

# Transylvania County

## Economic Development Strategic Plan for 2006-2009

**MISSION STATEMENT** - Actively support a diverse mixture of existing and new businesses in order to retain and create new jobs, increase the tax base, and promote an attractive community that is responsive, caring and sustainable.

### **GOAL 1: SUPPORT AND GROW EXISTING BUSINESSES.**

**Task A. Continue implementing systematic methods for contacting existing businesses to identify their needs and direct them to resource providers. Maintain an up-to-date inventory of existing businesses (manufacturing, professional, service, construction, etc.).**

<b>Action Items</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide assistance to business owners based on their identified needs and document result(s) - Ongoing.</li> <li>2. Update contact lists with new business contact information - Ongoing.</li> <li>3. Survey (electronically) business owners about ways that the County and other economic development partners can provide greater economic assistance - Winter 06, 08.</li> <li>4. Document referrals to other resource providers - Ongoing.</li> </ol>
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**Task B. Partner with local economic development allies (City of Brevard, Town of Rosman, Chamber of Commerce, Heart of Brevard, SCORE, Blue Ridge Community College, Brevard College, Transylvania Partnership and professional associations) to verify roles and best practices to assist existing businesses.**

<b>Action Items</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Convene economic partners twice a year to verify roles, responsibilities and develop specific actions to assist existing businesses – Winter 06, Summer 07 and continuing.</li> <li>2. Establish best management practices or informal agreements to assist existing and new businesses to avoid “turf” issues and to maximize assistance – Winter 06.</li> <li>3. Continue to co-sponsor events such as the Transylvania County/Chamber of Commerce Manufacturer’s/Business appreciation Luncheon, the Business/Manufacturer’s Expo and Chamber Expo – Ongoing.</li> <li>4. Annually update the County’s “Resource Guide to Starting a Business” brochure with input from economic development allies Spring 07.</li> </ol>
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**Task C. Identify and/or develop new mechanisms, policies and programs for supporting existing businesses and recommend these to the County Commissioners or others.**

<b>Action Items</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notify business owners (by forwarding emails, news releases or paid newspaper ads) about available grants and programs such as the expansion of water and wastewater, worker training opportunities, Article 3J Tax Credits, etc. – Ongoing.</li> <li>2. Continue ongoing efforts to explore new business opportunities with the</li> </ol>
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	<p>Ecusta owners – Ongoing.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Coordinate programs with local economic development partners (e.g., Blue Ridge Community College, Workforce Development, ESC, Chamber of Commerce and Heart of Brevard) – Ongoing.</li> <li>4. Organize and help host at least two (2) business forums each year for manufacturers and local business owners with support from the Transylvania Partnership and organizations/groups, including our local banks – Winter and Spring each year.</li> <li>5. Develop a standardized local “Incentive Grant” agreement that is approved by the County Attorney – Winter 06.</li> <li>6. Review existing and draft policies and/or ordinances that might affect existing businesses and report findings and recommendations to County Commissioners and others – Ongoing.</li> <li>7. Develop a web-based “discussion center” for manufacturers to exchange information on current concerns/issues – Winter 06.</li> <li>8. Develop a web-based “discussion center” for other business groups to exchange information on current concerns/issues – Summer 07.</li> </ol>
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**Task D. Identify needs for infrastructure improvements/updates and track and monitor their implementation (Note: many of these action items apply to helping attract new businesses).**

<b>Action Items</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify business owners’ needs and/or concerns and match resources to provide assistance (e.g., extension of needed public utilities, road improvements, wireless telecommunication, broadband connectivity) – Ongoing.</li> <li>2. Ensure that Congressman Taylor’s ERC initiative to deploy high-speed internet (broadband) service is successfully deployed throughout Transylvania County – Ongoing.</li> <li>3. Transylvania County Transportation Advisory Board, County Manager and staff continue attending NC DOT and Rural Planning Organization (RPO) public hearings/meetings and share relevant information with business owners/manufacturers. Recommend to County Commissioners appropriate concerns or ideas – Ongoing.</li> <li>4. Host a County, Brevard, Rosman and private water/wastewater forum to discuss common concerns and opportunities – Summer 07.</li> <li>5. Develop a new certified industrial site(s) (public, private or combination) with support from the Transylvania Partnership, NC Department of Commerce, AdvantageWest, City of Brevard and others – Fall 07.</li> </ol>
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**Task E. Identify and evaluate current incentives and recommend modifications/ changes to stimulate business development growth and expansion.**

