Virginia Cooperative Extension
Situation Analysis Report

2004
Rockbridge County
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Introduction

During the 2004 calendar year, a complete program and clientele needs analysis was conducted by the Rockbridge County Cooperative Extension staff. The purpose of this endeavor was to identify priority issues, old and new, within the community that Cooperative Extension needs to address more directly. Through a formal survey and a variety of focus groups, including those in the areas of agriculture and natural resources, family and community sciences, 4-H youth development, and the members of the Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors, data was gathered and issues were recognized with plans of action and possible community partners discussed.

The situation analysis process was led by the Unit Coordinator and 4-H Agent, with input, assistance and guidance from the Rockbridge County Extension Leadership Council (ELC). Quantitative data was gathered through various county census databases and qualitative data gathered from leaders and residents in the community. Each focus group was asked to identify the priority issues in their related Extension programs. Plans of action were then discussed, along with future partnerships for volunteers and funding. Once comprehensive data was gathered, the agents met with the ELC to prioritize key issues within each program area. The results of this endeavor are summarized in the following report.
Unit Profile

Rockbridge County is located in central Virginia, at the southern end of the Shenandoah Valley. Rockbridge neighbors the counties of Amherst, Alleghany, Augusta, Bath, Bedford and Botetourt. The county is very accessible to residents and tourists, with Interstates 64 and 81 running through the heart of the county connecting Rockbridge County with the entire east coast. Rockbridge County encompasses 610 square miles; approximately 50 miles north of Roanoke, 135 miles west of Richmond, 180 miles southwest of Washington D.C., and 200 miles northwest of the Port of Hampton Roads. The majority of Rockbridge County is rural, with Lexington being the county seat.

The city of Lexington is an important educational, retail, and government center for the county. Lexington is the home of Washington and Lee University and Virginia Military Institute. Lexington not only reflects a small college atmosphere, but also one of significant history. Such historical landmarks as the home of Stonewall Jackson, Lee Chapel and the George C. Marshall Museum can be found within the city limits.

The city of Buena Vista is the home of Southern Virginia University. Historically, a river boom-town, Buena Vista continues to be the home of the largest industrial and manufacturing base in Rockbridge County.

Rockbridge County was named for its distinctive landmark, the Natural Bridge, which is now designated as a National Historic Landmark. Beyond the Natural Bridge, the county is home to more than 100 historically-significant attractions. The Cyrus McCormick Farm, also known as the birthplace of the International Harvester Company, offers an agricultural historical heritage and is one of fourteen Virginia Tech Agricultural Research and Extension Centers across the state of Virginia. New in comparison, the Virginia Horse Center has proven to be a valuable asset to the people of Rockbridge County. Those who utilize this facility from across the United States provide significant income to the local economy as demonstrated in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Rockbridge County Tourism and Travel Dollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Travel Impacts</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traveler Spending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Payroll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Travel Taxes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rockbridge County has always been, and will continue to be, rich in agricultural heritage. Agriculture has been a mainstay in the culture and the local economy as witnessed by the commodities grown, the businesses that support the efforts of farmers by supplying the many needed goods and services, and the lifestyle of the majority of residents throughout the county.
Agriculture in Rockbridge County continues to be the largest industry. Rockbridge County consists of 388,480 acres with 248,627 acres zoned for agricultural use. Agricultural enterprises in Rockbridge County include forestry products, dairy, beef cattle, sheep, hogs, poultry, horses, agronomic crops, specialty crops, and forage production.

Agriculture is not only the largest industry in regard to land use, but also the leader in industrial value in the county when combining both total revenues and total assets. The agricultural industry continues to also be the largest employer in the county. There are 789 farms throughout the county. Below in Tables 2, 3, 4 & 5 are the current agricultural statistics for Rockbridge County (taken from 1987, 1992, 1997 and 2003 Virginia Census of Agriculture).

