



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

13



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This chapter analyzes the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats within the local economy and the workforce. Based on that information, it recommends steps to support economic growth, job creation, and a growing tax base for the City.

“We who live in free market societies believe that growth, prosperity and ultimately human fulfillment, are created from the bottom up, not the government down.”

—President Ronald Reagan

13.1

INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, it is private enterprise that creates jobs and wealth through the efforts of motivated people willing to risk private capital to meet market demand. Some of these people may be existing residents, while others may be people from outside the area who see economic opportunity in Beckley and underserved markets. Progressive and successful communities often work diligently

at economic development efforts and are focused on helping create a supportive environment for businesses to thrive and flourish. They identify local opportunities and then work to attract those inclined to fill those needs. The goal of this Chapter is to draw attention to considerations that can help Beckley become an even stronger magnet for business investment.



13.2

CHANGES SINCE THE 2001 PLAN

The City has made significant strides toward accomplishing many of the recommendations within the 2001 Comprehensive Plan regarding economic development. These include the following:

- **Attract 21st Century employment.** The 2001 Plan identified the need to transform from a mining-dependent economy to one that is more diverse. To that end, the City has encouraged industrial development in the Ragland Road area, and has helped create a new technology center in the Woodlands Pinecrest Business and Technology Park along the East Beckley Bypass. These areas are attracting new companies with higher paying jobs. It should also be noted that nine new restaurants have opened since 2007. Although these may not be high paying jobs with benefits, they do provide opportunities for many people to participate in the workforce on a full-time, part-time or temporary basis.
- **Develop a Technology or Workforce Development Center with College.** The State is managing the workforce development and training efforts through the Region 1 Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funding. The Career Center at 200 Value City Center serves as the local training center for workforce development, serving the needs of both businesses and individuals.
- **Annex potential development sites before they are developed.** The City has annexed some areas along the East Beckley Bypass in anticipation of the completion of the Bypass and potential industrial and business development along it. The City has also annexed, on the eastern edge of the City, the area of the new soccer fields and the residential area to its southwest, as well as land around the intersection of I-77 and Harper Road.
- **Seize development opportunities with the Bypass.** As mentioned above, the City has annexed some of the property along the Bypass resulting in the development of a technology park, new school facilities, soccer fields, a residential subdivision, and other properties in this area.
- **Seize opportunities to develop land north of I-64 and the airport.** This area continues to provide development opportunities, with about 160 acres available for development.
- **Use Request for Proposals (RFP) to expedite development.** This process has not yet been needed or utilized to attract development.

The Summit Bechtel Reserve

Another significant change to the local economic landscape since the 2001 Plan is the development of The Summit Bechtel Family National Scouting Reserve, a 16,000-acre adventure center for the Boy Scouts of America near New River Gorge National Park, which is expected to draw about 100,000 people a year to the area.

For just one national event in 2013, the Summit was forecast to attract 40,000 boy scouts, 20,000 visitors, and 800 volunteers for five days in the summer of 2013. (Although final numbers have not been published, the summer 2013 event was reported to be a success.) Spread out over 365 days, the forecasts would have represented an average daily gain of about +1,000 people to Raleigh County. Meanwhile, there is a capacity for daily visitor traffic to Beckley to increase - especially on days when visits exceed 5,000 per day on average (and higher during peak seasons). So, there is still considerable opportunity for attracting even more visitors with local attractions that are located in Beckley

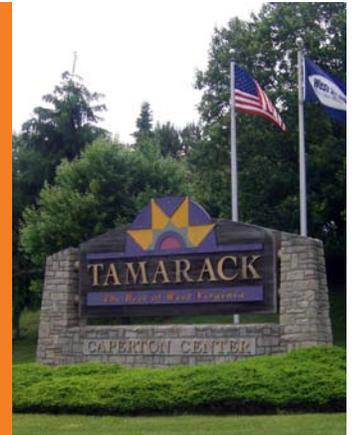
According to Don Striker, the Park Superintendent, The Summit has been called a “game changer” for the New River Gorge National Park and the area, and could serve as a model for smart, sustainable development with public land as the centerpiece. An international event is planned for the Summit for 2017 that will draw even more visitors.

With a cross-marketing campaign, the City of Beckley could benefit from visitors who are initially drawn to the Summit and seeking restaurants, shopping, hotels, and additional attractions. Beckley must help close the gap by offering a wider variety of venues and attractions located within its own community – including indoor attractions that would appeal to vacationing families during inclement weather.



Tamarack – The Best of West Virginia

Tamarack has existed for many years and is a major regional draw for tourists. However, as described in 2001, Tamarack does not directly benefit Downtown Beckley and road linkages are challenging at best. The Tamarack commissioned a study in 2012 that tested the feasibility of additional commercial development around the facility, including hotels, an RV park, and retail. If the Tamarack proceeds with this vision, it could benefit the region by drawing more visitors. This in turn reinforces the importance of improved linkages and synergies with Downtown Beckley.



The Economic Development Authority for the New River Gorge



Since the 2001 Plan, the coordination of economic development services for the City shifted from the 4C Organization to the New River Gorge Regional Economic Development Authority (NRGREDA). This Authority provides economic development services through collaboration between the City of Beckley and Fayette, Nicholas, Raleigh, and Summers Counties. Their mission is to initiate, facilitate and support the economic development efforts of its members.

In striving for economic diversification, the NRGREDA provides in-depth assistance to companies looking to expand or relocate in the area. Financial and business services include a loan program, acting as a point of access to a network of small businesspersons, training opportunities, and financing. ECGREDA participates in “Create West Virginia,” which was developed as a network of individuals, communities and businesses across the State that are committed to growing a State that thrives on innovation, connectivity, diversity and growth.

