



Situation Analysis Report



Scott County

2013

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Introduction

Scott County conducted a situation analysis update during 2013. The process was a collaborative effort between the Scott County Extension Office and the Scott County Extension Leadership Council (ELC). Data and information gathered assisted in updating priority issues related to extension programming.

The ELC reviewed demographic data in the Situation Analysis of 2004 (SA 2004) in contrast to updated demographic data from the US Census 2010, US Census of Agriculture 2007, and other pertinent information to familiarize itself with trends and shifts in trends that could be addressed through educational programming provided by Virginia Cooperative Extension. Numerous issues were identified, condensed, and key issues defined during this process. These discussions led to the development of four major priority issues that could be addressed through Virginia Cooperative Extension and partnerships with local agencies in areas outside current VCE resources.

Unit Profile

Scott County is a rural, largely agrarian county located within the Appalachian Valley of Southwest Virginia. This 538 square mile county is located on the Tennessee State line and is part of the Johnson City, Kingsport, and Bristol Combined Statistical Area (CSA).

Roanoke is 168 miles northeast; Richmond is 244 miles north east; and Atlanta is 310 miles south.

Population

The United States Census Bureau statistics reports the Scott County 2013 population as 23,334. This indicates an overall slight increase (0.15%) compared to the 23,300 cited in the SA 2004 and an increase of 0.68% from 23,177 in 2010. The population decline seems to be moderating when rates of 4.27% and 6.92% in 1970 and 1980, respectively, are compared. Six incorporated towns were located within the county boundaries in 2012; the county seat, Gate City (pop. 2,008), Clinchport (pop. 69), Duffield (pop. 90), Dungannon (pop. 326), Nickelsville (pop. 376), and Weber City (pop. 1,293). The trend was a reduction in populous within city limits with the exception of Duffield and Dungannon.

Age Distribution

The median age of Scott County residents in 2012 is 44.7 indicating an increase compared to 33.4 in 1980 and 41.4 in 2000. Age distribution in 2011 was 26.68% under the age of 25 years; 46.97% ages 25-59; and 26.35% 60 years and older. Compared to 2007, those in the 25-59 age brackets decreased while the 60+ increased in similar fashion.

Racial Composition

The racial composition of Scott County remains relatively unchanged at 98% white and 2% non-white.

Household Data

Per capita income during the period 2007-2011 was \$20,501. An increase from \$17,944 from the 2001 data cited in the SA 2004, but still only 63% per capita of other Virginians. The percentage of population (all ages) living below the poverty level increased from 13.9% in 1999 to 18.3% during the same 2007-2011 timeframe, indicating a poverty level 75% higher than others in Virginia. Children in poverty saw similar increases from 22% in 2010 to 25% in 2013.

Median value of owner-occupied housing increased 23.6% from 2000 (\$69,100) to 2011 (\$90,400).

Unemployment remains a concern, with an increase of 2.1% being realized from 2010 to 2013.

Persons listed as disabled follow a trend higher than the State of Virginia as shown as 5-20 (8.1% vs. 8.1%), 21-64 (28.6% vs. 17.5%), and 65+ (54.4% vs. 42.1%)

Medical Conditions

Premature deaths (yrs. lost before age 75 per 100k) increased from 8,902 in 2010 to 10,984 in 2013. This trend follows morbidity estimates increasing from 22% to 24% during the same timeframe.

Adult obesity has decreased 2% from 30% to 28%, however is higher than the state average of 25%. Excessive drinking also increased 3%, while teen birth rate remained level at 49 per 1000 females ages 15-19, though higher than the state average of 21 per 1000 females ages 15-19.

Chronic diseases, such as heart disease (233 vs. 218), malignant neoplasms (205.3 vs. 190), cerebrovascular diseases (63.2 vs. 58.3), COPD (40.3 vs. 39.2), and Diabetes (27.1 vs. 21.7) trend higher than state averages per 100,000 people.

Healthcare is limited both geographically and economically in Scott County. Uninsured persons increased two percent, with 14.1% of Scott County residents being entirely without insurance compared to 12.5% of Virginians. Primary care physician ratios (3,862:1) are approaching three times the ratio for the State (1067:1), however this statistic should be evaluated with discretion due to patient access to physicians in the Kingsport, Bristol, and Johnson City, Tennessee area.

Substance abuse and mental health issues are high in the county, while resources to address these issues are limited.

Education

Scott County had 4,287 students enrolled in 2011, an increase from 3,680 cited in the SA 2004. There are nine elementary schools, one middle school, three high schools, and the Scott County Career and Technical Center. High school graduation rates have increased dramatically from 2010 (65%) to 2013 (94%) and residents with some college also experienced dramatic increases (8% vs 52%) during the same timeframe.