**Rockbridge County Agricultural Statistics**

### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Farms</th>
<th>Acres of Farmland</th>
<th>Average Size Acres</th>
<th>Market Value of Products Sold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>146,455</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>$11,932,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>141,766</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>$14,373,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>140,110</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>$15,446,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>157,308</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>$18,545,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodity</th>
<th>Cash Receipts ($1,000)</th>
<th>VA Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crops</td>
<td>$2,528</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock</td>
<td>$16,017</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$18,545</td>
<td>37th</td>
</tr>
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### Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Livestock</th>
<th>Quantity in County</th>
<th>VA Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cattle</td>
<td>37,000</td>
<td>10th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef Cows</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>7th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk Cows</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>27th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep &amp; Lambs</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>17th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crops</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Yield</th>
<th>Production</th>
<th>VA Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corn for grain (bu.)</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>132,000</td>
<td>45&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn for silage (tons)</td>
<td>2,800</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>50,400</td>
<td>11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Hay</td>
<td>26,000</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>75,400</td>
<td>12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfalfa Hay (tons)</td>
<td>2,800</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>12,600</td>
<td>7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Hay (tons)</td>
<td>23,200</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>62,800</td>
<td>16&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are 241,345 acres of predominate forest in Rockbridge County, ranking 24<sup>th</sup> in harvest value with an average annual harvest value of $3,445,183. Economically, Rockbridge County’s forestry industry contributes $233,201,056, which is 32% of the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission forestry output. The county also contributes over 1,803 jobs towards this industry.

The population in Rockbridge County has grown from 18,350 in 1990 to 20,973 in 2003, indicating a 12.5% increase in over a 10-year period. As of 2003, the population of Lexington was 6,900 and Buena Vista at 6,100 residents. With the increase in population, an analysis on the population’s age was needed. The county’s median age is 37, with 34.8% of the population over age 62. Many people move to Rockbridge County to retire. This indicates that there is a need for further analysis on assisted living facilities and the care available for the elderly. Currently, there are four retirement/progressive living homes in the county. All four combined generate 233 beds made up of assisted living facilities and 146 dwellings.

County analysis also shows a low level of ethnic diversity in the county. Three percent of the total population is of African American decent; .3% is American Indian; .4% Asian, with .4% of other ethnicities.

Data from “Kids Count” indicates a higher than normal level of cases involving juvenile delinquencies (51/1000 juveniles in the county, compared to the state average of 46/1000). Rockbridge has a juvenile population of approximately 5000.

Data also indicates that the high school dropout rate is equal with the state at 3%.

Unemployment has decreased by 69.1% over the last ten years. Government, educational institutions, manufacturing, and service jobs provide the leading means of employment in Rockbridge County.

The county has experienced a high rate of births to single mothers at 32.9%, which is higher than the state average of 30.5%.

The average per capita annual income for the residents of Buena Vista is $16,377; Lexington $16,497; and Rockbridge County is $18,356.
Community and Resident Perspectives

Agriculture

Analysis for the Agriculture and Natural Resources perspective was derived from commodity focus groups, local agricultural organizations, community perspectives garnered from surveys and input from the Rockbridge County Extension Leadership Council (ELC). The following key subject areas were identified:

1. Agriculture efficiency and profitability
2. Total population recognition of agricultural importance to the quality of life in Rockbridge County
3. Continued support and research from the Land Grant University (Virginia Tech) that will directly influence production agriculture
4. Farmer family health and well being
5. Agricultural labor
6. Forage management and production
7. Water quality

Rising to the top of all focus groups and surveys was the challenge of keeping agriculture as a viable and profitable industry in Rockbridge County. As the average age of farmers and land prices continue to rise, it is becoming more difficult for young people to get involved in agriculture. In Rockbridge County, 80% of all farms are operated on a part-time basis and rely on outside employment to supplement farm income, health and retirement benefits, and social security. Younger people continue to move from the area to find better suited employment.

It was felt that the non-farm sector of the population was beginning to lose sight of the many benefits of a viable agricultural industry. As more and more people continue to move in from larger population centers of the United States, development continues to encroach closer to the agricultural sector. The ability of farm operations and residents to co-exist and live in harmony with each other continues to diminish.

