

Community Resources

EVENTS AND FESTIVALS:

Annual Arts & Crafts Show (February, Women’s Club of Newburgh)
Fiddlerfest (September)
Fireworks (July, Historic Newburgh, Inc.)
Ghost Walks (October, Historic Newburgh, Inc.)
Memorial Day Parade (May)
Newburgh Celebrates Christmas (December, Historic Newburgh, Inc.)
Wine and Art Festival (May, Historic Newburgh, Inc.)

ORGANIZATIONS:

American Legion Post 0044 Kapperman
F & A Masons of Indiana
Historic Newburgh, Inc.
Kiwanis Club of Historic Newburgh Kiwanis
Knights of Columbus
National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution
Newburgh Indiana Jaycees Inc.
Newburgh Lions Club
Newburgh Chapter No 2126 Women of the Moose
Newburgh Lodge 2439 Loyal Order of the Moose
Newburgh Senior Citizens Inc.
The Old Dam Community Band
Rivertown Storytellers at the River’s Bend Inc.
Rotary Club of Warrick County – Newburgh, Indiana
Toastmasters International
Warrick County Community Foundation
Women’s Club of Newburgh Inc.
Newburgh Senior Center

YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS:

Boy Scout Troop 305
Cub Scout Pack 369
Girl Scout Troop 623
Newburgh Youth Sports Association Inc.
Warrick County 4-H

SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC EDUCATION:

Castle High School
Castle North Middle School
Castle South Middle School
John H. Castle Elementary

Newburgh Elementary
Newburgh Public Library (Ohio Township Public Library System)
Tennyson Elementary
Warrick Education Center

NEARBY UNIVERSITIES:

Ivy Tech Community College
Trinity College of the Bible and Trinity Theological Seminary
University of Evansville
University of Southern Indiana

CHURCHES:

Abundant Life Community Church
Church of Christ Newburgh
Crossroads Christian Church
Faith Bible Church
First Christian Church of Newburgh
Gateway Baptist Church
Grace Community Church
Mt. Olive General Baptist Church
Newburgh Presbyterian Church
Newburgh United Methodist
Riverwind Baptist Church
St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
Shepherd of Paradise Lutheran Church

Community Information

COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

As a town located along the Ohio River, Newburgh has an unusually long and rich history. Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century explorers and early settlers ‘discovered’ the area that was originally part of the range of the Shawnee Tribe and had been near center of Mississippian pre-historic peoples as late as c.1450 a.d. Evidence of the Mississippian culture still remains today in the form of the National Historic Landmark Angel Mounds, which is located less than two miles west of Newburgh.

The forefathers of the Town of Newburgh are John Sprinkle and Abner Luce. John Sprinkle led his family to the site of Newburgh, or ‘Mount Pleasant,’ as he called it, in 1803. In 1812, he legalized his occupation of the land by securing land grants, and in 1818 he platted Sprinklesburgh. The original plat of Sprinklesburgh can be recognized in town today as a four-block stretch beginning one block west of Jennings Street and extending for one block above Main Street and the area between Main Street and the Ohio River.

Abner Luce founded Newburgh almost directly to the east of Sprinklesburgh in 1829. Newburgh encompassed the land east of Jennings Street. Obviously, the Town of Newburgh today gets its name from Luce’s plat, which was merged together with Sprinklesburgh in 1837. However, some of the most visible and important land in what is downtown Newburgh today was included in neither Luce’s or Sprinkle’s plat—this land was owned by Samuel Short. Short’s strip occupied the block west of State Street to Sprinklesburgh’s eastern edge and north from the river.

Newburgh enjoyed a brief period of prosperity in its early life as a center of industry centered on coal mining. According to Goode, Newburgh sank the first underground mine shaft in Indiana in 1850. Shortly thereafter, however, the all-important national railroad system came to southern Indiana—bypassing Newburgh completely and instead marking the beginning of Evansville’s regional dominance.