Agricultural Data

Agricultural data follows varying trends when comparing 2002 to 2007 Census of Agriculture data. Total farms have decreased 6% to 1,396 (male operators decreased to 1,250 and female operators decreased to 146) while acreage in farm land (153,689) decreased 2%. An increase in farmer age from 54.9 to 57 was observed.

Cattle numbers remain static, with 26,885 head, goat numbers almost doubled (1,231 vs. 2,201), sheep numbers quadrupled (1,022 vs. 4,417), and laying hens increased 80% from 397 to 1,952.

Corn crops have increased for both silage and grain corn, while tobacco acreage dramatically decreased by 300% following the tobacco quota “buyout” of 2004. Forage acreage decreased five percent to 22,993. Vegetable acreage remains consistent.

Community and Resident Perspectives

The Scott County ELC has entered a phase of rebuilding, and we used the ELC as a Focus Group of Key Informants from across the county. Individuals from county leadership, agriculture, youth and education, and health care were some of the facets of the county represented. Issues were identified during a forum meeting and then discussed and categorized. The final task was to prioritize these issues into by importance and the ability of Virginia Cooperative Extension to address.

Priority Issues

Leadership (Mentors/Tutors)

All participants relayed a concern over the lack of appropriate education, jobs, and investment into the county for future prosperity. To address these issues, strong competent leadership is needed to ensure a successful future. The group also identified 4-H Youth Development as a significant part of this success by identifying and cultivating leadership through in-school programs. After-school programs could also successfully build leaders through adult/child interaction, and an exchange of local history, heritage, and an appreciation for trades and hobbies.

Family Preservation (Parental Involvement, Substance Abuse Reduction, Education)

In close association with leadership is family preservation. Due to the financial strain placed on families, there is a disassociation between quality and quantity of time families spend with each other. Lower educational attainment also reduces a parent's ability to assist with school work and activities. A lack of parental involvement may also be affected by single family households, multiple jobs, and a desire for financial betterment. The effects of substance abuse can also hold a negative effect on households and parental involvement. 4-H Youth Development, ANR, and Family and Consumer Sciences may all address these issues through classes on budgeting, nutrition courses, communication (written and oral), financial management, small business development, and offering opportunities for mentorship (adult/child interaction).

Careers (Wages, Return of Youth)

Tied in to family preservation is career development. Factors such as single parent households and multiple job holders impact the quality and quantity of time spent by families. More importantly is a lack of appropriate jobs for returning youth. To address issues identified in the leadership category, retention of youth was indicated as a high priority. This issue is tied directly with the future economic stability and viability of the county. While the county has manufacturing job opportunities, there is a need for higher paying jobs which will allow returning youth to find careers and, in turn, establish residence within the county. While the local office of Virginia Cooperative Extension cannot directly address these issues, educational opportunities for local leadership, provided through VCE Community Development specialists, may be appropriate.

Children / Elderly Population (Health Care, Disease Management)

With growing populations in the children and 60+ populations, there is a unique opportunity for health and disease education. Family and Consumer Sciences and SNAP/FNP can assist by providing education in nutrition and healthy food choices. FCS has identified other resources provided by the Virginia Department of Health for disease management classes and health care issues for chronic diseases. Increased marketing of services and classes were also identified as needs.

Increased outdoor activities and recreation can be addressed through joint programming and outside resources through partnerships with the Department of Tourism, Natural Tunnel State Park, and private outdoor recreation companies. Community gardening and raised bed gardening can also be implemented for both physical activity and availability of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Agriculture (Economics, Sustainability, Literacy)

Agriculture is the leading industry in Scott County, bringing in over \$13 million dollars in sales annually, and contributing over half the annual tax revenues. Even though these numbers strongly favor agriculture, there is a lack of understanding and support for its significance in the

county infrastructure. While traditional farm meetings are needed, a need for supporting younger farmers not familiar with extension programs and alternative agriculture opportunities, such as organic vegetable production, farm transition development, and non-traditional farming, were identified as needed programming. In addition, supporting new ideas such as farm-to-table initiatives, farm internships, value-added product development, “eco” and “agri” tourism, and encouraging Farm Bureau’s Ag in the Classroom were also mentioned as needs. These ideas can be tied all together to develop a youth component which invests quality and quantity of time with parents and/or caregivers. Increasing the amount of community outreach to improve the understanding of agricultural significance and importance was also discussed as a way to grow traditional and non-traditional programs.