“A Vision Shared,” a comprehensive economic development strategy conceived in the spring of 2000, guides the activities of NRGREDA. It is a long-range process encompassing all elements of the economy including health care, education, tax reform and infrastructure. As a result of increased global integration and rapid technological change, more opportunities than ever exist for new businesses and entrepreneurs, and these trends are predicted to continue. The Authority uses this opportunity to nurture a culture of entrepreneurship that accepts change as a normal and healthy process.

In addition to the above, NRGREDA maintains a data base of sites and buildings, and a data base of regional demographic and economic information, both of which are available on its website. The website is also available in a variety of languages.

13.3

BUSINESS SURVEY

To help gauge issues facing Beckley today, a Business Survey was conducted at the Business Expo in early 2013. About 275 people responded to the survey. Slightly less than 55% of the respondents were NOT residents of the City of Beckley and almost 90% did not own a business in Beckley, although 45% were employed by businesses within the City.

Of the respondents, 21.6% were in retail sales, 18% were in professional services and 22.8% were unemployed. The balance worked in a variety of other businesses. It was noted that 44.8% of the respondents' business came from outside Raleigh County. Over 51% of the respondents felt that the overall business climate in Beckley was good and getting better, a good sign.

When asked how the City should spend its economic development efforts, almost 60% felt that the City should encourage business formations and start-ups, entrepreneurs, and expansion of existing businesses. Over 53% felt that the City should also entice outside companies to locate in Beckley.

The survey asked if there were adequate programs to assist businesses. Over 36% said yes, 23% said no, and 41% were not sure. The high number of people not sure could signify that programs are not adequately marketed to appropriate parties.

When asked what types of businesses were needed in Beckley, the following responses

were provided (with the highest number of responses listed first): Target, more restaurants especially ethnic foods, places for kids, Red Lobster, book store, coffee shops, dress shops, Old Navy, businesses geared toward outdoor recreation, and family entertainment.

The survey asked what could be done to make it easier to establish, operate or grow a business in the Beckley area. Responses included, in order of highest number of responses to lower responses, (this is not all-inclusive):

- Lower taxes--the B&O tax was mentioned frequently
- Improve roads and traffic conditions
- Provide more aggressive technical assistance to businesses
- Provide small business incentives
- Better customer service

When asked what the City could do to better assist start-up businesses or to improve the business climate, responses included (from highest number of responses to lowest, although the list is not all-inclusive):

- Road and traffic improvements
- More business incentives and grants
- More advertising for local businesses
- Drug free workplaces and solving the drug problem
- Education about available resources
- Bus service
- Shop local program

13.4

2013 MARKET STUDY SUMMARY

As part of this planning process, a 2013 Market Study was conducted by LandUse | USA with critical information regarding current market trends regionally and nationally and economic implications for Beckley. The 2013 Market Study also provides recommendations for types of businesses that could fill gaps in Beckley, with consideration for its full market potential.

The 2013 Market Study is referenced throughout this plan, and is complemented by a Workbook of data tables, charts, maps, and other exhibits developed to substantiate the findings, conclusions and recommendations. This workbook is available electronically from the www.planbeckley.com website, and in hardcopy format from the Municipal Building.

The 2013 Market Study includes close studies of retail trade; traveler accommodations; arts, entertainment and recreation; health care and services; education; and other industry sectors. It looks at demographics and growth, unemployment, labor force, top employers, industrial classifications, occupations, and the retail and housing climates. Results have been used to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT); and to identify market needs, gaps, and opportunities. The following sections of this Chapter summarize the results of that work.

Demographic changes

The economic profile of Beckley has changed since the 2001 Plan was completed, and comparisons to the region and State are important to understanding how Beckley stacks up against other markets in West Virginia. Some of these changes are discussed here.

Senior Population Trends –Raleigh County is similar to the other relatively small counties in West Virginia based on seniors as a share of total population. In the County, about 8% of the population is 75 years of age or older and 10% is between the ages of 65 and 74, which is similar to State averages. Evidence is clear for growth in the senior population for Raleigh County, with 15.5% of the population in 2000 being 65+ and a projection of 17,602 (21.7%) of the population being in that same age group by 2022. The population is aging statewide and nationally, and Raleigh County is in-step with these trends, and therefore needs to stay current with local demand for senior amenities.

Regarding aging trends, it is also important to note that when compared to prior generations, seniors are now:

- Living longer and more active later in life
- Working later in life (especially during recessions)
- Like everyone, spending more on dining out
- Demanding more quality of life amenities
- More mobile when choosing where to retire
- Becoming dissatisfied with conventional senior housing formats, and
- More likely to be in multi-generational households

Per Capita Income

The City of Beckley had a higher per capita income (\$24,300 in 2012) than the State average (\$23,200), but Raleigh County's income profile was lower at \$22,000. In comparison, Kanawha County with Charleston had a per capita income of \$26,900, which was higher than the State average.

