
Shenandoah County

**Commission on
the Future**

November 1998

REPORT OF THE SHENANDOAH COUNTY
COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE

The Shenandoah County Commission on the Future hereby submits its plan in conformance with the charter established by the Board of Supervisors.

The Commission wishes to thank the County Board of Supervisors for providing the opportunity to serve and to participate in this important milestone in the history of Shenandoah County. We also want to thank the literally hundreds of people who have been consulted by the members of this commission. People expert in county matters, those who previously studied areas included in this report and those who work day-to-day in operations of the county have been overwhelmingly cooperative and generous in giving of their time and knowledge to make this study a success.

The Commission stands ready to aid the Board of Supervisors and the people of Shenandoah County in helping to transform the goals of our report into reality.

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BACKGROUND

The future is challenging. The current population of Shenandoah County is 35,000 and is expected to increase by about 2% a year between now and 2015 to about 45,000. Based on current trends, the population in 2015 will be older on the average than at present and well above the average age in Virginia. Unemployment will be low but per capita income will be below the state average.

Those same trends indicate that educational accomplishment will be lacking, with a third of adults not having completed high school. About 20% of county households will be receiving some form of public assistance.

Again, based on straight-line projections, some 60% of the population will reside in unincorporated areas requiring wells and septic fields. This will worsen water and health concerns and further deplete county farmland and open space.

Employment opportunities will rise but the trend line shows that many of the jobs offered will be in manufacturing, service and food processing paying low wages and minimal benefits. This will cause those with higher skills to work in nearby counties and discourage qualified people from moving into Shenandoah County.

In turn, this outlook is unlikely to create motivation for quality or quantity of educational opportunities. It also will not result in improved health, leisure activities, recreation or other quality of life concerns.

It is this less-than-promising projection for the future that moved the Shenandoah County Board of Supervisors to call for the establishment of the Commission on the Future to help it plan for a better tomorrow for Shenandoah County.

The Board named the Commission in November of 1997 "to assist the Board of Supervisors in developing a strategic plan for the county. Basically, a plan for the future." It named a number of members to the Commission. The Commission later added others. (The full list of Commission members is included).

The Commission immediately began its work. The Commission elected a chair, Ed Hoole, and a vice chair, George Sylvester. It divided its assignment into six task forces: Economic Development, Public Safety, Education, Government and Finance, Human Services and Leisure Services. The Economic Development Committee was further divided into subcommittees on natural resources, agriculture, infrastructure, business development and tourism. Other task forces similarly divided their work. Each of the task forces has diligently pursued its goals and has submitted a report covering its area of responsibility.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

The Report of the Commission on the Future is arranged as follows:

- Vision Statement
- Executive Summary and Recommendations
- Task Force Reports

The individual recommendations of the various task forces stand on their own. Some are far-reaching; others are more immediate. Some are general; others specific. Some are costly; others can be accomplished with little or no cost. All deserve close attention and thought. Together they represent a broad look at Shenandoah County today and a road map of its future. The executive summary, based on the reports and consultations with task force members, points out trends that are common to the individual reports and contains the top priorities spotlighted by the task forces.

While the recommendations are extensive, it should be noted that they represent a 17-year time frame to the year 2015, which was our charter. It is a foundation on which thoughtful future actions and priorities can be based.

Two outstanding conclusions of our study deserve early mention. First is the finding that the people of Shenandoah County are almost universally concerned with our local future and care deeply about the directions that the county will take. In interviews and studies involving literally hundreds of people, the members of our task forces were impressed that the citizens of the county have strong ideas about the future and they appreciate this effort by the Board of Supervisors to put their goals and desires into words. The people feel an urgency and they want to be involved. This, in itself, is most encouraging for the future.

A second finding is that people want progress and growth but they also want to retain the general flavor and atmosphere that the county has now. They do want and need the jobs, services, improvements and opportunities, professional and personal that come with growth. They want to develop, to grow and to prosper. But they want the county to be improved, not replaced. They look to the Board of Supervisors to be the focal point in walking this path to the future.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The Commission developed the following goals and picture of the Shenandoah County of the Future.

- Retain to the maximum extent possible the acreage in farm use or open space
- Expand water and sewer service along the US Route 11 corridor to selected areas not now served
- Guarantee an adequate water supply for a population of 60,000. Gradually, but steadily reduce the percentage of households dependent on wells
- Increase per capita income by an average of 2% above inflation each year
- Attract new quality industries and businesses - light industries, non-polluting, higher tech, higher skills and higher wages
- reduce significantly the number of households needing public assistance
- Develop and market the inherent tourism potential of Shenandoah County with a goal of doubling the current revenue derived from tourism by 2015
- Retain the present volunteer fire and rescue services with necessary funding and incentives
- Integrate law enforcement activities, upgrade facilities and expand preventive and rehabilitation programs
- Raise achievement levels of all parts of the student population
- Increase efficiency and relevancy of education and training programs
- Expand recreational and cultural activities to improve the quality of life
- Harness the volunteer potential of retirees and others
- Improve the health of Shenandoah County residents
- Provide effective daycare options for both children and the elderly
- Maintain current effective tax burdens
- Combine agencies and services when possible without lowering standards

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE NEED FOR PLANNING

The first Commission recommendation is one that relates to all of the others: The need for planning, which must be expanded and improved. This report is a baseline for such activity but it should be more than that. The report should be the reason to focus attention on the future and to provide for it. People are aware that growth will happen with or without planning. What concerns them is that piecemeal growth without planning may be harmful.

The Commission recommends that the Shenandoah County Comprehensive Plan be updated, as is happening now, and strengthened during that update. Moreover, the Commission feels that it is imperative that the plan be used. The plan has not been a significant factor in shaping events in the county over the past several years. The County Board should encourage the county government and others, public and private, to focus on planning and coordinate their plans. Included in that planning should be the even tougher job of prioritizing actions.

Included in this recommendation is to call for a continuing commission or group composed of county volunteers to help the Board in this planning function. Such a group would provide expertise, review programs and see that proposed actions conform to the appropriate plans. Some members of the present Commission should be considered as a nucleus for the continuing group.

FOSTERING COOPERATION

The second overall recommendation is the need for the County Board of Supervisors to take the lead in fostering a new wave of cooperation within the county. The Commission feels that we must work with each other to move forward. This mutual assistance should range from parents working more closely with the school system to jointly solving environmental problems to common purchasing by governments to cooperation among communities with the county on law enforcement, fire and rescue services and courts. The County Board of Supervisors should take the initiative in every range of county matters to move people and governments to act in concert and solve mutual problems. The county should expand its role as a facilitator and promoter, not merely act as an administrator.

FISCAL CONSERVATISM

The County Board should retain the fiscal conservatism that has been a hallmark of the county. People want the financial security of a well-run balanced budget. They do not, for the most part, object to reasonable taxes and spending, but they want efficiency. How to relate the extensive recommendations of this report with that approach? The government and financial task force projections conclude that expected increases in county population and income will "provide sufficient latitude for future boards to meet urgent needs." It also should be noted the recommendations of the task force provide a 17-year time frame for the Board to prioritize those needs.

WATER RESOURCES

The Commission recommends that the Board in the very near future act to address another major topic--preserving our natural resources, particularly protecting our water. Water is a major area where action and cooperation among various jurisdictions is desperately needed. A Water Resources Management Advisory Board should be set up deal with water issues (both qualitative and quantitative).

RETENTION OF FARMLAND AND OPEN SPACES

The retention of acreage in farmland and open space is basic to a number of recommendations of the Commission. In the absence of a permanent policy or body to deal with land use issues, the Commission recommends that the Board establish both a land use policy and a Land Use Advisory Board to advise both the farm community and the Planning Commission on preserving and protecting the agricultural and open space nature of the county.

CONCENTRATE DEVELOPMENT

In order to concentrate future residential and commercial development along the I-81/US Route 11 corridor and away from the farms and open spaces of the country, water and sewer service should be extended to the unincorporated "gaps" between the towns' service areas. In guiding future development along the corridor, care should be taken to preserve the battlefields and scenic vistas that help to make US Route 11 the tourism artery of the county.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The county should have an economic development program, which is more active, that moves within plans previously adopted by the county and which targets firms offering specific benefits to the county, particularly higher technical content, higher skills and higher pay scales than the current county average. The county should be more proactive in this process and conscious of its role as a promoter, not merely an administrator. Specific guidelines should be adopted and efforts of private entities supported. More attention should be paid to encouraging existing businesses. More effort should be expended in attracting tourism and retirement and services that are compatible with those fast-growing fields.

EDUCATION

Our schools need constant attention to improve and to raise standards. Educational benefits should not end with high schools. Cooperation between the county government and the schools is necessary to help our children develop productive lifestyles, attitudes and values and to achieve their full potential.

IMPROVING SERVICES

The Board should recognize that many improvements in health, human services and leisure services are wanted and are needed. It should recognize that county government must be the focal point of a myriad of efforts in getting help from state and federal governments, in planning and prioritizing, in directing the proper agencies and in gathering support for efforts to improve the lives of county citizens. This same approach is necessary when dealing with law enforcement, court and fire and rescue matters. Larger and more useful cultural and sports facilities are needed.

VOLUNTEERISM

The Board should take the lead in harnessing the powerful force that is represented by volunteers throughout the county. All of the task forces found that public participation in almost every phase of activity could accomplish great things with little or no cost to the county. The Board and the county government, acting as promoters of the common good, can succeed in reaching many goals by using unpaid volunteers and directing them.

PRIMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

NATURAL RESOURCES

Immediately establish a Water Resources Management Advisory Board (WRMAB) headed by a highly qualified water management professional and charged with developing a County-wide water resources management plan. The WRMAB would be charged with studying and providing recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding:

The feasibility of developing a complex of reservoirs or other impoundment's to contain North Fork flood water runoff.

How to deal with the problem of contaminated runoff of storm water in County towns.

The protection of public and private well heads, surface springs, wetlands and sink holes.

How to minimize adverse development impact in Karst areas.

Concluding, on an urgent basis, the Minimum Instream Flow (MIF) study now being conducted by the Lord Fairfax Planning District Commission.

Develop and Institute as soon as possible an operating digitized Geographical Information System (GIS) to Assist the Board Of Supervisors in its decision-making regarding sustainable growth in the County, that will also preserve the natural resources.

AGRICULTURE

Establish a Land-use Advisory Board whose duties would be to study and advise the farm community and the Board of Supervisors on an ongoing basis regarding the preservation and protection of the agricultural and open space nature of Shenandoah County. Such a board would become conversant with the multiplicity of tools available to achieve this goal, including agricultural and forestal districts; transfer or purchase of development rights; conservation, riparian, and other types of easements; fixed area, maximum lot size, and sliding scale zoning; and the use of the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) system to assess, plan and address the factors of developability.

Encourage patterns of land-use that promote economic activity (residential and commercial development) within the I-81/US Route 11 corridor. Pursue the development of a county water and sewer system in those areas along the corridor not currently served.

To encourage the agricultural industry, continue preferential taxation for land in agricultural,

horticultural, and forestal use. Reduce and ultimately eliminate the personal property taxes on livestock and farm machinery.

To control farm and non-farm stream and groundwater pollution, implement a comprehensive program to educate the public as a whole in the area of Best Management Practices as they relate to soil fertility and pest management.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Form a Unified Shenandoah Water and Waste Authority.

Exploit the use of water from the North Fork of the Shenandoah River through a series of reservoirs and containment facilities.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Using best available data, establish firm guidelines for the types of industries that will be encouraged to locate in Shenandoah County as well as those to be discouraged from locating here. Encouragement should be extended only to those employers willing to offer living wage incomes as defined by local social services, employment agencies and others familiar with such data, and to those firms which require skill based production. No business should be invited or encouraged to locate here which would, in anyway, threatened natural resources, particularly water and air quality, either by toxic emissions or by excessive demand.

With the provision of water and sewer service throughout the entire length of the I- 81/US Route 11 corridor, encourage commercial, light industrial, and residential development within the boundaries of these sanitary districts as a way to discourage development of rural, open spaces areas.

Create a Commercial Development Partnership to function either in concert with or as an adjunct to the Economic Development Partnership. This group would serve as a clearinghouse for commercial development projects and to encourage entrepreneurship. It also could be a liaison between entrepreneurs and public agencies charged with seeing such projects to fruition.

On the belief that their expansion poses serious threats to the economic well-being of this community, all efforts should be made discourage further development of the poultry and textile industries in the Shenandoah County.

TOURISM

Designate the Old Valley Pike (US Route 11) as the Historic and Scenic artery of Shenandoah County - signage, historic markers, code enforcement, restoration and preservation of historic structures, enactment of an historic preservation ordinance.

Assist the private sector in developing and promoting packaged tours (transportation, lodging, meals, and attractions) to Shenandoah County from major market areas.

Establish a full-service County Tourism and Information Center.

Encourage the formation of a County-wide Chamber of Commerce.

Enact the meals tax in the unincorporated areas of the county and raise the lodging tax as a means of supporting the promotion of tourism in Shenandoah County in a more robust fashion.

EDUCATION

A stringent academic course with diverse electives including fine arts, vocational/occupational/technological and family life skills should be provided as an integral part of the comprehensive program.

Family oriented parent-child-teacher in service programs must be implemented to strengthen educators abilities to communicate and work with families to enrich and reinforce student learning.

A comprehensive staff development program addressing the utilization of lead teachers should be implemented with commensurate compensation.

The county school system must preserve the safe, nondisruptive environment needed for effective teaching and learning by reviewing and enforcing the student conduct code, and by addressing social promotions and the rewarding of negative student behavior.

GOVERNMENT AND FINANCE

Elected officials and citizens should maintain their conservative approach to spending and to debt using criteria for AAA bond ratings as guidance.

Prepare a long range financial plan which is reviewed and updated every other year including school requirements and phased long term debt projections.

Appoint a Blue Ribbon panel to study and report on the costs, benefits and feasibility of providing water and sewer services on a regional basis to the towns and other urbanized areas of the county, either through interconnections or by a sanitation authority.

Study the benefits and costs of combining town police and Sheriff's departments or establishing a county police force which would replace the Sheriff and town Police.

HUMAN SERVICES

Hire the human resources coordinator for the county, to ensure that programs are developed, and most importantly, maintain programs through local support. Grant writing skills are needed as this position could build coalitions to work together.

Provide emergency shelter for families, women, and teens.

Provide day-care and respite care for the disabled and the elderly. This will enable working adults to meet the demands of the workplace, assured that adequate care is provided for their family members. This will decrease the numbers of elderly and disabled people on public assistance.

LEISURE SERVICES

Appoint a committee to consider construction of an auditorium for cultural events with construction to be under way within five years.

Add a volunteer clearinghouse to the duties of the appropriate county Agency.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Develop programs, and take steps, to facilitate the recruitment and retention of County Fire and Rescue company volunteers, and insure the volunteer system continues to exist.

Appoint a coordinator for Fire and Rescue companies within Shenandoah County, who would provide liaison for such activities as training, purchasing, asset utilization, grants, and public education and communications.

In a timely fashion, commission a professional, county court and jail facility engineering study that will include space, functional, and safety and security requirements, both short and long-term.

Include the County Emergency Operations Center in the plan to relocate county functions and staff to the former Woodstock Middle School facility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

GOAL:

Ensure the quality and quantity of the water resources of Shenandoah County to support the projected population and economic activity through 2015.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

PRIMARY

1. Immediately establish a Water Resources Management Advisory Board (WRMAB) headed by a highly qualified water management professional and charged with developing a County-wide water resources management plan. The WRMAB would be charged with studying and providing recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding:
 - a. The feasibility of developing a complex of reservoirs or other impoundment's to contain North Fork flood water runoff.
 - b. How to deal with the problem of contaminated runoff of storm water in County towns.
 - c. The protection of public and private well heads, surface springs, wetlands and sink holes.
 - d. How to minimize adverse development impact in Karst areas.
 - e. Concluding, on an urgent basis, the Minimum Instream Flow (MIF) study now being conducted by the Lord Fairfax Planning District Commission.
2. Develop and Institute as soon as possible an operating digitized Geographical Information System (GIS) to Assist the Board Of Supervisors in its decision-making regarding sustainable growth in the County, that will also preserve the natural resources.

SECONDARY

1. Work to reduce irrigation water lost to evaporation.
2. Increase the County well testing program from 24 sites twice a year to 40 and coordinate with the well testing program conducted in the Holman's Creek watershed.
3. Support the effort to establish a basin-wide formalized river monitoring program.

4. Urge the Department of Environmental Quality to update as soon as possible the data on water withdrawals and returns from streams and wells.
5. Seek financial grants from the Chesapeake bay Alliance, Virginia Environmental Endowment, Department of Conservation and Recreation, and other federal and state funding sources.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

GOAL:

Retain to the maximum extent possible the acreage in farm use or open space within the Shenandoah County.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

PRIMARY

1. Establish a Land-use Advisory Board whose duties would be to study and advise the farm community and the Planning Commission on an ongoing basis regarding the preservation and protection of the agricultural and open space nature of Shenandoah County. Such a board would become conversant with the multiplicity of tools available to achieve this goal, including agricultural and forestal districts; transfer or purchase of development rights; conservation, riparian, and other types of easements; fixed area, maximum lot size, and sliding scale zoning; and the use of the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) system to assess, plan and address the factors of developability.
2. Encourage patterns of land-use that promote economic activity (residential and commercial development) within the I-81/US Route 11 corridor. Pursue the development of a County water and sewer system in those areas along the corridor not currently served.
3. To encourage the agricultural industry, continue preferential taxation for land in agricultural, horticultural, and forestal use. Reduce and ultimately eliminate the personal property taxes on livestock and farm machinery.
4. To control farm and non-farm stream and groundwater pollution, implement a comprehensive program to educate the public as a whole in the area of Best Management Practices as they relate to soil fertility and pest management.

SECONDARY

1. Urge the Legislature to appropriate funds to again provide soil testing by Virginia Tech at no cost to the farmer.
2. In view of the importance of agriculture in Shenandoah County and the fact that the future of agriculture is largely dependent on the participation of our young people, the county school administration should take every opportunity to encourage youth participation in activities related to agriculture.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

GOAL:

Provide Public Services (Water and Sewer) throughout the entire length of the I-81/US Rt. 11 corridor.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

PRIMARY

3. Pursue the development of a county water and sewer system in those areas along the I-81/ US Route 11 corridor not currently served. Form a Shenandoah Water and Waste Authority to coordinate the water and sewer effort of the county and the individual towns in the corridor.
4. Exploit the use of water from the North Fork of the Shenandoah River through a series of reservoirs and containment facilities.

SECONDARY

1. Provide the necessary facilities to obtain a fully enforceable program of recycling.
2. Develop plans to provide Public Water and Waste Treatment services along Route 42 and 263 corridors.
3. Form a County Power Commission to represent all Shenandoah County residents in the upcoming deregulation action.

OTHER

1. Assure adequate funding to stay current with the state-of-the-art technology in communications.
2. Review the structure of the school bus routes to assure safe conditions.
3. Review the traffic safety aspects of the road system supporting the poultry raising and processing facilities.
4. Assure that all railroad crossings are safe.
5. Assure that the airport in New Market retains its classification as an airport.

6. Retain the current designation of "right of way" for the railroad.
7. Provide parking and a "turn-around" at the west side of the Meems Bottom covered bridge.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

GOAL:

Attract New Quality Industries and Businesses to Shenandoah County -- light industries, non-polluting, higher tech, higher skills, and higher wages.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

PRIMARY

Using best available data, establish firm guidelines for the types of industries that will be encouraged to locate in Shenandoah County as well as those to be discouraged from locating here. Encouragement should be extended only to those employers willing to offer living wage incomes as defined by local social services, employment agencies and others familiar with such data, and to those firms which require skill based production. No business should be invited or encouraged to locate here which would, in anyway, threatened natural resources, particularly water and air quality, either by toxic emissions or by excessive demand.

2. With the provision of water and sewer service throughout the entire length of the I-81/Route 11 corridor, encourage commercial, light industrial, and residential development within the boundaries of these sanitary districts as a way to discourage development of rural, open spaces areas.

Create a Commercial Development Partnership to function either in concert with or as an adjunct to the Economic Development Partnership. This group would serve as a clearinghouse for commercial development projects and to encourage entrepreneurship. It also could be a liaison between entrepreneurs and public agencies charged with seeing such projects to fruition.

4. On the belief that their expansion poses serious threats to the economic well-being of this community, all efforts should be made discourage further development of the poultry and textile industries in the Shenandoah County.

SECONDARY

1. Partner with Shenandoah County's towns to encourage the orderly industrial, commercial development of areas immediately adjacent to those towns where public utilities are available. Particularly, as sites for cottage-type industries, which might employ 50 or fewer persons.
2. Encourage local public schools to use their technical educational facilities and other

means to train young people planning to enter the job market upon graduation.

3. Establish a program of ongoing contact with local businesses and industries to discuss such questions as manpower availability and training, tax incentives and public grant programs for expansion, to monitor and ensure the continued health and vitality of companies already doing business within the community.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

TOURISM COMMITTEE

GOAL:

Develop and Market the inherent tourism potential of Shenandoah County with a goal of doubling the current revenue derived from tourism by 2015.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

PRIMARY

1. Designate the Old Valley Pike (US Route 11) as the Historic and Scenic artery of Shenandoah County -- signage, historic markers, code enforcement, restoration and preservation of historic structures, enactment of an historic preservation ordinance.
2. Assist the private sector in developing and promoting packaged tours (transportation, lodging, meals, and attractions) to Shenandoah County from major market areas.
3. Establish a full-service County Tourism and Information Center.
4. Encourage the formation of a county-wide Chamber of Commerce.
5. Enact the meals tax in the unincorporated areas of the County and raise the lodging tax as a means of supporting the promotion of tourism in Shenandoah County in a more robust fashion.

SECONDARY

1. Determine where the various sources of grant monies and matching funds for the promotion of tourism are located and file applications where appropriate.
2. Stimulate through tax advantages and seed money the creation and development of additional tourism attractions -- e.g., restoration of mills and furnaces, a model farm, and an excursion railroad.

OTHER

1. Initiate a program in the schools, Chambers of Commerce, civic and service groups to educate the citizenry on the critical importance of tourism to the economic well-being of this County.
2. Monitor the Triplett Tech hospitality program, to ensure that it provides the kind of skills training that the tourism industry needs.

EDUCATION TASK FORCE

GOAL:

Assure quality year-round programs for lifelong learning through the county educational system.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

PRIMARY

1. A stringent academic course with diverse electives including fine arts, vocational/occupational/technological and family life skills should be provided as an integral part of the comprehensive program.
2. Family oriented parent -- child -- teacher in service programs must be implemented to strengthen educators abilities to communicate and work with families to enrich and reinforce student learning.
3. A comprehensive staff development program addressing the utilization of lead teachers should be with implemented commensurate compensation.
4. The County school system must preserve the safe, nondisruptive environment needed for effective teaching and learning by reviewing and enforcing the student conduct code, and by addressing the promotions and the rewarding of negative student behavior.

SECONDARY

1. Building programs must be based on teacher: pupils ratios, special needs of students, and realistic projections of future population growth.
2. The educational system needs to cooperate with and enhance community sponsored educational programs such as the County Library, historical programs and events, and fine arts offerings.
3. Career exploration and guidance for all students should be expanded to provide examination of career sites and state-of-the-art skills required in available businesses and professions, and the use of tutors and mentors to assist with school-to-work experiences.
4. Advanced levels of learning should be offered cooperatively with higher education institutions for those students who are ready to progress beyond his/her school curriculum level.

OTHER

1. The educational system should offer to students after school multi-interest activities with time for discovery of new ideas and pursuit of in depth study and skill development.
2. The school system should offer post-secondary programs for students and adults for remedial work or updating job skills and should be taught by in-school personnel, specialists, or community college/industry trained teachers.
3. The school system should extend the school day as well as the school year to provide time for faculty and staff to work together to develop the curriculum necessary for students successful future in school and in society.
4. An up-to-date communications system must be established for parents, families and teachers to be used after school hours.

