

## **1999 Annual Report Executive Summary**

### **East Prairie Enterprise Community**

#### **Overview of the Impact of the 1994 East Prairie Enterprise Community Designation on the Economy and Well-Being of Residents**

Both the economic and physical well being of 4,312 residents living in the East Prairie Enterprise Community Census tract 9504, is 100% positively impacted. The East Prairie Enterprise Community has met its ten-year goal in the economic development strategy by reducing the unemployment rate to within 4% of the state's unemployment rate. The latest figures from the Missouri Division of Employment Security show a substantial improvement. Mississippi County's unemployment rate was 4.6% in December 1999 as compared to 7.1% in December 1998. This is a difference of 2.5% which is well ahead of our 1994 goal of reducing the unemployment rate within 4% of the state average which was 2.7% in December 1999. Both the state and county number reflect the general growth in the state and national economy and its ensuing impact upon employment. However, the difference in the unemployment rates between the state and county has improved from 5.8% difference in 1994 to a 1.9% difference for this most recent period, December 1999. The Enterprise Community has met and exceeded its objective that by 2005 there would be a minimum of 4% difference between the county and state figures.

Job training and job development activities (Benchmark 9) since 1994 have increased 100% in youth and adult job training. Since 1997, 180 business and community residents have attended night computer classes and have successfully demonstrated knowledge of basic computer skills and the Windows 95 and 98 operating system. During the 1999 calendar year the number increased to 260 as over 75 residents improved literacy and job skills.

Industry and business are expanding (Benchmark 14). Jakel Incorporated, beginning its operation after the EC designation (in August 1995), employed 127 individuals in 1998 and has increased to a 1999 personnel roster of 155 individuals resulting in 30 new jobs. Fifty-four (54) acres of land has been acquired for an industrial park. A USDA, RBEG grant assisted in the development of the Industrial Park by providing for the construction of potential new and expanding businesses. The Industrial Park is now being marketed to potential new and expanding businesses. Susanna Wesley, a not-for-profit agency, incorporated and expanded in 1998, continues service to the community and employs 45 persons who carry out comprehensive community support programs. The East Prairie Enterprise Community Development Corporation, in 1998 received a \$150,000, (RBEG), and has loaned \$75,000 to new and expanding businesses, resulting in 17 new jobs. The East Prairie R-2 School District has expanded its personnel to include 45 part time employers at the rate of \$7.00, \$13.00, and \$18.00 per hour to work in the newly implemented after school program.

New tourism (Benchmark 13) Visitor's Guides have been published and distributed to both regional and national markets. The Dorena -Hickman Ferry resumed operating in 1999. The ferry transports vehicles between Dorena, MO (15 miles east of East Prairie) and Hickman, KY. This service has greatly increased the tourism traffic through East Prairie. Last year, 1998, East Prairie received their first formal tour bus last spring and this year two additional tours have been added. This year 1999, the Mississippi County Tourism Council, with one of its goals dedicated to eco-tourism, has formed and is now supported by funding from the Mississippi County Commission. Several local sites that attract various species of birds, some of them rare, have been identified. A Bird Watchers Site now appears on the East

Prairie homepage to encourage bird watching tourists to visit our community.

The St. Johns Bayou New Madrid Floodway project (Benchmark 15), is a bottoms up model of federal, state, and local entities working to end backwater flooding for residents of East Prairie. These residents and residents of the surrounding area, with the completion of the St. Johns Bayou-New Madrid Floodway project, will experience both physical and economic well being in year 2000. The project focus for the 1999 calendar year was the successful completion of the Corps of Engineers Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS). The public hearing and subsequent study comprised most of the years activity culminating with the SEIS initial report in November 1999. The Corps of Engineers, in collaboration with the Enterprise Community and other cooperating federal and state agencies, expect final study agreement with full scale project construction stated for April 2000. This is the next step following the 1998 calendar year, during which working partnerships had been formed, cost share funding acquired for Phase I of the project, and Item I Phase I of the project completed.