Commute to Work

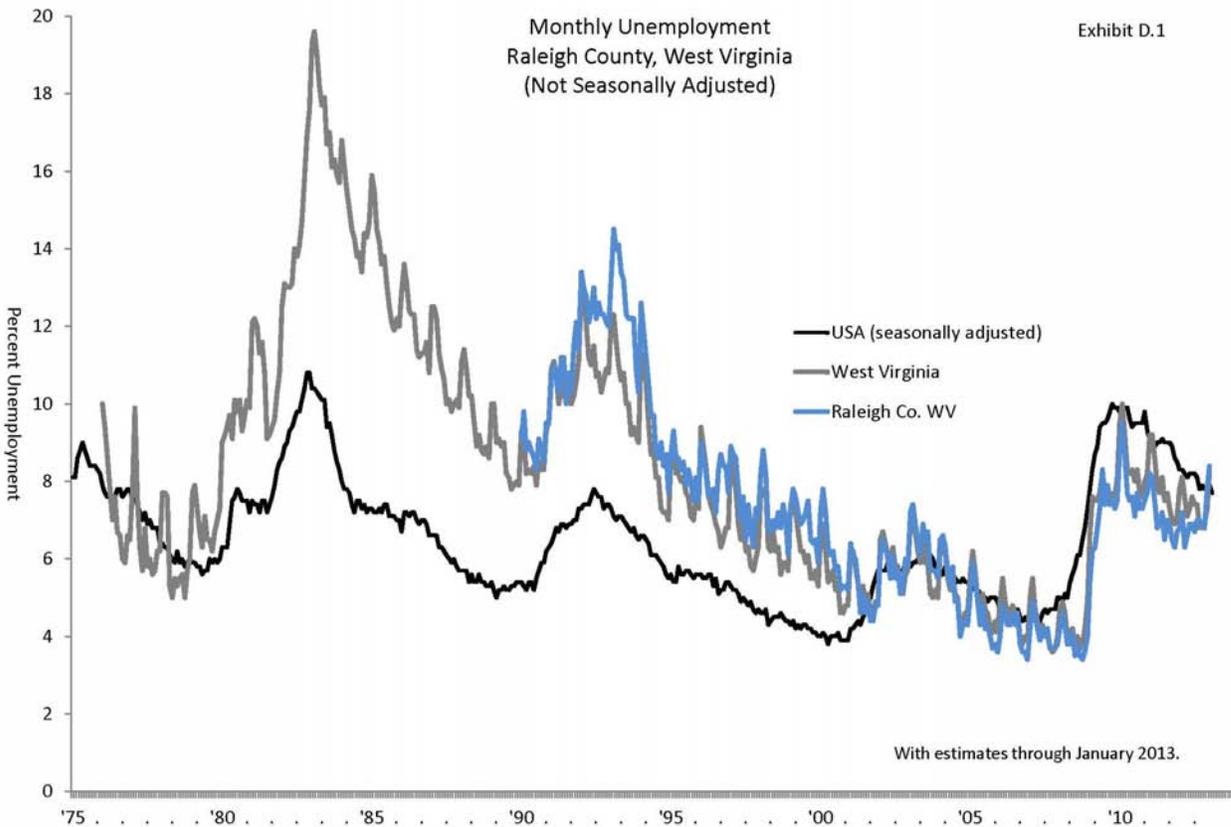
Workers in Raleigh County have a lower than average propensity for driving long distances to get to their jobs, with 33% traveling less than 15 minutes and almost 67% traveling more than 15 minutes.

Educational Attainment

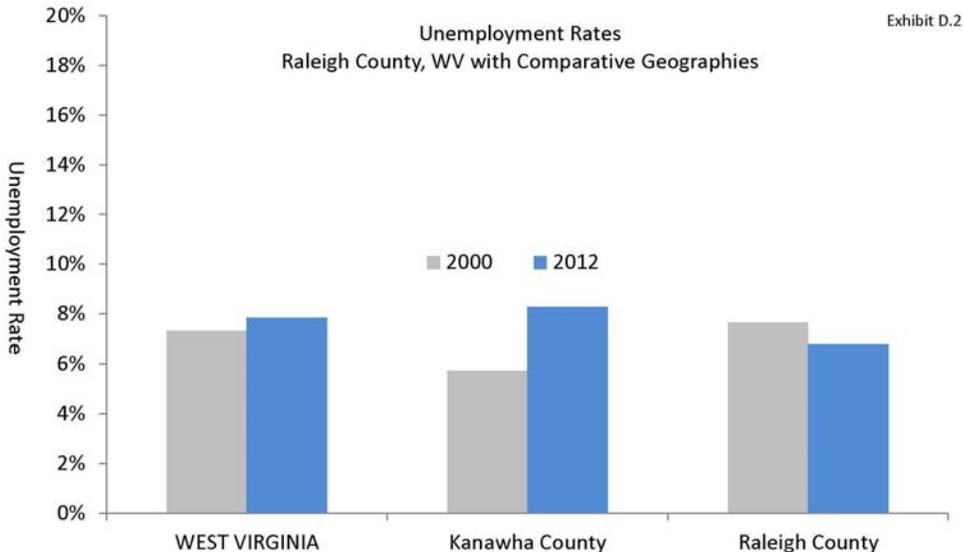
Although there are good choices for higher education in Beckley (including the recently reopened Charleston University at Beckley), adults in Raleigh County do not have an exceptionally high level of college attainment. Only 9.9% of residents have a Bachelor's degree compared to 11% of the statewide population. In addition, 40% of the population has some college or degree in Beckley, while almost 42% of statewide residents have the same qualifications.

Unemployment Rates

Unemployment in Raleigh County is currently tracking below State and national averages, but still high compared to pre-recessionary levels. Unemployment rates are currently hovering around 8%, which is slightly lower than averages for Kanawha County and the State. See charts labeled D.1 and D.2 on the following page.