<b>Action Items</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review and evaluate existing County incentive policy, compare it to other similar sized jurisdictions and surrounding counties, and recommend to County Manager and County Commissioners changes to increase investment and job creation opportunities – Summer 07.</li> <li>2. Research and identify “non-cash” and other non-traditional incentives that can benefit businesses and manufacturers – Summer 07.</li> </ol>
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Recommend that Brevard and Rosman either update or adopt similar incentive policies – Fall 07 and Ongoing.</li> <li>4. Work with NC Department of Commerce and the NC Economic Developers Association to maintain or improve the County’s current State tier/incentive benefit status – Ongoing.</li> </ol>
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**Task F. Continue to partner with financial institutions (Banks, SBA, MMF, Self-Help Credit Union etc.) to help businesses identify and access financial tools and resources.**

<b>Action Items</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain current contact list of local banks and financial institutions – Ongoing.</li> <li>2. Host an annual meeting with local banks and financial institutions to discuss current trends and business financing needs - Starting Spring 07.</li> <li>3. Identify and share financial trends and/or opportunities that existing businesses and/or manufacturers can use (e.g., website, emails and the County’s e-Newsletter) – Ongoing.</li> <li>4. Promote SBA loan opportunities through Smoky Mountain Development Corporation and our local banks – Ongoing.</li> <li>5. Reinitiate Transylvania Partnership’s efforts to work with local banks to establish a Small Business Loan Pool designed to assist small/new businesses – Winter 06.</li> <li>6. Create a Small Business Loan Pool if determined to be feasible – Summer 07.</li> </ol>
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**Task G. Expand, promote and continue the utilization of the Retiree Resource Network (RRN).**

<b>Action Items</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase Network membership quarterly by 5% - Ongoing.</li> <li>2. Advertise in local papers the Retiree Resource Network’s successes and the need for new members – Ongoing.</li> <li>3. Organize and host RRN meetings/activities to discuss current activities and to thank network members for their contributions – Quarterly.</li> <li>4. Identify businesses and organizations assisted – Monthly.</li> <li>5. Provide testimonials from clients to County Commissioners and the public – Annually.</li> </ol>
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**GOAL 2: ATTRACT AND GROW NEW BUSINESSES AND MANUFACTURERS.**

**Task A. Continue the current strategy to focus on a selected number of business sectors/ industries.**

- **Nutraceutical/natural products manufacturing**
- **Medical device manufacturing**
- **Outdoor recreational device manufacturing**
- **Evaluation of new sectors for possible addition as target markets**
- **Assist all prospects who contact us, irrespective of sector**

<b>Action Items</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contact and follow-up on all leads obtained from attending target market sector trade shows or other marketing events hosted by AdvantageWest or CarolinaWest (e.g., Natural Products, Medical Device and site consultant visits) – Ongoing.</li> <li>2. Respond to all website inquiries – Ongoing.</li> <li>3. Respond to leads obtained from postcard campaign and document efforts –</li> </ol>
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	<p>Ongoing.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Host manufacturers or other potential large employers that are interested locating or expanding their business to Transylvania County.</li> <li>5. Contract with a marketing company like 310 Ltd. or other consulting firm to help evaluate the County's target market sectors and develop a new marketing approach – Fall 07.</li> <li>6. Ensure that all available Transylvania County manufacturing buildings and/or warehouses are correctly posted on both the County's and the NC Department of Commerce's web sites – Ongoing.</li> </ol>
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**Task B. Promote and support entrepreneurship education, training and financial assistance programs.**

