



Virginia Cooperative Extension

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SITUATION ANALYSIS



FLOYD COUNTY

2018

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Introduction

The Floyd County Extension Leadership Council (ELC) and Extension staff conducted a comprehensive Situation Analysis in the winter of 2018. The process followed the guidelines, procedures and training provided by Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) personnel from Virginia Tech. To create the survey, changes were made to the previous 2013 survey instrument to reflect current options. Floyd citizens responded via Qualtrics and printed copies. Notices were sent to 330 via email and 43 were requested to be mailed and a Qualtrics link was posted on our local Facebook page. All paper copies of the survey results were entered into the Qualtrics system by local VCE support staff. Several members of the ELC met to review the data and develop a list of the top priority issues.

Unit Profile

Basic Demographics

Floyd County is a rural county located in Southwest Virginia located 30 miles southwest of Blacksburg. Floyd is one of four New River Valley (NRV) counties including Pulaski, Montgomery and Giles. The US Census American Fact Finder estimates Floyd's 2017 population as 15,594 and the 2013 population as 15,371. The Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service predicts the population of Floyd to grow to 16,799 by 2035.

During both 2013 and 2017, the majority of the population was in the 45 – 54 age group but a change occurs in the age group placing second. In 2013 it was those 35-44 and in 2017 it is those in the 65- 74 age group. The Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service predicts the Floyd population groups 45-54 (2102), 55-64 (2241), and 65-74 (2221) to be relatively even by 2020.

The ethnic composition of Floyd has changed very little since the 2013 Situational Analysis. Currently Caucasian is 95.9% (2013 - 94.49%), African American 1.8% (2013 - 1.39%) and Hispanic 2.5% (2013 -2.22%). The Floyd male to female ratio continues to be about one to one (males 49.40% - females 50.60%).

Economic and Employment

The household income per-capita in the past twelve months (2017 dollars) for Floyd was \$25,446. This amount is lower than two of the other NRV counties Pulaski (\$26,328), Giles (\$25,004) and Montgomery (\$28,277). The median income (\$48,396) was also lower in Floyd.

Although Floyd's percentage below the poverty level (12.4%) is lower than two other PD4 counties it is greater than the state average (10.6%).

The VEC Floyd Community Profile (03/01/2019) report that 1,810 people live and work in the area, 1,092 commute into the county to work and 4,476 commute out of the county. The number one employer remains the Floyd County School Board, the second Wall Residences, the third Strengthening Our System, Inc. and moving from second to fourth is Hollingsworth and Vose manufacturing. The report listed 1,028 as the count for total businesses in the county in 2012. - - check with Lydeana

The VEC study lists the Floyd unemployment rate for December 2017 as 3.1%, lower than the national (3.9%) and the state (3.2%).

Education

Currently the Floyd County School system is reporting an 87% graduation rate. School (public and private) enrollment numbers, grades K-12, for 2011 (2439) and 2017 (2493) indicate a very small increase. The 2017 census data reported a decrease, since 2011, in the number of those attending college (undergraduate) (173 to 350). There are still a small number of Floyd students that do drop out of school. The Virginia Department of Education 2017 school/school district cohort report shows a rate (6.5) that indicates a slight increase and is larger than the other three counties in the NRV.

Health and Well-being

The CDC reported, "In 2017, the 10 leading causes of death (heart disease, cancer, unintentional injuries, chronic lower respiratory diseases, stroke, Alzheimer disease, diabetes, influenza and pneumonia, kidney disease, and suicide) remained the same as in 2016. Causes of death are ranked according to number of deaths (1).Nov 29, 2018" These are also the leading causes of deaths in Floyd, the NRV and Virginia.

The Virginia Health Department, in their most recent report (2013) identified 157.4 deaths attributed to heart disease, 157.2 to malignant neoplasms (cancer), 63.7 to unintentional injury, 42.9 to lower respiratory diseases and 34.3 to cerebrovascular diseases (stroke). Diabetes has a rate of 22. When compared to the 2012 rates of 126.9 heart disease, 135.2 malignant neoplasms, 51.4 unintentional injury, 22.1 lower respiratory diseases, 36 cerebrovascular diseases and 14.6 diabetes, all except cerebrovascular disease increased in 2013. (All rates shown are per 100,000 persons and age adjusted to the 2000 U.S. standard population).

Obesity is also of concern because of its negative association with mental health, chronic diseases and quality of life. The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System updated their data in September 2017. At that time Virginia's obesity rate was below the national level, but at 30.1%, it is still ranks 28th in the country in obesity rates (2009). Obesity affects all ages from the very young to the very old.

Substance abuse has become an issue in much of the state, and while it is a health issue, it also creates challenges in the areas of crime, workforce and the economy. Substance abuse includes illicit drugs, prescription and over-the-counter drugs as well as alcohol. On November 21, 2016, the Virginia State Health Commissioner declared the opioid addiction crisis a public health emergency in Virginia. The mortality rate for prescription opioid overdose in Virginia in 2017 was 7.2 per 100,000 in rural counties and 5.3 per 100,000 in urban counties; mortality rate for fentanyl and/or heroin overdose was 4.3 per 100,000 in rural counties and 10.4 per 100,000 in urban counties. Drugabuse.gov reports that since 2010 the number of drug related deaths has increased from 45 to 450 (heroin related overdose deaths) and 87 to 648 (synthetic opioid related).