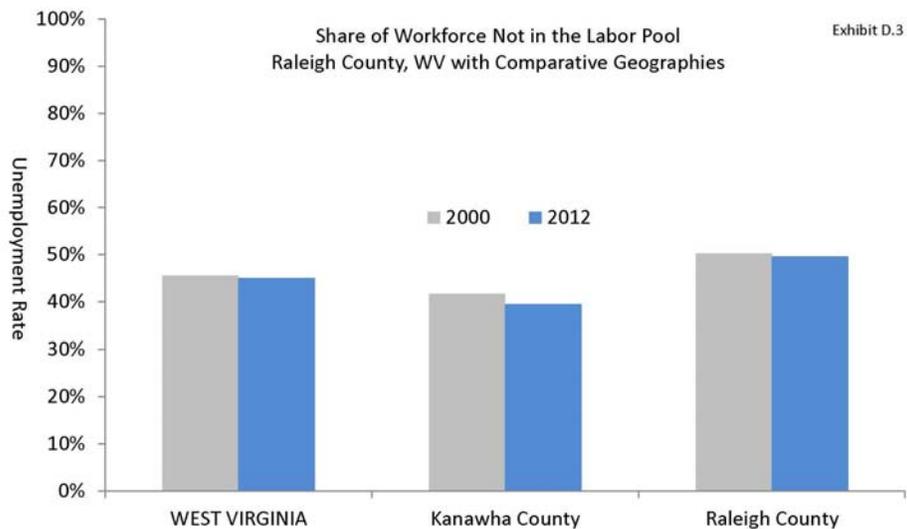
Figures for 2011-2013 are estimates and subject to revision by the BLS. All figures are percents of the total Labor Force Age 16+. Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics; Analysis by LandUse|USA, March 2013.



Source: Synergos Technologies, Alteryx, DemographicsNow, and PopStats demographic vendor providers. Analysis and exhibit prepared by LandUse|USA, April 2013. Unemployment rate as a share of labor force population ages 16+.

Labor Force

Raleigh County's relatively low unemployment rates can be partly attributed to lower rates of participation in the labor force. If unemployment increases over the next few years, it is more likely to be due to higher participation rates in the labor force combined with some seasonal fluctuations, and not likely to be an indicator of tougher economic times ahead. This is shown below in Exhibit D.3



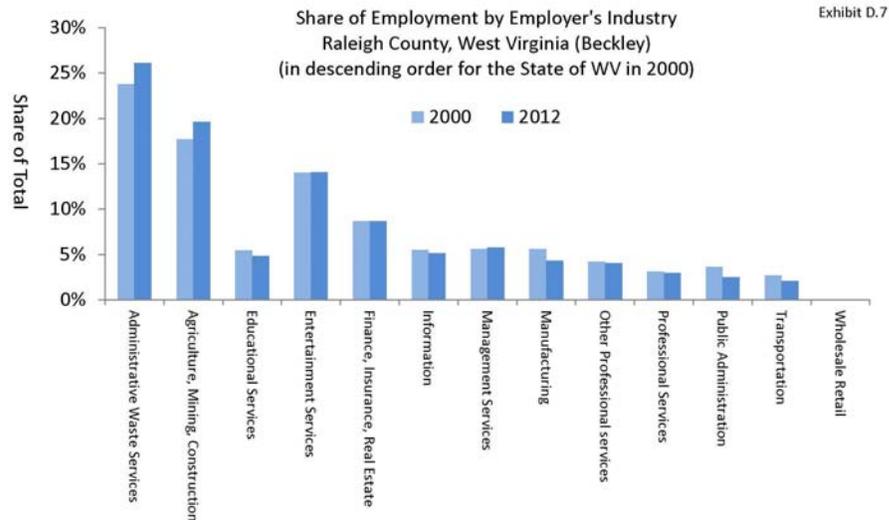
Source: Synergos Technologies, Alteryx, DemographicsNow, and PopStats demographic vendor providers.
Analysis and exhibit prepared by LandUse|USA, April 2013.
Workforce Population includes all residents ages 16+, regardless of labor force status.

Top Employers

In Raleigh County, some of the top employers are national retailers, medical and health care providers, and non-manufacturing professional companies. They include the Raleigh County Board of Education at 1,500 employees, Raleigh General Hospital with 930 to 1,100 employees, the Veterans Administration Hospital (710 employees), the Beckley Appalachian Regional Hospital with 650 employees, and Walmart with 561 to 600 employees at two locations.

Employment by Industry Sector

On the basis of employment by industry sector, Entertainment Service is among Raleigh County's top categories and could be leveraged for additional growth. Information is the most under-represented industry sector, suggesting a market gap and opportunity that has been validated through additional analysis. This is illustrated on Exhibit D.7.



Source: Synergos Technologies, Alteryx, DemographicsNow, and PopStats demographic vendor providers. Analysis and exhibit prepared by LandUse|USA, April 2013.

Health Care Industry

The market is well-served in many health care categories, including hospitals, outpatient care centers, offices of physicians, diagnostic laboratories, and home health care services. However, there is some gap and opportunity to add businesses in the following related categories:

- Dentists, chiropractors
- Funeral homes and related services
- Physical, occupational, and speech therapy
- Nursing care facilities, assisted living

