



**Virginia Cooperative Extension**

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# Situation Analysis Report



## Greene County

# 2013

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## Introduction

The Greene Unit of Virginia Cooperative Extension conducted a situation analysis Greene County, which included a unit profile and major statistical changes over the last ten years. Extension Staff held a series of discussion with Extension Leadership Council (E.L.C.) members, personal interviews and a survey instrument sent out to over 500 clients to determine what the key issues were in Greene County. Once this information was formulated, a discussion on how Extension might address these issues was held amongst E.L.C members and they were prioritized by category.

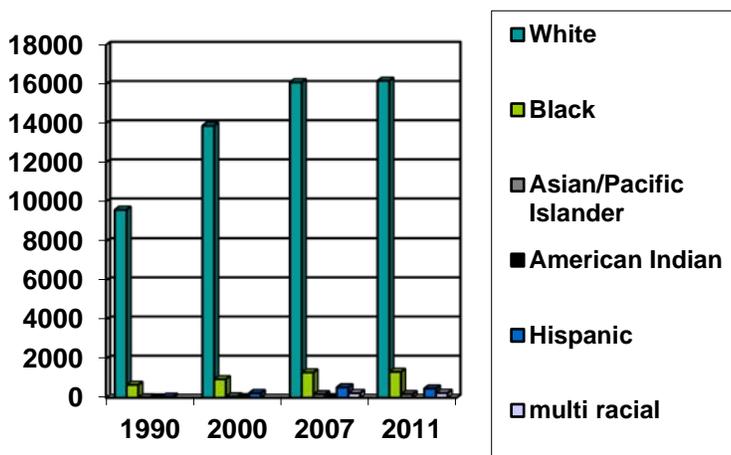
## Unit Profile

Greene County is located in both the Piedmont and Blue Ridge regions of Virginia, approximately 90 miles east of Richmond and 20 miles north of downtown Charlottesville. Greene County's 2007 population estimate is 18,291, up 2.4 % from the 2007 population estimate of 17,860. What this means is that the growth rate in Greene has slowed considerably from the last census.

Geographically, Greene ranks as the second smallest county in Virginia, with 157 square miles. Greene's population density, however, is 97.36, second only to Albemarle County in Planning District 10 and significantly higher than its other neighboring counties of Page, Madison, and Orange.

With only a slight increase in total population, the median age and percentages of various age groups has remained fairly constant. The largest age group in Greene is adults 25-54 years of age. The number of senior citizens has also increased from 2007. Greene has a low minority population, significantly lower than the state averages. The percentage of white persons remains the highest, at 88 %, followed by the Black or African-American population at 7%, the multiracial population at 1%, and the Asian population at 1%. The number of Hispanics of any race has dropped from 4.2% to 2.6% of the Greene's population. Median Household income in Greene has gone up 8% since 2007.

### Greene County's Population by Race



## **Farms and Land Use**

The value of Greene County farmland has nearly doubled since 2007. As of 2007 there were 222 farms, up from 214 in 2007. The total amount of acres in farms is 31,013, which is down by 5%. , but The average net income from farming and the agricultural products sold have gone up, but not at the same pace as expenses, which have gone up by 60%. Cattle inventory has remained almost the same and crop production for corn has gone down. Due to the sloping topography of the land, it is most suitable for pastures, hay fields and forests. Row crops are grown on some of the flatter land.

Most building and growth in Greene has been limited to the Route 29 corridor in the Ruckersville area. This combined with a greater emphasis in the community on farmland preservation, has slowed the decrease in agricultural land. The 2008 financial and housing crisis that faced the entire country lead to some depreciation in real estate values, but not as high as other regions. The housing market in Greene remains slow and new building has also slowed.

## **Education**

There are currently almost 3300 youth enrolled in the Public School system in Greene out of 3700 school age youth in the community. The remainder attend private schools or are home schooled. While approximately 10 % of the 4-H community and project club members are homeschooled. Some programming has been offered to youth enrolled in the local private school as well. 4-H currently has approximately 650 youth enrolled in either school enrichment programs or community or subject based clubs in the community. If duplications (youth enrolled in more than one program) are counted, the number rises to almost 850. This means that 18% of youth are enrolled in 4-H programming.

The number of high school graduates in the community has increased from 67% in 2010 to 92 % in 2013, while the number of persons with some college has actually dropped. The number of children in poverty has increased from 14% to 16% in the past three years and in single parent homes has also increased from 25% to 30 %.

## **Employment**

The 2013 population of Greene County was estimated at 18,791. The 2007 the population was estimated to be 18,281. The unemployment rate was 4.9% which is less than the state and national average. The average annual income per household in Greene has gone up from \$64876 to \$69 267. The total number of employees located in Greene County in 2007 was 2,167 and now is 4473. This has probably been due in part to the addition of Walmart, Lowes and several other restaurants.

Of the local workforce, approximately 1,500 people live and work in the area. Over 7000 of Greene Residents commute to neighboring counties, primarily to Charlottesville and Albemarle. Nearly 2000 employees currently commute to Greene for work.

The top fifteen largest employers in Greene are:

1. Greene County School Board
2. Wal Mart
3. County of Greene
4. Lowes' Home Centers, Inc.
5. Sunland Employee Leasing LLC
6. Osen Hunter Group LLC
7. Blue Ridge School
8. McDonalds
9. Food Lion
10. New System Linen Service Inc.
11. Rapidan Service Authority
12. Mountain Lumber Company
13. A Goff Limo.com LLC
14. Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.
15. The Greene Hills Club

## **Health**

Greene County's rates for health issues are for the most part average for Virginia. Greene's adult obesity rate has increased in the past two years and is at 29%, which is slightly higher than the state average. The number of uninsured has dropped slightly, but is still above the state average. New health care regulations may impact this number.

