



# Situation Analysis Report



## Tazewell County 2013

### Tazewell County Extension Staff

John W. Blankenship, Jr., Unit Coordinator/Agriculture and Natural Resources Senior Extension Agent  
Samuel "Sam" Leech, 4-H Youth Development, Associate Extension Agent  
Donna Meade, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent  
Rhonda Fuller, 4-H Youth Development 4-H Program Assistant  
Anne Cordle Arno, Family Nutrition Program (EFNEP & SNAP-Ed) Program Assistant  
Donna Horne, Unit Administrative Assistant

### Tazewell County Extension Leadership Council

Robert L. Moss, Jr., Chair,  
Elizabeth Bennett, Member  
Sarah Bowling, Member  
Cora Long, Member  
Jennifer Matney, Member  
Mike Hymes, Member  
Jane Sorensen, Member

## Introduction

The local Extension Leadership Council (ELC) led the Tazewell County Extension Office in conducting a comprehensive situation analysis. The situation analysis was developed to help guide Virginia Cooperative Extension's programming efforts address the needs of the population that we serve. The 2008 Situation Analysis was used as a baseline to prepare and plan the process. The data has been obtained and analyzed through a number of credible sources. Key informant interviews, focus group meetings, web based searches and researching demographic information were the primary modes used to gather these perspectives.

Tazewell County began gathering information for the situation analysis in the fall of 2013, according to the guidelines, procedures and training provided by VCE. The Extension Office used Qualtrics Survey Software to develop the Tazewell County Community Survey. This survey was given to focus groups after discussion of a local needs assessment. Community, County, Regional and National data, such as the 2010 United States Census and the 2007 Census of Agriculture were used to compile the report. Much of the data and information available is out-of-date and the Unit should continue to evaluate and recognize community needs for informal educational programs. The completed Situation Analysis was submitted into the Qualtrics Survey Software.

## Unit Profile

Tazewell County is located in the heart of the Appalachian Mountains of Southwest Virginia. The county borders Russell, Buchanan, Bland and Smyth counties in Virginia and Mercer and McDowell counties in West Virginia. U. S. Route 19 and 460 join to bisect the county carrying the majority of traffic connecting our county to Interstate 77 and Interstate 81. The northern area of Tazewell County is geologically coal and natural gas while the southern area is geologically limestone and agricultural. Hardwood forests cover the entire county, including Jefferson National Forest, Beartown Wilderness Area, and the Clinch Mountain Wildlife Management Area.

### Demographic Profile:

The most important feature of Tazewell County is its citizens. The population of 44,807 is divided into 49.31% male, 50.69% female with 95.17% of the residents being of the white race. Our population is well balanced with younger and older residents, 40.4% of the population falls between the ages of 25 to 54 years of age. Family households make up 72.4% of the population consisting of families living together at one residence, which indicates strong family relationships and bonds that bring youth and adults together. Tazewell County's population of 44,807 has slightly increased by 209 people since 2008. Over time the population is about the same as it was in 1960, showing that our county is sustaining its numbers and not increasing as other regions.

According to the 2013 Health Summary for Tazewell 23% of children live in poverty and 28% of children live in single parent households.

The Tazewell County Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for October, 2013 was 4,387 cases with 8,649 recipients, \$1,013,684.00 was the total payout for October.

Tazewell County has a Women Infant Children (WIC) Caseload of 1,135 which is more than double any of the other counties within the Cumberland Plateau Planning District (Tazewell, Russell, Buchanan and Dickenson Counties).

Tazewell County has a significant rate of deaths related to cancer compared to the Commonwealth of Virginia.

### **Economic Profile:**

The unemployment rate trends have grown from 5% in 2007 to 7% in 2012.

Tazewell County was known as a regional retail center for surrounding counties in 1997, primarily due to having two Wal-Mart Supercenters in the eastern and western part of the county. Today, the neighboring counties of Russell, Buchanan, McDowell and Mercer have their own Wal-Mart, taking much of the retail business away from the county.

The county is aesthetically pleasing with green rolling hillsides and mountainous backgrounds neatly groomed by grazing cattle and livestock. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, Tazewell County has 150,181 acres in farm land. Most local farms are in large tracts averaging 257 acres.

Tazewell County is ranked 4<sup>th</sup> among counties in Virginia in sheep production, 8<sup>th</sup> in goat production and 15<sup>th</sup> in cattle production. The “stocker” cattle industry is predominantly grazing livestock in Tazewell County, making Tazewell County first in number of grazing acres. These cattle are sold and shipped to feedlots in the grain belt where they will be finished for slaughter. Because of uniformly distributed rainfall and moderate temperatures, Tazewell County has a comparative advantage with an “ideal” grazing season climate. In 2012, the sale of cattle and calves accounted for 21 million dollars in Tazewell County.

