



Analysis and Recommendations for a  
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy  
for the Mid-East Commission  
Economic Development District

Region "Q"  
*(Beaufort, Bertie, Hertford, Martin, and Pitt Counties, NC)*

A Public Service Work Product  
of the Urban and Regional Planning Program  
Department of Geography  
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## PREFACE: ABOUT THIS WORK

This document is a work product of East Carolina University's Urban and Regional Planning Program. It is a significant embellishment of group work completed by 13 undergraduate students for Planning Studio Class (PLAN 4096) during the fall semester 2010. Students in the class compiled and analyzed data, spoke with stakeholders in the region, and prepared sections of this document under the direction of studio master Jerry Weitz, Ph.D., FAICP, associate professor and director of the urban and regional planning program. Chad Buch, a graduate student, also assisted the class.

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The Mid-East Commission was chosen as a client for the academic class project. The initial idea for the course was to prepare a comprehensive regional plan for the commission. After a scoping meeting between the instructor and staff of the Mid-East Commission in September 2010, it was determined that a more pressing and valuable project for the commission would be to update the 2009 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the five-county region. This document is therefore produced in support of that objective, but it does not in itself constitute an updated strategy document approved by the commission. It is hoped, however, that this report will save the commission staff considerable time and will in fact serve as the basis for the commission's required CEDS annual update.

This document is intended to help the Commission comply with the content requirements for CEDS documents as articulated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (2002). CEDS reports need to contain four principal elements: analysis, vision, action plan, and evaluation. This report contributes primarily to the analysis portion of the CEDS, with substantial data collection and analysis. It assists with determining a future vision and action plan by reviewing problems, issues, and opportunities in the economic development arena. It contributes to Region Q's public participation strategy through the identification and interview of stakeholders in the region. Another section of this report identifies resources and suggests goals and policies that are explicit in other plans affecting the region. Finally, we provide some recommendations regarding components of economic development strategies for the region. We have incorporated some of the 2009 Update of the CEDS prepared by the Mid-East Commission in this document.

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## CHAPTER 1 THE NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

### THE REGION

Region Q consists of Beaufort, Bertie, Hertford, Martin, and Pitt County, North Carolina. See the accompanying map. The region encompasses 3,176 square miles. Beaufort County is the largest of the five counties in terms of land area (see Table 1.1). The region’s location is along the Atlantic seaboard approximately midway between Boston and Miami. The population density in Bertie County (persons per square mile) as of 2006 is very low in comparison with the other counties, and in fact, Bertie County has one of the lowest overall population densities for counties in the State of North Carolina. Only Hyde, Jones, Swain, and Tyrrell Counties in the state had lower countywide population densities than Bertie County as of 2006 (U.S. Census Bureau).

**Table 1.1  
 Land Area and Population Density  
 Counties in Region Q**

<b>County</b>	<b>Land Area, 2000 (Square Miles)</b>	<b>Persons Per Square Mile of Land Area, 2006</b>
Beaufort County	959	56.0
Bertie County	741	27.3
Hertford County	360	66.8
Martin County	461	52.8
Pitt County	655	223.5
Region Q Total	3,176	--

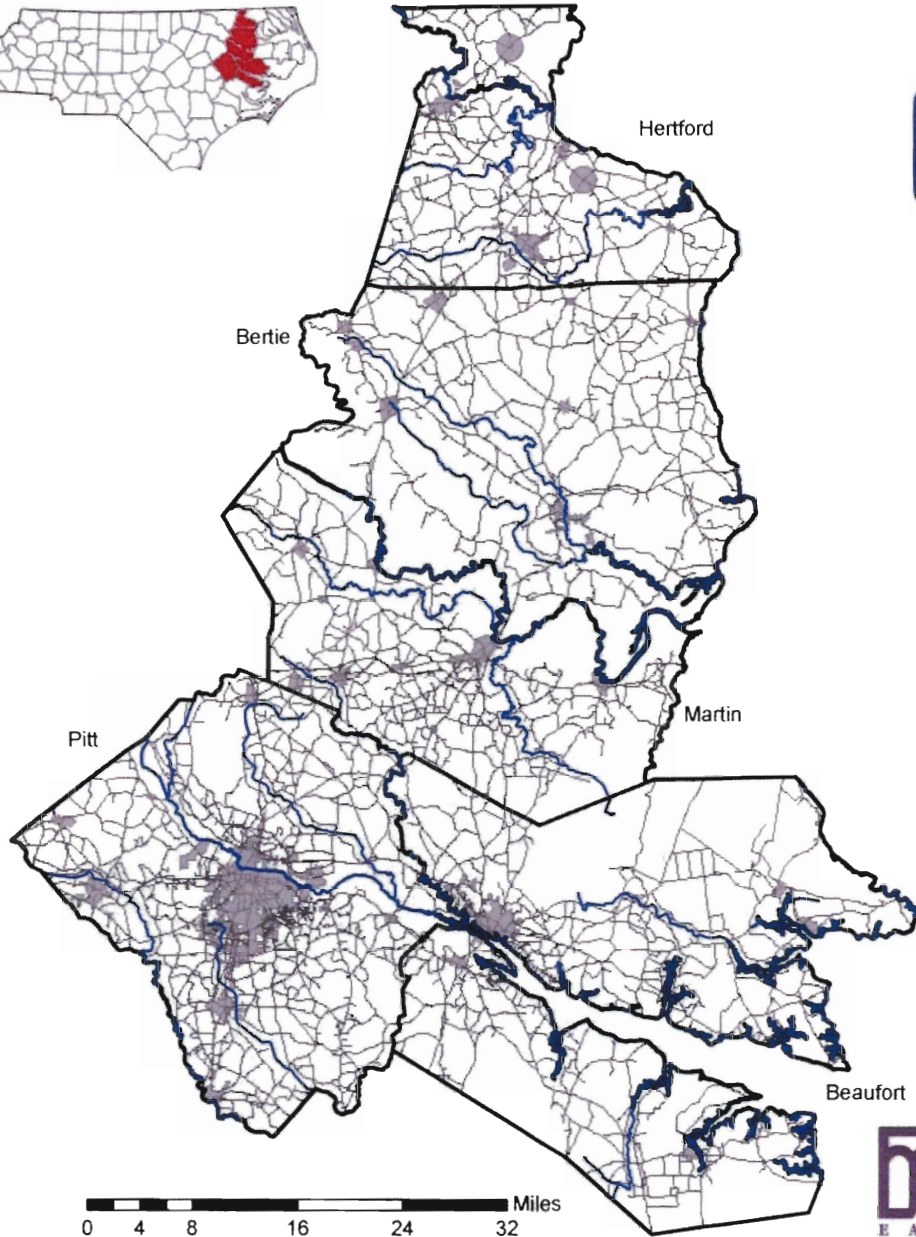
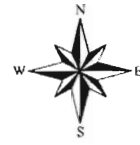
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *County and City Data Book – 2007*, Table B-1, Counties – Area and Population.

### THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

#### Environment and Natural Resources Profile

Region Q is located within the inner portion of the Atlantic Coastal Plain’s physiographic province, which extends from Massachusetts to Florida (Bertie County CAMA Land Use Plan Update 1998). Region Q is a wide, essentially flat, coastal plain lying within the inner coast along the Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds. Vast areas of the Coastal Plain lie only a few feet above sea level and topography is flat, although there are places where bluffs measuring 70 feet in elevation are located close to rivers in Bertie County (Bertie County CAMA Land Use Plan Update 1998). High quality ground water is available from underground aquifers. The region is dominated by large flood zones, a high water table, and many wetlands. The land in Region Q is dominated by wetland peat, and predominantly sandy and loam-based prime agricultural soils.

# Mid-East Commission Base Map



### Legend

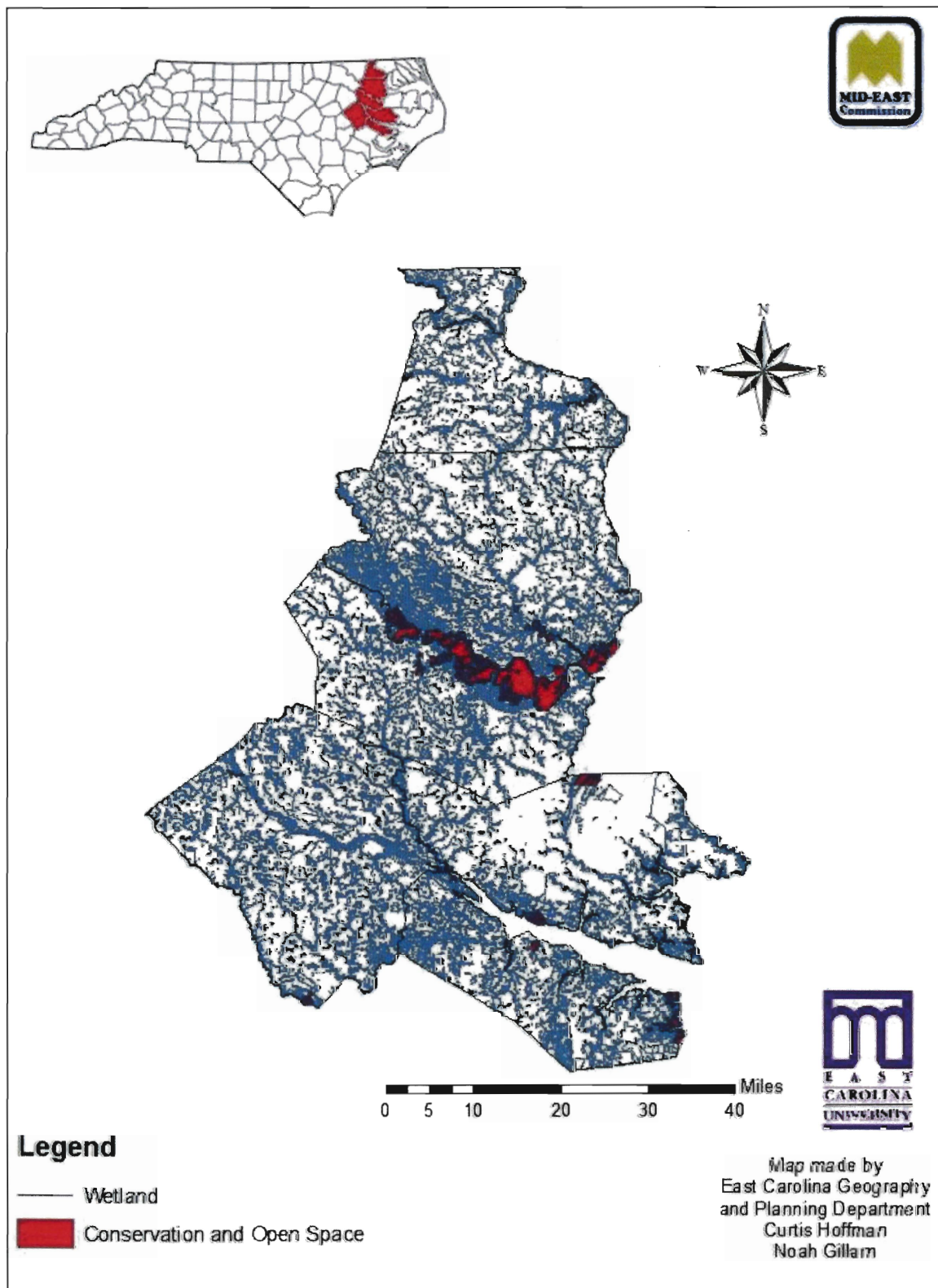
- Water
- County
- Municipalities
- Roads



Plan 4096  
Planning Program  
Department of Geography  
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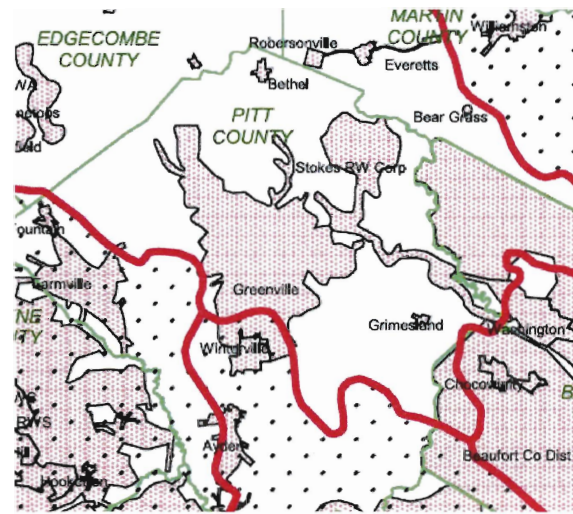


# Land Conservation Map

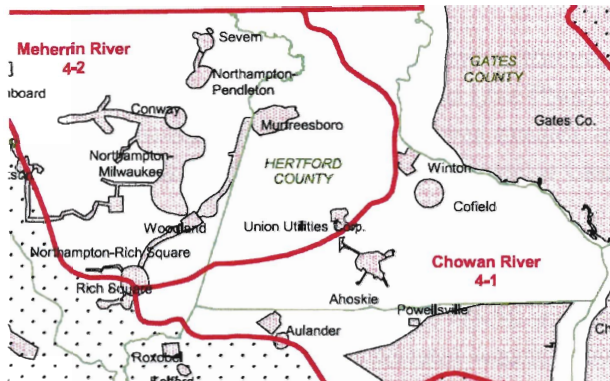




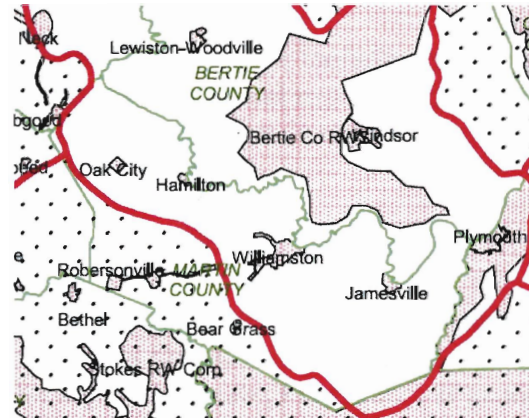
Region Q is a part of four major river basins: Tar-Pamlico, Chowan, Roanoke, and Neuse. The Tar River begins in Person County and drains 2277 square miles (including Greenville) before merging with the Pamlico River near Washington. The Chowan Basin is divided into the Meherrin River and Chowan River sub-basins. The Chowan River is formed by the merging of the Nottoway and Blackwater Rivers at the Virginia-North Carolina state line. The Dan and Hyco Rivers drain a stretch of land along the Virginia state line from northeastern Surry County to Kerr Lake in Granville County before they join the Roanoke River.



**Tar River Watershed at Greenville**  
 Source: NCDENR

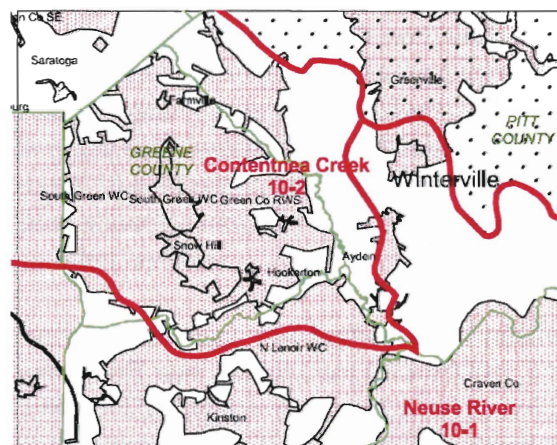


**Meherrin and Chowan River Watersheds at Hertford County**  
 Source: NC DENR



**Roanoke River Watershed at Bertie County**  
 Source: NC DENR

Below Falls Lake the Neuse River flows southeasterly past Smithfield, Goldsboro, Kinston, and New Bern on its way to Pamlico Sound. Contentnea Creek (which is a water supply for a few municipalities in Pitt County) joins the Neuse east of Grifton at the junction of Pitt, Lenoir, and Craven Counties. The Contentnea Creek sub-basin drains 1,024 square miles (DENR, North Carolina Water Supply Plan 2001, River Basin Summaries).



**Contentnea Creek Watershed**  
 Source: NC DENR

Rivers in the region have extensive floodplains and related environmentally sensitive areas that pose a limiting factor on development (Mid-East Commission 2009). In Pitt County, there are more than 107,000 acres classified as 100-year floodplain, and the majority of soils in the county have some development limitations (Pitt County Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2002).

In Bertie County, nearly 80 percent of the soils in the County have limitations for septic tanks due to poor drainage, seasonably high water tables, or permeability problems (County CAMA Plan as cited by Mid-East Commission 2009).



**Chowan River, Hertford County**

Source: [http://www.co.hertford.nc.us/land\\_records.asp](http://www.co.hertford.nc.us/land_records.asp)

In Beaufort County, over 70 percent of the county is undeveloped land, including sensitive environmental areas (CAMA Land Use Plan). Similarly, a map of soil suitability in Pitt County reveals that the vast majority of soils outside municipal planning areas is not very suitable for development (Pitt County Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2002).

## Climate

Annual precipitation ranges from 40-50 inches in the western Coastal Plain. A temperate climate makes shutdowns due to inclement weather rare and allows for year-round outdoor recreation. Proximity to the Gulf Stream serves to moderate the region's climate. Pitt County is generally representative of the region's climate as a whole and is summarized here. Pitt County is in the warmest area of North Carolina due to its close proximity to the ocean and its low-lying topography. Greenville has an average daily maximum temperature of 72°F and an average daily minimum of 50°F. The average annual precipitation is 49.0 inches. A large part of the rainfall during the growing season (approximately 220 freeze-free days between late March and early November) is due to thunderstorms and is quite variable between months, years, and localities. Winter rainfall is less variable. Frozen precipitation occurs nearly every winter, but accumulations are usually small and melt quickly. Wind speeds average about 8 miles per hour. The average relative humidity in mid-afternoon is about 50 percent, falling from about 85 percent at sunrise. Cloudiness is variable with sunshine about one-half of the total daylight hours in winter and two-thirds of the total daylight hours in other seasons.

Climate aberrations during the last fifty years are also worth noting. The highest daily rainfall was 10.75 inches (9/16/1999), and the highest daily snowfall was 12.8 inches (3/3/1980). The maximum accumulation of snow was 16 inches (3/1980). The highest recorded wind speed was 82 mph (6/4/1982) (Source: Pitt County Development Commission). North Carolina experiences hurricanes, tropical storms, and severe extra-tropical cyclones. These storms passing through the region have historically produced flooding and property damage. Hurricane Floyd passed

through the Region on September 15, 1999. All five Counties in the Mid-East Region were severely affected by the damage done during this storm. The worst damage was caused not by the high winds, as with many hurricanes, but by the rains that accompanied the storm. The region experienced severe and lasting damage because of the flooding associated with Hurricane Floyd. That damage has burdened all Region Q counties.

## **TRANSPORTATION ACCESS**

### **Highways and Roads**

The closest interstate highway to the region is Interstate 95, which is approximately 40 miles west of Murfreesboro in Hertford County, 20 miles west of Farmville and 40 miles west of Greenville, both in Pitt County. East-west highway access is facilitated by US 264 and US 64. US 264 Wilson Bypass opened in 2004, improving the accessibility from the region to Interstate 95 (North-South). US 64, another east-west highway, connects Rocky Mount at Interstate 95 to the northern tip of Pitt County at Bethel and eastward into Martin County and beyond.

The north-south highways consist primarily of NC 11, US 13 and US 17. NC 11 connects Kinston to Ayden, Winterville, Greenville and Bethel in Pitt County and continues north into Bertie County and to Murfreesboro in Hertford County. US 13 runs due north of Greenville in Pitt County, joins US 64 eastbound to Williamston in Martin County, then runs due north again above Williamston to Windsor in Bertie County, then to Ahoskie in Hertford County and into Virginia. US 17 connects New Bern with Washington in Beaufort County and continues due north to Williamston, where it joins US 13 and continues north through Martin County to Windsor in Bertie County, then northeast out of the region. North-south highways in the region are limited mostly to two-lanes (Mid-East Commission 2009).

### **Railroads**

Two of the nation's most extensive and financially healthy railroads, CSX Transportation, Inc. and Norfolk Southern Railway Company, traverse Pitt County, intersecting in Greenville. CSXT runs north-south through Bethel, Greenville, Winterville, Ayden, and Grifton. Norfolk Southern runs east-west, serving Grimesland, Greenville, and Farmville. The two systems interconnect at Greenville. Freight rail service to many industries and industrial areas within the region is presently considered adequate. Direct rail passenger service does not exist for the region, and travelers must travel to Wilson (40 miles from Greenville) or Rocky Mount (40 miles from Ahoskie) for the nearest Amtrak stations.

### **Airports and Air Freight Service**

Pitt-Greenville Airport provides air freight and commuter service to Greenville, which is in the southwestern portion of the Region. Commuter flights into or from the airport are commercial flights connected to the International Airport in Charlotte (Charlotte-Douglas). Air service into the region is generally infrequent and must be supplemented by common carrier freight hauls from the Norfolk-Virginia Beach and Raleigh-Durham Airports. The longest of three runways is



6,500 feet with navigational aids allowing night and inclement weather landings. All aircraft services are available, including charters. Air passenger service is provided through USAir Express, offering daily departures from 6:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. to Charlotte's Douglas International. USAir Express also maintains a crew base in Greenville. Air Cargo service in the Pitt County/Greenville area is provided by several air freight carriers including FedEx, USAir, and DHL. Daily pick-up and delivery is available.

Raleigh-Durham International Airport (outside the region), located approximately 90 miles west of Greenville via US 264 and Interstate 40, offers over 250 daily departures. Nine major airlines (Delta, USAirways, Continental, Northwest, Southwest, America West, AirTran, JetBlue, and American Airlines) and 18 regional carriers (including American Eagle, Continental Express, Comair, Air Canada, ExpressJet, and Midwest) provide daily direct non-stop flights to nearly 40 destinations in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

The North Carolina Global TransPark (GTP) is located 30 minutes south of Greenville at the Eastern Regional Jetport (Stallings Field) in Kinston (outside the region). The TransPark is a combination of an air cargo airport as well as a modern transportation, manufacturing, and distribution complex. In May 1996, the Global TransPark was designated as Foreign Trade Zone 214. The designation means companies can export and import products through the TransPark without many of the usual customs restrictions and tariffs. The runway at the Jetport has been extended to 11,500 feet, and a new 50,000 square foot central cargo building is fully leased. Further construction is expected in the near future. When completed, the GTP's unique facilities will provide industries with direct access to multimodal transportation alternatives. Intermodal capabilities will enable companies to use all of those alternatives for the most efficient and reliable transportation. The TransPark will also provide on-site education and training facilities to prepare the workforce necessary for the industries and businesses locating in the area.

The current level of air service is considered marginal for the Region's current needs and totally inadequate for a future which could see high technology commerce and growth. The Global Transpark located in Kinston (outside the region) might support greater air freight traffic into and from the area in the future, which would greatly enhance economic development in that region and beyond (Mid-East Commission 2009).

### **Ports and Maritime Travel**

The Intercoastal Waterway bisects the region, benefiting both tourism and commercial/industrial developments (Mid-East Commission 2009). The region is within 120 miles of three east coast ports capable of handling both bulk and containerized shipments.

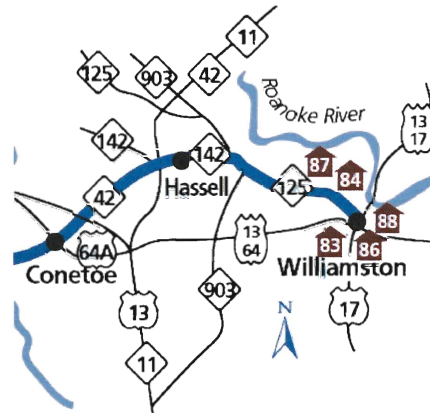
### **Coastal Carolina Trail**

Pitt County is one of three counties participating in the Coastal Carolina Trail Committee. That committee developed a master plan and feasibility study for development of a 30-mile recreational trail along an abandoned rail corridor. The trail project follows the former right-of-way of the historic Wilmington & Weldon Railroad from the City of Washington in Beaufort County through Pictolus and Stokes in northeastern Pitt County and through Parmele

to Oak City in Martin County. This regional recreational trail will be a heritage tourism resource (Pitt County Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2002).