One of the richest parts of Newburgh history, however, has to do with the route of a different sort of railroad. Newburgh is thought to have been a stop on the Underground Railroad between the mouth of the Little Pigeon River and Lake Michigan. On July 18, 1862, Newburgh also became the first town north of the Mason-Dixon line to be captured by the Confederates during the Civil War. Confederate officer (later General) Adam “Stovepipe” Johnson famously captured the Town

of Newburgh with an outnumbered force through the clever use of surprise and deception. To the great advantage of the town, many of the structures that feature in the history of this raid are still standing, including The Exchange Hotel (current home of River Town Antique Mall).

Since the civil war, Newburgh's economy has enjoyed four conspicuous periods of growth. The first came about with a resurgence of the coal industry after 1900. The second was a direct result of the Lock and Dam 47 construction boom in the 1920s. Finally, the third and fourth periods of growth came about with the arrival, and later expansions, of the Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA) in the 1950s and then the 1970s. The expansion of the 1970s was also assisted by the construction of the Newburgh Lock and Dam, which replaced the old Lock and Dam 47 in 1974.

Unfortunately, the growth of the 1970s produced highly mixed results for the Town of Newburgh. According to Taylor, the Newburgh's downtown suffered "an exodus of businessmen, disastrous fires, and ... unsavory motorcycle gangs." Fortunately, in the decades since 1970, Newburgh has undergone a renaissance in which it has rediscovered and begun to protect its history, and is beginning to rebuild a strong retail core in its downtown.*

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

In Downtown Newburgh, there are around 52 businesses. Of these, 28 are services, 16 are retail, and 8 are dining. The dining businesses include a range of food types, but with an emphasis on river/sea food. Emphases in retail businesses include: boutique household/garden wares, antiques, boutique clothing, and hard-to-find large ticket items

*The following resources were used to compile this history:

Goode, James B. "Mining Technology." *The American Midwest: An Interpretive Encyclopedia*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2007. Web.

"Indiana's Anti-Slavery League." www.undergroundrailroadindiana.com. Web.

Kellar, James H. "The Mississippian Tradition." *An Introduction to the Prehistory of Indiana*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1998. Web.

"Newburgh, Indiana Raid." *The American Civil War. Family History* 101. 22 Jan. 2011. Accessed 22 Jan. 2011. Web.

Taylor, Robert M., Jr., Errol Wayne Stevens, Mary Ann Ponder, and Paul Brockman. *Indiana: A New Historical Guide*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1992. Print.

including Murphy beds and stained glass. Finally, among services, there are 5 artistic services (mostly photography and education), 6 household services, 9 salon and spa services, and 8 professional services (3 of which are marketing/graphics).

There are approximately 1,266 businesses in the greater Newburgh, Indiana area, employing around 6,557 people with annual sales of \$635,969,979 (allbusiness.com). This area is the core area from which downtown Newburgh businesses draw their customers. The largest industries as measured by sales are: Construction; Professional Services; Health Care; Retail & Wholesale Trade; and Personal & Business Support Services. The largest industries as measured by number of employees are: Health Care; Construction; Retail & Wholesale Trade; Personal & Business Support Services; and Food & Beverage. Among all industries, the largest employers are health care-related, with a focus on women’s health care and senior living support/housing. In terms of sales, the largest companies are in the construction and health care industries. The focus among construction companies appears to be in infrastructure, especially utilities.

Breakdown by industry (from www.allbusiness.com):

Industry	No. Companies	No. People	Annual Sales
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	29	108	\$5,329,000
Automotive	56	216	\$15,977,000
Banking & Finance	53	299	\$18,307,771
Chemicals	12	56	\$4,584,000
Computing & Information Technology	11	20	\$1,230,000
Construction	201	1,042	\$276,350,691
Electronics	8	30	\$1,092,000
Entertainment & Arts	17	70	\$1,517,000
Fashion & Apparel	33	17	\$2,204,100
Food & Beverage	68	829	\$13,056,000
Health Care	116	1,629	\$92,980,164
Insurance	35	110	\$8,686,000
Manufacturing	59	464	\$20,197,704
Marketing & Advertising	3	7	\$900,000
Media & Telecommunications	30	122	\$3,359,000
Mining & Extraction	7	28	\$1,796,000
Paper & Packaging	3	3	\$304,000
Personal & Business Support Services	375	953	\$36,125,000
Pharmaceuticals & Biotechnology	5	186	\$480,000
Professional Services	125	538	\$242,983,393
Real Estate	68	287	\$24,921,000
Retail & Wholesale Trade	207	964	\$41,370,134
Transportation & Warehousing	33	229	\$20,382,714
Travel, Hospitality & Tourism	54	652	\$9,640,000
Waste Management	5	68	\$3,140,000