In the areas of education and family and youth development, the community of East Prairie and the surrounding area has reaped great benefits from positive human infrastructure development. A significant positive event for education and positive youth development is the enrollment of over 200 East Prairie school-aged youth in a school-based latch key program (benchmark 4). The East Prairie R-2 School District in collaboration with the East Prairie Enterprise Community lead entity and the Charleston R-2 School District (a Round 2 Champion Community) successfully submitted and received in calendar year 1999, a \$650,000 Twenty-First Century Education Grant. Youth leadership also came into its own when a community resident and 60 youth formed a community service group and this year successfully completed 10 service projects. Community Youth and Adults continue their education in the arts in developing the art form story telling as a cultural art form (Benchmark 6). The East Prairie Enterprise Community lead entity in collaboration with the East Prairie R-2 School District applied for and was awarded the prestigious Artist In Residence Grant, the only one in the state of Missouri. The East Prairie R-2 School District (Benchmark 1) reports a dropout rate of 4.5% for the 1999 calendar year, 1.78% for the 1997-98 school year compared to a 10% drop out rate in 1995-95, and an 18% drop out rate in 1994-95.

The East Prairie Enterprise Community goal of adults becoming literate, job ready, and productive community residents continues as work in progress. Several agencies with the goal of positive youth/adult development successfully partnered to strengthen the lead entity's Cultural Productivity Initiative, an incentivized job skill, academic/literacy training. The partners especially targeted the program components emphasizing individual leadership and responsibility both on and off the job. This effort resulted in adults (over 101 in 1999 and 70 in 1998) obtaining both literacy and job skills (Benchmarks 2, 8, and 9). In addition, with the addition of one stop partners at the lead entity's family center, over 160 residents received job and job related support from the Workforce Investment Program (formerly known as the Private Industry Council) and Parents Fair Share, a program for non-custodial parents.

The 4,312 residents living in the East Prairie Enterprise Community Census tract 9504 can now access preventative health care at the newly opened Mississippi County Health Department satellite located in the EC. This 1999 preventative health project is a complementary addition to the expanded health services of the Ferguson Medical Center. During 1999 physicians at the clinic rendered 12, 067 individual services. The number of health care providers have increased 250% in 1994 from one physician to a 1998 roster of two full-time physicians and one Board Certified pediatrician three days per week in 1998 (Benchmark 16). Older adults can now attend adult day care at the East Prairie Nursing Center.

Residents' living safely in their community is an EC goal. The safety of the public and the concept of

community policing have strengthened with the addition of a police officer and his family as residents in the city's public housing complex. In addition, 100% of officers participate with Susanna Wesley Family Learning Center to assist victims of domestic violence and other violent crimes. In 1999, with the assistance of the East Prairie Department of Public safety and the judicial system, 144 women and 44 youth have received services from the lead entity's direct services to victims of domestic violence. Rural Development has leased two houses to the lead entity as transition homes for victims of domestic violence. Twenty-nine new homes have been rehabilitated since 1994. In 1998, 16 dilapidated houses have been demolished and four new homes constructed. Although, not entirely complete, residents began recreation activities in their newly constructed twenty-five acre park in September of 1998 (Benchmark 5). This increased family recreational facilities 100%. The park serves as an outdoor community center for family and organizations-both for recreation and for business.

Partnership numbers expanded to include community volunteers, state and federal departments, and private donors who dedicate their time and energies to make East Prairie a better community. New partners in 1999 include the Regional Department of Probation and Parole, the Mississippi County Juvenile Judicial and Juvenile office, the Missouri Department of Workforce Development, the United States Department of Education, and the Bootheel Initiative, an outreach program of Southeast Missouri State University. In an effort to strengthen community partnerships, the East Prairie Enterprise Community has enthusiastically worked to support the development of the Lower Mississippi Delta Initiative Partnership, a regional effort that will positively impact the entire Lower Mississippi Delta.