### Scenic Byways

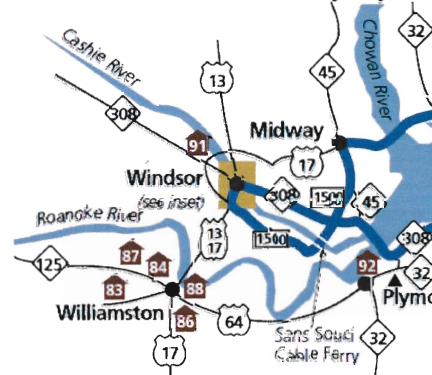
The region has three officially designated scenic byways. The first of these, Tar Heel Trace scenic byway, winds through North Carolina's Coastal Plain from Wilson to Williamston (Martin County), including NC 42, NC 142, and NC 125. It goes through the town of Hassell, which was known as Dogville Crossroads until 1903, then to Williamston where the route ends.



Source: NCDOT 2008

#### Tar Heel Trace Scenic Byway

From Williamston, it is 14 miles to Windsor on U.S. 17 North, where the Edenton-Windsor Loop Scenic Byway begins (the second of three scenic byways in the region). While most of these scenic byway lies outside the region, it does follow part of U.S. 13/17 North And U.S. 13 Business North (South Granville Street) into Windsor. Windsor was settled in 1722 and is the Bertie County seat. It was the site of Gray's Landing, a colonial trading point. Prior to the Civil War, Windsor was a major U.S. port of entry and business center on the road to Halifax.



Source: NCDOT 2008

#### Edenton-Windsor Loop Scenic Byway

The third scenic byway in the region is the Pamlico Scenic Byway. It begins at the Washington waterfront and follows the Pamlico River to the Pamlico Sound (Beaufort County). The town of Washington was originally called Forks of the Tar River and is the first town named after George Washington.



Source: NCDOT 2008

#### Pamlico Scenic Byway

## WATER, SEWER, AND OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE

### Water Systems

Many of the region’s municipalities (and a few counties) have public water systems as summarized in Table 1.2

**Table 1.2**  
**City and County Water Systems in Region Q**

County/City	Source of Supply	Number of Service Connections	River	Basin
<b>Beaufort County</b>				
Aurora	Groundwater	400	Pamlico River and Sound	Tar-Pamlico
Bath	Groundwater	200	Pamlico River and Sound	Tar-Pamlico
Beaufort Northside	Groundwater	8,060	Pamlico River and Sound	Tar-Pamlico
Beaufort Southside	Groundwater	3,776	Pamlico River and Sound	Tar-Pamlico
Belhaven	Groundwater	946	Pamlico River and Sound	Tar-Pamlico
Chocowinity	Groundwater	1,134	Pamlico River and Sound	Tar-Pamlico
Washington	Groundwater	5,136	Pamlico River and Sound	Tar-Pamlico
<b>Bertie County</b>				
Aulander	Groundwater	566	Chowan River	Chowan
Bertie County	Groundwater	4,124	Roanoke River	Roanoke
Kelford	Groundwater	150	Roanoke River	Roanoke
Lewiston-Woodville	Groundwater	330	Roanoke River	Roanoke
Powellsville	Groundwater	384	Chowan River	Chowan
Roxobel	Groundwater	100	Roanoke River	Roanoke
Windsor	Groundwater	1,490	Roanoke River	Roanoke
<b>Hertford County</b>				
Ahoskie	Groundwater	2,430	Chowan River	Chowan
Cofield			Chowan River	Chowan
Harrellsville	Groundwater	332		
Hertford County	Groundwater	2,919	Meherrin River	Chowan
Murfreesboro	Groundwater	1,435	Meherrin River	Chowan
Winton	Groundwater	495	Chowan River	Chowan
<b>Martin County</b>				
Bear Grass	Groundwater	54	Tar River	Tar-Pamlico
Everetts	Groundwater	176	Tar River	Tar-Pamlico
Hamilton	Groundwater	282	Roanoke River	Roanoke
Jamesville	Groundwater	195	Roanoke River	Roanoke
Martin County 1	Groundwater	1,050	Roanoke River	Roanoke
Martin County 2	Groundwater	591	Roanoke River	Roanoke
Parmele	Groundwater	147	Tar River	Tar-Pamlico
Robersonville	Groundwater	998	Tar River	Tar-Pamlico
Williamston	Groundwater	3,600	Roanoke River	Roanoke
<b>Pitt County</b>				
Ayden	Surface Water	2,817	Neuse River	Neuse
Bethel	Groundwater	850	Tar River	Tar-Pamlico
Farmville	Surface Water	3,293	Contentnea Creek	Neuse
Fountain	Surface Water	298	Contentnea Creek	Neuse
Greenville	Surface Water	34,116	Tar River	Tar-Pamlico
Grifton	Surface Water	1,124	Contentnea Creek	Neuse
Grimesland	Groundwater	240	Tar River	Tar-Pamlico
Winterville	Surface Water	3,749	Neuse River	Neuse
Stokes Regional	Surface Water	1,260	Tar River	Tar-Pamlico

Source: North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Division of Water Resources. Drinking Water Branch, Public Water Systems Search; <https://www.pwss.enr.state.nc.us/DWW/>. North Carolina Water Supply Plan (2001), Appendix A.

There are common problems with condition, maintenance, capacity, and/or location of public water and wastewater service throughout the five counties. Many town systems are 30 to 40 years old and have never been properly maintained. The result is failing systems, especially the distribution and collection lines. In the four more rural counties (excluding Pitt County), public water and sewer systems are strained by capacity limitations and in some cases are improperly located to serve the next potential round of industrial development (Mid-East Commission 2009).

## Wastewater Systems

Wastewater treatment plant facilities in Region Q are shown in Table 1.3.

**Table 1.3  
 Municipal Wastewater Treatment Plants (WWTPs) by County in Region Q**

Owner	Facility (WWTP)	Type	Class	Flow	Pre?	Receiving Stream
<b>Beaufort County</b>						
City of Washington	Washington	Municipal, Large	Major	3,650,000	Complete	Tar River
Town of Belhaven	Belhaven	Municipal, Large	Major	1,000,000	None	Battalina Creek
Town of Aurora	Aurora	Municipal, < 1MGD	Minor	120,000	None	South Creek
Town of Pantego	Pantego Municipal Center	100% Domestic < 1MGD	Minor	6,000	None	Pantego Creek
Dowry Creek Community Association, Inc.	Dowry Creek	100% Domestic < 1MGD	Minor	50,000	None	Pungo River
<b>Bertie County</b>						
Town of Windsor	Windsor	Municipal, Large	Major	1,150,000	None	Cashie River
Town of Lewiston-Woodville	Lewiston-Woodville	Municipal, < 1MGD	Minor	150,000	None	Cashie River
<b>Hertford County</b>						
Town of Ahoskie	Ahoskie	Municipal, Large	Major	1,300,000	None	Ahoskie Creek
<b>Martin County</b>						
Town of Williamston	Williamston	Municipal, Large	Major	2,400,000	Complete	Roanoke River
Town of Robersonville	Robersonville	Municipal, Large	Major	1,800,000	Complete	Flat Swamp
Martin Economic Development Corp.	McMurray Building	Industrial Process & Commercial	Minor	450,000	None	Roanoke River
Martin County Schools	Bear Grass Elementary School	100% Domestic < 1MGD	Minor	5,000	None	Turkey Swamp
<b>Pitt County</b>						
Town of Farmville	Farmville	Municipal, Large	Major	3,500,000	Complete	Little Contentnea Creek
Greenville Utilities Commission	Greenville Utilities Commission	Municipal, Large	Major	17,500,000	Complete	Tar River
Contentnea Metropolitan Sewerage District	Contentnea Sewerage District	Municipal, Large	Major	2,850,000	Complete	Contentnea Creek

Source: North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Active Permits.

## Communications

Former Governor Jim Hunt was a key figure in establishing the information highway in North Carolina. Private telecommunication utilities joined and completed the systems of fiber optic cable, asynchronous transfer modes (switches), and synchronous optical networks into a single network (Mid-East Commission 2009).

## LAND USE

The Region is dominated by rural undeveloped, agricultural and woodland that is sparsely populated. Pitt County is the only semi-developed county in the region and varies demonstratively from the other four counties (Mid-East Commission 2009).

### Beaufort County

Beaufort County is still rural in nature, with 71 percent of the land area undeveloped in 1996; about two-thirds of the undeveloped land in 1996 was forested. Weyerhaeuser was the county's largest landowner in 1996 and owns the largest share of forestland in Beaufort County. The county also reportedly had more harvested cropland than any other county in the Mid-East Region as of the mid-1990s (Beaufort County 1997 Land Use Plan Update). Urban development is confined mostly to the city of Washington, Washington Park, Chocowinity and their vicinity in the western part of the county. Rural residential development exists along most of the highway corridors and in the eastern waterfront edge of the county, and two-thirds of the population in the county lived outside of cities in towns as of the mid- to late 1990s. A concentration of industrial land (PCS Phosphate, with some 42,000 acres) exists between Aurora and Pamlico River in the southeastern part of the county. There is also industrial land along the US 264 corridor west of Washington.

### Bertie County

In Bertie County, the most common type of land use was forested land as of 1998, encompassing almost 70 percent of the county's land area. Commercial forest companies are the largest landowners in Bertie County. Cropland constituted another 22 percent of total county land area in 1998. A map of existing land use (1998) shows a generalized pattern of "rural concentrations" exists scattered across most of the northeastern two thirds of the county; urban areas are concentrated mostly in the northwestern corner of the county (Roxobel, Kelford, Lewiston-Woodville, and Aulander) and in the central part of the county Powellsville, Askewville, and Windsor. Only one municipality (Colerain) is located in the eastern portion of the county.

In Bertie County, there were (as of 1998) 13,891 acres of land owned or managed by the State of North Carolina, including, most notably, Roanoke River Wetlands (6,954 acres), Great Island Game Land (5,379 acres), and Bottom Lands of Albermarle Sound (1,143 acres). Growth and development in Bertie County have been minimal (Bertie County CAMA Land Use Plan Update 1998).



**Kuralt Trailhead in Roanoke River Wetlands**



## Hertford County

Like Beaufort and Bertie Counties, a significant share of Hertford County is owned by commercial forest interests including Weyerhaeuser. Only about 2 percent of the land area was urban in 1996. Ahoskie is the major population center in the county, and it is located in the southern part of the county near the Bertie County line. Murfreesboro, in the northwestern part of the county, is the next sizable city. The settlement pattern is one of a fairly even distribution throughout the county but also concentrated linearly along the transportation routes.

## Martin County

A land use plan is not available for Martin County. Therefore, no individual description of this county's land use is provided here. However, Martin County is not unlike the rural, forest, and agricultural nature of the other rural counties in the region.

## Pitt County

In 2002 about 94 percent (272,177 acres) of Pitt County's comprehensive land use plan planning area (excluding the Northwest Planning Area and Municipal Planning Areas) was undeveloped or agricultural (Pitt County Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2002). However, Pitt County has witness suburban residential development more significantly than the other counties. Pitt County contains an urbanized area extending generally from Winterville through Greenville and suburbanization is occurring west toward Farmville. Much of the county is still rural and agricultural, however, as described more fully below.

## Agriculture

Of the various land uses, agriculture is one of the few for which statistics are collected nationally. The Census of Agriculture reveals trends in individual counties and the region as a whole, from 1992 to 2007, as indicated in Table 1.4.

Region Q included 663,345 acres of farmland in 2007, constituting approximately one-third (32.6 percent) of the region's total area (Table 1.4).



**Cotton field in Hertford County**  
Source: <http://www.hertfordcountyncrealestate.com>

The amount of farmland in the region as a whole has consistently decreased from 1992 to 2007, and the net loss of farmland during that period was 32,068 acres. Bertie, Martin, and Pitt Counties each lost comparable amounts of farmland during that time period, while Hertford County witnessed a slight gain in farmland acreage and Beaufort County (bucking national trends) increased significantly in total farmland acreage from 1992 to 2007. The amount of farmland acreage lost in Bertie and Martin Counties was more than in Pitt County. While at least

some of Pitt County’s loss of farmland can be explained by suburbanization, given little growth in Bertie and Martin County suburbanization is probably not the major factor in explaining the decrease. The region also lost 602 farms from 1992 to 2007; however, the number of farms is much less significant than total farmland acreage, since a decrease in the number of farms does not necessarily signify a decrease in farmland acreage. In other words, the number of acres in farmland can increase even while the number of farms decreased (as was the case in Beaufort and Hertford Counties), given the possible consolidation of smaller farms into larger farming operations.

**Table 1.4**  
**Farms and Farm Acreage, 1992-2007**  
**Counties in Region Q**

County	1992		1997		2002		2007		Change, 1992-2007	
	Farms	Acreage	Farms	Acreage	Farms	Acreage	Farms	Acreage	Farms	Acreage
Beaufort	447	144,529	385	155,460	395	169,788	369	160,343	-78	+15,814
Bertie	456	170,006	371	154,338	330	142,553	279	147,353	-177	-22,653
Hertford	195	75,496	169	76,439	136	79,810	163	78,634	-32	+3,138
Martin	487	131,767	389	115,202	305	110,677	320	105,490	-167	-26,277
Pitt	583	194,015	474	193,377	448	185,776	435	171,525	-148	-22,490
Region	2,168	715,813	1,788	694,816	1,614	688,604	1,566	663,345	-602	-32,068

Source: Census of Agriculture, 1992, 1997, 2002, and 2007, County Data, North Carolina.

## HISTORIC RESOURCES

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of cultural resources. It was authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, and this registry is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect historic resources. Properties listed include districts, sites, buildings, and structures that are significant in American history, architecture, and culture. There are many sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places in the five counties. Each county’s historical sites are relatively concentrated, many of which are located in municipal downtowns (see Table 1.5).

**Table 1.5**  
**Sites Listed in the National Register of Historic Places**  
**Counties in Region Q**

County	Number of National Register Listings
Beaufort County	14
Bertie County	22
Hertford County	26
Martin County	25
Pitt County	27
Total, Region Q	114

Source: <http://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/nc/state.html#pickem>



## Beaufort County

Beaufort County has 14 National Register Listings, which is surprisingly the smallest number for counties in the Mid-East region. Most of the sites are located in Bath and Washington. These two towns are right on the water front and offer great views of the water ways.



**Downtown Washington in Beaufort County**



**Historic Church in Bath, Beaufort County**

## Bertie County

Bertie County has 22 listings on the National Register. Most of Bertie County's historical sites are located in the town of Windsor. The sites are mostly homes, yet there is one church and one plantation home listed.

## Hertford County

Hertford County has 26 listings on the National Register. Ahoskie and Murfreesboro combined have 18 of the county's historical properties.



**Hope Plantation, circa 1803, Bertie County**



**The Hare Plantation in Como**



**Wiley and Jane Vann Brown House in Hertford County**

The historical properties listed in the National Registry are mostly homes, but there are two schools and one general store identified in the county. The town of Como has the Hare Plantation Home which was renovated in 2003. The plantation is a private residence but the owners have opened their home for tours in an effort to help raise funds for local preservation.

### **Martin County**

Martin County has 25 listings on the National Register. One historic place of special interest is the Hope Plantation which is located in Windsor. It has been restored and is now used as a tourist attraction. Site tours of this restored plantation help attract visitors to the area. Six out of the 25 historic sites in Martin County are located in Williamston. Many of the other historical sites in Martin County are churches and homes. There is also a historic fort, Fort Branch.



**Home of Asa Biggs, a former  
U.S. Senator and federal judge**



**St. Martin's Episcopal Church, circa 1880**

Source: Martin County Travel & Tourism Development Authority/Visitor's Center and Martin County Historical Society

### **Pitt County**

Pitt County has 27 listings on the National Register. They range from old tobacco warehouses to residential homes. Most of Pitt County's historical sites are located in the city of Greenville. A good example of a restored historical building is the Blount Harvey building in downtown Greenville. The building was an old department store; now it has a specialty shop on the bottom floor and a wine bar on the top floor.



**Blount Harvey Building in Greenville**



## CHAPTER 2 POPULATION AND HOUSING

### POPULATION

#### Total Population: Counties and Region

Table 2.1 provides past and current estimates of population for the five counties in Region Q and the region as a whole. The region increased in total population from 2000 to 2009, but the vast majority of the population increase occurred within Pitt County and three of the region’s counties lost population during that time period. Beaufort County increased its population modestly between 2000 and 2009, while Bertie and Hertford counties decreased in population modestly during the same time period.

Martin County experienced a significant population loss from 2000 to 2009. These population trends have major ramifications for economic development – in particular the increase in labor force in Pitt County and the loss of labor force in Martin County. Labor force implications are discussed in a later section of this chapter.

**Table 2.1  
 Population and Population Change, 2000 and 2009  
 Counties in Region Q**

<b>County</b>	<b>Year 2000 Population</b>	<b>Year 2009 Population</b>	<b>2000-2009 Absolute Change</b>	<b>2000-2009 Percent Change</b>
Beaufort County	44,958	46,414	+1,456	+3.2%
Bertie County	19,773	19,345	-428	-2.1%
Hertford County	22,601	22,283	-318	-1.4%
Martin County	25,593	23,337	-2,256	-8.8%
Pitt County	133,798	159,057	+25,259	+18.9%
Region Q Total	246,723	270,436	+23,713	+9.6%

Source: 2000 data from: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, Summary File 1, Table P1. Year 2009 population estimates from U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division (June 2010), Table 4, “Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Incorporated Places in North Carolina: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2009 (SUB-EST2009-04-37).”

#### Total Population: Municipalities

Population trends for the cities can offer more insight as to population dynamics that countywide figures do not reveal. Municipal population trends are also important because cities are the centers of economic activity in the region. Table 2.2 provides population data for cities and towns in the region in 2000 and 2009.

Region Q has many small cities (less than 1,000 population), and the vast majority of the small cities outside Pitt County have witnessed some degree of population loss during the last decade. Every city in Martin County except Bear Grass lost population from 2000 to 2009, though some population changes are better characterized as stable than as an actual loss. Population loss in Williamston, the county seat of Martin County, was especially significant (-479 persons, or -8.2 percent).



**Festival in Williamston**

Robersonville's population decreased by 194 persons (-11.2 percent) from 2000 to 2009. Population loss has important implications for economic development as discussed later in this report.



**Downtown Robersonville**

Bertie County's municipalities, except for the City of Windsor, followed a similar trend to that of cities in Martin County in terms of decreases in total population. Similarly, in Hertford County, four of the county's six cities lost population from 2000 to 2009, though in some cases small population losses are better characterized as having stable populations.

Windsor (in Bertie County) increased its population substantially by 745 persons from 2000 to 2009 (32.6 percent), while Bertie County as a whole lost population during the same time period. Ahoskie and Murfreesboro (in Hertford County) also witnessed population increases during the period despite an overall loss of total county population.

**Table 2.2**  
**Population, 2000 and 2009, Cities in Region Q**

<b>Beaufort County</b>			<b>Martin County</b>		
<b>City</b>	<b>Year 2000 Population</b>	<b>Year 2009 Population</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Year 2000 Population</b>	<b>Year 2009 Population</b>
Aurora	583	576	Bear Grass	53	60
Bath	275	267	Everetts	179	148
Belhaven	1,968	2,042	Hamilton	516	465
Chocowinity	733	721	Hassell	72	68
Pantego	170	167	Jamesville	502	450
Washington	9,583	10,176	Oak City	339	334
Washington Park	440	450	Parmele	290	260
			Robersonville	1,731	1,537
			Williamston	5,843	5,364
<b>Bertie County</b>			<b>Pitt County</b>		
<b>City</b>	<b>Year 2000 Population</b>	<b>Year 2009 Population</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Year 2000 Population</b>	<b>Year 2009 Population</b>
Askewville	180	163	Ayden	4,622	5,043
Aulander	888	836	Bethel	1,681	1,759
Colerain	221	199	Falkland	112	114
Kelford	245	222	Farmville	4,302	4,656
Lewiston	613	561	Fountain	533	536
Woodville					
Powellsville	259	234	Greenville	60,476	81,747
Roxobel	263	240	Grifton (part)	2,073	2,265
Windsor	2,283	3,028	Grimesland	440	469
			Simpson	464	468
			Winterville	4,791	4,881
<b>Hertford County</b>					
<b>City</b>	<b>Year 2000 Population</b>	<b>Year 2009 Population</b>			
Ahoskie	4,523	4,658			
Cofield	347	324			
Como	78	74			
Harrellsville	102	93			
Murfreesboro	2,045	2,415			
Winton	956	892			

Source: 2000 data from: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, Summary File 1, Table P1. Year 2009 population estimates from U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division (June 2010), Table 4, "Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Incorporated Places in North Carolina: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2009 (SUB-EST2009-04-37)."



Cities in Beaufort County exhibit a mixture of population trends. Washington, the second most populated city in the region, increased its population from 2000 to 2009. Other cities in Beaufort County had relatively negligible changes in population, with the smallest cities decreasing slightly (essentially remaining stable) and Belhaven increasing slightly.



**Downtown Washington**

In Pitt County, with the exception of the smallest cities (Falkland, Fountain, Grimesland, and Simpson) which remained essentially stable, the other cities all increased in population. Greenville increased its population by 21,271 persons, thereby accounting for 84 percent of Pitt County's total population growth from 2000 to 2009 and 90 percent of Region Q's population increase. Given rapid population growth in Greenville, that city has now surpassed Asheville and Jacksonville in total population to become the 10<sup>th</sup> largest in North Carolina, behind Charlotte, Raleigh, Greensboro, Durham, Winston-Salem, Fayetteville, Cary, Wilmington, and High Point. Greenville also accounted for almost one-third (30.2 percent) of Region Q's population in 2009.

The trend of a fast-growing city (Greenville) within a rapidly developing county (Pitt) that contains smaller, satellite population centers (other growing cities) is positive from an economic development standpoint. However, the decreases in population of small municipalities in the region outside Pitt County may be cause for concern to the extent they continue. North Carolina's small towns are an important historical characteristic of the state; more than any other state, North Carolina "pioneered scattered growth away from cities and suburbs and no other state has retained as much of its older landscape in the process of industrialization and economic growth" (Herbers, 1978, p. 28-29).

It does not appear to be in the best interest of the region's economy or culture for the area's small towns to slowly erode away with further population losses to the point that they become virtually dead or "ghost" towns. On the other hand, the small town settlement pattern in North Carolina is a vestige of an economy dominated by agriculture, where the small towns once supported small, individually owned farms. A decentralized form of manufacturing also developed in North Carolina's small towns so that farmers could also have jobs in factories without giving up their farms (Herbers, 1978, p. 29). Given the decline of manufacturing nationally in terms of jobs, and a new agriculture that is less reliant on labor, one might seriously question whether such a dispersed development pattern of small towns in the region is indeed essential to the future of the region's economy.

Despite the possibility that the region's small towns may no longer serve as centers of agriculture and manufacturers, it is strongly recommended that the Comprehensive Economic Development



Strategy contain a “small town” maintenance and revitalization strategy. At a minimum, maintaining the region’s cultural heritage will ultimately depend on preventing the small towns from declining into obscurity. And the small towns in the region could still remain central in terms of economic activity, if they are not allowed to further decline into obscurity.

### **Age of the Population**

Age is among the most important dimensions of the population. There can be vast differences in the needs of children versus the elderly. Age has a relationship to the labor force – workers include the population ages 16 years and over through retirement age and sometimes beyond. Age has important relationships to housing and can help predict likely first-time homebuyers, renters, owners of second homes, etc. Age can also affect the political situation: for instance, in places where there is a large percentage of elderly, they sometimes vote down bond referendums for schools. The relationship of the age of population to the needs for community facilities and services is also very important. For instance, a high elderly population often translates into a need for health care and nursing and personal care homes. On the other hand, a town with many children signals a need for schools, day care centers, and playgrounds.

The 65-years-and-older age group is commonly referred to as the “elderly” and the “retirement age” population. Most of the people in this age group are no longer in the work force. While some elderly households may have more disposable income than ever before in their lifetimes, many elderly households will have limited incomes because they are no longer earning wages and salaries. Persons who own residences in this age group may eventually seek alternative housing, because they are more likely than other age groups to need assisted care or medical attention. Because of differences in life expectancy between men and women, a very high proportion of older persons is and will be women. The differences in life expectancy also contribute to the number of elderly women living alone, many of whom are likely to have inadequate income (Howe, Chapman, and Baggett 1994).

Table 2.3 shows the total number of persons ages 65 and above for counties and cities in the region in 2000, as well as the percentage share of the total population in each jurisdiction comprised of seniors. Note that these data are more than ten years old and therefore do not reflect the 2010 decennial census. Additionally, these data may vastly understate the extent to which the region’s population is aging in place and increasing in terms a percentage share of the total population.

The overall percentage of elderly population expressed as a percentage of total population was similar in 2000 in four of the five counties, at approximately 15 percent to 17 percent. Pitt County, while clearly having a much larger total population of seniors, had a substantially lower percentage of persons ages 65 and above in 2000; that smaller percentage is attributed to the younger population attending colleges and schools in Pitt County and Greenville.

