

1999 Annual Report Executive Summary

McDowell County Action Network (McCAN)

The McDowell County Action Network (McCAN) had its genesis in 1994 upon receiving \$2.95 million in SSBG funds and the designation as an Enterprise Community. McCAN developed "REBUILDING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR McDOWELL COUNTY", to serve as a blueprint for McDowell County's economic development plans for the twenty-first century and beyond. Five principles have guided both the vision that is propelling McDowell County into the twenty-first century, and the strategies necessary to achieve that vision. The five principles are: (1) to promote the economic independence of families and individuals; (2) to create and strengthen a vital, viable and diverse economy; (3) to ensure a desirable quality of life and a safe/healthy living environment; (4) to strengthen communities' and the county's capacity to build for the future; (5) to create a pro-family system of integrated services for children and families that enhances their ability to succeed and become self-sufficient.

Today, as a very active, vital and synergistic Enterprise Community Corporation, McCAN and its collaborators continue to implement this revitalization philosophy through a decentralized, community-based structure and process that provides innovative, practical and timely programs, products and services which emphasize education, job creation and the development of problem solving skills for people and neighborhoods.

This private non-profit corporation, whose fifteen member Community Resources Board is comprised of residents throughout McDowell County, has maintained its strong record of funding, and the provision of consultative services and advocacy. Since its inception, McCAN has leveraged in excess of \$100 million in private and public funding. McCAN's 1999 programmatic activities and accomplishments include but are not limited to the following:

- Created and or sustained more than 350 jobs.
- Assisted the McDowell County Commission and The McDowell County Economic Development Authority in developing Indian Ridge—a 6,300 acre industrial park.
- Actively involved in negotiations to attract a federal prison to the industrial park site that would create 500 jobs and 150 spin-off opportunities.
- Assisted in the development/expansion of a highly successful statewide welfare-to-work project. The Citizens Courtesy Patrol, operated by the West Virginia Citizens Conservation Corps has received awards from Governor Underwood, and have asked to replicate this program in other states.
- Through the USDA's Intermediary Lending Program, provided \$400,000 in business start-up and expansion loans from an original pool of \$1.2 million.
- The acquisition and application of \$70,000 in Housing Preservation Grant Funds utilized to weatherize/rehabilitate 30 homes.
- Continuation/expansion of the school-to-work program funded by the US Department of Labor in the amount of \$368,302.
- Continued activities/initiatives with Community Transportation Association of America and State Department of Transportation in establishing a county-wide public transportation system.
- Collaborated with the Cities of War, Gary, Iaeger and the McDowell County Public Service District in securing funding in the amount of \$5 million to build and/or upgrade water supply and wastewater treatment facilities.
- Provided consultative services and assisted in attracting funding to establish and/or strengthen neighborhood action groups—The Big Creek People in Action, Sandy River District Action Council, North Elkin Community Action Council.
- Conducted 25 Community Information Forums to allow for the continuation/expansion of citizens input and amending the Strategic Plan.
- Collaborated with the West Virginia HUD Office in exploring the development of a housing community for senior citizens.
- Worked with The McDowell County Board of Education and The McDowell County Head Start Program on the development and implementation of a collaborative pre-kindergarten program.
- Collaborated with the McDowell County Redevelopment Authority on the development of a 7 year \$180 million flood abatement program.
- Continued the expansion of homeownership opportunities by providing 10 new homes in collaboration with Stop Abusive Family Environments.
- Assisted in establishing the first annual McDowell County Fair that attracted 3,500 visitors and 35 vendors.

McCAN maintains an acute cognizance that when the vast array of vital and unique resources—academic, business, cultural, sports, government, technology—flow into McDowell County, everyone benefits. At McCAN, countless coalitions, collaborations and committed relationships result in "comprehensive enrichment" that bring bonafide opportunities for upward mobility to the people who live and work in McDowell County's neighborhoods. Reciprocally, the people enrich the county and its institutions as the people contribute in so many important ways to the vitality of this wonderful place we call home—McDowell County, West Virginia.