

We can do hard things.

-Sister Susan W. Tanner

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THANK YOU:

Resource Team members wish to express our sincere thanks for welcoming us into your community. The enthusiasm, talent, skills and resourcefulness that went into this unique approach to community “vitalization” will serve the community well as it moves ahead to implement the recommendations and projects in this plan.



Courtesy of S. Mirabilio

INTRODUCTION

The Goal

The purpose of the Resource Team visit was to assess the assets of the villages of Rodanthe, Waves, Salvo and Avon, with particular focus on job retention, supplemental income generation, and small business support within the commercial fishing and eco- and heritage tourism industries. The goal of this report is to begin the process of developing a holistic plan to maintain and to enhance a vibrant local economy that retains the heritage, character and quality of life on Hatteras Island.

The Team

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The Approach

“Saltwater Connections” is a program of community development work enabled through an Innovative Economic Development Grant from the NC Rural Center. The focus area of the grant is the unincorporated communities along the Outer Banks National Scenic Byway, which originates at Whalebone Junction (Nags Head) and stretches south to the North River in the village of Bettie in Carteret County. The Saltwater Connections Resource Team approach to growing sustainable communities is modeled after Handmade in America’s Small Town Revitalization Program, an asset-based economic development project in western North Carolina. The Handmade model is an adaptation of the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Main Street Four-Point Approach®. The points of focus for the Main Street® program are: Organization, Design, Promotion and Economic Restructuring. The goal for this community vitalization process is to leverage assets, whether cultural, architectural or human, in order to build a complete community vitalization plan.

Organization focuses on the structure, functions and responsibilities of a community's leadership. The idea is that community organizations, such as civic associations and Chambers of Commerce, local leaders, and elected officials all work together in concert, with shared goals in mind, to add value to each others' efforts and to limit or eliminate duplication of effort and competition for services and resources. An organized community, focused on shared goals and striving for the same outcome, is generally a successful one.

In the most literal of senses, Design addresses a community's appearance. It means the necessity of getting your community into top physical shape visually and creating a safe, inviting environment for visitors and residents. Streetscapes, signage, building facades and traffic patterns are examples of design aspects that help to create an inviting place. A community that retains its sense of place has an identity. Having an identity works to unify a community, making it stronger economically, as well as improving the quality of life for residents. But, Resource Team members wish to point out that design is not only about how things look, but also, about how things function. How things are designed affect how people live, how people interact with each other, and with the built and natural environment. The Team tried to think deeply about what kind of place the people we heard from wanted to live and work in, and how to mobilize local resources to establish priorities and make any changes.

Promotion of a community's strengths attracts visitors and investment to an area, as well as reinforcing community pride and strengthening local participation. A concerted effort allowing local residents to map out their community's assets, including natural, historical and cultural, will help pinpoint what attractions to highlight to draw in visitors and new residents, as well as to identify sectors where there is room for growth for new business investment.

Economic Restructuring begins with an assessment of the current and potential economical drivers in a community recognizing both strengths and challenges. The goal of this segment is to strengthen existing businesses and the current economic base, while diversifying and expanding the economy for a sustainable future for these Outer Banks villages.

Over the past thirty years, the Main Street® movement has transformed the way community members think about the vitalization and management of their neighborhoods and commercial districts. It is the desire of this initiative to adapt those principles and proven successes to the villages along the Outer Banks National Scenic Byway.

The Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center received an Innovative Economic Development Grant from the NC Rural Center in June of 2011. Referred to as the "Saltwater Connections" community development project, the local grassroots "Hatteras Connection" began the process of vitalization by organizing an interdisciplinary "Resource Team" site visit on May 2-4, 2011 to the villages of Rodanthe, Waves, Salvo and Avon. It was decided that the 21 Byway communities would be organized into four separate geographical areas with the understanding that these geographical locations all have individual needs, ideas and available resources, but also these communities share a common culture and history, similar geography, and shared issues, challenges and strengths. This report focuses on Rodanthe, Waves Salvo and Avon. The remaining villages of Hatteras Island, Ocracoke Island and Down East Carteret County will be addressed in separate reports. The process is about more than

resource team members listening to community members talk about challenges and opportunities; it is about providing a road map for the future, and building long-term partnerships where residents do real work to revitalize their economies and to preserve the unique character and sense of place that defines their communities.

Kinnakeet Township

Comprised of the villages of Rodanthe, Waves, Salvo and Avon, the township is a thin strip of land separating the Pamlico Sound and the Atlantic Ocean. It has a land area of 17 square miles. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2010), of the 3,156 total housing units in the Township, only 643 are occupied year-round with 72% owner-occupied. Vacant housing numbers can be a bit misleading as the Census shows a vacancy rate of 90%. However, most of these are vacation rental homes that are occupied on a weekly basis throughout the year. Of the 1,401 permanent residents, 982 reside in owner occupied homes, while 419 reside in rental property.



The Resource Team toured the villages and interviewed local people, collecting data and information that would give the team knowledge of the local conditions needed to provide the community with vitalization recommendations. The draft plan herein merely lays the foundation for local initiatives to revitalize villages by leveraging local assets. Local leaders have completed some projects in each area and are working toward completion of others that the team included in this plan. This document is a first step, serving as the community's "road map" for the future. It will evolve as the community implements projects and programs and as changing times require changes in priorities.

Moving into the future, some Resource Team members and Saltwater Connections staff will provide on-going assistance to villagers as recommendations are prioritized and implemented. Annual review, analysis and adjustment of this "road map" is relevant to keep it current and relevant to times and conditions. This report and the work plans that come out of it are "living documents" that will change and grow as projects are implemented and improvements are made.

The Place

Hatteras Island has an abundance of assets that make the area a unique spot along the North Carolina coast. It has a deep, storied culture with strong ties to

the region, the land and the water. Situated only miles from the Continental Shelf and at the confluence of the Labrador Current

and Gulf Stream, Hatteras Island is subject to dynamic coastal processes unlike any other along the East Coast of the United States. Hurricanes and nor'easters have shaped the island and played a major role in lifestyles, occupations and settlement patterns. The geography of the island has made it a travel destination for fishermen, surfers, kiteboarders and outdoor enthusiasts from all over the world. The seven villages on the island are surrounded by the Cape Hatteras National Seashore, America's first national seashore.

Hatteras Island contains two Dare County townships: Kinnakeet and Hatteras. Kinnakeet includes the villages of Rodanthe, Waves, Salvo and Avon. Hatteras contains the villages of Buxton, Frisco and Hatteras. All of these villages are unincorporated, with Dare County providing all local government services. The villages supplement these governmental services with a range of support from community-based organizations, from tax-levying civic associations (Hatteras) to those having no formal local organizational entity (Buxton and Frisco). The existing entities are important organizational assets on the island and will play an important role in the implementation of the vitalization plan.

History and Character.

The northern most villages on the island are Rodanthe, Waves and Salvo in the area earlier known as Chicamacomico Banks. English settlers arrived in the area well before the Revolutionary War. By 1850, the tri-village region was made up of 37 families, or 206 people, according to census data. The communities were distinct settlements about two miles apart from each other. Pre-Civil War residents, many descended from settlers from the North Carolina mainland or Virginia, tended livestock and took part in subsistence fishing, as well as limited commercial fishing, trading salted fish for corn to mainland plantations (Dunbar, 1956). It was not until 1939 that the three villages were known by their modern names. The area is synonymous with heroic lifesaving missions, including that of crewmen from the burning British tanker *Mirlo* during World War I.

Today, the villages are connected and appear to blend into each other. A researcher for the U.S. National Park Service's ethnohistorical study once asked an elder how Waves was unique from sister villages on either side. He replied, "It isn't unique. It was just a village where people lived." He characterized each village in terms of who lived there. "In Rodanthe, they had Midgetts, O'Neals, Meekins and Grays. In Waves, there was family of Grays and one family of O'Neals, and the rest were all Midgetts. In Salvo, they were primarily Paines, Hoopers and Grays." Evident from the ethnohistorical study, however, is that each village has its unique characters, stories and local histories, from post masters to store owners to midwives. These individual assets and personalities are what make each community unique.

Rodanthe has long-served as the dominant community of the tri-village area, perhaps because it was the first village to receive a post office, as well as a lifesaving station (both established in 1874), providing government jobs. It also housed the area's windmill used to grind corn. The small schools in Waves and Salvo were closed and consolidated to Rodanthe in the 1930s. Rodanthe was a ceremonial gathering place, hosting the annual Old Christmas celebration since at least the early 19th century. Rodanthe continues to provide jobs in the tri-village region, with many small businesses that provide vacation amenities and commercial offerings.

Waves, located between Rodanthe to the north and Salvo to the south, has strong family ties to Rodanthe. The majority of families in both communities had the surname “Midgett” before World War II. Waves and Rodanthe have long-shared a church, as well - Fair Haven United Methodist (called Chickamacomico Church in 1885), which sits on the border between the communities. Today, Waves serves as the hub of the tri-village area, because it is home of the modern post office that serves all three.

Salvo has a fascinating story of how the village got its name. A Union ship commander spotted the settlement from sea and asked his crew for the name of the village. Finding no name on the chart, the Captain ordered his men to “give it a salvo anyway,” - a simultaneous cannon firing. They wrote “salvo” on the chart, and this was used on later maps. The postal service simply chose the name Salvo from maps in 1901 (Payne, 1985). In the mid 1950s, a geographer predicted that the community’s population would level off at 100, and dubbed Salvo, “A fishing village, (with) little cause for tourists to stop.” (Dunbar, 1956). This prediction proved wrong, as tourism has far outpaced commercial fishing economically, and the proliferation of “mini-hotel” and secondary beach homes have caused the population to rise in Salvo – as in all the villages - considerably. In fact, the initial development of beach vacation homes occurred primarily in Salvo and along the road leading to the fishing pier in Rodanthe.



Courtesy of B. Garrity-Blake

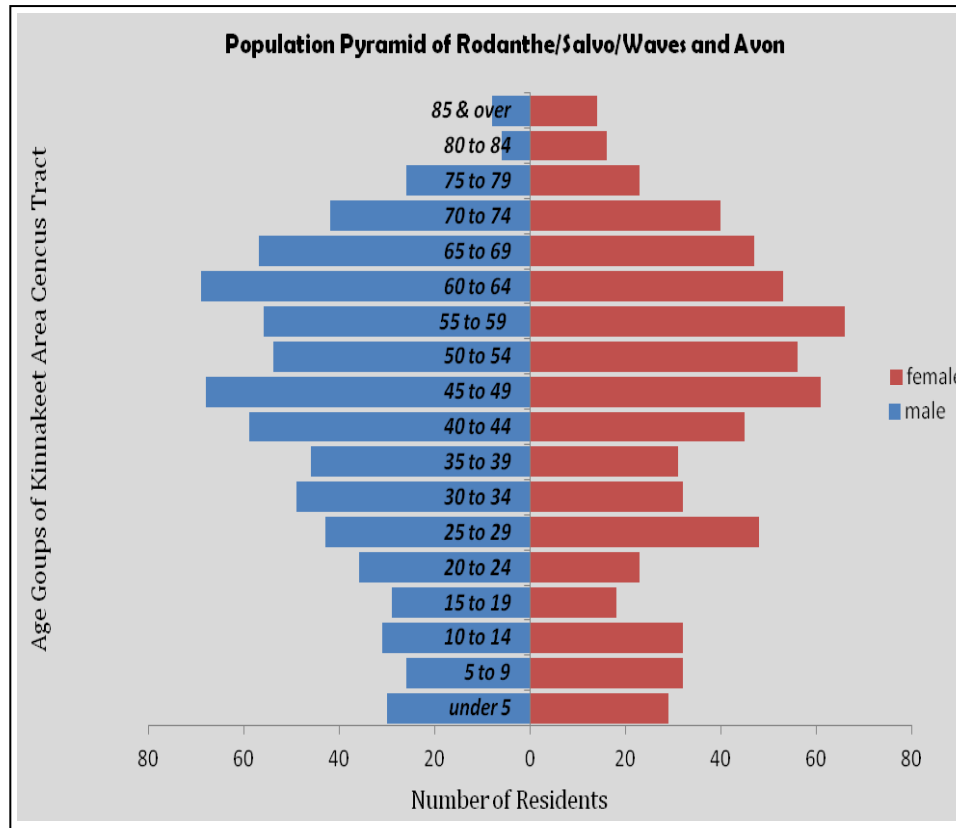
L.P. O'Neal in his shop with a model of his father's freight boat.