The Federal Retail Trade Survey, the most recent (published) covering the years 1998-2007, gives a broad overview of national trends in specific areas of retail business.

In women's clothing, an increase in payroll and employees combined with a decrease in number of establishments indicates a trend towards consolidation among establishments large enough to hire employees. This results in firms able to present larger selections at lower prices. Very small businesses, meanwhile, grew both in number of establishments and in sales receipts, indicating the existence of a demand that larger women's clothing stores are not able to satisfy. Under these circumstances, boutique stores may do very well, but it is important for boutique stores to have unique offerings that cannot be replicated at larger stores. The overall market for women's clothing is growing very slowly, and much more slowly than the retail average.

Gift, novelty, and souvenir stores' sales grew along with the overall retail market, but a combination of low margins and high expenses caused the number of establishments to fall substantially. This lowers supply, which has a generally supportive effect on those establishments that remain.

In used merchandise stores (including antiques), the overall number of businesses shrank drastically. In direct opposition to the trend, however, larger businesses experienced significant growth and overall sales in this segment grew significantly faster than the retail average. This is potentially a cultural trend that has embraced the retail of used goods, but has demanded a similarly large format and selection as what is offered by new goods retailers. As such, successful retailers in this segment will likely be those that offer a wide selection of goods to customers.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The most recent published demographic information for the Town of Newburgh comes from the 2005-2009 American Community Survey.

Newburgh is a town of 3,311 people that fall into 1,308 households, for an average household size of 2.53, which is slightly greater than the Indiana average household size of 2.49. The larger average household size is partially explained by Newburgh's high marriage rate, with 69.5% of Newburgh men over 15 y.o. married (Indiana 54.3%) and 58.9% of Newburgh women over 15 y.o. married (Indiana 50.4%). It is also partially explained by the number of children in Newburgh with 963 people under 19 y.o., or 29.1% of the Newburgh population, which is higher than the Indiana figure of 28.0%. In other words, Newburgh has more children in its community, and there are many more traditional families in Newburgh, than is average for Indiana. Generally this is seen as an attractive quality to potential businesses and residents. Also, a community with a large number of families and children will tend to

support a large number of family-oriented festivals and events.

Newburgh's residents also tend to remain very stable geographically, with 92.4% having lived in the same house for at least a year (Indiana 83.6%), and length of tenure somewhat higher and more evenly distributed than for Indiana. Newburgh also has a higher proportion of owner-occupied units (78.8%) as compared to the State average (71.5%). This indicates a population that is highly invested in the community. Such a population may be willing to support ambitious community projects that are effectively organized.

The median age of Newburgh residents is 36.8 y.o., which is somewhat older than the Indiana median of 36.4 y.o. The age demographic of Newburgh is not, however, older across-the-board. As discussed, Newburgh has a higher proportion of children than is typical for Indiana (29.1% versus 28.0%), which would typically indicate a young community. The offset for Newburgh's high number of children is Newburgh's low number of teenagers and young adults ages 15-24 (10.5% versus 14.4%). Another unusual factor in the age makeup of Newburgh is Newburgh's low number of retirement-age individuals. After age 65, Newburgh's proportion of older individuals dips below the Indiana average, and among individuals older than 75 Newburgh has significantly fewer than the Indiana average (1.2% versus 6.1%). This is a shocking figure that clearly indicates that there is no provision for elderly individuals within the Town of Newburgh itself. Like Newburgh's high number of children, Newburgh's low number of individuals over 75 would tend to create a younger, not older community. In the end, the largest age cohort in Newburgh is the middle-aged between 35 and 55 y.o., encompassing 32.6% of the population (Indiana 28.5%).