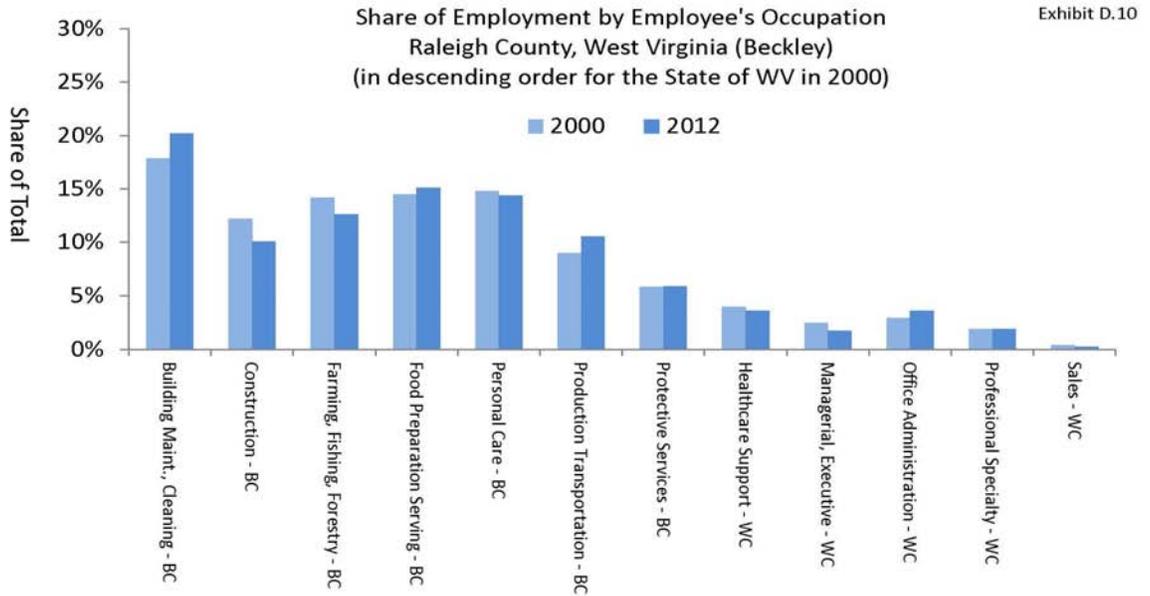
Other Industries

Among other industry sectors, there is little to no market gap in the industries of wholesale trade, manufacturing, real estate, and commercial and industrial machinery. However, there is a need and opportunity for Raleigh County to improve its competitiveness with other counties in West Virginia in the following industries:

- Professional Services
- Financial and Insurance Companies
- Information and Motion Pictures
- Administrative Support and/or Waste Management

Employees by Occupation

On the basis of employees by occupation, food preparation / serving and personal care appear to be Raleigh County's top strengths. Occupations in healthcare support and managerial / executive positions seem to be under-represented and are market gaps. Refer to Exhibit D.10.



Source: Synergos Technologies, Alteryx, DemographicsNow, and PopStats demographic vendor providers. Analysis and exhibit prepared by LandUse | USA, April 2013.



Advanced Education

The University of Charleston's (UC) Beckley campus opened in 2013 with approximately 500 students. UC Beckley plans to grow the Beckley-based, and on line student enrollment, to approximately 1,000 students by 2016. The long term plans for combined student enrollment on the Charleston campus, Beckley campus, and on line is to grow the UC enrollment to approximately 3,000 students. Assuming that these goals are met, there is no need to add another institution for advanced learning in Raleigh County.

13.5

GEOGRAPHIC STANDARDS OF MEASURE

As part of the 2013 Market Study, LandUse|USA searched geographic and market standards in West Virginia that represent good benchmarks for Beckley and Raleigh County. Kanawha County (which includes the City of Charleston) was chosen because it is a metropolitan market that sets the bar higher for Raleigh County, and because it is part of the same economic region.

Compared to Kanawha County, more comparable and similarly sized counties in West Virginia do not represent challenging

standards for Raleigh County. They also would not account for Raleigh County's unique geographic assets or the benefits of its proximity to the City of Charleston in Kanawha County.

Using comparisons between Raleigh County and the Kanawha County Standard, supply-demand models have been used to test the local market based on 5 performance measures: 1) establishments per capita; 2) sales per capita; 3) sales per establishment; 4) market share; and 5) jobs per capita. Most of these measures reflect adjustments for market differences in income and population size.

Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation

Based on an inventory of existing visitor amenities, the Beckley area seems to offer a good mix of recreation, entertainment, and arts venues. Some additional observations are listed below:

Outdoor Adventure Sports

Extreme adventure sports are among the most acclaimed attractions, including canopy adventures (zip-lining, rappelling, obstacle courses), water adventures (water rafting, canoe/kayaking), biking, and motor sports (including racing).



New River Gorge

Most of the recreational opportunities are located proximate to the New River Gorge National River area. Equestrian and fishing recreational opportunities are scattered among individual resorts.

Theaters and Music

There is a good mix of choices among theater and music related entertainment in Raleigh County, and almost every resort and significant visitor destination in Raleigh County offers live music and entertainment – usually with outdoor pavilions.

Per Capita Expenditures

Based on 2007 Economic Census data, expenditures on Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation reveal per capita annual expenditures of almost \$750 for the State (for 699 establishments), but only \$260 for Raleigh County (for 28 establishments), leaving substantial room for more local venues.

Revenues per Establishment

The Economic Census reports that among all Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation establishments throughout the State, the average establishment generates revenues of nearly \$2.0 million. In comparison, average revenues are just \$700,000+ for establishments in Raleigh County.



Market Share

Also based on Economic Census data, West Virginia is capturing 3.7% of the statewide resident expenditure potential on Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation categories. In other words, statewide expenditures on these categories are roughly equivalent to 3.7% of the average resident's per capita income. In comparison, Raleigh County is only capturing 1.3% of its resident expenditure potential – leaving plenty of room for growth and improvement.



Import and Export

In general, Raleigh County is not keeping pace with Kanawha County on offsetting export with import in the Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation industry (with -63% v. -39% net export, respectively).

Visitor Traffic

A study of visitor traffic also reveals that Beckley has high import for arts, entertainment, and recreation. Again, this is more than offset by export and leakage out of the market, and there is an opportunity to offset these losses by increasing daily visitor traffic by up to +4,300.