Avon, the largest of the northern villages at 800 year-round residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), is a distant sixteen miles south of Salvo and six miles north of Buxton. The community consists of two distinct parts – the mostly residential and historical village nestled on Pamlico Sound known as Kinnakeet, and the more visible and commercial area on the beach. Kinnakeet once was heavily wooded and known for the many clipper ships and small schooners built there of native oak and cedar. It also was home to two lifesaving stations – Little Kinnakeet to the north and Big Kinnakeet just south of the village. Early residents in Avon, like other banks villagers, relied on a variety of ways to make a living, although commercial fishing was identified as the primary occupation on Hatteras Island in the 1850 census. Other occupations have included boatbuilding, stock raising, hauling freight, piloting, yaupon making, eel grass production for furniture and mattress stuffing, and working at hunting clubs that catered to northern sportsmen. Today, Avon's oceanfront and strips along State Highway 12 and along Pamlico Sound cater to vacationers. The oceanside area of Avon was the first area on the island to be developed with vacation cottages after the bridge over Oregon Inlet was built, and this cottage development has led to still only one motel and no hotels. The village has Hatteras Island's only chain grocery store (Food Lion), movie theater (R/C Theaters), and medical clinic, plus many vacation cottages, restaurants, shops and services. These amenities attract retirees and contribute to higher population growth rates in Avon. Thereby, of all the Hatteras Island villages, it is experiencing the most growth, because retirees are residing there due to the availability of these conveniences and services.

Economy.

The most common industries in the Township from 2005-2009 (city-data.com) were: real estate and rental/residential property management; accommodation and food services; and arts, entertainment and recreation. Collectively, the villages have more campgrounds than any other area of the island. Many suffered damage from Hurricane Irene, but many hope to be ready

for business by the spring of 2012. Historically during the winter, the island's main employers are construction, which has suffered severe downturns since 2008; the NC Department of Transportation, especially the Ferry Division; and the businesses that support the small population. Commercial fishing, once the main economic engine, has declined since the 1970s. Fish houses, the critical infrastructure of the seafood industry, are "losing ground" to waterfront development. Sixty-eight residents of the Township - 32 in the Tri-Villages and 36 in Avon - are licensed commercial fishermen (NC Division of Marine Fisheries, 2010). Although some count themselves as full-time commercial fishermen, most combine fishing with other jobs, such as charter fishing, the ferry division, or a tourism-related trade. In the 1950s, Rodanthe was home to three fish houses, and two or three were located just south of Rodanthe before World War II. Today, no fish house operates in the tri-village area. Product is offloaded in Avon, Hatteras Village or trucked directly to off-island wholesalers or retailers.



Kinnakeet Township Population

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2010), there are 1,401 permanent residents living in the Township making up a total of 643 households. The average household size is 2.18 persons. The average family size is 2.59 persons. The majority of the population is between the ages of 40 and 65 with the median age 47.6 years. There are 735 males compared with 666 females, of which there are 104 males and 107 females are under the age of 18 years. The following Population Pyramid illustrates the breakdown of population by age group and sex. As can be determined from the chart below, the majority of the population is between the ages of 40 and 65.

The Recommendations

The following recommendations are ideas derived from what the public told the Resource Team during the visit in May of 2011 but are what we, with outside perspectives, recommend. During the site visit, the Team asked individuals to describe development efforts that have been implemented in their community, and the usefulness of these different activities. The Team's recommendations below merely are ranked according to themes and do not represent a priority ranking. The Team will next ask the communities to rank their priorities for future development activities in their community. These recommendations represent a starting point, designed to provide the communities with several achievable goals within the four areas of the Main Street® approach. As the community subcommittees begin to work towards the completion of these suggested projects, those groups tasked with the completion of these goals should closely review this list and adapt the list as appropriate. Suggested projects can be added or removed as the standing committees deem appropriate. This is a local effort and should closely reflect local needs and desires.

ORGANIZATION

"We have the workingest board of commissioners and we're STILL just putting out fires."

Allen Burrus,
Dare County
Commissioner
representing
Hatteras
Island

Organization is a process that builds consensus and cooperation by creating partnerships among the various groups that have a stake in the success of Rodanthe, Waves, Salvo and Avon. Coordination of public and nonprofit efforts would provide the most benefit, not necessarily centralization. When all stakeholders work toward shared goals and share responsibility for accomplishments, the result is more effective management and advocacy for the villages. Active volunteers, working in collaboration with businesses, nonprofits and public sector partners representing a broad cross section of the community, will ensure the inclusion of a balanced range of perspectives in these efforts.

Local volunteers organized tours, meetings and community dinners, and coordinated a seemingly impossible set of logistics to get people where they needed to be during the Resource Team site visit. The community already has begun mobilizing this asset - recruiting volunteers. Building community capacity is at the heart of any volunteer-led, asset-based approach, and assures that community residents and groups are at the heart of each project undertaken, doing the planning, implementing, evaluating and celebrating. The community is ahead of the game in respect to this.

Organization is both the most critical, and in some folks' perspectives, the least exciting of the four Main Street® components, so it is easy to overlook or avoid. Organization will define "who" will implement the recommendations in this report, and is the vehicle for planning, funding and making the improvements a reality. Organization requires participation by a diverse group of community leaders who can fully represent and engage the island's residents for the long term.

Recommendation. Establish an Implementation Steering Committee

The key to successfully implementing the recommendations in this report and to growing a sustainable future will be the establishment of a broad-based community organization to work with other local partners to establish a solid framework of local control. (Local partners might include Dare County, U.S. National Park Service, Hatteras-Ocracoke Council of the Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce, Outer Banks Visitors Bureau, village civic associations, and other organizations.) The organization should be inclusive, rather than exclusive, and must establish a strong governing board to ensure that the community is informed as the organization evolves, that decisions are made in a rational way, that resources are generated to implement the plan, and that standing committees experience short-term successes, as well as make and implement long-term plans.

Initially, an Implementation Steering Committee should be formed to oversee and to guide progress on report implementation. Examples of activities the Implementation Steering Committee may take on include, but are not limited to:

- Raising funds and hiring paid staff to assist partners in implementing the strategic plan;
- Helping civic associations and other partners raise funds to implement priority projects; and
- Provide staff support to the standing committees in reviewing, funding, implementing, updating and evaluating their plans.

Down the road for all the villages along the Scenic Byway visited by the Saltwater Connections Resource Team, an umbrella nonprofit that is patterned after a community development corporation would allow for outside perspective and partnering opportunities on challenging community issues. It could be structured so that each local region would have its own goals but provide an overall administrative umbrella that provides funding, collaboration and oversight. One way to begin is to form island councils. A Hatteras Island Council could have representative(s) from each village to work with the community, government agencies, local organizations and the region to address local concerns, to provide a collective voice for the villages, and to consider the formation of a regional entity for addressing shared needs, issues and opportunities. The Island Council would serve to improve communication between villages and to give a stronger voice to Dare County on issues specific to Hatteras Island. A regional umbrella's role would be to provide support for regional initiatives where opportunities and challenges are best addressed through a regional approach. It is recommend that the nonprofit be staffed, or at least work toward being staffed, which will require a lot of fundraising.

Recommendation. Develop a Mission Statement, Program of Work and Implementation Plan

The Implementation Steering Committee will need to develop a simple mission statement and a 2-3 year program of work for the group in order to stay focused and give volunteers a sense of accomplishment. There will be pressure, as the group's leadership is recognized, to take on other projects. Getting involved with a wide range of projects may be fine for individuals, but in order for your efforts as a group to be successful, the group needs to focus on implementing its plan rather than taking an opportunistic approach to community development. The plan will capture the goals and aspirations of the community and will encourage proactive planning with a common purpose and shared vision. Projects should be prioritized and a work plan that includes short-term and long-term goals and objectives should be developed. Just as any successful business begins with a business plan, community development and enhancement projects need a plan, as well. The plans should include the steps that will lead to successful implementation. Planning is an ongoing process, which sometimes requires flexibility in amending plans as local conditions change. As such, these plans need to be viewed as "living" documents.

Recommendation. Establish standing committees (Organization, Design, Promotion, Economic Restructuring) to implement the strategic plan

Focus area standing committees are of great importance to the overall success of the vitalization effort to ensure that all areas of community development are unified and synchronized. The committees should be made up of volunteers who are willing to actively

participate and work toward the completion of goals identified in this plan, as well as future endeavors. Volunteers on the committees should have an interest, and possibly some experience, in the area of focus. For example, local artisans would be a good fit for the “Design” committee. Whether these committees are formed at a village-scale or township level will be up to community members at-large.

The Organization Committee needs to include representatives from each of the other committees. Economic Restructuring will work closely with existing businesses, and with county, regional and state economic development agencies to strengthen and diversify the economic base. The Design Committee will work on a broad range of issues, from signage to bike and pedestrian paths, from trails and greenways to ocean and sound access, and from storefront facade programs to NC-12 and other transportation issues. The Promotion Committee will work closely with tourism agencies and local businesses to brand and market the villages, and with other partners to develop and to promote festivals, events and other community activities.

Recommendation. Establish a Hatteras Island Emergency Management Council

This recommendation reflects the real and on-going issues faced by Hatteras Island villagers most recently highlighted in the aftermath of Hurricane Irene. This will be an important committee to organize and get up-and-running to work on the proposed recommendations for development of an improved emergency communication action plan, meeting with the Dare County Control Group, as well as other priorities that Council members will identify. The Resource Team suggests this Council also have representatives from Ocracoke and all sites accessed by ferry on the mainland. The problems relative to hurricane preparedness, planning and recovery were two-fold: 1) communication between Hatteras villages and the Dare County Control Group, on which no villages have any representative since they are not incorporated; and 2) the impacts their situation had on surrounding areas.

Recommendation. Seek out and secure funding to implement priority projects

Once the program of work has been developed, the Implementation Steering Committee should develop a funding/financing plan for priority projects, including projected cost estimates and potential funding sources. The Committee and/or standing committee members should meet with potential funding partners, share the projects, and begin establishing the relationships needed to implement the projects. Potential funding partners may include: Outer Banks Visitors Bureau for tourism-related projects and programs; Dare County Control Board or NC Division of Emergency Management for acquisition of hurricane-impacted properties that may be used for beach access; U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development community facilities program or the NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund for a community center; or the National Park Foundation for priority projects that are aligned with U.S. National Park Service priorities. Community foundations typically have donor-advised funds that target specific interests, so it is recommended to meet with the community foundation representatives to share the vitalization plan and proposed initiatives to identify potential links to donors' interests. The Saltwater Connections initiative has some funds available to help fund starter projects.

Fundraising is about relationships and “delivering” on proposed activities and accomplishments. Existing funding sources could be used to leverage future funding by carrying out the funding obligations, reporting promptly, inviting funders to visit the projects during and on completion of the activities, and publicizing the supporters that made the project possible. The Outer Banks National Scenic Byway Committee has made a great start with securing funding for the paved multi-use path. There will continue to be future funding opportunities connected to the Scenic Byway designation.

The funding plan should be reviewed and updated annually, along with the program of work, and all funding received – whether from public agencies, family or corporate foundations, individual donors or school groups – should be widely publicized, celebrated and thanked.

Recommendation. Seek funding for an active, professional community-based beach patrol for ocean and sound waters

In their history nationwide, the U.S. Lifesaving Service (USLSS) men responded to over 178,000 lives in peril from the sea, of which they saved over 177,000. The Chicamacomico Lifesaving Station was the first station built in North Carolina in 1874, and the island has a rich heritage in providing lifesaving services. There are local volunteer fire departments and EMS units, as well as the volunteer-driven Chicamacomico Water-Rescue Squad. There are no lifeguarded beaches in Kinnakeet Township. New in 2010 was an ocean rescue program. Chicamacomico's beach patrol team consisted of three people on a jet ski and one person patrolling the beach. The ocean rescue program - funded by the fire department with a one-time appropriation in 2009, requires \$50,000 annually. No funds were found for the 2011 tourist season. Families coming to the island for a vacation will appreciate a visible, highly trained lifesaving operation. This team should be employed, at the minimum, from Memorial Day through Labor Day, the peak tourist season. The Organization Committee should begin by revisiting the request to the Dare County Tourism Board for help, and as a second step, consider creating a special tax district to fund the program in the future. Thinking on a longer-term scale, a training center for water rescue squads, generally, could be built. Trainees, particularly in the shoulder or off-season, would be a boon to accommodation and food-service industries.