There is a growing concern as to the direction of research and information being developed at Virginia Tech. There is a rising concern that the agricultural production sector is being left behind as university research and support dollars are being channeled towards more non-production based research and activities.

Farm family health continues to be a major factor as the farm population ages and new health concerns arise. For example, the immunization for an old existing problem (tetanus), and a new concern (rabies), need to be addressed to the agricultural sector by the local health department and local medical practitioners. Health issues that continue to plague the farming community are problems from dust, and back and muscle injuries. Farm machinery accidents also continue to be a major concern of the agricultural sector.
It is becoming harder and harder to find skilled workers for the various agricultural enterprises in the county. The younger work force is confronted with several shortcomings. First, their knowledge of agriculture and skill levels to the tasks involved is at a minimum. Secondly, they do not want to work the long, daily hours required at most farms. Thirdly, the work ethic needed from employees is often at a low level or non-existent.

Forages continue to be the mainstay of the agricultural industry in Rockbridge County. Seventy percent of all forages grown are marketed through livestock. The remaining 30% is marketed as high quality hay and other feedstuffs such as silage and haylage. It is important that agricultural producers are continually updated with cutting-edge information and technology. This will allow for producers to move forward progressively with new management practices and techniques.

Water quality will always continue to be in the forefront of the agricultural sector. It is important that the agricultural industry continue to recognize and maintain adopted “Best Management Practices” (BMP’s) that will ensure that nutrient run-off, soil erosion, and ground and surface water pollution are kept at a bare minimum level.

Once all input was completed, it was found that several subject areas overlapped. In the final analysis, three major issues rose to the forefront, as further identified in this document.
Family and Community Sciences

With assistance from the Family and Community Sciences (FCS) focus group, Extension Leadership Council (ELC) meetings, and community perspectives derived from surveys, the following key issues were identified:

1. Need to fill the vacant FCS Agent position
2. The necessity to recruit younger members to join Family Community Education Clubs (FCE)
3. Publicity for FCE Clubs
4. Emphasis of family unity and development
5. Stronger volunteer involvement and development within communities
6. Child services
7. Senior citizen health and living issues

The major issue that was reflected, among all focus groups and surveys involving Family and Community Sciences, was the lack of an Extension FCS Agent. Rockbridge County has been without an active agent for more than a year and a half, and the effects are being felt through the lack of agent leadership within the Family Community Education (FCE) Clubs and specialty programs offered to the community. The current FCE Clubs are led by a small group of retired women. With the absence of an agent, these clubs have not increased membership and express the need for recruiting younger generations to join their community clubs. This analysis identified the need to revert back to traditional programming concepts that are of more interest to FCE members. FCE club members identified the need for VCE to take a stronger active role in adolescence “Character Counts” and family issues and values programming. These were highly accepted ideas however, without an agent in the county they cannot be directly addressed.

The promotion of FCS was another key concern to recruit members and help to educate the public on issues that are within our county. For example, within the past ten years, teen pregnancy has increased, which has led to a higher number of births to single mothers. Nutritional educational information and programming is lacking for all generations. Until an agent is placed in Rockbridge County, VCE and affiliate FCE Clubs will have to partner with the local Rockbridge County Health Department and county schools to address these issues. VCE needs to encourage specialty programs, to be offered by the existing agents, to the Rockbridge community.