The school and community must co-operate in providing jointly, shared facilities such as a building housing a concert auditorium/gymnasium/pool in a central location in the county for access by all residents.

GOVERNMENT AND FINANCE TASK FORCE

GOALS:

The task force had two primary goals:

1. Continue the conservative approach to spending and taxing.
2. Combine/consolidate functions where there are economies and no loss at necessary services.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

PRIMARY

1. Elected officials and citizens should maintain their conservative approach to spending and to debt using criteria for AAA bond ratings as guidance.
2. Prepare a long range financial plan which is reviewed and updated every other year including school requirements and phased long term debt projections.
3. Appoint a Blue Ribbon panel to study and report on the costs, benefits and feasibility of providing water and sewer services on a regional basis to the towns and other urbanized areas of the county, either through interconnections or by a sanitation authority.
4. Study the benefits and costs of combining town police and Sheriff's departments or establishing a county police force which would replace the Sheriff and town Police.

SECONDARY

1. Establish procedures for obtaining requirements, including towns, in purchase of common items, where bulk savings may be obtained.
2. Appoint a commission with representation from all parts of the public sector and knowledgeable private citizens to study the organization and interaction of all government bodies in Shenandoah County and develop and proposed needed changes, to include changes in state laws, if appropriate, and a task force under the county administrator which would ensure technological compatibility.

OTHER

1. Study the benefits and costs of establishing a core of paid personnel to supplement the fire and rescue volunteers.

2. County government and school system cooperate in programs to inform the Shenandoah communities and enlist their constant involvement in helping our children grow up with productive lifestyles attitudes and values that reflect trust, mutual respect open communications and problem solving approaches.
3. Board of Supervisors and County Administrator study the efforts of the School Board and provide appropriate training to County agencies prior to undertaking any significant changes in operations or organization.

HUMAN SERVICES TASK FORCE

GOAL:

To develop a seamless system of human services for our children, youth, families, the elderly and individual Shenandoah County residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

PRIMARY

1. Hire a human resources coordinator for the County, to ensure that programs are developed, and most importantly, maintain programs through local support. Grant writing skills are needed as this position could build coalitions to work together.
2. Provide emergency shelter for families, women, and teens.
3. Provide day-care and respite care for the disabled and the elderly. This will enable working adults to meet the demands of the workplace, assured that adequate care is provided for their family members. This will decrease the numbers of elderly and disabled people on public assistance.

SECONDARY

1. Adapt playground facilities for access by children and adults with disabilities.
2. Establish diverse retirement facilities to meet the needs of active retirees, with living arrangements to care for a disabled spouse without the active spouse having to live in separate locations.
3. Respect and welcome cultural diversity in the community. Support adult literacy programs, English as a Second Language programs, and actively seek cultural diversity in county government and community events. Possibly encourage a cultural event at the fair, displaying crafts, music and dances.
4. Provide a Community Health Center, attached to the free medical and dental clinic the hospital or a retirement complex where county residents can access a heated swimming pool, exercise equipment, and meeting rooms.

OTHER

1. Maintain current county resource manual.

2. Encourage and participate in the formation of county partnerships, where both public and private agencies, industry, schools and local supporters coordinate and collaborate to maximize resources in meet public needs. This would include developing transportation options, up-to-date job training, respite care and other needed services.
3. Prepare for the growing human services demands of the next fifteen years. Begin dialogue with the state in government to avoid unrealistic cost shifting to localities, of state funded mandates.

LEISURE SERVICES TASK FORCE

GOAL:

The driving goal for the Leisure Services Task Force was to promote those activities and services that would provide for the projected expansion of population and an improved economy and, at the same time, provide both youth and older citizens with county-wide quality leisure activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

PRIMARY

1. Appoint a committee to consider construction of an auditorium for cultural events with the construction to be under way within five years.
2. Add a volunteer clearinghouse to the duties of the appropriate county agency.

SECONDARY

1. The county should work with the Shenandoah Memorial Hospital to determine the feasibility and affordability of a wellness center.
2. The county should continue support for a county-wide library system.

OTHER

1. The schools and Parks and Recreation Department expand opportunities in recreational activities, sport programs and educational trips.
2. Maintain a scheduled van escort service , by volunteers, to transport non-drivers and others to commercial areas.
3. The Board of Supervisors should encourage both the Schools and the Parks and Recreation Department to plan for continuing expansion of activities for citizens both for sport and cultural activities.

PUBLIC SAFETY TASK FORCE

GOAL:

Provide guidelines that will assist county government and public safety leadership to transition into an even more responsive, effective, and efficient component of Shenandoah County public services.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

PRIMARY

1. Develop programs, and take steps, to facilitate the recruitment and retention of county Fire and Rescue company volunteers, and insure the volunteer system continues to exist.
2. Appoint a coordinator for Fire and Rescue companies within Shenandoah County, who would provide liaison for such activities as training, purchasing, asset utilization, grants, and public education and communications.
3. In a timely fashion, commission a professional, county court and jail facility engineering study that will include space, functional, and safety and security requirements, both short and long-term.
4. Include County Emergency Operations Center in the plan to relocate County functions and staff to the former Woodstock Middle School facility.

SECONDARY

1. Shenandoah County should increase the fund allotment for each fire and rescue company to bring it more in line with surrounding counties.
2. Encourage County employers to support fire and rescue volunteers.
3. Sponsor an awards banquet for all county fire and rescue volunteers, at which each company would present annual awards stressing the value, significance, heroism, and selflessness of volunteers and the volunteer protection system.
4. The Sheriff's Office should become an integral part of the economic planning and development process in Shenandoah County.
5. The county should designate a Chief Law Enforcement Officer (the Sheriff) who would be charged with the responsibility to coordinate and enhance law enforcement activity Within the county with all other law enforcement agencies, particularly in the five town police departments.

6. Additional emphasis on, and attention to, both educational and rehabilitative proactive programs in schools and businesses should be initiated.

OTHER

1. Establish a section in the County Library, of reference material relevant to fire and rescue volunteers, and the interested public.
2. Prepare written material for new and existing county residents, explaining and promoting support for the fire and rescue volunteers system.
3. Review approval levels for purchasing and disbursements, particularly applicable, but probably not limited to, the Sheriff's Office.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

OVERVIEW

The Economic Development Task Force was chaired by George Sylvester and consisted of five subcommittees as follows: Natural Resources, chaired by Robert Kranich; Agriculture, chaired by D. Warrick Burruss II; Infrastructure, chaired by Vito Gentile; Business Development, chaired by Keith Stickley; and the Promotion of Tourism, chaired by George Sylvester. Coordination among subcommittees was achieved through a series of meetings led by the task force chairman and attended by the subcommittee chairmen.

The Shenandoah County Comprehensive Plan published in December 1991 and currently being updated contains a chapter entitled "Growth Management Policies." Therein are sets of growth "goals", "objectives", and "strategies" for the county for the subsequent twenty years. In the judgment of the Economic Development Task Force these growth management policies establish high but proper and attainable standards for where the county should strive to be in the future. The problem as we see it is that over the nearly seven years since publication important decisions have been made and events have occurred that are significantly at variance with the policies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. For example:

- The Plan calls for retaining the rural and open-space character of the unincorporated area of the county while guiding and directing growth into and around the towns and areas served by public facilities (sewer and water). According to the Loud Fairfax Planning District Commission Annual Housing Report dated March 1998, there were 1869 housing unit additions in the county between 1990 and 1997 of which 64% were in rural areas not served by public water and sewer. This trend reflects the steady decline in farm acreage in the county (11% decline over the last 10 years of measurement) and puts a strain on the quantity and quality of the groundwater, i.e., wells, in the county. It should be evident that failure to arrest this trend will have many unintended and unpleasant repercussions for the future.
- The Plan calls for encouraging light, high tech, higher wage, non-polluting industry. In fact, no such industries have come to Shenandoah County since publication of the Plan. The two most celebrated new industries, the Woodstock Manufacturing Company (Banks Brothers) and the AmeriCold Logistics Inc. are neither light, nor high tech, nor higher wage and yet they have been actively courted to locate here. Neither have nor will advance the average per capita income of the county. The lure of a higher tax base represented by these industries has been a powerful influence irrespective of their negative contribution to achieving the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.
- The Plan calls for providing the means to preserve agricultural land, and encouraging diversity in agricultural production. In fact, to date there has been little effort to preserve agricultural land as evidenced by the steady decline in farm acreage, and there is less diversity in agricultural production with the decline of dairy cattle, sheep, and orchards.

Beef cattle and poultry are the principal agricultural products and are forecast to remain so for the foreseeable future.

- The Plan calls for preserving and protecting the Shenandoah River, other streams, and the county's ground water, yet the one governmental body that should be equipped to deal with these issues, the Water Resources Steering Committee, has been inactive for some time. The result is that the quantity and quality of the county's surface and ground water supplies are being jeopardized and have no governmental champion to protect them.

The message in all of this is that the Commission on the Future report constitutes an urgent message to the elected and appointed officials in Shenandoah County. It will take positive and proactive measures on their part to reverse these trends and put the county on the track toward achieving the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and ensuring a bright future for the county and its citizens.

Relevant Vital Statistics

- The current population of the county is approximately 35,000. It is forecast to grow to 42,000 to 45,000 by 2015.
- The median age is growing and is 3 years older than that of the state. An influx of retirees is contributing to this.
- The per capita income is below the state average and ranks fifth among the six counties in the Lord Fairfax Planning District.
- At the present time unemployment is very low (approximately 2%).
- One third of residents over 25 years old have not completed high school.
- Approximately 20% of the households in the county are receiving some form of public assistance: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, food stamps, Medicaid, subsidized school lunch program.
- Approximately 40% of the population resides in the incorporated towns or sanitary districts. Some 60% reside in the unincorporated areas and are dependent on septic systems.
- Inasmuch as only Woodstock and Strasburg draw their drinking water from the river, over 80% of the population are dependent on wells, either directly or through a municipal treatment plant. A small number rely on cisterns or delivered water.

GOALS FOR 2015

The Economic Development Task Force has established the following quantitative and qualitative goals for the county:

- Retain to the maximum extent possible the acreage in farm use or open space.
- Expand water and sewer service along the US Route 11 corridor to selected areas not now served by the towns.
- Guarantee an adequate water supply for a population of 60,000.
- Gradually but steadily reduce the percentage of households dependent on wells.
- Protect ground water and streams from contamination.
- Increase per capita income by 2% above inflation each year.
- Attract new quality industries and businesses -- light industries, non-polluting, higher tech, higher skills, and higher wages.
- Reduce significantly the percentage of households needing public assistance (currently 20%).
- Develop and market the inherent tourism potential of Shenandoah County with a goal of doubling the current revenue derived from tourism by 2015.

AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION FOR SHENANDOAH COUNTY

1. Although the decline in agriculture in the county is probably inevitable given the demographics, there are things the county can do to slow the rate of decline and to preserve the rural ambiance of the land. Tax incentives on land use for farming and on farm equipment and livestock can serve to encourage farmers to stay in farming. There is a range of tools available to keep as much of the land in agriculture and open space as possible. Recent press reports have documented success stories in several Maryland counties (Montgomery, Howard, Calvert), but in each case it was necessary to make a policy decision to apply the tools aggressively: conservation easements, large lot zoning, purchase or transfer of development rights are some examples. An August 6, 1998 memo to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors from the Director of Planning and Code Enforcement on the subject of land use administration is recognized by the Economic Development Task Force as an important county initiative in this regard. What is lacking is a permanent county body to engage in land use administration policy and implementation and hence this Task Force's recommendation to create a Land Use Advisory Board.

- If there is a future for the poultry industry in the county, it should be at approximately its current level. With the decline in farm population it does not seem wise to build more poultry houses, and we should not encourage the growth of more poultry processing capacity, a prime example of a low skilled and low paid labor industry. More poultry litter and sludge beyond what is currently being generated would represent a further threat to the ground water and surface water systems.
3. An effective open space policy should automatically curtail the growth of subdivision developments in areas that are marginal for septic systems. Thus new residential development would occur along the US Route 11 corridor where the towns already have service areas equipped to provide water and sewer and where our proposed Unified Service District would expand on the county's existing sanitary districts and provide service to those unincorporated areas between the towns not presently served. All of this would act to minimize the threat of pollution of the county's ground water supply. Provision of water and sewer to these areas along the US Route 11 corridor will inevitably attract both residential and commercial development; great care will be necessary to protect the battlefields and scenic open spaces from uncontrolled development that would spoil the potential of the US Route 11 artery as a prime tourism attraction.
 4. Following acquisition of the Aileen wastewater treatment plant with its 1.2 million gallons per day capacity, this facility should be connected with the existing systems in Woodstock, Edinburg, Mt. Jackson, and New Market and the unincorporated areas in-between. The use of this state of the art plant would obviate the need to expand the existing treatment plants in the towns on a piecemeal basis. The Task Force recommends the formation of a Shenandoah Water and Waste Authority to coordinate the water and sewer efforts of the county and the individual towns in the corridor.
 5. Our proposed Water Resources Management Advisory Board would address all aspects of the county's critical water resources save those directly involving water treatment and waste water (sewage) treatment which are the responsibility of the towns and the proposed Unified Service District. Its charter would include studying the development of a complex of reservoirs or other impoundments to capture and store water from the North Fork at times of high water levels, developing plans to protect public and private wellheads, studying the problem of storm water runoff in the towns, and so on. In short, protecting the quantity and quality of the county's water supply for the foreseeable future.
 6. Many citizens are uncomfortable with the industrial development that is currently being pursued by county authorities. The Economic Development Task Force therefore offers a set of guidelines for assessing whether or not a prospective new industry is acceptable as a member of this community and worthy of inducements to locate here. In brief these guidelines are:
 - a) the industry's processes deal with non-polluting materials;
 - b) the industry's lowest hourly wages constitute a "living wage;"
 - c) the industry has a technical component

requiring at least a high school education; d) the industry does not have industrial water requirements that will burden the existing water supply; e) the industry is willing to locate in one of the county's industrial parks; f) the industry's size is a "fit" with the county and its goals for the future; and g) the industry is prepared to protect the rural and open space ambiance of the county through "green areas," buffers, and landscaping. In sum, the county must realize that it now has sufficient industry at the low end of worker skills and wages and strive to attract new industry and business with higher technology content, middle income wages, and some white collar businesses. For example, communications, electronics, information systems, and the computer industry in general are all growth industries throughout the country. Our Director of Economic Development and our Economic Development partnership must lead the way in determining what businesses and industries are likely candidates and in informing the county leadership what steps the county must take to enhance its suitability to attract the right companies. This is a long term process. In the meantime, the county must not succumb to the temptation, for tax base purposes, of accepting more growth in bottom end industries. Future industrial growth should be confined to those areas designated for such development, such as the Mt. Jackson Industrial Park and the Northern Shenandoah County Industrial Park. Commercial development will of necessity be directed to the existing population centers, the towns along US Route 11, and should follow the architectural style of the historic towns in which they locate.

7. Tourism will continue to represent an important element in the economic well being of the county. It currently surpasses agriculture as the leading source of revenue in the county. To realize its full potential it needs to take on a much more assertive posture. The long term promotion of tourism would include a full service county-wide tourism information center; the development and promotion of US Route 11, the Old Valley Pike, as the historic and scenic tourism artery of the county; the promotion of packaged tours to the county (transportation, lodging, meals, and attractions) from major market areas such as Washington, Baltimore, and Richmond; formation of a county-wide Chamber of Commerce; the imposition of a meals tax in the unincorporated areas and an increase in the lodging tax to provide the necessary operating funds for the Director of Tourism and seed money for private development of additional attractions such as a model farm, restoration of historic mills and furnaces, and an excursion railroad; and the initiation of a program to educate the citizenry on the importance of tourism to the economic well-being and future of Shenandoah County.
8. It is unlikely that the town and county political structures will change in any dramatic way. But in areas of economic development, there is a compelling need for a mechanism to bring the towns and the county together to develop and implement an integrated long range plan that addresses infrastructure, land use, protection of natural resources and the environment, and industrial and commercial development.
9. This report on economic development for the future proposes two new agencies to proactively serve the Board of Supervisors and its subordinate units: the Land Use Advisory Board and the Water Resources Management Advisory Board. Identifying a

minimum-sized professional staff and citizen members to serve on each of these agencies will require careful attention. In selecting citizen members strong consideration should be given to the growing population of retirees in the county. Many of these citizens possess exceptional qualifications in terms of formal education, practical knowledge and experience, leadership, commitment to excellence, and the time to devote to public service. Further, it is important to select citizen members who have no personal financial stake in the outcome of their deliberations.

Specific and detailed recommendations may be found in the sections on Natural Resources, Agriculture, Infrastructure, Business Development, and the Promotion of Tourism which follow.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Membership

The Subcommittee consisted of Commission members Robert Kranich, (Chairman), and Henry Staudinger, plus environmental authorities Phoebe Kilby and Bill Gaidos.

Meetings

The Subcommittee met several times, once with representation of the Lord Fairfax Planning District Commission, and Robert Kranich and Bill Gaidos met respectively with officials of the Department of Environmental Quality and U.S. Geological Survey. The Subcommittee also met with officials connected with the Holman Creek Project and with Task Force Chairman George Sylvester. Henry Staudinger provided data on land application of biosolids while Phoebe Kilby initiated a focus on the image of Geographical Information System (GIS) mapping.

Definitions

For this study, natural resources includes both ground and surface water, air, and both forested and open land. Land use connotes the function of utilizing land for agricultural, commercial, industrial, residential, or cultural purposes.

NATURAL RESOURCE ASSETS IN THE COUNTY

The County is blessed with the beautiful North Fork of the Shenandoah River and several of its main tributaries -- namely, sections of Stoney Creek, Cedar Creek, Mill Creek, and Smith Creek, as well as many small feeder streams. There are six large springs which provide roughly 45 percent of the annual mean daily flow of 389 million gallons per day (measured by USGS station at Strasburg). The flow, however, is feast or famine, ranging from a historic low of 22.6 mgd on October 15, 1985, to 39,128 mgd on September 7, 1996. On September 23, 1998 the flow at Strasburg was 84.6 mgd, or 21% of average flow.

Of the total land area of Shenandoah County (512 square miles) there are less than 800 farms today encompassing approximately 125,000 acres. More than half of farmland is in Karst geology, but farmland is still being rapidly lost to individual home development in a scatter-sprawl pattern. Almost two-thirds of the 1,800 new residential homes built since 1990 were not connected to existing town water and sewer facilities, as recommended by the current Comprehensive Plan. The County's farms/ open space is rapidly diminishing.

REVENUE FROM FARMS AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Revenue from County farming (approximately \$56 million in 1992) has now dropped below estimated revenue from Tourism of \$60 to \$65 million dollars. It must be noted that the tourism estimate is very rough as tourist expenditures are extremely difficult to record.

Revenue from hunting and fishing, aside from license records, are difficult to estimate, but are without question growing. Recreational use of the North Fork is increasing.

FINDINGS

1. Adequate water resources are at great risk. For example, in water year 1996 (October 1 to September 30) approximately 15% of the North Fork river flow for the entire 12 months occurred in two days, January 12 and September 7. Without near-term impoundment measures there is no prospect of husbanding flood waters.
2. At the moment, September 1998, the water flow of the North Fork, now just above 20 percent of daily mean flow of 389 mgd, is on the margin of that deemed essential. Currently, data on surface water withdrawal and replacement is inadequate.
3. The county's formidable Karst geology, making 50 percent of the County's groundwater extremely susceptible to surface water contamination, is well defined, recently remapped by USGS, but should not be host to questionable land use practices risking pollution.
4. Shenandoah County does not have a large, well-defined aquifer and there is no current useful data on groundwater available for human consumption. All we know is that more and more wells dug 20 - 40 years ago are drying up.
5. We have absolutely no infrastructure in place to cope with floods, to "save" flood water, or to control poison runoff in towns during heavy rainstorms. We have six streams, or segments of streams in the County designated "impaired" by state and federal authorities, and consequently do not meet federal environmental water quality standards.
6. Pure groundwater resources are at great risk. Over 40 percent of wells in Holmans Creek area, for example, have nitrogen, phosphorous, and fecal coliform levels in excess of acceptable health standards.
7. Population growth will comprise mostly people who transfer from the Metropolitan Washington area and who "move away" from people, traffic, industry, and rampant development. Twenty percent of the population is over 65 years old --mostly retirees, and this percentage is increasing.
8. Much of the in-migration population chooses to live outside of town utility services, thus contributing to scatter-sprawl in mostly Karst areas.

There are the following impediments to protecting natural resources in Shenandoah County:

1. First, the County is dominated by a growth-at-any-cost culture which fosters industrial development to expand the tax base.
2. The County lacks a publicly funded permanent agency, a commission, or committee of water resource and land use professionals to advise the Board of Supervisors on measures necessary to control and approve only sustainable growth in relation to natural resources protection.
3. The County decision makers do not yet have adequate information necessary to make wise decisions regarding the protection of natural resources and sustainable residential, commercial, and industrial growth. Essential elements needed are a digitized Geographical Information System, and a County-wide water resource management plan based on an adopted Minimum Instream Flow (MIF) study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PRIMARY:

- Immediately establish a Water Resources Management Advisory Board (WRMAB) headed by a highly qualified water management professional and charged with developing a county-wide water resources management plan. The WRMAB would be charged with studying and providing recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding:
 - The feasibility of developing a complex of reservoirs or other impoundments to contain North Fork flood water runoff
 - How to deal with the problem of contaminated run off of storm water in county towns
 - The protection of public and private wellheads, surface springs, wetlands and sinkholes
 - How to minimize adverse development impact in Karst areas
 - Concluding, on an urgent basis, the Minimum Instream Flow (MIF) study now being conducted by the Lord Fairfax Planning District Commission
- Develop and institute as soon as possible an operating digitized Geographical Information System (GIS) to assist the Board of Supervisors in its decision-making regarding sustainable growth in the county that will also preserve the natural resources

SECONDARY

- Work to reduce irrigation water lost to evaporation
- Increase the county well testing program from 24 sites twice a year to 40 and coordinate with the well testing program conducted in the Holman's Creek watershed
- Support the effort to establish a basin-wide formalized river monitoring program
- Urge the Department of Environmental Quality to update as soon as possible the data on water withdrawals and returns from streams and wells
- Seek financial grants from the Chesapeake Bay Alliance, Virginia Environmental Endowment, Department of Conservation and Recreation, and other federal and state funding sources to achieve goals enumerated above.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Membership

The committee consisted of Commission members D. Warrick Burruss II (Chairman), Fred Garber, and William Wine, and associate member E.M. (Ned) Conklin. Student associate members were: Alicia Getz, Strasburg High School; Julie Neese, Stonewall Jackson High School.

BACKGROUND

Shenandoah County covers an area of 512 square miles, or 327,900 acres. According to the 1992 United States Census of Agriculture report, approximately 38 percent (125,394 acres) of this land is farmland. Agriculture plays a major role in Shenandoah County's economy, accounting for \$56 million dollars in sales. Shenandoah County ranks fourth in gross agricultural income among Virginia counties. It is an area of rich agricultural resources, based in large part on highly productive soils, widely distributed water sources, and close proximity to major East Coast markets. Of the 125,394 acres of farmland, approximately 36 percent (44,750 acres) is classified as prime farmland, which is the highest for any county in the Lord Fairfax Planning District. However, due to the close proximity to the Washington metropolitan area, there is considerable pressure to convert agricultural and forest land to more intensive uses, including commercial, industrial and residential. This has accounted for much of the loss of farmland in the decade 1982 to 1992. The number of farms decreased approximately 10%, from 922 in 1982 to 832 in 1992. Total farmland acreage decreased approximately 10%, from 139,595 acres in 1982 to 125,394 acres in 1992. The number of full-time farmers decreased from 419 in 1982 to 358 in 1992, a decrease of approximately 15 percent.

