



## Situation Analysis Report



# Tazewell County 2018

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## Introduction

The local Extension Leadership Council (ELC) led the Tazewell County Extension Office in conducting a comprehensive situation analysis. The situation analysis was developed to help guide Virginia Cooperative Extension's programming efforts to address the needs of the population that we serve. The 2013 Situation Analysis was used as a baseline to prepare and plan the process. The data has been obtained and analyzed through a number of credible sources. Key informant interviews, focus group meetings, web based searches and researching demographic information were the primary modes used to gather these perspectives.

Tazewell County began gathering information for the situation analysis in the fall of 2017, according to the guidelines, procedures and training provided by VCE. The Extension Office developed a Situation Analysis Community and Resident Perspective Survey. This survey was given to focus groups after discussion of a local needs assessment. Community, County, Regional and National data, such as the 2010 United States Census, 2017 U. S. Census Bureau Quick Facts and the 2012 Census of Agriculture were used to compile the report. To obtain a more current perspective of demographics the Unit will continue to evaluate and recognize community needs for informal educational programs. The completed Situation Analysis has been submitted into the Qualtrics Survey Software.

## Unit Profile

Tazewell County is located in the heart of the Appalachian Mountains in the southwestern portion of Virginia, on the border of West Virginia. The county borders Bland, Buchanan, Russell and Smyth counties in Virginia and McDowell and Mercer counties in West Virginia. It is a region of beautiful green mountains, rolling hills and wide-open valleys that covers 522 square miles. The county's accessibility to Interstates 77 and 81 makes it a convenient location for all markets east of the Mississippi and the Midwest. Richmond, the state capital, is 281 miles northeast; Roanoke is 110 miles east; and Bristol is 70 miles southwest. The county is ideally located within the geographic center of the east coast and within one day's drive of 50% of the most populous states in the country. The northern area of Tazewell County is geologically coal and natural gas while the southern area is geologically limestone and agricultural. Hardwood forests cover the entire county, including Jefferson National Forest, Beartown Wilderness Area, and the Clinch Mountain Wildlife Management Area.



## Demographic Profile:

Census Data indicates that the estimated population for Tazewell County is approximately 45,000 people. It is divided into 49.44% male, 50.56% female with 95.10% of the residents being of the white race. Only .6% are of the Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity. Our population is well balanced around 50 years of age with younger and older residents, 39.7% of the population falls between the ages of 25 to 54 years of age which has fallen 1.8% since the 2013 Situation Analysis. Family households make up 72.4% of the population consisting of families living together at one residence, which indicates strong family relationships and bonds that bring youth and adults together. Tazewell County's population in 2011 was 44,807 and has increased by 271 people. Over time the population is about the same as it was in 1960, showing that our county is sustaining its numbers and not increasing as other regions, or decreasing like other populations in other coalfield counties.

## Economic Profile:

The unemployment rate trends decreased from 8.6% in 2013 to 5.9% in 2017, a 2.7% decrease.

Tazewell County was known as a regional retail center for surrounding counties in 1997, primarily due to having two Wal-Mart Supercenters in the eastern and western part of the county. Today, the neighboring counties of Russell, Buchanan and Mercer have their own Wal-Mart, taking much of the retail business away from the county. Also, several regional stores like Magic Mart and Save-A-Lot have gone out of business.

Historically, the coal industry has brought prosperity to Tazewell County through its rich mineral and natural gas resources. With 68% of the county in timberland, the forest industry has organized to harvest and preserve our forests as a renewable resource. Tazewell County has 227,600 acres of forested land with 93% of those acres being privately owned.

## Agriculture Profile

The county is aesthetically pleasing with green rolling hillsides and mountainous backgrounds neatly groomed by grazing cattle and livestock. According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, Tazewell County has 150,181 acres in farm land. Most local farms are in large tracts averaging 257 acres. The market value of agricultural products sold in 2007 increased to 26% in 2012.

