



Situation Analysis Report



Henry County/ City of Martinsville

2013

UNIT Extension Staff

Melanie W. Barrow, Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent
Donna Draper, Unit Administrative Assistant
Kim Hairfield, SNAP-Ed Program Assistant
Brian L. Hairston, 4-H Youth Extension Agent
Lisa LaLiberty, SNAP-Ed Program Assistant

UNIT Extension Leadership Council

Darrell Jackson
Deborah Buchanan
Eric Hairston
Dale Wagoner

Introduction

The Henry County/Martinsville Virginia Cooperative Extension Unit (VCE) conducted a comprehensive situation analysis during the 2013 calendar year. This is a reviewed and updated version of the Situation Analysis conducted in 2008. A unit profile based on U. S. Census data, Census of Agriculture data, and locally generated economic data was the initial step to determine the current situation and look for areas of importance for Extension programming. The second step involved gathering data from local citizens and groups of citizens by surveys and interviews.

The Unit Staff reviewed both the 2004 and 2008 Situation Analysis and this was used as a guideline during the ensuing meetings.

Upon review of the 2008 Situational Analysis, it was determined by the Unit Staff and the ELC members that the issues presented at that time have been addressed through all reasonable efforts.

Issue 1: Lack of employment opportunities/continued loss of jobs

Unfortunately, this issue, as with others identified below, is out of the scope of the VCE mission. We can, do and will continue to provide individuals that are suffering from low-income situations due to such causes, with information for budgeting; making the food dollar go further, special diet needs (diabetic, pre-natal, etc.)

Issue 2: Continuous reduction of Governmental funding

With the official word of “recession” being slated by the Federal Government, this issue has been talked about much by key informants in our area. The prospective is that as the State budget declines, so does local governmental body funding. This in turn not only reduces or eliminates state programming, but also influences the amount of funding provided by the local governmental bodies. Such cuts cost the consumer in a lack of adequate programming, provided by agencies such as VCE and DSS, which aids those that are suffering from Issue 1. Extension will continue to provide the citizens with as much information and education as can be appropriated due to lack of funding.

Issue 3: Cost of living increase

This issue has been deemed a reaction to the prior two issues. With an increase in the cost of food and other commodities, residents have to find ways to cut costs in order to provide essential needs to themselves and/or their families. VCE can, do and will continue to provide individuals that are suffering from low-income situations due to such causes, with information for budgeting; making the food dollar go further, special diet needs (diabetic, pre-natal, etc.)

Issue 4: Responsible Parenting

Programs designed to educate parents specifically on what they should be doing at home in the areas of discipline and academics, were identified as important. Children feel the effects of parental stress. Many times their anxiety is revealed in negative ways, such as bad behavior or not performing academically as well as they can. Children reap the benefits of proper parental discipline and leadership. This issue should be addressed through partnership with other agencies in the community.

Unit Profile

The County of Henry and the City of Martinsville are located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the south-central Piedmont region of Virginia. The Virginia-North Carolina state line forms the southern border of the region. Roanoke is 50 miles north of Martinsville/Henry County; Washington, D.C. is 293 miles northeast; Norfolk is 232 miles east; and Greensboro and Winston-Salem, North Carolina are 50 and 55 miles south, respectively. The region offers unique locational advantages, placed halfway between the Roanoke Valley and the Piedmont Triad with direct connections via US Highways 220 and 58. US 58 is an efficient access route to the Port of Hampton Roads.

People continue to leave Henry County and the City of Martinsville. Between 2000 and 2010, the Henry County population decreased by 6.52% and the City of Martinsville by 10.35%, as residents re-located to places outside of the county and city. This number is an impression of the economic decline that has burdened the area for a little over a decade. Since 1998, at least 30 manufacturing companies have either reduced the workforce significantly or closed the doors altogether. This has led to staggering unemployment rates as high as 20.4% in 2009; and as of August 2013, 14.6% in the city of Martinsville (the highest in the state) and 8.7% in Henry County, respectively. These numbers do not take into account employers that use "seasonal" workforce and lay off employees several times a year.