Livestock, livestock products, and poultry make up over 90 percent of the county's agricultural income, with poultry accounting for the largest portion. The poultry industry is vertically integrated with growers producing broilers and turkeys on contract. Cattle and dairy products make up the second largest sector of agricultural income, followed by field crops (including tree fruits).

The number of farms with annual sales of \$25,000 or more decreased approximately eight percent from 1982 to 1992, from 191 farms in 1982 to 175 farms in 1992. During the same period, the number of dairy cattle decreased 33 percent, and have continued to significantly decline over recent years. Sheep numbers have likewise decreased significantly, with sheep being raised on far fewer farms. Hog production declined over 65 percent during the same period, reflecting a statewide decline in hog production. The local decline in these enterprises is likely to continue.

After a period of significant expansion in Shenandoah County, integrators report no plans for a major expansion of the number of poultry houses or production in the county in the next few years. Beef cattle production will likely remain a strong contributor to the county's agricultural economy, with 58 percent of the farms (1992) engaged in beef production. Beef enterprises utilize land resources that might otherwise be unprofitable, and they are compatible with the county's topography and soils.

FINDINGS

1. Like most other farmers, Shenandoah County's farmers are caught in a cost-price squeeze. Production costs are often rising faster than product market prices, forcing producers to continually look for new management technologies in both crop and livestock production. The problem is further aggravated by a shortage of qualified farm labor. With numerous small businesses and manufacturing firms in the county, farmers face stiff competition for the available labor force. However, these same firms provide a means for farmers with marginal enterprises to obtain off-farm employment.
2. Local producers have proven to be staunch survivors in a highly cyclical and sometimes volatile agricultural economy. Conservative financial management coupled with a high level of diversification on many farms has enhanced their long-term outlook. In order for the farmer to survive, however, more support at all levels must be forthcoming. As one of many examples of support, or lack thereof, for many years farmers were provided with soil testing by Virginia Tech at no cost. Although necessary to ensure Best Management Practices are being followed, farmers are no longer provided this free service. Some farmers cannot afford the cost of this expensive testing.
3. For the most part, farmers realize that Best Management Practices are necessary in order for farming to be profitable and at the same time protect the environment. They are aware that water is a precious resource. Out of the 832 farms, an average of six farmers irrigated during the years 1990 - 1997. For this period, the Average Daily Total Withdrawal of Water for Irrigation for the months of June, July, and August combined was 131,159 gallons. Comparatively, the lowest recorded daily flow for the Shenandoah River was 22.6 million gallons per day, recorded October 15, 1985
4. Based on the 1982 -1992 census figures shown in the background section of this report, if the same decline is allowed to continue to the year 2015, the number of farms will decrease from 832 in 1992 to only 645 by the year 2015. At the same time, total farmland will decrease to only 96,000 acres by the year 2015. In addition, if past trends continue, as many as 2000 additional residential units could be built on land that is currently agricultural, all using wells and septic systems.
5. Factors that discourage rather than encourage the county's youth activities in the fields of agriculture have been noted. In recent years it appears that less emphasis is being placed on agriculture by the Shenandoah County School Administration. Fewer field

trips and other agricultural activities appear to be the case. The start of the school year prior to the traditional Shenandoah County Fair makes it difficult for 4-H and Future Farmers of America (FFA) members to compete.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PRIMARY

1. Establish a Land Use Advisory Board whose duty would be to study and advise the farm community and the Planning Commission on an on-going basis regarding the preservation and protection of the agricultural and open space nature of Shenandoah County. Such a board would become conversant with the multiplicity of tools available to achieve this goal, including agricultural and forestal districts; transfer or purchase of development rights; conservation, riparian, and other types of easements; fixed area, maximum lot size, and sliding scale zoning; and the use of the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) system to assess land and address the factors of developability.
2. Encourage patterns of land use that promote economic activity (residential and commercial development) within the I-81/ US Route 11 corridor. Pursue the development of a county water and sewer system in those areas along the corridor not currently served.
3. To encourage the agricultural industry, continue preferential taxation for land in agricultural, horticultural, and forestal use. Reduce and ultimately eliminate the personal property taxes on livestock and farm machinery.
4. To control farm and non-farm stream and ground water pollution, implement a comprehensive program to educate the public as a whole in the area of Best Management Practices as they relate to soil fertility and pest management.

SECONDARY

1. Urge the legislature to appropriate funds to again provide soil testing by Virginia Tech at no cost to the farmer.
2. In view of the importance of agriculture in Shenandoah County and the fact that the future of agriculture is largely dependent on the participation of our young people, the county school administration should take every opportunity to encourage youth participation in activities related to agriculture.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Membership

The committee consisted of Commission members Vito Gentile (Chairman), Dr. Jake Haun (MD) and associate members John Weissenborn, John Ventura, Charlie Bruce and Bill Tyrrell.

Meetings

Meetings were held early in the year, to initially define infrastructure and to establish a course of action. A series of discussions were held with various members of the Board of Supervisors, interviews were conducted with employees of the county and members of the several Water and Sanitary Districts. Additional meetings were held with Jerry Copp, Resident Engineer for VDOT; C.D. Wine, President of Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative; and James Guy of LeClair Ryan Attorneys At Law. Meetings were also held by the task force leaders with the mayors of the incorporated towns. Meetings were then held by the sub-committee to coordinate the findings, analyze the data collected, and formulate recommendations for the year 2015.

Definition of infrastructure

Infrastructure is traditionally defined as those facilities and elements of government necessary to support industry, communities and living conditions. In this study infrastructure is defined as Water and Waste, Transportation, Communications, and Power. Each of these general categories were broken down into smaller elements allowing the committee to consider the most important aspects of each.

Infrastructure can be viewed in two aspects. First it can be approached as a tool to encourage and promote growth, particularly in the area of industry. In this case the county would have to budget and develop facilities without a tax base to support them. ("betting on the come"). Secondly, it is developed in support of either natural growth or induced growth through economic development and marketing. This study focuses primarily on the former and secondarily on the latter.

In addition to looking at the physical facilities it became apparent that the political aspects had to be incorporated into the study to assure that the recommendations were based on reasonable foundations.

PROLOGUE

Infrastructure is the primary tool for the realization of the vision and goals contained in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan for Shenandoah County. The Comprehensive Plan contains a vision which encourages future growth in the public service areas along the US Route 11 corridor. To achieve

this goal it will be necessary for the county to adopt and implement the concept of a Unified Service District (USD). The initial step will be the adoption of an updated version of the concept of a Unified Water and Sanitation District contained in the 1971 Water and Sewer Plan for Shenandoah County. In order to realize this growth it is essential that the county and townships coordinate and cooperate to develop and implement integrated long range plans that address future requirements for infrastructure, environment and natural resources and our historic heritage.

FINDINGS

This portion of the report is broken down into the several categories of Infrastructure:

WATER AND WASTE:

Waste is defined as sewage, solids and agricultural. Primary focus is on the sewage. There are currently seven separate districts providing services for the county: Strasburg, Toms Brook-Maurertown, Woodstock, Edinburg, Mount Jackson, New Market and Stoney Creek Sanitary District in the western part of the county. The first six provide service for the incorporated areas of the county which exist along the US Route 11 and Interstate 81 corridor. For purposes of this report that area is referred to as the service corridor. Water and sewage for the balance of the county is provided by private entities and individuals. (For example the Rocco plant on VA Route 42 provides its own plant but also draws water from Woodstock.) The following observations are recorded regarding the general subject of water and sewage. Tables Number I-1 and I-2 (Appendix B) summarize the data related to Water and Treatment facilities.

It is important to note that the area not served by districts represents about 60% of the population of the county.

There is no current data regarding the availability of potable groundwater. The geological structure which is basically "Karst" or limestone is very susceptible to infiltration of surface water contaminants. There are no known large aquifers in the county.

The underground water is subject to contamination by ground water runoffs from a number of sources. High levels of nitrates have been recently found in one of the wells supplying water for Mt. Jackson.

The county has recently acquired the Aileen Plant near Edinburg, a 1.2 million gallon sewage treatment plant which has been sitting idle for several years.

Along the corridor there are several areas which are not tied into any of the Water and Sewage Districts.

The North Fork of the Shenandoah River flows through the entire north-south length of the county.

Each of the incorporated areas of the county currently plan independently for expansion of their facilities to provide additional capacity.

Solid waste is currently disposed of in the county landfill. However, enforcement of its usage is not totally effective.

TRANSPORTATION:

This category can be further broken down into roadways, airports, railroads and the services of bus and transit systems. Table I-3 at Appendix B records the current condition of several of the main roads in the county. This data was furnished by VDOT.

ROADS AND BRIDGES:

The county currently has four major arteries, Interstate 81 and US Route 11, both of which run North and South and US Route 55 and US Route 211, which run east and west. There are two additional arteries, VA Route 42, which serves the county from the middle (Woodstock) south and VA Route 263 from Mt. Jackson to Orkney Springs. Both of these are significant because they serve corridors which may develop in the foreseeable future. In addition to these highways there are numerous roads serving virtually all parts of the county. The following observations are made concerning the roads and bridges:

Current plans to expand Interstate 81 are underway by VDOT. This is due to the expected increase in truck traffic along the Interstate.

US Route 11 is being looked at to expand its capacity in the county.

All "posted" bridges will be renovated in the next few years.

New commercial industries such as Wal-Mart, Sheetz and Food Lion have or will cause localized traffic problems in the areas around their locations.

With the addition of several new poultry raising facilities in the recent years, traffic associated with that industry, namely the feed and transport trucks, create a potentially hazardous situation for local traffic on the narrow roads.

AIRPORTS:

There are two privately owned airports in the county.

The airport at New Market is currently for sale and has been offered to the county.

RAILROADS:

The rail line through the county is privately owned by Norfolk Southern. During the study two issues were identified:

The bridge in Edinburg has questionable integrity.

The railroad crossings in Strasburg, Mt. Jackson and Woodstock represent a safety issue as

growth is realized in the adjacent areas.

BUS AND TRANSIT SYSTEM:

There are none of these type of transportation systems within the county.

POWER:

Electrical Power to the county is furnished by three privately operated entities; Allegheny Power, Virginia Power and Shenandoah Valley Electrical Cooperative. The key issue is the mandated deregulation. The process of deregulating the electric utility industry in Virginia will start January 1, 2002 and must be completed by 2004. Every Virginia customer will be able to choose the company that generates his/her electricity. Generation of electricity is one of the three components of providing electricity; the other two are the transmission of electricity from the generating facility to the sub station, and the last is distribution of the electricity to the consumer.

With three suppliers in the county several property owners have more than one supplier because of the artificial division of lines of responsibility.

It is unlikely that the competition will be extended to the delivery lines to the consumer. The current utility companies will continue to be the distribution companies with their network of wires that deliver electricity to homes and businesses. The State Corporation Commission will continue to regulate these distribution networks and the rates the utilities can charge customers for operating them.

The consumer's bill will be "un-bundled" to indicate each cost separately: (1) electrical generation, (2) transmission and (3) distribution.

If a power generator other than the current utility is used, a wheeling fee will be charged by any utility whose lines are being used to deliver the power to the consumer.

The kilowatt hours of electricity generated will be sold by marketers. These marketers will likely employ a wide range of marketing techniques, such as long distance telephone providers currently employ. This means that the individual consumer will be able to make a choice of suppliers.

Based on the above facts the following observations are noted as problems:

Obviously, the power marketers will seek out large power consumers as clients and not the individual consumer.

The "sunk" cost of nuclear power plants and existing long-term contracts with outside suppliers, termed "stranded" costs, will force some utilities to become non-competitive in unregulated environment. These costs will be passed on to either the consumer or the stockholder.

COMMUNICATIONS:

The county's telecommunications needs are served principally by Shentel with some overlap of

cellular coverage by companies in contiguous areas. The future of the telecommunications industry can be characterized as one of increasing competition with wireless service increasingly supplanting hard wired service.

As result of several discussions with Shentel the following observations are made:

This means more antennas and rights of way.

Technological increases in bandwidth for data transmission and competitively driven expansion of coverage areas will result in the increase of the use of telecommuting in industry, which in turn will allow more employees to work away from the traditional work place. Shenandoah County represents a favorable place to live and still work productively.

Technological advances will increase the need for funding of electronic equipment in public safety centers and vehicles. These will include wireless communications, computers, GPS satellite navigation receivers and possibly even differential GPS facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From an infrastructure point of view, the county should develop a "Corridor" concept. This corridor will run along US Route 11 and Interstate 81 from the northern county line north of Strasburg, to the southern county line south of New Market. Further, action should be taken to encourage the majority of future growth, residential and commercial and industrial, into that corridor. One of the tools to accomplish this is to provide the corridor with public services. This means that the county must "fill the gaps" between the existing service areas owned and operated by the towns. The study of the infrastructure clearly points out that water and waste (namely sewage), is the most critical issue. Therefore, the following recommendations are submitted. These recommendations are on several levels, as describe below:

General

Establish water and sewer service to the unincorporated areas in the corridor and its adjacent (east and west) areas under county auspices. A so-called Unified Service District would include these new areas and the existing Stoney Creek and Toms Brook Sanitary Districts under one organizational umbrella.

Political

The formation of a Shenandoah Water and Waste Authority (SWWA), consisting of representatives of the five existing towns and the Unified Service District of the county. This body should have sufficient authority to develop regulations, study issues, develop necessary plans, construct necessary facilities, manage the usage of water and the treatment of sewage and most important to enforce the regulation regarding water and waste. This should be done in a

cooperative manner, which does not restrict the authority of the individual towns and the county.

Physical

Purchase of the Aileen treatment plant will allow its capacity to supplement the needs in the incorporated towns of Edinburg, Mt. Jackson and the unincorporated areas between Edinburg and Mt Jackson, Edinburg and Woodstock and tie in with the New Market system midway between Mt. Jackson and New Market.

Exploit the usage of water from the North Fork of the Shenandoah River through a series of reservoirs and containment areas. This reserve of water would be available to supplement the water supply in the corridor. Other areas of the county would also be tied into this reserve supply as they are developed beyond the year 2015.

Develop plans to provide public water and waste treatment services along the VA Routes 42 and 263 corridors with expansion capabilities for the adjacent areas.

Provide the necessary facilities to obtain a fully enforced program of recycling of all materials.

ROADS AND BRIDGES:

The second most critical issue in the Infrastructure study is Transportation, namely roads and bridges. Again this is discussed on two levels:

Political

As recommended in another section of this report, it is recommended that the county create a Land Use Advisory Board with the necessary technical staff to propose new regulations, provide technical review of permits in the area of land usage, and advise on the enforcement of land use issues. As part of that authority VDOT would be represented and assist in the review of plans, programs and and permits relative to roads and bridges.

Physical

The study reports that on the basis of the projected growth in both population and commercial and industrial industries, the road way system is adequate to support that growth. There are, however, a number of improvements that should be incorporated to enhance the system.

Review the poultry raising and processing facilities and determine the traffic safety aspects around those plants, and immediately initiate plans to assure traffic safety by the year 2015.

Provide a parking area and turn around on the west side of the Meems Bottom covered bridge. This would support the development of the tourism.

Review the route structure of the school bus routes and assure that those roads used by the busses

are upgraded to double lanes and are properly marked to assure traffic safety.

RAILROADS:

The development and operation of railroads is primarily in the private sector. Currently there is little traffic on the one line which runs from north to south. Trains currently run south to Edinburg and north from Edinburg. The bridge structure in Edinburg is questionable. The study indicates that several issues should be addressed regarding the railroads.

Political

The right of way designation for trackage should be retained regardless of ownership.

Physical

With increased commercial development in Mt. Jackson and Woodstock, crossings should be improved to assure traffic safety. Should private interests develop a tour train, facilities should be provided to allow access to the train at its several stops.

AIRPORTS:

The county should ensure that the airport in New Market is retained and encourage the development of either industrial or residential development utilizing its capabilities.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION:

The committee does not have any specific recommendations regarding public transportation based on the forecast of growth to the year 2015.

ELECTRICAL POWER:

The third issue is the future cost of generation of electricity. Since the deregulation is mandated to occur during the time frame of this study it is recommended that:

Political

Form a County Power Commission representing all Shenandoah County residents which could negotiate the best deal with the power marketers for a common generating cost. Each resident would have to pay individual charges for wheeling and distribution costs.

COMMUNICATIONS

The fourth issue is the rapidly increasing technology of communications.

Essential to the aesthetics of the county is legislation mandating maximum possible shared use of public utility facilities, such as towers for antennas, and rights of way.

Close coordination with the Land Use Advisory Board to assure right of ways, "green boundaries" and other considerations.

Increased funding will be required as equipment and services stay current with the state-of-the-art technology in communications.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Membership

This subcommittee was made up of four members: Commission members Keith Stickley (Chairman), Noel Borden, Ed Hoole, and Allan White. George Sylvester, Chairman of the Economic Development Task Force, was a regular participant.

Meetings

The subcommittee began its work January 21, 1998, and focused for the first five months on questions related to industrial development. It met twice monthly discussing a broad range of subjects, including but not limited to wages and labor pool, the out-migration of labor, the in-migration of labor, industrial development programs in neighboring counties, Virginia models of industrial development, the environmental impact of industry by type, the economic impact of industrial development, industrial prospects by preference and the position of Shenandoah County town government representatives on questions related to industrial development.

Additionally, the subcommittee surveyed 29 members of the Commission on the Future, asking them to rate business and industrial prospects by preference. The survey included such information as wages, benefits and skills levels, size and scope of operations and the appropriateness of incentives to attract business to the community.

In its final weeks, the subcommittee empaneled three persons knowledgeable in the area of commercial development for the purpose of considering the future of retail and service-related entrepreneurship in Shenandoah County. That panel was made up of Mr. Borden, owner of a lumber and hardware business; William B. Holtzman, president of Holtzman Oil Corporation of Mt. Jackson and operator of franchised food, gasoline and hotel businesses; and Alan Toothman, president of Alan Toothman Construction Co., Inc., a builder of high quality retirement homes in central Shenandoah County.

The Study

To consider the question of industrial development for Shenandoah County, the subcommittee first posed two basic questions: Do the people of Shenandoah County want to invite additional industry here, and, if so, can the county reasonably expect to support and maintain industry in terms of available labor, infrastructure and the necessary investments in resources, including water?

In an effort to answer these questions, the subcommittee studied the best and most recent data available from regional and state sources on population and labor trends, interviewed those involved in development efforts of nearby jurisdictions, met with the executive director of the Valley Conservation Council, the chairman of Shenandoah County's Board of Supervisors and

mayors and town managers of five of the county's six incorporated towns. In February the subcommittee met with Mr. William Barnett, chairman of the Warren County Economic Development Council. Mr. Barnett described in detail his group's efforts to create 2,000 new jobs in five years. A telephone interview was subsequently conducted with the chairman of Rockingham County's Board of Supervisors who described his board's plans to de-emphasize industrial development.

Subcommittee members also met with Mr. Beverley Fleming, chairman of Shenandoah County Board of Supervisors, and Mr. Richard Moorefield, the county's economic development director, for the purpose of discussing the county's industrial development strategy. That meeting was also attended by the chairmen of the other economic development task force subcommittees.

Additionally, industrial development community models provided by the Lord Fairfax Planning District Commission were reviewed, and a meeting to discuss the delicate balance between conservation and development was held with Ms. Faye Cooper, executive director of the Valley Conservation Council.

Since most public utilities in Shenandoah County are owned and controlled by town governments and since the current Comprehensive Plan for Development calls for limiting new development to areas within or adjacent to those towns, the subcommittee chair and other task force chairs met individually with mayors and/or managers of the towns of Strasburg, Woodstock, Edinburg, Mt. Jackson and New Market.

Finally, the subcommittee met with its panel of local authorities on the question of commercial development, discussing problems associated with entrepreneurship and the types of business development Shenandoah County might reasonably expect to experience over the 15 years covered by this study.

FINDINGS

In five months covered by this study, no resident of Shenandoah County, including members of this subcommittee and those called upon to assist, suggested that the leaders of this community attempt to entice industry to locate here without first investigating the consequences of such acts. Considerations most frequently cited were those related to the environment, particularly water and sewer requirements and air and water pollution potential. Contributors to these discussions also frequently cited the need to increase wage and skills levels, calling attention to the relatively low per capita income for Shenandoah County.

The fact that Shenandoah County, unlike many Virginia localities, operates an economic development program without a set of clear-cut guidelines as to types of industry, wage and skills levels was frequently raised. The question of whether Shenandoah County can indeed support additional industry with the available labor pool remains in doubt. Statistics show that the county's population of some 35,000 includes a labor force of approximately 17,200, most of whom are employed in manufacturing and service-related business. Although manufacturing employment is declining statewide and nationwide, the fact that it remains high in Shenandoah

County should be cause for concern. Unemployment occasionally reaches 4 percent, particularly during winter months when construction trades are idled by bad weather, but generally remains below 2 percent.

Owing largely to the county's proximity to larger commercial and industrial markets to the north and south and to the high-growth areas of Northern Virginia, approximately 29 percent of Shenandoah County's total labor force commutes to jobs outside the county, a fact which can hardly be considered a local phenomenon. Many workers live in the communities of New Market and Strasburg and are geographically as close to jobs in Rockingham or Frederick counties as they would be to jobs in Shenandoah County. Furthermore, many building tradesmen are able to earn twice as much income per hour on jobs in Northern Virginia than they could expect to receive here, and considering the rewards the commute is understandably bearable.

Although promoters of industrial development frequently cite this out-migration of labor as a reason to invite new companies here, it is interesting to note that two of Shenandoah County's largest employers, Perry-Judd, Inc. and Lear Corporation, both located at Strasburg, report more than 30 percent of their workers live outside Shenandoah County. Considering that and the fact that fewer than two percent of the county's workforce is unemployed, new industry would be required to either hire those already employed here or recruit labor from outside the county.

Besides the obvious questions about available labor, the ability of Shenandoah County to provide water and sewer services to industry is, at best, limited. Except for the sanitary districts at Toms Brook and Basye, all other public utility services in Shenandoah County are owned and controlled by the incorporated towns. Therefore, industrial development efforts conducted by county government can only be as successful as those at the head of town governments would allow them to be.

The county owns approximately 73 acres at the Mount Jackson Industrial Park and the Town of Mt. Jackson owns an additional 30 acres there, all zoned for industrial use. County government currently is partnering with a group of private landowners to create the North Shenandoah Industrial Park, north and west of Strasburg. The town of Strasburg has committed to provide up to 100,000 gallons of water daily for that park and would treat an equal quantity of waste under terms of an agreement with the county.

Measuring local enthusiasm for industrial development is not always easy. In nearby Warren County, an active economic development council during the past five years has created 2,000 new jobs using a series of tax incentives, including the creation of enterprise zones. Officials of that effort say they have spent \$8,500 in public funds for each of those jobs, including tax set-asides, donations of land, industrial access roads and public utility services. Rockingham County, on the other hand, has abandoned its industrial development effort altogether, citing full employment and the rising cost of providing public services to those who would relocate for an industrial job. The chairman of Rockingham County's supervisors said the unemployed, particularly immigrants, will relocate for a job offering as little as \$7 per hour.

Though Warren County's economic development effort was supposed to have been restricted

by guidelines on wages and skills, Mr. Barnett said some companies whose wage levels fell below the allowable threshold were invited and encouraged to locate there. Despite insisting on a "living wage" minimum of \$10 per hour, one firm was recruited there with a beginning hourly wage of just \$6.50.

Frederick County, meanwhile, which until recently operated one of the most aggressive industrial development programs in Virginia, has had to reevaluate its effort in the aftermath of an outpouring of public sentiment against the proposal to open a large glass manufacturing plant there. The public concern was that the plant would pollute the air.

Although some counties, Shenandoah included, still conduct economic development efforts aimed at recruiting industries, others have abandoned those programs for a combination of reasons, including low unemployment and the high cost of providing public services, especially schools. The most notable of those counties which have resisted the temptation to build the local tax base on industrial plant and equipment are Clarke and Rappahannock counties whose residents enjoy a higher per capita income and prefer to pay a higher real estate tax rate rather than industrialize their open spaces.

