

Labor Market Analysis

Background:

The Eastern Carolina Local Area is located within the Eastern Region Economic Development Region and encompasses nine counties (Carteret, Craven, Duplin, Greene, Jones, Lenoir, Onslow, Pamlico, and Wayne). These counties are primarily rural and reliant upon agriculture with a total area of 5,710.64 square miles, and 4,834.41 square miles of land area. The counties' populations range from Jones and Pamlico with less than 13,000 each, to Onslow and Wayne with more than 100,000 each. According to the 2000 Census, the total population was 565,503 and 87,608 (15.5%) were below poverty. According to the North Carolina Demographics Unit, by July 2009 the estimated population will increase to 612,173, for a growth rate of 8%. The counties are a diverse mix of races, ethnic groups and ages with pockets of urban prosperity among rural poverty. The 2001 median family income within the Local Area was \$41,689 and ranged from a high of \$47,000 in Carteret County to the low of \$36,700 in Duplin County.

According to the 2000 Census, of those persons, 25 years of age and older in the Local Area, 224,552 are High School Graduates and 39661 are College Graduates.

There are four military bases in the three highest populated counties of Craven, Onslow, and Wayne. In addition, the three coastal counties (Carteret, Pamlico, and Onslow) are growing seasonal resort and retirement areas. The labor force statistics for the period ending March 2002 reflect a 6.3% unemployment rate for the region. Government, retail trade, services and manufacturing are the major sources of employment, with government employing the largest number of workers. Most of the jobs are located in the more populated counties with the military installations and in the seat of government for each county.

As part of the analysis, we looked at where the local workforce travels to find employment. Based on 1990 Census data, the following is a comparison of the commuting patterns, by County, within the Local Area.

| County | Noncommuters | % of Total | Outcommuters | % of Total | Incommuters | % of Total | Total of Non/Out/Incommuters |
|----------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------------------------|
| Carteret | 18,160 | 65.4% | 6,828 | 24.6% | 2,785 | 10.0% | 27,773 |
| Craven | 33,495 | 69.7% | 4,621 | 9.6% | 9,932 | 20.7% | 48,048 |
| Duplin | 13,163 | 60.7% | 4,935 | 22.8% | 3,592 | 16.6% | 21,690 |
| Greene | 2,903 | 36.2% | 4,064 | 50.6% | 1,063 | 13.2% | 8,030 |
| Jones | 1,463 | 31.1% | 2,676 | 56.9% | 562 | 11.9% | 4,701 |
| Lenoir | 21,776 | 65.2% | 4,243 | 12.7% | 7,338 | 22.0% | 33,357 |
| Onslow | 81,745 | 87.6% | 5,056 | 5.4% | 6,467 | 6.9% | 93,268 |
| Pamlico | 2,429 | 47.1% | 2,266 | 43.9% | 463 | 9.0% | 5,158 |
| Wayne | 44,858 | 79.6% | 6,332 | 11.2% | 5,152 | 9.1% | 56,342 |
| ECLA | 219,992 | 73.7% | 41,021 | 13.7% | 37,354 | 12.5% | 298,367 |

When viewed from the perspective of the Local Area as a whole, almost 74% of the workers were employed within their county. The other 26% were about equally split, with *Outcommuters* amounting to 13.7% and *Incommuters* accounting for the remaining 12.5%. **There were almost 4,000 more individuals commuting out of the Local Area to work, than were commuting into the Local Area for work.** This seems to indicate that, for a segment of our workforce, the labor market conditions are more favorable outside of the Local Area.

A comparison of the commuting patterns among the counties does reveal some significant differences. The percent of *Noncommuters* range from a high of 87.6% in Onslow County to a low of 31.1% in Jones County. The percent of *Outcommuters* range from a high of 56.9% in Jones County to a low of 5.4% in Onslow County. The differences in the percent of *Incommuters* is lower and ranges from a high of 22.0% in Lenoir County to a low of 6.9% in Onslow County.

The three counties with the highest percent of *Noncommuters* have large military populations that may account for some of the differences between them and the other six counties. The three counties with the highest percent of *Outcommuters* are the least populated in the Local Area and generally have companies with very small numbers of employees. The three counties with the highest percent of *Incommuters* appear to be more attractive from an earnings perspective, based on Per Capita Incomes and average weekly wages.