The various cities exhibit a clear trend of having higher percentages of seniors than the counties as a whole, as of 2000. At least one of five residents in many of the region’s cities were ages 65 and above, as indicated in Table 2.3; that finding holds true in the region’s larger cities and towns (excluding Greenville): Washington, Williamston, Windsor, Ahoskie, and Murfreesboro.

**Table 2.3**  
**Persons Ages 65 and Over and**  
**Percent of Total Population Ages 65 and Over, 2000**  
**Counties and Cities in Region Q**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Persons Ages 65 and Over, 2000</b>	<b>Percent of Total Population Ages 65 and Over, 2000</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Persons Ages 65 and Over, 2000</b>	<b>Percent of Total Population Ages 65 and Over, 2000</b>
<b>Beaufort County</b>	7,128	15.9%	<b>Martin County</b>	3,849	15.2%
Aurora	131	22.5%	Bear Grass	13	24.5%
Bath	66	24.0%	Everetts	25	13.9%
Belhaven	375	19.0%	Hamilton	93	18.0%
Chocowinity	113	15.5%	Hassell	18	25.0%
Pantego	28	16.2%	Jamesville	113	22.5%
Washington	1,986	21.0%	Oak City	92	27.1%
Washington Park	89	20.0%	Parmele	51	17.6%
			Robersonville	382	22.1%
			Williamston	1,208	20.7%
<b>Bertie County</b>	3,162	16.9%	<b>Pitt County</b>	12,828	9.6%
Askewville	23	12.7%	Ayden	820	17.7%
Aulander	171	19.3%	Bethel	310	18.4%
Colerain	55	23.9%	Falkland	17	15.1%
Kelford	39	15.9%	Farmville	813	18.8%
Lewiston Woodville	87	13.1%	Fountain	96	18.0%
Powellsville	50	19.3%	Greenville	5,310	8.8%
Roxobel	60	22.8%	Grifton (part)	363	17.6%
Windsor	489	21.4%	Grimesland	67	15.2%
			Simpson	66	14.2%
			Winterville	488	10.2%
<b>Hertford County</b>	3,335	14.8%			
Ahoskie	905	20.0%			
Cofield	52	15.0%			
Como	14	18.0%			
Harrellsville	24	23.5%			
Murfreesboro	449	22.0%			
Winton	104	10.9%			

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, Summary File 1.

The potential need of elderly for special housing and specific community services should be monitored in future updates of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. Again, the number of elderly persons expressed as a percentage of total population, and the number of households with seniors as of 2010, is likely to have increased since 2000 as shown in Table 2.3.

### **Income and Poverty**

Table 2.4 provides two measures of wealth of the population in 1999-2000 by individual county and city: median family income and the percentage of the total population below poverty level. The median family income for the state of North Carolina as a whole in 1999 was \$46,335. Median family incomes in 1999 for counties were relatively similar and only ranged from approximately \$32,000 to \$38,000, well below the state median. Beaufort County had the highest median family income in 2000 of the five counties in the region, but it was well below the state median.

The cities and towns with the highest median incomes in the region in 1999 were Washington Park and Bath (both in Beaufort County), followed by Simpson, Winterville, and Greenville (all three in Pitt County). Other, smaller cities that had median family incomes above \$40,000 in 1999 were *Aurora and Pantego (Beaufort County), Askewville (Bertie County), and Falkland and Grifton (part) (Pitt County)*.

At the other end of the income scale, the data in Table 2.4 reveal significant concerns about low incomes and concentrations of poverty. In Bertie County, which had the lowest median family income of all five counties in the region in 1999, seven of the eight cities and towns (excluding Powellsville) had median family incomes below Bertie County's median family income.

Moreover, poverty status has been significant in many of the small cities and towns in the region. For North Carolina as a whole, the percentage of total persons living below the poverty line in 1999 was 12.3 percent. All counties in the region were well above the state's percentage share of population living in poverty in 1999.

As indicated in Table 2.4, a relatively small number of cities and towns (11 of 40) in the region had lower percentages of their total populations in poverty than the State of North Carolina as a whole: Bath, Pantego and Washington Park (Beaufort County), Askewville and Colerain (Bertie County), Como and Harrellsville (Hertford County), and Bethel, Falkland, Farmville, and Winterville (Pitt County). All of the cities and towns in Martin County had percentages of total population living in poverty in 1999 higher than the state's median.

Furthermore, as indicated in Table 2.4, acute poverty levels existed in several cities and towns in the region in 1999. Six cities and towns had 30 percent or more of their residents living below the poverty level in 1999: Bellhaven (Beaufort County), Lewiston Woodville (Bertie County), Everetts, Hassell, and Robersonville (Martin County), and Fountain (Pitt County).

**Table 2.4**  
**Median Family Income in 1999 and**  
**Percent of Total Population in Poverty, 2000**  
**Counties and Cities in Region Q**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Median Family Income 1999 (\$)</b>	<b>% Total Population in Poverty, 2000</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Median Family Income 1999 (\$)</b>	<b>% Total Population in Poverty, 2000</b>
<b>Beaufort County</b>	<b>\$37,893</b>	<b>19.5%</b>	<b>Martin County</b>	<b>\$35,428</b>	<b>20.2%</b>
Aurora	\$42,000	20.9%	Bear Grass	\$30,625	15.0%
Bath	\$58,125	8.2%	Everetts	\$25,935	33.0%
Belhaven	\$23,958	35.0%	Hamilton	\$28,977	24.1%
Chocowinity	\$31,875	21.7%	Hassell	\$19,167	30.0%
Pantego	\$41,750	6.5%	Jamesville	\$32,813	19.7%
Washington	\$30,280	27.4%	Oak City	\$33,500	26.5%
Washington Park	\$68,750	4.7%	Parmele	\$21,528	29.1%
			Robersonville	\$28,565	30.9%
			Williamston	\$32,984	29.0%
<b>Bertie County</b>	<b>\$30,186</b>	<b>23.2%</b>	<b>Pitt County</b>	<b>\$32,643</b>	<b>19.0%</b>
Askewville	\$42,917	10.8%	Ayden	\$34,808	25.0%
Aulander	\$34,125	26.7%	Bethel	\$35,278	4.5%
Colerain	\$38,750	4.5%	Falkland	\$43,750	5.1%
Kelford	\$29,357	28.9%	Farmville	\$38,918	4.9%
Lewiston Woodville	\$26,389	31.3%	Fountain	\$26,042	36.0%
Powellsville	\$30,938	24.7%	Greenville	\$44,491	26.0%
Roxobel	\$28,036	12.3%	Grifton (part)	\$40,875	17.0%
Windsor	\$34,107	25.8%	Grimesland	\$36,250	16.7%
			Simpson	\$47,500	13.2%
			Winterville	\$47,167	11.6%
<b>Hertford County</b>	<b>\$32,002</b>	<b>18.3%</b>			
Ahoskie	\$22,769	24.8%			
Cofield	\$18,214	26.5%			
Como	\$31,250	3.5%			
Harrellsville	\$32,000	0.0%			
Murfreesboro	\$29,716	18.6%			
Winton	\$19,706	20.0%			

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, Summary File 1.



Several other cities and towns had percentages of total population living in poverty in 1999 between 20 and 30 percent: Aurora, Chocowinity, Washington (Beaufort County), Aulander, Kelford, and Windsor (Bertie County), Ahoskie, Cofield, and Winton (Hertford County), Hamilton, Oak City, Parmele and Williamston (Martin County), and Ayden and Greenville (Pitt County). This means that, of the 40 cities and towns in the region, more than half (21) had percentages of the total population living in poverty in 1999 above 20 percent. Clearly, the pervasiveness of poverty in the region and median family incomes well below the state’s median is cause for some concern from an economic development and quality of life perspective.

### **Educational Attainment**

ECU’s research for Region Q did not include an analysis of educational attainment levels of the population. However, the 2009 CEDS reported that the educational achievement of the population in the region lags behind North Carolina averages, and the state’s population lags noticeably behind national averages.

### **County and Regional Population Projections**

The North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management projects the populations of counties through the year 2030. Table 2.5 provides projections of population for the counties and region from 2010 to 2030 in five-year increments. The region will continue to grow as a whole significantly, but due almost entirely to growth in Pitt County. Beaufort County’s population will increase modestly during the next 20 years, increasing at a rate of 5 percent from 2010 to 2020 and then 4.7 percent from 2020 to 2030. Pitt County’s population will increase substantially over the next two decades, increasing at a rate of 20.5 percent from 2010 to 2020 and then 17.0 percent from 2020 to 2030.

The other three counties will have relatively stable populations, witnessing relatively slight declines. Although Martin County lost 2,256 in population from 2000 to 2009, the projections indicate that the county’s population will remain basically stable during the next two decades (a loss of less than 400 persons).

**Table 2.5**  
**Population Projections, 2010 to 2030**  
**Counties in Region Q**

<b>County</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>
Beaufort	47,498	48,674	49,845	51,007	52,166
Bertie	20,037	19,919	19,890	19,883	19,882
Hertford	23,953	23,930	23,923	23,924	23,922
Martin	23,772	23,552	23,464	23,429	23,413
Pitt	161,893	178,478	195,068	211,655	228,243
Region Q	277,153	294,553	312,190	329,898	347,626

Source: North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management.

Population projections can also be translated into future housing unit needs and reveal anticipated trends for the construction industry. With an addition of 66,350 residents over the 20-year period from 2010 to 2030, Pitt County should experience during that same period an addition of approximately 27,300 new housing units, if average household size in Pitt County in 2000 remains stable (2.43 persons per unit, average).

As noted earlier, the age of the population is one of the more important variables to analyze, and the elderly population in particular is of significant interest. Table 2.6 provides population projections of the senior population (ages 65 and above) in the county by region.

The age composition of the population will change significantly toward more seniors over time in the various counties and the region as a whole. While the total populations in Bertie, Hertford, and Martin Counties will decline between 2010 and 2030, those counties will nonetheless witness significant increases in the elderly population.

**Table 2.6**  
**Projections of Population Ages 65 and Above, 2010 to 2030**  
**Counties in Region Q**

<b>County</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>
Beaufort	8,696	10,055	11,190	12,051	12,598
Bertie	3,229	3,418	3,716	4,042	4,190
Hertford	3,852	4,129	4,609	5,028	5,192
Martin	3,752	4,074	4,400	4,665	4,731
Pitt	15,963	19,442	23,538	27,744	30,990
Region Q	35,492	41,118	47,453	53,530	57,701
% of Total Population, Region	12.8%	14.0%	15.2%	16.3%	16.6%

Source: Compiled from North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management.

These significant increases in share of the total population who are elderly have significant implications for housing demand, labor force, and community and social services. The increasing elderly population is likely to mean different (senior friendly) housing types such as retirement communities, barrier-free housing for the disabled, and certain institutional living arrangements like nursing and personal care homes will come into demand. The aging in place of the population also suggests that over time the labor force will decline unless seniors continue working beyond the age of 65. And the composition of services and facilities provided by counties and other providers may need to transition over time from things like building playgrounds to constructing senior centers.

## HOUSING

### County and Regional Housing Trends and Short-term Projections

As with the population, the vast majority of the increases in housing units from 2000 to 2009 occurred in Pitt County, along with significant increases in Beaufort County (see Table 2.7). Although population declined slightly between 2000 and 2009 in Bertie, Hertford, and Martin County, the housing stock increased during the same time period. Housing unit increases in light of population decreases could be explained by a number of factors. First, the need for housing can increase even with declines in population if households split into smaller ones. Second, the construction industry may be building houses in excess of market needs. Third, the newly constructed housing units may be second homes or recreational/seasonal residences.

Table 2.7 also shows a short-term projection of housing units in the counties and region in 2014. Housing construction will still occur in all counties from 2009 to 2014, except for Martin County, where a decrease from the 2009 total housing units is projected.

**Table 2.7**  
**Total Housing Units, 2000 and 2009**  
**Counties in Region Q**

County	2000 (Census)	July 1, 2009 (Estimate)	Absolute Change 2000-2009	2014 (Projection)
Beaufort	22,139	24,085	+1,946	24,685
Bertie	9,050	9,406	+356	9,461
Hertford	9,724	10,100	+376	10,193
Martin	10,930	11,201	+271	10,966
Pitt	58,408	75,374	+16,966	82,169
Region Q	110,251	130,166	+19,915	137,474

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. Table 4, "Annual Estimates of Housing Units for Counties in North Carolina: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2009" (HU-EST2009-04-37). Release Date: September 2010. 2014 projection from NC Commerce Department, Economic Development Division, County Profiles (April 2010).

### County and Municipal Housing in 2000

As indicated in Table 2.8, Bertie, Hertford, and Martin County have similar numbers of total housing units as of 2000. Three of the five counties (Beaufort, Bertie, and Hertford) had more than one-fourth of their total housing stocks comprised of mobile (manufactured) homes in 2000. Bertie County had the highest percentage of its housing stock comprised of mobile (manufactured) homes in 2000, with 31.7 percent.

**Table 2.8**  
**Total Housing Units and Percent Share of Mobile Homes, 2000**  
**Counties and Cities in the Region**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Total Housing Units, 2000</b>	<b>Mobile Home Share of Total Housing Units 2000</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Total Housing Units, 2000</b>	<b>Mobile Home Share of Total Housing Units 2000</b>
<b>Beaufort County</b>	<b>22,139</b>	<b>27.5%</b>	<b>Martin County</b>	<b>10,930</b>	<b>23.4%</b>
Aurora	316	17.8%	Bear Grass	28	0.0%
Bath	150	1.4%	Everetts	85	13.9%
Belhaven	827	30.3%	Hamilton	216	24.4%
Chocowinity	302	17.0%	Hassell	33	8.3%
Pantego	65	18.3%	Jamesville	233	17.6%
Washington	4,398	5.2%	Oak City	162	10.5%
Washington Park	218	0.0%	Parmele	133	20.4%
			Robersonville	785	1.4%
			Williamston	2,506	1.6%
<b>Bertie County</b>	<b>9,050</b>	<b>31.7%</b>	<b>Pitt County</b>	<b>58,408</b>	<b>17.7%</b>
Askewville	85	14.6%	Ayden	2,067	5.2%
Aulander	412	16.0%	Bethel	723	7.9%
Colerain	111	7.2%	Falkland	43	20.9%
Kelford	124	17.7%	Farmville	2,018	2.0%
Lewiston Woodville	291	32.6%	Fountain	243	8.0%
Powellsville	137	18.9%	Greenville	28,276	5.0%
Roxobel	134	27.6%	Grifton (part)	983	20.0%
Windsor	1,092	11.4%	Grimesland	187	27.0%
			Simpson	207	17.6%
			Winterville	1,937	4.9%
<b>Hertford County</b>	<b>9,724</b>	<b>25.5%</b>			
Ahoskie	2,010	2.1%			
Cofield	168	28.0%			
Como	44	9.1%			
Harrellsville	50	0.0%			
Murfreesboro	986	3.2%			
Winton	385	27.0%			

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, Summary File 1, Table H1 and Summary File 3, Table H30.

Table 2.8 also reveals, like the population counts presented earlier, the limited amount of residential development existing in many of the small cities and towns in the region. Eight of the 40 cities and towns in the region had less than 100 housing units in 2000.



The cities and towns also exhibit a wide range of shares of mobile (manufactured) homes as a percentage of total housing stock. Some towns, like Washington Park, Bear Grass, and Harrellsville had no mobile (manufactured) homes in 2000 according to the decennial census, while others (Belhaven, Lewiston Woodville, Roxobel, Cofield, Winton, and Grimesland) had more than one-fourth of their housing stocks comprised of mobile (manufactured) homes in 2000. Although some cities and towns had high percentages of their housing stock in 2000 comprised of mobile (manufactured) homes, it appears based on the county percentages shown in Table 2.8 that mobile (manufactured) homes are more prevalent in the unincorporated portions of the region.

### **Housing Value and Age**

Table 2.9 shows the median housing value of specified owner-occupied housing units and the median year built for counties and cities in the region in 2000. Note that since mobile (manufactured) homes can be owner occupied, but are typically of lower value than conventional, site/stick built homes, the significant shares of mobile (manufactured) homes in most of the counties in the region have the effect of depressing median home values. For benchmarking purposes, the median value of specified owner-occupied housing units for the State of North Carolina was \$108,300, and the median year built for housing units in the state as a whole was 1978.

All five counties had median values of owner-occupied housing units well below the state median in 2000. Pitt County had the highest median value (\$96,800) of owner-occupied housing units in 2000 of the five counties in the region. Beaufort County's median value of owner-occupied housing units in 2000 was second highest in the region, at \$81,900. Bertie, Hertford, and Martin County had owner-occupied housing unit values in 2000 that were 55 percent, 57 percent, and 63 percent, respectively, of the state's median.

Like with the median income and poverty level data presented earlier, the median value of owner-occupied homes in 2000 reveals more insights about the distribution of wealth in the region. In 2000 there were five cities and towns with median housing values of owner-occupied housing units below \$50,000 (less than one-half of the state's median value); in order of lowest value first, they were Hassell, Roxobel, Parmele, Oak City, and Winton.

Relatively few (12 of 40) cities and towns had median housing values for owner-occupied housing units that exceeded their county median values: Bath and Washington Park (Beaufort County), Askewville, Aulander, Colerain, and Windsor (Bertie County), Ahoskie, Como, Harrellsville, and Murfreesboro (Hertford County), Bear Grass (Martin County), and Greenville (Pitt County). This appears to mean that, with some notable exceptions, the higher value housing tends to be located in unincorporated parts of the county. That observation might be partially explained by higher-value, amenities-driven homes along coastlines and lake shorelines outside the cities and towns in the region. The low values of homes as indicated in Table 2.9 appear to be associated or correlated with larger shares of mobile (manufactured) homes in Roxobel and Winton; furthermore, low home values appear to be associated or correlated with high poverty levels in Hassell and Oak City.

**Table 2.9**  
**Owner-Occupied Housing Value and**  
**Median Age of Housing Units, 2000**  
**Counties and Cities in the Region**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Median Value (\$), Specified Owner Occupied Housing Units</b>	<b>Median Year Structure (Housing Unit) Built</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Median Value (\$), Specified Owner Occupied Housing Units</b>	<b>Median Year Structure (Housing Unit) Built</b>
<b>Beaufort County</b>	<b>\$81,900</b>	<b>1975</b>	<b>Martin County</b>	<b>\$68,400</b>	<b>1972</b>
Aurora	\$63,500	1971	Bear Grass	\$80,000	1960
Bath	\$95,900	1955	Everetts	\$52,900	1943
Belhaven	\$57,600	1968	Hamilton	\$60,300	1968
Chocowinity	\$64,000	1971	Hassell	\$32,500	1950
Pantego	\$65,000	1957	Jamesville	\$57,400	1969
Washington	\$75,800	1966	Oak City	\$44,400	1953
Washington Park	\$122,800	1954	Parmele	\$42,000	1966
			Robersonville	\$59,600	1962
			Williamston	\$63,000	1963
<b>Bertie County</b>	<b>\$59,200</b>	<b>1973</b>	<b>Pitt County</b>	<b>\$96,800</b>	<b>1982</b>
Askewville	\$60,000	1967	Ayden	\$74,500	1968
Aulander	\$59,500	1960	Bethel	\$67,400	1965
Colerain	\$62,500	1952	Falkland	\$67,000	1971
Kelford	\$50,600	1955	Farmville	\$78,500	1963
Lewiston	\$54,300	1973	Fountain	\$64,600	1957
Woodville					
Powellsville	\$56,100	1960	Greenville	\$110,200	1983
Roxobel	\$37,800	1959	Grifton (part)	\$80,000	1967
Windsor	\$71,560	1965	Grimesland	\$60,000	1972
			Simpson	\$94,400	1978
			Winterville	\$93,900	1980
<b>Hertford County</b>	<b>\$61,700</b>	<b>1972</b>			
Ahoskie	\$74,200	1962			
Cofield	\$51,800	1966			
Como	\$77,500	1953			
Harrellsville	\$62,300	1953			
Murfreesboro	\$73,100	1963			
Winton	\$47,300	1967			

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, Summary File 1, Table H1 and Summary File 3, Tables H63 and H76.

With regard to age of housing units, for benchmarking purposes, the median year built for housing units in the state of North Carolina as a whole was 1978. Not surprisingly, rapid homebuilding in Pitt County in more recent years has raised its median year of construction of housing units (1982) above the state's median. In the other four counties, the median year built is older (lower) than the state's median.

Age is not, in and of itself, an indicator of housing conditions. However, older housing stocks may be correlated with lower values, deteriorated housing conditions, smaller sizes of homes that no longer meet current consumer preferences, and other issues and concerns.

Based on the median year that housing units were constructed, as indicated in Table 2.9, there are several small cities and towns in the region that have housing stocks that are 50 years old or older on average. In order of oldest first, the following cities had median years built for housing (as of 2000) in the 1950s (or earlier): Everetts (1943), Hassell (1950), Colerain (1952), Como and Harrellsville (1953), Washington Park (1954), Bath (1955), Pantego and Fountain (1957), and Roxobel (1959). The median year built is influenced by the number of new homes constructed in later decades, and so the low medians indicate that not much new housing has been constructed in these smaller cities and towns in the region.

Furthermore, the region has a significant number of cities and towns with median years of construction in the early 1960s. Any concentration of homes with median year constructed in 1961 or earlier represents potential for designation as "historic" per the parameters of the National Register of Historic Places. While designation of neighborhoods in some small cities and towns may not be fully embraced by the property owners, the region might study the prospects and potential for designating appropriate residential areas in several small cities and towns in the region as "historic," which might then contribute to housing value increases through maintenance and refurbishment and possibly even contribute to a heritage tourism strategy for the region. One has to be cognizant, however, that such a strategy could result in "gentrification" and displacement of lower income households if appropriate mitigation strategies are not put into effect.

## CHAPTER 3 LABOR FORCE AND ECONOMY

### LABOR FORCE

#### Labor Force and Unemployment

Table 3.1 provides labor force data by counties in the region, along with unemployment and unemployment rates. The labor force in Region Q has increased in each of the region's five counties from 2000 to 2010. Regionally, the civilian labor force increased by approximately 22,000 from 2000 to 2010. However, the civilian labor force has declined slightly in four of the five counties (excluding Pitt) and the region as a whole from 2009 to 2010. Unemployment rates for the counties and region as a whole are substantially higher in 2010 than in 2000, but the 2010 unemployment rates show significant improvement from 2009 unemployment rates.

**Table 3.1  
 Labor Force and Unemployment  
 Counties in Region Q, 2000, September 2009 and 2010**

County	Civilian Labor Force			Unemployment			Unemployment Rate		
	2000 Census	Sept. 2009	Sept. 2010	2000 Census	Sept. 2009	Sept. 2010	2000 Census	Sept. 2009	Sept. 2010
Beaufort	18,913	21,745	20,713	1,285	2,343	2,044	6.8%	10.8%	9.9%
Bertie	7,539	9,515	9,224	573	976	936	7.6%	10.3%	10.1%
Hertford	8,699	10,524	10,353	829	947	890	9.5%	9.0%	8.6%
Martin	10,649	12,253	11,868	928	1,274	1,121	8.7%	10.4%	9.4%
Pitt	64,565	79,516	80,540	4,695	7,994	7,400	7.3%	10.1%	9.2%
Region	110,365	133,553	132,698	8,310	13,534	12,391	7.5%	10.1%	9.3%

Source: 2000 data from U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3, Table P43. 2009 and 2010 data from North Carolina Employment Security Commission, Labor Market Information Division. 2010. Workforce in-Depth: Custom Region Summary for Beaufort, Bertie, Hertford, Martin, and Pitt Counties. Generated November 2010.

The decrease in county and regional unemployment rates and decreases in the total number of unemployed may reflect positive news of an improving economy. However, the civilian labor force also decreased from 2009 to 2010 in all counties except Pitt, and may have had some effect in terms of reducing unemployment rates. Also, the decline in unemployment rates and the unemployed in the region could reflect persons who have left the work force (out of frustration or retirement), or it could signal a movement of workers out of the region to find employment elsewhere.

Table 3.2 provides the total number of workers living in each city in the region in 2000 (persons 16 years and over), and the percentage of total working living in that city who worked in that same city in 2000. These figures provide us with a partial, but not complete view of employment in each city in 2000; since people can live in other areas and commute into the given city for work, the data for people working in the city does not present a complete accounting of



employment by place of work in each of the cities, but rather, only those who also lived in the given city.