The number of individuals involved in vegetable and horticulture production is increasing through the use of home gardens and high tunnel greenhouses. Community gardens and farmer’s markets are developing throughout the county. The Master Gardener Program is addressing needs of home horticulture education. There is resurgence in not only growing our own food but also in learning to preserve those foods. Canning and other means of preserving our food produces flavorful, high-quality food that saves money, builds self-reliance and creates lifelong memories.

Tazewell is located at the beginning of five different watersheds and there are no streams that flow into the county from other sources. This generates a need for programming to educate the public of the impact our residents have on their neighbors. Water resource availability restricts the potential for large industries that depend on waterways for processing and transportation. These issues are being addressed by the Clinch River Valley Initiative, which is

a collaborative effort to enhance water quality, educational opportunities and local economics in the coalfields of Southwest Virginia, focusing on the Clinch River. The Clinch River is one of the most biodiverse river systems in North America and the largest stream leaving the area and creates a habitat for many species of fish, freshwater mussels and wildlife, some of which are on the endangered species list.

The coal industry has brought prosperity to Tazewell County through its rich mineral and natural gas resources. With 68% of the county in timberland, the forest industry has organized to harvest and preserve our forest as a renewable resource. Tazewell County has 227,600 acres of forested land with 93% of those acres being privately owned.

### **Education Profile:**

The Educational Profile for Tazewell County indicates that 14% of the population 18 years and over have attained a Bachelor's Degree or higher, 33% have attained a high school diploma or GED, and 10% have completed the 8<sup>th</sup> grade or less.

In the fall of 2012 Tazewell County Public Schools had 91 students enrolled through the dual enrollment with Southwest Virginia Community College. In this credentialing program students receive college credit while taking advanced courses in high school.

52% of the students in the Tazewell County School System receive free and reduced lunches, and only 56% ride the school bus to and from school each day.

Bullying among youth has been identified and continues to be a problem in the school system.

## **Community and Resident Perspectives**

### Soil & Water Conservation District

- Natural Resource Conservation
- Teaching youth to protect their environment through programs with Tazewell County Schools currently: Our Living Soils, Food & Fiber, Water Wizard, Kids in the Outdoors, Tour du Parc, Kids in the Creek
- Protecting our water quality
- Agriculture Marketing
- Agriculture Production/Profitability
- Agriculture Sustainability/Preservation
- Animals/Livestock Production Education

### Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

- Help with the Hunter Safety Education Program
- Wildlife Identification
- Kids in the Outdoors

- Wildlife Plot Seeding and Management
- Water Quality Education
- Fishing Education
- Shooting Education
- Natural Resource Production/Profitability

#### Clinch Valley Community Action

- After School Workshops
- Activities for Day Care providers
- Activities for Home School Students
- Partner with CVCA on Grants to show matching contributions
- Provide programming for underserved audiences
- Offer an affordable Residence Camping Program

#### Tazewell County Farm Bureau Federation

- Agriculture Education and Literacy
- Education on drugs
- Violence in our schools, communities, and surrounding area
- Helping children deal with peer pressure
- Zoning of methadone clinics
- Morals of our society

#### Adult Volunteer Leader Association/4-H Youth Council

- Leadership/Problem Solving Skills
- Community Service
- CHARACTER COUNTS!
- Control the abuse of drugs
- Internet security
- Places for teens to hang out
- Control violence and bullying at school

#### Bluefield College

- Help Maintenance with Nursery and Lawn Care
- Continuing Training on Wildlife and Forestry Trail Behind the College
- Work with the Colligate 4-H Club for Camps and Retreats
- Speak to classrooms in the Science department on Environmental Issues
- Work with Brazil on Bluefield College's International Program

## Southwest Virginia Community College

- Utilize the Community Center for Competitions, Meetings, and Training
- Guest Speaker for Mathematics in Agriculture to Tech Prep Students
- Guest Speaker for Agriculture Bio Security Classes
- Youth Programs for Career Development (Reality Store)
- Business to Business Showcase Exhibits

## Tazewell County Tourism & Recreation Board

- Promote Agri-tourism with groups visiting Tazewell County
- Promote Youth Activities such as Kids in the Outdoors
- Utilize our Parks and Facilities in Tazewell County

## Thompson Valley Fire & Rescue

- Fire Prevention Programs
- Rural Water Supply (Quality and Quantity)
- Homeland Security
- Natural Resource Production/Profitability
- Environment
- Food Safety & Preservation

## Tazewell County School System

- Help with Landscaping for school grounds and athletic facilities
- Conduct 4-H meetings in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grades for Elementary Schools
- Work with Health Rocks in the Middle Schools
- Work with the Vocational Agriculture Department
- Share Resources to enhance School Programs, Incubators
- Our Living Soils, Food & Fiber, Water Wizard, Kids in the Outdoors, Tour du Parc, Kids in the Creek

## Tazewell County Livestock Producers

- Agriculture Production/Profitability
- Animal and Livestock Programs
- Education of Smooth Farm Transition
- Control of Invasive Species
- Land Use

## Extension Leadership Council

- Energy
- Health and Chronic Diseases (Cancer)