The large number of middle-aged individuals in Newburgh is certainly a factor in Newburgh's unusually high income and level of education (discussed below). Based on Newburgh's age distribution, it appears evident that Newburgh is an attractive location for middle-aged individuals with children. One of Newburgh's chief future challenges will be in expanding its appeal, and affordability, to young adults so that Newburgh can retain children who grow up in the community. In addition, Newburgh has a great opportunity for growth in expanding offerings for those over 75 who may prefer to remain in the community but are otherwise compelled by a lack of appropriate services to move out of Newburgh in order to seek accommodations for later life.

Newburgh's residents over 25 years old are much more highly educated than is typical for Indiana with an impressive 97.0% holding at least a high school diploma (Indiana 85.7%), and 78.6% with at least some college (Indiana 49.2%). Newburgh's high level of education is a crucially important factor in economic growth and development, as the education of residents is among the chief figures looked at by relocating businesses.

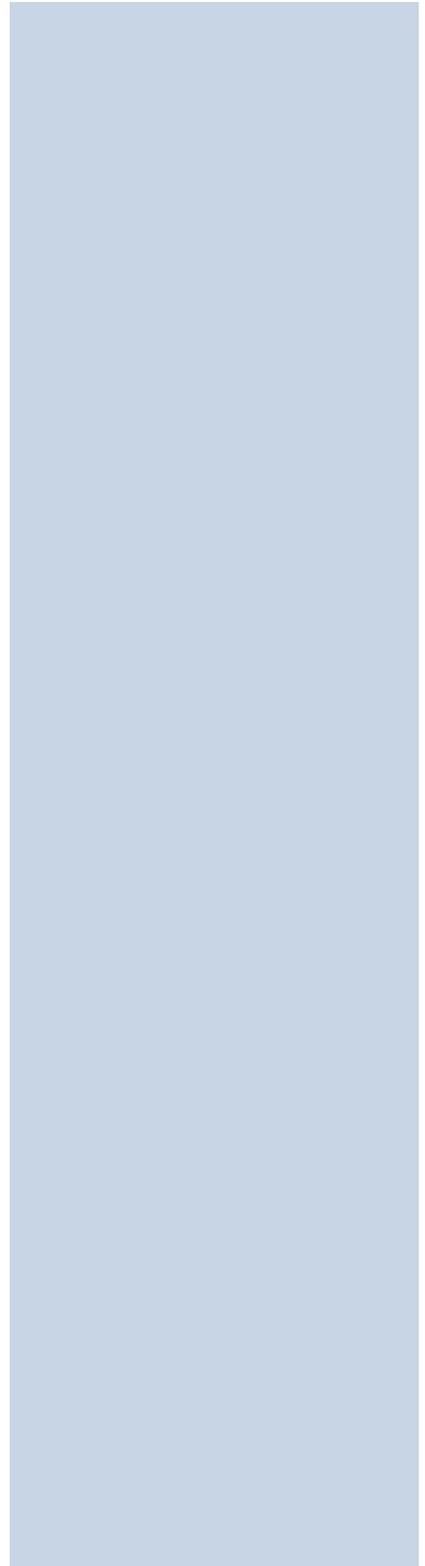
Average Newburgh residents earn much more than average Indiana residents, with a median household income of \$69,032 and a mean household income of \$80,665 (Indiana median \$47,465 and mean \$60,615). The median housing unit in Newburgh is worth \$146,200, which is much higher than the Indiana median of \$120,200. The median rent paid in Newburgh is \$539/mo. (Indiana \$671/mo.), which is reflective of a low cost of living. Newburgh's most common rent cohort (42.9%) is between \$300 and \$499 per month. Newburgh residents are almost universally mobile, with 100% of households having at least one car available (Indiana 93.7%).