**Table 3.2**  
**Total Workers 16 Years and Over Living in Place**  
**and Percent Working in Place of Residence, 2000**  
**Cities in Region Q**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Total Workers Living in Place</b>	<b>Percent Working in Place of Residence</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Total Workers Living in Place</b>	<b>Percent Working in Place of Residence</b>
<b>Beaufort County</b>			<b>Martin County</b>		
Aurora	230	33.9%	Bear Grass	33	12.1%
Bath	110	20.0%	Everetts	73	5.5%
Belhaven	585	34.5%	Hamilton	197	14.7%
Chocowinity	296	12.8%	Hassell	21	0.0%
Pantego	60	8.3%	Jamesville	178	16.9%
Washington	3,361	61.9%	Oak City	128	17.2%
Washington Park	221	11.3%	Parmele	96	3.1%
			Robersonville	646	25.7%
			Williamston	1,960	46.1%
<b>Bertie County</b>			<b>Pitt County</b>		
Askewville	101	11.9%	Ayden	1,679	17.3%
Aulander	337	17.9%	Bethel	592	13.7%
Colerain	114	15.8%	Falkland	34	11.8%
Kelford	74	12.2%	Farmville	1,763	38.8%
Lewiston	164	33.0%	Fountain	193	10.9%
Woodville					
Powellsville	103	7.8%	Greenville	29,795	63.5%
Roxobel	124	25.0%	Grifton (part)	839	15.7%
Windsor	744	49.2%	Grimesland	158	14.6%
			Simpson	206	6.3%
			Winterville	2,377	11.6%
<b>Hertford County</b>					
Ahoskie	1,588	52.6%			
Cofield	112	13.4%			
Como	44	0.9%			
Harrellsville	27	33.3%			
Murfreesboro	930	44.8%			
Winton	230	30.9%			

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, SF 3, Tables P26 and P27.

The figures in Table 3.2 are more revealing in terms of the overall labor force distribution in the region (as of the year 2000) than the figures in Table 3.1 (county data). The most sizable labor force in 2000 for any city by far in the region was Greenville (29,975), followed by Washington (3,361). After these two cities, in order of labor force size, were the following cities: Winterville, Williamston, Farmville, Ayden, Ahoskie, Murfreesboro, and Grifton. The region contains many cities and towns that have negligible labor forces. Of the 40 cities and towns in the region, 9 had labor forces of less than 100 persons in 2000.

Although the focus of this section is on labor force and employment trends by place of residence, the data in Table 3.2 are also revealing with regard to the extent to which the cities and towns of the region provided for employment in 2000. We look to those data as a partial indicator of employment in small cities, because the U.S. Census Bureau does not provide employment estimates for individual cities and employment data are generally not available from other sources. As noted above, however, one can only get a partial, incomplete picture of employment (actual jobs) in the individual cities in 2000, by looking at the data in Table 3.2.

In Greenville, Washington, and Ahoskie in 2000, more than one-half (63.5%, 61.9%, and 52.5%, respectively) of the resident labor forces in those cities held jobs located within the city in which they lived. Williamston and Murfreesboro had positive statistics in that regard also; 44.8 percent of Williamston's resident labor force in 2000 held jobs within the City of Williamston, and 44.8 percent of Murfreesboro's resident labor force in 2000 held jobs within the City of Murfreesboro. In Farmville, the corresponding percentage was 38.8 percent. Some of the other smaller cities provided jobs within the city for about one-third of their labor forces residing in the city in 2000: Aurora (33.9%), Bellhaven (34.5%), Lewiston Woodville (33.0%), Harrellsville (33.3%). However, given the small labor forces in these cities and towns, the significance is almost negligible as they represent relatively small numbers of employment in 2000.

### **Labor Force by Place of Work**

Table 3.2, previously presented, shows the extent to which workers residing in cities worked in their city of residence in 2000. We now look at the same data for counties and the region as a whole. These data are important because they help us understand where the jobs were in 2000, the extent to which jobs were concentrated or dispersed, and the extent to which workers traveled to other locations for employment.

Table 3.3 shows the resident labor forces of each county in the region and where they were employed in 2000: within the place in which they lived, if they lived in a city, within the county of residence but outside of their place (city) of residence, and outside the county. In Region Q in 2000, the more than three quarters (79 percent) of the workers in the region did not leave the county in which they lived to go to work. Of those workers, some of them lived and worked in the city in which they resided (24.3% of total workers). Only about one (21%) in five of the region's resident workers commuted outside their county of residence for work in 2000.

**Table 3.3**  
**Employment by Place of Work, 2000**  
**Residents of Counties in Region Q**

County	Total Workers 16 Years and Over	%	Lived in a City and Worked in Place of Residence	%	Worked in County but Not in Place of Residence	%	Worked Outside County of Residence	%
Beaufort	18,497	100%	2,552	13.8%	11,556	62.5%	4,389	23.7%
Bertie	7,352	100%	568	7.7%	3,739	50.9%	3,045	41.4%
Hertford	7,560	100%	1,351	17.9%	4,405	58.3%	1,804	23.8%
Martin	10,487	100%	1,164	11.1%	4,950	47.2%	4,373	41.7%
Pitt	63,307	100%	20,444	32.3%	33,967	53.6%	8,896	14.1%
Region	107,203	100%	26,079	24.3%	58,617	54.7%	22,507	21.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, SF 3, Tables P26 and P27.

We can examine these trends further by looking at a special data file produced by the Census Bureau showing county-to-county commuting by resident labor forces. Note that the data in Table 3.4 do not show all places where the resident labor force worked in 2000, but only those that worked within the region.

**Table 3.4**  
**County to County Work Commuting Within Region Q, 2000**  
**Residents of Counties in Region Q**

Lived In:	Worked In:					
	Beaufort	Bertie	Hertford	Martin	Pitt	Total, 5 Counties
Beaufort	14,108	29	41	248	2,557	16,983
Bertie	38	4,307	1,416	432	125	6,318
Hertford	0	946	5,756	13	4	6,719
Martin	656	366	40	6,114	1,619	8,795
Pitt	1,772	80	25	472	54,411	56,760
Total	16,574	5,728	7,278	7,279	58,716	--

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, March 6, 2003. Residence County to Workplace County Flows for North Carolina Sorted by Residence State and County.

As might be expected, Table 3.4 shows that as of 2000, workers were inclined to work within their own county of residence. Working residents of Beaufort County worked predominantly in Beaufort County and to some extent in Pitt County in 2000. Commuting out of Beaufort County to Bertie, Hertford, and Pitt County for work was negligible in 2000. In Bertie County, traveling north for work to Hertford County was more prevalent than traveling south to Martin County or

Pitt County in 2000. Hertford County's labor force in 2000 who worked within the region worked almost exclusively within Hertford County itself, or Bertie County. Martin County's resident labor force worked in all five counties in the region in 2000 but was inclined not to drive north into Hertford County in significant numbers. Pitt County's resident labor force in 2000 worked predominantly Pitt County itself but also to a significant extent in Beaufort County. Though not reflected in Table 3.4, it is worth noting that Hertford County's working residents in 2000 had some significant numbers commuting north into Virginia for work. All counties in the region, of course, have some resident workers who commuted out of the region altogether in 2000.

### **Labor Force by Occupation**

Industry has served as a dominant unit of analysis for almost all applied regional economic analyses, but examining regional economies from a different angle (i.e., occupations) can provide important insights for regional development. Since workers who perform similar tasks can move easily between industries with minimal retraining, strategies focusing solely on industries are likely to overlook occupation-based opportunities across industries (Koo 2005). Therefore, it is worthwhile to examine the occupational profile of the region's workforce.

Table 3.5 shows the occupations of working residents of counties in Region Q, and the region as a whole, in 2000. There were 110,365 workers residing in the region in 2000. Because Pitt County workers comprised more than half of the region's workforce in 2000, the region totals mirrored those of Pitt County for the most part, with a few exceptions as noted below. Regionally, sales and office occupations led all types of occupations in 2000 with 24 percent of the total. Professional and related occupations followed with 20.5 percent, and production, transportation and material moving occupations were third highest, with 18.5 percent. Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations comprised on 1.5 percent of occupations of workers in the region in 2000.

There are some variations among the counties worth noting, but generally there are not any substantial differences when the occupations of the five county workforces in 2000 are compared (as in Table 3.5). Pitt County's workforce in 2000 was comprised of professionals, management, and sales and office positions to a greater extent than the region as a whole. Pitt County had smaller shares of its workforce in farming and production occupations than the region as a whole in 2000.

Beaufort County's resident workforce followed the regional shares in 2000, except that a higher percentage of Beaufort County's resident workforce were employed in construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations than the region as a whole (13.4 percent in Beaufort County versus 10.6 percent in the region). Bertie County's labor force in 2000 worked predominantly in production, transportation, and material moving occupations, which comprised 29.6 percent of the total workforce, and services, which comprised 17.6 percent of the total workforce in 2000.

Hertford County was similar to Bertie County in that production, transportation, and material moving occupations constituted the highest occupational share (23.5%), but sales and office



occupations were second (21.1 percent). Martin County working residents' occupations were distributed much the same as Hertford County in 2000.

**Table 3.5**  
**Employment by Occupation**  
**Workers 16 Years and Over, 2000**  
**Counties in Region Q and Region**

Occupation	Beaufort	%	Bertie	%	Hertford	%	Martin	%	Pitt	%	Region	%
Management, business, and financial operations	1,728	9.1%	638	8.5%	756	8.7%	906	8.5%	6,868	10.6%	10,896	9.9%
Professional and related	3,584	19.0%	1,071	14.3%	1,523	17.5%	1,507	14.2%	14,911	23.1%	22,596	20.5%
Service	2,647	14.0%	1,332	17.6%	1,364	15.7%	1,577	14.8%	10,025	15.5%	16,945	15.4%
Sales and office	4,315	22.8%	1,229	16.4%	1,837	21.1%	2,375	22.3%	16,841	26.1%	26,597	24.0%
Farming, fishing and forestry	459	2.4%	213	2.8%	210	2.4%	299	2.8%	487	0.8%	1,668	1.5%
Construction, extraction and maintenance	2,525	13.4%	820	10.8%	962	11.1%	1,325	12.4%	6,070	9.4%	11,702	10.6%
Production, transportation and material moving	3,655	19.3%	2,236	29.6%	2,047	23.5%	2,660	25.0%	9,363	14.5%	19,961	18.1%
Total, All Occupations	18,913	100%	7,539	100%	8,699	100%	10,649	100%	64,565	100%	110,365	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, SF 3, Table P50.

One has to be cognizant of the limitations of these data, given that they are now more than a decade old. The 2010 decennial census will not publish numbers of this sort for another couple of years. The labor force could have changed significantly since 2000. However, with the exception of fast-growing Pitt County and to a lesser extent Beaufort County, the total population has not changed substantially in the other three counties and therefore occupational mixes have also probably changed relatively little during the last decade.

### Labor Force by Industry

Table 3.6 shows the industries within which residents of counties in Region Q, and the region as a whole, worked in 2000. Jobs in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting and mining comprised on 3.3 percent of the region's total labor force in 2000; note that this figure is slightly higher than the percentage of workers in farming (and related) occupations, since there may be office workers and other types of occupations working within agricultural industries.

As already noted, there were 110,365 workers residing in the region in 2000. Because Pitt County workers comprised more than half of the region's workforce in 2000, the region totals for industry mixes in which the resident labor force worked mirrored those of Pitt County for the most part, with a few exceptions as noted below.

**Table 3.6**  
**Employment by Industry**  
**Workers 16 Years and Over, 2000**  
**Counties in Region Q and Region Totals**

Industry	Beaufort	%	Bertie	%	Hertford	%	Martin	%	Pitt	%	Region	%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	1,091	5.8%	495	6.5%	347	4.0%	545	5.1%	1,121	1.7%	3,599	3.3%
Construction	1,644	8.7%	452	6.3%	618	7.1%	722	6.8%	4,430	6.9%	7,866	7.1%
Manufacturing	3,518	18.6%	2,145	28.5%	1,966	22.6%	2,545	23.9%	9,941	15.4%	20,115	18.2%
Wholesale trade	700	3.7%	240	3.3%	173	2.0%	418	3.9%	1,965	3.0%	3,496	3.2%
Retail trade	1,992	10.5%	638	8.4%	1,025	11.8%	1,161	10.9%	8,043	12.4%	12,859	11.7%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	768	4.0%	247	3.3%	289	3.3%	405	3.8%	2,135	3.3%	3,844	3.5%
Information	319	1.6%	56	1.0%	92	1.1%	157	1.5%	1,375	2.1%	1,999	1.8%
Finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing	767	4.1%	176	2.4%	267	3.1%	373	3.5%	2,954	4.6%	4,537	4.1%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	923	4.9%	288	3.9%	339	3.9%	537	5.0%	3,804	5.9%	5,891	5.3%
Educational, health and social services	4,211	22.3%	1,726	22.1%	2,198	25.3%	2,233	21.0%	17,902	27.7%	28,270	25.5%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	1,134	6.0%	259	3.5%	391	4.5%	490	4.6%	5,406	8.4%	7,680	7.0%
Other services (except public administration)	1,035	5.5%	407	5.4%	423	4.8%	559	5.3%	2,941	4.6%	5,365	4.9%
Public administration	811	4.3%	410	5.4%	571	6.5%	504	4.7%	2,548	4.0%	4,844	4.4%
Total, All Industries	18,913	100%	7,539	100%	8,699	100%	10,649	100%	64,565	100%	110,365	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, SF 3, Table P49.

Regionally, educational, health, and social services industries led all industries with more than one-quarter (25.5 percent) of all region workers in 2000. The second most prevalent industry in the region in 2000 was manufacturing, which comprised 18.2 percent of all jobs held by the region's workforce. Construction and arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodations and food services are two industries that constituted 7.1 and 7.0 percent, respectively, of jobs held by the region's workforce. All other industry categories constituted approximately 5 percent or less of total industry share.

As alluded to before, Pitt County's workforce is substantially similar to the region's industry mix because Pitt County has such higher numbers of workforce participants (well more than half of the region's total in 2000). Not surprisingly, given the existence of East Carolina University and other colleges and educational institutions as well as Pitt County Memorial Hospital in Pitt County, educational, health, and social services industries comprised the highest industry share (27.7 percent) of total jobs held by Pitt County's working residents in 2000. Manufacturing (15.4 percent) was second in terms of jobs held by Pitt County's workforce in 2000, followed by retail trade (12.4 percent).

Beaufort County's workforce had a similar mix of industries within which its residents worked in 2000. Like Pitt County, educational, health, and social services was the leading industry sector for Beaufort County's working residents in 2000, constituting 22.3 percent of that county's total. Just like Pitt County, manufacturing was the second leading industry in Beaufort County, with 18.6 percent, and retail trade was third with 10.5 percent. The construction industry, with an 8.7 percent share, was fourth in Beaufort County and that reliance on construction jobs is higher than the region's industry mix. Hertford County was also similar to the industry mixes of the region, Pitt County, and Beaufort County, in that educational, health, and social services was ranked first (25.3 percent), followed by manufacturing (22.6 percent), then retail trade (11.8 percent).

Bertie County and Martin County are distinguished from the other three counties in the region in that workforces residing in these two counties were employed to a greater extent in manufacturing (28.5 percent and 23.9 percent, respectively) than any other industry. Educational, health, and social services was the second most prevalent industry in Bertie County and Martin County in 2000, with shares of 22.1 percent and 21.0 percent, respectively. Bertie County had by far the largest share of working residents employed in agricultural industries (6.5 percent).

### **Predictions about the Future Labor Force**

As noted earlier, the aging population is expected to have a significant, if not dramatic effect on the labor pool in the region and the state as a whole. The caption below, from the North Carolina Commission on Workforce Development (2007), suggests just how much of a concern future labor force supplies could be affected.

*Impending baby-boom retirements will exacerbate an emerging skills gap among experienced, skilled workers. Baby boomers now account for one third of the state's population and nearly half the labor force. It is impossible to know how long baby boomers will stay in the labor market after 2011 when the first wave reaches age 65. Their inevitable exit will dramatically impact the state for generations to come in the labor supply, changes in the workplace, and in the loss of skills and work experience to the state's economy. The retirement of one-quarter of the workforce, especially many of the state's most experienced workers by 2020 has the potential to leave a gaping hole in the supply of workers. If this segment of the workforce is lost en masse, it could create tremendous upheaval in the workplace. As a result, we can expect a talent shortage in North Carolina (North Carolina Commission on Workforce Development 2007).*

## EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

### County Business Patterns, 1998-2008

*County Business Patterns* is an annual publication which provides data on employment by place of work. “Place of work” is distinguished from the “place of residence” data presented in the prior section on resident labor forces. The data analyzed in this section pertain to jobs within the individual counties and the region as a whole, regardless of whether it is working residents from inside or outside the county and region who fill those jobs in the region. Table 3.7 provides total employment for the counties and the region as a whole in 1998, 2003, and 2008, as well as the total number of establishments with payroll. It is important to note that these data exclude government employment and self-employed persons. These data allow for an analysis of change in employment at two five-year intervals (1998 to 2003 and 2003 to 2008) and for a decade as a whole (1998-2008). Year 2008 data are the most recent available from the U.S. Census Bureau. Tables 3.8 and 3.9 show the absolute change and percent change in total employment for the individual counties and the region as a whole.

**Table 3.7**  
**Establishments and Non-Government Employment, 1998, 2003, and 2008**  
**Counties in Region Q and Regional Totals**

County	Employment			Establishments		
	1998	2003	2008	1998	2003	2008
Beaufort	15,433	12,940	14,059	1,146	1,159	1,207
Bertie	5,446	5,075	5,256	379	378	379
Hertford	7,084	7,827	7,425	574	533	516
Martin	6,637	6,133	6,258	550	509	494
Pitt	50,143	51,498	59,879	3,051	3,274	3,588
Region	84,743	83,473	92,877	5,700	5,853	6,184

Source: *County Business Patterns*, 1998, 2003, and 2008.

**Table 3.8**  
**Total (Absolute) Change in Employment, 1998-2003, 2003-2008, and 1998-2008**  
**Counties in Region Q**

County	Absolute Change in Employment 1998-2003	Absolute Change in Employment 2003-2008	Absolute Change in Employment 1998-2008
Beaufort	-2,493	+1,119	-1,374
Bertie	-371	+181	-190
Hertford	+743	-402	+341
Martin	-504	+125	-379
Pitt	+1,355	+8,381	+9,376
Region Q	-1,270	+9,404	+7,774

Source: *County Business Patterns*, 1998, 2003, and 2008.



**Table 3.9**  
**Percent Change in Employment, 1998-2003, 2003-2008, and 1998-2008**  
**Counties in Region Q**

County	Percent Change in Employment 1998-2003	Percent Change in Employment 2003-2008	Percent Change in Employment 1998-2008
Beaufort	-16.1%	+8.6%	-8.9%
Bertie	-6.8%	+3.6%	-3.5%
Hertford	+10.5%	-5.1%	+4.8%
Martin	-7.6%	+2.0%	-5.7%
Pitt	+2.7%	+16.3%	+19.4%
Region Q	-1.5%	+11.3%	+9.6%

Source: *County Business Patterns*, 1998, 2003, and 2008.

Total employment in the region decreased by 1,270 jobs from 1998 to 2003, which was a decline of 1.5 percent. From 1998 to 2003, there were significant employment declines in three of the five counties in the region: Beaufort (-16.1 percent), Bertie (-6.8 percent), and Martin (-7.6 percent). Pitt County increased its employment but only slightly (+2.7 percent) during the 1998 to 2003 time period. Hertford County was an exception in that it witnessed a substantial (+10.5 percent) increase in employment from 1998 to 2003.

However, the region's total employment then increased by 9,404 jobs between 2003 and 2008, an increase of 11.3 percent. For the decade from 1998 to 2008, the region increased in employment by 7,774 jobs, an increase of 9.6 percent. From 2003 to 2008, four of the five counties increased in employment (Table 3.7). Hertford County, which was the exception in terms of its employment change from 1998 to 2003, witnessed a decrease (-5.1 percent) in employment from 2003 to 2008.

Region Q's total employment in 2008 was 92,877 jobs according to *County Business Patterns*, up from 84,743 jobs in 1998 (see Table 3.7). Of the five counties in the region, only two (Hertford and Pitt) witnessed employment increases from 1998 to 2008, according to County Business Patterns data. Hertford County's increase during the decade (1998-2008) was modest (+4.8 percent), while Pitt County's employment increase from 1998 to 2008 was substantial (+19.4%). The largest employment decline during the decade occurred in Beaufort County, which lost 1,374 jobs and 8.9 percent of its job base.

### Zip Code Business Patterns

The U.S. Census Bureau provides total employment data by zip code. Viewing how employment has increased or decreased over time by subarea (zip code) helps economic developers understand where employment is concentrating and areas that have lost employment over time. Reviewing employment by zip code is useful because one can begin to identify patterns and trends in employment at a smaller unit of geography than the region or by individual county.

**Table 3.10**  
**Employment in Region Q by County and Municipal Zip Code, 1998-2008**

County or City	Zip Code	Employment (March 12)		
		1998	2003	2008
<b>Beaufort County</b>				
Aurora	27806	1,599	1,252	1,294
Bath	27808	163	213	306
Belhaven	27810	1,023	938	889
Chocowinity	27817	428	594	723
Pantego	27860	357	379	446
Washington	27889	11,771	9,316	10,166
Washington Park	27889	See Washington		
<b>Bertie County</b>				
Askeville	27983	See Windsor		
Aulander	27805	336	339	540
Colerain	27924	214	197	218
Kelford	27847	12	99	87
Lewiston Woodville	27849	2,251	1,915	1,844
Powellsville	27967	65	51	n/a
Roxobel	27872	40	38	36
Windsor	27983	2,368	2,196	2,009
<b>Hertford County</b>				
Ahoskie	27910	4,494	5,146	4,982
Cofield	27922	116	661	596
Como	27818	41	50	49
Harrellsville	27942	172	93	n/a
Murfreesboro	27855	1,548	1,252	1,189
Winton	27986	670	607	756
<b>Martin County</b>				
Bear Grass	27892	See Williamston		
Everetts	27825	n/a	n/a	118
Hamilton	27840	661	268	282
Hassell	27841	n/a	n/a	n/a
Jamesville	27846	445	432	227
Oak City	27857	63	51	53
Parmele	27861	n/a	n/a	n/a
Robersonville	27871	899	726	530
Williamston	27892	4,514	4,674	4,827
<b>Pitt County</b>				
Ayden	28513	1,637	1,945	2,129
Bethel	27812	393	343	350
Falkland	27827	n/a	n/a	n/a
Farmville	27828	3,046	3,138	3,097
Fountain	27829	102	99	122
Greenville	27858	12,937	16,075	20,767
Greenville	27834	25,272	22,319	24,561
Grifton (Part)	28530	606	560	802
Grimesland	27837	276	132	170
Simpson	27879	29	16	98
Winterville	28590	2,871	3,359	4,363

Source: County and Zip Code Business Patterns, 1998, 2003, and 2008.

The zip code data are especially important since employment estimates for individual cities are not provided by the U.S. Census Bureau and are generally not available from other sources. Table 3.10 provides total employment data for the years 1998, 2003, and 2008 by zip codes in the region. Table 3.11 provides a rank order of employment by zip code in 2008. Not every zip code in the region is shown in Table 3.11; instead of all zip codes, for brevity, Table 3.11 only shows those zip codes with employment of 1,000 or more in 2008. That decision was somewhat arbitrary. The data in Table 3.11 reveal that the City of Greenville, which contains two zip codes, had nearly one half (48.8 percent) of the region’s employment in 2008. Further, including smaller city zip codes of Winterville, Farmville, and Ayden in addition to Greenville, Pitt County comprised nearly 60 percent of the region’s total employment in 2008. Moreover, 87.5 percent of the region’s employment is concentrated within just the 12 zip codes with 1,000 or more employees. Clearly, the employment pattern is one of concentration, as opposed to being spread out across the region.

**Table 3.11**  
**Rank Order of Employment in 2008**  
**Zip Codes with Employment of 1,000 or More, Region Q**

County	Zip Code City Name	Zip Code	2008 Employment	Percent of Region’s Total Employment 2008
Pitt	Greenville	27834	24,561	26.4%
Pitt	Greenville	27858	20,767	22.4%
Beaufort	Washington	27889	10,166	10.9%
Hertford	Ahoskie	27910	4,982	5.4%
Martin	Williamston	27892	4,827	5.2%
Pitt	Winterville	28590	4,363	4.7%
Pitt	Farmville	27828	3,097	3.3%
Pitt	Ayden	28513	2,129	2.3%
Bertie	Windsor	27983	2,009	2.2%
Bertie	Lewiston Woodville	27849	1,844	2.0%
Beaufort	Aurora	27806	1,294	1.4%
Hertford	Murfreesboro	27855	1,189	1.3%

Source: *Zip Code Business Patterns*, 2008.