Tazewell County is ranked 4<sup>th</sup> among counties in Virginia in sheep production, 8<sup>th</sup> in goat production and 15<sup>th</sup> in cattle production. The "stocker" cattle industry is predominantly grazing livestock in Tazewell County, making Tazewell County first in number of grazing acres. These cattle are sold and shipped to feedlots in the grain belt where they will be finished for slaughter. Because of uniformly distributed rainfall and moderate temperatures, Tazewell County has a comparative advantage with an "ideal" grazing season climate. In 2012, the sale of cattle and calves accounted for 21 million dollars in Tazewell County.

The number of individuals involved in vegetable and horticulture production is increasing through the use of home gardens and high tunnel greenhouses. Community gardens and farmer's markets are developing throughout the county. The Master Gardener Program is addressing needs of home horticulture education. There is resurgence in not only growing our own food but also in learning to preserve those foods. Canning and other means of preserving our food produces flavorful, high-quality food that saves money, builds self-reliance and creates lifelong memories.

Tazewell is located at the beginning of five different watersheds and there are no streams that flow into the county from other sources. This generates a need for programming to educate the public of the impact our residents have on their neighbors. Water resource availability restricts the potential for large industries that depend on waterways for processing and transportation. These issues are being addressed by the Clinch River Valley Initiative, which is a collaborative effort to enhance water quality, educational opportunities and local economics in the coalfields of Southwest Virginia, focusing on the Clinch River. The Clinch River is one of the most biodiverse river systems in North America and the largest stream leaving the area. It creates a habitat for many species of fish, freshwater mussels and wildlife, some of which are on the endangered species list.

### **Education Profile:**

The Educational Profile for Tazewell County indicates Educational Attainment percentages for the population 18 years and over as:

- 8% - 8<sup>th</sup> Grade or Less
- 12% - Some High School
- 36% - High School Graduate or GED
- 22% - Some College
- 9% - Associate's Degree
- 8% - Bachelor's Degree
- 5% - Graduate or Professional Degree

## **Community and Resident Perspectives**

### Soil & Water Conservation District

- Natural Resource Conservation
- Teaching youth to protect their environment through programs with Tazewell County Schools currently: Our Living Soils, Food & Fiber, Water Wizard, Kids in the Outdoors, Tour du Parc, Kids in the Creek
- Protecting our water quality (urban and agriculture)
- Agriculture Marketing
- Agriculture Production/Profitability
- Agriculture Sustainability/Preservation
- Animals/Livestock Production Education

## Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

- Help with the Hunter Safety Education Program
- Wildlife Identification
- Kids in the Outdoors
- Wildlife Plot Seeding and Management
- Water Quality Education
- Fishing Education
- Shooting & Archery Safety Education
- Natural Resource Production/Profitability
- Nuisance Species Management

## Clinch Valley Community Action

- Head Start/Early Head Start
- After School Workshops
- Activities for Day Care providers
- Activities for Home School Students
- Partner with CVCA on Grants to show matching contributions
- Provide programming for underserved audiences
- Offer an affordable Residence Camping Program

## Tazewell County Farm Bureau Federation

- Agriculture Education and Literacy
- Education on drugs
- Violence in our schools, communities, and surrounding area
- Helping children deal with peer pressure
- Leadership and Citizenship Education
- Farm Safety Program
- Expand Young Farmer Opportunities

## 4-H Youth Development Program

- Recruitment of Adult Volunteers
- Revitalize 4-H All Star
- Resident Camp/Day Camps
- Leadership/Problem Solving Skills
- Community Service
- CHARACTER COUNTS!
- Control the abuse of drugs
- Internet security
- Places for teens to hang out
- Control violence and bullying at school

## Tazewell County School System

- Help with landscaping for school grounds and athletic facilities
- Conduct 4-H meetings in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grades for Elementary Schools
- Work with Health Rocks! in the Middle Schools
- 4-H Yoga for Kids
- Work with the Agriculture Education Departments
- Industry Credentialing Programs
- Share resources to enhance School Programs, Incubators
- Our Living Soils, Food & Fiber, Water Wizard, Kids in the Outdoors, Tour du Parc, Kids in the Creek
- Expand Career and Technical Education Opportunities at all schools and Career and Technical Center

