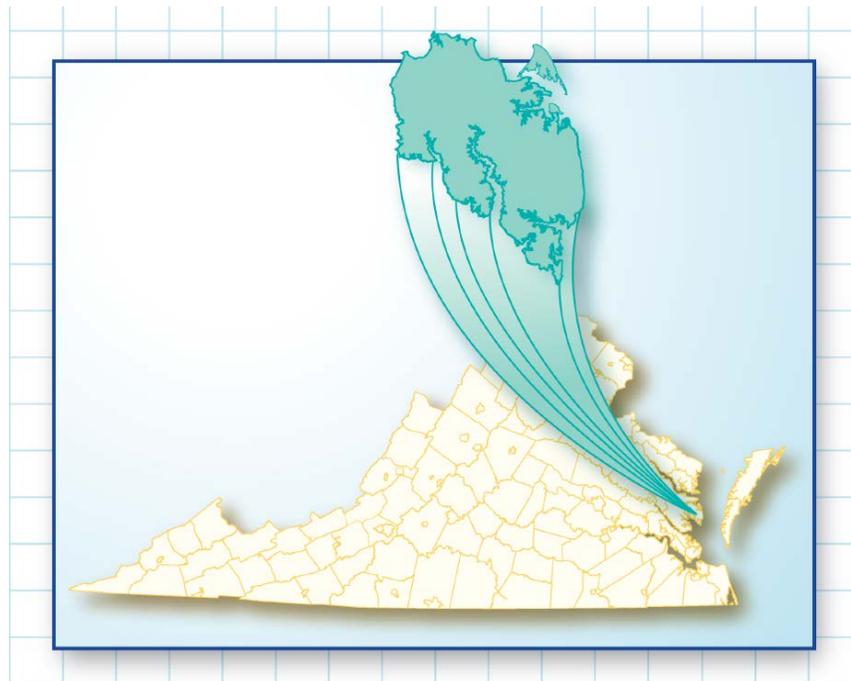




Situation Analysis Report



Mathews County

2013

Mathews Extension Staff

Mary Lee Andrewskiewicz, 4-H Youth Extension Agent
Janette Parkin, Unit Administrative Assistant

Mathews Extension Leadership Council

Steve Whiteway
Chuck McCarty
Pete Hall
Jonathan Putt
Nancy Welch



Introduction

Mathews County conducted a comprehensive situation analysis during the calendar year 2004. This information was re-examined and updated in 2008 and again in 2013. The situation analysis process was led by the Extension Leadership Council (ELC) and involved the use of a Mathews County Unit Profile, as well as gathering community perspectives on issues and problems in the county. Data and information from these two sources were analyzed by the ELC and priority issues were identified.

The ELC met two times during the situation analysis process. At the first meeting, an overview of the situation analysis process was covered. An initial situation analysis plan was developed that included tasks and timelines for ELC members and VCE staff. Also, the unit profile was reviewed. Based on this, the first task was development of the unit community survey and the analysis of the unit profile. Using the provided report from the VCE Situation Analysis Resource website, ELC members and VCE staff analyzed pieces of the data sets to tailor the survey to the community (based on the template from the VCE Situation Analysis Resource website). For the survey, the theoretical population was identified as community representatives. These representatives were accessible, as most were a part of local organizations. A list of contacts was created from the recommendations of the ELC members. These contacts were then distributed among the ELC members with surveys for each contact. ELC members were given both paper copies and a link to the online version of the survey so that those community members without access to the Internet would have the same opportunity to provide input. At the second meeting of the ELC, findings from the unit profile and the community surveys were presented and discussed, and the top priority issues for Mathews County identified, including those that could be addressed with current VCE resources and those that were outside the scope of current VCE resources.

Unit Profile

Mathews County is located in the Eastern part of Virginia on the tip of the Middle Peninsula.

The data indicated that **the population age 65 and older** is 24.84% of the total population based on reports from 2011. This is a 3.19% increase since the 2000 census. This is more than double the Virginia and National averages for 2011. Because of this high number, it is important to look at community issues focused on this older population.

The **mean income** increased by \$11,086 from 2007 to 2011, an 18% increase. The mean income of 2011 was \$70,050. This is less than the Virginia mean income, but comparable within \$1000 for the 2011 National mean income.

The number of **sexually transmitted infections per 100k** doubled from 2010 to 2013. There was a slight decrease (6 per 1,000 females age 15-19) of teenage pregnancies in that same time period.

In regards to **education attainment**, those of eligible ages who have graduated high school rose from 83% to 98% from 2010 to 2013. Those with some college rose from 22% to 50%.

The percentage of **children in poverty** increased from 13% to 18% from 2010 to 2013.