Table 3.12 shows two columns of data, zip codes with the largest increases in employment and zip codes with the largest decreases in employment from 1998 to 2008, in rank order of absolute change. Zip codes with relatively little change in employment (an increase or decrease of less than 100) are excluded from Table 3.12.

Greenville’s zip code 27858, which is home to East Carolina University, stood out in terms of the most significant employment increase during the decade from 1998 to 2008, with a net increase of 7,830 jobs. Winterville, a growing suburban area south of Greenville, also had a significant increase in employment, with almost 1,500 new jobs during the ten-year period. More modest employment increases occurred in the Ayden, Ahoskie, Cofield, Williamston, and

Chocowinity zip codes, with relatively slight employment increases occurring in the Aulander, Grifton, and Bath zip codes.

**Table 3.12**  
**Rank Order of Absolute Employment Change by Municipal Zip Code, 1998-2008**  
**(Increase or Decrease of 100 jobs or More)**  
**Region Q**

Rank	Employment Growth, 1998-2008			Employment Decline, 1998-2008		
	Zip Code	Zip Code Name	Absolute Increase, 1998 to 2008	Zip Code	Zip Code Name	Absolute Decrease, 1998 to 2008
1	27858	Greenville	+7,830	27889	Washington	-1,605
2	28590	Winterville	+1,492	27834	Greenville	-711
3	28513	Ayden	+492	27849	Lewiston Woodville	-407
4	27910	Ahoskie	+488	27840	Hamilton	-379
5	27922	Cofield	+480	27871	Robersonville	-369
6	27892	Williamston	+313	27983	Windsor	-359
7	27817	Chocowinity	+295	27855	Murfreesboro	-359
8	27805	Aulander	+204	27806	Aurora	-305
9	28530	Grifton	+196	27846	Jamesville	-218
10	27808	Bath	+143	27810	Belhaven	-134
11				27837	Grimesland	-106

Source: *Zip Code Business Patterns*, 1998 and 2008.

By far the largest employment decline occurred in the Washington zip code in Beaufort County; that zip code lost 1,605 net jobs during the decade studied. Part of Greenville, zip code 27834, declined from 1998 to 2008 by 711 jobs. There are six zip codes that had a net decline of 300 to 407 jobs during the ten-year time period: Lewiston Woodville, Hamilton, Robersonville, Windsor, Murfreesboro, and Aurora. Two of these declining city zip codes are in Bertie County (Lewiston Woodville and Windsor), two are in Martin County (Hamilton and Robersonville), and one is in Hertford County (Murfreesboro).

The data on employment decline, as shown in Table 3.12, are of greatest concern because the region will want to address areas of declining employment with sound economic development strategies. Moreover, given how the economy continued to worsen after 2008, the data in this report are likely to understate the extent of employment decline. Decision makers should also note that more recent data on job losses may reveal other (potentially higher) priorities than can be concluded from the data shown in this report. There are three primary conclusions and suggestions:

First, Region Q leaders should place emphasis and priority on stemming the employment decline which has occurred in the Washington zip code (27889). With an employment decline of 1,605 during the last decade, it is by far the most severely depressed economy in the region, at least in



terms of absolute decrease in employment. More data on the nature, causes, and consequences of employment decline in the Washington zip code is needed. Attention should be given to the extent the employment decline is a city-only problem, or whether employment has also decreased in the unincorporated part of the Washington zip code. *Zip Code Business Patterns*, published by the U.S. Census Bureau, provides data on the number of establishments (but not employment by industry). Thus, further research could determine the extent to which the numbers of establishments by employment range have changed over time, even if one cannot pinpoint job losses by various industry types based on these data alone.

Second, Greenville (and Pitt County to the extent the zip code extends outside city limits) will need to address economic revitalization in the 27834 zip code given the significant employment decline from 1998 to 2008. Additional data are needed to determine the nature, causes, and consequences of employment decline in Greenville's 27834 zip code.

Third, there is a discernable pattern of employment decline in several of the smaller cities and towns in the range of 300 to 410 persons over the decade from 1998 to 2008. While every community is unique, it appears that much of the employment decline is spread out in various smaller cities and towns in the region. To the extent that Region Q can generalize the nature and state of economic decline, it may be able to provide a prototype or typical strategy for stemming and reversing small city employment decline. Economic developers should also investigate more closely the labor force characteristics for the municipalities in these zip codes (year 2000 data are available) in order to establish priorities about the types of jobs most appropriate given the occupations of the labor force in those municipalities.

## **EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY**

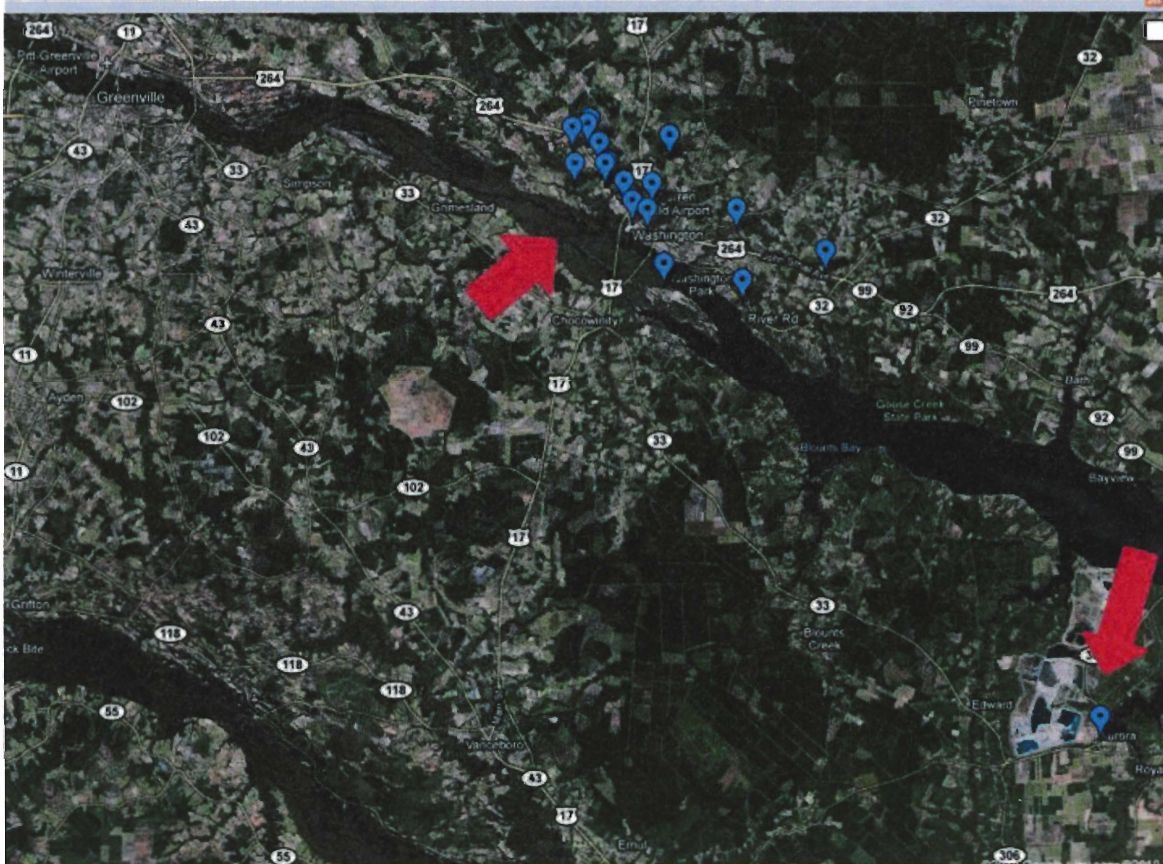
The total employment trends depicted above are informative in and of themselves. They do not yield much insight, however, as to which industries within the overall economy are growing or declining. It is worthwhile to investigate employment and establishment data within several (but not all) industry sectors. Doing so helps economic developers understand in better detail what specific industry changes have occurred in the regional economy from 1998 to 2003 and 2008.

### **Manufacturing**

Table 3.13 provides data for manufacturing employment and establishments by county in the region and for the region as a whole. The total number of manufacturing establishments has steadily declined in the region, as has manufacturing employment, from 1998 to 2008. In the region in 1998, there were 20,621 manufacturing jobs comprising almost one-quarter (24.3 percent) of the region's total non-governmental employment. By 2003, manufacturing employment declined to 15,344 jobs, and manufacturing's share of total regional, non-governmental employment in the region had slipped to 18.4 percent.

From 1998 to 2003, manufacturing losses were especially large in Beaufort County, which lost 14 manufacturers and 2,288 manufacturing jobs during that five-year period. Beaufort County's manufacturing employment increased slightly from 2003 to 2008, with basically the same number of establishments. Bertie County lost 659 manufacturing jobs from 1998 to 2003 even

though the total number of manufacturing establishments remained the same. Manufacturing jobs decreased substantially in Hertford County from 1998 to 2003 (a loss of 481 jobs and 7 manufacturing establishments), then decreased more from 2003 to 2008 (a loss of 166 jobs and 6 establishments).



**Concentrations of Industry in Beaufort County**

**Table 3.13  
 Manufacturing Establishments  
 and Employment, 1998, 2003, and 2008  
 Counties in Region Q and Regional Totals**

County	Manufacturing Employment			Manufacturing Establishments		
	1998	2003	2008	1998	2003	2008
Beaufort	5,284	2,996	3,096	72	58	57
Bertie	2,816	2,157	n/a	17	17	17
Hertford	1,635	1,154	988	29	22	16
Martin	1,906	1,314	981	19	19	17
Pitt	8,980	7,723	6,931	112	99	94
Region	20,621	15,344	--	249	215	201

Source: *County Business Patterns*, 1998, 2003, and 2008. n/a = not available – omitted from original source due to disclosure requirements.

Like Beaufort County and Bertie County, Martin County lost manufacturing jobs (592) from 1998 to 2003 without any change in the total number of manufacturing establishments. Martin County also lost 2 manufacturing establishments and 333 manufacturing jobs from 2003 to 2008. Pitt County witnessed a steady decline in manufacturing employment and the number of manufacturing establishments. From 1998 to 2003, Pitt County lost 1,257 manufacturing jobs and 34 manufacturing establishments. From 2003 to 2008, Pitt County lost 792 more manufacturing jobs and 14 more manufacturing establishments.

The consistent decline of the manufacturing economy in the region is disappointing but not unexpected given national declines and manufacturing employment and previously observed trends in the state. Many of North Carolina’s traditional manufacturing industries continue to shed jobs as part of an on-going economic transition. Certain industry sectors—such as elements of textiles, apparel, furniture, and computer/electronics—are shedding a large number of jobs. Losses in these industry sectors are occurring throughout the state, but their greatest impacts are being felt in smaller communities that once relied almost entirely on recently down-sized or closed manufacturing facilities. In eastern North Carolina, textiles and tobacco no longer drive employment and economic growth (North Carolina Commission on Workforce Development 2007).

### Health Care and Social Assistance

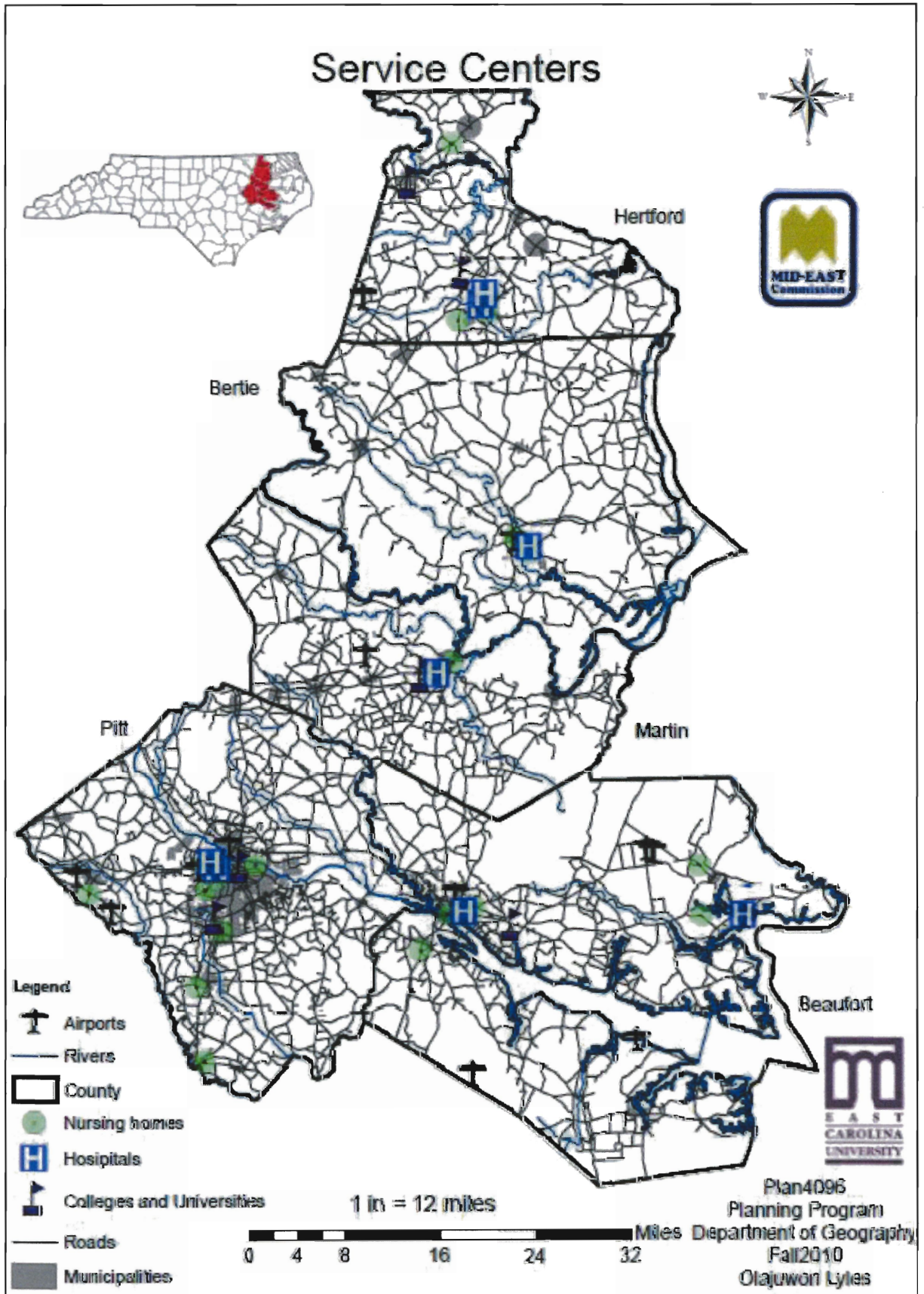
The health care and social assistance industry is clearly a bright spot in terms of economic growth in the region. Table 3.14 shows data on the number of establishments and employment in this industry in 1998, 2003, and 2008 for counties in the region and regional totals. While jobs in this industry have not quite doubled from 1998 to 2008, there has been steady, substantial growth in employment and establishments. The only exception to the steady increase of employment was in Hertford County from 2003 to 2008, when a small decrease occurred.

**Table 3.14**  
**Health Care and Social Assistance Establishments**  
**and Employment, 1998, 2003, and 2008**  
**Counties in Region Q and Regional Totals**

County	Health Care/Social Employment			Health Care/Social Establishments		
	1998	2003	2008	1998	2003	2008
Beaufort	1,930	2,187	2,612	86	99	145
Bertie	740	1,011	1,520	36	46	62
Hertford	1,207	2,249	2,182	65	83	87
Martin	897	1,386	1,645	50	62	81
Pitt	9,453	11,172	15,498	267	321	461
Region	14,227	18,005	23,457	504	611	836

Source: *County Business Patterns*, 1998, 2003, and 2008.







Health care and social assistance employment in 1998 constituted only 16.8 percent of the region’s total non-government employment, significantly less than manufacturing’s share of total non-government regional employment. By 2003, health care and social assistance employment comprised 21.6 percent of total regional non-government employment, more than manufacturing’s share. And by 2008, health care and social assistance industries constituted more than one-quarter (25.3 percent) of the region’s nongovernment employment.

### Retail Trade

Table 3.15 shows employment and establishment data for retail trade in the region. Retail trade comprised about 16 percent of the region’s total non-government employment in 1998 and 2003.

**Table 3.15**  
**Retail Trade Establishments**  
**and Employment, 1998, 2003, and 2008**  
**Counties in Region Q and Regional Totals**

County	Retail Trade Employment			Retail Trade Establishments		
	1998	2003	2008	1998	2003	2008
Beaufort	2,322	2,294	2,552	230	232	215
Bertie	424	404	376	71	62	54
Hertford	1,267	1,195	1,209	129	112	112
Martin	1,244	1,100	1,143	115	108	86
Pitt	8,409	8,428	9,363	650	649	651
Region	13,666	13,421	14,643	1,195	1,163	1,118

Source: *County Business Patterns*, 1998, 2003, and 2008.

Total retail employment declined slightly from 1998 to 2003 but increased from 2003 to 2008 despite a decrease in the total number of retail trade establishments. In 2008, retail trade comprised 15.8 percent of the region’s total, non-government employment.

Retail trade employment has declined slightly over time in Bertie, Hertford, and Martin County. The number of retail trade establishments has also declined steadily in these three counties except that the number of retail trade establishments held steady in Hertford County from 2003 to 2008. That retail trade employment has declined in these three counties is not surprising. Absent a significant number of visitors, retail trade establishments are reliant on a stable population base, and the total populations in these three counties have decreased slightly over time as described in Chapter 2.

Pitt County witnessed modest growth in retail trade employment from 1998 to 2008 but without an increase in the number of retail trade establishments. Beaufort County experienced a small increase in retail trade employment with a decline in the number of retail trade establishments from 1998 to 2008.

### Accommodation and Food Services

Table 3.16 shows employment and establishment data for the accommodation and food services industry in the region in 1998, 2003, and 2008. This industry captured shares of total, non-governmental employment in the region of 9.4 percent in 1998, 10.7 percent in 2003, and 11.6 percent in 2008.

**Table 3.16**  
**Accommodation and Food Services Establishments**  
**and Employment, 1998, 2003, and 2008**  
**Counties in Region Q and Regional Totals**

County	Accommodations/Food Employment			Accomm./Food Establishments		
	1998	2003	2008	1998	2003	2008
Beaufort	992	1,083	1,282	69	74	78
Bertie	119	148	154	11	19	14
Hertford	728	560	726	46	33	41
Martin	625	725	745	43	42	41
Pitt	5,531	6,390	7,843	250	269	317
Region	7,995	8,906	10,750	419	437	491

Source: *County Business Patterns*, 1998, 2003, and 2008.

Pitt County is responsible for the lion's share (83.9 percent) of employment growth in the accommodations and food services industries in the region from 1998 to 2008, with an increase of 2,312 jobs. Beaufort County also witnessed a significant increase in employment in accommodation and food services industries from 1998 to 2008. Bertie and Martin Counties also had employment gains in this industry during the same decade but employment was stable over the time period in Hertford (though a major decrease and rebound occurred in employment within that ten-year time period).

### Construction

Table 3.17 provides data on the employment and establishment in construction industries in the region. Compared with the other industries described above, construction employment is not nearly as significant. Construction employment decreased significantly in the region from 1998 to 2003 and precipitously in Pitt County during the same time period. Construction has since (from 2003 to 2008) rebounded in Pitt County, and other counties also witnessed significant gains in employment. The number of construction establishments increased slightly in Beaufort and Pitt Counties but declined significantly in Hertford and Martin Counties and stayed relatively stable in Bertie County from 1998 to 2008.

**Table 3.17**  
**Construction Establishments**  
**and Employment, 1998, 2003, and 2008**  
**Counties in Region Q and Regional Totals**

County	Construction Employment			Construction Establishments		
	1998	2003	2008	1998	2003	2008
Beaufort	510	693	876	130	135	143
Bertie	147	133	182	32	29	28
Hertford	326	400	n/a	46	39	33
Martin	397	429	442	81	69	51
Pitt	3,600	2,947	4,083	370	357	408
Region	4,980	4,602	n/a	659	629	663

Source: *County Business Patterns*, 1998, 2003, and 2008. n/a = not available – only a range was reported in the original source.

Another measure of construction activity is building permits issued for new housing units. Table 3.18 provides data by county on the number of new housing units issued in 2004, 2005, and cumulatively between 2000 and 2005.



A newly developed subdivision in Washington (2010); it is ready for new homes, but the economy has nearly halted homebuilding

**Table 3.18**  
**New Private Housing Units Authorized by Building Permits**  
**Counties in Region Q**

County	2004	2005	Cumulative, 2000-2005 Period
Beaufort	255	316	1,410
Bertie	63	36	283
Hertford	24	45	252
Martin	36	31	251
Pitt	2,191	2,548	11,889
Region	4,573	4,981	14,085

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *County and City Book 2007*. Table B-7

The figures in Table 3.18 indicate that residential building activity was substantial in Pitt County from 2000 to 2005 but modest in Bertie, Hertford, and Martin Counties during the same time period.



## Other Industries

Other industries comprising non-government employment include forestry, fishing, hunting, and agriculture support; utilities; wholesale trade; transportation and warehousing; information; finance and insurance; real estate and rental and leasing; professional and scientific services; administrative and support and waste management and remediation; management of companies and enterprises; educational services; arts, entertainment, and recreation; other services (except public administration); and unclassified establishments. Data for these industry sectors were briefly reviewed but not analyzed and summarized here. In most if not all instances, these industries each contributed small shares (5 percent or less) to the economy of the region and to individual counties. Pitt County has more sizeable employment numbers in many of these industries, than other counties in the region, given its higher state of urban development.

## Government

Total federal, state and local government was nearly 5,000 employees in the year 2005 in the region. This made government as an industry more significant in terms of the total regional economy than construction in 2008. The Census Bureau publishes survey data on state and local government by selected individual counties by type of employment. Survey data are only available for two of the five counties in Region Q (Martin and Pitt), as shown in Table 3.20. These data show that state and local government employment in Martin and Pitt Counties is dominated by elementary and secondary education (both instructional and other employees).



**Martin County Courthouse**

Source: <http://www.ncgenweb.us/martin/>

Government employment is not included in *County Business Patterns*. However, the County and City Data Book provides data for each county's government employment in the year 2005, as provided in Table 3.19.

Despite only covering two of the five counties in the region, the data in Table 3.20 when compared with total (federal, state, and local) government employment indicate that total government employment is predominantly state and local; furthermore, there are more than 5,000 state and local employees in just two counties in the region as of 2009, an amount larger than total government employment for all five counties in the region in 2005. Though there may be comparability issues with the two different sources, and despite only partial data, the figures

indicate that government is a significant growth industry. The government employment industry should therefore not be overlooked as a component of the region's economy.

**Table 3.19**  
**Federal, State, and Local Government Employment, 2005**  
**Counties in Region Q**

<b>County</b>	<b>Federal, State, and Local Government Employment, 2005</b>
Beaufort	510
Bertie	147
Hertford	326
Martin	397
Pitt	3,600
Region	4,980

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *County and City Book 2007*. Table B-12

**Table 3.20**  
**State and Local Government Employment, 2009**  
**Martin and Pitt Counties**

<b>Type of Employment</b>	<b>Martin County</b>	<b>Pitt County</b>
Corrections	--	124
Elem and Sec Instructional Employees	497	1,914
All Other Higher Education	30	176
Higher Education Instructional Employees	59	190
Financial Administration	13	72
Firefighters Only	--	0
Judicial and Legal	0	9
Other Government Administration	11	69
Health	113	137
Highways	--	0
Natural Resources	9	4
Police Officers Only	34	154
Public Welfare	31	202
Solid Waste Management	4	15
All Other and Unallocable	26	113
Water Supply	4	1
Electric Power	--	0
Transit	9	19
Elem. and Sec. Other Employees	100	899
Other Fire Employees	--	6
Other Police Employees	2	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>982</b>	<b>4,135</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 Annual Survey of State and Local Government Employment and Payroll. Revised January 2011.



## Agriculture

The Coastal Plain is the main agricultural region of the state, with over 3.1 million acres of harvested cropland producing food and fiber crops for market. However, in recent years field crops have been surpassed by livestock operations as the major source of agricultural income (NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources 1991).