Recommendation. Explore the feasibility of incorporating Avon

Residents of Hatteras Island feel they significantly contribute to the Dare County tax base but feel they only see a slight return on their contribution in the way of County expenditures. The community of Avon is the most likely community in this focused report to meet the requirements for incorporation into a town and could benefit from enhanced ability to levy taxes, locally manage finances, and engage in detailed planning and zoning. There are some drawbacks to incorporation, such as having to provide certain services to the population of the incorporated town. The Kinnakeet Civic Association or another village community organization should research, with assistance from the NC Department of Commerce, the benefits and costs to determine if Avon would be better off as an incorporated town, and if so, what the steps are for incorporation. It will be vitally important to involve all residents and property-owners in this process, as well as to communicate with, and garner support from, Dare County commissioners. Another option that could be explored is establishing a special tax district that would allow an ad valorem tax to be levied, supplying funds for

establishing, repairing and maintaining community properties, such as a community center. A special tax district exists for Hatteras Village, and the tax district's governing board and the Village's civic association might be a good source of information on the pros and cons of taking this step.

Recommendation. Involve and strengthen the existing civic associations

The civic associations have worked for years in each of the villages to identify priorities, to raise local funds, and to make things happen. They will remain as the key “connections” to what is important in each of the villages. The Implementation Steering Committee should work to connect the civic associations to each other, aggregate the priorities, and add value to the civic associations’ efforts. It will be important to have the civic associations represented on the standing committees and to incorporate their priority efforts into the overall program of work. One very important way the Implementation Steering Committee might add value is by helping the civic associations improve their fundraising efforts and secure funding to implement projects and programs.

Recommendation. Explore bringing the Avon Property Owners’ Association (APOA) and the Kinnakeet Civic Association (KCA) together as one organization

The APOA pre-dates the KCA. All property owners in Avon are eligible to be dues-paying members of the APOA; however, the main membership components are owners of oceanside and soundside properties outside of the historic village. The APOA annually awards scholarships (\$1,500) to two graduating seniors of the Cape Hatteras Secondary School. They also arrange for a curbside recycling program, a beach trash patrol in Avon, and maintenance of 21 beachfront boardwalks. When monies are available, they make donations to other local programs like Hatteras Island Meals Inc. The KCA sponsors the monthly Really, Really Free Market at the fire station and created the temporary free market in Salvo after Hurricane Irene; sponsors history potluck dinners in the winter; sponsors a Veteran’s Day potluck; co-sponsors St. Baldrick’s Day; participates in spring and fall litter sweeps; sponsors a Health and Wellness Fair; partnered with Dare County Parks and Recreation to fund the playground and build a picnic shelter; holds weekly fish fries in the summer to raise funds; and supports arts at schools with donations.



Goods displayed in fish boxes at the Really, Really Free Market in Waves after Hurricane Irene.

The Resource Team heard about the varied constituencies and the reasons for organizing these two entities. From the perspective of outsiders – such as private foundations or public agencies that might be approached for project funding or other forms of assistance – there likely will be questions about whether and how the two entities are working together. It is recommended, at a minimum, that these two associations meet and share information about each other’s priority activities and projects and explore the possibility of combining forces or merging. Both of these

organizations are valuable to the community, and with the increased work of implementing this report's recommendations, it is important to eliminate any duplication of services. Both groups should initially be involved with the Implementation Steering Committee and should actively seek out opportunities to collaborate on fundraising and project implementation.

Recommendation. Increase volunteerism on the island

There are no municipalities on Hatteras Island, which means a lot rests on community leaders and volunteers. Community efforts, such as this one, require an increased amount of human resources, particularly in the current economic environment that makes grants hard to come by. There is an incredible range of skills and talents to be found among the Island's residents. A community-wide effort should begin to identify and recruit volunteers, and invite them to participate in the new organization and its standing committees. While county, state and federal agency staff can provide guidance, the day-to-day work needs to be done by community members. Everyone living and working on the Island has a stake in the Island's future, and this project offers an opportunity for folks to help shape that future. Specific training sessions, capacity-building experiences, and small workshops could help community members learn facilitation skills, establish effective communication mechanisms, and inventory existing experiences and skills that could better utilize volunteer investment. Building of a core of quality volunteers in community projects would encourage others, increase productivity and contribute to community pride.

The volunteer support that makes it possible to complete projects should be tracked, documented and shared widely with project partners, the media and funders. Few, if any, funders want to be the sole investor in the project. They want to know that projects are community priorities and community-driven. Think of it in terms of how you like to invest your own money – few of us would be willing to invest in a business if the business owner refuses to invest their own money. Tracking the value of the “sweat equity” community members invest in community projects and sharing that information with funders demonstrates the community's commitment to the project and places a dollar value on that commitment. A few examples of these “in-kind” contributions include:

- The market value of food and lodging that was provided for the Resource Team members was a significant in-kind community contribution to developing this plan;
- If a local landscaping company donates labor to install entryway signage to the villages or Hatteras Island, the market value of the contribution of labor should be counted;
- If an attorney donates his or her time to help incorporate a nonprofit organization, their time could be calculated at regular billing rates and included in the tally of in-kind contributions; and
- If volunteers perform general labor to prepare for and operate a community festival, their time could be calculated at the federally approved hourly rate for that time period, which currently is \$7.25 per hour.

It is easy to see how the numbers will add up to significant contributions that demonstrate strong commitment by community members to help themselves. It also is important to share the numbers with the volunteers – it makes it easier for people to continue

their volunteer activities when they see the collective results and know that their time and energy are helping to raise the dollars needed to move the larger efforts forward.

Recommendation. Develop an Island Leaders Program similar to that of Maine's Island Institute

Effective local leadership is the single most distinguishing feature of vibrant rural communities, but the high demand on volunteers within these small communities often leads to burnout. A series of training sessions or seminars would help to strengthen the skills needed to develop, fund and implement community programs and projects. The community should identify the skills that could help the community prosper, and then identify volunteers interested in developing those skills. Those skills should include, at a minimum, board member training, grant-writing, grassroots or major donor fundraising, event planning, project planning, meeting facilitation and conflict resolution. The (Maine) Island Institute's training takes place through a combination of in-person and virtual sessions to build and practice new skills while making connections with leaders throughout Maine's island communities. Leadership training programs, such as those at the NC Rural Economic Development Center or The Conservation Fund, also would offer volunteers the opportunity to learn new ideas and build relationships and networks with regional mentors and resource groups.

Recommendation. Strengthen capacity for grassroots participation in governmental decision processes

Many community members expressed frustration with decisions and processes associated with governmental entities, particularly on issues like fishing regulations. Opportunities for public participation in governmental decision processes are often limited and challenging, but they do exist once people understand how the processes work and develop some basic skills. These areas of knowledge and skill are rarely taught in formal education settings. Some communities elsewhere have developed experiential learning programs for this purpose – to show ordinary citizens how government decision processes work, and how they can participate in those processes effectively. As a result, citizens are more able to advance their interests and offer uniquely valuable policy solutions based in local knowledge. Local communities might consider hosting or developing a program of this sort to build stronger local community involvement in government decision-making. One model is the Community Fisheries Action Roundtable organized by the Penobscot East Resource Center.

Recommendation. Create a community center in Avon

A 1992 nationwide study on use of parks and recreation programs conducted at Pennsylvania State University found that participants in the study could be divided into two groups: users of local recreation and park services and non-users, with 71% of non-users still saying they received some benefit from their communities' parks and recreational services. Local parks and recreation opportunities are associated with a sense of community. Community-level benefits are considered more important than individual or household-level benefits. Interestingly, the study also found 75% of respondents said that, "...local recreation and park services are worth \$45 or more per member of their household..." per year. During the Resource Team visit, a recurring theme heard was the

need for year-round recreation options, especially for young people. A community center centrally located in Avon would help provide those opportunities.

The Kinnakeet Civic Association (KCA) currently shares space with the volunteer fire department at their new fire station in Avon. While it is a remarkable facility and the relationship between the KCA and the fire department is fantastic, the KCA would benefit from having its own separate base of operation. There is strong interest among Avon residents in having a place to go, for residents of all ages, that provides recreation and exercise programs. Besides the more traditional benefits of giving young people a place to go and recreate, a community center offering exercise and fitness, learning and education, and social opportunities for all ages is something needed in the four villages generally. The KCA and other partners should work with the Dare County Parks and Recreation Department to: 1) share this report and recommendation; 2) explore the potential for including a community recreation center in the County's plans; and 3) work to collaboratively develop plans for, and figure out how to fund, a community center in Avon.

DESIGN

"I hate to see all these big houses, but they ARE our economy."

Anonymous,
tackle shop
owner-
operator



The community character that historically defined the Hatteras villages has changed dramatically in recent years with increased development, especially along NC-12 and the waterfront; yet, there are vestiges that remain in the older neighborhoods, in the working fish houses, in the community grocery stores, and in the mom-and-pop businesses that serve residents and visitors year-round. These places are helping to retain the “sense of place” and cultural integrity that was key to the successful designation of the Outer Banks National Scenic Byway. The Design Committee has an important opportunity to work at identifying and protecting the places, land uses, buildings and other design components that can ensure Hatteras does not lose its “sense of place” forever. These assets include (but are not limited to):

- A strong predominance of locally owned, small businesses and an impressive lack of fast food restaurants and other franchises that tend to erode community character;
- A landscape that is dominated by coastal lands and water that are part of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore and have kept much of Hatteras Island relatively intact; and
- An incredible history and culture that have been kept alive in the stories and historic structures and passed on by long-time residents.

In “old times,” the community had gathering places like dance halls. The development “boom” happened with little real coordination or integration of design techniques that might have been used to encourage “walk-ability,” or the types of natural gathering places that are critical to a sense of community. The downturn in construction provides an opportunity for the villages to explore implementing design guidelines that encourage, for future development, these activities that define quality of life for residents and visitors alike. Well-planned municipalities tend to develop similar guidelines to protect the interests of residents and businesses and to develop and protect congregating areas by fostering a comfortable and attractive environment for users, which might be as simple as being within walking distance of a morning newspaper and cup of coffee. Avon residents, for example, could encourage dense development in the Town Center (crossroads of one of the Island’s only two traffic lights and the Williams’ store), redirecting the focus of growth away from the periphery and concentrating use in an area with existing infrastructure and services.

***Recommendation.* Install “Welcome to Hatteras Island” entrance signs**

One of the keys to creating and retaining a sense of place is making sure that visitors know when they have arrived at your “place.” Just as homeowners want the door/entryway to their home to be inviting and to tell a little

about who they are, entrance signs are an important way to welcome residents and visitors alike and say a little about the community – in this case, the island – and show pride in place and people.

Recommendation. Design and install wayfinding signage for Island assets

“Wayfinding” is a series of signs and/or kiosks strategically located throughout a community to help visitors identify and find local points of interest. Some of the more common examples of wayfinding can be found in historical areas or districts. The signs are usually uniform in design (similar size, shape and color) and placed or located in a visible location, so sites can be found easily and enjoyed. As the public begins to play a role in the bike lane design process, taking into consideration private property rights, limited land resources, appearance and physical design of the bike lane itself, and perhaps most importantly, the safety of those utilizing the bike lane, it presents a good opportunity for village residents to discuss signage on a community scale. Wayfinding is another area where local artist talent can be utilized for design ideas. And additionally, a “marking system” in conjunction with some brand messaging, should help visitors find galleries on this busy highway. As always, the public should have a say in which community assets are promoted through the signage. The Outer Banks National Scenic Byway has federal funding to design, fabricate and install wayfinding signage for the entire Byway. Community input will be encouraged with the hope that each village will build on the wayfinding system within its village to help facilitate each community’s most popular sites to be well-accessed.