Many of the new residents of Shenandoah County, particularly those in the expanding retirement community, express little if any interest in any effort by local government that might change what it was that attracted them here. Those outside local government who might look favorably on such efforts would be influenced mostly by the wages being offered. Interest in industrial development seems highest among those connected with local government who see investments in plant and equipment as taxable assets that will help forestall increases in real estate taxes, and those whose personal or corporate interests would be enhanced by development.

If leaders of Shenandoah County's incorporated towns favor an aggressive industrial development program, it was not apparent during interviews conducted by this task force. Without exception, the wastewater treatment systems of Shenandoah County towns are fraught with inflow and infiltration problems that have already attracted the attention of state health officials. During periods of heavy rains, those plants are well beyond capacity now, and would be unable to accommodate additional large industrial users.

New Market is selling more than 65 percent of its existing water capabilities to a poultry plant and would decline any offer to serve another large user in or outside town limits. Although it recently completed an agreement with the county, Mount Jackson's wastewater treatment plant is operating at near capacity and even after expansion would likely be limited to serve the remaining parcels in the industrial park there.

Like those of New Market, the town leaders at Edinburg have no interest in industrial development in or near the town. As leaders of the county's fastest growing town, Strasburg's mayor and town manager say growth will be limited to the willingness and the ability of the townspeople to support improvements to water and sewer systems. Growth and development of the North Shenandoah Industrial Park, they say, will be limited, at least in the near term, to whatever can be supported by a commitment of 100,000 gallons of water daily.

While Woodstock's mayor and town manager say they endorse the county's economic development program, Woodstock continues to wrestle with one of the worst storm drainage situations in Shenandoah County. Though it has the capacity to deliver water to a new industry, its inability to treat waste during periods of heavy rain would almost certainly be a factor for state regulatory agencies to consider.

The survey of Commission on the Future members, while not scientific, bears out the findings of the study and the views of those who contributed to it: 67 percent of respondents said minimum wages for industrial plant workers should be above \$8 per hour, and 70 percent said the average wages should be \$10 or above. Though respondents believe wages should be higher, they doubt the local labor force has the skills to command such wages. Only 15 percent said the county should attempt to recruit food processing, manufacturing or distribution companies while 40 percent said information technology companies would be preferable.

Seventy percent of respondents said companies with fewer than 100 employees should be targeted in any industrial development effort, and 83 percent said no firm should be invited here which uses more than 200,000 gallons of water daily. Asked to rate local institutions best able to support development, the private sector was cited four times more often than county and town governments combined.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PRIMARY

1. Using best available data, establish firm guidelines for the types of industries that will be encouraged to locate in Shenandoah County as well as those to be discouraged from locating here. Encouragement should be extended only to those employers willing to offer living wage incomes as defined by local social services, employment agencies and others familiar with such data, and to those firms which require skills-based production. No business should be invited or encouraged to locate here which would, in any way, threaten natural resources, particularly water and air quality, either by toxic emission or by excessive demand.
2. With the provision of water and sewer service throughout the entire length of the I-81/US Route 11 corridor, encourage commercial, light industrial, and residential development within the boundaries of these sanitary districts as a way to discourage development of rural, open spaces areas.
3. Create a Commercial Development Partnership to function either in concert with or as an adjunct to the Economic Development Partnership. This group would serve as a clearing house for commercial development projects and to encourage entrepreneurship. It also could be a liaison between entrepreneurs and public agencies charged with seeing such projects to fruition.
4. On the belief that their expansion poses serious threats to the economic well-being of this

community, all efforts should be made to discourage further development of the poultry and textile industries in Shenandoah County.

SECONDARY

1. Partner with Shenandoah County's towns to encourage the orderly industrial and commercial development of areas immediately adjacent to those towns where public utilities are available, particularly as sites for cottage-type industries which might employ 50 or fewer persons.
2. Encourage local public schools to use their technical educational facilities and other means to train young people planning to enter the job market upon graduation.
3. Establish a program of on-going contact with local businesses and industries to discuss such questions as manpower availability and training, tax incentives and public grant programs for expansion, to monitor and ensure the continued health and vitality of companies already doing business within the community.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PROMOTION OF TOURISM

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Membership

The committee consisted of Commission members George Sylvester (Chairman), Shirley Maxwell, and at-large members Don Albright, Dan Harshman, Diana Lurey, Ed Markel, Josephine Millett, Danny Proctor, Susie Sprague, and Mary Ann Williamson.

Meetings

Beginning January 6, 1998 the Committee held 15 meetings, the primary purpose of which was to conduct interviews with individuals and organizations having a primary understanding and interest in the tourism industry in Shenandoah County. Interviews were conducted with representatives of the Chambers of Commerce in Mt. Jackson, Woodstock, New Market, and Strasburg, Mr. Bill Ortt, President of the Shenandoah Fairgrounds Association; Mr. John Watt, Virginia Tourism Corporation; the entire membership of the Shenandoah County Travel Council; Mr. James Barrett of Valley Trains and Trails; Mr. Vilnus Vitols of Tourism Council of Strasburg; and Mr. Andy Dawson, Director of the Shenandoah Valley Travel Association. In addition, the Committee itself had representatives of the lodging and restaurant industry (Harshman, Lurey, Markel and Sprague), the caverns (Proctor), Bryce Resort (Sylvester), historic preservation (Maxwell), and arts and crafts (Millett). Judy Reynolds, former Shenandoah County Director of Tourism, was a member of the committee until she resigned her county position in March. She was replaced by Mr. Scott Travers who was a regular attendee and participant in the subcommittee's work. Mr. Gregory Cross of the Lord Fairfax Planning District Commission was instrumental in providing statistical data. Interface with the other committees within the Economic Development Task Force was achieved through monthly meetings of the chairmen of the five committees.

Definition of Tourism

For this study tourism is defined as any activity that attracts residents of other localities to Shenandoah County for the leisure-time purposes of historical enlightenment, visits to attractions, enjoyment of scenic beauty and natural wonders, entertainment, recreational activities (particularly outdoors), antique and craft shopping, and lodging and dining experience.

Tourism Assets of the County

Shenandoah County is well situated to benefit from tourism. The geographical center of the county is less than a two hour drive from the Greater Washington area, and less than three hours from Richmond. It is served by interstate highways I-66, and I-81. It is situated in the scenic Shenandoah Valley which is renowned for its rural and agricultural ambiance and its history, particularly its Civil War history. It is a short drive from the popular Skyline Drive. Attractions

in the county include four Civil War battlefields, the Shenandoah Caverns, the George Washington National Forest, the North Fork of the Shenandoah River, a twenty-seven hole golf course at Shenvallee near New Market, an eighteen-hole golf course and ski slopes at Bryce Resort near Basye, antique shops in several towns along historic US Route 11, the Strasburg museums, scenic drives along country roads bordered by farmland in active use, an historic covered bridge, tours of the vineyards in the area, and a number of bed and breakfasts, restaurants, and lodgings.

Revenue from Tourism

As an economic activity tourism ranks with agriculture as the leading source of revenue for the county. In 1997 revenue from lodging and restaurant sales alone totaled \$40.4 million.

Impediments to Tourism

In spite of its numerous attractions there are some significant impediments to the promotion of tourism in the county. The I-81 corridor is becoming notorious for the volume of truck traffic which it handles and that translates into an often unpleasant experience for passenger vehicles. For those who are not just traveling through the county, however, the parallel U.S. Route 11 offers a refreshing alternative. The I-81 interchanges at Tom's Brook, Woodstock, Mt. Jackson, and New Market have been developed without much consideration for scenic impact or favorable impression. They are characterized by truck stops, gas stations, and fast food establishments. Industrial and commercial development has occurred without attention to preserving the natural and scenic beauty of the area. There has not been an effort to create open green buffer spaces and landscaping to blend these plants and buildings into their surroundings. Here and there within the county there are eyesores which cannot be considered to have anything but a negative impression on tourists. The area south of Woodstock along US Route 11 in the vicinity of the old drive-in movie is a case in point. There are a number of automobile "graveyards" scattered throughout the county which have a similar negative impact. The county is divided into three distinct sections -- northern, central and southern-- which tends to emphasize individuality at the expense of cooperation needed to advance county-wide interests. From a financial viewpoint, per capita income is the lowest in this part of the state, and most businesses, including those related to tourism, are undercapitalized. Signage oriented toward tourism is for the most part inadequate and non-uniform. Some of the county's most notable attractions are lacking in appropriate signage, the Woodstock tower being a prime example. Finally, a small but sometimes quite visible segment of the populace does not understand the importance of tourism to the county and as a result does not welcome visitors from elsewhere to their community.

Lack of Understanding of Tourism's Importance

Following on the previous statement, with the exception of those engaged in the tourism industry (lodging, restaurants, attractions, recreational activities, and the like), there is not a very good understanding of just how important tourism is to the economic well-being of the county in terms of providing revenue, local jobs, and an improved economic base through the acquisition of dollars from outside the county. Nor is there an appreciation of the fact that tourism is

essentially a "freebie" in terms of making minimum demands on county services, most notably the public school system.

County Promotion of Tourism

In 1997 the County budgeted for and appointed its first Director of Tourism. The office of the Director currently serves also as a tourism information office. It is adjacent to the I-81 interchange in Woodstock but is in a difficult to find location that is unattractive in its surroundings -- not an ideal setting for putting the County's best foot forward to the tourism industry. Due to funding constraints it is not open on weekends which is the time of greatest demand by tourists. There is also a Shenandoah County Travel Council whose mission is to promote tourism. Its members are appointed by the Board of Supervisors and they represent each of the major towns and the various sectors of the industry -- lodging, restaurants, and attractions.

Underutilized Potential

Much of the tourism potential in Shenandoah County is underutilized. Packaging of tours in such a way that individuals and groups can pay a single fee in advance and then be shepherded from start to finish -- transportation, lodging, meals, attractions, recreation -- is a proven success in the tourism industry. It is yet to be implemented in Shenandoah County. The county has no center suitable for hosting conferences that would introduce people from the Washington area and elsewhere to the many attractive features of the area. There are numerous historic mills, furnaces, and similar facilities that could be restored and made into tourist attractions. The County Fairgrounds could be much more widely utilized. The existing single track railroad that traverses the county from north to south is used very little for commercial purposes and conceivably could serve as the roadbed for an excursion train. The George Washington National Forest which occupies approximately 33% of the county's land area, and the North Fork of the Shenandoah River which flows the length of the county are priceless natural resources for the outdoorsman. Shenandoah County is a primary resource for genealogy studies with its numerous church records and well-documented land records. US Route 11, the Old Valley Turnpike, has major historical significance as an artery responsible for populating much of the United States west of the Appalachians, and was a conduit for armies marching up and down the Valley during the Civil War.

FINDINGS

A. Promotion of Tourism as a revenue industry in Shenandoah County

- a. Tourism in the form of dollars spent by tourists while visiting Shenandoah County is a major industry in the county, rivaling agriculture in terms of annual revenue. In 1997 the revenue from lodging and restaurant sales alone totalled \$40.4 million.
- b. The success of the tourism industry has been due in large part to the efforts of individual tourism proprietors.
- c. In 1997 the county created the position of Director of Tourism to promote the cause of tourism. This reflects a recognition and sense of commitment toward tourism by

the county's leadership.

- d. The tourism industry is unique in that it makes few demands on local government and affects the environment in a minimal way. Tourists, for example, do not place any burden on the school system.
- e. Efforts have recently begun to "package" the various tourism attractions in the county and market such packages in major market areas such as the Greater Washington, DC area, Baltimore, Richmond, and Tidewater.
- f. There is no conveniently located full service Shenandoah County tourism information center, and the Director of Tourism office is located in a less than optimum location for the purpose that it serves. Funding constraints limit the hours of operation to weekdays only and much of this time is by volunteers.
- g. There is a catalog of county tourism attractions on the Shenandoah Travel website, and the amount and quality of information provided is constantly improving. Other than the website, however, it is difficult for the traveler to gain access to the catalog information.
- h. There are a number of potential attractions of an historic or scenic nature that have not been developed and marketed -- old furnaces, old mills, scenic byways, the railroad, the Woodstock tower -- to cite some examples.
- i. US Route 11 is the main artery for tourism in the county. It is currently underutilized and under promoted as such.
- j. Industrial, commercial and residential development and maintenance of vacant land have not preserved the natural beauty of the surrounding countryside, thus diminishing the overall attractiveness of the county.

Summary: the tourism potential of Shenandoah County is significant and needs to be marketed by both the private and public sectors.

2. Identifying and overcoming impediments to tourism:

- a. The county's budget allocation for tourism is insufficient to support a robust promotion of the industry. The lodging tax is the source of funds for this activity.
- b. Signage, particularly along I-81, is insufficient to draw travelers off the interstate and into the rest of the county. Signage along US Route 11 is inadequate and insufficient from a tourism standpoint.
- c. The county needs more basic elements of tourism -- conference centers, recreational amenities (golf courses, picnic areas, river accesses, etc.), historic restorations, and get-out-of-the-car attractions , such as an excursion railroad).
- d. There are too many blights on the landscape -- auto junkyards, abandoned buildings along US Route 11, uncontrolled strip development, lack of "green" areas and landscaped buffers around new developments at the interchanges.
- e. There is insufficient appreciation of the benefits of tourism at all levels -- government, chambers of commerce, businesses, citizens. This is manifested in a lack of support for tourism initiatives and occasionally an apparent hostility toward tourists as "outsiders."
- f. Among some citizens and some communities there is an insufficient sense of civic

pride which serves as a turnoff to tourists visiting the area.

Summary: The success of the tourism industry is not guaranteed. We have to work at it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PRIMARY

1. Designate the Old Valley Pike (US Route 11) as the historic and scenic artery of Shenandoah County.
 - a. Obtain state designation as an historic and scenic byway.
 - b. Mount appropriate signage on I-81 at the northern and southern entrances to the county.
 - c. Through the state Department of Historic Resources improve the upkeep of existing historic markers, add additional markers wherever appropriate, and provide adequate parking at each marker site.
 - d. Through code enforcement clean up the many eyesores along US Route 11. Revise the Code as necessary to make it consistent with the image the county should be projecting as a mecca for tourism.
 - e. Create at least two picnic areas for tourists along US Route 11 to supplement the county park located near Toms Brook.
 - f. Encourage each town government to declare its town an historic town, take steps to restore and preserve its historic structures along US Route 11, erect an unmanned tourism kiosk to provide information pertaining to the town, and otherwise take steps to spruce up the overall town appearance.
 - g. With the expansion of water and sewer service to unincorporated areas along the US Route 11 corridor, protect the environs against uncontrolled development that would spoil the potential of the route as a tourism attraction.
 - h. Inasmuch as it has none, the county should pass an historic preservation ordinance.
2. Assist the private sector in developing and promoting packaged tours (transportation, lodging, meals, attractions) to Shenandoah County and neighboring areas.
 - a. In concert with local tourism entrepreneurs, work through tour operators in the major market areas such as Washington, DC (The Shenandoah Valley Travel Association (SVTA) has a data base of tour operators interested in the Valley).

- b. Create themes such as: the Civil War, the Shenandoah Valley Music Festival, antiques and crafts, golf, outdoor experiences (hiking, biking, skiing, fishing, camping, canoeing), genealogy, etc..
 - c. Encourage partnerships among various elements of the local tourism business, e.g., discounts for B&B customers to frequent local restaurants.
 - d. Recognize that successful packaging takes time -- at least three years, that bus tours book six months in advance, and that it is best to start small.
3. Establish a full-service County Tourism and Information Center.
- a. Recommended location: off I-81 on US Route 11 interchange at the north end of the county.
 - b. Provide sufficient funding to staff with paid employees on 7 days per week basis during tourist season. (See Recommendation 5 for source of funding). Augment with volunteers to extent practicable.
 - c. Consider including a gift shop (as in Winchester) with proceeds going to help support the center.
 - d. Install a computer terminal providing access to the county's website which would highlight the various tourism attractions as well as a schedule of events for the current day and current week.
 - e. Provide an easy-to-read handout map of the county highlighting the tourism points of interest, particularly along US Route 11, and indicating the distance involved in reaching other important points of interest such as Orkney Springs, Bryce Resort, Wolf Gap, the Woodstock Tower, Camp Roosevelt, etc.
 - f. Commission the preparation of a short booklet to accompany the above map which would describe the history and significance of each of the highlighted attractions. The cost of such a publication could be defrayed by charging a small fee for its purchase.
 - g. Establish a cooperative agreement with the SVTA to serve as the county's southern entry point Tourism and Information Center and reimburse them for stocking brochures and maps, providing space for a website computer terminal, and otherwise providing county-related services to tourists traveling northbound.
4. Encourage the formation of a county-wide Chamber of Commerce.
- a. Offer to locate its office in the County Tourism and Information Center.

- b. Consider Chamber membership as a source of funding for the Tourism and Information Center.
 - c. View a county-wide Chamber as a means of bringing the business and commercial interests of the individual towns and the county into closer cooperation and coordination.
 - d. Ask one of the progressive leaders in the community, such as the current mayor of Edinburg, to take the lead in forming the county-wide Chamber.
5. As a means of supporting the promotion of tourism in Shenandoah County in a more robust fashion more tax dollars will be required. Such monies should be derived from the tourist industry, not from general revenue. Specifically:
- a. Enact the meals tax in the unincorporated areas of the county.
 - b. Raise the lodging tax from the current 2% to 4%. This will require routine authorization by the state legislature which in turn will require that the additional 2% be reserved for promotion of tourism purposes. All lodging taxes collected by the towns should be turned over to the county for the promotion of tourism.

SECONDARY

- 1. There are federal, state, and organizational sources of grant monies and matching funds to be awarded for the purpose of promoting tourism. Research and determine where the various sources are to be found and ascertain the procedures necessary to apply for same.
- 2. Stimulate through tax advantages and seed money the creation and development of additional tourism attractions throughout the county, e.g., restoration of the Edinburg Mill, an excursion railroad using the existing Norfolk Southern roadbed, a model farm, restoration of historic mills and furnaces.

OTHER

- 1. Monitor the Triplett Tech hospitality program to ensure that it provides the kind of skills training that the tourism industry needs, e.g., culinary arts, hotel management. Consider the use of current tourism businesses as adjunct faculty.
- 2. As the role of tourism becomes more and more critical to the economic well being of Shenandoah County, the education of the citizenry in the importance of tourism becomes a necessary element. It should begin in the primary and secondary schools and carry over to the Chambers, civic and service groups, and even the institutions of county and town governments.

THE EDUCATION TASK FORCE

INTRODUCTION

The Education Task Force determined as its mission to assure quality year-round education programs and opportunities in schools and in the community for life-long learning through involvement of educators, community leaders, and all interested citizens. Information was reviewed concerning the perceived immediate and projected needs of county inhabitants of all ages with a vision toward being proactive rather than reactive.

BACKGROUND

To develop this report the task force used the 1997 Citizens Advisory Committee report, the 1997 Capital Improvements Plan, the Shenandoah County Public Schools' Six-Year Improvement Plan (1995-2001), the 1995 State Board of Education Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools document, statistics from the Shenandoah County Economic Development Office and the Planning District (1990-96), and other Shenandoah County Schools reports and statements.

In addition, an open-ended survey for County residents was prepared, and with the help of the Central Office of the school system, 17,000 households in the County received this survey enclosed with the Shenandoah County Public Schools report from Dr. H. D. Northern, Jr. and staff. Approximately four hundred surveys were returned, tabulated and comments read. These were summarized and are available for perusal.

After analyzing information from all the compiled sources, the task force determined that, with a knowledgeable and visionary administration and highly trained personnel including family and community involvement and support, the County School System should offer comprehensive education programs and opportunities which will help its citizens to become independent and contributing family members and responsible individuals in a world society.

Members: The Education Task Force Committee consists of active and retired educators, students and a parent: Lorna Lutz, Chairperson, Nancye Bowman, Tara Dooley, Mary Catherine Funk, James Johnson, Marjorie Moyers.

FINDINGS

1. The rural uniqueness of the Shenandoah County community is evidenced in the County School System's cluster campus concept. Originally, each small community had its own school accompanied by strong community support, fierce pride, and an highly competitive spirit. These small schools were the center of most community civic, cultural, athletic and often social activities, and all residents and children were acquainted with each other and had been for generations.

Being strong in educational organization and philosophy, it is interesting that the first

Teachers' Association of Virginia was organized at Triplett High School in 1899, and that there were Community Leagues organized in 1905 being 55 strong in 1926. The school boards were appointed and citizens did not hesitate to make their wishes known. Finally, in 1959-60 major consolidation entered the picture, and the communities' competition, burning brightly, slowly emerged into a single flame in the new high schools, and even more slowly into the recently formed campus clusters. The schools ceased being community-oriented center, and more and more began to feel distanced from the educational staff and programs.

The importance of community ownership of its schools cannot be over stressed. More involvement of parents and citizens in various social, cultural, and athletic activities; and, certainly in the educational decisions is critical in assuring the schools are serving the needs of the community for generations to come. Using sports as a means for uniting the community is a good start, but considering that young and old should have access to the facilities and programs, offering more civic, social, and cultural events would surely result in greater involvement in and support for the educational efforts and a greater comfort level for the entire community.

2. The Virginia Department of Education's latest Standards of Learning mandates emphasizing high levels of achievement for every child in the basic academics with accompanying scores linked to school accreditation has threatened to diminish the important roles of occupational/career training and the value of fine arts in a comprehensive education program. The July/August 1998 Virginia Review reports that the College Entrance Examination Board provides the following insights: "Students of the arts continue to outperform their non-arts peers on Scholastic Assessment Tests. In 1995, SAT scores for students who studied the arts more than four years were 59 points higher on verbal and 44 points higher on the math portion than students with no course work or experience in the arts." The vision must "Create an educational environment that creates and helps transform lives of academically and artistically gifted high school students as well as adults seeking new skills for the millennium." It is therefore imperative for the schools to provide a comprehensive educational program which will not only offer a good academic foundation, but will also maximize the child's learning capabilities and continued maturation. This will have ultimate goals of a successful life as a responsible and contributing member of society who will be well prepared for the best that life can offer.

Assessments of pre-school children should include the mental, physical, emotional, and social maturation levels. Assessments should be made each school year in grades K-12, accompanied by parent and teacher learning plans and/or remedial recommendations based upon goals and stages of growth and development of the child. The school system should not just depend upon the SOL tests as the measure of achievement or of successful school teaching.

3. In-service programs are needed to help teachers and administrators to strengthen the educators' abilities to communicate and work with parents. Many parents have little or no training in parenting skills or in knowing how to enrich and extend their children's

learning opportunities. Therefore, training and learning enrichment could greatly enhance the educational opportunities for their children.

Research findings have shown that what the child learns the first three years of his/her life is critical to the cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development in that child. Effective parenting of pre-schoolers is key to the growth of the child, so classes for the more mature students providing information about child growth and development, parenting and life management skills would prepare all students for their vitally important roles as parents and family members and would ultimately raise the educational and cultural levels of families in the community.

There has been a major concern in the nation and in Shenandoah County about family breakdown and poverty with resultant dependency on government agencies, alcohol and drug addiction, and abuse of all kinds. Violence in the community and in the schools is a real threat, and our schools are trying to prepare for control of this. There is a real need for a safe and non-disruptive classroom environment for effective teaching and learning. There are correlations between absent parents and children at home alone and a rise of abuse and teenaged crime. It has been estimated that 70% of juvenile offenders come from single-parent families whose children are primarily unsupervised. Since violent behavior begins often with being neglected or treated violently or with abusive language, coarse words and hate language often heard and viewed on TV, gangster rap music, or in videos and movies, on the street or at home, it is crucial that parents and educators find ways to stress the importance of treating others with dignity and the children should be monitored and supervised as well as being provided with a stable, loving, and caring environment.