Retail Trade

In addition to the detailed study of arts, entertainment, and recreation, the 2013 Market Study also includes a study of retail categories and traveler accommodations (restaurants and hotels). Key observations from this work are summarized below:

Effective Trade Area

The 70% effective trade area for most retailers in Beckley is roughly equivalent to Raleigh County, and includes all of Beckley’s neighboring jurisdictions. Residents of Beckley account for about 40% of all retail sales for the City’s retailers. Residents in the surrounding communities account for about 30%, and the remaining 30% of retail sales are generated by visitors from beyond Raleigh County.

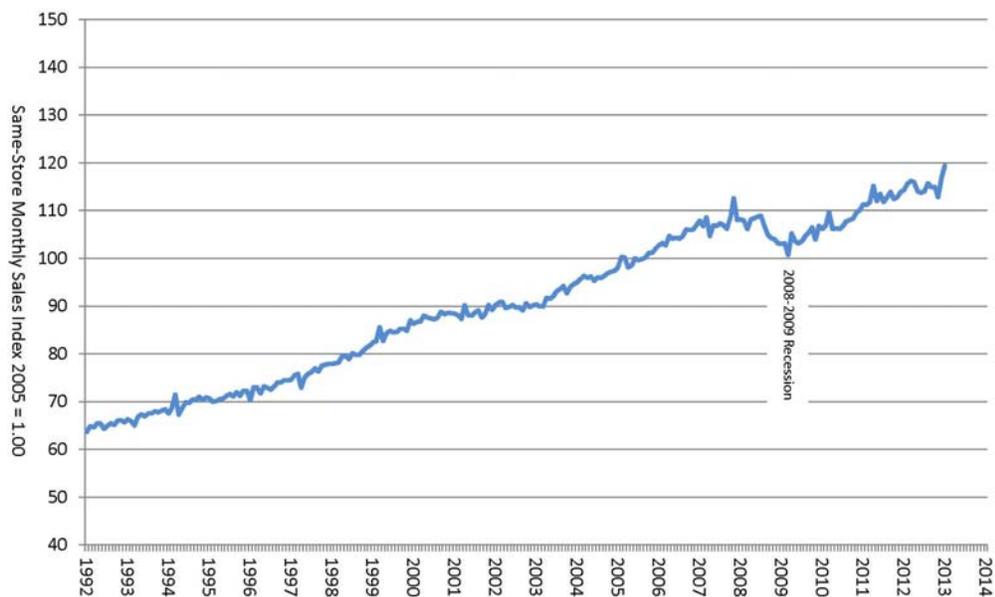
Visitor Traffic

There is a significant upside opportunity for both Raleigh County and the City of Beckley to increase the number of daily visitors and shoppers. For Beckley, successful implementation of a highly effective strategy could increase daily visitor traffic by up to +10,000 to +15,000 visitors during the peak season, and +5,000 blended over all seasons.

Retail Recovery

All signs point to a good recovery of retail sales trends since the recent recession, and full recovery is expected over the next few years. See Exhibit C-1 below.

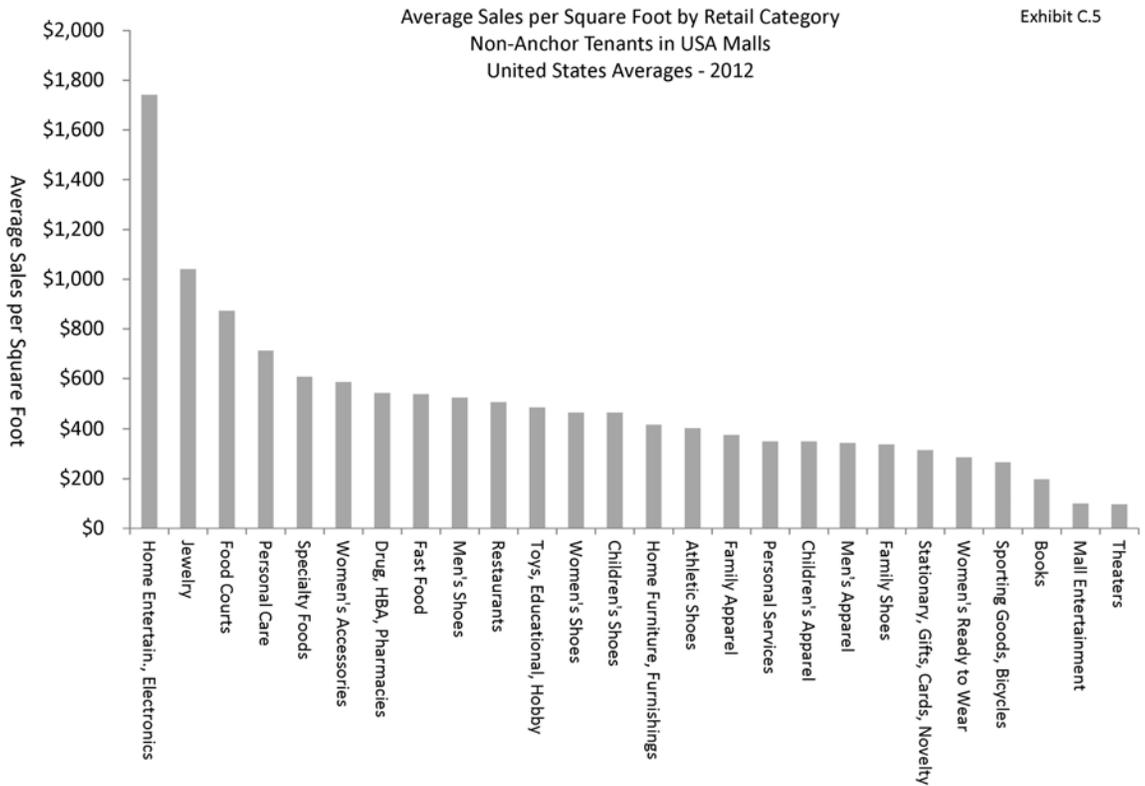
Same-Store Monthly Sales Index for All Chain Stores
Seasonally Adjusted, Excludes Wal-Mart
2005 = 1.00 Index Exhibit C.1