Farmland near Parmele

*County Business Patterns* provides data on employment in farming, but those numbers are combined with forestry, fishing, and hunting. Furthermore, the numbers of agricultural establishments and agriculture employment would appear quite small if those numbers were presented. Citation of such statistics would tend to understate the role of agriculture in the region's economy, given that many farm operations involve only families and self-employed workers who probably do not qualify as "establishments" reported on by *County Business Patterns*. Whereas employment in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting in North Carolina comprised only 0.7 percent of total employment statewide in the second quarter of 2007, the shares of total county employment in these agricultural sectors were higher during that same quarter in Beaufort County (2.7 percent), Bertie County (4.8 percent), Hertford County (2.3 percent), Martin County (3.4 percent), and Pitt County (1.1 percent) (Source: County Economic Development Profiles).

As noted in Chapter 1 of this report, the Census of Agriculture provides statistics on the number of farms and amount of farm acreage in the individual counties. For such statistics, see Table 1.4. More detailed statistics are available, including land in cropland and land in livestock. We present some of the data here, in Tables 3.21 and 3.22.

Table 3.21 shows the acreage of total cropland and harvested cropland for each county in Region Q in 2007. Beaufort County led the region in terms of total cropland and harvested cropland, constituting more than one-quarter of the region's total. Beaufort County farmers were followed closely by Pitt County, which had approximately 27 percent of the region's total cropland and total harvested cropland.

With regard to livestock inventories, as shown in Table 3.22, cattle and calves are the most significant livestock in the region. There were 209 cattle farms in the region in 2007, concentrated primarily in Pitt, Beaufort, and Martin Counties. There were only 85 farms with hog and pig inventories in 2007, and the majority of those farms were in Pitt County. Poultry farms in the region totaled 107 in the year 2007, the majority of which were located in Bertie County.

**Table 3.21**  
**Total Cropland and Harvested Cropland, 2007**  
**Counties in Region Q and Region Totals**

<b>County</b>	<b>Total Cropland (acres)</b>	<b>Harvested Cropland (acres)</b>	<b>Percent of Total Cropland (region) (acres)</b>	<b>Percent of Harvested Cropland (region) (acres)</b>
Beaufort	138,955	130,240	28.4%	28.1%
Bertie	92,745	90,193	18.9%	19.4%
Hertford	52,519	49,727	10.7%	10.7%
Martin	74,052	69,271	15.2%	14.9%
Pitt	131,401	125,102	26.8%	26.9%
Region	489,672	464,533	100%	100%

Source: 2007 Census of Agriculture, County Data, North Carolina

**Table 3.22**  
**Number of Farms With Cattle, Pig, and Poultry Inventories, 2007**  
**Counties in Region Q and Region Totals**

<b>County</b>	<b>Cattle and Calves</b>	<b>% of Region Total</b>	<b>Hogs and Pigs</b>	<b>% of Region Total</b>	<b>Broilers and Other Chickens</b>	<b>% of Region Total</b>
Beaufort	50	23.9%	10	11.8%	1	0.9%
Bertie	22	10.5%	7	8.2%	62	58.0%
Hertford	9	4.3%	9	10.6%	24	22.4%
Martin	41	19.7%	13	15.3%	5	4.7%
Pitt	87	41.6%	46	54.1%	15	14.0%
Region	209	100%	85	100%	107	100%

Source: 2007 Census of Agriculture, County Data, North Carolina

## CHAPTER 4 EXISTING PLANS AND RESOURCES

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#### Economic Development Board

Economic and community development planning for the state of North Carolina as a whole is assigned to the Economic Development Board, consisting of 37 members. The Board is created within the Department of Commerce to provide economic and community development planning for the state (N.C.G.S. Sec. 143B-434). The Economic Development Board is charged with preparing and annually updating a comprehensive strategic economic development plan (G.S. §143B.-434). State law also sets out in detail the contents of the required strategic plan (G.S. §143B.-434.01). The Economic Development Board adopted a strategic economic development plan in 2004 which describes goals, objectives and progress measures for each objective.

Within the context of the required comprehensive strategic economic development plan of the state, goals are long range (four years or more) and “shall be developed with realism but should also be selected so as to encourage every Region and county in the State to develop to its maximum potential.” In that same context, objectives shall be for one year or less in scope and focus on realizing the goals. Both goals and objectives should not state how economic development targets are to be reached, but rather, what the economic conditions will be if they are attained (G.S. §143B.-434.01).

#### Economic Development Board Goals

The 2004 strategic economic development plan specifies the following statewide economic development goals:<sup>1</sup>

Goal 1 (Workforce and Education) Develop an outstanding education system and a highly qualified workforce.

Goal 2 (Science and Technology): Invest in science, technology, and university outreach.

Goal 3 (Recruitment and Retention): Ensure a competitive environment for the recruitment and retention of business, capital investment and jobs creation.

Goal 4 (Urban Development): Create strong metropolitan growth centers that generate regional business development, shared prosperity, and a high quality of life, in partnership with surrounding areas.

Goal 5 (Rural Development): Develop thriving rural areas that maintain a high quality of life; achieve one North Carolina by mobilizing the state’s resources to create strong regional

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<sup>1</sup> The 2004 report did not contain the short titles of goals shown in parentheses; however, the 2008 update referred to the 7 goals in the summary fashion shown in parentheses.

partnerships and programs that foster broader economic development opportunities in rural North Carolina.

Goal 6 (Infrastructure): Develop a competitive regionally based infrastructure and promote sustainable economic development.

Goal 7 (Tourism, Film, & Cultural Resources): Maintain and strengthen tourism, film, and sports industries; preserve, protect, and promote our state’s cultural, natural, and heritage assets.

### **North Carolina’s Northeast Commission**

North Carolina General Statutes (Sec. 158-8.2) create the North Carolina’s Northeast Commission to facilitate economic development in a 16 county region, including Beaufort, Bertie, Hertford, and Martin Counties in the Mid-East Commission’s jurisdiction. The Northeast Commission is required (G.S. §158-8.2) to adopt and implement an economic development program, including development of a preferred economic development plan and feasibility studies to determine the nature and placement of economic development for maximum economic impact.

Administratively, the commission is assigned to the North Carolina Department of Commerce (G.S. §158-8.2). Its mission is to “increase the standard of living in the sixteen county region of Northeastern North Carolina through industrial, business, and tourism development as well as improve economic conditions by marketing the region’s excellent amenities of business, tourism, and quality of life” (North Carolina’s Northeast Commission 2009). According to an independent review, industry cluster targets for the Northeast Commission include the following: health care, high value-added agriculture, marine trades, recreation & tourism, and wood products and furniture (North Carolina Commission on Workforce Development 2007).

### **Global TransPark Development Zone**

Pitt County is located in a 13-county region organized as the Global TransPark Development Zone by an act of the North Carolina General Assembly in the Early 1990s. The Global TransPark is headquartered at the Eastern Regional Jetport in Lenoir County north of the City of Kinston. It is a combination air cargo airport and transportation, manufacturing, and distribution complex (Pitt County Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2002) (see also Chapter 1 of this report).

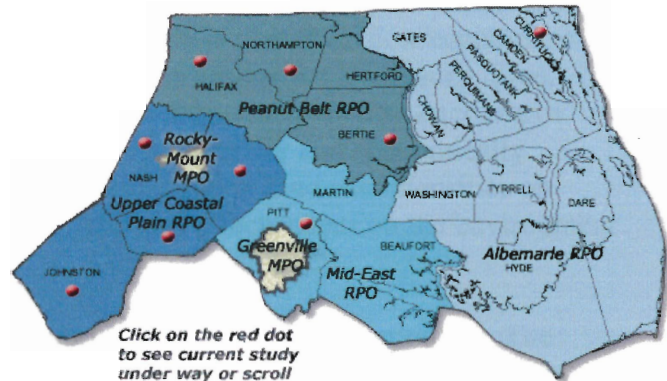
## **TRANSPORTATION**

Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs) are authorized to be established by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) pursuant to G.S. 136-211. Duties of RPOs include developing long-range local and regional multimodal transportation plans (G.S. 136-212). Unlike their metropolitan counterparts (i.e., Metropolitan Planning Organizations or MPOs; see G.S. 136-200 through 136-202), there is no funding allotted to RPOs from the federal government. RPOs are generally funded by an 80 percent state to 20 percent local share (G.S. 136-213).



Responsibility for transportation planning in Region Q is divided. Hetford and Bertie Counties lie within the Peanut Belt RPO along with Halifax and Northampton Counties. The Mid-East RPO covers Martin County, Beaufort County, and the rural parts of Pitt County. The Rocky-Mount MPO covers the urban part of Pitt County, and the Greenville MPO covers the urban part of Greenville County.

The urban part of Pitt County is assigned to the Greenville Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), including Greenville, Ayden, Simpson and parts of unincorporated Pitt County (North Carolina Department of Transportation 2005). While the region is divided in terms of transportation planning organizations, a Northeast Planning Group has been formed by NCDOT which encompasses all of Region Q and beyond (see figure).



**Transportation Planning Jurisdictions**  
Source: North Carolina Department of Transportation,  
Transportation Planning Branch

A region-wide transportation plan covering the five counties in Region Q, as well as 35 other counties located east of I-95, is in the process of being incorporated into the North Carolina Statewide Transportation Plan (Mid-East Commission 2009). In addition, individual counties to varying degrees have local transportation plans and/or policies.

## LOCAL LAND USE PLANNING

Three of the five (Beaufort, Bertie, and Hertford) counties in the region are required to plan under the North Carolina Coastal Area Management Act. The land use planning documents produced locally are required to follow Subchapter 7B, “Land Use Planning Guidelines,” of the North Carolina Administrative Code, as amended. Though not required under CAMA, Pitt County has engaged in comprehensive planning and is in the process of updating the comprehensive plan adopted in 2002. In the following paragraphs, we summarize the county land use plans with respect to their relationship to economic development.

### Beaufort County

Beaufort County’s 1997 Land Use Plan Update provides policies for economic and community development (Section IV.E.). Beaufort County encourages and supports all types of economic development which can be shown to complement the existing demographic, economic, and environmental base within the county. It also articulates a commitment to providing appropriate levels of public services, facilities, and infrastructure.

The plan also recognizes the importance of locating new economic development in and around existing urban areas where public infrastructure and acceptable transportation systems already exist (e.g., the Washington/Beaufort County Industrial Park), or where such infrastructure and systems can be reasonably extended. That includes siting industry with access to municipal/central water and sewer services; to that end, the county will cooperate with the cities to plan for



and extend water and/or sewer services to industrial and commercial firms locating outside municipal service areas. Remote locations for industry are not encouraged, and industry should not infringe on established residential development.

All industrial prospects will be given a fair, case-by-case assessment to compare economic benefits with possible negative environmental effects. Priority is placed on new economic development which provides employment-intensive opportunities for the local work force, especially for the youth and underemployed of Beaufort County. The plan also encourages redevelopment and revitalization of existing underutilized industrially and economically developed areas (e.g., deteriorating commercial structures). Higher land use intensities on existing properties is also supported, so long as no deleterious effects occur on the environment or infrastructure.

Tourism is considered extremely important in Beaufort County and will be supported. The county will work toward continuous promotion and enhancement of tourism and tourism-related development opportunities in Beaufort County. The plan recognizes efforts of the Beaufort County Economic Development Commission and the North Eastern Beaufort County Economic Development Commission. The county also supports state transportation department efforts to improve access to and within the county. Public access to shoreline areas is supported, as are the efforts of the North Carolina Division of Travel and Tourism.

### **Bertie County**

Bertie County's 1998 update of its CAMA land use plan indicates that the primary concern of the county's officials and citizens is the need for diversification of the county's economic base. Providing job opportunities to keep existing citizens in the county and to attract new citizens is a top priority. Particulars evident in the 1998 plan update include the following with regard to economic development:

- Industry will be directed to developed areas.
- Bertie County expressed interest in 1998 to establish an ecopark for industrial siting.
- The 1998 plan update is also supportive of recreational and second home residential development activity taking place along rivers, provided it is consistent with applicable environmental and land use regulations.
- The plan supports dredging areas along major bodies of water to provide safe access for commercial and recreational boating.
- Tourism, and especially ecotourism, is a major focus for Bertie County. Natural features are the county's greatest attributes, and ecotourism is a most promising activity and one of the greatest economic development tools available.

### **Hertford County**

Hertford County's 1996 Land Use Plan Update recognizes the need to protect its agricultural lands, and to cooperate with and accommodate the commercial forestry industry. It also favorably views mineral production (while adhering to state and federal permit standards) and capitalizing on commercial and recreational fisheries (while protecting habitat areas through

continued water quality efforts), which is widespread throughout the county on rivers and ponds. That policy is especially applicable on the Chowan River, which regularly hosts bass fishing tournaments.

Hertford County strongly supports industries seeking to provide jobs; compliance with zoning regulations is required. The county will commit local dollars if available and will seek outside funding to assist with industrial recruitment efforts. The types of industries most desired include natural resource-based industries or those which are not heavily dependent on elaborate transportation systems. Good candidates include computer technology or telecommunications and other non-polluting industries.

Development is encouraged in existing urban centers which provide public facilities and utilities. The county has worked on water and sewer plans for the county, but it currently lacks full coverage with these utilities. Redevelopment is not an issue in the county except within towns experiencing decreases in population.

Hertford County will take a more active role in promoting tourism and improve publicity to attract tourists; historically, the county's role in that regard has not been strong. The county supports upgrading public access to rivers and recreational areas. The county has experienced growth as a military retirement location. Economic development resources which exist in Hertford County include: an Industrial Development Commission, a Committee of 100 (concerned citizens), and Murfreesboro's Industrial Committee.

### **Martin County**

Martin County does not have a land use plan available for review. However, the Martin County Economic Development Commission provides information regarding economic development incentives and opportunities. Outdoor recreational opportunities such as hunting, striped bass fishing, visiting in the Roanoke River National Wildlife Refuge, and paddling/camping on the Roanoke River are emphasized. The county also recognizes its rich cultural heritage and has number of historic resources which are tourist attractions.

Martin County is also home to the Senator Bob Martin Eastern Agricultural Center, which features first class equine events as well as others ranging from ATV races to major boat shows. The East Carolina Motor Speedway in Robersonville also draws people in from outside the region and county.

### **Pitt County**

Pitt County adopted its first comprehensive land use plan in 1990. Goals, policies, and objectives relevant to economic development, from the Pitt County Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2002, are summarized as follows:

- Preserve large tracts of prime agricultural land to ensure that farming remains a viable part of the local economy.

- Promote the development of high quality, planned industrial parks and appropriate locations for light industrial uses
- Encourage well-planned commercial establishments to provide necessary goods and services to area residents.

The future land use map of the Pitt County Comprehensive Land Use Plan (2002) provides some insights as to future land use, though the plan is now almost a decade old and presently in the process of being updated. Here, we emphasize the future land use plan's recommendations with regard to commercial and industrial development. Note that the county's plan does not describe or control land use within the incorporated areas, including Greenville.

Pitt County identifies a need for rural commercial/crossroad community designations at numerous intersections which will be a mix of residential, institutional, and limited commercial and light industrial land uses. This implies some dispersal of employment in Pitt County beyond its current concentrated pattern, though not in any significant quantities. A combination of commercial and light industrial land uses are planned at some key intersections, including U.S. 264 with Frog Level Road and U.S. 264 at Greenville Boulevard near the intersection with the U.S. 264 Northeast Bypass. Industrial uses are recommended for areas at EJE Recycling on U.S. Highway 264 and along the railroad corridor east of the Town of Bethel.

## **WATER SUPPLY PLANNING**

State legislation in 1989 mandated state and local water supply planning processes. A State Water Supply Plan was adopted in 2001. It provides a comprehensive assessment of water supply needs, water use, and water availability across the state; identifies the major water supply issues facing the citizens and elected officials of North Carolina now and in the near future; and provides guidance for sound water supply planning. The State Water Supply Plan is a compilation of over 500 Local Water Supply Plans developed by local government water systems to assess their water supply needs over a twenty-year period. North Carolina General Statute G.S. 143-355(1) requires all units of local government that provide or plan to provide public water service to prepare a local water supply plan. A local water supply plan is an assessment of a water system's current and future water needs and its ability to meet those needs (Source: North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources website). However, DENR's website shows only 20 localities with such plans available online, none of which are in Region Q.

The Water Use Act of 1967 allows the Environmental Management Commission to designate an area as a Capacity Use Area (CUA) if it finds that the long-term sustainability of the water resource is threatened or that water use in an area requires coordination to protect the public interest. Within a designated CUA, all persons withdrawing more than 100,000 gallons of water per day must first obtain a permit from the Division of Water Resources (DWR).

Capacity Use Area # 1 (CUA #1) was formed in 1976 in response to pumping of the Castle Hayne aquifer associated with a phosphate mining operation in Beaufort County. Pumping of tens of millions of gallons of ground water per day to dewater the mine near the town of Aurora affected water levels in wells tens of miles away. CUA#1 includes all or parts of eight eastern North Carolina counties surrounding the mine, as shown in the accompanying figure. In Region Q, it includes all of Beaufort County and part of Martin County.



**Capacity Use Area #1**  
Source: NC DENR (2001)

Ground water levels in the confined aquifers of the Central Coastal Plain have been declining for decades as ground water withdrawals have increased. The Central Coastal Plan Capacity Use Area was established in 2001 by the state. It includes all of Pitt County, and Beaufort County and also includes much of Martin and Bertie Counties in addition to a small southern portion of Hertford County. Enhanced groundwater use rules apply within this area in order to protect groundwater as an essential natural resource (Pitt County Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2002). Major ground water impacts are being observed in two principal aquifers, the Black Creek and Upper Cape Fear, which have been a desirable source of high-quality, low-cost drinking water throughout the coastal plain. The most threatened portions of these aquifers lie beneath fifteen North Carolina counties including three in Region Q: Beaufort, Martin, and Pitt (DENR 2001).

## **OTHER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES**

### **North Carolina Biotechnology Center**

“Biotechnology” is the use of living cells and their molecules to solve problems and make useful products. The key knowledge is an understanding of cells, the basic units of life, and—at a still deeper level—the molecules that make up cells. Biotechnology seeks to understand how living organisms work—and how they can work for people and society.

The North Carolina Biotechnology Center is a private, non-profit organization dedicated exclusively to biotechnology development. It is headquartered in Research Triangle Park, and is reportedly the world’s first government-sponsored organization dedicated to developing the biotechnology industry. The Biotechnology Center is not a site for laboratory research or company incubation. Instead, it works to strengthen the research capabilities of North Carolina’s



companies and universities. The Eastern Office of the North Carolina Biotechnology Center is located at 2200 S. Charles Blvd, Suite 1400 in Greenville, NC.

North Carolina, with the third largest concentration of biotechnology companies in the U.S., is a global competitor in this industry. State and local governments are working to keep the biotechnology industry growing in North Carolina.

#### **North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center, Inc.**

This nonprofit organization was established in 1987 and is headquartered in Raleigh. Its mission is to develop, promote and implement economic strategies to improve the quality of life of rural North Carolinians. It serves rural counties (85 of 100 in the state) with a special focus on individuals with low to moderate incomes and communities with limited resources. The Rural Center works with statewide partners to develop a joint vision for the long-range future of rural North Carolina and to shape and advocate for policies to achieve that future. Specific to the economic development context, it seeks to strengthen small towns, promote economic growth through entrepreneurship, and find jobs for dislocated workers. The Rural Center launched a small towns initiative in 2005 with an eye toward improving the capacity of local communities to plan and implement initiatives, and stimulating job-creating investments.

#### **Community Enhancement and Economic Transformation Initiative (CEETI)**

The North Carolina Department of Commerce and East Carolina University through its Office of Engagement, Innovation and Economic Development have partnered in an innovative pilot program to leverage the resources and expertise of both organizations to support economic development in eastern North Carolina communities. This initiative is targeted in particular to assist distressed, low-wealth and limited-capacity communities. Community assistance grants have been made available via the Department of Commerce to build capacity for economic development projects.

#### **Mid-East Commission/Economic Development District**

The Mid-East Commission was created by the State of North Carolina in May of 1967 as a Regional Council of Government serving the local governments and residents of Region “Q”, which is comprised of Beaufort, Bertie, Hertford, Martin, and Pitt Counties, as well as their municipalities. The Commission’s mission is to assist people in the Region and its environs by providing professional technical assistance services from its Planning, Economic Development, and Community Services Department, Workforce Development, and Area Agency on Aging. The Mid-East Commission continues to aggressively assist its local governments in planning, implementing, and evaluating economic development projects in the Region (Mid-East Commission 2009).

#### **County Economic Development Commissions**

Economic development commissions exist in Beaufort, Hertford, Martin, and Pitt Counties. Bertie County has an economic development department as part of county government. A

detailed discussion of their roles is beyond the scope of this report, but each has a website with useful information.

### County Property Taxes and Selected Expenditures

Property tax data is available for the counties. Table 4.1 shows the amount of property taxes collected by each county from 2004 to 2009. Each county has seen a steady increase in property tax revenues, although there was a decrease in Martin and Hertford Counties from 2006 to 2007.

**Table 4.1**  
**Property Taxes (\$) Collected, 2004-2009**  
**Counties in Region Q**

County	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Beaufort	\$21,266,826	\$21,973,594	\$22,283,649	\$23,267,088	\$23,587,669	\$24,717,186
Bertie	\$7,564,593	\$7,683,256	\$7,848,550	\$8,050,246	\$8,429,262	\$8,592,534
Hertford	\$10,726,526	\$10,847,376	\$10,767,224	\$10,663,738	\$10,839,469	\$11,147,095
Martin	\$12,188,052	\$12,316,564	\$12,451,545	\$12,086,146	\$11,668,642	\$13,142,729
Pitt	\$46,810,878	\$56,383,283	\$62,069,778	\$63,079,375	\$67,733,390	\$73,748,152
Region	\$98,556,875	\$109,204,07	\$115,420,746	\$117,146,59	\$122,258,432	\$131,347,696

Source: State of North Carolina

The burden of taxes is more meaningful in terms of per person property taxes paid. Those figures are provided in Table 4.2 and enable a relative comparison of per capita property tax burdens among the five counties in the region. Martin County has had the highest per capita property tax burden in most years, followed by Beaufort County. Bertie has had the lowest for most years.

**Table 4.2**  
**Per Capita Property (\$) Collected, 2004-2009**  
**Counties in Region Q**

County	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Beaufort	\$467	\$480	\$485	\$502	\$512	\$531
Bertie	\$383	\$390	\$401	\$417	\$422	\$427
Hertford	\$452	\$458	\$452	\$446	\$458	\$469
Martin	\$490	\$498	\$506	\$495	\$487	\$551
Pitt	\$336	\$398	\$433	\$431	\$446	\$474

Source: State of North Carolina

### Golden Leaf Foundation

This foundation has funds to provide economic impact assistance to economically affected or tobacco-dependent regions of North Carolina. It gives priority to projects that will benefit those counties that are tobacco-dependent or economically affected.

### **Z Smith Reynolds Foundation**

This foundation's mission is to improve the quality of life of people in North Carolina. Community and economic development is one of the focus areas of the foundation. It seeks to increase community control of economic assets and economic independence for the benefit of low-income and/or rural populations.

### **Chambers of Commerce**

There are numerous chambers of commerce in the region which are active in promoting business in the individual cities, counties, and the region as a whole. The role of chambers of commerce is further evaluated in this report.

### **Universities, Colleges, and Technical Schools**

Higher education and training facilities in the region include Beaufort County Community College in Washington, East Carolina University, Pitt Community College and Miller-Motte College in Greenville, Martin Community College in Williamston (including a Windsor-Bertie campus), Chowan University in Murfreesboro, and Rowan-Chowan Community College in Ahoskie. Colleges, universities and technical schools provide an essential role in training future work forces, and they can help economic development efforts in other ways by providing facilities for meeting spaces, lending their organizational skills, and becoming partners.

### **Eastern Agricultural Center**

The Senator Bob Martin Eastern Agricultural Center, a multi-million dollar equestrian and conference complex, is the newest economic driver in the region. Construction of this facility has reportedly led to many new businesses such as motels and restaurants, horse farms, and stabling operations. Travel and Tourism is looking for ways to expand eco-tourism and to capitalize on the Bob Martin Eastern Agricultural Center (Mid-East Commission).

## CHAPTER 5 SUMMARIES OF STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Students selected people in the region to interview. Generally, the stakeholders were asked to share their observations and suggestions about economic development in their county and/or the region as a whole. This chapter provides summaries of the stakeholder interviews.

### **Bill Early, Planning and Zoning Administrator, Hertford County**

Mr. Early recommended the following improvements/enhancements for potential economic growth. With regard to transportation, the county needs to integrate more four-lane roads that could allow Hertford County more access to major highways and interstate traffic to attract more business. Mr. Early mentioned that one such project is already underway and another is scheduled to begin next year. There is a loss of jobs or the potential to lose jobs due to foreign competition. A recent local company was sold and could possibly be outsourced to another country, which would lead to the potential loss of at least 100 jobs for the county.