The **unemployment rate** increased 2% from 2010 to 2013. However, the 6% rate of 2013 is comparable to the Virginia rate.

The 2013 **graduation rate** was an impressive 95%.

Community and Resident Perspectives

In order to reach a representative sample of the different areas of the Mathews County community, survey participants were selected using purposive sampling where community and organization leaders were chosen to participate. These participants were selected to represent the residents with which they most commonly work. For example, leaders from youth organizations would represent the youth issues in the community, leaders from organizations targeting seniors would represent the senior issues in the community, and so on.

Priority Issues

Based on the unit profile and resident perspectives data from above, the following top priority issues (in no order) were identified for Mathews County.

Issue 1: Water Quality

Water Quality was identified as a top issue facing Mathews County. Based on the comments on the community survey, this is mainly an issue of education and awareness. Due to the proximity of Mathews to so many sources of water and the sea level of the community, many people find it very important to know about and understand water quality. There are a few ways in which this can be addressed. The education of the public can be achieved with Extension resources. This would involve using university resources such as research and knowledge of individuals. Additionally, local government can be made aware of the many resources at the universities throughout Virginia regarding water quality. This would help ensure that local policymakers, decision-makers, and those running for local office might be well-informed of the issues surrounding water quality here in Mathews. Additionally, it was noted that using these University resources would be politically neutral and would bring pure research-based knowledge to the community.

Issue 2: Obesity/Nutrition

Obesity/Nutrition was identified as a second pressing issue in Mathews County. In terms of youth, the schools in Mathews have a focus on increase nutritional value of the foods served. Additionally, the High School is currently the provider of the meals for the Meals on Wheels program in the community which provides nutritional lunches for needy residents of Mathews. Also, Hands Across Mathews is an organization which currently provides one-on-one mentoring for individuals throughout the community. This is an opportunity for Extension to provide “train-the-trainer” educational programming to those mentors so that they might be able to better serve the Mathews community. Extension can also address this issue by increasing the health programming in 4-H in order to reach the youth population of the community. This, in partnership with the train-the-trainer programming, would help reach multiple age groups which were mentioned in the community survey comments.

Issue 3: Parenting

Parenting was identified another pressing issue in Mathews County. The comments in the community survey were primarily about other people’s children rather than individuals stating that they themselves would be interested in attending parenting classes. Based on past offerings, it seems that those needing parenting classes are less likely to attend even free classes. Therefore, it would be necessary to generate interest in programs prior to implementation. One way in which this issue could be addressed is to use the existing Parent-Teacher Associations as a starting point. These parents may be more willing to receive educational programming regarding parenting and could then generate interest in other parents in the Mathews community. Head Start in Mathews already has parent education, so it may be beneficial to determine if Extension programming can be implemented there.

Issue 4: Youth Issues

Youth Issues was identified as a fourth pressing issue in Mathews County. Many respondents indicated that the various youth issues on the survey were considered important to the Mathews community. These included youth community involvement, youth development, and youth activities. The comments related to youth issues were generally about making fun and hands-on programming available to youth, as well as involving teens in community service activities. Because there is already a Teen Leader 4-H Club, this group could partner with the local YMCA Teen Leader group, as well as service organizations at Mathews High School in order to organize a joint community service project which would be publicized to the general Mathews community. This would allow the teens to show their community involvement and partner with other groups. 4-H should continue to partner with the Coalition 4 Kids. Additionally, there should be some 4-H involvement with the local Boys and Girls Clubs, as well as the schools in order to provide the hands-on programming that kids will enjoy. This would also address comments about preparing youth for the future.

Issue 5: Small Businesses

Small Businesses was identified as a fifth pressing issue in Mathews County. Many comments on the community survey regarding this issue had to do with local government as well as financial literacy. It may be beneficial for a Chamber of Commerce to be organized so that local businesses can have one group to work with in order to be represented. This would not be addressed with Extension resources, but it can be brought to the attention of local government. In terms of financial literacy, it would be beneficial to generate interest in financial literacy programs offered by Extension prior to offering the programs. In the past, attendance by small business owners has been low. The Extension Office can also use resources from other states' Extension Systems which meet the needs of small business owners.

In addition to these five issues, awareness of the resources in Mathews County was brought to the table by the ELC members. Many of the comments in the community survey indicated that individuals may not be aware of resources which already address the issues presented. Because of this, it may be necessary to promote resource marketing within the community. The Extension Office can begin to address this by attempting to reach many diverse members of the community in order to inform them of the resources available through VCE. Current efforts towards this include regular promotions of 4-H to all students, monthly radio interviews, and brochures of all services offered by Virginia Cooperative Extension to be distributed to residents and new community members.