Recommendation. Provide a series of kiosks to showcase the Island’s attractions

A series of kiosks should be placed in areas of high-volume foot traffic and at attractions along NC-12. These kiosks could provide a map, noting the current location, and locations of other Island attractions. In addition to local artists, carpenters could be utilized in the construction and design of the kiosks. A grant application currently is at the national office for the Outer Banks National Scenic Byway to assist with planning, designing, fabricating and installing interpretive signage throughout the Byway. A decision on this application is expected mid-2012.

Recommendation. Work with the Park Service to develop better signage and improve communication about beach closures

The most contentious issue voiced on Hatteras Island was the Off-road Vehicle (ORV)/beach closure policies of the U.S. National Park Service (NPS), particularly in regards to communicating the current closure locations. The NPS provides real-time information on their website, but beachgoers without current internet access have limited information channels. A focus team should work with the NPS to develop more appropriate communication materials and methods that emphasize the open areas for public use.

Recommendation. Petition the County to enforce business signage guidelines

Continuing with the theme of signage, there is a haphazard manner in which signage for business and promotion are arranged and designed on the island. Signage ordinances are established in the interests of public safety, community aesthetics, and the public

need for clear visual communications. Visual distractions, impediments to traffic visibility, and competition with traffic control devices all are considerations in crafting sign regulations. A remedy should be two-fold: 1) updating businesses on current sign signage placement, size, design and lighting requirements; and 2) beginning a dialog with the County on improved enforcement of the zoning regulations. As a sidebar, similarly there is no enforcement of business criteria.

Recommendation. Create a dialog with NC Department of Transportation about traffic calming measures

During interviews with local citizens, road and pedestrian safety were among the greatest of concerns. A streetscape plan illustrates the scale in which development should be considered. Within villages, the streetscape could be on a human scale, which means it is designed for pedestrians first, not an automobile scale, which is more focused on those passing through at a higher rate of speed. An environment designed at the human scale is usually a walkable, safe environment and can help naturally reduce the speed of vehicular traffic in an area. Traffic calming, through safety measures, such as sidewalks or narrowing of the roadway, can encourage walkability in a community, which then increases foot traffic. Increased foot traffic allows visitors to take in more of the community, increasing “dwell times” at businesses, which usually translates into increased economic potential for local businesses.

Recommendation. Contact law enforcement about stricter enforcement of speed limits on the island

In addition to, or in lieu of, actual constructed traffic calming measures mentioned above, stricter speed limit enforcement also can help to improve roadway safety for both motorists and pedestrians. A dialog should begin with both the State Highway Patrol and the County Sheriff’s Department about stricter enforcement of speed limits on the island.

Recommendation. Encourage the public to be involved in the bike lane design process, and generate on-going community support for implementing and extending the paved paths along the Outer Banks National Scenic Byway

Residents of all ages – including the elementary and secondary students interviewed during the Resource Team visit – spoke about the importance of residents being able to walk, ride bikes and use other forms of alternative transportation. On April 29, 2011, the Dare County Scenic Byway Committee received a \$1.95 million federal grant to provide 7.9 miles of paved pathway on the Outer Banks National Scenic Byway (NC-12) on Hatteras Island. The new pathway, a five-foot wide concrete surface along the Pamlico Sound side of the highway, will run through the villages of Rodanthe, Waves, Salvo and Avon. This is a tremendous step forward in “knitting” the communities together. Residents finally will have a safe place for everyone to walk, ride bikes or skate along the “main street” of northern Hatteras Island.

In order to generate on-going support for this and future transportation-related projects, it will be vitally important to involve residents and property owners in the planning process through participation in public hearings and planning meetings, on-going communication about the process and progress of the project, requests for input, regular progress reports, and celebration of completion of the funded project. Be creative in the outreach; engage the young people, ask the elders what they need, host potluck suppers to share

reports on the progress, and use a wide variety of communications and social media to make sure the communications are two-way throughout the process.

Recommendation. Update Island residents and businesses about existing development regulations and design guidelines

Island residents and businesses need more comprehensive information about existing development regulations. If the community knows what is allowed and what is not, they can help shape the future of the community's appearance and sense of place through design. This education should target many audiences and utilize a variety of methods for outreach and information-sharing that may include public meetings, hosted by the civic associations and/or County Planning Department, held in village gathering places. News articles, letters to the editor and Op-Eds about development regulations (print and online) also are excellent ways in which information can be disseminated to the public. Meeting with the Planning Board District 4 representative and County Planning Department staff to enlist their support and to identify other methods of sharing the information, which may include distribution of printed materials about development guidelines to business owners or presentations to students during classes where local government functions are studied, also is encouraged.

Recommendation. Work with Dare County Planning Department to explore design standards for the area

Property and business owners often resist design-related planning, because they have concerns that they will lose control over the unique characteristics of their building or property. A subset of the Design Committee should work with the Dare County Planning Department to explore design standards for the area, generally, beyond signage and that is rooted in community visions. Rather than mandating what color a property owner might paint their building, streetscape plans typically include recommendations on standards for improvements that reinforce the unique character and pedestrian orientation of an area. These standards may address unifying design features for sidewalks, paving, curbing, street trees, building facades, setbacks, vehicular parking areas, building heights, bicycle parking, signage, awnings, street furniture, overhead utilities, streetlights and other elements of a streetscape. Other ancillary issues like irresponsible pet owners letting their dogs run loose and mess in public spaces might also be addressed through a streetscape plan. Through pursuit of public art funds that may be available through the NC Arts Council, National Endowment for the Arts Our Town grant program, for example, the Design Committee may be able to sponsor a design charrette that leads to local artists' creating bike racks, outdoor seating and signage in front of public buildings in the villages along the proposed bike/walk path. (Additionally, local art could be hung inside public buildings and cooperating businesses.) In planning, the charrette has become a technique for consulting with all stakeholders. The word charrette may refer to any collaborative session in which a group of designers drafts multiple solutions to a design problem. This type of charrette (sometimes called an enquiry by design) typically involves intense, and possibly multi-day, meetings involving municipal officials, developers and residents.

Recommendation. Explore potential benefits of historic district designation

Rodanthe has a designated historic district that was identified in conjunction with the NC Department of Transportation planning process for the Oregon Inlet Bridge replacement project. There would be benefits to the Tri-Villages and Avon in seeking historic architectural surveys and in identifying historic properties and potential historic districts. The NC Humanities or other funding sources could allow for documentation of the histories of the vernacular houses. Following this, owners of historic homes could be provided with information if they are interested in exploring historic preservation covenants and tax incentives. A workshop with invited speakers from Preservation NC or the State Historic Preservation Office of the NC Department of Cultural Resources could explain options to the community at-large.

Recommendation. Locate available property for increased parking opportunities for ocean and soundside access

The Atlantic Ocean and the Pamlico Sound are the greatest natural assets of the Byway islands. The water offers many opportunities in recreation and attraction of visitors. Ironically, visitors are sometimes met with the challenge of accessing coastal waters during the peak season. Efforts should be made to accommodate increased use of the beaches and water. From the development of a soundside public beach area to accommodate the needs of families with small children, to the need for increased parking at existing beach access areas and new access points within villages, waterfront access continues to be a major need.

Off-road vehicle (ORV) access to Cape Point and other desirable fishing areas is managed by the U.S. National Park Service (NPS) and is non-negotiable. There is an acknowledged need by the NPS, however, for new parking areas and accesses, especially at Mile Post 46 along State Highway 12, in tandem with better signage denoting parking opportunities. A new trail for pedestrians to walk down through the dunes to the beach has been discussed and should be considered. As ocean beach access becomes more restricted, increased soundside access opportunities should be explored and marketed, including a public boat ramp with bath house and parking. The challenges brought on by Hurricane Irene present an opportunity to acquire damaged property for public access and public spaces. The NPS has committed to additional parking spaces if both land and acquisition funds are identified.

PROMOTION

“We need to be able to hook people long enough to tell the story of Hatteras and the beaches.”

Lee Nettles,
Managing
Director,
Outer Banks
Visitors
Bureau

As popular a destination as the Outer Banks is as a whole, Hatteras Island would benefit from a fresh branding campaign. There are still many families and individuals who have been vacationing at Hatteras for generations and who continue to come back year after year and stay at campgrounds, small family-run motels and seasonal cottages. But, mass media continually reminds potential visitors that the Island is “landfall central” for hurricanes on the U.S. East Coast. Some others see Hatteras as the long drive they have to make down a two-lane road to get to the Ocracoke Island ferry. Even further, there is a need for a re-invented image after all of the ORV controversy and the well-intentioned but controversial reopening of the Island after Hurricane Irene. The Outer Banks Visitors Bureau already is working to hire a consultant to evaluate the post-Irene public image.

Cape Hatteras is recognized as the best place to kiteboard in the world, and the number one U.S. East Coast surfing destination. In fact, on the northern edge of Rodanthe Village is the internationally known “S-Turns” and the most well-known surf spot on the Outer Banks. Still other sites and activities have helped to shape public awareness and perceptions about livelihoods, the pace and quality of life, and lifestyles on the island. The Rodanthe Pier became well-known after its cameo appearance in the 2008 Richard Gere and Diane Lane major motion picture, “Nights in Rodanthe.” The Avon Pier offers some of the best red drum fishing in the world - in fact, the World All-Tackle Record for red drum, a fish weighing in at 94 pounds, 2 ounces, was caught about 200 yards from the pier in 1984. These are just some of the natural and cultural assets that can be promoted in a branding campaign.

The Resource Team heard clearly that the cost of living is high, and activities and amenities for nurturing seniors or striving singles and youth are limited. Young people who are growing up on the Island acknowledge the challenges – low wages in seasonal jobs and lack of affordable housing – but most are clear they want to live, work and raise their families on the Island. The Island and its villages are home to incredibly resourceful and resilient residents who care deeply about and have worked hard to preserve the quality of life that distinguishes island communities. Promoting the Island’s quality of life can entice private company relocation. Quality of life is one of the most important aspects companies look at when expanding or locating somewhere. They want their employees to be happy and productive. Nothing helps create that environment like high quality of life, sense of place and belonging to a community.

On the arts and entertainment front, it is clear that the arts community is growing on the Island. There is a newly started Tri-Village Arts Club, and studio tours and in-house gallery art shows have increased. The market for art is changing on the Island. It used to be repeat customers, but now more first-time visitors are choosing Hatteras Island over more crowded destinations, such as Duck. This is an asset to be capitalized on. Further, there is

some geographical protection for local artists through agreements with galleries. This is important so the same items are not sold at multiple venues, forcing customers to go from one gallery to another.

Recommendation. Begin conversations with the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau to establish a tourism development person specific for Hatteras Island

Hatteras Island would benefit from a community-based tourism development professional working specifically with Island businesses and organizations to develop events, promotions, training, websites and other services to promote eco- and cultural tourism on the Island. Ideally, this should be a full-time, year-round position.

Recommendation. Develop a Hatteras Island “brand” around a “best known for” local Island feature

Tourism currently is the main economic engine with many resources devoted to destination marketing – a visitor-centered approach to the economic and cultural development of the villages. Once primarily featured as a natural attraction (beaches), the market strategy should diversify to highlight more of a “unique/boutique” destination, which are typically small and localized destinations that capitalize on a specialized “best known for” appeal. Some new best known for features have become windsurfing and kiteboarding. Just south of Avon is the “Canadian Hole,” one of the most popular windsurfing spots on the Outer Banks. It was named in honor of the Canadian windsurfers who frequent the location. Like Roanoke Island, a “brand” for Hatteras Island could be developed around this, such as “Outdoor Adventure Capital.”

The Outer Banks Visitors Bureau is a key partner in the promotion of Hatteras Island as a tourist destination and should be represented on the Promotion Committee. The Committee should work closely with the Visitors Bureau to identify funding resources for branding and marketing the northern Hatteras Island villages, and then to implement the branding/marketing campaign when those resources have been secured.

