

2002 Annual Report Executive Summary

Halifax, Edgecombe, Wilson Enterprise Community

The year 2002 proved to be another productive program year for the Halifax, Edgecombe, Wilson Enterprise Alliance Enterprise Community. As a Round I EC designee, the Enterprise Alliance through its many partnerships has successfully met most of its benchmark goals for economic empowerment for the three counties. Securing additional funds for administrative operations proved to be a great challenge. Due to budget shortfalls, most municipalities did not contribute funds needed to sustain administration. One grant was received in December 2002, which will sustain administration through June 2003.

The Halifax, Edgecombe, Wilson Enterprise Alliance Board of Directors will meet in early 2003 to consider a sustainability plan for continuation of administrative operations and the direction of the organization beyond the designation period. The Hollister Citizens Organization Community Center has completed eighty percent of the renovations to the center. The center is providing the community with free exercise classes three days a week. A computer class is offered to the community for a small registration fee, and is free to senior citizens. The Center is the permanent home of Girl Scout Troop #072 and is used by the community for weddings, wedding receptions, family reunions, birthday parties, and concerts for youth. Hollister REACH delivered food to citizens who lost power during the ice storm. Two hundred dollars worth of food was distributed. The Hollister REACH facility has been completed, but it needs additional repairs and yard work.

The programs are working well; however, money is very tight. Budgeting is believed to be tight in 2003 because foundations are encouraging non-profits to raise funds. More people are applying and less money is available. Native Opportunity Way Community Development Corporation, Inc. (NOW-CDC) was successful in a number of areas in 2002. They received over ten applications for their loan pool. According to loan requirements, the applicants had to be turned down by three banks before NOWCDC was able to approve the loans. Even though none were awarded a loan by NOWCDC, they were able to refer the applicants to partnering banks (BB&T, Centura and First Citizens), at which three of the referrals received loans totaling \$163,500. Z. Smith Reynolds (in part due to the \$35,500 received from the Halifax, Edgecombe, Wilson Enterprise Alliance as leverage funds) awarded the agency \$25,000 for administration and program costs. The grant was awarded for their loan pool effort as well as support for their business development efforts. HUD awarded NOW-CDC, Inc., \$99,500 in 2002 to assist with their business development efforts. Funding from HUD was made possible, because of NOW-CDC's association with the Enterprise Community. These funds are to be used for business development assistance in the form of development of five websites for area businesses and for a small business technology center. The Washington, DC Office of Community Services (OCS) awarded the agency \$75,000 in 2002 to conduct an assessment of the business needs in the Hollister community. OCS asked NOW-CDC to put together projects and business plans that will be considered during their next funding cycle. Again, funding and support from the HEW Alliance, greatly assisted NOWCDC in its effort to receive funding from OCS. The agency has steadily built its capacity over the last three years and feels they now have all of the pieces together needed to build the Combo Store (Citgo Convenient Mart in Phase I and restaurant in Phase II). The hope is that these two projects will eventually lead NOW-CDC to be able to build a strip mall in Essex. Food Lion announced recently that they intend to build in the Hollister community in 2003. NOW-CDC has worked hard to educate Food Lion about the merits of locating in the Hollister community and believe that their efforts will pay off in 2003. NOW-CDC is working with First Citizens Bank and BB&T to get them to consider opening a branch in Hollister.

The Town of Enfield struggled with its Community Resource Center benchmark. Securing a feasible site

and leveraging funds presented its share of challenges. The Town of Enfield realistically examined their Community Resource Center benchmark and decided to build a smaller building from the ground up. Rocky Mount/Edgecombe Community Development Corporation (RMECDC) is the community developer and benchmark leader of the Edgecombe County's Enterprise Community benchmarks in real estate development of commercial, housing, and downtown façade as well as service programs of homeownership counseling and small business skills development. RMECDC continues to provide the above-mentioned services in partnership with the City of Rocky Mount, Edgecombe County, and other nonprofit organizations in the community. RMECDC provided housing recovery assistance to flood survivors impacted by Hurricane Floyd floodwaters until its program ended June 30, 2002. RMECDC processed over \$35 million in applications for housing assistance, served over 3,000 families, and has built two subdivisions in response to the flood.

Rocky Mount/Edgecombe Community Development Corporation had a very successful year. Their major accomplishment was construction completed on the Edgecombe County Industrial Incubator. The Industrial Incubator is a mix-use business and light industrial mall located in a newly constructed 40,000 square foot facility at Fountain Industrial Park. The facility provides leasing space, employer incentives, supportive services, and skills training. The Rocky Mount Opportunities Industrialization Center operates a Skills Development Center within the Incubator. The Skills Center provides a Computer Lab, Information Resource Center, and industry-specific training. The general overview of the progress achieved for Rocky Mount OIC resulted in three successful Enterprise Community programs. OIC managed a paid work experience program, summer youth activities, and basic education enrollment. Rocky Mount OIC made great accomplishments during the 2002 fiscal year and will continue to progress throughout the 2003 fiscal year, working in the Enterprise Community. OIC was able to recruit and provide transportation and training to 48 Enterprise Community residents during the 2002 fiscal year with 10 completing their GEDs. OIC provided summer employment opportunities to 23 students in the Summer Work Experience Program and six weeks of work experience during the summer months. The partnership with the Workfirst Partners serving 26 students in the Thornridge community was completed working with the Rocky Mount Edgecombe Community Development Corporation. The grand opening of the Skills Training Center in the Rocky Mount/Edgecombe Community Development Corporation Industrial Incubator took place this fiscal year. The partnership with the Workfirst Partners Program was finalized this fiscal year with funds earmarked for educational training, and purchasing of equipment and supplies for the Skills Training Center. Rocky Mount OIC continuously provides recruitment and outreach within the Enterprise Community, encouraging community support for programs operated for enrollment opportunities. The City of Wilson's Community Beautification Benchmark, Enterprise Community funding in the amount of \$15,000 is being used to make aesthetic improvements in the City's redevelopment areas. On the Civic Education Benchmark, Enterprise Community funding in the amount of \$10,000 is being used to provide technical assistance and support for various neighborhood groups served by new resource centers.

Wilson Community Improvement Association, Inc., (WCIA) continues to build and expand programs started with funding received from the Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community Program. Adventura East II one of the largest projects to date done by WCIA continues to provide homeownership opportunities to residents in the Enterprise Community. During 2002 WCIA counseled over 100 applicants with 13 of them becoming first time homebuyers. The neighborhood resource centers continue to provide programs and activities that address youth, family and community needs. One center was renamed the Charles E. Branford Resource Center in a celebration honoring Martin Luther King. As a result of a benchmark revision, WCIA established the Bessie S. Satchel Girls program. The program focuses on the whole child by providing social, spiritual and academic alternatives to at-risk pre-teen girls, ages 8-13. Retired teachers also serve as volunteers, with over 15 girls participating in the program.