## Post-Secondary Education

- Help Maintenance with Nursery and Lawn Care
- Continuing Training on Wildlife and Forestry Trail Behind the College
- Work with the Collegiate 4-H Club for Camps and Retreats
- Utilize International Program Opportunities
- Utilize the Community Center for Competitions, Meetings, and Training
- Programs for Agriculture, Environment and S.T.E.M.
- Youth Programs for Career Development (Reality Store)

## Tazewell County Tourism & Recreation

- Promote Agri-tourism with groups visiting Tazewell County
- Promote Youth Activities such as Kids in the Outdoors
- Utilize our Parks and Facilities in Tazewell County
- Participate in County Festivals & Fairs

## EMS, Fire & Rescue

- Fire Prevention Programs
- Rural Water Supply (Quality and Quantity)
- Homeland Security
- Natural Resource Production/Profitability
- Environment
- Food Safety & Preservation Emergency Preparedness

### Tazewell County Livestock Producers

- Agriculture Production/Profitability
- Animal and Livestock Programs
- Facilitating Smooth Farm Transition
- Control of Invasive Species
- Land Use
- Decline of Dairy Farms and milk prices
- Decline of Coal Industry
- Lack of Internet & Cell Phone Accessibility

### Extension Leadership Council

- Good paying jobs
- Economic Viability
- Energy
- Health and Chronic Diseases (Cancer)
- Opioid Crisis
- Children in Poverty
- Teen Birthrate
- School Dropouts
- Careers
- Environment
- Limited Health Care Options (Facilities & Providers)
- Business to Business Showcase Exhibits
- Recruitment of Extension Volunteers

### Family and Consumer Sciences Program

- Aging Population and Long Term Care
- Child Development Issues including before and after school programs and career development
- Chronic Disease and Health
- Nutrition and Obesity
- Parenting
- Financial Management, Small Business/Entrepreneurs and Consumer Issues
- Food Safety/Preservation
- Opioid Dependency Education



## Family Nutrition Program

- Empty Buildings & Empty House
- Healthy Eating
- Exercise Opportunities
- Producing & Processing Your Own Food
- Litter Control
- Low Cost Family Activities

## Master Gardeners

- Economic Viability
- Strong Education System
- Environmentally Sound Horticulture Practices
- Water Wise Gardening focusing on water quality and quantity
- Healthy Living and Growing Safe Fruit, Vegetables and Meats for Home Use
- Sustainable Safe Growing Processes and Preservation of Food and Energy
- Youth Gardening Programs with Community Partners focusing on decision making and life skills

## Priority Issues

### Leadership Development

Tazewell County has an identified need for Leadership Development among youth and adults. The Virginia Cooperative Extension-Tazewell County Office (VCE) offers Leadership Development opportunities through Advisory Committees, Extension Leadership Council, 4-H Clubs, Ag Producers' Meetings and offices throughout Extension Programs. There is a need to organize young farm operators to fill leadership roles in agriculture as the average age of farmers is 59 years.

### Job Training and Development

With relatively high unemployment rates for Tazewell County, job readiness programs like résumé building and interview skills is important for both youth and adults. Development of programs to address employment needs is a priority issue. Awareness of higher education options and career connections at the local, regional, state and national levels is a deficiency. Hands-on real life simulations give youth the ability to explore career opportunities, and make lifestyle and budget choices similar to those adults face on a daily basis. Partnerships with the school system, public libraries and other educational agencies support the need for a strong educational system (kindergarten through college) to prepare residents for existing and future jobs.

### **Healthy Living and Nutrition Education**

Nutrition Education when practiced helps reduce the risk of chronic diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease, and other illnesses associated with obesity. Research on cancer and cancer causing agents is important to explain the number of people affected by the disease. Healthy diets consist of fresh fruits, meats, dairy, whole grains and vegetables that promote local production and availability to the consumer.