<b>Action Items</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collaborate with BRCC, Brevard College and the Transylvania Partnership to partially fund fourth ENVI course – Winter 06.</li> <li>2. Develop a plan for making ENVI course self-sustaining on an ongoing basis – Spring 07.</li> <li>3. Partner with MMF, SCORE and other organizations to conduct annual seminars/training sessions for entrepreneurs – Spring 07.</li> <li>4. Support AdvantageWest's entrepreneurial efforts by linking potential entrepreneurs and businesses with AdvantageWest staff and the Blue Ridge Angel Investor's Network (BRAIN) – As appropriate.</li> <li>5. Track and provide assistance to entrepreneurs who have received Community Development Block Grant assistance – Ongoing.</li> <li>6. Successful construction/completion of the Small Business Incubator at Blue Ridge Community College's Transylvania County campus and close out of the Community Development Block Grant obtained by the County – Fall 08.</li> <li>7. Provide support and assistance to BRCC business incubator director – Ongoing.</li> </ol>
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**Task C. Encourage the construction of new manufacturing buildings and development of certified industrial sites (private or public).**

<b>Action Items</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Transylvania Partnership to encourage the private sector to locate property and begin constructing a new certified industrial site(s) – Winter 06.</li> <li>2. Transylvania Partnership and County to identify financial resources and apply for grants to help offset the cost to construct a certified industrial site and renovate existing unused or underutilized buildings – Spring 07.</li> <li>3. Work with Buncombe and Henderson counties and Advantage West to identify larger tracts of land within the region that could be developed to increase job opportunities – Ongoing.</li> </ol>
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**Task D. Continue marketing plans and efforts initiated in the 2002-2005 Economic Development Strategic Plan (external marketing).**

<b>Action Items</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete the postcard campaign – Winter 06.</li> <li>2. Promote the competitive advantages enjoyed by Transylvania County citizens (i.e., low taxes, natural environment, abundant recreational opportunities, excellent school system (K-12, Brevard College and Blue Ridge Community College), cultural events/venues, and excellent health care – Ongoing.</li> <li>3. Increase subscriptions to the E-newsletter to 2,000 recipients – Spring 07.</li> </ol>
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Evaluate E-newsletter program and whether or not to include it in the 2007-2008 budget requests – Spring 07.</li> <li>5. Mail demographic/information packages to all leads – Ongoing</li> <li>6. Help Sponsor the AdvantageWest 2007 Natural Products Forum with financial support from the Transylvania Partnership – Spring 07.</li> <li>7. Evaluate all print ads and determine if they should be continued – Spring 07 and annual thereafter.</li> <li>8. Evaluate the County’s current marketing and “branding” strategy by working with a marketing company like Tungsten – Fall 07.</li> </ol>
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**Task E. Develop a Retiree Resource “think tank” to identify new business sectors and specific businesses to attract to Transylvania County.**

<b>Action Items</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish a Retiree Resource “think tank” to identify new manufacturing/businesses sectors that the County should actively pursue as well as specific companies to market to directly and try to attract to the County – Fall 06.</li> <li>2. Conduct “exit interviews” of businesses that were interested in Transylvania County but located elsewhere and report findings to EDAB and Staff – Ongoing.</li> </ol>
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**GOAL 3: DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT METHODS TO INFORM AND EDUCATE COMMUNITY LEADERS AND THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROCESS, PROJECT STATUS AND OUTCOMES (INTERNAL MARKETING).**

**Task A. Define and communicate the role and the impact of economic development (private and public). Enhance/develop marketing, public relations and communication materials, tools and programs.**