4. While teen-age pregnancies and live births in Shenandoah County have shown a downward trend percentage-wise since 1989, it is important to understand that for most teenagers, the birth of a child may provide a future of unemployment, poverty, family breakdown, emotional stress, dependency on public agencies, alcohol and drug addiction, health problems for the mother and child and abuse. Even though there are no statistics available on how many times teenage males (or older) become fathers, the law now requires a DNA test to prove parentage, and the father is required to contribute to the financial support of the child. The resultant emotional and financial burdens of all this often results in drop-outs, abuse and violence. Finally, the tragedy of being an unwanted child is a crushing blow which lasts for generations.

Parents and schools must work together with the community agencies to provide for their children's intellectual, ethical and emotional development. Counselors, guidance personnel, and early identification of pending problems must be a part of the schools' programs. Remedial programs are important, but vision is needed to structure programs which will help improve the quality of life for all families. There must be concern for the education of the total child for his/her success in life and for that of future generations. It is better to "build a fence at the top of the cliff than to provide ambulances at the bottom".

5. The Shenandoah County School System provides educational opportunities for the pre-school years through adult evening classes encompassing vocational/technological training and Young Adult classes for men and women. Also, GED classes are offered to assist those without high school diplomas. However, since the 1990 statistics report that one-third of the Shenandoah County residents over age twenty-five do not have a high school diploma, and the numbers of older persons both in the work force and retirees have increased, it appears there is a great need for additional educational opportunities through the school system for both school children and for adults.

Another noteworthy 1990 statistic is of the 21,803 residents twenty-five years and older, only 3,789 had some college or an associate degree, and 1,433 had a bachelor's degree or a graduate or professional degrees. One can assume from these statistics that a low percentage of residents are college educated. Further, if sixty-six percent of the county high school seniors actually enrolled in college (projected in 1998-99 from the Citizens Advisory Committee Facilities Studies Report) the total number would be approximately 226. The latest percentages report that fifty percent of the enrollees actually stay in college to earn a bachelor's degree. All of this seems to indicate that the greater number of students will need a strong academic/fine arts education and one which prepares them for entering the work force at an early age.

Shenandoah County has, for many years, provided vocational/occupational/technological training through the Triplett Vocational-Technical Center and throughout the school system with the in-school sources of study being linked with the academics and electives. This must be accomplished throughout the school system so that courses are not taught in isolation but rather provide a connection and reinforcement of each other. The vocational/ occupational/technological training should involve apprenticeships and cooperative training with industry, business, and professionals, for all students, both college- and non-college-bound, so that career exploration and wage-earning skills are not the exclusive domain of the non-academic track students.

College-bound students quite often do not have opportunities for career exploration or development of wage-earning skills, and frequently are at a loss in finding meaningful employment after acquiring a college degree. Conversely, mentorship programs are available to the gifted and talented students, but rational extrapolation will lead one to conclude that all students would benefit from having mentors. Frequent job changes evidence a need for career assistance for post-graduates and for other community members. These offerings should be provided cooperatively with available businesses and professionals. There should be post-secondary school for graduates and adults for remedial work or updating job skills for new and emerging occupations for relocating in a different line of work.

6. Advanced placement classes are being offered to those academically gifted students in the school system. All children should be encouraged to grow and learn as rapidly as they can. Adult citizens should also be offered on-going educational opportunities by coordinating classes in the school system and the community colleges in the area.

7. The Massanutten Military Academy, established in 1899, and the Shenandoah Valley Academy have not been the only private schools in the county. Several church schools, and more recently, home schooling has been an option for parents who wish to have a more dominant role in their children's education. The Shenandoah County School System must not ignore the opportunities to contribute to and cooperate with these educational efforts. Many of the citizen surveys indicated they supported private or home schooling. While they are not funded with public tax money, the parents and children of these private schools should have some access to the public school facilities and possible programs since they do support the public schools with their taxes.
8. The community is presently faced with requests for additional county debt to repair and upgrade the present facilities and to provide additional space for instruction of special needs children and to enhance the learning of all students through a lower teacher-pupil ratio. The October 9, 1997 Citizens Advisory Committee Facilities Studies Report projects a student population increase based on projected overall population increase in the county. The 1996 statistics gave a county population of 34,300 with a resultant student population of 5,261 or fifteen percent of the county population. The projections for the year 2006 is made using a projected county population of 41,297 showing fifteen percent of these as students or 6,125. The projected student enrollment for 1998-99 was 5,436; however, as of October 12, 1998, the total was 5,399 which is 37 less than projected.

It is interesting to find that the *Shenandoah County Geography Supplement* published in 1931 (page 36) reported that the total enrollment of students for the year ending June 29, 1929 was 4,638. This information reveals a gain of only 761 students in sixty-nine years.

Added to the need for repairs and updating with necessary classroom additions, there has been projected a need for a new gymnasium at each of the high schools to accommodate the increased athletic programs and, more specifically, a strong case has been made to provide for overflow crowds during indoor sports' final tournaments. Considering the need for maintaining a fair balance between additional budgetary provisions for improving and broadening instructional programs and learning opportunities for the children and the community, it would seem that program needs should be prioritized over three gymnasiums. Also, the strong possibilities of a cooperative effort between the county and the school division to erect one large building, centrally located, housing a concert auditorium, swimming pool, and a large gymnasium available for use by the schools and the community. Certainly all these factors deserve serious consideration when prioritizing the county's educational program and building needs.

9. There should be a re-emphasis on community and schools-based educational programs and opportunities for life-long learning through cooperative use of the communities' libraries resources, community-sponsored learning sessions, educational tour groups, music and the arts, and wellness-oriented activities. This may very well involve access to the school facilities on a year-round basis with some concern about additional expenses to the school system being agreeably resolved. The community buildings and churches should certainly be available to the school system. The cooperative educational

ventures between the schools and the community will surely develop a closer relationship between the two and will be of great benefit for generations to come.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A stringent academic source of study should be provided for preschool through the twelfth grade. All types of diverse electives, including fine arts, should be offered to provide a comprehensive education.
 - a. Programs of study should be developed to prepare students for college, vocations, and the workplace.
 - b. To ensure that students will receive the best possible education in the future, class size should be lowered and, most importantly, student discipline has to be addressed and enforced. Teachers have lost much teaching time and students have lost much learning time because of discipline problems.
2. The Life Skills and Family Life curriculum should be taught K-12 as a part of all children's classes and as separate required courses in junior and senior high school.
 - a. Junior and senior courses should focus on personal and family relationships, decision-making, career and money management, and child development with responsible parenting skills.
 - b. Day care involvement should be an extension of this program.
 - c. Parenting programs and information should be provided through the school for all parents to extend and enrich their children's learning experiences and educational opportunities.
3. The school system should provide vocational/occupational/technological training and apprenticeships involving cooperative training with Valley industries, businesses, and professions for all students, both college-bound and non-college bound, so that career exploration and wage-earning skills will provide a foundation for becoming independent and contributing members of society.
 - a. The career goals-related courses of study should be interwoven and reinforced with the academics and electives to provide a meaningful and comprehensive education. Courses should be continually up-dated with training for new and emerging state-of-the-art skills.
 - b. Career guidance for all students and the community should be expanded to provide exploration of career sites and skills required. Mentor-ship programs for all students and career assistance for recent graduates should be provided cooperatively with the available businesses and professions.
 - c. Additional guidance personnel should be added throughout the school system, K-12, to assist children with their problems and to provide ongoing career exploration and work ethics courses.
 - d. A first class county volunteer system of retired professionals, executives, and tradespersons should work with the schools as tutors, mentors, and to assist with school-to-work experiences.
4. Advanced levels of learning should be offered cooperatively with higher education to

- provide opportunities for the student who has progressed beyond his/her school curriculum in certain areas of study, but is not yet ready to go full time to a college or university. Adult citizens in the community should be offered the same opportunities. Increase gifted and talented resource specialists to help implement these opportunities.
- a. Higher education institutions within the radius of fifty miles or more should be tapped.
 - b. After school multi-interest activities should tap adults in the community to offer enrichment of experiences and knowledge of topics not offered during the school day. After school should be a time for discovery of new ideas and pursuit of in-depth study and skill development. Multi-interest activities should provide stimulation for latch-key children toward a more rounded growth and maturation as well as offering opportunity for interaction with other students in an informal and supervised setting.
 - c. These courses may also be offered cooperatively with a community college or other educational institutions.
 - d. Flex-time should be offered to full-time teachers or part-time contracts offered to provide instruction and supervision to these programs.
 - e. Charter schools should be considered as a viable option.
5. Post-secondary school should be for students and adults for remedial work or for updating job skills for new and emerging occupations or for relocating in a different line of work.
- a. In-school personnel, specialists and community college/industry trained teachers should be hired for this program.
 - b. Night courses should be offered at all three high-schools.
6. World history and U.S. history are required subjects; however, in the future it is recommended that local and area history become a part of the curriculum. In planning for the future of our community it is necessary to be familiar with the past history of this area.
- a. County historical/geographical curriculum should be developed and implemented.
7. It is imperative to have time allotted for faculty and staff to work together to develop the curriculum to prepare students for a successful future. It has been predicted that more time will have to be allotted for academics including technology training.
- a. To achieve the above it may be necessary to extend the school day as well as extending the school year.
 - b. Year-round school should be offered to provide opportunities for students to schedule all necessary or optional classes.
8. A program of lead teachers in mathematics, science, technological studies, English, social studies, and other essential programs should be established and maintained to provide support and guidance for all classroom teachers. This is very important because of all the changing state and local requirements for accreditation.
- a. Experienced master teachers should be offered lead teacher opportunities and compensated accordingly.
 - b. A comprehensive staff development program should be implemented with

compensatory incentives.

9. Our school system should provide professional development in the area of working with students from other cultures and those with special needs. This community has a growing population of Spanish-speaking citizens and children with special needs, and only a few certified personnel to work with them. Main streaming has impacted on the learning environment and teaching strategies.
 - a. Increased certified personnel is needed to work with these students. Programs should also be provided for students from other cultures and those with special needs.
10. Preservation of a safe, non-disruptive environment is needed for effective teaching and learning.
 - a. The county must review and enforce the student conduct code. (Please note that the above is being addressed this school year).
 - b. Social promotion and rewarding negative behavior should be addressed.
11. Family-oriented parent-child-teacher teaching and learning sessions should be provided based on assessments and accompanied by realistic goals and plans to cooperatively assist the child toward the highest level of education possible.
 - a. In service programs are recommended for teachers and administrators to strengthen educators's abilities to communicate and work with families so they become involved in their children's maximum growth opportunities at home and school.
 - b. Parents should be involved in attending these teaching-learning sessions and to attend or assist with at least one of their children's classes during the year.
 - c. Parents should be involved as trained volunteers. Volunteer aid classes should involve actual training of classroom activities.
 - d. Parent Guides should be developed for each grade and subject area to provide maximum assistance. Groups of county teachers should develop these guides relating to their grade level and/or subjects being taught. Classrooms should be constructed so that parental observation could be made without the children being aware.
12. An up-to-date communication system must be established for parents, families, and teachers to be used after school hours.
 - a. Voice-mail with many phone lines are needed at all school facilities. E-mail and fax information needs to be available.
 - b. Teacher-parent communications should be through assignment sheets, video-training sessions, and newsletters.
13. Multipurpose use of school facilities year-round should provide for a more cost effective service to the community.
 - a. Custodians should be compensated for over-time.
 - b. Clubs should be allowed to meet, paying for electricity and damages.
 - c. Non-profit groups should not be charged, but be responsible for clean up.
 - d. Outside facilities should be available for use.

14. The Educational system should be involved in libraries' resources offering pleasure reading, references, genealogy, periodicals, videos, tapes, and computer access to all the community libraries and to the Internet.
 - a. The county library, housing the county's historical archives, must provide programs for children and other community offerings.
 - b. Education should actively pursue the use of the public libraries particularly as the new county library comes into being, taking field trips and having library volunteers visit to the schools. Library programs should be publicized.
15. Educational groups such as elderhostels should be offered periodically as university or college extension classes.
 - a. The educational system should become involved with elderhostel development.
 - b. Extension classes should be offered in the County from colleges.
16. Community sponsored learning sessions should be offered by community agencies, businesses, organizations, and by the many learned and specialized community persons serving as resources.
 - a. The school system should publicize and offer speakers.
 - b. The education system should speak to civic groups about the directions being taken in education.
 - c. The education system should help with a resource directory and publicize such programs.
17. The school system should be involved with educational tours, groups visiting the historical, architectural, agricultural, agri-business, manufacturing, and environmental resources.
 - a. Publicize FFA tours and Young Farmer tours.
 - b. History classes could help put together county historical tours.
 - c. Publicize home and garden tours.
 - d. Help create environmental resource tours.
18. Music and the arts should include choral, theatrical, orchestral, and instrumental groups as well as crafts and visual arts.
 - a. The education system should publicize and promote the community fine arts programs.
 - b. Publicize and promote schools' fine arts programs.
 - c. Use schools for community fine arts programs.
19. Wellness-oriented activities: nutrition classes, hiking, and biking clubs, aerobics, etc. should be boosted.
 - a. Help establish bike trails: clubs could participate in and help create.
 - b. The vo-tech departments could offer nutrition classes.
 - c. Publicize hiking club membership and itineraries.
20. Refer to the Six-Year Capital Plan for the building facility future.

- a. School population growth should be projected by using census, birthrate, and immigration information as a basis for any future building program.
- b. More space is needed immediately at some of the schools for maximum learning.
- c. Maintain a fair balance between improving and broadening instructional programs and learning opportunities and needs for additional instructional space.
- d. Recommend the possibility of a main auditorium/gymnasium/pool for school and community use. Defer the building of any new high school gymnasiums until all other building needs are fulfilled or until the student population needs indicate the necessity.

GOVERNMENT AND FINANCE TASK FORCE

INTRODUCTION

There were significant changes in the mission of the Government and Finance Task Force during the course of this study. Initially the Task Force addressed its efforts to operations of the Treasurer, the need for a capital improvement plan and possible duplications of services by the towns and the county. Because of issues raised in commission meetings based on the observations of other task forces, the Task Force was reconstituted and in turn addressed only macro financial issues while concentrating on relations between the towns and the county.

Based on the skills and knowledge of Task Force member Terry Arnold, briefings were presented to the County Administrator and the Sheriff on performance standards. Because of other pressures, insufficient feedback was received from the responsible officials to pursue this issue further although some interest was expressed.

In the course of its investigations, the Task Force met with School Board Chairman, Sonny Bayles; School Superintendent, Dr. Danny Northern; and board member C. J. Borden. On the town side, the Task Force met with the mayors of Strasburg, Harry Applegate; Edinburg, Dan Harshman; and Mt. Jackson, Joe Williams. The Task Force members also had numerous conversations with the county administrator and assistant county administrator as well as Board of Supervisors members on issues of concern to the Task Force.

As described below the Task Force analyzed the latest audit reports of the towns and the county and reviewed the prior year and current year budgets of the county and five towns. Toms Brook, the smallest town, failed to respond to requests for data.

Members of the Task Force who prepared this report were: Terry Arnold, Charles Emswiler and Ed Hoole.

BACKGROUND

Financial Outlook - The Task Force reviewed financial data for Shenandoah County for the period FY 1981-82 through FY 1997-98 and audits (1997) and budgets (FY 1997-98 and FY 1998-99) for five of the six towns. It should be noted that approximately forty percent of students reside within town limits and that county liabilities included \$24,985,017 in school bonds and Literary Fund loans. The jurisdictions reviewed have total assets, liabilities, equity and unreserved fund balances in the 1997 audits as follows: (in Dollars)

	<u>Assets</u>	<u>Liabilities</u>	<u>Equity</u>	<u>Unreserved</u>
Shenandoah County	49,503,599	38,358,910	11,144,689	7,225,231
Town of Strasburg	16,243,482	6,956,428	9,287,054	307,755
Town of Woodstock	14,848,966	5,701,464	9,147,502	993,114
Town of New Market	7,116,596	3,156,700	3,959,896	399,009
Town of Mt Jackson	3,935,946	801,453	3,134,493	227,533
Town of Edinburg	2,329,068	612,731	1,680,905	52,061
TOTALS	93,977,657	55,623,118	38,354,539	8,927,723

Assessments - Over the period FY 1981-82 to FY 1997-98, total assessed values grew at an average annual rate of approximately 7.5 percent. Real property values grew from \$580 million to \$1.827 billion or by almost \$78 million annually while personal property and other assessments grew at annual averages of \$8.4 million and \$7 million respectively. When adjusted for inflation, real property assessments increased by more than \$845 million from 1981 to 1997. See Chart at Appendix D.

Revenues and Expenditures - In 11 of the last 16 fiscal years (FY 82 to 97), Shenandoah County general fund revenues have exceeded expenditures and in the last 3 years a reserve of over \$5 million has been built up. On the revenue side, there is cause for concern because the pressure for reduced spending means that the rate of increase in intergovernmental revenues from state and federal governments is unlikely to continue. Intergovernmental receipts have consistently been the largest single type of revenue. See Chart at Appendix D.

On the expenditure side, the largest dollar increase has been for education, but county government expenditures, less debt service, have grown at a faster rate. Debt service, as a portion of total expenditures, has grown from 3.4 percent to 9.3 percent.

County-Town Relations - The towns in Shenandoah County cooperate with each other by loaning specialized equipment and exchanging information and expertise. The county is not a major participant in these areas, but it has made specialized construction equipment at the Landfill available when requested, has included the requirements of some towns in bulk purchase contracts, has provided expertise and cooperation in handling sludge through the sanitary districts and included towns in reviews of the County Comprehensive Plan. The county also notifies towns of zoning and building requests within two miles outside the town boundaries and checks for compliance with town zoning requirements before issuing building permits. At the present time, the county's major role is to provide county wide services which are the same for all citizens regardless of boundaries and the towns depend on the county to provide backup in emergency situations. The county does share expertise which is not possessed by the smaller staffs in the towns, but only when asked, and more could be shared. Towns have not invited the county to participate in reviews of town comprehensive plans or directly contributed any funding to the efforts of the Economic Development Partnership.

Coordination and Common Services Arrangements - Many citizens feel that there is too much

local government in Shenandoah County, i.e., a county government and six town governments. Much of the justification for this situation dates back to earlier times when distance and travel difficulties fostered small local entities, but political resistance may preclude reorganization. In the absence of major reorganization such as disestablishment of towns, there are common functions which could be performed on a regional or county-wide basis. Foremost among these is provision of water and sewer services. Surface influences of water supplies and infiltration of sewer systems have pushed several towns to the limits of their systems and their ability to finance needed improvements and repairs.

Another major area of potential cooperation is public safety. The skills and expertise needed are currently shared through cooperative agreements, but manpower and financial burdens are beginning to have negative impacts. The existence of Interstate highways and growing urbanization are bringing new problems and demands. The smaller towns are not able to maintain a police presence for 24 hours a day, seven days a week and commuting patterns have impacted fire and rescue companies so that it may be only a matter of a few years before a minimum core of paid fire and rescue personnel is needed.

Risk Intervention - In the decade to come, Shenandoah County will be more crowded. Its major highways and the Interstate system will carry more traffic. Its citizens will be on the average older. Its population will be more diverse racially, ethnically and culturally. This means that everyone who lives or works in the Shenandoah Valley must confront and master new challenges and in the process deal with new human, resource and environmental conditions, or the quality of life will decline for us all.

Shenandoah County's pre-school and school-age populations may not increase very rapidly, but one set of factors is and will remain absolutely clear and virtually constant: The children who are already here, and the generation to come will need all the help they can get from their parents, families, schools, and communities to mature into productive citizens with healthy lifestyles. They will need constant love, encouragement and reinforcement willingly to invest their lives in achieving and sustaining a society that is fair, prosperous and safe for us all.

Our children have a need for the constant, considerate, supportive attention and care of grownups. They need the learning and the wisdom grownups can provide to grow and succeed in our society. Whatever view of the matter children may assert from time to time, their need is always real and always present. Grownups have basically similar needs. Our elders, many of whom may be financially better off than at any time in our history, have real needs to share in the lives of younger people, to draw on them for consideration and care, and to share with them their wisdom and life skills. This model of the human condition is as old as time, and it will not be replaced.

Efforts to deal with the breakdown of that model have led us to look to the state or the national government for means to put Humpty Dumpty back together. The public service, infrastructure, welfare, health care and social security models we have developed meet part of our needs, but nothing we have invented at state or national levels have in any way relieved us of the tasks of defining the terms and taking the primary actions needed to assure health, happiness and

productivity in our individual lives. We as mentors, parents, families, schools, and communities must work out the human condition at this level, or it never gets done.

Our transfer of authority and responsibility to state and national levels has in serious ways led us astray. Our system of courts and prisons has focused its prime attention on crime and punishment, on conviction or confession and confinement, rather than on mitigation of conditions that cause crimes and on the prevention of crimes. This strategy is crowding our court calendars, filling our prisons to the extreme and it is provoking increasing outcries that the system is unjust. Worst of all, the system is not really deterring crime or violence. Rather we are seeing more crimes, especially by youth, and gangs have multiplied in our cities, recruiting children as young as 8 and introducing them to lives of crime, violence, prostitution, and abuse of others.

Implementing Change - The voters in Shenandoah County decided in 1993 to adopt an elected school board which quickly moved to implement changes. The conscious efforts to obtain citizen input and improve administrative changes provide an excellent example of building support. Some of these efforts were:

- Community advice was sought regarding needs and criteria for a new superintendent
- Budget preparation coordination was expedited and modifications made in the internal process
- The campus concept brought significant operational changes in communications and lines of authority
- Technology was made a priority and a very competent technology team assembled and empowered
- Teachers competed to become certified in the field of "computerization"

Organization - The Constitution of Virginia requires a school board but gives it no power to raise funds. Conversely, under general law, the Board of Supervisors must fund school requirements, but has very little say in how funds are spent. These institutional stresses are currently being alleviated by personal contacts between and among the members of both boards and their supporting administrative staffs. There is no guarantee that these cooperative efforts will continue and, in fact, elected offices have been shown to promote shorter terms, loss of continuity and single issue candidates. As the challenges faced by local governments change, new solutions must be sought to issues never envisioned in the past. A critical current need is technology compatibility. There are numerous examples in the private sector of a single board of directors overseeing multi-functional enterprises largely by consolidating like functions.

FINDINGS

The conservative financial attitudes of elected officials have placed local jurisdictions in collectively sound postures for the future.

Although there is no guarantee that history will repeat, continuation of the historic average growth rates will bring a total real estate assessed value of slightly more than \$6 billion in the

year 2015 And, even when adjusted for Congressional Budget Office inflation projections, real estate assessments would grow to approximately \$4 billion in today's dollars.

Care must be taken to insure that own source revenues (i.e., local property taxes, charges and fees) are sufficient to support program increases and inflationary costs which must be supported by local funds. If the same fiscal conservatism which recent Boards of Supervisors have displayed is continued, the estimated growth in assessments discussed above should provide sufficient latitude for future boards to meet urgent needs.

The county could, at minimal cost, provide for centralized purchasing of common products and provide information and assistance in securing grants, loans and other funding resources for the towns. The greater combined buying power, possibly including Shenandoah County Public Schools, would help all the participants to address scarcity of resources through cooperation. County satellite offices in local town halls would also benefit citizens who now have to travel up to 20 miles each way to Woodstock to conduct business with the county.

There are numerous opportunities for cooperation in services delivery which should be further explored in detail.

To overcome the weakness of the strategy of crime and punishment, we must have a sharper focus on equipping our children with life skills, enabling them to cope with risky and potentially destructive situations. Everybody in our Shenandoah County communities must take part in this teaching, training, sensitizing process. Our County Government must seek to engage all adults in the county in contributing toward the development of healthy lifestyles for our children. Our county schools can and should provide the basic skills, but every adult in the communities of Shenandoah is responsible for extending and reinforcing those skills in daily life and work situations.

The actions taken by the School Board and Administration to implement change provide an excellent example for other agencies to follow. Public understanding and acceptance of these changes are extremely high.

