√   25-50%
❑ More than 50%
❑ Don't know

3.26   Does your community have a community center or other facility for public gathering?

√   No Use Business facilities

If yes, what services does this center offer?

❑ Events, services, or activities for children and young adults
❑ Events, services, or activities for retirees and senior citizens
❑ Recreational activities
❑ Arts and cultural activities
❑ Meeting place for business and government organizations
❑ Other: _____
❑ Don't know

Local Government / Public Policy Infrastructure

3.27   When was your community's comprehensive plan last updated?

❑ This year
❑ Last year
❑ 2 to 5 years ago
√   More than 5 years ago; Due 10/04; Committee has been established
❑ Don't know

Does your community have a formal process for monitoring how closely actual development follows the comprehensive plan?

√   No

Did your organization participate in the effort to develop the plan?

√   Yes

Is your organization responsible for implementing any of the comprehensive plan?

√   No

3.28   What type of land use regulations are employed by your community?

❑ County zoning
❑ City zoning
❑ Land use codes
√   Building codes
❑ Covenants
√   Mobile home ordinance
❑ Other: _____
❑ Don't know

If your community employs any of the above, how well does your community enforce land use regulations (e.g., building inspector)?

❑ Very Well
❑ Well
❑ Neither Well Nor Poor
√   Poor
❑ Very Poor

3.29   Does your local government have a solid waste management plan?

√   Yes

If yes, please provide year of most recent revision Don't know

3.30   Which of the following government services are available on-line? Note to Self: Check

	Yes	No	Don't know
Contact information	X		
List of services	X		
Bill payment		X	
Minutes of meetings		X	
Tax records or plats		X	
Certificates		X	
Licenses		X	
Permits		X	
Community calendar		X	
Other:			

3.31   Do you consider your county to be a business-friendly community?

√   Yes Especially chamber and newer ; Old Group: controlling

3.32   Is your local government considered a "qualified local government" by the State of Georgia?
√   Yes

If yes, has your government ever lost or been at risk for losing this status?

√   Don't know

Why?

_____

_____

3.33 **Has your local government <u>actively</u> participated in any of the following regional activities?**

❑ Merged or consolidated provision of services between two or more jurisdictions
√   Regional Advisory Council
√   Regional Development Center meetings
√   Georgia Academy for Economic Development
❑ Regional land use planning
❑ Joint development authority or enterprise
❑ Other: _____
❑ Don't know

3.34 **Does your community have a downtown development authority?**

√   Yes Not an active group   ….. Truett McConnell

3.35 **Has your local government been selected to a city recognition or downtown redevelopment program?**

√   No

If yes, please provide the most recent year of selection: _____

3.36 **Does your community have a county-wide recycling program?**

√   Yes   With Drop off locations

3.37 **Does your community have designated brownfield sites?**

√   No

If yes, is there a formal program being implemented to redevelop or remediate brownfield areas?

❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Don't know

3.38 **What is the bond rating of the largest city or county government in your community?**

_Note: County has little to no debt

3.39 **Has a local bond referendum been passed by voters during the last THREE years?**

√   No ❑ Don't know

If yes, please describe: _____

Has a local bond referendum been defeated by voters during the last THREE years?

√   No ❑ Don't know

If yes, please describe: _____

3.40   **How does your community's property tax millage rate compare to communities in your region?**

❑ Higher
❑ Same
√   Lower
❑ Don't know

Has your community raised its millage rate in the last THREE years?

√   No For BOE

Has your community lowered its millage rate in the last THREE years?

√   No

3.41   **Please indicate the following for your tax digest during the past THREE years.**
Check on this
❑ Growing above the rate of population change
❑ Growing below the rate of population change
❑ Declining
√   Don't know

3.42   **Please describe any grants to support economic development received by your community during the last THREE years.**

Agency (Source)	Amount ($)	Economic Development Use
None that they know of		

Community Economic Development Readiness Assessment (CEDRA)

PART FOUR – MEASURING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

Organizational Processes

4.1 **Which of the following is the lead organization for economic development in your community?**

- ❑ Development authority
- √ Chamber of commerce Works with DA and will supervise activities of White County Office of ED; see report
- ❑ City or county government office
- ❑ Other: _____
- ❑ No lead organization
- ❑ Don't know

If development authority, please indicate the following: Check on this

- ❑ Constitutional
- ❑ Statutory

If chamber of commerce, please indicate the following:

- ❑ 501(c)3
- √ 501(c)6

4.2 **Please indicate which of the following economic development activities are within the responsibility of your organization.**

- √ Assisting entrepreneurs and small businesses
- √ Developing a tourism base
- ❑ Fostering international trade
- √ Recruiting new industries
- √ Supporting the needs of existing business and industry
- ❑ Other: _____

Which of the following work areas are reflected in your program of work?