Volunteerism is another concern that was addressed throughout the Extension analysis. The current FCE Clubs are small, with most members over the age of 60. The community needs to be made aware of the diminishing volunteer base throughout the county. As the years have passed, many people are becoming too busy, and some are unaware what volunteer opportunities are available. Extension needs to address the continuing need for community volunteers and help mold the upcoming youth on the importance of volunteering.
4-H Youth Development

From 4-H focus groups, ELC meetings, and community perspectives derived from surveys, many key issues were discussed in priority order:

1. Need of in-school programming
2. Need for 4-H program associate
3. Increase of specialty clubs
4. Volunteerism
5. Funding for the 4-H program
6. 4-H promotion
7. Increase of membership

Additional comments provided from the community:
- Partnerships between current 4-H clubs
- 4-H members need further educational emphasis in specialty areas
- Increase specialty workshops and programming
- Increase community service activities
- Help incorporate “Character Counts” into the schools

Current strengths for Rockbridge Youth:
- Existing 4-H Clubs
- School involvement and extracurricular activities
- 4-H Camp
- Support of the Rockbridge County School Board and Principals, and the Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors
- Rockbridge Regional Fair

Throughout the community analysis, conducted by Rockbridge County Cooperative Extension, many 4-H issues and concerns were expressed. Over the past two years the Rockbridge 4-H program has experienced the retiring of one agent, leaving the county absent of a 4-H agent, and the continuing promotion of events. After eight months, a new agent was selected, facing challenges to rebuild existing 4-H clubs and increase community involvement. The community was faced with change, and concerns of new programming efforts have been addressed. All issues that were identified are being analyzed through the Extension office and 4-H agent.
Agriculture

Issue 1: Agriculture Efficiency and Profitability

Description: Agricultural efficiency and profitability continue to be the main focal point of farming operations. With machinery, production inputs, labor and fixed costs continually on the rise beyond the level of inflation, and commodity prices not following the same trend, the margins of farm profitability have continued to compress. The agricultural sector continues to fight an up-hill battle with these and other issues. Agriculture will need the support of a multiple-faceted approach to continue to achieve sustainability.

VCE’s role in addressing this issue: It is recognized that the initiation of Agricultural and Natural Resource Agents with specialty roles, covering multiple counties, has increased the efficiency and level of educational agricultural production program delivery to agricultural producers. This concept needs to continue, and diversify more, as agricultural production further evolves. Virginia Tech needs to direct its primary focus on production oriented research. A strong commitment to research in the areas of soil fertility, variety trials, weed control, disease control, forage and grain crop production, and commodity marketing is needed that will have immediate and direct benefit to the agricultural sector in Virginia. VCE needs to continue to support the publishing of hard copy, updated production oriented Extension Publications. VCE will have to help school systems identify the educational needs of future agriculture workers, so that students can develop proper skill levels. Farmers will need to be continually updated as to labor rules and regulations. Cutting edge educational programming, in forage production systems, needs to be sustained as a major emphasis to the extension mission in Planning District Six. VCE will need to continue with an educational mission in the area of water quality to address the ever increasing concerns of surface and ground water pollution from agricultural production systems.

Issue 2: Maintaining Farm Land and Co-existence with the Non-Farm Sector

Description: Population growth has changed the complexion of Rockbridge County at a steady pace from large open-land bases, to new homes and subdivisions canvassing the landscape. The ability of farming and urbanization to co-exist is becoming more and more of a problem. Land values have increased at a rate of over 150% in the last 10 years, making the selling of land for retirement an attractive solution, to those wishing to get out of agriculture, or who are in a financial situation that can be solved easily by selling farms or parcels for development off of larger land bases.
VCE’s role in addressing this issue: Extension will need to take an active role in the development of a state developed farmland preservation initiative that will allow the state to purchase development rights from farmers who wish to do so. A statewide program will allow agricultural land to be more affordable to younger individuals, allow existing operations to expand land bases at affordable prices, help some to better manage debt and set the priorities for the preservation of prime agricultural land across the entire Commonwealth of Virginia. VCE will have to take an active role in estate planning and transition. As estate planning becomes more and more complicated, extension audiences will need the proper help and guidance, of VCE Farm Business Management Agents, with this important topic. VCE will have to continue to work with community leaders to ensure that laws and regulations are fair to the agricultural industry and will not deter from the ability of farmers to operate in an acceptable and profitable fashion. VCE agents will have to take an active role in educating the non-farm public to the role of agriculture and the numerous advantages that agriculture brings to the community.