This is particularly important in the aftermath of Hurricane Irene and the negative publicity and comments on the internet that resulted when visitors could not get to Hatteras for their vacation stays. It is recommended that the Promotion Committee also be represented on, and coordinate closely with, the Hatteras Island Emergency Management Council in order to ensure clear communication during future storm events.

Recommendation. Promote the Island’s quality of life to entice private company relocation

One of the key strategies of the economic restructuring recommendations is working to diversify the economy to ensure that there are more than seasonal jobs available. In the internet age, there are many “lone eagle” or small businesses that are sole proprietorships or have less than ten employees that can do their work remotely. These businesses often choose where they want to be located based on lifestyle and quality of life considerations (as long as high-speed internet access is available). It will be

important to work closely with the Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce, North Carolina's Northeast Economic Development Commission and other economic development agencies to promote Hatteras Island and its quality of life as an ideal location for small businesses. One strategy might be to host corporate gatherings during the shoulder season or off-season to raise awareness about the amenities and lifestyles. Another idea might be to have Hatteras Island represented at trade shows for technology-related businesses.

Recommendation. Create historic village walking/biking tours to showcase historic buildings and graveyards

Rodanthe has a very brief summary of buildings in its historic district that could be used to develop a walking tour, and there are many historic homes in Avon. These historic properties present a wonderful opportunity for historical and educational based tourism. For example, the postage stamp-sized Salvo Post Office was one of the smallest post offices in existence. When the new postmaster took over, he or she would simply jack the post office onto a boat trailer and move it to his or her yard. This likely would be of interest to visitors. The original village of Avon ("Kinnakeet") is situated on a small, yet picturesque, harbor that once was dotted with schooners built there and used for oyster fishing. In modern times, practically every yard in "Old Avon Village" contains an outboard-powered skiff. Old Avon Village is where many locals live, and it also is filled with wonderful old-style cottages on pilings (to protect them from sound side flooding). In addition to showcasing historic homes, all four villages have significant numbers of family gravesites (though several of these are threatened by erosion). Guided and self-guided tours could be developed for such sites should families/property owners be willing participants. Eighty percent of travel planning is now done via the web/online, so tours should be uploaded to a website as a long-term goal. A first step would be an updated historic architecture survey. Staff from the NC Office of Archives and History can assist with this.



Hooper Brothers at the former Salvo Post Office.

Recommendation. Research avenues to restore and to open up tours of the "Little Kinnakeet" Lifesaving Station (Avon)

Avon once had two active lifesaving stations. The northern "Little Kinnakeet" station remains and is on U.S. National Park Service property. The facade has been repaired, but nearly five million dollars is needed to renovate the building for historical interpretation to visitors. If a no-fee lease agreement could be developed with a local organization in exchange for repair work, locals could interpret the rich history of past rescue efforts.

Recommendation. Professionalize the interpretation of all history museums, particularly the Chicamacomico Lifesaving Station and Hatteras Island Histories/Mysteries Museum

Local museums should explore becoming nonprofit membership organizations. Key to this would be to have full community engagement in both operations and programming. Someone who feels connected to a history museum is more likely to buy-in through service in-kind or monetary donations – keys to museum longevity. Avenues to create this connectivity are many. A first step would be to create a list of artifact donors, providing their image and/or name in a published newsletter, or in a posting in the gift shop. Carrying more works of local artists in the gift shop not only creates connectivity to locals, but also, provides for a unique shopping opportunity. The gift shop itself then could be promoted/advertised as an Island art gallery and space for it increased in museum advertising. The publicity would bring a different demographic of people to the historic sites. Photography days, where the museum scans and documents photographs from private collections and posts selections on website, also fosters community buy-in.

There are training programs and workshops available, as well as books and online resources (see “Resources” section) that discuss the care and maintenance of historic house museums. Some cities and regions have developed tours that visit a number of historic house museums.

The process for establishing a nonprofit organization involves:

- Establishing a Board of Directors; five to nine members is often considered to be the optimal size for group decision-making. If a larger Board will better represent and engage community members, it is recommended to have a subset of the Board serve as an Executive Committee that meets more frequently and is authorized to make decisions and act on behalf of the overall Board. The Executive Committee typically will consist of the officers of the corporation and one or more at-large members.
- Develop Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws that include the mission and charitable purposes of the organization, and incorporate as a nonprofit in the State of North Carolina by filing the documents with the Secretary of State’s office. Existing documents for the other civic associations might be used as a guide in developing these two documents, and organization leaders may seek (paid or pro bono) assistance from an attorney in developing the documents.
- Develop a three-year work plan and budget for the organization. The work plan may consist of the priority action items from this report, and estimated budget line items for each project should be developed and combined into a three-year budget that includes potential funding sources, as well as expenditures.
- Complete and submit Form 1023, the application for determination of nonprofit status by the Internal Revenue Service. The mission, purpose, goals, and three-year work plan and budget will be incorporated into this application. It usually is easier to have assistance from a nonprofit attorney at least in reviewing the application prior to submittal.

Recommendation. Create a rotating community-based art exhibit at the community centers

The Rodanthe Community Center presents a perfect opportunity to create interpretive information about the old schoolhouse and how it became a community center, with particular emphasis on the older parts of the building. Civic leaders could arrange for other



Courtesy of S. West
Young people making Christmas ornaments at Studio 12 in Avon.

rotating/temporary photographic exhibits like the filming of “Nights in Rodanthe,” illustrated by quoted narratives of locals about the filming. Funding could come through fan websites and the film company itself. Exhibitions of post-Irene photography alongside historic photos of the after-effects of other historic hurricanes would be of great interest to visitors and provide a “healing” experience to residents impacted by the storm. The Resource Team heard how the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum (Hatteras Village) missed a golden opportunity after Hurricane Isabel (2003) by not producing a photographic exhibit of the storm’s effects and post-storm efforts. Residents recalled the oversized photo of “Izzy Inlet” that was at the Red and White grocery in Hatteras Village and how it was a hit. Residents may be amazed that visitors have never seen anything like the hurricane damages Hatteras Islanders experience. It is a huge part of the Island heritage, for better or worse. The Tri-Village Arts Club should discuss possibilities of documenting traditional art—historical and contemporary like turning storm flotsam into art—with the Dare County Arts Council and the NC Arts Council’s Folklife Program.

Recommendation. Diversify the tourism economy by creating a Tourism Development Plan around “immersion” tourism and educational activities, such as commercial fishing, sky-watching and bird-watching

Hatteras Island is the premier location on the U.S. east coast, perhaps the world, for participating in water-related sport and activities. But, there is so much more available. A growing market in tourism is “Immersion Travel” or “Cultural Immersion Travel.” Hatteras villages should tap into this market trend by providing educational-based tourism centered on life as a waterman, to start with. Visitors interested in the local culture and the occupation of commercial fishing could participate in a fishing trip, speak with members of commercial fishing families about the challenges they face, and learn about the ecology of the area through the eyes of watermen. The historical aspect of the industry could be featured, as well. Other immersion activities could include boat building, waterfowl hunting and navigation. Navigation would tie into astronomy, as the small, rural villages with limited street lights and vast stretches of National Park Service and National Wildlife Refuge lands allows for some of the most spectacular views of the night sky for stargazing and astronomy enthusiasts. Local cooking and foods unique to Hatteras Island is another potential “immersion” topic, teaching visitors to cook local dishes. The Promotions Committee should research local recipes passed down from generation to generation.

The Outer Banks Visitors Bureau will be an important resource partner in promoting the outdoor adventure activities and opportunities that exist, and that can be developed, on Hatteras. One strategy that is often used in the tourism industry to promote certain destinations is to host a “familiarization (“fam”) tour, which is a free or reduced-rate trip offered to travel professionals to acquaint them with what a destination, attraction or supplier has to offer. Fam tour participants typically include tour and travel companies, meeting and event planners, and writers and journalists, such as the Travel Writers Association. One of these target audiences, ElderHostel, Inc., is a national organization that is dedicated to lifelong learning. Their subsidiary, Road Scholar, offers more than 7,000 educational tours in all 50 states and 150 countries. The Promotion Committee should work closely with the Visitors Bureau to develop and implement strategies that promote Hatteras Island to target audiences and to cultivate these new relationships that will help to diversify the economy.

Recommendation. Promote local folklore

There are many stories to be told by long-time residents of the Tri-villages and Avon. These stories should be recorded so that future generations can have an understanding of what life on the Island was like in past generations. These stories present opportunities for books, plays and film, as well as tourism opportunities. As a first step in promoting the living history of the villages, the Kinnakeet Civic Association is holding “history potlucks” in the winter, whereby residents are invited to share stories from the designated community and to bring a covered-dish of traditional food/favorite recipe. But, the conversations are not recorded or filmed. There have been several unsuccessful attempts at reviving *Sea Chest*, the oral history publication by the secondary school students. Volunteers could be given training in how to conduct an interview and transcribe recorded oral histories. The Outer Banks History Center is a repository of priceless oral histories collected on Hatteras and Ocracoke islands by U.S. National Park Service personnel and others since the 1960s. A more long-range action would be to revisit oral history information and recommendations from the National Park Service’s ethnohistory report.

Recommendation. Seek resources to put up Christmas decorations on Island roads in tandem with “Old Christmas”

On the Outer Banks, only the municipalities on the northern beaches are able to devote resources towards municipal Christmas light displays, though cultural attractions (e.g., Island Farm, Elizabethan Gardens, Jockey’s Ridge State Park) have developed elaborate programming around the theme of Christmas. In 2005, Kill Devil Hills residents, the Poulos’, house lights were voted number one in America by a *Good Morning America* Poll. Across the country, neighbors are drawn together by holiday road light shows.

There also is the world famous Manteo Christmas Shop. All this synergy prompted a new marketing idea by the Outer Banks Visitor’s Bureau this year – a campaign called



John Herbert leading Old Buck at the Rodanthe Old Christmas celebration.

“OBXmas,” in which none of the Hatteras Island communities right now are geared to participate in. Rodanthe is famous for its traditional “Old Christmas” celebration held on the nearest Saturday to January 7th. The event is open to the public with a small admission fee. Residents may want to better promote the annual Old Christmas celebration in conjunction with the OBXmas campaign, including the rifle marksmanship contest, the oyster roast, the chicken pastry dinner and dance with a live band, and the always greatly anticipated appearance of the mythological “Old Buck” bull. This could pull in visitors during an off-season time, benefiting local motels, stores and restaurants. More importantly, building of a multi-use path through the northern villages could help to facilitate street lighting and decorations like other areas of the County. The Promotions Committee should research possible funding mechanisms.

Recommendation. Market the area for future filming (motion pictures, documentary and science discovery) opportunities

The natural environment enjoyed on Hatteras Island presents a unique setting for filming motion pictures, short films, documentaries, and even, nature-based shows. Several feature movies have been filmed here in the past. Hatteras Island could be promoted to local film companies looking for an original setting to film. There are several large film and production companies located in nearby Wilmington, NC. As a first step to raise awareness of the industry, the Promotions Committee should tap into the creative culture on the Island by hosting an independent film festival. The festival could happen once a year during the shoulder season.

“Businesses are suffering because people are suffering.”

Anonymous,
restaurant
owner

ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

The Economic Restructuring Committee should focus on two broad areas: 1) strengthening existing businesses, and 2) supporting and recruiting new businesses that help to strengthen and diversify the economy on the Island. Given the extraordinary natural resources and coastal environment, the Committee should work to emphasize sustainable business practices, green jobs and creation of higher-quality jobs with livable wages and benefits.

The Committee will want to work with the Hatteras-Ocracoke Council of the Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce, the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau, the Northeast Economic Development Commission, Outer Banks Catch, and other related economic development agencies and programs.

STRENGTHEN EXISTING BUSINESSES

Residents universally expressed a strong desire to keep “mom-and-pop” businesses part of the Island economy, which is itself a marketing asset. Best summarized by a customer review online, *“This is what a surf shop is about, a surfer and family helping others along the way! Low key, not a lot of frills, and definitely not your mainstream bunch of garbage for sale...Thanks for being a part of the eternal Outer Banks surfing lore!”*

North Carolina is a state of small businesses, with over two-thirds of the jobs in the state provided by businesses with fewer than 100 employees and 17% of all jobs occurring in sole proprietorships or businesses with no employees. Almost 27% of the businesses in North Carolina are family-owned. Strengthening existing



An example of a mom-and-pop business in Salvo.

businesses is a sound economic development strategy for a variety of reasons, especially because it is easier to help existing businesses expand and create new jobs, than it is to recruit new industries.