- Children in Poverty
- Teen Birthrate
- School Dropouts
- Careers
- Environment

#### Family and Consumer Sciences Program

- Aging Population and Long Term Care
- Child Development Issues including before and after school programs and career development
- Chronic Disease and Health
- Nutrition and Obesity
- Parenting
- Financial Management, Small Business/Entrepreneurs and Consumer Issues
- Food Safety/Preservation

#### Master Gardeners

- Environmental Sound Horticulture Practices
- Water Wise Gardening focusing on water quality and quantity
- Healthy Living and Growing Safe Fruit, Vegetables and Meats for Home Use
- Sustainable Safe Growing Processes and Preservation of Food and Energy
- Junior Master Gardening Programs with Community Partners focusing on decision making and life skills

## Priority Issues

### Leadership Development

Tazewell County has an identified need for Leadership Development among youth and adults. The Virginia Cooperative Extension-Tazewell County Office (VCE) offers Leadership Development opportunities through Advisory Committees, Extension Leadership Council, 4-H Clubs, Ag Producers' Meetings and offices throughout Extension Programs.

There is a need to organize young farm operators to fill leadership roles in agriculture as the average age of farmers is 59 years.

### Water Quality

Water quality is an important issue because there are no streams flowing into Tazewell County. All water flows out of the county as it is located at the head of five different water systems. Water resource availability restricts potential for large industries that depend on waterways for processing and transportation. The Clinch River is the largest stream leaving the area which creates a habitat for many species of fish and wildlife. Rare Mussels are found

in the Clinch River. Youth Programs for Fifth and Sixth Graders are held to educate them on their water through “Kids in the Creek” and “Water Wizard” Programs. Drinking Water Clinics are held as needed to assure citizens with wells, cisterns, springs, and other sources of private drinking water for their homes that their water is safe.

### **Production and Marketing Livestock**

With Tazewell County’s Livestock Industry thriving, marketing livestock is important to the farmers. Livestock makes up 95% of the total value of agricultural products sold. Forage Production is also very important as the staple food source for livestock in Tazewell County. Livestock Producers need timely production and marketing research training.

### **Healthy Living and Nutrition Education**

Nutrition Education when practiced helps reduce the risk of chronic diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease, and other illnesses associated with obesity. Research on cancer and cancer causing agents is important to explain the number of people affected by the disease. Healthy diets consist of fresh fruits, meats, dairy, whole grains and vegetables that promote local production and availability to the consumer.

Women, infants, and young children have a need for proper nutrition and safety practices. Family Nutrition Program Assistants are needed to share nutritional information with eligible individuals.

Healthy living and making positive life choices continues to be an issue among Tazewell County youth.

### **Hands-on Learning and Outdoor Education**

To reinforce textbook learning, youth and adults need the opportunity to demonstrate life skills. The VCE Office provides this opportunity through hands on learning and taking people out of the classroom to help develop their skills.

### **Good Parenting Skills and Responsibility to Children**

With high statistics of single parents below poverty level and dysfunctional family units, there is a need for educating all guardianship of responsibilities to children.

### **Substance Abuse**

Abuse of prescription and non-prescription drugs is high in this county and in most ways beyond the scope of VCE. However, the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco among minors is an issue which VCE addresses in programs for youth at risk through Character Education.

## **Job Training and Development**

With relatively high unemployment rates for Tazewell County, job readiness programs like resume building and interview skills is important for both youth and adults. Development of programs to address employment needs is a priority issue. Awareness of higher education options and career connections at the local, regional, state and national levels is a deficiency.

## **After-School Activities to Accommodate Parents in the Workforce**

Many of Tazewell County's families have multiple incomes requiring both parents to be away from home at the same time. This creates a need for after school programs and activities to prevent latch key children being at home alone and unsupervised. This identifies a need for programs to give opportunities to occupy children with quality learning experiences during the time after school. The need for transportation to programs has been identified for these programs to be accessible.

## **Recreational and Entertainment Activities for Citizens**

Physical activity should be a choice in healthy living for youth and adults. For the quality of life in Tazewell County to improve, there is a need for more programs and facilities for all people to enjoy their time away from work. Tazewell County is experiencing success through the Wellness Movement and programs offered by recreation parks, YMCA, wellness centers and health serving organizations. Tazewell County's mountainous terrain lends itself to many outdoor recreation and sporting events. Public access to witness the natural beauty of Tazewell County is limited. Hiking, biking and ATV trails are needed to give citizens access to experience the outdoors and natural resources.

## **Food Safety and Preservation**

Food sustainability and the safety of our food sources are among the growing concerns in Tazewell County. With the growth of farmer's markets and the increase of needs and desires to consume healthier fresh foods comes the need for the importance of food entrepreneurs, vendors, and handlers to understand the issues involved in food safety. As well, there is more interest in not only growing our own food but also in learning to preserve those foods. Canning and other means of preserving our food to produce flavorful, high quality food that saves money, builds self-reliance and creates lifelong memories.