Source: Data provided by the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) Research Department; analysis by LandUse|USA; March 2013. Examples of chains in the analysis include: Kmart, Sears, Target, JCPenney, Macy's, Limited, Kohl's, Gap, Cato, Ross Stores, Nordstrom, TJX Cos., Rite Aid, Walgreens, Costco, Sam's Club, and Sak's Fifth Avenue. Wal-Mart is excluded.

Retail Productivity

Nationwide, retail categories with the highest sales per square foot will also generate the highest revenues. Hard-line categories, big-ticket items, jewelry, food services, and drug stores are among the top retail performers. This consideration is illustrated below in Exhibit C.5 below:



Source: Sales tracking by the International Council of Shopping Centers Research Department; analysis by LandUse | USA; March 2013.

Retail Saturation

The following categories are relatively well-served in the market and the retail analysis does not reveal a significant market gap or opportunity: warehouse clubs, discount stores, building materials stores, and sporting goods stores.

Hotel Accommodations and Food Services

Among hotels and restaurants, Raleigh County has good net import (+25%) relative to Kanawha County (+23%), while the City of Beckley is at almost +80% net import.

Retail Trade

Based on comparisons with Kanawha County (and with appropriate adjustments for market size and income profiles), the biggest gaps and opportunities for Raleigh County are in the following sub-categories:

- Food & beverage stores, grocery stores
- Clothing, accessories, and jewelry
- Furniture and appliance stores
- Automotive Repair, Maintenance
- Health, Personal Care Stores

Retail Shopper Traffic

Among non-residents coming to the City of Beckley each day, an estimated 30,900 of them are shopping at the retail establishments. There is an opportunity to increase daily shopper traffic to Beckley by +8,700. Raleigh County could increase its shopper traffic by up to +10,300.

City of Beckley and Raleigh County, West Virginia Analysis of Existing and Upside Trade Areas and Import

Existing Scenario Based on Retail Sales	2010 Population	Share	Upside Scenario Based on Retail Sales	2010 Population	Share
City of Beckley	17,614	36%	City of Beckley	17,614	31%
Import from Beyond	30,909	64%	Maximum Import	39,632	69%
Total Market	48,523	100%	Total Market	57,246	100%
			Upside Import	8,722	15%
Raleigh County	78,859	68%	Raleigh County	78,859	63%
Import from Beyond	36,432	32%	Maximum Import	46,713	37%
Total Market	115,291	100%	Total Market	125,572	100%
			Upside Import	10,281	8%

Analysis and exhibit prepared by LandUse | USA, April 2013.

Traveler Accommodations

Among non-residents visiting Beckley each day, an estimated 26,400 of them are enjoying the City's restaurants and eating establishments. They might also be staying at some of the hotels. Overall, there is an upside opportunity to increase this trade by another +18,600 patrons per day.

13.6

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the 2013 Market Study, national trends, and the entire planning process, the following recommendations are provided for consideration by the City and its economic development partners for the next ten years. The national trends described in Chapter 5 are considered to be important "tailwinds" that should be recognized in the context of new economic development strategies for Beckley. For reference, these five trends were:

- Residents are aging, which will affect housing, transportation and mobility, land use, skill sets, investment opportunities, etc.
- The "new economy" is based on knowledge, information management and technology, creativity, and entrepreneurship, and communities must be able to attract people with these skills in order to attract or retain modern businesses and industries.
- Placemaking is critical for communities.
- Having a variety of transportation choices is critical.
- There is a connection between the health of residents and the design of the community, and this is becoming more and more of a concern.
- Adoption of smart growth principles and best practices is a growing trend for communities.

Going forward, the following recommendations are made to support economic growth, stimulate job creation, and sustain a growing tax base.

1) Eliminate (or Significantly Reduce) Problems Associated With Confusing Corporate Boundaries.

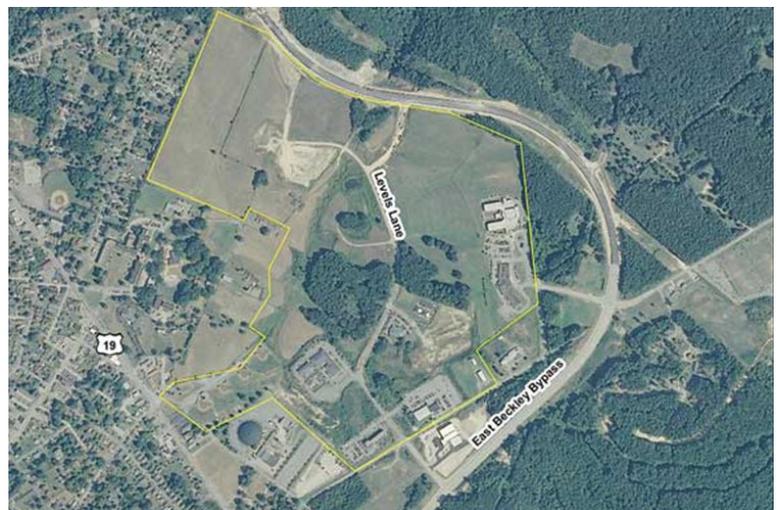
Existing issues associated with confusing corporate limits are more than a minor nuisance - they are a real economic development problem that requires attention. Real costs are incurred in terms of efficient delivery of services and in terms of local planning and development. The City should therefore authorize a study to properly understand all aspects of annexation, especially annexation of the “donut holes” within the corporate limits, but also to even out the exterior boundaries of the City in the future. The study should include a Cost-Benefit Analysis that looks at the existing tax structure, the cost of services provided by all service providers (police, fire, EMS, street maintenance, sidewalks, lighting, water, sanitary sewer, storm drainage, trails, courts, parks, recreation, etc.), costs to provide updated infrastructure, service delivery times (police, fire, EMS), etc. It should also look at alternative delivery methods and costs, and alternative tax structures, so that individuals can make intelligent decisions based on real facts. An educational campaign should be developed and implemented to enlighten residents on the advantages and/or disadvantages of annexation. It may be necessary to offer incentives for a short time to induce people to annex. At the same time, the City cannot neglect City residents and businesses that have been paying taxes all along.

