

## **2002 Annual Report Executive Summary**

### **Fayette - Haywood Enterprise Community**

In 1995, the U.S. Department of Agriculture formally designated Fayette and Haywood Counties as an Enterprise Community. With seven years complete and three years remaining as an officially-designated Enterprise Community, the Fayette-Haywood Enterprise Community continued moving forward in 2002 toward becoming an independent non-profit entity with the submission of an application to the Internal Revenue Service to become a recognized 501(c) 3 organization. As a result, the Enterprise Community reaffirmed its commitment to improving economic development, education, health care, housing, infrastructure, and quality communities.

Since becoming operational, the Fayette - Haywood Enterprise Community has traveled a path inherent in this type of community empowerment. The stages of "What's Next?" , "The First Project" and "Retaining Active Participation" have given way to "New Directions." While the pace of action has varied, the direction of the community and its commitment has remained constant. The community's original strategic plan had an emphasis on projects and programs that invest in the individual "persona" of the community and less on "bricks and mortar." Although the Strategic Plan has been amended to include new infrastructure projects, such as water lines and industrial park improvements, the emphasis of the Enterprise Community remains on people, programs, and facilities that serve the public. The flexibility of amending the Strategic Plan over the course of the initiative has allowed the original objectives to be accomplished by new means.

For example, the need to assist preschool children was expressed in the desire to assist the Head Start program. When the need was refined, it was determined that the best action would be to partner with the Fayette County Board of Education in developing a preschool classroom. As a result, a classroom was jointly developed at the Jefferson School in the Enterprise Community. The program has been such a success that the Board of Education has explored how to expand its availability. Preschool education has been identified as an important part of any educational system and there have been discussions on how well preschool instruction may work in a rural setting.

In Fayette County, the answer is it works well! The use of EC Funds to match Tennessee House Program Funds has had a far-reaching leverage effect in the city of Brownsville. The city received \$800,000.00 in state funds as a designated A Bicentennial Neighborhood. Also, \$100,000.00 in EC Funds resulted in \$500,000.00 in state housing rehabilitation funds. This neighborhood initiative has become a model of cooperation and illustrates what can happen when diverse groups come together for a common purpose.

The two previously described actions are only two of many actions the Fayette - Haywood Enterprise Community has undertaken in recent years. Actions taken within the last year include: Community Centers: In Census Tract 603 and 605, significant progress continued on the development of the Community Centers. In fact, construction on the joint Civic Center/Ambulance Center in Census Tract 605 was completed and a ribbon cutting ceremony was held on June 27, 2002. Also this past year, architectural plans were drawn and bids were submitted for the construction of a Community Center in Census Tract 603. This Community Center will serve the residents of Braden, Galloway, Longtown, and the surrounding rural community.

Small Business College: The collaborative efforts of the Enterprise Community, the Brownsville-Haywood County Chamber of Commerce, the Fayette County Chamber of Commerce, BellSouth, and the University of Tennessee resulted in the completion of a year-long Small Business College to aid

local business owners. The courses were designed to teach new entrepreneurs innovative ways to start and maintain a successful business. Additionally, a follow-up training session was held in November covering computerized bookkeeping.

**Capacity Building:** Long-term community capacity-building through leadership development with the WestStar Regional Leadership Program continued. Two additional participants from Fayette County successfully completed the program in 2002. As a result, it is expected that this will ultimately increase the level of active involvement in the community and result in the formation of new leaders in the community.

**Restructuring:** As stated earlier, in addition to the steps already taken towards becoming an independent non-profit entity with the submission of an application to the Internal Revenue Service to become a 501 (c) 3 organization, the Fayette – Haywood Enterprise Community actively recruited several new board members to its steering committee. With the addition of these new board members, the new ideas and new perspectives they bring to the table will help ensure that the work of the Enterprise Community continues in the region even after the official designation as an Enterprise Community ends.

As stated, the pace of implementing the Strategic Plan has varied; however, significant progress has been achieved and will continue to be achieved. Those involved in the process realize that the achievement of goals through the EC initiative will take time and this acknowledgment is expressed in the ten-year planning and implementation period. The obstacles facing the Fayette-Haywood Enterprise Community are the ones any initiative would face in addressing the overall goals formed in the strategic plan. However, individuals from the community are a potent force; the strength of the initiative in Fayette and Haywood Counties lies with the active involvement of the Steering Committee representing each Census Tract in the Enterprise Community.