Recommendation. Conduct a market analysis to identify existing small business needs

One of the distinctive features of the Hatteras Island economy is the predominance of small and family-owned businesses, and the lack of fast food restaurants and other franchises. While this is a strength that should be marketed as part of the branding and marketing campaign, it also has inherent challenges, given the seasonal nature of the tourism economy and the difficulties that are generally faced by small businesses. Retirement, particularly of baby boomers, is very big business. Weddings also are big business. One question that needs to be answered is, should these be delineated as major economic growth areas? Some of the issues heard by Resource Team members included: need for increased access to capital, need for coordinated marketing, need to increase use of social media in marketing, and the need for expanding customer bases through internet sales, to name just a few.

The Economic Restructuring Committee should work with the Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce, the Small Business Center at College of the Albemarle, and other economic development entities to survey business owners on the Island, to identify their needs related to financing, marketing, management, and etc. Once the data has been compiled, the next step would be to identify the types of support needed to determine: 1) training needs for business owners; 2) services that might be provided to multiple businesses by existing nonprofits or programs such as Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE); and 3) services that might provide new business development opportunities, such as accounting services, website development and maintenance, and etc.

SUPPORT AND RECRUIT NEW BUSINESSES

New business development and recruitment should include a mix of new start-ups that are locally owned and managed with new or existing businesses that relocate to Hatteras from another area. It will be important to work with the range of agencies and other community and economic development entities to identify, recruit and/or support businesses that will help to strengthen and to diversify the economy on the Island. The quality of life is a large part of the decision-making process that draws business into an area, but available infrastructure, institutional support and consumer base is what keeps it there.

Recommendation. Conduct a local market analysis to identify small business opportunities

The Economic Restructuring Committee should connect with the Chamber of Commerce and the Northeast Economic Development Commission to identify any studies or market analyses that may have already been completed. If none have been undertaken recently, committee members should explore partnership opportunities with these agencies, a community college Small Business Center, or the Business School at East Carolina University, to conduct a market analysis. The Center for Green Research and Evaluation at Elizabeth City State University is working to complete a “regional green economy plan” that has identified seven strategies with high potential for “green job” creation, including:

- Energy-efficient construction
- Eco- and heritage tourism
- Sustainable agriculture
- Renewable energy production
- Recycling industry and green manufacturing
- Stormwater management and low-impact development
- Green education and training

“Green industries” are gaining in acceptance, and actively recruiting these types of businesses can help demonstrate the community commitment to job creation that is consistent with protection of the quality of life and rich natural resources. It is important to coordinate this market analysis with the “existing business needs” survey to ensure that new businesses will add value to the existing businesses, while “rounding out” the economic activities on the Island.

Recommendation. Increase the inventory of affordable housing for residents

Lack of access to affordable housing is one of the primary reasons cited by interviewed youth as the reason they are likely to have to leave the Island to get a job or raise their family. In July, the NC State Employees’ Credit Union Foundation unveiled a multi-family complex to provide affordable housing for teachers on Hatteras. This project will help to reduce only some of the demand, and not in any way for the northern villages. The Economic Restructuring Committee should work closely with the Outer Banks Community Development Corporation to explore options for collaborating on increasing the supply of affordable housing on the Island. Some local jurisdictions have adopted inclusionary zoning policies that require or encourage developers to set aside a percentage of the units in housing developments for low- and moderate-income residents. Most inclusionary housing programs offer density bonuses or other incentives to offset the developer’s project costs and compensate for providing affordable units, which may otherwise yield reduced profits. This approach enlists private sector help in contributing to the affordable housing supply, and reduces segregation of affordable and market-rate housing. This should be researched with the Dare County Planning Department.

Further, around the country Habitat for Humanity has helped tens of thousands of partner families (through sweat equity) move into simple, decent, affordable houses. To help even more, part of Habitat’s responsibility includes advocacy and public awareness with local and state elected officials. Habitat supports a national Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The HTF would be a new source of revenue to assist in the production of new affordable housing and the rehabilitation of existing housing. As a bonus, Habitat offers a disaster response, which is bonus to an island highly prone to hurricane impacts. Admittedly, there are an exceeding number of nonprofits on the Island, but this is one nonprofit worth starting up and adding to the milieu.

Recommendation. Locate available property for increased parking opportunities for ocean- and soundside access

Increased oceanside and soundside access is an economic restructuring issue, as well as a design issue, since increased availability of parking and water access will result in longer stays and increased expenditures by visitors to the Island. The first step should be to meet with the Dare County Control Group to determine whether any properties that will be “bought-out” with FEMA funds might provide future use for parking or water access. A second step would be to meet with the U.S. National Park Service to explore opportunities for public-private collaboration to provide parking and water access. Other potential funding sources to be explored might include the NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, though Dare County would have to be the applicant; the Federal Highway Administration’s Scenic Byways Program; and the NC Department of Transportation enhancements funding.

Recommendation. Obtain public support for increased parking opportunities

As with most of the recommendations in this report, the key to successful implementation of priority projects will be obtaining public support. This can be accomplished through a variety of approaches that might include potluck suppers, public meetings, flyers in the post office or grocery stores, and word of mouth. Use volunteers to get the word out, and have ways to document the public support through forms, surveys, interviews, petitions and etc.

Recommendation. Locate a permanent facility that can accommodate a local “Farmers Market”



Courtesy of S. West

Hatteras Island Farmers Market at temporary location in Avon.

Farmers markets continue to rise in popularity mostly due to the growing consumer interest in obtaining fresh products directly from farmers. As of mid-2011, there were 7,175 farmers markets operating in the U.S.; this is a 17% increase from 2010. In a Project for Public Spaces study, 60% of customers at farmers markets said they had or planned to visit other stores in the area. Markets also have been identified as good social gathering places that help build community.

The Hatteras Island Farmers Market, sponsored by the nonprofit Coastal Harvesters, offers residents and visitors the opportunity to purchase produce and other goods directly from North Carolina farmers. Local artisans who make utilitarian goods also participate in the market. The market has been popular and well-attended but faces challenges in retaining farmers as vendors due to both the distance from production land to the Island and the uncertainty over the markets’ future due to the lack of a permanent location. The Economic Restructuring Committee should explore options for locating the market on public land and for developing a regional local foods distribution hub.

Another idea is for fish trucks to backhaul produce from inland. Backhauling refers to the transporting of one type of cargo in one direction and another on the return or subsequent trips and could be a way to sustain commercial fishing and get more fresh produce on the Island. This is a common technique among small farm operators. The risk of cross-contamination would be minimized by following Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) standards. Healthier eating for residents, particularly youth, was an issue also identified by the community. Finally, this would equate to improved business for fish house trucks and/or new business development opportunities for Island entrepreneurs.

Recommendation. Seek support for sales of seafood at the “Farmers Market” from the Dare County Department of Public Health Board

In November, the Dare County Department of Public Health Board discussed the possibility of allowing sales of seafood at “farmers market.” It will be important for the Economic Restructuring Committee to follow up with the Public Health Board and the County Commissioners to ensure that the approvals are finalized.

Recommendation. Continue to promote and expand local foods programs

While the North Carolina seafood industry is stressed and the number of fish houses and fishermen are declining, the “local foods” movement has gained momentum in the United States. Fishermen have an opportunity to target discriminating consumers and get a better value for their product by associating themselves with the local foods movement. Key to this effort is the seafood education and branding campaign being carried out under the auspices of an umbrella group called North Carolina Catch, and carried out locally by four regional groups (Carteret Catch, Outer Banks Catch, Brunswick Catch, and Ocracoke Fresh). These “catch” groups are working to educate consumers about the availability and quality of local seafood. Hatteras Island fishermen, seafood dealers and restaurants benefit from this program and should continue to support it. Islanders should explore other ways local seafood can be promoted and enjoyed, including partnering seafood industry participants with proponents of the farmers market and community garden. A concerted effort to have local foods cooked and served at Island schools, to the elderly, or at festivals and events could benefit the fishing industry and the residents of Hatteras Island.

Recommendation. Explore value-added products for local seafood and seafood processing waste (e.g., fish scraps)

Value-added seafood products present an opportunity to increase profit margins. Examples might include a filleting and processing facility that could tap into the increased demand for local seafood, and a production facility where specialty foods, such as canned seafood chowders and stews or frozen fish cakes, could be produced, packed, stored and shipped. The Economic Restructuring Committee should research the feasibility of value-added production on the island, including development of a commercial grade, shared-use community kitchen.

There also is general seafood processing waste, such as fish carcasses and scraps. Commercial fishermen should examine other businesses that have used this processing by-product to make non-edible products like plant fertilizer. Similar to many of the above recommendations, the Economic Restructuring committee should research other coastal, fishing communities for ideas, uses or niches that currently are not being tapped on-island.

Recommendation. Seek funding to make Rodanthe Harbor an adequate commercial port

The harbor has the potential to regain its position as a valuable working waterfront serving both residents and visitors in the Tri-village area. The community should seek funding for repairs to the bulkhead to ensure its structural integrity. Monies also are needed for dredging the channel to an adequate depth to accommodate commercial fishing boats, pleasure boats and the NC Department of Transportation's ferries.

Recommendation. Maintain working waterfront areas

The value of maintaining Hatteras Island's working waterfronts, such as fish houses and boat repair facilities, cannot be overstated. A seafood dealer creates a direct economic impact by selling seafood that he/she buys from local fishermen. A portion of the sales goes toward paying fishermen, as well as the dealer's overhead and employee wages. An economic ripple effect, a multiplier, occurs as fishing dollars are reinvested in the business on goods and services, such as fuel, groceries, insurance and boat repairs. The impact on the local economy is significant, as well. Fishing income is spent on a variety of necessities, such as home mortgages, food, clothing and school supplies, helping to sustain local businesses. These effects occur over and over again as money is spent and re-spent in the local economy.



Courtesy of S. Mirabilio

Remains of the fish house in Rodanthe Harbor.

There are no public docks or seafood offloading locations in the Tri-Villages or Avon. The closure of any fish house on the island would result in a critical shortage of docking space for commercial fishing boats and many fishermen exiting the fishery, negatively impacting the economy. Residents should seek state legislation that specifically authorizes voluntary working waterfront conservation easements, similar to that authorized for farmland and forestry land in NC, and that would create a NC Seafood Development and Working Waterfront Preservation Trust Fund structured similarly to that for farmlands in GS 106-744. The NC Waterfront Access Study Committee recommended this action in its 2007 report to the General Assembly. This legislation would position the Island and the state to benefit should federal working waterfront protection legislation be enacted.

One way to diversify the fish house business model could be the development of a substantial retail front. Working waterfronts also present opportunities for heritage or occupational tourism.

Hatteras Island seafood dealers complain that young people are not entering the industry in sufficient numbers, and the industry therefore faces labor shortages with the dwindling number of commercial fishermen. Islanders might look into establishing a junior fisherman apprenticeship program at Cape Hatteras Secondary School of Coastal Studies whereby students acquire a commercial fishing license by fishing with a licensed sponsor and showing income (any amount) from the sale of fish for three years. This could be combined with units in boating safety/navigation, mariculture and other marine-related studies. This would address an immediate labor need of seafood dealers and create jobs. The state now has some 1,500 licenses available. If the applicant is the child/grandchild of a Standard Commercial Fishing License holder, the three-year income requirement is waived.

***Recommendation.* Investigate the feasibility and economic potential of expanded shellfish mariculture**



Courtesy of S. Mirabilio

Fishing restrictions and closures have had a severe impact on the commercial fishing operations of Hatteras Island, particularly federal restrictions such as the recent snapper/grouper closures and a series of measures pertaining to the Endangered Species Act. These restrictions, combined with high operating costs and a market depressed by a flood of imported products, have eroded the vitality of the commercial fishing industry. Emerging programs and business models, such as direct marketing, community supported fisheries, and local seafood branding efforts, are designed to help offset the negative trend. A handful of entrepreneurs in North Carolina are experiencing some success growing oysters in suspended cages for the lucrative “half shell” market, which is a multi-million dollar industry in Virginia but is in its infancy in North Carolina. An expanded shellfish mariculture program should be explored for Hatteras Island as the ecology of the area is ideal for oysters and clams, and the Cape Hatteras Secondary School, the UNC Coastal Studies Institute (Manteo), and NC Sea Grant already are studying mariculture possibilities on-island and could serve as great resources for locals wishing to explore this option.