Key trends that are expected to shape the economic environment of the Local Area in the next several years.

The key trends that are expected to shape the economic environment of the Local Area in the next several years continues to be driven by technological changes and global competition. Industries that are expected to grow continue to be in the services segment of the economy that includes retail sales, business services, health care services, temporary employment agencies, and tourism. However, the majority of these jobs tend to be those requiring minimal technical

skill and offering part-time employment, low pay, and no benefits. Employment is steadily growing in many home-based and information-intensive occupations not previously regarded as skilled. This continuing change in the nature of the skills in demand is an immediate challenge for education and training system. Both the public schools and community colleges are responding with curriculum change so those subjects with a potentially higher vocational relevance, such as computer technology are being promoted.

As current trends suggest, services and non-manufacturing industries will continue to grow. Emphasis must be placed in developing high value service sector industries, such as health care, environmental engineering, plastics, and software. These jobs offer the potential to create a multiplier effect in transforming eastern North Carolina's economy.

Industries expected to decline continue to be those in agriculture and manufacturing. Manufacturing employs twenty percent of the region's working population, with textiles, apparel, food products, industrial and commercial machinery manufacturers serving as major employers. During the past two years, the Local Area has experienced significant manufacturing plant closures throughout the region, primarily in the textile industry. Primary reasons for plant closures are increased competition, changes in technology, and downsizing to improve efficiencies.

Workforce investment needs of businesses, job seekers, and workers

The workforce investment needs of businesses, job seekers, and workers vary based on the changes from a labor economy to a technology economy. In the manufacturing and service sector, the spread of technology is rapidly increasing productivity, but at the same time, reducing the demand for labor. While statistics report that output is on the rise, employment in manufacturing continues to decline. Emphasis must be placed on targeting workers in manufacturing jobs and developing customized training programs to train incumbent workers in the use of technology, and quality control practices. In addition, programs that offer training opportunities to incumbent workers who lack technical skills or possess limited education must be developed and promoted.

Another key indicator in identifying the workforce investment needs of our region's businesses, job seekers, and workers is largely attributed to the low skilled, low-wage jobs available in the local economy. There is a strong perception that the workforce in eastern North Carolina lags in the measures of education and skill levels necessary to compete in the changing high-performing economy driven by technology. Strategies that promote education and skills upgrading through a variety of traditional and non-traditional methods must be implemented to increase the skills level of the workforce.

In order to assess the workforce investment needs of local businesses, the local Board solicited input through a mail survey to local businesses. According to the

survey, employers reported that the greatest expression of workforce skills needs by employers was centered on the following workplace competencies: integrity; interpersonal/team skills; leadership; applied technology to task; and computer literacy. With the exception of leadership, about four in ten employers saw a need for these skills for most of the work done at their business. Based on the responses from the 80 percent of the business types, future job training should focus on basic skills, personal and interpersonal skills. The top five reported skills ranging from important to needed were “listening”, “self-motivation”, “applies technology to task”, “interpersonal/team skills”, computer literacy and understanding diverse cultures and people.

In seeking employees, businesses want to find qualified employees quickly and in a cost-efficient manner. They would prefer a reliable resource that can filter out unqualified candidates and certify candidates as job-ready or job-skilled. This process would include screening for work ethic and interpersonal skills. Employers reported that they normally use a variety of recruitment tactics to include local Temporary Agencies, the Community College Placement Offices, and the Employment Security Commission.

In understanding the needs of job-seekers and workers, a recent survey indicated that job-seekers and workers are eager to learn new skills and improve in their current jobs. The needs identified by job-seekers include better access to information on local training programs and jobs, tuition assistance, ongoing training and education, childcare, and transportation services. Workers indicated that they are most interested in seeking job advancement, education and training, access to information technology and the Internet, and good job opportunities in their local community.

Current and projected employment opportunities in the local

Current and projected employment opportunities in the Local Area were identified through an analysis of labor market information from the North Carolina Employment Security Commission. The seven fastest growing industries in the region are Social Services; Business Services, Auto Repair, Services, and Parking; Health Services; Motion Pictures; Legal Services; and Self-Employed Workers. Based on the highest total annual openings, for which employment can be obtained with two years of post-secondary education, or less, the top twenty occupations with the well-paying, high-volume local jobs are:

- Registered Nurses,
- Secretaries, except Legal and Medical,
- Licensed Practical Nurses,
- Teachers Aides, Paraprofessional,
- Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists,
- All Other Health Professionals,
- Medical Secretaries,
- Legal Secretaries,
- Sales Agents, Real Estate,
- Welders and Cutters,
- Radiologic Technologists,

Emergency Medical Technicians,
Dental Hygienists,
Data entry Keyers, Except Composition,
Medical Records Technicians,
Drafters,
Paralegal Personnel,
Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians,
Psychiatric Technicians,
All Other Physical and Life Sciences.