2) Further Investigate The Feasibility of a Meeting / Banquet Facility Near BIG

Renaissance Beckley and the City should further investigate steps to pursue a new meeting/banquet facility at the BIG site in the downtown. The Market Analysis indicated that there is potential for a successful center (specific size and parameters to be determined through a specific study.) This center could include a hotel, conference areas, restaurant, and retail space. Parking is already provided at the BIG facility

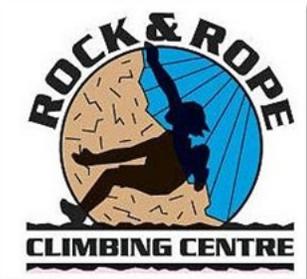
3) Continue to Encourage Build-Out of the East Beckley Employment Center at the Woodlands Pinecrest Business and Technology Park

The East Beckley Employment Center at the Woodlands Pinecrest Business and Technology Park was recently expanded. With a commitment of \$1.2 million, the Park was expanded and the road extended to the East Beckley Bypass. This adds another 30 acres of available sites for development. All economic development partners should work together to assure successful completion of this project and recruitment of new tenants. As these sites are developed, the City should assure that additional industrial and business development sites are available, especially along the Bypass. The City should continue to work with the New River Gorge Regional Economic Development Authority to recruit additional manufacturing jobs to Beckley.



4) Target and Pursue Businesses that Appeal to Recreation Enthusiasts

In the City of Beckley, more indoor/outdoor venues are needed as additional attractions, especially to serve recreation enthusiasts during inclement weather and stays in the City. Some suggestions include a water park, a bounce house, Children’s Discovery Center, high-tech simulation arcade, gyroscopes, wildlife habitat and zoo, game ranch, indoor archery range, training center, indoor rock wall climbing center, hot air balloons, and skydiving at the airport. New venues must be of a high caliber to meet the high-expectations of modern, technologically savvy, and sometimes fickle visitors. As described in Chapter 15, the area north of Harper Road and east of I-77 may be a appealing location for some of these uses.



5) Target And Pursue Businesses That Support Arts, Entertainment And Recreation Activites

Other businesses that should be considered to support the arts, entertainment and recreation venues include resort hotels, themed restaurants (such as Nascar, Legoland), downtown festival competitions, and Bed & Breakfasts.



6) Add More Events

The Beckley area supports a number of very successful events that have grown in popularity. These include the Appalachian Arts & Crafts Fair, Rocket Boys Festival, Sweet Treats, Chili Night, and Taste of Appalachia. Continued efforts to build and expand events are needed to help to extend the visitor season and increase Beckley's attractiveness as a destination.

7) Expand the Airport

According to the New River Gorge Regional Economic Development Authority, Summit leaders are very interested in ensuring that the Raleigh County Airport is improved to provide adequate service to future visitors to the Summit and the Park. This is something that local leaders should work together to pursue. Needed improvements include additional ramp parking for commercial and private planes, a tower, and a runway extension possible in the future. A new apron was completed in 2012.

8) Support Efforts to Upgrade The Mall

Malls all over the nation struggle to maintain profitability and viability. As a private enterprise, the City can't take direct action, but it can be supportive of efforts to upgrade the facility so that it remains viable and more up-to-date with current retail trends and offerings.

9) Pursue Identified Opportunities for Downtown

Several categories of businesses were identified as being potential targets for local economic development efforts. These are businesses that could be lured to Beckley to help fill voids in the existing mix of offerings. Some of the more significant businesses described in the Market Study that are relevant to downtown include:

- **Green grocery store, specialty food store, year-round farm market.** Specific stores include - organics, microbrewery, wine & cheese boutique, vinegar & oil boutique, beef jerky, international meats, home microbrewery supplies, vitamins, health food, gluten-free foods, etc.



- **Home Design & Consignment.** Specific stores include - Home furnishings consignment, furniture restoration & consignment, window treatments store, illuminations, electrical supply, banners, flags, lawn decor.
- **Arts, Music and Boutiques.** Specific stores include: artisan markets/bazars, jewelry, handbags, accessories, leather goods, luggage, craft supplies, soaps, candles, fragrances, etc.
- **Retail Incubator.** Such a facility would allow businesses to rent small spaces in a larger building for better exposure and lower costs.



10) Pursue Other Identified Opportunities for Beckley

The Market Study offers a long list of potential businesses that would help serve unmet needs or otherwise help draw people to Beckley. Some of these businesses are service businesses.