- √ Business retention and expansion
- ❑ Commercial or industrial property development
- ❑ Communications / media relations
- ❑ Downtown development
- √ Entrepreneur development
- √ Funding
- ❑ International trade
- ❑ Local public policy
- ❑ Marketing and recruitment
- √ Professional development
- √ Technology
- √ Tourism development
- ❑ Workforce development
- ❑ Other: _____

4.3 **For any of the activities listed in Question 4.2 that are not within the responsibility of your organization, please indicate the lead organization responsible for that activity.**

Commercial/Industrial Development – Private Developers _____

 Downtown Development – works with them _____

_____

4.4 **Please indicate the economic development budget for the community for the past THREE years.**

Year	Total Budget ($)	Professional Development Budget ($)
2004	$226,000	

What percentage of the economic development budget comes from the following sources?

Local taxpayers   _____ %
Business community   40%
State agencies   _____ %
Federal agencies   _____ %
Other: _Hotel/Motel Tax   35 %
         Membership   25%

Does your community have a hotel / lodging tax?

√   No   ❏ Don't know

If yes, what percentage of the revenue is allocated for tourism promotion and development?

❏ 0-10%
❏ 10-25%
❏ 25-50%
❏ More than 50%
❏ Don't know

4.5 **How many full-time equivalent paid staff work on economic development?**

3 Fulltime

How many of these have a professional economic development certification (e.g., CEcD, EDFP)?

_NONE___

4.6 **Have members of your board of directors attended any of the following?**

√   Georgia Academy for Economic Development
√   Development authority board training
√   State or local leadership programs
❏   Sales training
❏   Other: _____

4.7 **How many graduates does your community have from the Georgia Academy of Economic Development?**

__Four_

4.8 **How many graduates does your community have from a state leadership program?**

_Not Sure: Two??? Chris and Dennis__

4.9 **Does your community administer a local leadership program?**

√   Yes

If yes, how many graduates? Five years: 70 +/-

4.10 **Does your organization utilize volunteers?**

√   Yes

If yes, please describe the training for the volunteers.
Depends on level of volunteer participation
√   Volunteers go through a formal training program
√   Volunteers attend professional association meetings
√   Volunteers are informally trained
❑   Volunteers receive no training
❑   Don't know

4.11 **Please rate the effectiveness of the working relationship between your economic development organization and the following entities. Please use a scale of one to five, where one means "not at all effective" and five means "very effective."**

	1	2	3	4	5
Adjacent counties and cities		X			
Board of education (superintendent)					X
Citizens			X		
Entrepreneurs and small business				X	
Existing business and industry				X	
Four-year college or university				X	
Georgia Department of Community Affairs					X
Georgia Department of Industry, Trade, and Tourism					X
Georgia Department of Labor				X	
Legislators					X
Local banks					X
Local city / county government					X
Local civic groups				X	
Local media					X
Local tourism-related businesses (hotels, restaurants, parks, etc.)					X
Other local economic development organizations in your community					X
Regional Advisory Council					X
Regional Development Center					X
Social services organizations					X
Technical college / community college				X	
Utility company					X
Other:					

4.12 **Does any of your community's economic development activities show seasonal or cyclical variations?**

√   Yes

If yes, please explain.
Helen Tourism

Informational and Planning Systems

4.13 Does your organization collect basic information about any of the following?

√ Area sites and buildings
√ Business assistance resources
❑ Business taxes and regulations
√ Commercial and industrial properties
√ Demographic information
√ Education information
❑ Entrepreneurs
❑ Existing business and industry
❑ Health care information
❑ International trade (export) opportunities
√ Major employers
√ Tourism destinations
❑ Workforce availability and compensation
❑ Other: _____

How often does your organization update the information you collect?

	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually	As Needed
Area sites and buildings				√
Business assistance resources				√
Business taxes and regulations				√
Commercial and industrial properties				√
Demographic information				√
Education information				√
Entrepreneurs				√
Existing business and industry				√
Health care information				√
International trade (export) opportunities				√
Major employers				√
Tourism destinations				√
Workforce availability and compensation				√
Other:				❑

How is the information presented?