The first three occupations (Registered Nurses, Secretaries, except Legal and Medical, and Licensed Practical Nurses) account for more than 50% of these jobs in the Local Area. In addition to the above named occupations, projected employment is expected to occur in the telecommunications industry sector to include occupations such as:

Data communications specialists,
Telecommunications software specialists,
Telecommunications professional engineers,
Systems designers/engineers,
Electrical/electronic engineers,
Telecommunications equipment specialists,
Cable Installation specialists,
Communications consultants,
Website Designers,
Telemarketers.

Community Resource Analysis

The Local Area has a variety of options to assist adults and dislocated workers with their employment/training needs. JobLink Career Centers operating in the region serve as the One-Stop resource offering a range of core, intensive, and training options from self-service to comprehensive training and employment services for all job and training seekers.

The type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment/training activities include: occupational skill training, including training for non-traditional employment; on-the-job training; programs that combine workplace with related instruction; in some areas, cooperative education programs; training programs operated by the private sector; skill upgrading and retraining; entrepreneurial

training; job readiness training; adult education and literacy activities provided in combination with other skill training services listed above; customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ individuals who have successfully completed training.

In addition to training, adults and dislocated workers can access other employment-related services at JobLink Career Centers. The Employment Security Commission offers assistance to adults and dislocated workers with registering for employment, conducting job search activities, filing unemployment claims, and receiving job placement assistance. In addition, services through the Department of Social Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and other community agencies are available through JobLink to address other human services needs.

An assessment of the availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities includes the seven Community Colleges located within the Eastern Carolina Local Area. They offer a comprehensive range of educational programs to meet the training needs of adults and dislocated workers.

These programs include basic educational skills, higher academic education, occupational continuing education, job retraining, personal growth and development. Included in their training activities are the following 10 curriculums:

Agricultural and Natural Resource Technologies,
Biological and Chemical Technologies,
Business Technologies,
Commercial and Artistic Production Technologies,
Construction Technologies,
Engineering Technologies,
Health Sciences,
Industrial Technologies,
Public Service Technologies, and
Transport Systems Technologies.

More than 90 individual programs leading to Associate Degrees, Certificates, or Diplomas are available in the Local Area. Not all Colleges offer each of the more than 90 programs. Based on the offerings at the various Colleges, the following is a representation of the curriculums ranked from the most-offered to the least-offered:

Business Technologies, (*most offered*)
Public Service Technologies,
Construction Technologies,
Industrial Technologies,
Health Sciences,
Engineering Technologies, Transport Systems Technologies, Biological and
Chemical Technologies, (*offered equally*)
Agricultural and Natural Resource Technologies, and
Commercial and Artistic Production Technologies (*least offered*).

The following five (5) individual programs are offered at all seven of the Colleges:

Business Administration (A25120),
Information Systems (A25260),
Office Systems Technology (A25360),
Cosmetology (A55140), and
Criminal Justice Technology (A55180).

The following 15 individual programs are offered at a minimum of four of the seven colleges:

Accounting (A25100),
Business Administration/Marketing and Retailing (A2512F),
Office Systems Technology/Legal (A2536A),
Office Systems Technology/Medical (A2536B),
Air Conditioning, Heating and Refrigeration Technology (A35100),
Electrical/Electronics Technology (A35220),
Medical Assisting (A45400),
Nursing Assistant (Certificate) (C45480),
Practical Nursing (Diploma) (D45660),
Machining Technology (A50300),
Welding Technology (A50420),
Basic Law Enforcement Training (Certificate) (C55120),
Early Childhood Associate (A55220),
General Occupational Technology (A55280), and
Automotive Systems Technology (A60160).

Other training activities available in the Local Area include four-year colleges, and Proprietary Business, Technical, Trade and Correspondence Schools licensed by the North Carolina State Board of Community Colleges.