The present separation into school, county general government and towns may not serve our future needs. There are many common or like functions which could be more effectively and efficiently performed by a single organization-either by a transfer of function or by creation of a joint organization. Some of these common functions are: building maintenance, public safety, water and sewer, waste disposal, land use and zoning, and information technology.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Elected officials and citizens maintain their conservative approaches to spending and to debt. The principles utilized by other jurisdictions which maintain Triple A bond ratings may be used as guidance: maintain a managed reserve of not less than two percent of expenditures, debt as a percent of assessed value should not exceed three percent, and debt service as a percent of

expenditures should always be less than ten percent.

The Board of Supervisors prepare a long range financial plan (10-15 years) which is reviewed and updated every other year. The plan should project revenues and expenditures by fiscal year including schools requirements and phased long term debt projections.

Shenandoah County establish procedures for obtaining requirements and including towns in purchases of common items such as gasoline, oil and lubricants and other major purchases where bulk savings may be obtained. Additional efforts should also be made by the county to make services more readily available to citizens and a county employees(s) should be designated a point of contact to advise and assist towns in obtaining grants or other outside funding.

The Board of Supervisors appoint a blue ribbon panel to study and report on the costs, benefits and feasibility of providing water and sewer services on a regional basis to the towns and other urbanized areas of the county, either through interconnection of existing systems or by a sanitation authority. The Blue Ribbon Panel should include representatives of all existing service providers as well as builders and citizens.

Working groups be established by the Board to study the benefits and costs of:

- a. Combining town police departments with the Sheriff's Department or establishing a county police force, which would replace the Sheriff and the town police.
- b. Establishing a core of paid personnel to supplement the fire and rescue volunteers.

The county government and the school system cooperate in programs to inform the Shenandoah communities and enlist their constant involvement in helping our children grow up with productive lifestyles, attitudes and values that reflect trust, mutual respect, open communications and problem solving approaches.

The Board of Supervisors and County Administrator study the efforts of the School Board and provide appropriate training to county agencies prior to undertaking any significant changes in operations or organization.

A commission be appointed with representation from all parts of the public sector and knowledge-able private citizens to study the organization and interaction of all government bodies in Shenandoah County and develop and propose needed changes, to include changes in state laws, if appropriate, and a task force under the county administrator which would ensure technology compatibility.

HUMAN SERVICES TASK FORCE

INTRODUCTION

The Human Services committee has considered the diverse area of human services in the County. We invited the directors of both public and private agencies to speak with us. The Department of Social Services, Department of Health, Northwestern Community Services Board, Shenandoah Alliance for Shelter, Response Inc, (Domestic Violence), Shenandoah County Pregnancy Center, Pastoral Counseling Services, and Perry-Judd's, Human Resource Department shared their concerns and future goals.

Some agencies cover a regional area based on Planning District Seven, while others are local entities. The Department of Health, Northwestern Community Services Board and Perry-Judd's Press, have formal long-range plans, the majority did not.

An over-view of the above agencies will be described, an analysis of the current programs and the projected needs of the County over the next fifteen years will be provided. We will take into account, the projected fifteen percent increase in the general population, along with the specialized needs of our county citizens, pregnant women, children, teenagers, young adults, adults, and the elderly.

Human Services Task Force members were: Patricia Maier and Darlene Warsing, co-chairs; Charles Emswiler, Judy French, Richard Powell, Rev. Charles Symons and Theresa Hoover.

VISION STATEMENT FOR THE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

To advise and offer guidance to the Shenandoah County Commission on the Future in developing a seamless system of human services for our children, youth, families, the elderly and individual Shenandoah County residents.

BACKGROUND AND FINDINGS

We consulted with a number of persons regarding the adequacy of human services in Shenandoah County. We concluded that Shenandoah County compares favorably with other counties of similar size and rural characteristics, but there are many unmet needs. Rapid and unplanned growth of the county will impact negatively on the ability of both the public and private sector to meet the needs for human services and will strain our resources.

The committee identified the cornerstones of essential human services for the citizens of Shenandoah County. They include Health, physical and mental, Social Services, Education, Transportation to access services and employment opportunities, access to respite care and retirement options.

Health

Lord Fairfax Department of Health Director, Dr. Mohammed Khodr reported that Shenandoah County is facing increased demands for comprehensive, affordable health care. The County has a high rate of heart disease, cancer, and a significant rate of chronic respiratory diseases, related to tobacco and environmental factors.

Many low paying jobs have limited or non-existent health benefits. Poor health limits employment opportunities. Employers who conduct business in our county must provide comprehensive insurance coverage for their employees. Health, Mental Health, Disability and Substance Abuse treatment must be included to ease the demand on localities to pay for working citizen's health needs. Poor health limits employment opportunities. Sick children mean a parent must stay home and miss work. This sets up a vicious cycle, often resulting in job loss, adding to the welfare rolls.

Shenandoah County has a small community hospital with limited options. County residents often travel to Winchester or Harrisonburg for specialty medical care. This results in lower patient usage of our local hospital. The Shenandoah Health Partnership including the Health Department, Shenandoah Memorial Hospital, Shentel, Shenandoah Alliance for Shelter, Department of Social Services, and other interested parties have completed a community needs assessment and identified three (3) priority populations.

1. The Underinsured
2. The Uninsured
3. Families

The Shenandoah Health Partnership has formed a steering committee to study the feasibility of developing a Free Medical Clinic to provide healthcare to the poor and elderly and will establish a sliding fee for the uninsured. A primary care clinic is also needed to provide primary health care to Medicaid clients, and to provide medical care in the home of the elderly and disabled. Dental care for Medicaid patients is virtually non-existent in our county. There is one dentist presently serving Medicaid clients. An expansion of the free Medical Clinic to include dentistry is vital.

Our environment has a natural beauty, but it is very fragile. The Health Department is very concerned that our ground water supply will continue to be contaminated. The underlying factor is the Karst structure and its impact on the ground water. The use of alternative septic systems, coupled with the lack of continued inspections and the need for additional inspectors, leaves us vulnerable. We must protect our water supply to maintain the health of both the citizens and the economy.

There is a pressing need to find an agency, organization, or foundation that will fund a part time coordinator's position for the Health Partnership. This would allow the coordinator to seek grants and future funding.

Social Services

John Ayers, Director of Social Services, reported that in 1996, 6.2% of the county residents received Medicaid. The Medicaid enrollment on September 1, 1998 was 1,480. If current percentages is projected to 2015, county residents on Medicaid would range from 2,506 to 3,600. He reported that 62 families receive Temporary Assistance To Needy Families benefits, 505 individuals receive fuel assistance, 260 individuals receive rental assistance, and 710 households receive food stamps.

The new Virginia Children's Medical Security Insurance Plan (VACMSIP) has a new two page enrollment form, a recipient handbook, and a new toll-free number, 1-877-VA-CMSIP, ready for distribution this month. This new Virginia Child Health Medicaid program will permit more children and working families to enroll. The number of Medicaid recipients will certainly increase, but the health and well being of our youngest citizens will also increase. It is recognized that every dollar of prevention saves four dollars in remedial services.

The Healthy Families Initiative is just moving into implementation. The new Program Coordinator/Support Worker, Ms. Lori Jones has been hired and the enrollment of the first families began in September, 1998. This program seeks to prevent neglect and abuse of young children by educating and mentoring first time parents. Education will be provided for new parents in nurturing and parenting their newborn. Each support worker will carry a case load of 10 to 15 families. A second part time Support Worker will be added shortly. The Shenandoah Memorial Hospital had 176 births in 1997 and is projecting 233 births this year. This increase reflects the growth of young families in the county.

Mental Health

Northwestern Community Services Board's Executive Director, David Ziegler, reported that with the population increase comes increased demands for services. Mental illness will strike 4 in 10 of our citizens during their lifetime.

Based on the projected population of 42,000 to 45,000 county residents by 2015, 16,800 residents may face the impact of mental illness in themselves or the family.

Complicating the issue is the concerted cost shifting from federal and state dollars to the localities. This cost shifting could cost the county 20% to 30% of the costs, versus the 8% to 10% current support to human services agencies.

Northwestern Community Services Board offers a menu of services to the public. The three (3) primary divisions are the Division of Behavioral Health and Wellness, Division of Continuing Care and the Division of Children, Youth and Families.

Under these divisions are programs offering prevention and early intervention; mental health clinics; emergency services; Virginia House, a crisis intervention residential program for adults; Shenandoah House, the soon to be opened residential program for adolescents; Parent-Infant Education; PIE, for Infants and Toddlers with Developmental Delays and Substance Abuse

prevention programs for teens, women, and men.

Increased needs for the child and adolescent population continues to impact our community. Out of home and community placements cost upwards of \$200,000.00 per child per year. Shenandoah County needs to develop community connections and linkages to support people in crisis.

Daycare: Infancy Through Old Age

The era of considering day care as baby sitting for children is over. In this time of both parents working outside the home, increased single parent homes and the elderly population growing older and feebler, the county must begin to look at ways to meet the needs of its citizens.

The new knowledge regarding the plasticity of the infant brain, leaves the critical influence of the first three years no longer in doubt. Developmentally appropriate daycare is needed for all children, whether it is provided to the youngest infant or the after school care for the elementary student.

There is a lack of quality day care in our county. There is a great need for day care options, ranging from family day care, center-based day care, before and after school care and overnight care for parents working the midnight shift. Without reliable child care, employers face higher absenteeism.

Many parents work a 10 to 12 hour shift. This leaves many elementary and middle school children going home to an empty house. Increased numbers of parents work out of the county. When you add travel time for parents to reach their place of employment and return home, the child may spend the majority of his/her time alone. When an area has a large number of "latch-key kids", juvenile crime rates increase. There is no one at home to help with homework, limited opportunities to socialize with their friends and too much empty time to spend in front of the TV. Summertime only increases the need for care for the older child. Churches, the County Parks and Recreation Department, local employers and the schools should explore options and partnerships to fill the need. Mentoring programs with senior citizen volunteers to help with homework, sports and to spend time one on one could be some options to the "latch-key" dilemma.

With the general population of the USA aging and living longer, daycare also becomes a need for the "sandwich families"; those working families which require day care for their children, but also need to find dependable care for their elderly parent or family member. Support programs that include respite opportunities to those who care for a disabled or elderly parent are solely needed in Shenandoah County.

Transportation and Shelter

Transportation is a factor that crosses all the human services needs. The lack of transportation limits the accessibility of all services. With the high elderly population, the need increases as

driving skills decline. Shenandoah County does not have a public transportation system or even a Medicaid Cab. This inhibits the ability of the County citizens to seek medical care.

One of the drawbacks to the lack of transportation in Shenandoah County is the difficulty the unemployed find in commuting to an employment office, the nearest ones being in Harrisonburg, Winchester and Front Royal. Our county needs an employment office, initially part-time, growing into a full time office as local businesses transfer their employment needs to the county. This would encourage businesses to employ local persons rather than out of county persons as is often the case now.

The nearest shelter for the homeless is either in Winchester, 35 miles North, or Harrisonburg, 35 miles to the South. The greatest need for emergency shelter is for families, women, and teen age girls and boys. The lack of public transportation prohibits the purchase of a bus ticket to enable the homeless to reach emergency shelter.

Retirement

There is a need for more retirement facilities to meet the demand of independent living apartments and rooms that can be shared by man and wife, and greater availability of options for the increasing numbers of active retirees moving to the county. A Community Center available for all citizens could be attached to a retirement facility.

A greater effort to welcome the retired people coming to live in our county is recommended. They are usually highly skilled, professional, active people, eager to be a part of the community. This is where we will find the source for volunteers in the literacy programs, after school mentoring programs, and other county-wide programs.

Education

We found this theme revisited through our meetings with both the public and private sector. Shenandoah County has a high drop out rate of 9th to 12th graders. We rank 102 out of 135 regions in the state. Without education, job choices are limited. Limited employment opportunities equal lower paying jobs. Many low paying jobs have limited or no health care benefits.

Shenandoah County schools must develop new curricula aimed at meeting the requirements of the job markets of 2010. This means increased computer skills, English, Math, Graphic Arts, and writing ability. A course in work-place etiquette, employee responsibility and interview skills should be the requirement of every high school student. Perry-Judd Inc. employs 700+ full time employees. Even with one of the highest pay scales, they have difficulty in finding applicants with employable job skills and good job ethics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Hire a Human Resources Coordinator for the county, to ensure that programs are

developed; and most importantly, maintain programs through local support. Grant writing skills are needed as this position could build coalitions to work together, (example Shenandoah Health Partnership), and pursue funding for a Free Medical and Dental Clinic.

2. Publish a County Resource Manual and keep it current. This could be part of the Human Resources Coordinator's responsibilities.
3. Adapt playground facilities for access by children and adults with disabilities.
4. Establish diverse retirement facilities to meet the needs of active retirees, with living arrangements to care for a disabled spouse without the active spouse having to live in a separate location.
5. Provide emergency shelter for families, women, and teens.
6. Encourage and participate in the formation of county partnerships, where both public and private agencies, industry, schools and local supporters coordinate and collaborate to maximize resources and meet public needs. This could include developing transportation options, up to date job training, respite care and other needed services.
7. Provide day care and respite care for the disabled and the elderly. This will enable working adults to meet the demands of the workplace, assured that adequate care is provided for their family members. This will decrease the number of elderly and disabled people on public assistance.
8. Respect and welcome cultural diversity in the community. Support Adult Literacy programs, English as a Second Language programs, and actively seek cultural diversity in county government and community events. Possibly encourage a Cultural Event at the Fair, displaying crafts, music and dances.
9. Establish a Community Health Center, possibly attached to the Free Medical and Dental Clinic, the hospital or a retirement complex where county residents can access a heated swimming pool, exercise equipment, meeting rooms.
10. Seek the acquisition of clean industry offering good paying jobs with advancement possibilities. Encourage our youth to remain in our county to work and raise their families. Ensure employers will provide adequate health insurance.
11. Prepare for the growing human services demands of the next 15 years. Begin dialogue with the state government to avoid unrealistic cost shifting to the localities, of state funded mandates.
12. Continue to seek public input in county government.

LEISURE SERVICES TASK FORCE

BACKGROUND

Believing that continuing to attract retirees to the county is a better alternative to county well being than importing industry, especially low paying industry, the Leisure Services Task Force concentrated its study on what the county could offer that would encourage this trend in addition to better serving our current population, especially our youth and our aged.

County-wide leisure activities could promote wider acquaintance and thus help solve two of the county's major problems: a) lack of understanding between "old-timers" and incoming retirees, and b) narrow-minded town loyalty.

Consulting with a wide variety of citizenry as well as staff of the Shenandoah County Hospital, the Parks & Recreation Department Advisory Council, the leaders of the county's musical and theater groups and various volunteer organizations, we considered the leisure activities that are available and the improvements/additions that should be made, with particular emphasis on changes the county could/should effect.

Past experience in efforts to promote a community center clearly demonstrated that any cultural improvements, such as an auditorium, a wellness center and most other activities improving leisure services, will require county wide support following a detailed analysis of needs, goals and affordability.

Members: Linda Murphy, Kenneth Pruett, Steve Shaffer, and Jeanne Walton

FINDINGS

Auditorium(s) for Cultural Events

The County needs one auditorium large enough to accommodate meetings such as school graduations (seating 800+) with a stage and backstage room. Such a facility would enhance possibilities for importing musical and theatrical presentations as well as accommodating presentations of our local talent (e.g., Masterworks Chorus and Valley Educational Center for the Creative Arts) as well as school performances.

Library Facilities

Anticipated construction of the new county library within the next two years together with computerization of the community libraries in the system will meet current needs. The library system expects to meet future needs by combining Library Foundation and county support.

Volunteer Coordination

A county-wide scheme matching volunteers with needs/opportunities in the county's agencies, schools, libraries, sports programs, museums, charities, etc., would have three benefits:

- a. better utilization of volunteer talent. (A lot of the relatively young retirees moving in have wonderful talents to share as well as energy and would welcome assistance in finding a niche where they could be useful.)
- b. better integration of newcomers into the community. (Working together, the "locals" and the newcomers would appreciate each other more. The natives would be reassured that the newcomers plan not to "change" the county but moved here because they like it the way it is, also that the retirees will support school improvement as a commitment to the future despite having no children attending them.)
- c. increasing the work force without increasing the budget.

Exercise Facilities

Present school, community and private facilities are inadequate. Highest priority is an all-year pool. An indoor track and games courts are also needed.

Recreational Facilities, Sport Programs and Educational and Cultural Events

The County Parks and Recreation Department is currently reorganizing to make their facilities and activity programs more visible to the public. Newsletters will be used as well as current announcements in local papers to inform citizens of services available. Additional activities, such as golf and archery, is desired; together with information on hiking and biking, educational tours and cultural events.

In the course of our discussion, other projects that could be accomplished with volunteers were seen as overlapping with other task force areas and perhaps better handled by them. For example, greeting new residents with a "welcome wagon" and a county guide (like the one published annually in the Northern Virginia Daily, with names of people to contact in government and non-government areas), should also be available to all citizens in some county office. The Economic Development Task Force's recommended expansion of tourism and the possibility of restoring train service--either "recreational" or to provide transport to non-drivers for a number of other purposes -- obviously would also provide wonderful leisure activities for our citizens.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The supervisors should appoint a committee now to consider construction of an auditorium as

an adjunct to a school and/or as a Parks & Recreation project and/or with private financial support. Construction should be under way within five years.

The supervisors should continue support to the Shenandoah County Library System to establish a central library facility, automate community libraries, and should include funds in future annual budgets to operate the library system.

The supervisors should add a volunteer clearing house to the duties of whichever agency they think most appropriate (e.g., the Economic Development director, the Office of Tourism, the Parks and Recreation Department, or the Chamber of Commerce) to coordinate this project.

The county administration should work with and cooperate with the Shenandoah Memorial Hospital to study the need for facilities such as a wellness center that would include physical rehabilitation to include a therapy pool. The study should investigate both the feasibility and affordability of such a facility.

The supervisors should encourage the schools and the Parks and Recreation Department to expand opportunities in recreational activities, sport programs and educational trips.

A scheduled van escort service should be maintained, run by volunteers, and possibly coordinated by the Parks and Recreation Department.

The Board of Supervisors should provide the required personnel and funding to the Parks and Recreation Department to support major improvements in cultural and educational activities and encourage closer supervision of recreation and sport programs.

PUBLIC SAFETY TASK FORCE

INTRODUCTION

The Public Safety Task Force considered the following areas of public service in the county; Fire, Rescue, and Law Enforcement which includes the criminal and corrections processes. This report will review Fire and Rescue as one major topic, and Law Enforcement as the other, since many of the components of the two vary significantly, including staffing and funding. An inventory of the current situation for Fire and Rescue is provided first, then an analysis of the current adequacy of that service and an estimate of funds needed to bring service up to a standard level, if necessary, is made. Subsequently, the projected cost of continuing adequate fire and rescue services over the next fifteen years will be provided, taking into account the expected thirty percent increase in population, using current dollar value. Since a quantitative analysis and cost projection for the components of Law Enforcement are somewhat more complex, and due to the need for professional engineering and security consultation, no such quantitative data will be attempted for that portion of this report.

Task Force Members: William Mullikin (Chairman), Jack Ekey, Herbert Parker, Robert Showman.

FIRE AND RESCUE

BACKGROUND AND FINDINGS

We have consulted with a number of persons regarding the adequacy of fire and rescue services in the county as of 1998. We conclude that the current level of service in Shenandoah County compares favorably with other counties of similar size and rural characteristics. Response times and fire insurance rates equate to neighboring counties including Warren and Rockingham. We have consulted the Shenandoah Mutual Fire Insurance Company (Calvin Swartz) and Shenvalley Insurance (Kelly Stauff) in making these comparisons. Our report has also been reviewed by the County Fire and Rescue Chiefs Committee. Special thanks to Mike Butler of the Lord Fairfax EMS Council for all the help and information he provided. The task force, however, is solely responsible for all conclusions, findings, and recommendations.

Having concluded that our fire and rescue services are acceptable by comparison with those in similar communities, what additional costs will be required to continue these services over the next fifteen years?

Equipment: At this time, the total approximate value of equipment and buildings for fire and rescue services, as shown on county insurance policies is:

Vehicles	Equipment	Structures	<u>Total</u>
\$10,000,000	\$1,250,000	\$6,340,000	\$17,590,000

Assuming the current level of capital equipment is appropriate, and assuming a generally accepted standard of five percent annual repair and replacement cost of the total value, \$879,500 will be required each year, or \$13,192,500 during fifteen years, to retain the current state of readiness. If the population increases about two percent per year, \$5,277,000 will be needed over the next fifteen years to provide buildings and equipment at the current level, for the increased population. The total cost to maintain existing equipment and provide for the increased population over the next fifteen years then, is estimated at \$18,469,500.

The annual cost of full time personnel at the county and regional level, who participate in fire and rescue (County Fire Marshal, Regional EMS Council, County Dispatch), must to be added to the total figure. We estimate the fire and rescue share of the annual cost of these current full time employees to be \$192,998. This amount includes costs of pensions, medical insurance, etc. The fifteen year cost is \$2,894,970. As with equipment costs, we assume a 2% increase each year, over the next fifteen years, to cover the increase in population, or \$868,500. This, added to the equipment costs described above, brings the estimated additional gross cost to the county, and the towns in the county, to \$22,232,970 over the next fifteen years, in order to continue fire and rescue services at current levels.

Each year, the county currently receives and transfers to the various companies, a total of \$40,270 in state aid. No regular federal funds are received, but some grants are obtained. Taking these into account, the additional fifteen year county and town cost is reduced by \$604,050 to \$21,628,920. This amount which, as stated, is over and above current levels of support, must be supplied either through voluntary donations to, and/or fund raising efforts by the various squads, or by county and town taxation.

\$21,628,920 is a significant sum but since new replacement insurance values were used as a basis to arrive at that amount, and some replacement equipment will be used purchases, that figure is likely to be high. Also, as we have previously indicated, the current level of Fire and Rescue equipment and facilities may or may not be appropriate. If it is excessive, clearly replacement cost may be further reduced. As the county and towns become more involved with these costs, they may wish to use the assistance of state emergency services offices, as the county did in the case of the Emergency Operations Center analysis.

Manning and Deployment of Personnel:

Within all suburban-rural counties, the issue of career personnel has become a focal point as the makeup of counties change, both economically and socially.

At present, personnel levels and delivery of services within Shenandoah County are acceptable. Critical to this level of operation is retention of the volunteer system. All counties which have either part time or career employees have obtained these people through necessity. County government should take immediate steps to assure retention of the present volunteer system, or face the inevitable fact that career personnel will be required. Warning signs are already evident within the rescue companies. Abnormal response times, or the lack of response by a rescue company, indicates a possible problem with personnel manning.

To retain the present volunteer system, the county needs to focus on two areas. First is financial assistance to fire and rescue companies. Second are programs to facilitate the recruitment and retention of volunteers. Listed below is a comparison of annual payments to each individual fire and rescue company within our adjacent counties:

<u>County</u>	<u>Yearly allotment</u>
Shenandoah County	\$16,111
Warren County	\$60,000
Frederick County	\$58,000
Rockingham County	\$32,000
Page County	\$25,000

These figures do not include insurance benefits, or wage figures for career personnel, which all counties except Shenandoah and Page currently have. Neither do they take into account, contributions made by town governments to town fire departments and rescue squads. The latter have been left out since the contributions by Shenandoah County towns pretty much equate to the contributions of towns in other county jurisdictions, taking into consideration the size of the towns involved. Thus, the disparity in support funding really lies at the county level, with Shenandoah County support more than 55% less than that of the next lowest county (Page), and more than 171% less than that of the average of the four adjacent counties.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Shenandoah County allot each fire and rescue company at least an amount equal to the next lowest of surrounding counties (\$25,000 - Page), and gradually increase support to an amount that compares more favorably with other surrounding counties. Star Tannery would be an exception, with their amount being pro rated as is now done. Additional funding by the county will relieve volunteers from some of their fund raising tasks, and allow them to concentrate on fire and rescue. Obviously, it is to the advantage of the county, the towns, and taxpayer residents to continue the volunteer system, and every reasonable opportunity should be taken to ensure and support that continuance.