The housing situation in Newburgh is not as attractive as the population makeup. Newburgh has 1,569 housing units, but only 1,308 households, which contributes to a 16.6% housing unit vacancy rate. This is higher than the Indiana average of 11.1%. Both owner units and rental units contribute to this high overall vacancy rate, but the rental unit vacancy rate is much worse at 31.4% (Indiana only 9.9%). Clearly, there is currently a glut of rental housing (and owner-occupied housing), so residential development proposals should be examined with some scepticism in the upcoming years.

Appendix E

Case Studies

Many communities are faced with issues and opportunities similar to those found in Newburgh. Contained here are fifteen case studies that summarize various projects implemented or planned by other small, American towns to improve their communities. Website addresses are provided for each study, along with a brief summary of each case study.



Preservation + Growth

Hillsborough, North Carolina

Hillsborough has pursued a strategy to both promote heritage-based tourism and manage growth for economic diversity and quality of life. The strategy begins with using its heritage assets to attract tourists. Through the Alliance for Historic Hillsborough, the community coordinates and focuses its resources toward effective promotion and preservation. A local tax on prepared foods and beverages provides a long-term and sustainable revenue source for promoting historic Hillsborough. Events such as the Last Friday art and culture series attract thousands of visitors who spend money on food, entertainment and shopping. Second, in response to development pressure, the town of Hillsborough has implemented an innovative process of managing growth. It uses the annexation and permit review processes to facilitate development on the community's own terms.

For more information:

<http://www.sog.unc.edu/programs/cednc/stbi>

<http://www.historichillsborough.org>

<http://www.ci.hillsborough.nc.us>

(Lambe, Will, Small Towns, Big Ideas: Case Studies in Small Town Community Economic Development. Community & Economic Development Program School of Government, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, December 2008.)

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Partnership

Edenton, North Carolina

Edenton established a strategy to preserve its historic assets in order to create conditions for private sector investments in the community. Working together, the Town of Edenton and Preservation North Carolina transformed the old Edenton Cotton Mill Village – the historic living quarters for mill workers and their families – from dilapidated shacks to modern village residences. By 1999, after improving the village’s infrastructure and initiating an intense marketing campaign, Preservation North Carolina sold all 48 of the village residences. With the aid of incentives, each residence was completely renovated in the ensuing years. In addition to the increased publicity, Edenton has seen property values in the village increase nearly 20 times and the mill houses have attracted artisans and entrepreneurs to town.

For more information:

<http://www.sog.unc.edu/programs/cednc/stbi>

<http://www.historichillsborough.org>

<http://www.presnc.org>

<http://www.visitedenton.com>

<http://www.townofedenton.com>

(Lambe, Will, Small Towns, Big Ideas: Case Studies in Small Town Community Economic Development. Community & Economic Development Program School of Government, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, December 2008.)

Building Capacity

Bakersville & Hayesville, North Carolina

Bakersville and Hayesville maintain similar though not identical community and economic development strategies. Both involve building infrastructure and capacity for initiating and sustaining locally driven community and economic development. In addition, each town's strategy includes elements of tourism and downtown revitalization. Bakersville's strategy is to improve the town's civic infrastructure in an effort to attract and retain artist studios and other Main Street retailers that attract tourist dollars into the local economy. Hayesville is working to beautify the community, forge partnerships to develop tourism infrastructure and put on events that attract tourists and invigorate local civic energy. Despite each community's limited population and financial resources, Bakersville and Hayesville have taken steps to build physical infrastructure and organizational capacity to facilitate community and economic development. In each community, a local volunteer-led organization evolved to lead the effort.

For more information:

<http://www.sog.unc.edu/programs/cednc/stbi>

<http://www.bakersville.com>

<http://www.hayesville.org>

(Lambe, Will, Small Towns, Big Ideas: Case Studies in Small Town Community Economic Development. Community & Economic Development Program School of Government, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, December 2008.)