From 2007-2011, for the employed population 16 years and older, the leading industries in Henry County were Manufacturing at 25.6%; Educational services, and health care, and social assistance at 20.8%; and Retail Trade at 12.4% (81.2% private and salary workers, 13% government workers, 5.8% self-employed)...in the City of Martinsville were Educational services, and health care, and social assistance at 21.7%; Manufacturing at 18.6%; and Retail Trade at 13.7% (82.1% Private and wage and salary workers, 13% government workers, 4.7% self-employed).

The median age of Henry County residents is 44.7 years and the City of Martinsville resident is 43.6 years. Total population of Henry County is 54,151 (71.5% white, 21.8% African American, 4.7% Hispanic/Latino, 1.9% some other race); while the City of Martinsville's total population is 13,821 (48.5% white, 44.5% African American, 4% Hispanic/Latino, 2.7% some other race).

From 2007-2011, residents aged 25 years or older of Henry County and Martinsville City, 11% and 8.8% have less than a ninth grade education; 14.8% and 11.9% have some high school

education but no diploma; and 35.2% and 29.5 % graduated high school – respectively. 22.9% of Henry County and 18.6% of Martinsville City residents have some college education, but have not graduated; 8.2% and 9.4% have obtained an Associate's degree; 12.2% and 7.5% have graduated with a Bachelor's degree; and 6.5% and 3.8% have obtained a Graduate or Professional degree – respectively.

The workforce is almost evenly divided between males and females. For the year 2011, per capita income and all measures of median income were significantly below the same figures for Virginia as a whole. However, Henry County and Martinsville City households only earn \$33,695 and 32,440, respectively. It is obvious that Henry County and Martinsville incomes are below where they could be and that programs targeted for low income audiences should be provided.

From 2007-2011, 18.8% of Henry County and 24.1% of Martinsville City residents were living below poverty level, an 8.1% and 13.4% higher than the state average. Related children under age 18 below the poverty level was over double that of the state average at 27.2% in Henry County and a staggering 36.1% in the City of Martinsville.

From 2007-2011, Henry County and Martinsville had a total of 26,000 housing units, 13% of which were vacant. Of the total housing units, 70.5% was in single-unit structures, 6% was in multi-unit structures, and 21.5% were mobile homes. 19.78% of the housing units were built since 1990. There were 23,000 occupied housing units - 18,000 (77%) owner occupied and 5,200 (23%) renter occupied. Five percent of the households did not have telephone service and 7% of the households did not have access to a car, truck, or van for private use. Multi Vehicle households were not rare. 33.7% percent had two vehicles and another 28% had three or more. With the large number of older homes, there appears to be a need for programs covering home maintenance and repair. Owners who have paid off their mortgages tend to spend more of their incomes on gardening and landscaping, especially retired residents who have more time. Environmental horticulture educational programming will help them do the work right while protecting the environment. Programs, such as, container gardening programs, will serve those who live in apartments while programs targeted toward homeowners can be adapted to serve those who rent houses.

The trend for agriculture production has increased in Henry County. The following information was gained from the 2007 Census of Agriculture. The number of farms in Henry County had fallen off by 16% from 362 in 1997 to 305 in 2002, but has since rebounded to 340 farms in 2007. However, the acreage of farmland has decreased from 56,667 acres in 1997 to 53,064 acres reported in 2002, down to only 50,779 in 2007 to 149 acres in 2007. This is consistent with the decrease in farm size from 174 acres in 2002. Some drastic declines in Henry County agriculture include Market Value of Production (down 46%), Market Value of Production Per Farm (down 36%), Government Payments (down 55%), and Government Payments per Farm (down 43%). These numbers show a hefty and steady decline in agriculture production in the county.

Community and Resident Perspectives

Two forms of surveys were developed for the Henry County/Martinsville VCE Unit.

A survey was designed to sample the youth of our community and their concerns. A group consisting 300± students, aged 10 – 12, were asked to fill out surveys indicating what they felt were the most important areas that VCE could assist this region in.