Programs should be developed to facilitate the recruitment and retention of County Fire and Rescue Company volunteers. A system of incentives and recognition is integral to such programs and might include some of the following:

1. Personal property tax relief for private vehicles of volunteers;
2. Mileage reimbursement by the county for the use of private vehicles en route to emergency sites;
3. Medical, workers' compensation, and life insurance coverage;
4. A program, available in some counties, whereby volunteer contributions to a 401K-type

of fund are matched by county contributions (known in some instances as a Longevity Awards Service Program);

5. Immediately available, professional counseling for volunteers who may suffer from volunteer-related post-traumatic stress disorder;
6. Tuition reimbursement for successful completion of educational courses related to volunteer activities;
7. Establishment of a section for EMS and Fire-related reference material at the new county library that would provide county volunteers, and the public who might be interested, with information on a circulating basis;
8. Encouragement of employer support for fire and rescue volunteers. We recommend that members of the Board of Supervisors Public Safety Committee visit, at least with larger employers in the county, to encourage them to support, and communicate their support, to county volunteer-employees. Also, to urge employers to encourage their employees, who might have desirable skills and interest, to become involved as volunteers in county fire and rescue activities.
9. County public safety officials might prepare written material for use by realtors and developers in helping to make new county residents familiar with Shenandoah County Fire and Rescue volunteerism, and to ask for the support of local companies whenever possible. New county residents, relocating particularly from urban locations where Fire and Rescue service is provided by paid personnel, are often unaware of the volunteer system. Such literature would very likely also be useful in further educating veteran county residents.
10. A countywide awards banquet for all county Fire and Rescue volunteers at which each company would present annual awards stressing the value, significance, heroism, and selflessness of volunteers and the volunteer protection system. Media representation would be encouraged in order to keep the public better informed.
11. Finally, each Fire and Rescue Company should form a Recruitment and Retention Committee, if they have not already done so. Those committees would be responsible for updating existing, and creating, new programs.

Note: Many of the above ideas were obtained from an excellent paper prepared by Mike Butler, Executive Director, Lord Fairfax Emergency Medical Services Council, updated in 1998, entitled "The Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Emergency Medical Services Personnel".

Fire and Rescue services in Shenandoah County reflect a large investment of both capital and manpower. To properly manage this investment, a coordinator is needed. The county government should take steps to create a position of coordinator for all Fire and Rescue

companies. This manager would serve as a combination public education officer, training officer, purchasing coordinator, grants coordinator and liaison officer. The liaison role component of this position would represent issues of the Fire and Rescue companies to county government. There is no need for this person to participate in day-to-day operations, as this is adequately handled by each individual company. Further, the task force recognizes that in the future, perhaps sooner than we would like, additional full time personnel may be required for both Fire and Rescue companies; in that event the coordinator would be very valuable to the county and towns by helping to assess and satisfy such needs.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

BACKGROUND

Law Enforcement in Shenandoah County is provided primarily, by the Shenandoah County Sheriff's Office, and the police departments of the towns of Edinburg, Mt. Jackson, New Market, Strasburg, and Woodstock. While there is some activity by the Virginia State Police and, to a much lesser degree, the National Forest Service, it is minimal and episodic. Accordingly, neither agency will be considered as a factor in this report, although it should be noted that the State Police provide important technical, advisory, and infrequent manpower backup when needed and/or available. Currently, there is a mutual aid agreement and good working relationships between the Sheriff's Office and four of the above-mentioned towns that provide for interjurisdictional activity; as of this writing, Strasburg is not party to such an agreement. While town police department activities consist of traditional law enforcement, citizen requests for assistance, and citizen complaints, the Sheriff's Office has three distinct functions; law enforcement, corrections/jail, and the civil process which includes bailiff and process-serving activities. Further, while town police departments are staffed and funded largely by the towns, about seventy nine percent of the Sheriff's Office budget is funded by the state, and to a lesser extent, federal governments. Accordingly, staffing and funding of the Sheriff's Office is largely determined by historically-based state staffing standards (county population or activity level).

Task force findings in this section are mostly based on several meetings with Sheriff Green, other officials on his staff, the police chief or his representative of all of the towns except Strasburg, a representative of the Commonwealth Attorney's office, and tours and observations of court and jail facilities. Also, involvement by a member of the task force with law enforcement in various locations within the United States and other countries played a small part.

FINDINGS

Clearly, the future activity of Law Enforcement within Shenandoah County will be significantly influenced by the type of economic development and the demographics of population growth within, and around, the county.

While the Sheriff's Office and town police departments have, in the past, had a generally positive

working relationship, it has been informal and loosely structured. Within the past few years, that has improved and seems to be headed in the right direction. Still, there is room for improvement.

Court and prosecution facilities are inadequate, functionally deficient, virtually void of prudent safety and security precautions, and do not appear to be at a standard commensurate with some other surrounding jurisdictions. Proximity and easy accessibility among court participants, including hostile and potentially dangerous parties, is very concerning and is presently being only partially addressed by manpower intensive actions on the part of the Sheriff's Office. Unless corrective action is taken that, at a minimum, addresses the safety and security issues, a serious incident is predictable. It is unlikely the safety and security issues can be corrected without addressing some of the adequacy and functional matters.

Jail facilities, particularly support facilities, are deficient. While prisoner detention areas are currently adequate with an occupancy rate of about ninety percent, they are, at best, somber and in marginal condition. However, there is a need for additional and improved support facilities. Indeed, the present infirmary should probably be condemned. Further, at the present, there is no capability for juvenile holding or detention within the County. Juveniles requiring even temporary detention must either be transported out of the County, or be personally supervised by a law enforcement officer, taking the officer away from other, more important duty.

It appears that half or more of the arrests made in Shenandoah County are directly, or indirectly, related to alcohol and/or drug abuse.

There seems to be more than necessary bureaucracy associated with the purchasing and disbursement processes within the Sheriff's Office, and very likely, other county offices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Sheriff's Office should become an integral part of the economic planning and development process in Shenandoah County. Law Enforcement input could assist with analyzing and projecting the impact of various types of development and growth, and also help project, more accurately, Law Enforcement activity within the County.

The county should designate a chief law enforcement officer who would be charged with the responsibility to coordinate and enhance Law Enforcement activity within the county with all other Law Enforcement agencies, particularly the five town police departments. Presumably, that would be the Shenandoah County Sheriff. While the chief law enforcement officer might not, but desirably would, have some functional direction over town departments, recommendations and reports could be made to appropriate town and county officials in order to assist with the evaluation and direction of law enforcement within both the county and the towns. The chief law enforcement officer might also be the principal county contact for other state and federal law enforcement agencies. In any event, increased and formalized attention should be given to enhancing the collective effectiveness and efficiency of county and town law enforcement activities.

The county should, in a timely fashion, commission a professional county court and jail facility engineering study that will include space, functional, and safety and security requirements; both short and long term. It is strongly suggested this recommendation be given high priority. Such a study should include provision for juvenile holding and, perhaps, detention. Of course, to the extent practical, the more significant historical aspects of the buildings, including the architecture should be respected. Further, since the county currently maintains the old courtroom for historical purposes, while receiving little or no functional benefit or value, it would seem desirable to include an appropriate use of that area in the study and redesign action plan. Relocation of certain non-judicial county offices and staff to the enlarged, retrofitted Woodstock Middle School building should provide opportunities formerly not available for court purposes.

While this task force is not expert on drug and alcohol prevention programs, it is evident there is a need for additional emphasis and attention to both educational and rehabilitative proactive programs, perhaps in schools, businesses, and county social services. At least one member of the task force concludes that the Commonwealth's somewhat laissez-faire attitude toward the tobacco industry may be exacerbating the drug and alcohol issue, since there is evidence to suggest there is a connection between the use of tobacco and alcohol and/or drugs, particularly the latter. Accordingly, the task force urges county officials to press state officials for more aggressive measures to combat the use of tobacco among youth, and we propose that county law enforcement aggressively enforce existing and future laws related to the illegal use of tobacco by underage users.

A review of approval levels for purchasing and disbursements within the Sheriff's Office is appropriate. While current restrictions may be connected with past problems, the present process is simply too restrictive, time-consuming, and sometimes counterproductive. Less restrictive approval levels, backed by appropriate auditing, are very likely to improve efficiency and morale, and produce some cost savings by allowing staff to exercise more judgement, particularly in the purchasing and payment processes of mundane items.

The last recommendation of the Public Safety Task Force deals with the County Emergency Operations Center, which has the responsibility of dispatching and deploying both Fire and Rescue and Law Enforcement resources. Basically, the present facility is inadequate compared to any reasonable standard, and future expansion or improvement of the existing facility is probably not feasible. A technical evaluation report was completed in April, 1997, by the Virginia Fire Services Board and the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. That comprehensive report covers all aspects of the dispatch operation, and it would be redundant to further elaborate in this report. Since timing is of the essence, the task force recommends that the County Emergency Operations Center be included in the overall plan that has certain county functions and staff transferring to the former Woodstock Middle School facility.

APPENDIX A

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Additional Comments of Shirley Maxwell

The report of the Commission on the Future is generally excellent. However, I would voice again my concern that the recommendation that water and sewer service be provided along the entire Route 11 corridor – and that residential, industrial, and commercial development be concentrated there – is at odds with recommendations elsewhere in the report that the historic and aesthetic values of open space and existing structures along US Route 11 must be preserved and enhanced. In the absence not only of an updated comprehensive plan, but also of the strong zoning ordinance needed to enforce such a plan, and give the past tendency of the county's Board of Zoning Appeals to grant variances for questionable uses, the presence of water and sewer service outside the incorporated areas is surely an invitation to uncontrolled and inappropriate development. Although there is good reason to recommend coordinated water and waste management service throughout the county, and the Unified Service District concept is a sound one, I do not believe that it requires "plumbing" the length of US Route 11. I would suggest that water and sewer services be extended only *after* the areas for which they are requested have been annexed by an existing service area.

APPENDIX B

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Table I-1
Sewage Treatment**

Districts	Type of Plant	Current Capacity (gals/day)	Current Usage Rate (gals/day)	Planned Improvements	2015 Projected Usage Rate
Town of Strasburg	Secondary Treatment	975,000	600,000	Reduce I & I	25% increase over current usage
Toms Brook Sanitary District	Secondary Treatment	189,000	90,000		25% increase over current usage
Town of Woodstock	Secondary Treatment	1,000,000	650,000	None	25% increase over current usage
Town of Edinburg	Secondary Treatment	175,000	120,000	Upgrade sewer lines	25% increase over current usage
Town of Mt. Jackson	Secondary Treatment	200,000	160,000	To double the existing capacity. They have a permit for 400,000 gals per day. County has agreed to pay for the added capacity.	25% increase over current usage
Town of New Market	Secondary Treatment	500,000	483,000	Upgrade sewer lines and reduce I & I.	25% increase over current usage
Stoney Creek Sanitary District	Secondary Treatment	600,000	140,000	Reduce I & I in next 10 - 15 years. Plan to replace 25 year old tanks currently in the system.	25% increase over current usage

Infrastructure Sub-Committee Report

**Table I-2
Water Supply**

Districts	Source	Current Capacity (gals/day)	Current Usage Rate (gals/day)	Storage Capacity (gals)	Planned Improvements	2015 Projected Usage Rate
Town of Strasburg	River	1,100,000	600,000	1,250,000	Future planned improvements include adding 2,000,000 gals of storage and additional water lines. Add additional water lines.	25% increase over current usage
Toms Brook Sanitary District	2 - Wells	170,000	100,000	250,000		25% increase over current usage
Town of Woodstock	River	1,800,000	750,000	1,250,000	Future improvements will involve added storage and upgraded water lines.	25% increase over current usage
Town of Edinburg	2 - Wells and a Filtration plant	250,000	140,000	875,000	Future planned improvements include upsizing the smaller lines.	25% increase over current usage
Town of Mt. Jackson	3 - Wells with 1 - Well in reserve	370,000	320,000	3,000,000	Add Well number 6. If additional Water is required it will be obtained from other sources.	25% increase over current usage
Town of New Market	5 - Wells and a MEMCO micro-filtration plant	910,000	545,000	500,000	All new wells will be added to the new filtration system.	25% increase over current usage
Stoney Creek Sanitary District	7 -Wells with chemical filtration for iron and manganese	269,000	140,000	433,000	Exploring for additional water sources in the National Forrest	25% increase over current usage

Table I-3

Roads and Bridges¹

Road Designation	Location	Comments
I - 81	Rockingham CL to Warren CL	This road is carrying 30,000 to 40,000 vehicles per day with approximately 30% of these being trucks. The vehicles per day coupled with the amount of trucks meets or exceeds the original design capacity for this road. There is currently a study being performed to determine the future needs of this road as far as additional lanes, Interchanges, etc. projected on the expected volumes of traffic for the year 2020.
Route 11	Rockingham CL to Warren CL	<p>Shenandoah county and the Town of Woodstock have requested an additional interchange on the north end of Woodstock to improve traffic flow on Route 11 within the town limits. To date, this has not been approved.</p> <p>Encountering some congestion through local towns and one truss bridge south of Mount Jackson which is currently on posted. By the year 2015, there could be a need to upgrade or replace this bridge. Furthermore, we are receiving impacts at the route 11/I-81 Strasburg interchange due to development.</p> <p>There is a drainage problem on Route 11 in the town of Maurertown with flooding occurring periodically. We have requested funding for improvements to this area. To date, we have been unable to allocate funds for this project due to higher priorities.</p>
Route 42	Rockingham CL to Route 11 in Woodstock	<p>We plan to replace the bridge at the intersection of Route 263 over Mill Creek. We hope to advertise this project in the beginning of 1999 and complete construction in the year 2000. No real capacity problems from Rockingham County line to Route 675 at Columbia furnace. From Route 675 at Columbia furnace to 0.5 miles south of I-81, we are encountering growth due to housing, the Rocco poultry plant, etc.. The road is currently needing the needs however, if growth continues, the road may exceed its capacity in the reasonable near future.</p> <p>We are encountering capacity problems from 0.5 miles south of Interstate 81 to Route 11 due to the I-81 Interchange, commercial development, and it will soon be impacted by the addition of Wal-Mart shopping center.</p>
Route 263	Route 11 in Mt. Jackson to Orkney Springs	Currently, there are no significant congestion problems. However, during the winter season, there is a significant amount of traffic on this section of road traveling to the Bryce resort. This road has mountainous terrain between Route 42 and Basye with narrow shoulders which causes some problem during hazardous weather conditions.
Route 292	Route 11 to West side of I-81 in Mt Jackson	This road currently has capacity problems due to development. We have requested funding upgrade this section road in the primary construction plan however, to date, this has not been approved due to other considerations throughout the Staunton district.

¹ All Data contained in Table I - 3 was furnished by VDOT

Table I-3 (con't)

Road Designation	Location	Comments
Route 623	Route 675 at Columbia Furnace to Route 55	This section of road is currently handling the amount of traffic sufficiently. We have a project between Route 605 at St. Luke to Route 604 which should be under construction around 2005, to upgrade this section are road, improve horizontal and vertical alignment.
Route 614	Route 42 at Forestville to Route 11 at Bowman's Crossing	The road is adequate for the amount of traffic. There are several sections however which need to be addressed: Route 42 to Route 263 -- There are times there is quite a bit of truck traffic due to the quarry operations or the plant makes plant near the Rockingham county line. Route 263 to Route 703 -- There is occasionally quite a bit traffic on this section of road due to traffic short cutting from I-81 going to Bryce resort. On this particular section of road, there are several sharp curves which have been identified for potential improvements for better alignment in the next three to four years. Route 703 to Route 707 -- There are several sharp curves in this section which have been identified for improvement by the year 2001.
Route 675	I-81 in Edinburg to WVA Line	This section of road has two 10 ton posted bridges, one on the east side of Route 42 and one on the west side of Route 42. The one on the west side can be detoured easily. Also, from route 717 to the WVA line is a mountainous area with steep grades and narrow shoulders. The road is currently adequate for the amount of traffic it is carrying with the exception of the 10 ton bridges.
Route 678	Warren CL at Waterlick to south of Kings Crossing	This road does not have any posted bridges. There is a location with narrow shoulders. This road is adequate for the current traffic volume.
Route 600	Route 11 in Maurertown west to Route 623	No posted bridges. It has several sharp curves from Route 642 to route 623, particularly in the Saumsville area. However, the road is adequate for the current traffic volume.
Route 600	Route 623 to Frederick CL (Cedar Creek)	This road goes over the mountain with sharp curves and narrow shoulders. VDOT is considering installing additional delineators and potentially additional guardrail at selected locations on the mountain, in the future. Once into Cedar Creek Valley, the road has sections of narrow shoulders, however, it is adequate for the amount of traffic.
Route 604	West corporate limits of the town of Woodstock to Route 623	The road has several sharp curves near the intersection of Route 676, however, it is adequate for the amount of traffic. It generally has wide pavement with adequate shoulders.
Route 717	Route 263 at Basye to Liberty Furnace	There are no posted bridges. The road is windy with steep grades, however, it is adequate for the current traffic volumes.

Table I-3 (con't)

Route 758	East corporate limits of the Town of Woodstock to route 678	This is known as the Woodstock Mountain Road. The mountain is an all weather, untreated surface with significant steep grades and sharp curves. The road is closed during inclement weather due to extreme conditions encountered by VDOT forces as well as the traveling public. It is opened as soon as conditions permit.
Route 836	Intersection of Route 263 at Basye	This road has a 23' clear roadway bridge at the intersection. VDO plans to ask the board of Supervisors for approval to place it in the upcoming revision of the six year plan to widen this bridge to 40' + of clear roadway to improve on the turning movements at this intersection. If approved, this work should be complete in the next two to three years.

APPENDIX C

EDUCATION

TEENAGE PREGNANCIES AND ABSENT FATHERS

1994 Pregnancy Statistics in Shenandoah County:

Female population - 1976 Ages 10-19

Teens ages 10 to 14 - 2 pregnancies out of population of 1019

Teens aged 15 to 19 - 63 pregnancies out of population of 957

In 1995 - one birth to a ten year old

There is no report on how many times teenage males became fathers

In 1994 there were 29 recorded induced abortions to out-of-wedlock females; only 8 were teenaged.

In Virginia birth rates increased significantly in 1989, 1990, and 1991. The largest number of births occurred in the age group 25-29.

For most teenagers, the birth of a child may provide a future of unemployment, poverty, family breakdown, emotional stress, dependency on public agencies, alcohol and drug addiction, health problems for mother and child, and abuse.

For the child born to teenagers, the tragedy of being unwanted may be a crushing blow which lasts for generations.

Without a father in the home, there is no one to provide, protect, or act as a mentor.

Indicators of Disadvantage:

The Annie E. Casey Foundation lists 10 indicators of disadvantages:

- Low birth weight babies
- Births to single teenagers
- Children living in poverty
- Children in single-parent families
- Idle teenagers
- Infant mortality rate
- Child death rate
- Juvenile violence crime arrest rate
- Violent death rate of youths
- High school drop-out rate

Virginia ranks 15th among 50 states and DC in providing for children's well being.

NEGLECT, ABUSE, ASSAULT, VIOLENCE

In the US more than 700,000 women are sexually assaulted each year.
Male victims account for 5% of reported sexual assaults.
61% of female rape victims are under 18 years of age.

Each year:

- 2 million to 4 million women are battered
- 1,500 women murdered by intimate partners
- 1.8 million elderly maltreated victims
- 1.7 million child abuse reports filed (increased 40% between 1985 and 1991)

In 1994 reports:

- One sixth of youths ages 10-17 has seen or knows someone who has been shot
- Children under 18 are 244% more likely to be killed by guns than in 1986
- Estimated 70% of juvenile offenders come from single-parent families
- The average child has watched 8,000 televised murders, and 100,000 acts of violence before finishing elementary school
- Many children are home alone and unsupervised

Violent behavior may begin with abusive language, coarse words, and hate language.

Abusive language on TV (Beavis and Butt-Head), gangsta rap music, profanity and vulgarism used in movies, TV, at home, and at school.

Gangs on the increase and moving up the Valley: see the fashion statements... draggy pants, other garb indicating gang membership.

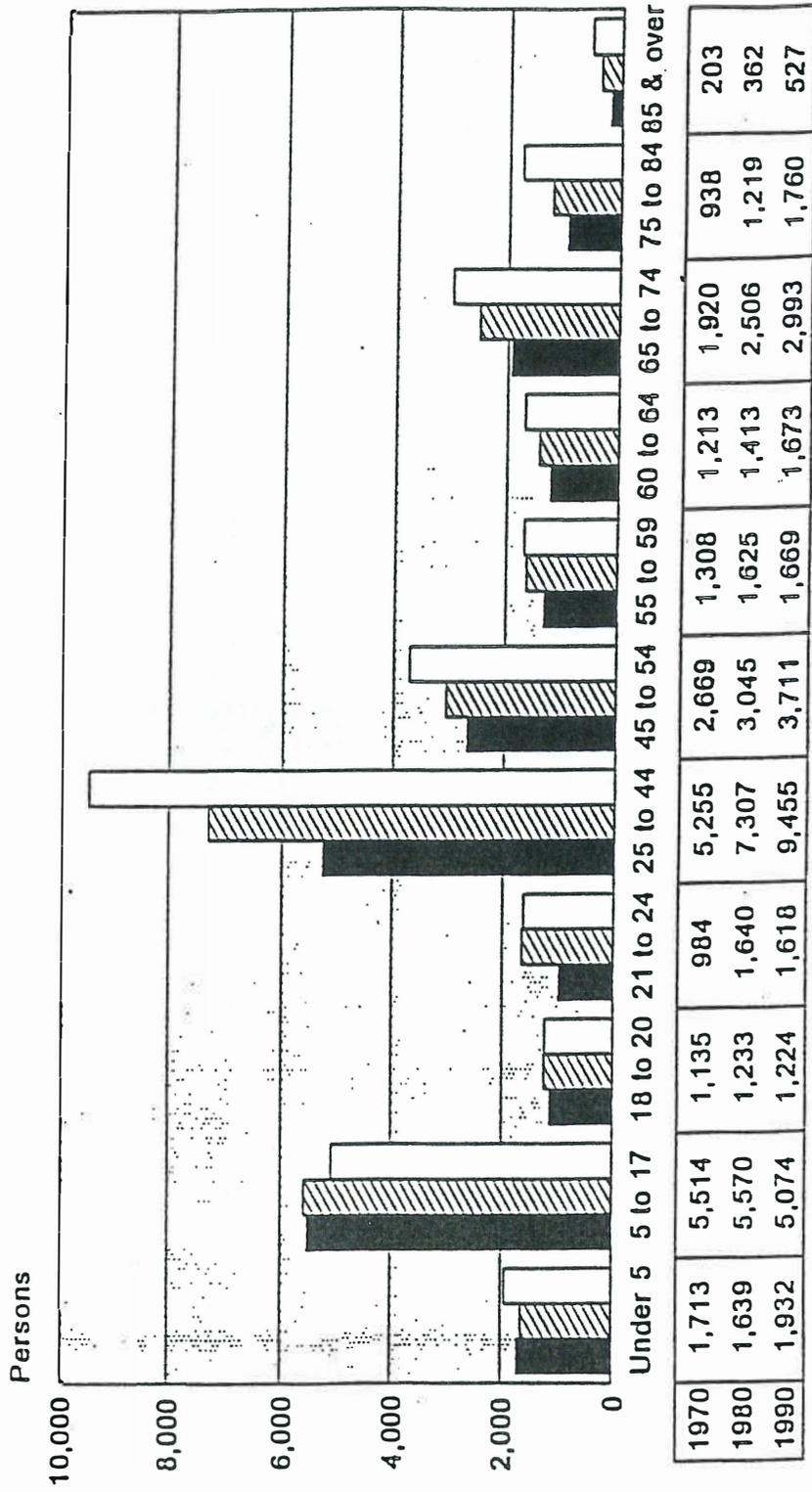
Emotional abuse and stress on the increase... being put down, having self-esteem lowered.

Substance abuse still high - drug distribution and use a problem .

Shenandoah County high in alcoholism.