Agriculture and Environment

According to the 2013 study, The Economic Impacts of Agriculture and Forest Industries in Virginia, and the 2016 New River Valley Agricultural and Agri-tourism Strategic Plan, agriculture is Virginia's largest and oldest industry, generating over \$52 billion annually and supporting approximately 310,900 jobs. Further, almost 90% of Virginia's farms are family-owned and operated (NRV Plan 2016).

Floyd ranks 30th out of 98 Virginia counties with a "Market Value per Farm Average" of \$607,145. Crop sales account for 39% of the total market & livestock sales for 61%. Large-scale animal and crop production in the Floyd County region is structured for wholesale markets. For fruit and vegetable production (also speciality crops), many Floyd farmers rely on local wholesale accounts and retail direct markets. In the Floyd County region, farms with direct sales have increased in recent years. Direct sales include roadside stands, farmers markets, pick-your-own, and door-to-door sales, but not craft items and processed products such as jellies, sausages, and hams (2016 Regional Report). While 2012 agricultural data indicates an increase in acres of land in farms (128,872 to 144,657), average farm size (149 to 168) and median farm size (50 – 179), new data indicates an increase in the overall number of small farms. Throughout the New River Valley, Floyd continues to experience the least dramatic drop in farm size.

The PD4 Livability Initiative study lists the top NRV crops as; forage land (for livestock), hay, corn, wheat, rye, fruits and vegetables, cut Christmas trees, sod, nursery stock and rotation wood crop. The primary farming operations in Floyd are beef, dairy and nursery production. The study also indicates that “Floyd County averages much higher earnings per farm than the rest of the NRV” in relation to average market value of crop production.” Floyd’s average is between \$50,000 and \$40,000 while the next highest is Pulaski around \$30,000. While the PD4 Livability Initiative reports currently 56% of the county’s homes are within an agricultural area and 40% are in rural residential locations, it predicts by 2030 the numbers will shift to 42% in an agricultural area and 48% in rural residential location. This change has potential to affect storm water runoff and water quality of rivers and streams and increase housing units relying on septic and well systems. Floyd County has a unique situation in that all our water begins in the county and flows out of the county. This creates additional concern about the impact residential and agricultural practices have on water quality.

COMMUNITY AND RESIDENT PERSPECTIVES

One hundred thirty-one surveys were opened of which 108 were completed. A review of the respondents revealed that 50.60% were female and 49.4% male. Forty-eight percent identified themselves as being a college graduate and 38% as having some college, while 13% had were high school/GED graduates. The age range was somewhat equally spread between the ages of 40 and 74, with there being slightly more in the 40 - 49 category.

When asked to list the years lived in Floyd, the majority of respondents ranged from 11 – 50 years. The extremes were 6 months on one end and 93 on the opposite. Responders were asked to identify which school district their current address was in. Of the 103 that responded, 45% were in Floyd, 34% in Check, 12% in Willis and 7% in Indian Valley. The race and ethnicity responses indicated that 96% of responders were white, 2% other and .9% African American with .9% identifying themselves as American Indian. Recognizing no one identified as Hispanic, three surveys were shared with residents for their responses.

PRIORITY ISSUES

Based on the unit profile, resident survey rankings and responses also ELC discussion and responses, the following top priority issues were identified for Floyd County. Some of these issues can be addressed through Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) resources. Others are outside the scope of VCE resources and will be referred to or pursued in partnership with the appropriate agency.

Issue 1: Preservation of Natural Resources

As our population grows, there is increasing pressure on our natural resources. The issue of protecting water quality is extremely important in Floyd County due to all of the County's water originating within its borders before flowing out into adjacent counties.

Residential development results in more fertilizers and pesticides being applied. Without adequate knowledge of proper use, the risk of excess nutrients and pesticides reaching our water is real. In the same way, agriculture can be a source of non-point source pollution. VCE currently partners with other agencies including the Skyline Soil and Water Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service to provide homeowners, contractors and farmers with information they can use to make safe and effective decisions that will help protect our natural resources. Floyd Extension can engage Master Gardener volunteers to extend and enhance our educational outreach to residents, while the FCS and Agriculture Agent can plan, promote, and conduct the residential water analysis clinic "What's In Your Drinking Glass." Based on situation analysis responses, it would appear more effort and collaborations need to be explored to continue addressing water quality issues.

Issue 2: Profitable Agriculture

Floyd has a strong agricultural industry generating approximately 34 million dollars in cash receipts annually ranking 30th among Virginia counties (2012 U.S. Agriculture Census). However, many challenges threaten the viability and sustainability of agriculture including residential growth, farm profitability and increasing age of agricultural producers.