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Signage & Promotion

Underwood, North Dakota

Underwood began declining as an active town center once Highway 83 started to pull traffic and development away from the old town center. This planning project outlined a strategy based on Underwood's industrial heritage to pull traffic back to town. The town utilized public/private partnerships to build on local resources and identify catalysts for seed projects, while at the same time building momentum for community support. The Plan, *Imagining a Way Forward*, proposes seed projects to effect foundational changes for Underwood. These projects include building a graphic brand presence at a truck stop near the old town center to create curiosity about the town's history and current amenities. Coupled with efforts to create a more pedestrian-friendly Main Street, the intent is to grab passers-by and bring them into town to experience local offerings.

For more information:

www.underwoodnd.net

Branding

Pensacola, Florida

Pensacola, Florida's economy, downtown, and reputation lagged behind comparable Florida communities. A branding process was initiated to raise the town's profile, and the effort culminated in an initiative in which six adjectives describing the city and its ambitions were printed on 45,000 colored, dot-shaped magnets, allowing citizens to interact with and influence their city's branding.

The community's branding consultant began by evaluating the city's strengths and weaknesses against a pre-generated list of 36 "great city" attributes. Then they read published material about the city, consulted with a diverse set of users and looked at competitor cities to identify existing niches and gaps in the region. After taking all of this information to local residents, Pensacola settled on the magnet concept to encapsulated the town's identity. Ultimately, the process engaged Pensacola's citizenry and spurred new development and tourism initiatives. In addition, the research generated during the process indicated what areas future development should focus on in order to maximize results.

For more information:

http://www.pensapedia.com/wiki/Pensacola_branding_initiative

Adaptive Reuse + Public/Private Partnership

South Boston, Virginia

Located in South Boston, Virginia, the Prizery Community Arts Center originally served the community as part of a thriving tobacco industry. Built c. 1905 as an unassuming three-story masonry warehouse for the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, it now takes on a new life as the heart of a community revival, having been transformed into an arts center.

The Prizery Community Arts Center has impacted the town as an arts community with the introduction of art galleries, history displays, classrooms, dance studio, a tourism center, multi-purpose room, offices, and a 260-seat theater. Public/private partnerships were utilized to accomplish the objectives of the project. The building was generously donated to the South Boston Community Foundation who sought municipal funds – grants and private donations, town and county support, and Historic Investment Tax Credits to bring the arts center to life.

“The result is a demonstration of the power of preservation and tax credit rehabilitation to renew the economic and cultural vitality of a historic community.”

For more information:

www.dhr.virginia.gov

www.prizery.com

Rehabilitation Tax Credit News, Volume 1, Issue 1, Virginia
Department of Historic Resources

Partnership

Elkin, North Carolina

Elkin is channeling local artists' talents and energy into new entrepreneurial ventures. A study from 2003 revealed that Elkin and the Yadkin Valley region had a small but rapidly growing concentration of artists, and the area has demonstrated that small businesses in the arts and crafts sector – properly marketed and supported – can catalyze small business growth and attract tourist dollars into the local economy. In 2004, the Piedmont Council of Governments worked with three artists to form the Yadkin Valley Craft Guild. A year later, the guild partnered with the Town of Elkin on Growing Entrepreneurs, an apprenticeship program through which local artists receive education and training in their respective craft as well as assistance in starting their own businesses. Local art studios and heritage craft-based businesses, combined with the region's growing wine industry, are attracting tourist dollars into Elkin.

For more information:

<http://www.sog.unc.edu/programs/cednc/stbi>

<http://www.downtownelkin.com>

(Lambe, Will, Small Towns, Big Ideas: Case Studies in Small Town Community Economic Development. Community & Economic Development Program School of Government, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, December 2008.)

Bridging Districts

Selma, North Carolina

Selma created and implemented an innovative economic development finance tool to revitalize a depressed portion of its downtown. After a concerted effort to update its dilapidated downtown in the mid-1990s, Selma's main intersection is now thriving with antique shops and restaurants. At the edge of downtown is another marker of Selma's revitalization success, the Selma Union Depot, now a bustling Amtrak stop. However, the four blocks of town between the depot and Selma's thriving retail shops have remained depressed. In fact, town leaders found that the depressed stretch was a barrier in terms of luring tourist dollars from the Amtrak station into Selma's downtown corridor. In response, Selma created the finance tool to spur economic development in the four-block Anderson Street area. Under the tax grant program owners who improve their property receive a cash grant of 49 cents per \$100 of the difference in the tax value before and after the improvement. The grant is awarded each year for five years. The program began attracting attention within months of its passage by the town council.