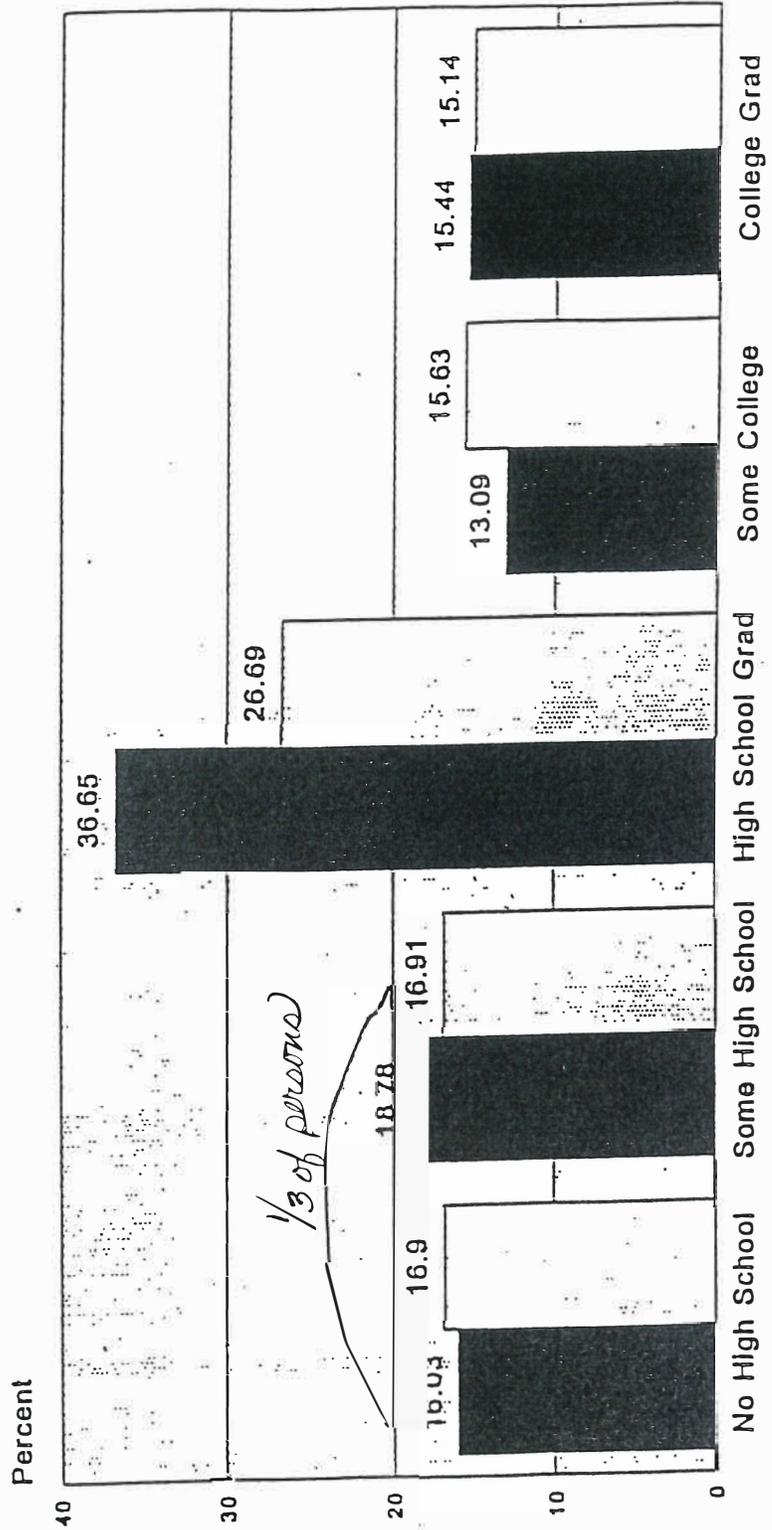
Age Distribution

Shenandoah County



Educational Attainment: 1990

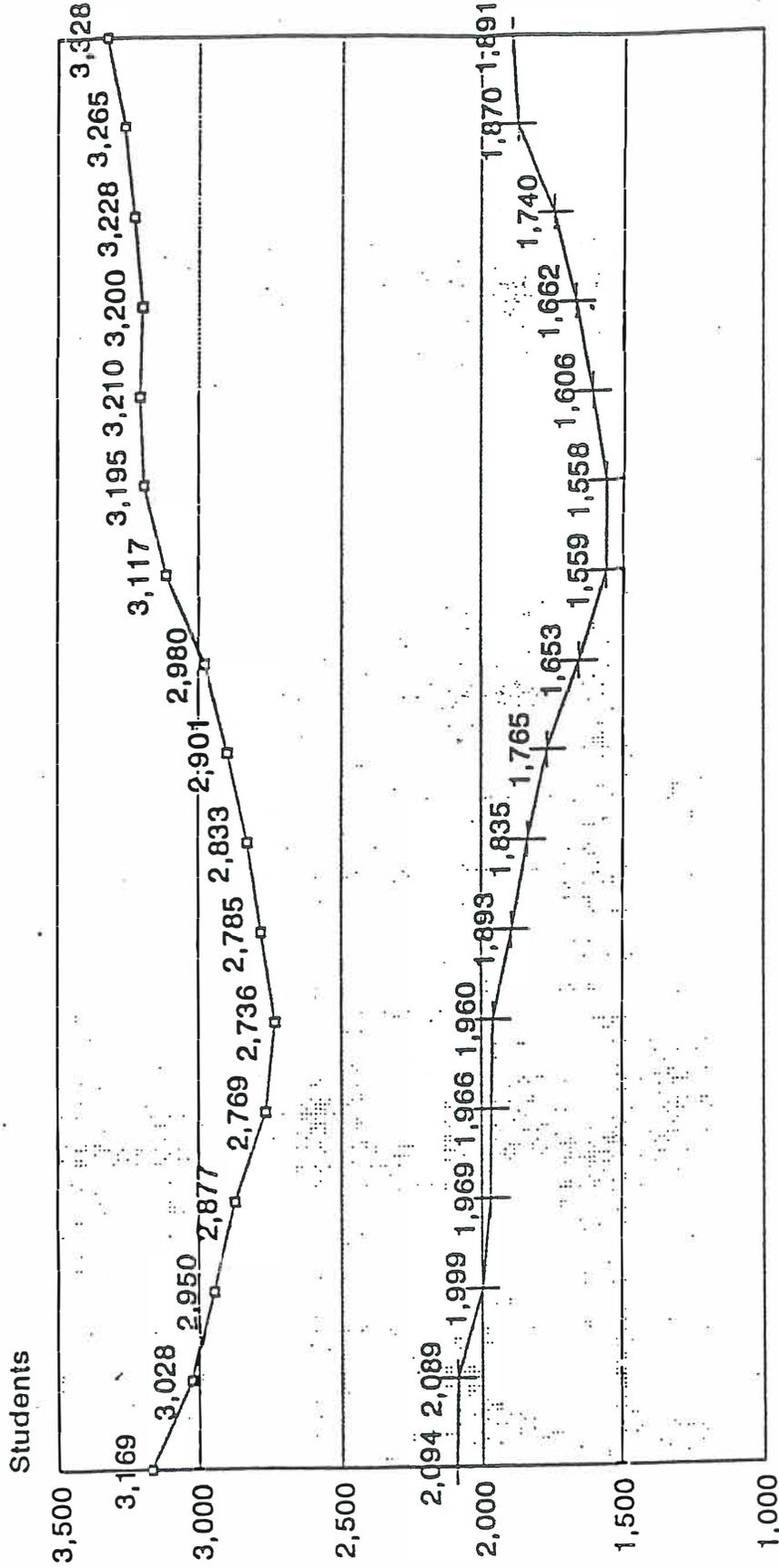
Persons over 25
Shenandoah County



End of Year Membership

by Grade Level

Shenandoah County



□ Elementary (K-7) + Secondary (8-12)

ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS

The following charts indicate enrollment projections by grade level and totals from the current year to the year 2003. Growth projections were obtained through a review of school census data, projections from the Lord Fairfax Planning Commissions, and through a review of current building starts in the various localities on Shenandoah County. A student generation ratio has been applied to certain types of housing starts to gain a fair estimate of the impact of housing growth on school enrollment.

PROJECTED 10 YEAR POPULATION AND STUDENT ENROLLMENT

YEAR	COUNTY POPULATION	NUMBER OF STUDENTS
1996	34,300	5,261 (15% OF COUNTY POP.)
2006	41,297	6,195 (15% OF COUNTY POP.)
		934 ADDITIONAL STUDENTS

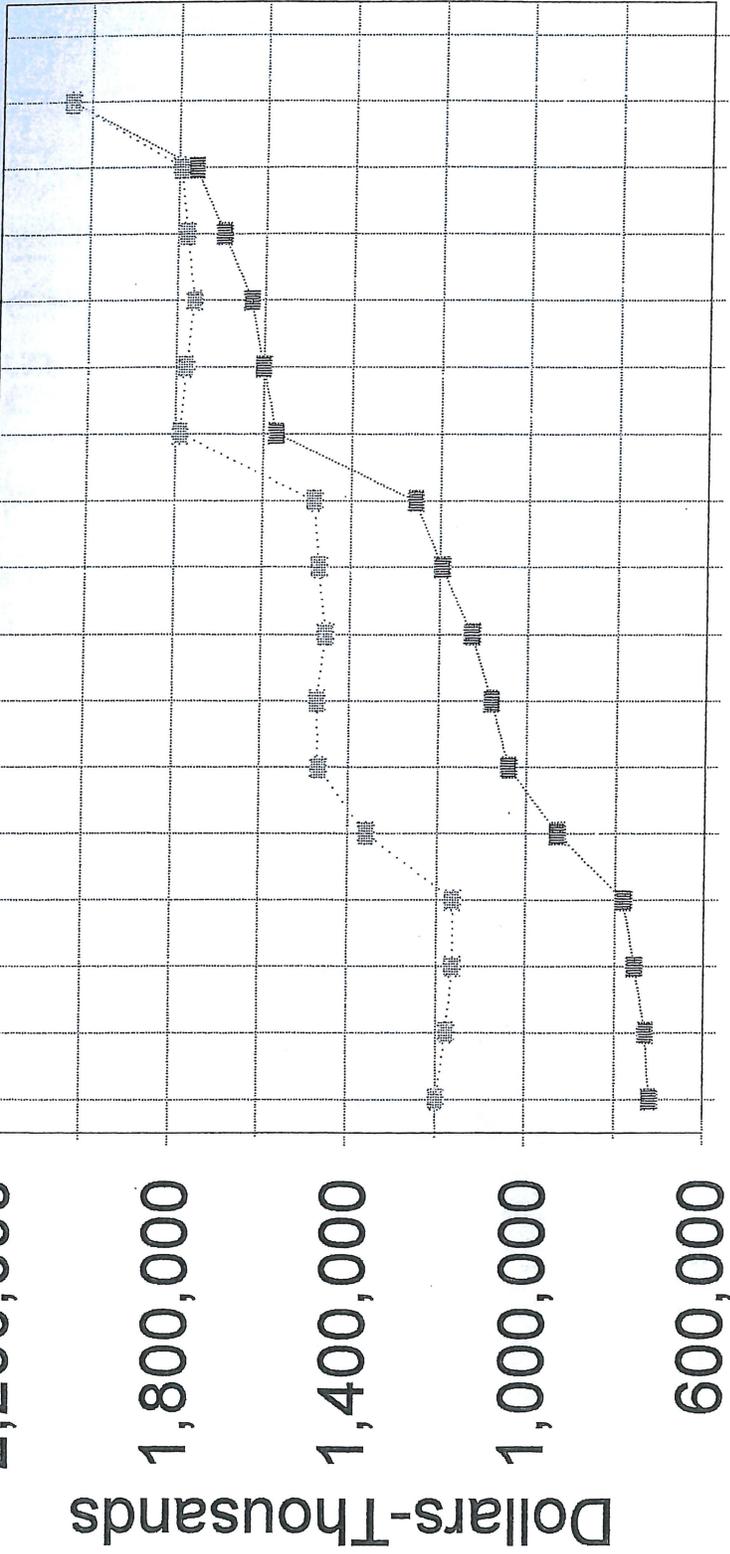
Figures compiled by the Virginia Conservation Council for the Valley Sustainable Development Initiative

APPENDIX D

GOVERNMENT AND FINANCE

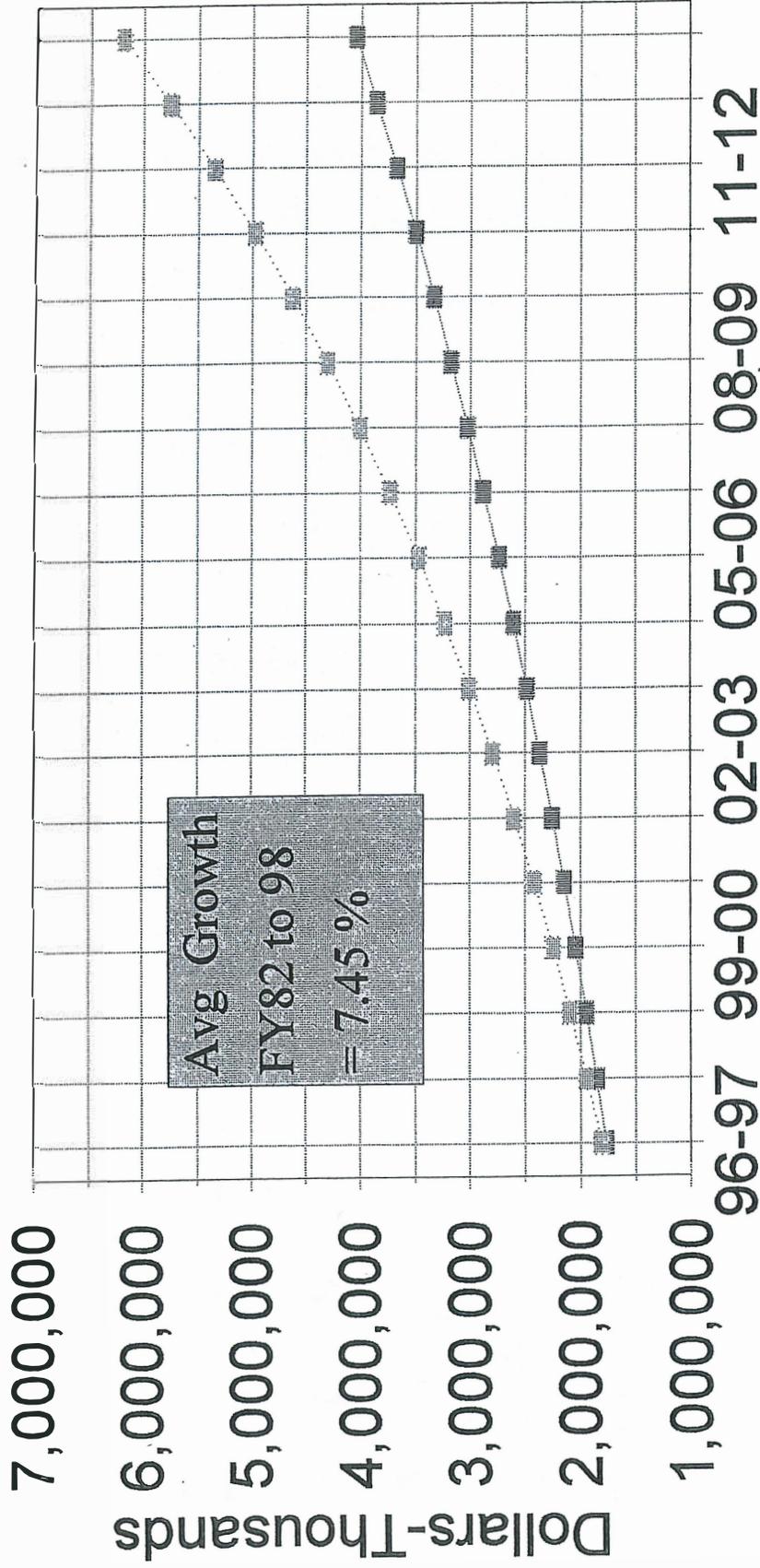
TOTAL ASSESSED VALUE

1981-82 to 1997-98



■ --- \$ Then Yr ■ \$ 1997

Estimated Assessment Growth

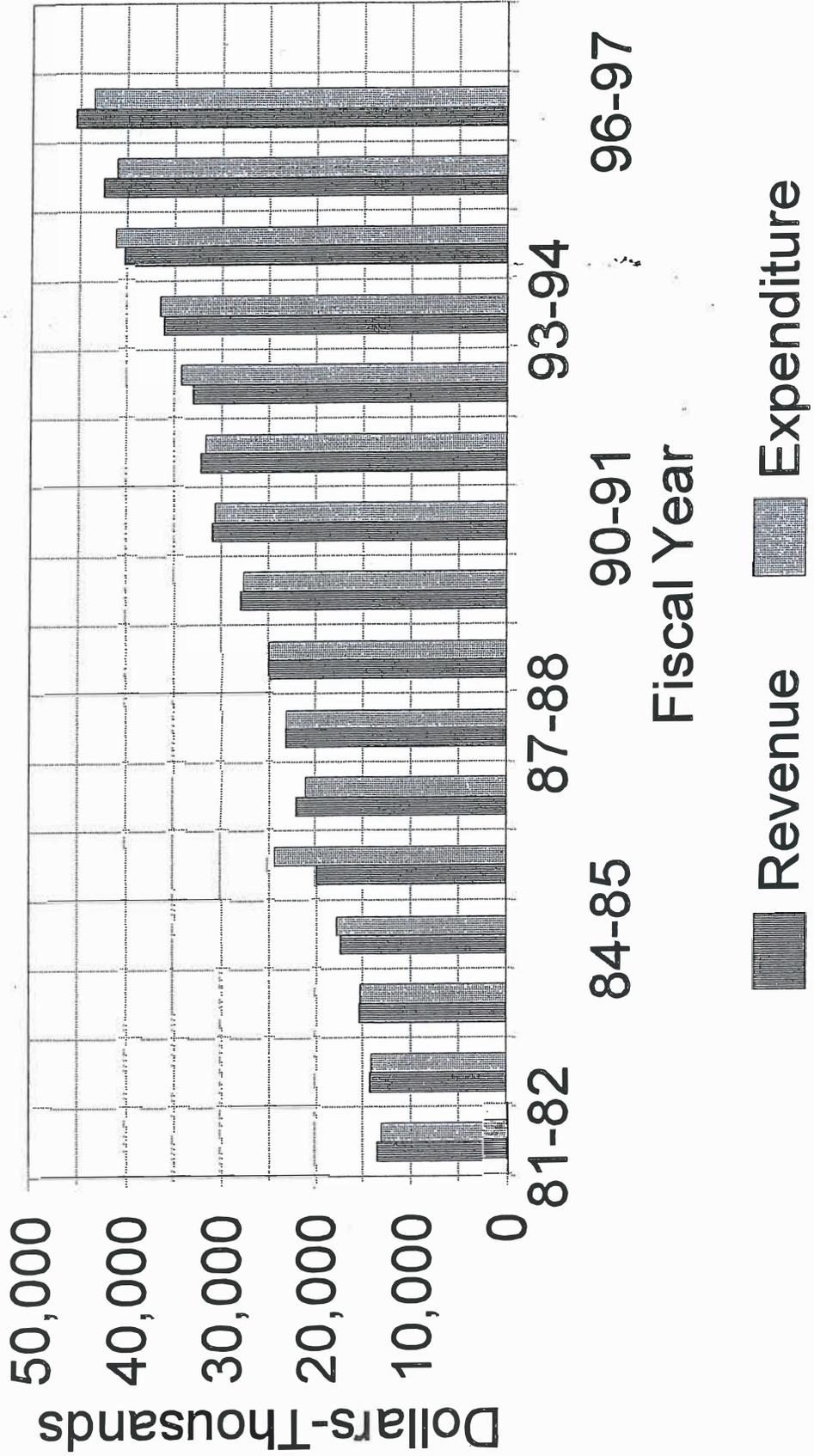


Fiscal Year

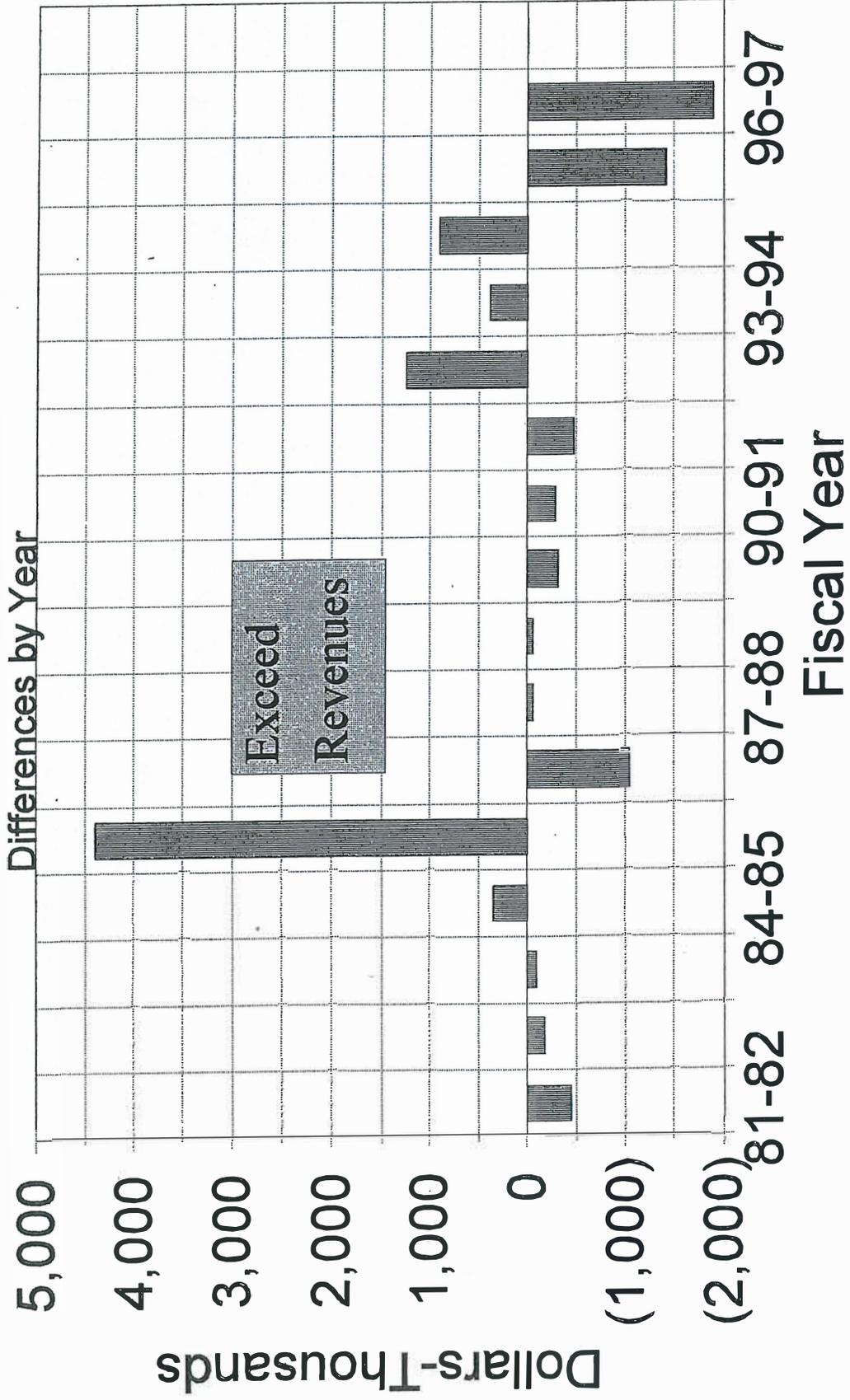
Less Inflation Trend

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

1981-82 to 1997-98



EXPENDITURES vs. REVENUES



REVENUE GROWTH BY TYPE