Success in leveraging and obtaining funds for projects as a result of the enterprise designation and with the support of partners, the community has acquired, since 1994, \$13,067,051 in additional funding to implement benchmark activities. Funds for the calendar year 1999 include: Neighborhood Assistance Grant to Susanna Wesley, Inc. for Welfare to Work Program and Incentives \$129,071; USDA Rural Development in the Housing 504 program provided for grants and loans for housing rehabilitation, \$93,177 and \$118,000 in 502 funds were used to construct four new homes for a total of \$211,817.00; USDA Rural Development RBEG in the amount of \$43,000 for an Enterprise Facilitation Project; USDA Rural Development Waste/Waste grant in the amount of \$2,040,000 and loan in the amount of \$1,711,000 for water and wastewater improvements; Missouri Department of Tourism, \$1,030 to share in the cost of promoting the tourism bird watching program; Missouri Division of Job Training through Service Delivery Area 13 Workforce Investment Board funded employment support, job training, and job connections, \$739,542.

Missouri Division of Social Services for Cultural Productivity grant, \$220,000; direct services to domestic violence, \$74,334; Missouri Department of Education Special Literacy Grants, \$35,458; and an Americorps Vista Member (LIFT MO) \$24,000; Missouri Department of Public Safety, youth programming and domestic violence support \$223,200 and the Bootheel Initiative, \$78,000 youth programming. Private donors included: Ameren UE SmartLight to East Prairie Recreation Corporation for recreational facility lighting, \$10,000, and \$14,000 from private donors to support youth adult programming

Additional Activities and Accomplishments not specifically mentioned in the Strategic Plan: East Prairie R-2 School students have increased educational opportunities. This past spring, 1999, the R-2 moved from a provisional accreditation status from the Missouri Department of Education to one of full accreditation. Students moved into new elementary classrooms and into renovated school buildings in October 1998. This \$1.7 million project was passed by a 79 % vote margin in 1997(previous bond issues had failed). The entire project, because of renovation and new buildings, enabled the school to provide separate campuses for grades 9 through 12 and for grades 7 through 8. All four school campuses have a computer laboratory and nearly every classroom is computer equipped. The school system received a broad base of community support from a group called Education First Committee. This committee, first

organized to support the school bond issue, now meets periodically. Students in the school district can now participate in an interactive television classroom and can receive college credit from two area colleges. This technology program, in partnership with five area schools, currently connects classrooms with two local colleges. The school will soon have the capabilities to dial into other colleges to take additional courses. Funding for the project was through a technology grant. East Prairie students can now receive up to 18 hours of college credit through interactive television and dual enrollment classes. The 1999 addition is the R-2 School Districts Twenty First Century After School Learning Program now provides course access to both youth and adults.

Welfare Reform in 1994 did not exist, therefore was not a direct activity in the strategic plan. However, welfare to work activities were incorporated in the adult learning program at Susanna Wesley under a state funding contract through the department of Social Services for TANF recipients. From Cultural Futility to Cultural Productivity, an incentive-based life-long learning and employment program focused on skills such as academic-certification, computer training, budgeting, employment attitudes and family literacy. At years end, exists both day and night computer education training, pre-employment skills training, and job consultants who work to connect employer and employees. Since 1997 when the computer center was opened 240 business and community residents have attended night computer classes and nearly 300 unemployed adults now have basic computer skills, including opening and closing programs and keyboarding. This past summer over 115 county youth participated in leadership and on the job work experiences.

The Enterprise Community is now a one-stop satellite for the newly established Workforce Development Board with the Enterprise Community lead entity seated on the board. Four regional/county programs have located outreach offices in the Susanna Wesley Family Learning Center. The new agencies represented are from Bootheel Healthy Start, Work Force Development, Parents Fair Share, and the Women's Health Project for breast and cervical cancer.