Issues directly related to the agriculture community identified through the situation analysis and by stakeholders include preservation of natural resources, agriculture sustainability/preservation, and agriculture profitability/marketing.

In a climate of rising input costs, producers need relevant and timely production related information in order to make well informed decisions. This issue is being addressed by VCE resources. Examples include individual consultations and educational programs on agricultural Best Management Practices; coordinating Floyd BQA cattle marketing efforts; facilitating a young farmers winter education series; conducting "Weathering the Storm" a farm stress recognition and coping meeting in an effort to prevent suicide; conducting "Ag in the Classroom" youth training for high school students; and securing grant funds from the Virginia Tobacco Commission for regional agri-business initiatives. The creation of the Floyd County Agricultural Advisory Board, on which VCE has a permanent seat and plays an integral role,

demonstrates that there is a desire among citizens and local government to work towards sustaining a viable agricultural industry in Floyd County.

Issue 3: Aging in Place

AARP states that “by 2030, one out of every five people in the United States will be 65 or older.” and the majority of them are going to want to stay in their own homes and communities. Locally, a real estate agent shared that the majority of recent home buyers were sixty years old or older.

During the 2010 – 2013 NRV Livability Initiative, a grass-roots, community-based initiative was established to address the unmet and growing needs of residents and their desire to age in their homes and communities. A NRV Aging in Place Leadership Team has been working to find solutions and resources.

Extension will make contact with the appropriate community agencies and organizations to gauge how we might assist in the changes taking place.

Issue 4: Drug/Opioid Abuse

Floyd County residents indicated a need for additional education and alternatives to combat Drug/Opioid Abuse in the community, specifically for youth. Afterschool and community club opportunities are vital assets in providing youth with outlets to participate in activities and deter them from abusing drugs. The Floyd County 4-H Program allows youth to take part in these types of activities that promote positive development.

Programs exist to educate youth on the dangers of Drug and Opioid Abuse, as well as those associated with alcohol and tobacco. The 4-H Health Rocks! Curriculum is designed to inform youth of the dangers these substances, as well as promote overall healthy living. According to National 4-H, the Health Rocks! Program reported, “Over 87% of youth participants nationwide disapproved of engaging in risky behaviors related to substance abuse and 92% of youth disapproved of risky behavior (i.e. alcohol and tobacco use).” This program has been previously utilized in Floyd County High School Health and P.E. classes and conversations will be had regarding the program’s reinstatement.

Extension is investigating additional ways to work with families and communities to address the opioid issue. PROSPER is an evidence based program that is being piloted by Family and Consumer Science agents, and 4H agents and community partners. This educational

program has begun to spread across the state and efforts are being made to make it available in most areas across Virginia

Survey comments included: teen/community involvement before and after school safe center – healthy alternatives, counseling, promotion of positive lives and relationships.”

Issue 5: Youth Leadership and Life Skills

Feedback from Floyd County residents identified a need for youth program resources, specifically related to leadership and life skills. While athletics and organized school activities promote both, developing leadership and life skills can be learned in non-traditional education environments. The Floyd County 4-H Program is designed in accordance with national and state 4-H expectations to provide youth with the opportunities to expand their abilities in these areas.

According to the National 4-H website, “In 4-H, we believe in the power of young people. We see that every child has valuable strengths and real influence to improve the world around us. We are America’s largest youth development organization—empowering nearly six million young people across the U.S. with the skills to lead for a lifetime.” The Floyd 4-H Teen Club creates opportunities for teenagers to gain experience leading groups, assisting in other 4-H activities, and increasing their visibility through volunteer service projects. Teen members that exhibit abilities to lead others attend residential 4-H Camp as volunteers and mentors. These youth work with peers that are similar in age, as well as junior 4-H members between the ages of 9-13. Club members are also responsible for planning and facilitating Cloverbud 4-H Club activities for 5-8 year old youth. This opportunity allows for life skills growth through responsibility, respect, and punctuality, to name a few,

Survey comments included: lots of young people with not a lot for them to do – leadership skills to our youth to keep county innovative – need after school for all ages of students – life skills for youth – more socially to do that encourages good citizen attitudes, teaches sustainable lifestyles – need life skills/decision making skills for youth) 4-H with occasional assistance from ANR and FCS.

Issue 6: Health

Chronic disease prevention and management are priority concerns nationally and within Virginia. The statistics indicate that Floyd’s rates for chronic disease have increased. The

Center for Disease Control states that people can enjoy a better quality of life and reduce risk of chronic diseases if they make healthy choices such as eating healthy and including physical activity in their lives.

Extension nutrition and wellness programming focuses on making healthy lifestyle choices that can significantly reduce the likelihood of developing a chronic disease. Behaviors such dietary habits, physical activity, meal preparation and food safety. All three Extension program areas will share skills addressing these topics and related topics such as how to grow their own food for more access to good food choices. To make a difference in the overall health and nutrition of Floyd residents of all ages, Extension will also pursue input and partnerships with local supporting agencies and organizations.