√ Custom report
❑ PowerPoint
❑ CD-ROM
❑ Video
√ Web site
❑ Other

4.14   Does your organization maintain an economic development Web site?

√   Yes

If yes:

How often is the Web site updated?

❑ As needed

Which of the following services are offered through the Web site?

- ❑   Annual report
- ❑   Calendar of economic development events
- ❑   Comprehensive plan
- √   Contact information
- ❑   Economic development strategic plan
- √   Information for prospects
- √   Information for tourists / visitors
- √   Information for entrepreneurs
- √   Information for existing business and industry
- √   Link to public and private organizations in the community
- ❑   Links to relevant organizations outside the community
- ❑   Media releases
- ❑   Member-only section
- ❑   Online assistance services (including online forums or bulletin boards)
- √   Organization mission and goals statements
- √   Newsletter   As link to the Telegraph
- ❑   Public polls
- ❑   Research reports
- ❑   Updates on services or activities (e.g., program of work areas)
- ❑   Other: _____

4.15   Does your office use any of the following technologies?

	Yes	No	Don't know
Database system (e.g., Access)	X		
Digital assistant (e.g., Palm Pilot)		X	
Digital phone / cell phone Use Personal one for business	X		
GIS		X	
Intranet		X	
PC or laptop	X		
Presentation software (e.g., PowerPoint)	X		
Remote access to electronic communications services (email, calendar)		X	
Spreadsheet / budgeting software (e.g., Excel)	X		
Subscriber list serv services		X	
Web-based research service (e.g., Lexis/Nexis)		X	

4.16   Do you or your staff routinely use computers more than four years old?

√   Yes

4.17 **Which of the following sources does your organization use to develop strategies and services?**

- √ State, regional, or national professional economic development association meetings
- ❑ Regular meeting with state economic development professionals
- ❑ Economic development trade journals and publications
- ❑ General business trade journals and publications
- ❑ Comprehensive plan
- √ Suggestions from community leaders
- √ Suggestions from community citizens
- ❑ Other: _____

4.18 **How often do you meet with statewide economic developers?**

- ❑ Monthly
- √ Quarterly
- ❑ Annually
- ❑ As Needed
- ❑ Never

When was the last time a statewide economic developer brought a prospect to your community?

- ❑ Within one month
- ❑ Two to four months
- ❑ Within the last year
- √ More than one year ago
- ❑ Other: _____
- ❑ Don't know

4.19 **Does your community have a written economic development strategic plan?**

- √ No

Is your plan based on any of the following?

- ❑ Community vision and goals
- ❑ Competitive assessment including a comparative analysis between community and similar communities
- ❑ Demographic and socioeconomic analysis
- ❑ Economic development feasibility assessments
- ❑ SWOT analysis
- ❑ Market analysis
- ❑ Other: _____
- ❑ Don't know

Which of the following sources were used to gather input for your plan?

- ❑ Citizen review committee or panel
- ❑ Comprehensive plan
- ❑ Publicizing of findings along the way through local media
- ❑ Suggestions from community leaders
- ❑ Suggestions from community citizens
- ❑ Surveys, interviews or focus groups
- ❑ Town halls or public forum meetings
- ❑ Other: _____
- ❑ Don't know

Community Economic Development Readiness Assessment (CEDRA)

Does your community have a formal process for monitoring progress and tracking results?

√   No

Which of the following components does your strategic plan include?

- ❑ Business retention and expansion plan
- ❑ Commercial and industrial property development plan
- ❑ Community marketing plan
- ❑ Entrepreneur and small business development plan
- ❑ Environmental plan
- ❑ Funding / resource capacity plan

- ❑ Growth management plan
- ❑ Incentives plan
- ❑ Marketing plan
- ❑ Prospect recruitment plan
- ❑ Infrastructure development plan
- ❑ Technology utilization plan
- ❑ Tourism development plan
- ❑ Workforce development plan
- ❑ Other: _____

4.20   Does your organization have a computer-based system for tracking results against economic development objectives?

√   No

If yes, what measurements are included in your system?

_____

_____

_____

Does the system track lead generation?

	Prospect	Existing Business	Entrepreneur	Tourist and Visitor
Advertising	❑	❑	❑	❑
Cold calls	❑	❑	❑	❑
Web site	❑	❑	❑	❑
Consultants	❑	❑	❑	❑
Statewide economic developers	❑	❑	❑	❑
Trade shows and marketing trips	❑	❑	❑	❑
Other economic development groups	❑	❑	❑	❑

Does the system track any of the following activities?