## **Community and Resident Perspectives**

The boom of growth and development that impacted Greene County in the previous situation analysis has slowed, both due to the population leveling off as well as the economic and housing crises of 2008. The addition of Lowes, Walmart and several other businesses have increased the tax base and added more jobs to the community. However, many of these jobs are lower paying and part time. Many jobs formerly held by teens are now held by adults. Unemployment among teens is twice as high as the rate for adults.

Stanardsville, the county seat, has been engaged in a long term improvement and beautification plan. Concerned citizens also formed a safety council, which now has given way to a non-profit youth council. This council is currently assessing the community's needs in an effort to provide more programming for youth, particularly those in the low-income neighborhood in Stanardsville.

Ruckersville has been impacted by becoming the growth zone for Greene and now has greater traffic and congestion during commuting times. Ruckersville has a town council, but it has not been as cohesive a group as the Stanardsville council.

Greene County Public Schools has had several major administrative changes since the last situation analysis, as well as many changes and reassignments of personnel, mostly the result of the administration's effort to improve standardized test scores.

## **Conducting the Analysis**

A survey was sent out electronically to a variety of VCE clientele through 4-H and ANR newsletter lists and list serves as well as random residences from the phone directory. Over 500 surveys were sent out. In addition our ELC members were challenged to take the survey to persons who were not currently VCE clients. While we had a fairly low return (21 surveys), the surveys came from a fairly wide variety of persons in the community and represented the population fairly well from a demographic standpoint. Results from these surveys were fairly inconclusive, with many issues tying when scored on a numeric system. In order to add clarity and select the appropriate issues, we held several discussions amongst our ELC as to what the key issues were for Greene County and how Extension might address them.

## **Priority Issues**

### **Report Analysis Results**

Our survey divided up the various common issues for each discipline of Extension, by its area. Based on survey results as well as discussion with the ELC and key informants, the following issues were identified as priorities in Greene:

#### **Issue 1: Land Use and Agriculture**

##### **Agriculture Sustainability**

This issue includes agricultural production and profitability, farm business management, generational land transfer, equine and livestock management and niche agriculture business opportunities. VCE addresses this issue through a variety of Agriculture and Natural Resource programs, including: weed/insect identification and pest management recommendations, soil analysis and fertilizer recommendations, pesticide applicator certification, researched-based and commodity specific educational programs, individual consultations and advice, as well as on-line publications and access to university and regional specialists. Currently Greene County does not have a full time ANR agent serving the farming community, but is served by neighboring agents and an agent with part time assignment in Greene. A greater number of services and programs could be offered to our farming community if we had a larger staff with a full time agent stationed in the Greene Office.

##### **Local Food Systems**

This issue encompasses food safety, beginning farmer education, marketing of agricultural products, home gardening and food preservation. VCE addresses this issue through GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) Training, Serv Safe certification, the Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition curriculum, research-based educational programs and publications (i.e.

Going to Market), Master Gardener volunteers (who provide advice and problem solving for the home gardener) and home canning and food preservation education. While most of these services and classes are available to our residents within the planning district, we lack the staff to offer many of these programs on a more local basis.

## **Issue 2: Community Issues**

### **Energy**

Rising fuel and electrical prices have led to most residents having less disposable income. Extension's role can be through education about budgeting and energy efficiency so that residents can more wisely and efficiently use their available income. Financial management programs for youth and adults can help residents cope with these rising costs, as well as programs on energy efficiency. Extension can have little other impact on this issue.

### **Science and Technology Literacy**

There is a widening gap, particularly among generations regarding the availability and use of technology. While the majority of our audience has internet and email, some clients remain underserved both in the use and accessibility of technology. As part of our efforts to reach the underserved, we must consider options for all clients, not just those with computers and internet. On the other hand, increased use of our website, internet resources and technology has allowed us to reach our audience efficiently and cheaply. Youth are more attracted to programs that allow them to engage with technology, especially when this can be combined with traditional programming as well.

### **Community Services and Planning**

Residents ranked this equally with Science and Technology Literacy. Extension's opportunities lie through increasing local governmental officials' involvement with our statewide Community Viability programs. 4-H, through its service learning projects and citizenship projects can serve to involve youth in the community and increase their awareness and involvement in local government as adults.

## **Issue 3: Family and Youth**

### **Youth Activities**

The greatest issue listed was for more youth activities in the community. As evidenced by the growing concerns of the Stanardsville Safety Council and Youth Council, a greater emphasis has been placed on ways to curb youth violence, drug abuse, and increase community involvement. 4-H offers several programs for middle and high school age youth as well as programs for youth of all ages. By offering youth alternative activities, service opportunities, and job and life skill training, youth can be given alternatives to the negative influences of violence and drugs in their community. Youth leadership, Dropout rates, and many of the other issues that were considered important can all be addressed by offering greater

opportunities for 4-H and other youth programming in the community, as well as targeted programs on life skills and citizenship.

### **Health, Nutrition and Obesity**

Adult and child obesity impact almost 30% of the population of Greene. Programs on nutrition, exercise, preparing foods at low cost and utilizing local foods are all current programs offered by Extension personnel. Over half of the 4-H programs in the schools and in the community clubs have several programs or activities each year focusing on food and nutrition subject matter. With the addition to a new FCS agent to the planning district, more adult educational programs will be made available as well.