***Recommendation.* Explore an Island shuttle service (by both land and water) as an opportunity for one or more local entrepreneurs**

The Economic Restructuring Committee should investigate the feasibility of providing a water-taxi service to transport anglers to Cape Point or other areas otherwise closed to beach driving at certain times of the years. Depending on the specifics of the closure, it may be legal for anglers to fish from desired points so long as they do not drive across designated beach areas during nesting season. This could pose an opportunity for a new small businesses in shuttling anglers and visitors via boat.

Recommendation. Strengthen pier-related recreational fishing opportunities

Given the negative impacts of Off-road Vehicle (ORV) closures reported by local businesses, particularly tackle shops (some of which report a 60% decrease in spring revenue), other fishing opportunities, such as pier fishing, should be promoted. Hatteras Island's two operating piers are located in Rodanthe and in Avon. They represent 10% of the state's remaining public fishing piers. With the costs of operating an offshore boat rising (e.g., fuel), and four-wheel-drive vehicles being prohibited on large stretches of Hatteras Island beaches, fishing piers allow saltwater anglers, especially subsistence fishers and the handicapped, to recreate despite ocean access challenges.

Recommendation. Work to identify and meet National Park Service Special Event Permit conditions, so as to provide more pier-based family entertainment

Both piers offer youth fishing events; Rodanthe in May and Avon in August. Avon also offers a red drum tournament in November. As there is not a wealth of affordable family entertainment on the Island, more event programming at the piers seems advantageous. The Avon Pier used to do more events (e.g., Friday night music and \$1 beers; volleyball tournament), but this was not an image the U.S. National Park Service (NPS) wanted for its concession areas, and special events permits are being granted minimally. The firework shows, always difficult because of the NPS special event permit process, have become even more difficult because of the new North Carolina firework law that went into place in 2010. The law calls for technicians, who must be 21 or older, to earn a three-year operating license by completing a training course, passing a written exam, and paying \$200. Even with owning its own equipment, it costs the Avon Pier nearly \$20,000 to put on a show. But, the fireworks display used to draw between 2,000-3,000 people.



Men fishing at sunrise off the pier in Avon.

Recommendation. Research start of a U.S. kiteboarding tour similar to Kiteboard Tour Asia

Both REAL Watersports and Kitty Hawk Kites (KHK) opened kiteboarding "resorts" in 2008 - full-service kite, surf, standup and style centers that try for an all-inclusive ski resort theme complete with restaurants and vacation condos. Both companies are witnessing big growth. Kiteboarding only began in 1998 with a couple dozen boarders in the world, so there is room for much growth. In just eight years (data to 2006), the population of kiteboarders was estimated at 150,000 to 200,000 world-wide. REAL puts on the Triple S Invitational in early June each year, where 24 of the world's best kiteboarders compete in a unique free-ride format. The event started with an Outer Banks Visitors Bureau Tourism Assistance Grant, which is a pot of money earmarked for activities that will bring visitors to the area Aug. 15 to Jun. 15 each year (traditionally the slow period). The KHK started this year the first ever East Coast Kite Expo, which was held at their Waves Village Memorial Day Weekend. The companies should consider working together, as these events could be grown to start a U.S. kiteboarding tour similar to Kiteboard Tour Asia.

***Recommendation.* Create a dialogue with the East Albemarle Regional Library about providing outreach and bookmobile services**

Library services are an important aspect of any community. The characteristics deemed of most importance to retiring individuals are in order: medical facilities, low utility rates, low cost of living, library facilities and recreational facilities. Kinnakeet Township is lacking in many of these areas, particularly in library services. If it is not likely that a satellite library facility would locate in the Tri-villages or Avon, the residents should have the opportunity of a mobile service (book mobile). This service should be provided on a set schedule and be advertised to allow the citizens to take advantage of this opportunity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are ideas derived from what the public told the Resource Team during the visit in May of 2011 but are what we, with outside perspectives, recommend. During the site visit, the Team asked individuals to describe development efforts that have been implemented in their community, and the usefulness of these different activities. The Team's recommendations below merely are ranked according to themes and do not represent a priority ranking. The Team will next ask the communities to rank their priorities for future development activities in their community. These recommendations represent a starting point, designed to provide the communities with several achievable goals within the four areas of the Main Street® approach. As the community subcommittees begin to work towards the completion of these suggested projects, those groups tasked with the completion of these goals should closely review this list and adapt the list as appropriate. Suggested projects can be added or removed as the standing committees deem appropriate. This is a local effort and should closely reflect local needs and desires.

Recommendation	Time Frame	Partners
Organization		
Establish an Implementation Steering Committee		
Develop a Mission Statement, Program of Work and Implementation Plan		
Establish standing committees (Organization, Design, Promotion, Economic Restructuring) to implement the strategic plan		
Establish a Hatteras Island Emergency Management Council		
Seek out and secure funding to implement priority projects		
Seek funding for an active, professional community-based beach patrol for ocean and sound waters		
Explore the feasibility of incorporating Avon		
Involve and strengthen the existing civic associations		
Explore bringing the Avon Property Owners' Association (APOA) and the Kinnakeet Civic Association (KCA) together as one organization		
Increase volunteerism on the island		
Develop an Island Leaders Program similar to that of Maine's Island Institute		
Strengthen capacity for grassroots participation in governmental decision processes		
Create a community center in Avon		
Design		
Install "Welcome to Hatteras Island" entrance signs		
Design and install wayfinding signage for Island assets		

Recommendation	Time Frame	Partners
Provide a series of kiosks to showcase the Island's attractions		
Work with the Park Service to develop better signage and improve communication about beach closures		
Petition the County to enforce business signage guidelines		
Create a dialog with NC Department of Transportation about traffic calming measures		
Contact law enforcement about stricter enforcement of speed limits on the island		
Encourage the public to be involved in the bike lane design process, and generate on-going community support for implementing and extending the paved paths along the Outer Banks National Scenic Byway		
Update Island residents and businesses about existing development regulations and design guidelines		
Work with Dare County Planning Department to explore design standards for the area		
Explore potential benefits of historic district designation		
Locate available property for increased parking opportunities for ocean and soundside access		
Promotion		
Begin conversations with the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau to establish a tourism development person specific for Hatteras Island		
Develop a Hatteras Island "brand" around a "best known for" local Island feature		
Promote the Island's quality of life to entice private company relocation		
Create historic village walking/biking tours to showcase historic buildings and graveyards		
Research avenues to restore and to open up tours of the "Little Kinnakeet" Lifesaving Station (Avon)		
Professionalize the interpretation of all history museums, particularly the Chicamacomico Lifesaving Station and Hatteras Island Histories/Mysteries Museum		
Create a rotating community-based art exhibit at the community centers		
Diversify the tourism economy by creating a Tourism Development Plan around "immersion" tourism and educational activities, such as commercial fishing, sky-watching and bird-watching		

Recommendation	Time Frame	Partners
Promote local folklore		
Seek resources to put up Christmas decorations on Island roads in tandem with “Old Christmas”		
Market the area for future filming (motion pictures, documentary and science discovery) opportunities		
Economic Restructuring		
Conduct a market analysis to identify existing small business needs		
Conduct a local market analysis to identify small business opportunities		
Increase the inventory of affordable housing for residents		
Locate available property for increased parking opportunities for ocean- and soundside access		
Obtain public support for increased parking opportunities		
Locate a permanent facility that can accommodate a local “Farmers Market”		
Seek support for sales of seafood at the “Farmers Market” from the Dare County Department of Public Health Board		
Continue to promote and expand local foods programs		
Explore value-added products for local seafood and seafood processing waste (e.g., fish scraps)		
Seek funding to make Rodanthe Harbor an adequate commercial port		
Maintain working waterfront areas		
Investigate the feasibility and economic potential of expanded shellfish mariculture		
Explore an Island shuttle service (by both land and water) as an opportunity for one or more local entrepreneurs		
Strengthen pier-related recreational fishing opportunities		
Work to identify and meet National Park Service Special Event Permit conditions, so as to provide more pier-based family entertainment		
Research start of a U.S. kiteboarding tour similar to Kiteboard Tour Asia		
Create a dialogue with the East Albemarle Regional Library about providing outreach and bookmobile services		

GETTING STARTED

Coastal residents understand fully that “all things are connected” – for example, tourism development, a vibrant local economy, strong businesses, and water access are all inextricably linked. In addition to the four focus areas of the Main Street® Approach, eight principles will guide plan development to foster the best chance for success. These include –

Comprehensive – progress should be made in all four areas

Incremental – start with small and easier projects and work up to the more challenging.

Self-help – Maintain community involvement and commitment in each on-the-ground activity.

Partnerships – Each group has a role to play and working together brings each other’s strengths to play.

Capitalize on existing assets –

Quality – it is not necessarily about the number of community improvements but about the effect of each activity in creating positive imagery amongst residents and visitors alike.

Change – Carefully plan your initial projects to have successes early on that will help shift public perceptions and practices in support of change.

Implementation – It is better to see a few projects all the way through then to start many and not finish due to resource limitations as these projects pave the way for larger ones.

Changes in the organization, business, promotion and built environment in the Tri-Villages and Avon need to balance resources with potential impact. Some will take place before others based on interest, funds and when opportunities present themselves. As a guide, specific projects on the Island should be:

DOABLE: Projects should be undertaken with a clear understanding of the resources and capacity to complete them. Focus limited resources on small-scale projects with big impact. Choose some projects that allow community members to contribute their skills and expertise.

VISIBLE: Projects should be visible and in prominent locations, where it is evident that things are happening. It is especially important that this happens sometime soon after recommendations are made. For example, projects along Highway 12 would immediately be noticeable.

AFFORDABLE: Projects should respect the limited resources of the villages. The selection and design of projects should balance the costs with the potential impacts.

FLEXIBLE: Instead of projects focusing or supporting one type of activity, they should be designed to be flexible enough to support a range of activities, which are both planned and unplanned.

INCLUSIVE: Projects should be designed in a way that will be children-friendly. Additionally, the design, planning and construction of projects should actively engage members of the community as well as visitors to build ownership into the process.

TRAINING: Efforts can be made to build and enhance the skill set of community members in the process.

APPROPRIATE: Projects should respond to the feedback received from community members, stakeholders and the planning and design professionals that worked together to generate this report.

SUSTAINABLE: Projects should respond to the natural environment. Local materials and contractors should be used wherever possible, to ensure that the economic impact of the projects remain, for the most part, in the local community.

Some basic things to keep in mind as you move forward:

Attitudes

- Be authentic – remember who you are, and what’s important to the community
- Build on your assets
- Address your weaknesses
- Be patient
- Listen to the community, and to each other
- Find win-win solutions
- Cultivate your funders and partners

Actions

- Work hard
- Work together
- Plan and organize well
- Work the plan, but remember that the plan is a living document
- Get the whole community involved, even the naysayers
- Feed the volunteers – people who eat together work together better

Communications and Manners

- Tell your story – in newsletters, newspapers, and in person
- Thank your volunteers, funders, and investors – many times and many ways
- Keep the community informed

Celebrate your successes

- Continue to cultivate your funders and partners
- Evaluation
- Evaluate quantitatively – and qualitatively
- Learn from your mistakes, and your successes
- Take pictures – before, during, and after
- Take stock of what you have accomplished – write it down
- Let the community know what you have accomplished
- Remember you can accomplish anything if you don't mind who gets the credit
- Ask the community what they think

Human Capacity –**AmeriCorps**

Part of any community development effort is cultivating human resources in addition to monetary. More than \$3.4 million in federal grants are available for North Carolina non-profits and government agencies to recruit AmeriCorps members. AmeriCorps volunteers assist non-profits and government agencies with providing tutoring, mentoring, disaster services, environmental stewardship, education on healthy futures, and job training and placement. The N.C. Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service coordinates the grants. Grant applications are due to the N.C. Volunteer Commission by noon on Friday, March 16, 2012. Application forms are available on the N.C. Volunteer Commission's website at: www.volunteernc.org, or by calling 919-715-3470 or 1-800-820-4483.