The most important issues identified by Henry County/Martinsville youth included **after school programs, developing leadership skills, money management, how to find a job, caring for senior citizens, caring for people with special needs, nutrition and health, and child care.**

4-H programs the youth felt were important included camping, school honors, study groups, outdoor skills, sports, and community service. Other services such as mentoring homemakers, gardening, and robotics were listed as programs the youth would like to participate in. As far as specific programs that Henry County/Martinsville youth would participate in, a similar pattern of preferences is evident. **Physical Programs** such as outdoor sports and exercise would be popular. **Money management** was also ranked high on the list, followed by **nutrition, computer training, anger and stress management, drug intervention and dealing with personal loss, disappointment and depression.**

Risky behavior issues drew a lot of attention. The youth felt more education is needed for youth in our community. They also felt that parents should be educated about the indicators that their children are engaging in is risky behavior and the consequences for such activities. They feel it is very important to offer activities that will provide a safe alternative for the young people to participate in.

The second survey developed focused on the views of Key Informants throughout the community. This survey was developed using the new Qualtrics technology. We drew our **Priority Issues** from the Key Informant surveys.

Priority Issues

Based on the unit profile and resident perspectives data from above, the following top priority issues were identified for Henry County and the City of Martinsville.

ISSUE 1: Nutrition

Nutrition was identified as the top issue facing Henry County and the City of Martinsville.

Poor nutrition, obesity, and chronic disease are facets of the larger issue of health and are many times approached from a reactive approach. It was identified that these can best be addressed through education, and opportunities to apply the information received in productive

ways by offering classes with practical applications at widespread locations throughout the area. It was also suggested that teaching parents about good nutrition habits would encourage an overall healthier community. Agricultural sustainability was mentioned as a way to provide the community with food production educational opportunities that focus on the health benefits of laboring as exercise, personal food production as healthy food alternatives and personal food production as a means of food security.

This issue is currently being addressed with Henry County and the City of Martinsville VCE resources. Based on the situation analysis, no further action is required.

ISSUE 2: Child Development

Child Development was identified as the second most pressing issue facing Henry County and the City of Martinsville.

Child development is considered to be very vital to society and so it is important to understand the social, cognitive, emotional and educational development of children. It is suggested that early learning will give each child a better life and that educational programs related to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (S.T.E.M) would be very beneficial to the children of our community by giving them a jump start to better jobs and higher wages. Basic reading skills, problem solving and creative arts are a few other competencies that were encouraged.

This issue is currently being addressed with Henry County and the City of Martinsville VCE resources. Based on the situation analysis, no further action is required.

ISSUE 3: Parenting

Parenting was identified as the third most pressing issue in Henry County and the City of Martinsville.

Parenting is the ability to rear/raise a child from birth to adulthood by supporting the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development needs of one's offspring. Responses showed that some felt that young parents lacked the skills and knowledge to rear children and that the responsibility was largely being placed on the teachers; which took time away from educators' being able to focus fully on academics. It was also mentioned that many parents are not proactive in the education of their children and are solely relying on schools to educate our youth. It was suggested that resources and workshops designed to address issues related to discipline, nutrition, general care, education, financial responsibility, etc., be offered.

This issue is not currently being addressed by Henry County and the City of Martinsville VCE , but could be appropriately addressed by VCE if appropriate resources were available.

ISSUE 4: School Dropout

School Dropout was identified as the fourth most pressing issue in Henry County and the City of Martinsville.

School dropouts are directly related to youth activities, youth violence, life skills, and decision making for our youth. The relationship between poverty, crime and school dropout is frightening. Giving young people a sense of purpose and a feeling of belonging would help keep them in school and avoid the violence that comes from being outside a positive school environment. There should also be more programs that address youth violence in order to help prevent behaviors such as anger, violence, bullying, etc. There should also be more programs that encourage students to choose a career, such as the agriculture and horticulture programs, which are currently only offered at only one county high school, in ways which more academic fields do not.

This issue is currently being addressed with current Henry County and the City of Martinsville VCE resources. Based on the situation analysis, effort to collaborate with the Henry County and City of Martinsville School Systems and other youth-based organizations, need to be explored to better address this issue.