Improvements to infrastructure are needed. Most of the county and municipal buildings are in good standing and a few have even recently undergone expansion. Many rural areas are lacking due to the fact that their only source of internet access is still through dial-up. There is a lack of broadband access in many of the county's most rural areas. State and environmental regulation have sometimes made it difficult to gain access to capital funding that would aid in economic development projects. As a whole, the county has a fairly stable housing market and with the exception of a few minor improvements to the infrastructure of the county, the overall infrastructure is stable as well.

Other factors facing the economy are the skill level of labor force not being qualified for the jobs that are available. A weakened housing market also has had an impact on economic development. On a positive note, unemployment in the county is not as high as the state's unemployment rate, and we are proud to announce that two new companies are coming to the county to bring new development and jobs.

### **Melvin Nichols, Public Works Department, Hertford County**

Mr. Nichols stated that although he felt most of the main roads in the county were in pretty good shape, some improvements could be made to attract more potential business. Allowing for more access to major highways, he felt, would be a good idea. He felt that many of the rural areas of the county were in need of attention, although he felt that the county as a whole had a stable system of infrastructure and water and sewer system. Mr. Nichols also stated that he felt there were a few "abandoned" areas in the county that could be possibly revitalized and made more attractive, which in turn could lead to new business ventures and possibly create more jobs for those in the community.



**Carla Hendricks, Social Services Department, Hertford County**

Miss Hendricks, who is a long time resident of the Hertford County, offered her thoughts as to what could be done to improve upon the economic prosperity of Hertford County. Most of the roads throughout the county are in good shape although some of the secondary roads could use attention. Improving the connections with the highway system would improve upon business opportunities, although she questioned whether or not it would also attract “unwanted” traffic. She also mentioned that perhaps some vacated areas undergo revitalization to make them useful once again to the overall economic community. She felt that revitalization could create jobs for those who are currently unemployed and thus bring more money back into the county. The state should review some aspects of its regulations policies and policies and perhaps consider being more lenient in regards to statewide assistance. She also mentioned improvements in education and facilities which would perhaps lead to more families having a desire to relocate to the area.

**Kelly Andrews, Associate Director, Pitt County Development Commission**

Unlike Detroit with their motor industries failing, Pitt County does not have one defining business or industry supporting the economy. It has the University, Health Services, and a diverse industrial base. It also has manufacturing and distribution. All of these businesses and institutions help support the town as there isn't one industry to rely on. Unlike the rest of the nation, Pitt County is doing quite well and is remaining stable.

In order to enhance economic development, we must shake the perceptions some have about the south or eastern North Carolina. We should promote the area's diversity and identity in order to attract businesses to the area. To help enhance the economy for the future, we must attract an innovative, creative, and a highly technical work force. We must attract businesses to the area, but also increase the quality of life in the area. We must provide more leisure activities, better public education, and a more diverse community.

**Cori Hines, Community Development Planner, City of Greenville**

Compared to the rest of the state, Pitt County's economy is strong, mostly due to the medical and technology-based industries around the county. Pitt County is supported by numerous small businesses. To attract businesses and residents, there are numerous additions that should be made: inclusive public plazas, better parks and recreation, alternative forms of transportation, more amenities for the middle class, and a higher quality of living through safety and enhancing the area's aesthetics. We need to become more self sufficient by keeping the money within the town. For example, a working mass transit system would save a lot of money for the citizens to spend elsewhere within the community. We must continuously keep our infrastructures up to date; for example, public wireless internet in urban areas.

**Jessama Allender, Sociology Professor, East Carolina University**

Pitt County is doing well economically and developing really well, compared to the majority of eastern North Carolina, but it still lags behind many parts of the state. We need to promote

social culture and diversity like Asheville has done. Promoting a greener and more pedestrian friendly town would attract many businesses and citizens to relocate to the area. We should revitalize downtowns and create a working transportation system. West Greenville needs revitalization socially and physically. We need to expand the economy to create more jobs. There needs to be a focus on improving socio-economic problems. There should be more green-space and parks. We should focus more on how to incorporate the river with arts, entertainment, meeting facilities, and restaurants.

**Jessica Barrow, Student, East Carolina University**

I enjoy the city and rural part of Pitt County and also the college. I think having a college in a particular city brings in new people. The hospital and all of its services are also a great part of Pitt County, and I think it's great that they keep adding on to it. I think it's great that Pitt County is growing and becoming a bigger county. We could do better to improve the transportation routes throughout the City of Greenville. Some roads become so busy during certain times that traffic is unbearable. With Pitt County constantly growing, the roads will keep getting busier and busier. I would also like to see bigger businesses being built, such as a better mall.

**Tommy Lymon, Former Police Officer in Winterville**

I've been living in Pitt County for around 20 years and I have thoroughly enjoyed it. I have witnessed its growth and think it's a positive thing. The first thing I would change would be the flow of traffic down Memorial Drive, Greenville Boulevard and around the ECU area.

**Brandon Zimmerman, Resident of Greenville**

Medium to large sized industries play a big part in the makeup of employment, such as BSM. Greenville is a small town that depends on the University to survive. More jobs have been provided in the last five years to stimulate the economy.

**Rachel Croasdaile, Resident of Greenville**

The University is the heart of the city. I do not see many opportunities for employment aside from the current filled positions. There are "college-aged" employment opportunities such as waitress/delivery jobs, but even those have a large competitive force behind them due to the large student population. The hospital and neighboring affiliations employ lots of people; without those Greenville would be drastically smaller and less economically well-off.

**Amelia Winter, Resident of Greenville**

In Greenville, there are lots of jobs available, but no room for movement up the work ladder. Traffic is a problem in Greenville, especially during rush hour, but some will not consider public transportation because of the value of private automobiles. More emphasis could be placed on small, locally owned companies in Greenville in order to stimulate the economy. A good example is the many boutiques and small shops such as those in Arlington Village.

**Eric Graham, Health Service Case Manager/ Service Intake Coordinator**

Pitt County and the Greenville-Winterville area is a nice place to live and it's quiet. I enjoy the scenery and everything is at the tip of my hand when it comes to things that I need. I don't have to live directly in the middle of the city to get the necessities that I need like groceries, banks, or even entertainment. The traffic is my worst complaint. At around 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. things are really bad. I normally try to beat the traffic by leaving for work early so I can get off before the traffic gets too bad. It's also a lot of traffic because Pitt Community College is not too far from my residence.

There are not many places for children to go and have positive fun. There needs to be more parks and recreational activities for children. Preferably, somewhere with a low cost due to the fact that the cases that I normally work with on a day to day basis are low income. I would like to see the lanes widened. I know that will take a while for it to happen but it's something that would help with the traffic.

**Nedra Harris, ECU Brody School Administrative Staff, Resident of Ayden**

Ayden is a very historic area. I live close to downtown Ayden and its many mom and pop shops. I like the historic feel of the area and its something that I wouldn't want to change. I do have to drive a little ways to get to food and other amenities, but it doesn't bother me any. There are not any weaknesses that I am aware of or that bother me. The location of the school is good and I don't mind driving about 8 to 10 miles to get amenities. There is a need for better roads. I drive everyday from Ayden to Greenville and the roads are terrible. I also think that a better traffic pattern could be implemented, starting on the border where Ayden and Greenville connect. That's where I have the most problems. I would like to see Ayden grow more. I like the town now, but I feel that if we expand a little more then we could have more resources and eventually add more historic areas.

**June Allen, Sales Manager (Greenville), Resident of Washington**

The water front is one of the strengths of my area. It brings many people to the area who like nature and who like to fish and other things. Many people like the eateries that we have to offer. We even have a state park to offer. As to weaknesses, I think that the appearance could be better. When you first get into town, things look run down and the appearance to tourists can be not so inviting. Downtown Washington has a nice feel to it. It's historic and leads you straight to the waterfront. But Washington needs to be improved. There are too many pot holes in the roads. I would like to see the entrance to be rebuilt and the roads to be redone. The roads could be better. There are too many buckles in the road, and it can be damaging to your vehicle. I think after that it would be even more inviting to tourists.

**Don Edwards, Business owner; Commissioner, Greenville Redevelopment Commission**

The main issue in Greenville is revitalization of the center and west Greenville areas. Revitalization can bring about economic change in these areas.

### **Carl Reese, Greenville City Planner**

Greenville is a regional service center. There is a push towards eco-tourism in the area. There is a need for the region as a whole to try harder to work together to get plans accomplished.

### **Ashley Barrow, School Teacher in and Resident of Williamston**

I have seen the changes going on in the region. There is a need for education to help boost economic development.

### **Tom Thompson, Beaufort County Economic Development Commission**

We should attract business and manufacturing owners from the Northeast to relocate to Northeastern North Carolina to promote business and help employment rates through marketing schemes. Counties at their expense should build appropriately designed and sited spec (or built-to-suit if an opportunity presents itself) buildings if there are no suitable buildings in the county. We should assist high poverty counties in building industrial spec. buildings by paying the interest for some given period of time, such as four years. We should develop a program to provide mortgage financing for manufacturing facilities in rural counties for new or expanding industries. We should also encourage the formation of non-profit corporations such as Committees of 100 to actually build and lease buildings using this program.

### **Alan Lilley, Winterville Planning Director**

My major concern is listening to the community and implementing their ideas. The first step to helping the economy in Pitt County was updating the Town's Comprehensive Plan and Horizon Land Use Plan in order to incorporate more space and alter zoning for future businesses in the area. Through a survey of residents we obtained knowledge about how the community felt about Winterville and what improvements and modifications they wanted as far as businesses. Options such as large-scale department stores and movie theatres to smaller coffee and antique/designer shops were among those on the list. With regard to housing, people want to live in a home that is highly desirable and close to where they work.

### **Wanda Yuhas, Executive Director, Pitt County Economic Development Commission**

Over the past several years Pitt County has made a significant transition from farming to high-tech industries. Greenville, the county seat and largest city in the county in terms of population and business, is looked at thoroughly from other states (like California, experiencing economic crisis). Industries such as Kinston Spirit Air Systems attract a lot of "high profile" attention. Pitt County is also looked highly upon in regards to medical professionals with leading hospitals such as Pitt Memorial. The commission's main goal is to create an influx of more jobs especially those for young professionals graduating from ECU. Currently, graduates are looking to other counties and states for job opportunities. Pitt County is stable compared to most other counties in the region (Martin, Beaufort, Hertford, etc.) because of diversity among the workforce and the tax rate. All of this is discussed among manager meetings held monthly to discuss solutions to



economic development, particularly among ECU, Pitt Community College, and other institutions in the area.

**Steve Biggs, Director of Economic Development, Bertie County**

There are certain issues that we looked at in evaluating what would benefit the economy most in Bertie County. The three most important issues that would have significant potential impact are education, health and human services and economic development. We need to improve the health and human services system for all citizens of Bertie County, with special emphasis on youth, elderly, and the disadvantaged. Presently, services are not being utilized to the fullest extent. We need to educate the residents of Bertie County about the services the county provides; hopefully, to empower them to become more productive citizens. For economic development, we need to create an environment that supports all the new and existing businesses by improving infrastructure to promote tourism, entrepreneurship, and the integration of technology by utilizing existing community values and natural resources. For education we need a system that prepares citizens to live worthwhile and productive lives. We should enhance classrooms with technology and learning tools that help promote positive, wholesome interactions between students, parents, schools, and the community.

**Mike Freeman, Chairman of the Bertie County Planning Board**

Mobile homes are a significant share of the county's total housing stock, at 32 percent. Bertie County lacks central sewer service, zoning, and most other land development controls. And the subdivision ordinance the county adopted in 2005 was the first countywide land development regulation. Bertie County lacks public water access availability, and there is no public beach access. All the previous accesses have been lost. Boating access is important to the area.

**Traci B. White, Planning Director, Bertie County**

One of the major things affecting economic development is how rural many areas of Bertie County are. The lack of jobs and money making jobs have led to the decline of employment and the economy. The county is definitely lacking in retail establishments that make the county a desirable place to work or live. Also, in the past 10 years the county has been flooded twice, once from hurricane Floyd and again from tropical storm Nicole. These two events have weakened the economy greatly. The entire downtown of Windsor lies in the flood plain and flooded in both of these events. It has been hard for the downtown to rebuild after these events, making the downtown economy struggle.

**Josh Aldridge, Aldridge and Southerland Reality, in Greenville**

The infrastructure in Greenville, Winterville, and Ayden is good for economic development. There are five industrial parks in Pitt County and all have lots available. As far as goals for economic development are concerned, we have to look at what's working and what needs work. Agriculture is a big part of Pitt County, along with retail and manufacturing. These sectors should be looked at first. Another good issue to look at would be industry and what it takes to bring industry into these large industrial parks.

**Jordan Normann, Student of East Carolina University**

I live out a ways from town and I sure can't see much if any infrastructure out this far to support economic development. Where I live the roads are not too good. But in town they are a little better. I have seen some improvements to the major highways surrounding Pitt County. I believe infrastructure should be a key issue in economic development. Without it, there is no possible way development of any kind can occur.

**Daniel Cowan, Employee of University Book Exchange, Greenville**

I am not sure about the conditions of the actual water and sewer facilities. I would bet that these systems are well maintained and up to date as well. Advancements could be made in roadside lighting, especially roads close to East Carolina University campus. Also, wider streets for traffic ease and wider sidewalks for pedestrian ease as well. I feel like there are a few unnecessary roads, we need to put roads where we think they will be most beneficial. The region should focus on every aspect of economic development: usage of the existing industrial parks, focus on agriculture, anything that's going to create jobs and generate revenue.

**James Stewart, Pitt County Planning Department**

There should be an improvement in economic development, starting with the transportation system and roads. There is an excessive amount of congestion on major roads in Greenville, such as Greenville Boulevard. But also consider that congestion is not all bad, because it brings more opportunities to Greenville.

**Dean Lally, U.S. Marine, formerly from Pitt County**

There is an excessive amount of traffic congestion on Greenville Blvd. and other main streets throughout Greenville at peak hours. When asked what he would do to continue the economic growth of Greenville and Pitt County, Mr. Lally said he would continue to focus on East Carolina University and the Greenville-Pitt Memorial Hospital.

**Stephanie Romero, Restaurant Industry in Bertie County**

There have been many steps in the right direction regarding economic development, but it is possible to have too much development. Planning and development of more green spaces would be beneficial to not only the younger kids but people of all ages.

## CHAPTER 6 PROBLEMS, ISSUES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

In this chapter, we pull together the various problems, issues and opportunities either directly referenced or inherently raised in the prior chapters of this report. In addition, we have researched some of the economic development literature and other reports specific to North Carolina in an effort to capture and assess prospects and conundrums that might not be evident from our data collection effort. We draw on prior work of the Mid-East Commission in preparing this chapter.

In this chapter, we do not attempt to distinguish between what is an issue, an opportunity, or a problem. Rather, we consolidate our discussion together. Our reasoning is that a particular issue, depending on one's viewpoint, can be viewed as a problem by one and an opportunity by another. We do not necessarily pose suggestions or potential solutions in this chapter, though we might allude to general directions. However, recommendations for economic development are provided in the following chapter.

Major macro/external forces shaping the economy in North Carolina are articulated in an economic overview by the Interagency Economic Development Group (2008), a team supporting the Economic Development Board in implementing and annually updating the state's economic development strategy plan. Broad trends include:

- **Globalization:** a decline, projected to continue, in traditional manufacturing industries due to cheap labor costs abroad.
- **Demographic changes:** rapid population growth; migration from rural to urban areas; and an aging population.
- **National economic uncertainty:** a slowing of the pace of economic growth; ongoing problems with housing and financial markets; and the high price of oil.

### RURAL DISADVANTAGE

Rural residents in general remain economically disadvantaged compared to their counterparts in metropolitan areas (Besser, Recker and Parker 2009). Remote nonmetro counties often experience “rural disadvantages,” which include slower growing or declining populations, older and less educated populations, smaller, less diversified economic bases, poorer quality jobs, lower incomes, higher poverty, and higher unemployment (Lobao and Kraybill 2005). Rural disadvantage or decline may be attributed to declining farm employment, remoteness from metropolitan areas, and a lack of amenities like a vibrant Main Street or natural features (Smart Growth Network 2010).

The region is considered isolated “from the beaten path” in that it does not have an interstate highway and is generally not on the path toward significant destinations, although many people do cross the region on the way to the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Because of low per capita and median household incomes in the region, many residents do not have the discretionary income needed to support flourishing retail and service businesses (Mid-East Commission 2009).

The land-based economy and its accompanying way of life in rural communities have been affected by a number of outside forces. While many of these changes have been gradual, others have been more immediate. As these communities continue to change, rural identities may be altered and communities may lose the opportunity to set their own agendas (Smart Growth Network 2010).

### **SMALL TOWN DECLINE**

Communities with declining populations or a contracting economy face a combination of problems: unemployment and poverty, increasing demands for social services with fewer dollars to pay for them, an aging workforce, vacant properties, and loss of historic structures (Smart Growth Network 2010). Many small towns in North Carolina, including most in the region, are in jeopardy due to job losses in manufacturing, closures of main street businesses, and downward spiral effects from worsening economic conditions (Small Towns Action Council 2009). The council has found that North Carolina's small towns require immediate action to help them cope with crisis and brighten prospects for the future. This update to the economic development strategy takes a closer look than ever before with regard to demographics in the small towns of the region.

The Small Towns Action Council (2009) has prepared an action agenda which offers a road map to economic growth for small NC towns; it needs to be fully supported in the region and its recommendations fully integrated into the region's economic development and other planning efforts. The Council calls for creation of an office of small town development in the NC Department of Commerce, alongside its Main Street program, the 21st Century Communities Program, and other state programs that affect small towns.



**Downtown Everetts**

### **IMPACT OF NATURAL DISASTERS**

Hurricane Floyd passed through the Region on September 15, 1999. All five Counties in the Mid-East Region are affected by the damage done during this storm. The worst damage was caused not by the high winds, as with many hurricanes, but by the rains that accompanied the storm. The region experienced severe and lasting damage because of the flooding associated with Hurricane Floyd.

### **GENERAL STRATEGIES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

To develop the regional economy, would it benefit more from incubating small business start-ups, facilitating expansion of existing businesses, or attracting large business establishments from other regions? The main focus of practitioners and state economic development programs

continues to be the latter two, business retention and new industrial recruitment (Loveridge and Nizalov 2007).

These strategies can be grouped into three categories: recruiting employers from outside the community, supporting local entrepreneurship and the expansion of existing employers (developing local capitalism), and developing local amenities such as child care centers, recreation facilities, and cultural events. The rationale for the third strategy is that pleasant places to live attract economic growth and prosperity and thus, strategies to improve recreation and other amenities will result in economic benefits for the community at large (Besser, Recker and Parker 2009).

The most obvious and quickest tactic to achieve this goal is to recruit a major employer or several smaller employers to locate in a given place. Tactics for recruiting new employers include building facilities and infrastructure; offering tax incentives, grants, and job training subsidies; and lobbying federal and state officials to be the location for casinos or government facilities (such as prisons) (Besser, Recker and Parker 2009).

## **LOSS OF MANUFACTURING JOBS**

Many of North Carolina's traditional manufacturing industries continue to shed jobs as part of an ongoing economic transition. Certain industry sectors—such as elements of textiles, apparel, furniture, and computer/electronics—are shedding a large number of jobs, offsetting employment gains in other industries. Losses in these industry sectors are occurring throughout the state, but their greatest impacts are being felt in smaller communities that once relied almost entirely on recently down-sized or closed manufacturing facilities. In eastern North Carolina, textiles and tobacco no longer drive employment and economic growth. North Carolina's traditional "middle jobs"—those that paid a family-sustaining wage and required minimal formal education or training—are disappearing as part of this transition (North Carolina Commission on Workforce Development 2007).

Beaufort County is particularly well situated for successful business and manufacturing companies. The county's access to the waterfront (Pamlico River) and NC Highway 264 gives it significant advantages for transportation of goods. Much of the manufacturing in Beaufort County is centralized in Washington and includes some of the state's and even the nation's largest producers of plastics, pipes, textiles, and filters.

Bertie County has very little manufacturing employment, but the largest manufacturers are Penco Products, Inc. (which distributes and builds locker/storage products) and manufacturers of construction and building materials. Manufacturers in Hertford County include those that specialize in forest (lumber processing) and agriculture products as well as plastic, steel, and metal producers. The most prominent manufacturer in Martin County is Syfan Manufacturing, which produces the popular "shrink wrap" packaging materials. Notable manufacturers in Pitt County include Weyerhaeuser, United Machine Works, NAACO, DSM Pharmaceuticals and Grady-White Boats.



At issue is whether the region should continue to pursue manufacturers in light of national trends toward continued declines in employment. To some extent, that decision needs to be based on a more detailed analysis of manufacturing than is included in this report.

### **CONSTRUCTION OF “SPEC” BUILDINGS**

A popular economic development strategy is for individual counties (at their own expense) to build appropriately designed and sited “spec” (or built-to-suit if an opportunity presents itself) buildings if there are no suitable buildings in the county. At issue is the extent to which each county in the region should construct one or more spec buildings in an effort to attract new industry or manufacturers. In Beaufort County, a 40,000 square foot metal building, constructed in 2003, was sold to a company from New Jersey after 18 months. Such strategies have proven successful. In Havelock, Craven County built spec buildings that were subsequently occupied by companies from New Jersey. On the other hand, if the region has a number of vacant buildings that were used previously for manufacturers, retrofitting strategies in lieu of new construction are also worth considering.

### **JOB CREATION AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION**

New job creation is concentrating in certain fast-growing metropolitan areas; the economy is creating many new high-skill, high-wage jobs but they are now concentrated in a few major urban hubs. As a result, many areas of North Carolina are not prospering from the economic transformation. Creating opportunities for workers in less populated areas of the state will take new and innovative approaches to economic development (North Carolina Commission on Workforce Development 2007).

### **HIGHER EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT LEVELS NEEDED**

The availability of skilled workers is one of the most important determinants of firm location decisions (Koo 2005). The future prosperity of all North Carolinians depends on achieving higher educational attainment levels for all citizens. Based on the mix of industries and occupations projected to grow the fastest in North Carolina, this relative earnings pattern will not change during the coming decade. To close that gap, the future prosperity of North Carolinians relies heavily upon further enhancing workers’ education and skills (North Carolina Commission on Workforce Development 2007).

### **IMPENDING LABOR SHORTAGES**

Impending baby-boom retirements will exacerbate an emerging skills gap among experienced, skilled workers. Baby boomers now account for one third of the state’s population and nearly half the labor force. It is impossible to know how long baby boomers will stay in the labor market after 2011 when the first wave (i.e., those born between 1946 and 1955) reaches age 65. Their inevitable exit will dramatically impact the state for generations to come in the labor supply, changes in the workplace, and in the loss of skills and work experience to the state’s economy. The retirement of one-quarter of the workforce, especially many of the state’s most experienced workers, by 2020 has the potential to leave a gaping hole in the supply of workers.

If this segment of the workforce is lost en masse, it could create tremendous upheaval in the workplace. As a result, we can expect a talent shortage in North Carolina (North Carolina Commission on Workforce Development 2007).

### **LOW-SKILL IN-MIGRANTS**

Low-skill in-migrants present both opportunities and challenges in meeting the state's workforce needs. North Carolina is attracting a large number of unskilled or semi-skilled in-migrants. One of the largest cohorts within this group of in-migrants is Hispanic workers. Growth in the state's Hispanic population continues to far outpace the national average. The influx of low-skill Hispanic workers provides a significant source of labor for many industries, including construction, agriculture, food processing and a number of services. On the other hand, the influx of Hispanic workers is also posing several real challenges for the state's education and social services providers. Efforts to acculturate Hispanic in-migrants will be critically important to the state's economic success. As companies continue to shed many traditional semi-skilled and low-skilled "middle jobs," there will be fewer opportunities for low-skilled workers to gain upward mobility (North Carolina Commission on Workforce Development 2007).

### **TAX BURDENS AND RELIANCE ON FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDING**

Of the five counties in the region, three have abnormally high tax burdens (Mid-East Commission 2009). High taxes can have a discouraging effect on businesses that are interested in expanding or relocating in those counties. Tax bases in these same counties are fully stretched to pay for minimal education efforts and other essential services. Capital investment needed for extensions and upgrading of water and sewer is out of reach locally without outside financial assistance.