Volunteers for Peace

Bringing outside volunteers can help attract new energy to a project, and can bring the fresh perspective of seeing one's own community through the eyes of others. The non-profit organization Volunteers for Peace facilitates the placement of international and national volunteers for this purpose. Most are college-aged and unskilled, but they bring high energy and enthusiasm. In the past they have assisted projects such as festivals and fundraising events; construction and renovation; historic preservation; environmental conservation and education; and working with children, elderly, disabled, or disadvantaged groups. More information is at: <http://vfp.org/join-us/host-a-project>

East Carolina University

ECU has experts in relevant areas such as regional planning, hazards response, sustainable tourism, the development of natural resource economies, and social services. Many resources can be accessed by developing collaborative research and outreach relationships with appropriate faculty. Finding the right folks, however, can be harder. First stops for hazards response expertise

might include the ECU Geography Department, Renaissance Computing Institute, and Center for Natural Hazards Research. General planning expertise is also based in the Urban and Regional Planning Program, housed within the Geography Department. The Geography Department also has expertise in natural resource economies and sustainable tourism. The Center Sustainable Tourism and School of Social Work might also offer helpful resources. <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-cas/geog/index.cfm>, <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-cas/plan/>, <http://www.ecu.edu/renci/>, <http://www.ecu.edu/hazards/>, <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/sustainabletourism/>, <http://www.ecu.edu/che/socw/>

Island Institute Leadership Training

The Island Leaders Program serves those currently in leadership positions – as well as island residents who want to make a greater commitment to their communities – with skill-building and networking opportunities, linking leaders across Maine’s archipelago to discuss and address island issues.

A. J. Fletcher Foundation

There are some foundations that provide capacity-building support, including this Foundation. Unfortunately, it is not making any grants in 2012. Looking to the future, this is a program that could help hire staff for community efforts. In the meantime, one thing community leaders should definitely do is keep track of the cash and in-kind contributions of volunteers’ time and any other support received from lawyers, real estate agents, etc. The dollar amount of those in-kind contributions will demonstrate strong community support for the project, which will give a competitive advantage over groups that do not have strong community support. www.ajf.org

Financial Capacity –

Habitat for Humanity

Around the country, Habitat has helped tens of thousands of partner families (through sweat equity) move into simple, decent, affordable houses. To help even more, part of Habitat’s responsibility includes advocacy and public awareness with local and state elected officials. Habitat supports a national Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The HTF would be a new source of revenue to assist in the production of new affordable housing and the rehabilitation of existing housing. As a bonus, Habitat offers a disaster response, which is bonus to an island highly prone to hurricane impacts. www.habitat.com

The Duke Endowment ~ Rural Church Program

Over the years, the United Methodist Church has played a pivotal role in dozens of North Carolina's rural districts, where the local church is the center of weekly worship, baptisms, weddings, funerals and community events, as well as home to food pantries and centers for child and elder care. Through our grants for rural churches, the Endowment seeks to help build facilities that support community service, and help churches explore sustainable building practices that can meet spiritual needs and economic realities. www.dukeendowment.org/grants/grants-overview

Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

The Foundation provides grants for environmental, community development and pre-collegiate education projects and organizations. Hawley Truax is the environmental program officer and Tracey Greene-Dorsett is the community development program officer. Their next deadline is February 1, 2012. The first step is to contact the program officer and request a meeting; it is good to bring a one- or two-page description of the project and what problems it is designed to address. www.zsr.org

National Endowment for the Arts' Our Town Grant Program

Through the Our Town program, the Endowment provides a limited number of grants, ranging from \$25,000 to \$150,000, for creative "placemaking" projects that contribute toward the livability of communities and help transform them into lively, beautiful and sustainable places with the arts at their core. Applications are due on March 1, 2012. www.nea.gov/grants/apply/ourtown/index.html

Self-Help Credit Union

This community development financial institution provides loans for business and economic development purposes, particularly to borrowers that are higher-risk or not understood by traditional lenders. www.self-help.org

The Conservation Fund's Natural Capital Investment Fund

This investment fund is a community development financial institution that provides loans and technical assistance to natural resource-based businesses, which often have a hard time getting loans from traditional lenders. The loan range typically is from \$50,000 to \$250,000 and Rick Larson (rlarson@conservationfund.org) heads up the N.C. lending. www.ncifund.org

The Conservation Fund's ShadeFund

This web-based, micro-loan program for natural resource-based businesses subsidiary of The Conservation Fund also is spearheaded by Rick Larson, but the loans typically range from \$5,000 to \$35,000. A resource-based organization can contact Enrique Perez (eperez@conservationfund.org) to see about being a field partner, which does not cost anything. The entity merely agrees to refer natural resource-based small businesses to them, and then the organization is listed as a partner on their website. www.shadefund.org

NOAA's Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Phase I 2012

The U. S. Department of Commerce (DOC), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) plans to seek proposals from small business firms for participation in Phase I of the Fiscal Year 2012 NOAA Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program. The purpose of Phase I of the SBIR program is for firms to conduct research and development which will allow the Government to determine the scientific or technical merit and feasibility of concepts, ideas and quality of performance as a prerequisite for further Government support which may follow in Phase II of the program. The following are the NOAA, Research and Development (R&D) topics available for Phase I: Climate Adaption and Mitigation, Weather-Ready Nation, Healthy Oceans, Resilient Coastal Communities and Economies. The proposal deadline is February 1, 2012 at 4:00 PM Central Time.

https://www.fbo.gov/index?s=opportunity&mode=form&tab=core&id=fada14ff631c75636708234c986f3c3b&_cview=0

U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has a wide range of grant and loan programs, including the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program that is administered by the electric membership cooperatives and provides (some) grant dollars and (more) low-interest loan dollars for buildings and other capital improvements. They also have funding for community economic development, small business loans and loan guarantees, housing, job creation, and also, a small business innovation research grant program. To find out more about these programs, contact the local electric co-op or the regional USDA RD person. www.rurdev.usda.gov/nc/

U.S. Economic Development Administration

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) provides federal funds on a dollar-for-dollar match basis for buildings and other bricks-and-mortar improvements that will create jobs. These are very competitive, and it would probably be good to talk with the County economic developer about these programs, as it would strengthen a proposal to do it in partnership with the County and/or the Council of Governments. They even have a Global Climate Change Mitigation Incentive Fund program that provides funding if your building is LEED certified, uses alternative energy, etc. The EDA requires letters documenting that jobs will be created; the contact person is Robin Cooley, the program officer for North Carolina and South Carolina, and her office is in Columbia, SC. Her email address is rcooley@eda.doc.gov. For general information visit: www.eda.gov/InvestmentsGrants/Programs.xml

U.S. Economic Development Administration Supplemental Disaster Relief

The EDA intends to award investments in regions experiencing severe economic distress as a result of severe storms and flooding that occurred between March and May 2010. Under this announcement, EDA solicits applications for Economic Adjustment Assistance investments under the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as amended ("PWEDA"). Through the Economic Adjustment Assistance program (CFDA No. 11.307), winning applicants will utilize EDA's flexible set of program tools to develop and implement on a regional basis long-term economic redevelopment strategies for certain disaster-impacted regions in the U.S. The deadline appears to be on a rolling term until March 9, 2014.

www.grants.gov/search/search.do;jsessionid=cjtRTkTG4p1qTDLSknLn3YLyW7F8TzRkB06vY0b0Sn8SVJhynLJK!-102435184?oppld=69933&mode=VIEW

N.C. Division of Parks & Recreation Trust Fund

The Fund provides dollar-for-dollar matching grants to local governments for parks and recreational projects to serve the public. A group would have to partner and submit the application through Dare County. Their maximum grant is \$500,000, and the money can be used for land acquisition or capital improvements like buildings, boardwalks, piers, etc. The submittal deadline is January 31, 2012, and a first step is to contact the eastern field representative and introduce them to the project, while also contacting the County Parks and Recreation folks to see if they are already planning to submit grant requests for other projects.

www.ncparks.gov/About/grants/partf_main.php

N.C. Division of Parks & Recreation Trails Fund

The Recreational Trails Fund provides grants of up to \$50,000 and nonprofits are eligible to apply for these funds that can be used for trails, boardwalks, piers, signage, parking areas, restroom facilities, etc. Their deadline is also January 31st and you should contact the eastern field representative to discuss your project. www.ncparks.gov/About/docs/RTP_2012_Info_Pack.pdf

N.C. Rural Center

The Rural Center has a variety of grant and loan programs, particularly the Economic Innovation grants program and the Capital Access Program, which is designed to encourage banks to invest in riskier or non-traditional loans; and they provide micro-loans. They also recently announced a special youth initiative that has a range of programs to engage young adults in entrepreneurship, and community-based planning and project implementation. www.ncruralcenter.org

Outer Banks Community Development Corporation

The Outer Banks Community Development Corporation (CDC) offers housing counseling services, and development and governmental support assistance to Dare and surrounding counties. www.obx-cdc.org

MONITORING & EVALUATION

Constant evaluation of the recommendations in this plan, via regular review sessions with the Organization team, is critical to ensuring it remains a viable, living document. You will need to continually monitor your progress on how well you are furthering the Four Point Approach and how successful you are at managing projects, meeting deadlines, communicating internally and to your multiple external audiences, and utilizing the resources available.

Once again, this needs to be a living document used to prioritize the needs of the community and outline recommendations. The value of the plan lies with the ability of the organizational body to set realistic goals — and implement innovative strategies — against which progress can be measured. It also allows the community to gauge the ongoing product. Implementation, evaluation and modification will be continuous in order for the plan to remain relevant, responsive and proactive. This strategic effort will provide greater accountability and represents an organization-wide approach to the preservation and enhancement of the quality of life your very special community enjoys.

RESOURCES

Penobscot East Resource Center

Penobscot East works in an area similar in many ways to the Outer Banks, on issues relevant to this report. Their mission is to support sustainable coastal communities in rural eastern Maine. Their primary target is small boat fishing operations, but their model is also useful in a broader sense. They actively work toward public participation in resource management decision making, community-based innovations in fisheries management and seafood markets, collaborative research, and resource stewardship education. Among their programs is the Community Fisheries Action Roundtable, as noted above, which offers knowledge and training to encourage resource stewardship through public participation in government decision processes.

www.penobscoteast.org/default.asp

Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance

Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance offers a somewhat different model for grassroots involvement in natural resource decision making, again focused on the fishing industry. They conduct targeted advocacy campaigns to mobilize support for small businesses in natural resource management, and they support seafood market innovations. This group mainly works in the Northeast, but also has strong contacts here. Their focus is more on mobilizing regional support for regional and federal level advocacy, whereas Penobscot East organizes at the local level and targets mostly state and regional issues. <http://namanet.org/>

Preserving Coastal Heritage Video

The link provided is for a video about Down East and Hatteras Island fishing communities that was featured at the NC Rural Economic Development Center 2010 Rural Partners Forum in Raleigh:

http://www.yousendit.com/transfer.php?action=batch_download&send_id=981070217&email=f93396b06712c33f1c2e116e04c65383

Sustainable Communities

Developing more sustainable communities is important to our national goals of strengthening our economy, creating good jobs now while providing a foundation for lasting prosperity, using energy more efficiently to secure energy independence, and protecting our natural environment and human health. Three federal agencies came together to create the Partnership for Sustainable Communities to help places around the country develop in more environmentally and economically sustainable ways.

www.sustainablecommunities.gov/toolsKeyResources.html

Living on the Margins - Connecting Individuals with Opportunities, a NC Rural Center publication -

<http://www.ncruralcenter.org/publications.html>

U.S. National Park Service's ethnohistory report

http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/caha/caha_ethno_v1.pdf

House Museums Info

There are a number of online resources for local and “house museums,” including some provided by the National Trust for Historic Preservation (www.preservationnation.org); and OldHouses.com (www.oldhouses.com).