Women, infants, and young children have a need for proper nutrition and safety practices. Family Nutrition Program Assistants are needed to share nutritional information with eligible individuals.

Healthy living and making positive life choices continues to be an issue among Tazewell County youth.

### **Substance Abuse**

Abuse of prescription and non-prescription drugs is high in this county and in most ways beyond the scope of VCE. However, the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco among minors is an issue which VCE addresses in programs for youth at risk through Character Education.

### **Recreational and Entertainment Activities for Citizens**

Physical activity should be a choice in healthy living for youth and adults. For the quality of life in Tazewell County to improve, there is a need for more programs and facilities for all people to enjoy their time away from work. Tazewell County is experiencing success through the Wellness Movement and programs offered by recreation parks, YMCA, wellness centers and health serving organizations. Tazewell County's mountainous terrain lends itself to many outdoor recreation and sporting events. Public access to witness the natural beauty of Tazewell County is limited. Hiking, biking and ATV trails are needed to give citizens access to experience the outdoors and natural resources.

### **Hands-on learning and outdoor education**

To reinforce textbook learning, youth and adults need the opportunity to demonstrate life skills. The VCE Office provides this opportunity through hands-on learning and taking people out of the classroom to help develop their skills in the environment. Some examples include STEAM learning activities and in-school 4-H Clubs practicing parliamentary procedure. Activities such as 4-H Camp help youth gain multiple benefits from experiences in the areas of leadership, character development, self-esteem, decision-making skills, independent living skills, and citizenship.

## **Water Quality**

Water quality is an important issue because there are no streams flowing into Tazewell County. All water flows out of the county as it is located at the head of five different water systems. Water resource availability restricts potential for large industries that depend on waterways for processing and transportation. The Clinch River is the largest stream leaving the area and creates a habitat for many species of fish and wildlife. Rare mussels and fish species are found in the Clinch River and other rivers flowing through Tazewell County. Programs are held to educate youth on how to protect water resources through Water Quality Education Programs. Drinking Water Clinics are held as needed to assure citizens with wells, cisterns, springs, and other sources of private drinking water for their homes that their water is safe to consume. We collaborate with other agencies on river cleanup, aquatic habitats, conservation methods and Tazewell County's unique fresh water resources.

## **Good Parenting Skills and Responsibility to Children**

With high statistics of single parents below poverty level and dysfunctional family units, there is a need for educating all guardianship of responsibilities to children.

## **After-School Activities to Accommodate Parents in the Workforce**

Many of Tazewell County's families have multiple incomes requiring both parents to be away from home at the same time. This creates a need for after school programs and activities to prevent latch key children being at home alone and unsupervised. This identifies a need for programs to give opportunities to occupy children with quality learning experiences during the time after school. The need for transportation to programs has been identified for these programs to be accessible.

## **Food Safety and Preservation**

Food sustainability and the safety of our food sources are among the growing concerns in Tazewell County. With the growth of farmer's markets and the increase of needs and desires to consume healthier fresh foods comes the importance of food entrepreneurs, vendors, and handlers to understand the issues involved in food safety. As well, there is more interest in not only growing our own food but also in learning to preserve those foods through canning and other means of preserving our food to produce flavorful, high quality food that saves money, builds self-reliance and creates lifelong memories.

## **Production and Marketing Livestock**

With Tazewell County's Livestock Industry thriving, marketing livestock is important to the farmers. Livestock makes up 93% of the total value of agricultural products sold. Forage Production is also very important as the staple food source for livestock in Tazewell County. Livestock Producers need timely production and marketing research training. Warm Season Grasses have been used in eastern VA to bridge the gap of the summer slump which occurs in July & August. We need to research the productivity and effectiveness of planting these

forages in Tazewell County. Livestock Producers continue to request the latest research-based training for procedures and products for Beef Quality Assurance.

### **Horticulture Plant Production**

The horticulture and plant production area is needed for home owners and gardeners throughout the county. The Tazewell Extension Office should continue the Master Gardener Program, offering training for new volunteers and teaching workshops for the public to participate.