<b>Action Items</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop and issue, on a regular basis, press releases, news articles and other media information pieces highlighting current local economic development initiatives and activities by the County Commissioners while highlighting the long-term nature of economic development activities and how complex projects can be – Monthly.</li> <li>2. Make presentations to community groups and organizations – Ongoing.</li> <li>3. Continue to publish the Planning &amp; Economic Development E-newsletter on a monthly basis – Ongoing.</li> <li>4. Arrange for interviews with business leaders on local radio – Quarterly.</li> </ol>
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**Task B. Work with local governments to ensure that regulatory processes are clear, enforceable and consistent from department to department. Help inform existing and prospective businesses about regulations that impact business development and operation. Develop and implement systematic methods to identify regulatory concerns, issues and problems encountered by businesses and their cost impact.**

<b>Action Items</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prepare a list of local and state regulations that apply to business development and operation and place on our web site – Winter 06.</li> </ol>
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Help businesses and manufacturers have a better understanding of local permitting concerns (Building, Permitting and Enforcement Department and City of Brevard UDO) by facilitating meetings between appropriate agency contacts – Ongoing.</li> <li>3. Assist manufacturers and businesses that are having difficulty with local permitting, NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources and other State agencies – Ongoing and as needed.</li> <li>4. Based on feedback from businesses, communicate problems and inconsistencies to regulatory bodies – Ongoing.</li> </ol>
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**Task C. Survey employers to identify workforce training/education needs, encompassing both job training and working environment/cultural issues. Follow up to gather data on implementation and results by local educational institutions, including special programs at the high school level.**

<b>Action Items</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Working with Blue Ridge Community College, ESC and JobLink to develop and administer a business/manufacturing survey to identify training/education needs – Winter 06.</li> <li>2. With JobLink, ESC personnel and others, evaluate current programs, make recommended changes and share current information with existing businesses either directly or through organizations like the Chamber of Commerce, Heart-of-Brevard and local papers – Spring 07.</li> <li>3. Involve Transylvania County Schools to develop plans to enhance workforce training/education based on business needs/concerns – Ongoing.</li> </ol>
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**Task D. Organize community representatives and task force groups to visit other “similar type” communities to seek collaboration and exchange ideas.**

<b>Action Items</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. EDAB to work with the Chamber of Commerce and Heart-of-Brevard to develop a potential list of communities that elected and community leaders should consider visiting – Spring 07.</li> <li>2. Identify potential funding sources to help fund collaboration/exchange visits to other communities – Spring 07 and thereafter annually.</li> <li>3. Schedule, complete and document the visits - Fall 07 and thereafter annually.</li> </ol>
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**GOAL 4: SUSTAIN THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE COUNTY BY CAPITALIZING ON OUR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES WHILE MINIMIZING WEAKNESSES.**

**Task A. Review and, as necessary, amend the County’s Comprehensive Plan and other ordinances to include changes to improve the quality of life for Transylvania citizens (i.e., natural environment, recreational opportunities, excellent school system, solid waste, and cultural opportunities).**

<b>Action Items</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Planning Board to identify and prioritize needed changes to existing planning related ordinances and/or recommend to County Manager/Commissioners new policies/ordinances (e.g., Community Appearance Initiative, erosion control) – Winter 06 and Ongoing.</li> <li>2. Transylvania County Natural Resource Council to identify environmental trends</li> </ol>
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	and determine the impact of environmental issues on the quality of life and report to County Commissioners – Ongoing.
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**Task B. Evaluate the current availability of affordable housing and make recommendations for improvement to public and private sector leaders.**

<b>Action Items</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Working with the City of Brevard, Town of Rosman and other organizations such as WCCA and Habitat for Humanity, identify current barriers to affordable housing and its impact on economic development – Winter 06.</li> <li>2. Develop an inventory of affordable housing and available land for affordable housing – Winter 06.</li> <li>3. Prepare a list of affordable housing activities or proposals that local elected leaders can adopt – Winter 06.</li> <li>4. Encourage existing Transylvania County affordable housing organizations to apply for HOME Grant funds – Winter 07.</li> <li>5. Reapply for the 2008 CDBG Scattered Site Rehabilitation grant funds – Fall 07.</li> <li>6. Engage in regional affordable housing strategies to help secure additional financial resources to assist Transylvania County residents – Ongoing.</li> </ol>
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**Task C. Study transportation needs and issues and recommend changes to governmental leaders.**