### **PRIVATE FINANCING AVAILABILITY**

Commercial capital within the region is largely controlled by lending institutions that are headquartered in other regions of the state or the country. Fortunately, the Region generally has lending institutions which do make adequate capital available on reasonable terms and conditions. However, private capital is generally not available to job-creating, high-risk start-up businesses. Borrowers in need may have access to other financing sources such as the Mid-East Certified Development Corporation's EDA Revolving Loan Fund or the USDA Intermediary Relending Program (Mid-East Commission 2009). At issue is the extent to which commercial capital remains available as needed in future years.

### **DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL CAPITALISM**

Another tactic in light of the difficulty in achieving new employment is to create retention and expansion programs for local businesses and to develop programs to encourage local entrepreneurship. The economic development tactics used by communities to enhance local capitalism include business incubators, business networks, job training and educational opportunities for owners and employees, entrepreneurship programs, and financial assistance for start-ups and business expansions (Besser, Recker and Parker 2009).

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION VERSUS COMPETITION

An underlying rationale for local governments to cooperate with one another in economic development efforts is that such efforts will provide benefits that spill over from one community to another. Combining or pooling resources may enable certain cities and counties to attract new industry and pursue new approaches to economic development which they were previously unable to do on their own. Regional cooperation may be necessary to overcome difficulties that multiple local governments in the region face, including limited resources, declining populations, and changing social and economic environments (Gordon 2007).

Although communities in the region may participate in cooperative efforts, understand the benefits of cooperation, and express a willingness to cooperate in regional economic development efforts, there are likely to be obstacles that will curtail cooperative efforts. Clearly, there are geographic, economic, labor, transportation, infrastructure, technologic, education, population, and housing similarities and differences within the region. Local governments may choose to maintain their own autonomy. There may be disagreements about the nature of cooperative efforts and/or how to go about solving a problem or addressing a particular issue. Local leaders may judge programs and projects based on fair share-equity considerations such as whether one community benefits more from a given action or program. It is possible that a climate of competition is so intense that it surpasses and overwhelms any such cooperative efforts. Competition within a region over economic development, if it exists, can detract from efforts to market the entire region competitive with the rest of the state, nation, and world (Gordon 2007). Indeed, while regional cooperation is generally good, parochialism comes in to play on a few issues in Region Q (Mid-East Commission 2009).

Turning competition into cooperation may be a region's greatest hope for economic development success. To avoid or mitigate disagreements and conflicts, strong leadership and commitment at the state, regional, and local levels is required, as well as a willingness to work for common goals. One option to improve cooperation in regional economic development is to form a regional economic development alliance. The region might benefit by having an organization that helps pull localities together and coordinate their efforts. Such an alliance might be comprised of power and utility companies, railroads, local private industries, Farm Bureaus, banks, community colleges and universities, government agencies, chambers of commerce, and local elected officials.

At minimum, such an alliance would serve as an information exchange for the region, a gathering of local government elected and appointed officials, economic development specialists, real estate agents, bankers, and educators in regular summit meetings. Such an alliance might be responsible for coordinating such considerations as transportation, planning, marketing, grantsmanship, and infrastructure. Such an alliance could also exchange ideas and information and channel economic development prospects and leads to the most appropriate locations within the region. Furthermore, another charge for such an alliance is to work with existing industries to find linked businesses—companies that supply these existing companies with materials—and work to bring those companies to the region. Specific activities could include one central economic development website, cooperative marketing of multiple areas within the region or the

entire region itself, and the sharing of exhibit booth registration fees at trade shows (Gordon 2007).

**LACK OF ZONING AS AN OBSTACLE**

The absence of appropriate land use and/or environmental regulations could render economic development far more difficult (Mid-East Commission 2009). Site locators might look at a given area and note that the county or community does not have zoning but other competing areas do, and then they rule out the jurisdiction without zoning. If a business or industry is going to invest in a given building or facility, they will probably be interested in knowing what is going to be built or operated next to them. Hence, zoning is not just for protecting communities and people from what they don't want, it's also about protecting the businesses and industries, as well (Gordon 2007).

**BROWNFIELDS**

A brownfield is generally a contaminated site. More specifically defined, brownfields are real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant (Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency). Table 6.1 identifies three brownfield sites in the region that are undergoing redevelopment.

**Table 6.1  
 Brownfield Sites with Redevelopment Proposals in Region Q**

<b>Property Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Description</b>
Alamac Knit Fabric	NC Hwy 125 Hamilton (Martin County)	106-acre former textile manufacturing facility with known soil and groundwater contamination involving chlorinated solvents. Site is undergoing active remediation under NC DWQ. Intended reuse is as a non-polluting school locker manufacturing facility that will employ some 350 workers.
Carolina Cove	111 Lakeside Terrace Drive Greenville (Pitt County)	The Lakeview Terrace Apartments (14 buildings on 9.02 acres) were constructed in 1972. Groundwater is contaminated due purportedly to an off-site dry cleaner. A prospective developer intends to renovate the structures for affordable housing.
Singer Company	357 Amilite Way, Chocowinity (Beaufort County)	This is an abandoned rural manufacturing facility with lead and phthalate contamination in the soils and groundwater. A brownfields agreement provides for partial site remediation. A developer intends to redevelop the site with mixed retail and light industrial uses.

Source: North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources

**HERITAGE TOURISM AND MAIN STREET PROGRAMS**

The Main Street Four-Point Approach of the National Trust for Historic Preservation provides a useful framework for redevelopment efforts, specifically in older downtowns. This approach focuses on strategically combining historic preservation efforts with marketing the businesses in

historic downtown areas as a way to generate additional economic investment (Smart Growth Network 2010). At issue is the extent to which heritage tourism and Main Street programs can and should become a part of Region Q’s economic development strategies.

## BIOTECHNOLOGY

On November 10, 2010, a one-half day forum (Bio Development 101) sponsored by the North Carolina Biotechnology Center was held at East Carolina University. That forum represents increasing interest in Pitt County but also the region as a whole in the opportunity to make life sciences a central feature of economic development. While the biotechnology industry is concentrated in Research Triangle Park and Raleigh, a significant number of biotechnology firms are located in Greenville as shown in Table 6.2 (North Carolina Biotechnology Center 2010), and there is significant potential for growth.

**Table 6.2**  
**Biotechnology Companies in Region Q**

Company Name	Location in Region	Emphasis
CardioVascular Resonances LLC	Greenville	Research and Development
GEM Tox Consultants & Labs, Inc.	Greenville	Research and Development
PhytoMyco Research Corp.	Greenville	Research and Development
Pioneer Surgical Orthobiologics	Greenville	Research and Development
Chirazyme Labs, Inc.	Greenville	Production and Manufacturing
DSM Pharmaceuticals, Inc.	Greenville	Production and Manufacturing
Fuji Silysia Chemical USA Ltd.	Greenville	Production and Manufacturing
Shure Foods, Inc.	Greenville	Production and Manufacturing
CTMG, Inc.	Greenville	Contract Research & Testing
Metrics Inc.	Greenville	Contract Research & Testing

Source: North Carolina Biotechnology Center 2010. North Carolina Biotechnology Directory 2010.

## AGRITOURISM

Agritourism activities can include visits to active farms and overnight stays at farm bed-and-breakfast operations. Visitors might even participate in farming tasks. Rural landowners can earn revenues from tourism activities on their land, including traditional recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, and observing wildlife. Tourists are attracted to agritourism activities because they desire an experience that allows them to interact with a rural landscape that has an authentic and meaningful sense of place (Smart Growth Network 2010). Ecotourism, discussed in more detail in the next chapter, is also a potential economic development strategy.

## ECOTOURISM

There is potential for the region to better capitalize on its natural resources as assets to attract economic development, in particular, tourists. Ecotourism typically involves travel to destinations where plant and animal habitats and cultural heritage are the primary attractions. Ecotourism instills in tourists a greater appreciation of natural habitats. Nature-based ecotourism



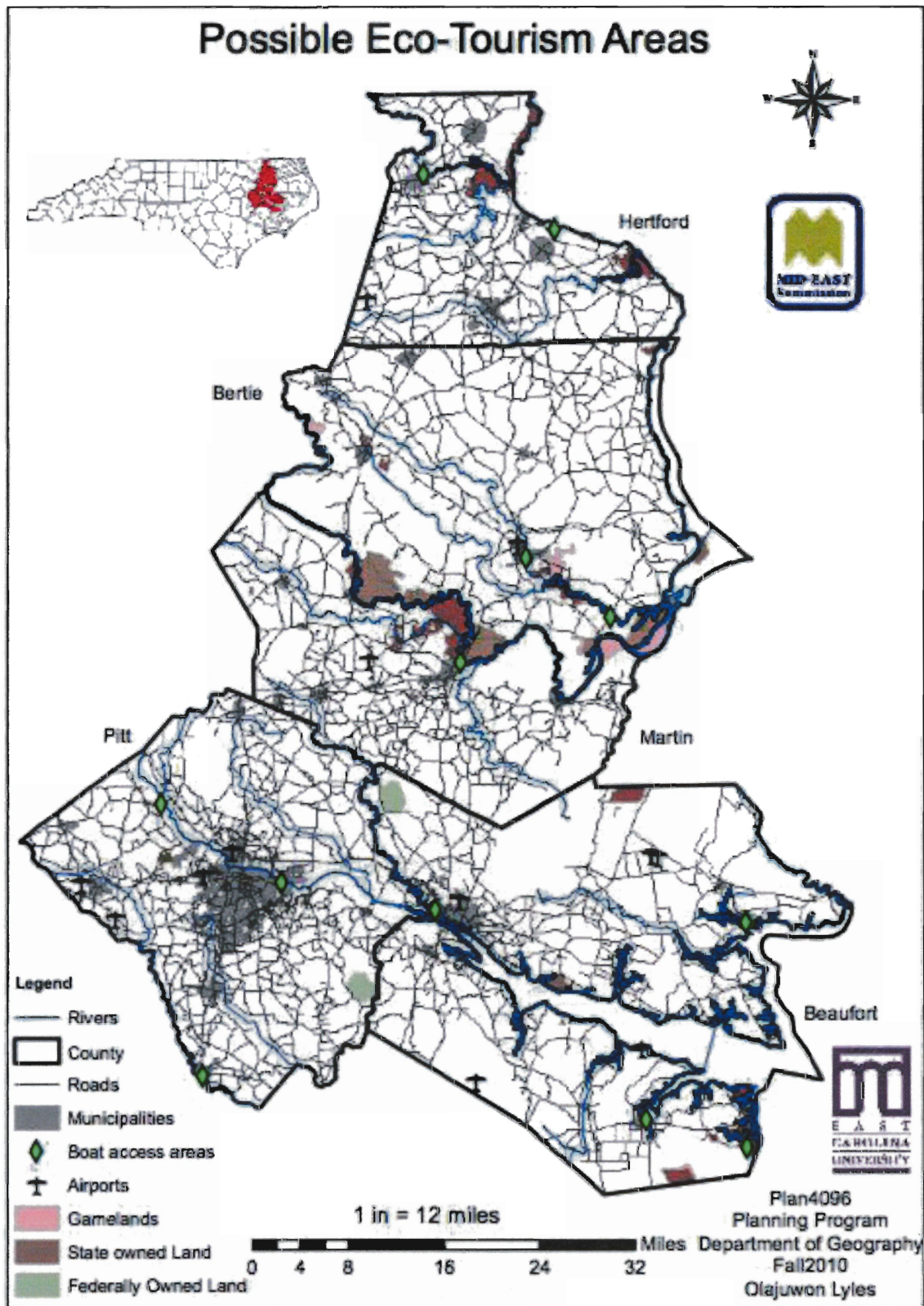
can include hunting and fishing tours, estuarine cruises, wildlife tours, natural history field trips, backwater paddle adventures, horseback riding trails, and camping trips. It is an economic development strategy that blends well with the region's agricultural, historic, and cultural destinations. Momentum is gathering to support the continued growth of eastern North Carolina's eco and sustainable tourism industry. In addition to expanding existing businesses that serve the tourism industry, pursuit of this economic development strategy could lead to the establishment of new small businesses, such as outfitters, tourist companies, educational farms, fishing-hunting-birding guides, field trip programs, "spring break" eco-programs, and tour travel operators.<sup>1</sup>

*"The great thing about ecotourism is that people come in  
and spend money but don't stay... the footprint is very light.  
When the people leave, we can hardly tell they were here."  
— Carl Rees, Planner, City of Greenville*

Possible eco-tourism areas in the region are shown on a map on the following page.

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<sup>1</sup> Mercer, Calvin. 2011. Emerging Eco and Sustainable Tourism in Eastern North Carolina. E-mail correspondence.



## **CHAPTER 7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

In this chapter we provide our suggestions for what the region should do to advance economic development. We stop short of preparing a specific work program, however, since our contribution to Region Q's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy was not intended to be determinative. Although we have completed some of the analyses of population, housing, labor force, economy, and infrastructure that are needed to bring comprehensiveness to Region Q's efforts, we have not fully engaged the public. Final work programs and specific policies and objectives for economic development should only be proposed after more thorough vetting with stakeholders, economic development professionals in the region, and local elected officials.

### **PREPARE A REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN**

As noted earlier in this report, three of the five counties are required to plan under the state's Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA). Pitt County has maintained a comprehensive plan and it presently updating its plan. There is a need to have a more detailed data base of existing land use for the region using Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Whether or not each county in the region desires to use zoning, a land use plan is highly recommended. The land use plans provided in some of the CAMA plans are highly generalized, and more detailed information about where commercial and industrial development will be encouraged is needed for economic development and infrastructure planning purposes. The comprehensive plans of individual counties should be compiled into a regional land use plan. The regional land use plan should provide an inventory of lands which are potentially part of heritage tourism, eco-tourism, and agritourism efforts (introduced in Chapter 6 and also discussed in this chapter). The regional land use plan also needs to identify cooperative strategies for economic development, such as multi-county business parks and approaches for sharing in the costs of infrastructure for economic development. Finally, the regional land use plan needs to be coordinated with various transportation planning efforts in the region (see discussion below).

### **COORDINATE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING**

As noted in Chapter 4, the region's transportation planning is split among three different transportation planning entities, the Greenville Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) (much of urbanized Pitt County), the Mid-East Rural Planning Organization (RPO) (non-urbanized Pitt County, Beaufort County, and Martin County), and the Peanut Belt RPO (which groups Bertie and Hertford Counties in the region with Northampton and Halifax Counties). This means that extra efforts are required to ensure that regional transportation plans will match up with one another. Then, there is the prospect that individual counties will complete their own transportation plans, which need to be consistent with regional transportation plans. As noted in Chapter 4, an effort by the North Carolina Department of Transportation to complete a multi-regional transportation plan for 35 counties east of Interstate 95 should go a long way toward coordinating the various regional transportation plans. However, specific coordination activities need to be identified and included in the work program for Region Q's comprehensive economic development strategy.

## COORDINATE MULTI-AGENCY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

When local, regional, state, and national economic development efforts are all considered collectively, there is some potential for confusion, overlap, and even conflict from among the various agencies and commissions. Economic development is clearly already recognized as being centrally important in Region Q. That is why, for instance, each county has its own economic development commission or department. Regionally, there is the Mid-East Commission (i.e., Region Q), but four of the region’s counties are also within the jurisdiction of the Northeast Commission and the other county lies within the Global TransPark Development Zone. Then, there is the state’s Economic Development Board which is also charged with establishing policy for economic development in the state. Therefore, substantial time and skill is needed to merge and mesh local efforts with regional economic development plans, all within the framework of goals established by the state. Region Q’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy needs to ensure local and regional goals, policies, and work programs are entirely in alignment, without duplication or overlap.

## ENHANCE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WEBSITES

We reviewed the websites of the county economic development agencies in the region. Bertie County has an economic development department, while the other four counties have economic development commissions. Of the individual counties, Pitt County and Beaufort County have the most updated and, in our opinion, most useful websites. Table 7.1 shows whether each county provides (signified by a “+” sign) or does not provide (signified by a “-” sign) information which would typically be available for economic development purposes.

Bertie County and Martin County need to provide more comprehensive information about economic development prospects in their counties. Ideally, the economic development websites of each county should at minimum contain information on each of the five areas listed in Table 7.1. In addition, all counties to the extent they have not done so already should consider adding videos, various maps (e.g., state, market, and transportation), listings and photographs of available properties, and links to the county’s comprehensive plan.

**Table 7.1**  
**Information Accessible from County Economic Development Websites**

County	Demographic Data	Property Available	Infrastructure Information	Lifestyle (Education, etc.)	Industry Information
Beaufort	+	+	+	+	+
Bertie	-	-	-	-	-
Hertford	+	+	-	-	+
Martin	-	+	-	-	-
Pitt	+	+	+	+	+



Table 7.2 provides a review of websites for the chambers of commerce in the region. There are a total of 10 cities in the region that have chambers of commerce. Those cities are Greenville, Ayden, Grifton, Washington, Ahoskie, Murfreesboro, Aurora, Belhaven, Williamston, and Windsor. A “+” indicates information is available and a “-” indicates information is not available; a “++” indicates the information is considered especially effective, and a “+-” indicates the information is available but is not considered especially effective.

**Table 7.2**  
**Information Available Via Chamber of Commerce Websites in the Region**

Chamber of Commerce	Website	Calendar of Events	Newsletter	Member Benefits	Job Openings
Williamston	+	+	+-	+	+-
Greenville	+	+	+	-	+
Ayden	+	+-	+-	+	-
Grifton	+-	+	+	-	-
Washington	+	++	+	+	+
Aurora-Richland	+	+-	-	+	-
Belhaven	+-	-	-	-	-
Windsor	-	+	-	-	-
Ahoskie	+	+	+-	+	-
Murfreesboro	+	-	-	+	-

**PROMOTE AND EXPAND HEALTH CARE FACILITIES**

Pitt County Memorial Hospital is the region’s largest employer with approximately 6,700 employees. East Carolina University is second, with approximately 5,250 employees, a large proportion of which involve the campus’s medical facilities. Moreover, in times of economic recession, the health care industry has added jobs nationally. Clearly, health care deserves prominent treatment in Region Q’s comprehensive economic development strategy.



**Pitt Memorial Hospital, Pitt County**

**EXPLORE AGGLOMERATION ECONOMIES IN MANUFACTURING**

Despite losses in manufacturing employment nationally and in the region, there are good reasons that the pursuit of additional manufacturers should remain a part of the Region’s overall economic development strategy. One way to potential strengthen the region’s prospects for



manufacturing is to better understand exactly the manufacturing operations that exist now in the region and cultivate new manufacturing or related service employment that complements those existing manufacturers. In the economics literature, this is known and referred to as agglomeration economies. In other words, the term *agglomeration economies* refers to the benefits gained by firms as a result of locating near each other. When firms cluster together, they can benefit through such effects as declining costs of production or other advantages of networking. To this end, it is recommended that Region Q conduct a more detailed study of existing manufacturing firms in the region and identify specific prospects for agglomeration economies in the manufacturing sector. The results of that study could then help economic developers recruit businesses and manufacturers that would have discrete advantages via agglomeration economies if they were to locate in the region.

### **CONSIDER EXISTING INVENTORY BEFORE CONSTRUCTING SPEC BUILDINGS**

Local governments can construct “spec” buildings to attract interest in the area. With these buildings, prospective new companies have the advantage of a faster relocation and are able to move in promptly to initiate business operations. This is a common economic development strategy in the region. When subsidized locally, spec buildings have many advantages, including being able to quickly recruit new businesses and industries to the county and region. We recommend using some caution in this approach, however.

There may be a sufficient inventory of vacant industrial buildings (especially given the great recession from 2007 to 2010) already existing in the county. Emphasis should be placed first on determining whether existing buildings can serve industrial recruitment needs. Secondly, if such buildings are not suitable or flexible enough to meet anticipated needs for desired employers, consideration should be given to whether such existing buildings can be economically renovated or modernized to meet those needs. Only after ruling out rehabilitation of existing, available buildings should the region pursue the construction of “spec” buildings, in our opinion.



**Vacant Warehouse for Lease in Williamston**

### **LEVERAGE RESOURCES OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

While we are certain that economic developers in the region are aware of the many ways educational institutions in the region can assist with economic development efforts, it is unlikely that the full potential for partnership has been explored and achieved among community colleges, universities, and economic development commissions. The mission of the University System of North Carolina as articulated by UNC Tomorrow (2007) is consistent in several ways with the notion of partnering for economic development. Specifically, UNC Tomorrow’s final

report indicates that the university system should “increase its capacity and commitment to respond to and lead economic transformation and community development.” East Carolina University (ECU) responded to the UNC Tomorrow Report with a 25-page report of its own (ECU 2008). In that document ECU articulates a commitment that it will “expand and apply its expertise, research and outreach functions to address regional and wider-scale challenges and to support public and private sector decision-makers in such areas as the economy, environment, and energy and water, among others.” Region Q leaders should therefore continue to actively explore and capitalize on resources available not only from ECU but all universities and colleges in the region.



**Martin Community College, Williamston**



**East Carolina University, Greenville**

### **RESUSCITATE AND RE-ENERGIZE SMALL TOWNS**

In Chapter 2, we looked at population trends and raised concern about the trend across the region of small towns losing their economic vitality. The many small cities in the region are the “backbone” of the region’s heritage. It goes against all of the region’s history and culture to allow further deterioration of small towns to the point that they no longer play any role in the economy. Heritage tourism and Main Street programs are two tools that hold some promise (see more discussion below). There are also tools and techniques available via the Rural Center and Small Towns Action Council that should be consulted and implemented as appropriate.



**Powellville**



**Urban Infill Potential in Robersonville**



However, more concerted efforts will be needed. Cities that have downtown commercial districts, however small they may be or however few businesses they might contain, need to band together to create a prototype plan for economic resurgence and small town design that will provide a framework or blueprint toward progress. Again, the small towns of the region are too important to the history and culture of the region to be left to fend on their own. We recommend a pooling of resources to develop a prototype strategy that will fit several of the small towns in the region in terms of economic development, revitalization, land use, and urban design.

### **PURSUE HERITAGE TOURISM**

As discussed in Chapter 1, the five counties in the region have many unique historical properties which could become a part of the economic development strategies for the region. To date, historic preservation appears to under-recognized in terms of potential for economic development. Studies have shown that heritage tourists are likely to visit longer and spend more money than other tourists (Mason 2005). Therefore, strong consideration needs to be given to adding historic preservation as a component of Region Q’s economic development strategies.



**Swamplawn Plantation, Martin County**

Source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/historyrambler/4363377971/>

### **PURSUE ECOTOURISM**

Stakeholders have suggested that ecotourism has good potential as an economic development strategy in Region Q. We agree. There is the natural or green “infrastructure” already in place via rich natural resources and sensitive environments throughout the region. Further analysis of ecotourism potential should be included in the short-term work program of the comprehensive regional economic development strategy.



**Chowan River, Bertie County**

Source: <http://www.joemurrayrealty.com/>

Leaders should consider the Center for Sustainable Tourism at East Carolina University a strong potential partner in that effort. That strategy can and should also include components of “agritourism” as identified in the previous chapter.

## **ADDRESS AGING MUNICIPAL WATER AND SEWER SYSTEMS**

Water is the life-blood of all humans and the communities in which they live. It is surprising, however, how often water is under-appreciated and even unrecognized as a critical economic development resource. The Mid-East Commissions comprehensive economic development strategy had previously identified the problems with existing, small water systems and other infrastructure in the region.

In Chapter 1 of this report, we provide more details of municipal water systems in the region and their number of service connections. The small towns in the region do not have capital to adequately maintain and upgrade their systems which are already quite old. In some cases, counties are getting into the water and sewer business and may be in a position to develop water master plans that could potentially include connection to and upgrading of these many small municipal water systems. Some systems may even need to be discontinued if they become beyond repair.

Clearly, funding is an issue – local governments lack the money need to even maintain, much less upgrade, their water plants and replace deteriorating supply lines. More efforts will be needed in the near future to address this critical infrastructure question. It is likely that some sort of regional consortium to assist cities and counties will become necessary during the next decade. Because water system improvements can take several years to plan, design, and construct, there should be an action item in the work program of the comprehensive economic development strategy to assess and then improve municipal water systems.

## **DIVERSIFY AGRICULTURE**

A task force on the future of the agricultural economy in Region Q should be a part of the Region Q comprehensive economic development strategy work program and should be convened within the next year. The region has very strong roots in agriculture, and the importance of agriculture to the economy has been emphasized in this report, even though the statistics referenced herein do not adequately capture the true impact of agriculture on the region's economy.

The task force should look at new trends and identify new products that can be grown in the region. The task force should look for ways to innovate and diversify the agricultural economy, but yet it should not overlook traditional products such as row crops, now that there is heightened concern globally about food shortages and the security of imported food. For an excellent resource in this regard, see Curtis et al. (2010) in the references section.

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