For more information:

<http://www.sog.unc.edu/programs/cednc/stbi>

<http://www.selma-nc.com>

(Lambe, Will, Small Towns, Big Ideas: Case Studies in Small Town Community Economic Development. Community & Economic Development Program School of Government, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, December 2008.)

Empowerment

Colquitt, Georgia

For four weekends in the fall and spring of each year, tens of thousands of people descend on Colquitt for Swamp Gravy,⁷⁰ a musical play that celebrates life in rural southwestern Georgia. With a cast of more than 100 local volunteers, Swamp Gravy tells the history of Colquitt. The play has sold more than 120,000 tickets and generated well over \$4 million since it began in 1993. The local arts council has reinvested revenues from the production into the revitalization of downtown buildings and the renovation of a local mini-mall, where vendors of arts, crafts and antiques have access to affordable rental space. The Colquitt–Miller County Arts Council deliberately structured Swamp Gravy to involve and empower local residents with the goal of stimulating civic and economic life in the depressed town. Cultural tourism now provides more jobs and revenue than any other industry in Colquitt, and the arts council has reinvested over \$1 million in downtown renovations and building projects

For more information:

<http://www.sog.unc.edu/programs/cednc/stbi>

<http://www.colquitt-georgia.com>

(Lambe, Will, Small Towns, Big Ideas: Case Studies in Small Town Community Economic Development. Community & Economic Development Program School of Government, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, December 2008.)

Adaptive Reuse + Public/Private Partnership

Waterloo, Iowa

The Haffa building was built in 1885 in downtown Waterloo, Iowa and first housed a retail clothier and furrier business. In 2002 the final tenant left leaving the building vacant. In early 2003, the building was purchased for a mixed use rehabilitation project and now houses Waterloo's creative businesses and live/work space for artists, helping to stimulate economic development in this Iowa Main Street Community of 68,000.

A combination of tax credits, loan guarantees and property tax rebates financed the entire project. State and Federal Historic Tax Credits, New Market Tax Credits, tax credits from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, as well as a \$40,0000 state grant for façade renovation have been utilized to facilitate the projects success.

To assist the developer in securing those credits, the Waterloo City Council approved a development agreement for the Haffa building by offering a partial loan guarantee and property tax rebates. The city guaranteed \$100,000 of a \$500,000 private loan for the Haffa Building project. It also granted a seven-year, 100 percent property tax rebate for any value added over and above the assessed value of \$64,220. The public/private partnership and creative funding strategies were instrumental in the project's completion.

For more information:

www.preservationnation.org/resources/case-studies/ntcic/haffa-building.html

www.preservationnation.org/resources/case-studies/ntcic/haffa-building.html, Pat Kinney, wfcourier.com, Sunday, January 29, 2006

Diversification

Branson, Missouri

Branson is considered by some to be the “country music capital of the universe.” Local leaders wanted to diversify the town’s economy and livelihood and in 2001, unveiled plans for Branson Landing, a mixed-use project on Lake Taneycomo that included a 220,000-square-foot convention center, a 250-room four-star hotel, a boutique hotel, 140 waterfront luxury condominiums and nearly 450,000 square feet of retail shopping. The project represents an attempt to diversify Branson’s economy beyond musical entertainment and provide stable, year-round employment. The strategy rests on a three-legged economic model: tourism-based revenue, stable employment through service industries and construction filling residential needs. Three lessons emerged from this project:

1. Small communities can create record-breaking projects
2. Successful public investments can have ripple effects throughout the community
3. Strategies are more likely to be successful when they are built on existing assets

For more information:

<http://www.sog.unc.edu/programs/cednc/stbi>

<http://www.branson.com>

(Lambe, Will, *Small Towns, Big Ideas: Case Studies in Small Town Community Economic Development*. Community & Economic Development Program School of Government, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, December 2008.)