- ❑ Information packages mailed
- ❑ Presentations delivered
- ❑ Trade shows or marketing trips
- ❑ Type of entrepreneurial assistance provided
- ❑ Type of existing business and industry support provided

Does the system track follow-up information?

- ❑ Reasons entrepreneurs chose the community
- ❑ Reasons existing businesses and industries expand
- ❑ Reasons existing businesses and industries move, close, or downsize
- ❑ Reasons prospects do not locate
- ❑ Reasons prospects locate
- ❑ Reasons tourists / visitors chose the community

4.21 How often does your organization communicate progress and results with your community's leadership?

- ❑ Monthly
- ❑ Quarterly
- ❑ Annually
- √ As Needed
- ❑ Never

How often does your organization communicate progress and results with your community's citizenry?

- ❑ Monthly
- ❑ Quarterly
- ❑ Annually
- √ As Needed
- ❑ Never

4.23 How do you measure satisfaction with the service you give?

- ❑ We do not monitor satisfaction
- ❑ We keep track of customer comments informally
- ❑ We conduct formal surveys of customers
- ❑ We hire an outside firm to conduct surveys and audits
- ❑ We have a system that collects ongoing customer comments and complaints at a central location

4.24 When was the last time your organization conducted a formal survey?

- √ Within the past 12 months
- ❑ Within the last three years
- ❑ Never

What was the subject of the survey?

- ❑ Customer satisfaction
- ❑ Entrepreneur and small business needs
- √ Existing business retention and expansion needs
- ❑ Planning
- ❑ Technology needs
- ❑ Tourism
- ❑ Other: _____

4.25 Does your organization measure the effectiveness of economic development incentives granted to business?

- √ No

Community Economic Development Readiness Assessment (CEDRA)

How does your organization measure the effectiveness of incentives?

- ❑ Count the number of new / expanding companies and jobs
- ❑ Employ a fiscal impact modeling tool to determine the break-even point in advance of offering the incentives
- ❑ Formally survey businesses to determine whether they created the jobs and/or made the capital investments they promised
- ❑ Get an informal feel
- ❑ Include a "clawback" provision
- ❑ Other: _____

Services

4.26   Does your organization host any of the following?

- √ Business networking event (e.g., Business After Hours)
- ❑ Developer's Day
- √ Eggs & Issues event
- √ Existing business and industry recognition event Monthly Business Highlight; Annual award
- √ Major tourism event (e.g., festival, fair) that draws significant attendance from outside community
- ❑ Technology fair
- ❑ Other: _____

4.27   Which of the following activities does your organization employ to recruit economic development prospects?

- ❑ Advertising in targeted trade publications
- ❑ Cold calls
- ❑ Coordination of local sales team
- ❑ Developer's Day
- √ Listing of properties on community Web sites
- ❑ Listing of properties with statewide economic development agencies
- ❑ Trade shows and marketing trips
- ❑ Visitation to statewide developers in Atlanta periodically
- ❑ Other: _____

4.28   Which of the following services for tourists / visitors are available in your community?

- √ Highway signage
- √ Newcomer information packet
- √ Public tours In Helen
- √ Literature for self-guided tours
- √ Welcome center
- ❑ Other: _____

Community Economic Development Readiness Assessment (CEDRA)

4.29 **Which of the following existing business and industry support services are available in your community?**

- ❑ Assistance to bring new product to market (i.e., commercialization)
- ❑ Assistance with adopting energy management practices
- ❑ Assistance with adopting lean manufacturing practices
- ❑ Assistance with adopting quality management practices
- ❑ Assistance with contracting with federal agencies
- ❑ Assistance with identifying export potential and identifying markets outside the United States for products
- ❑ Assistance with meeting workforce needs
- ❑ Assistance with utilizing information technologies
- ❑ Other: _____

4.30 **Which of the following entrepreneurial development services are available in your community?**

- ❑ Business development incubator
- √ Local courses and workshops on entrepreneurship
- √ Local facilitator / one point source of information
- √ Local loan programs for entrepreneurs
- √ Management and technical assistance
- √ Outreach services
- √ Revolving loan programs Appalachian E...
- √ Small Business Administration or other guaranteed loans Local Banks
- ❑ Other: _____

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