<b>Action Items</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Actively participate in the Rural Planning Organization (RPO) – Ongoing.</li> <li>2. Transylvania County Transportation Advisory Board to assist County Manager and Commissioners by identifying local concerns, safety issues and road improvements – Ongoing.</li> <li>3. Identify County road priorities, with input from Brevard and Rosman, and share those with NC DOT through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – Ongoing.</li> <li>4. Evaluate current public transportation options and recommend any changes to help assist individuals (i.e., elderly, disabled) achieve greater mobility – Spring 07 and Ongoing.</li> </ol>
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**Task D. Form a task force of appropriate community leaders to evaluate current programs for encouraging preventative medicine (healthy lifestyle), with emphasis on wellness programs, and communicate to the business community and the general public the findings and recommendations.**

<b>Action Items</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Health Department to follow-up on the actions items identified by the Partnership for Health – Spring 07.</li> <li>2. Facilitate annual meetings between manufacturers/businesses and Transylvania Community Hospital to help identify areas of concern and opportunities to help our businesses – Winter 06 and Ongoing.</li> </ol>
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**GOAL 5: DEVELOP AND NURTURE STRONG ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RELATIONSHIPS.**

**Task A. Identify existing and new economic development partners/players and develop strategies to enhance the County’s ability to assist existing and new businesses and manufacturers (covering**

local, regional, state, educational and governmental resources).

<b>Action Items</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work closely with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>o Heart of Brevard</li> <li>o NC Department of Commerce</li> <li>o AdvantageWest</li> <li>o CarolinaWest</li> <li>o Rural Development Center</li> <li>o PSNC Energy</li> <li>o Duke Energy</li> <li>o Citizens Telephone Company</li> <li>o JobLink</li> <li>o Workforce Development</li> <li>o Employment Security Commission</li> <li>o Smoky Mountain Development Corporation</li> <li>o SCORE</li> <li>o Mountain Microenterprise Fund</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Convene all economic development partners at least annually to strengthen relationships and collectively determine how to best assist our existing businesses and to recruit new manufacturers and businesses to Transylvania County – Winter 06, 07, 08.</li> <li>3. Elected, Community and Business leaders to travel to Raleigh and Washington, DC to meet with elected officials and discuss current issues – Spring 07, 08, 09.</li> <li>4. Actively participate on and support Regional Boards (i.e., Land-of-Sky Regional Council, RPO, CarolinaWest, Asheville Regional Housing Consortium, NC Economic Development Commission) – Ongoing.</li> </ol>
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**GOAL 6: CONTINUE TO PROVIDE ORGANIZATIONAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMS.**

**Task A. Evaluate existing marketing programs to determine effectiveness; prepare/submit realistic Planning and Economic Development budgets for each fiscal year; and communicate need/justification to the County Manager, Commissioners and the public.**

<b>Action Items</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evaluate print ad campaigns, E-newsletter and other marketing efforts including travel to trade shows – Spring 07, 08, 09.</li> <li>2. Evaluate Resource Network Coordinator and Economic Development Planner contract – Spring 07, 08, 09.</li> <li>3. Develop detailed Planning and Economic Development Budgets for each fiscal year with justifications – Spring 07, 08, 09.</li> </ol>
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**Task B. Research new funding sources to help offset economic development costs to the County.**

<b>Action Items</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify State and Federal agencies/programs that provide grants to support economic development efforts – Ongoing.</li> <li>2. Seek grant support for specific economic development activities to assist</li> </ol>
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	existing and new businesses (e.g., NC Rural Center to help Gaia Herbs) and the County - Ongoing.
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**Task C. Recruit college student interns and retirees to help design and implement programs.**

<b>Action Items</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Visit Brevard College, BRCC, Western NC and other colleges that have planning programs to recruit interns – Ongoing.</li><li>2. Retiree Resource Coordinator to recruit new retirees – Ongoing.</li></ol>
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