Creative Assets

Nelsonville, Ohio

From 2001 to 2006, Nelsonville's downtown square went from desolate storefronts to a bustling artists' haven with the help of subsidized rent for artist retailers. The town's historic architecture, anchored by the turn-of-the-century Stuarts Opera House, has been rehabilitated and brought back into productive existence. Coffee shops, restaurants and other social gathering places buzz with community activity. This contrasts with six years ago, when the downtown occupancy rate was 25 percent and buildings were crumbling. In exchange for rent support, artists have been required to invest their sweat equity into rehabilitating storefront spaces. As the appearance of storefronts has improved and downtown activity has increased, civic leaders saw and understood the potential value in leveraging local assets and the creative economy. They came together in an ad hoc manner to initiate Nelsonville's strategy of attracting artists by subsidizing their rent for downtown spaces. This group included many owners of downtown real estate.

For more information:

<http://www.sog.unc.edu/programs/cednc/stbi>

<http://www.nelsonvillechamber.com>

(Lambe, Will, Small Towns, Big Ideas: Case Studies in Small Town Community Economic Development. Community & Economic Development Program School of Government, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, December 2008.)

Riverfront Access

Owensboro, Kentucky

The Comprehensive Plan for Owensboro, Whitesville, and Daviess County has long recommended that a special interest district plan be developed for the Ohio riverfront. The goal is to enhance public access to the riverfront and to increase residential, recreational, festival and tourist opportunities in the vicinity of the river. The Comprehensive Plan calls the Ohio River the most physically and historically significant feature of the community. The City established three additional objectives in order to fully benefit from this resource:

1. Build a world-class riverfront that will be enjoyed by Owensboro residents as well as citizens from surrounding regions now as well as for future generations
2. Enhance downtown, encourage private development and business, and promote Owensboro as a riverboat destination
3. Create a riverfront that accommodates boaters, fishermen, pedestrians, and nature lovers, as well as to accommodate festivals, which attract tourism

For more information:

(<http://www.iompc.org/documents/Riverfront/index.htm#ReportDocs>)

Bicycle Planning

Brunswick, Maine

The Town of Brunswick, Maine maintains a model bicycle and pedestrian plan for small towns like Newburgh. The introduction to their plan clearly delineates the logic behind such a plan:

As in most American communities, the automobile dominates transportation in Brunswick. Often, the accommodation of cars in our public and private spaces creates obstacles to safe, efficient, and pleasurable walking and biking. Nevertheless, human-powered travel, whether by foot, bicycle, wheelchair or stroller remains an indispensable part of our daily lives. It is in the best interest of our community to accommodate and promote this type of travel, not only as a practical necessity but also in order to enjoy the important economic, environmental, and social benefits that come from increased bicycle and pedestrian activity.

For more information:

www.brunswickme.org

Brunswick Bicycle & Pedestrian Improvement Plan, Brunswick
Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee, March 7, 2005

Partnership

Oakland, Maryland

When leaders in Oakland learned of Wal-Mart's plans to locate in their town, they brought in several consultants from the national Main Street office to help the town think strategically about ways to maintain their steadily improving downtown. In preparation for Wal-Mart's arrival, Oakland's Main Street retailers restructured their product lines to create new niches that were unique to these local stores. For example, a 100-year-old hardware store developed an upscale electrical product line to capture market space not occupied by Wal-Mart. In addition, most downtown retailers started focusing on customer service and improved their ability to order specialty products for customers. The initial Main Street process and the intensive preparation for Wal-Mart brought in representatives from surrounding towns. As a result local leaders saw an opportunity to pool small-town resources across Garrett County in an effort to provide efficient public services and share staff. Each month, mayors from these towns gather to discuss issues such as garbage collection, negotiate purchases together and apply jointly for various funding streams.

(Lambe, Will, Small Towns, Big Ideas: Case Studies in Small Town Community Economic Development. Community & Economic Development Program School of Government, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, December 2008.)

For more information:

<http://www.sog.unc.edu/programs/cednc/stbi>

<http://www.oaklandmd.com>