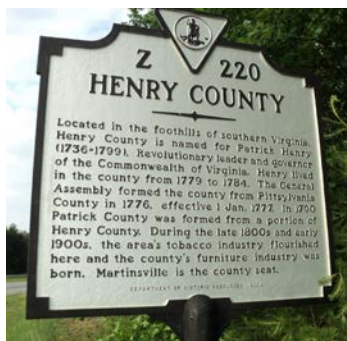




Situation Analysis Report



Henry County/ City of Martinsville

2018

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Introduction

In February 2019, The Henry County/Martinsville Virginia Cooperative Extension Unit (VCE) conducted an inclusive survey analysis to define areas of key importance for local Extension programming. The data was gathered from local citizens who play key roles in the community. Previous Situation Analysis reports were used as guidelines for the survey.

Based on the information received in the 2013 survey, the following were identified as top priority issues for Henry County and the City of Martinsville. The issues have been addressed through all reasonable efforts.

Issue 1: Nutrition

With the cost of food and the cost of living going up, VCE felt that establishing classes would be a great way to do our part to ease the effect of this additional cost. Classes haven been provided in nutrition, health and exercise education. These classes targeted low income families but are open to anyone. Educating adults in these areas teach them to buy more with less money. It shows them how to make the best nutrition choices for their money and for their health.

Issue 2: Child Development

Child Development was identified as the second most pressing issue facing Henry County and the City of Martinsville in 2013. Since 2013, educational programs have been implemented and have been very beneficial to the youth in our area. Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (S.T.E.A.M.) gives youth a jump start to better jobs and wages by helping them learn and apply reading skills, problem solving skills, creative arts and other skills that were encouraged.

Issue 3: Parenting

In 2013, Parenting was identified as the third most pressing issue in our area. Rearing a child from birth is a huge responsibility. It is one that is largely placed on teachers. 4-H goes into the schools and teaches the Character Counts! Pillars which encourages integrity in children. 4-H also teaches respect and other positive values to aide parents in raising their children. 4-H's mission is "engaging youth to reach their fullest potential while advancing the field of youth development."

Issue 4: School Dropout

The increase in S.T.E.A.M. and working with the schools through Warrior and Bengal Tech provides greater interest in school and encourages them to continue their education.

Unit Profile

The County of Henry and the City of Martinsville are located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the south-central Piedmont region of Virginia. The Virginia – North Carolina state line forms the border of the region. Roanoke is 50 miles north of Martinsville/Henry County; Washington, D.C. is 293 miles northeast; Norfolk is 232 miles east; and Greensboro and Winston-Salem, NC are 50 and 55 miles south, respectively. The area offers unique locational advantages, placed halfway between the Roanoke Valley and the Piedmont Triad with direct connections via US Highways 220 and 58. US 58 is an efficient access route to the Port of Hampton Roads.

There are 830,000 annual visitors to Henry County with the top attractions including races at the Martinsville Speedway and Oktoberfest in UpTown Martinsville.

Henry County, Virginia's estimated population is 52,824 with a growth rate of -0.73% in the past year according to the most recent United States census data. The population of the City of Martinsville is 13,670 for a total of 66,494.

In 2018, 10.4% of the population (6,925) were age 0-9, 10.5% (7,008) were age 10-19, 10.5% (6,979) were age 20-29, 11.2% (7,441) were 30-39, 12.0% (7,972) were 40-49, 15.1% (10,007) were 50-59, 14.6% (9,713) were 60-69, 10.1% (6,675) were 70-79 and 5.7% (3,774) were 80+.

The average household income in Henry County/Martinsville is \$47,544. The average family size is three. The average family home value is \$130, 928.

The unemployment rate in Henry County in 2018 was 5.1% in January and down to 3.3% in December. This gives us the lowest unemployment rate we've had in 25+ years.

Eastman Chemical and Monogram Food Solutions are the largest manufacturing employers in the area. Radial, Hanesbrand and Nautica are the leading logistics employers; while Faneuil and Results are the largest employers at call centers.

Most of the participants in this survey were very familiar with the educational programs provided by VCE, though only a little over half of them had actually participated in any of our programs.

Community and Resident Perspectives

Mental health anxieties were primarily stress from finances, paying for college and frauds, scams and identity theft. Renter rights and wills and estate planning were of high importance, but not of extreme importance at this time.

Currently, our Henry County/Martinsville VCE Unit does not provide educating in these areas. This is something we will address in the future.

4-H

4-H programs were identified as having a very positive impact on the local community. Being in the schools each month seemed to further influence the encouraging attitude of the students. Along with this, our teens working and interacting with the youth at camp created a strong bond and connection that encouraged positive behavior as well.

4-H also teaches the Character Counts! Pillars, traits that are used to help instill a positive school climate for students and a “culture of kindness”, making schools a safe environment for students to learn. This, in turn, works towards improving the moral quality of society by positively altering personal and organizational decision making and behavior.

Agriculture

Water quality and safe use of pesticides were seen as extremely important issues. Providing training classes for the public and private sectors are highly beneficial in educating the community on ways to check water quality, use of pesticides, growing local products, sustainable gardening and providing them with excellent resources.

Family Nutrition (Adult & Youth)

Affordable health care, substance abuse prevention and access to healthy food and safe drinking water were among the top nutrition concerns. Classes to educate and encourage adults and youth on healthy food choices, food nutrition, portion sizes, and exercise, games and activity are being taught in schools and in small classes after work hours. Fresh fruits and vegetables are promoted at the Farmer’s Market when in season. Educational brochures are given to visitors at the market.

Priority Issues

Based on the information received in the survey, the following were identified as top priority issues for Henry County and the City of Martinsville:

Issue 1: Drug Use

Drug use and illegal drug sales in Henry County and Martinsville have risen to an all-time high. Opioid overdoses are an epidemic. Efforts are currently in progress to educate the community. There are also partnerships that both educate the youth about the problems drugs cause and looking at ways to treat the problem in the larger community.

In doing our part to educate the community, the Henry County/Martinsville VCE Unit has a 4-H Opioid Prevent Program Assistant who works with the youth in our community to show them the harm that drugs can bring to them, their family and their community.

Issue 2: Low Paying Jobs

This issue comes with the decline in the job market itself. Once a high paying furniture and sweatshirt capital, this area has been hit with economic hardships from factories closing. Jobs were scarce and people were leaving the area to find work elsewhere. Now, jobs are becoming available, but call centers and shipping centers do not pay the high wages people in Henry County and Martinsville were once accustomed to earning.

Issue 3: Welfare/Disability

Piggybacking off of Issue #2, welfare and disability has become a huge issue. It seems to make better sense financially, or just easier, to go on welfare or disability than to earn an honest income. As one participant put it, "Most could work, but find a way to be identified as disabled." And many times, this welfare/disability assistance is spent on amenity items rather than necessities for the family, which still leaves many of them at poverty level.