Issue 3: Maintaining a Healthy Farm Population and Work Force

Description: It is apparent that many old and new challenges face the farming sector when it comes to maintaining a healthy and safe work force. Rabies has become a major problem in domestic livestock over the past decade in Rockbridge County. Many other disease immunizations are not kept current. Injuries to backs and muscles continue to side-line workers temporarily throughout the year, while others may be removed permanently from the workforce. Farm machinery accidents are always a factor to the well being of farm families and workers.

VCE’s role in addressing this issue: Both ANR and FCS agents need to partner with local health departments and medical practitioners to better educate the farming sector regarding disease problems and proper immunization schedules. Programs dealing with the appropriate daily care of muscles and backs would be of great benefit. VCE agents need to design and offer Farm Safety Workshops that will cover the many aspects of safe machinery operation. Educational programming related to farm accidents and injuries, for emergency response teams across the county, would be a major benefit.
Family and Community Sciences

Issue 1: Lack of a Family and Community Sciences Agent

Description: Adults and youth in the community are lacking education from Extension on the issues of food preparation, health, safety, and family development. Analysis has proven that the community is limited in its knowledge base of these entities. Program direction needs to address these subjects. The residents of Rockbridge County are concerned that the county is losing its traditional FCS programming from VCE, and would like to see a revitalized commitment with a stronger focus to these topics.

VCE’s role in addressing this issue: Current FCS agents, from surrounding counties, have programming responsibilities in Rockbridge County. FCS programming needs to address a stronger educational effort to the Rockbridge Extension audience. VCE can address this issue by hiring a full-time agent to cover the FCS duties and responsibilities in Rockbridge County. The Agriculture and 4-H agents will continue to work with the current FCE members to recruit younger audiences through specialty programs and increased volunteerism.

Issue 2: Youth and Family Values

Description: Family values are a major part of a prosperous community. Positive influence will help to reduce the number of juvenile delinquents and high school dropouts. With the increase in dual income families and the rise of one-parent homes in the county, these values are not gaining the attention they need. Youth are having to take care of themselves after school and are not receiving the positive character building education they deserve.

VCE’s role in addressing this issue: VCE offers “Character Counts” programming through 4-H and training sessions for teachers and volunteers. Programs need to be implemented to bring families together and to educate the community on how to maintain family unity. VCE will need to place emphasis on educating parents on ways to instill discipline and respect in their children.

Issue 3: Health Care

Description: Health care issues, for both young and old, are always important to a healthy and prosperous community. With the recent flu vaccine shortage, many senior citizens in the community expressed concerns which they would like to have addressed. Adequate immunizations and healthcare were key issues during the analysis. The community expressed their opinion on wanting to see an agent in the county who addresses family, adult, senior, and youth health concerns.

VCE’s role in addressing this issue: In partnership with the local hospital and health department, Extension has an opportunity to support the community with health care
information and workshops. Support from neighboring county FCS agents will help Extension deliver needed programming to the community.

**Issue 4: Senior Citizens**

**Description:** The County’s population has grown over the past few years because of the appeal for the historic, peaceful, country atmosphere, in which many people choose upon retirement. Many of these seniors return to the area to reunite with family and friends. The increase in population, above the age of sixty, has increased the demand for progressive living establishments. To solve the need for adequate living and care, as seniors progress through the later stages of their lives, four major housing opportunities exist for seniors in Rockbridge County. These enterprises offer dwellings for the able and facilities for assisted living and extended care. All homes are comfortably filled to occupancy; however, with the increase in the senior citizen population further expansion of existing and new facilities needs to take place.

**VCE’s role in addressing this issue:** VCE will need to partner with social services, and the current retirement communities, to monitor the increase in population to address what will be needed for the future. FCS will need to offer programs for the senior community members on health care, fitness and nutrition, and future financial security.
4-H Youth Development

**Issue 1: In-School Programming**

**Description:** The absence of in-school programming is a major community concern from all focus groups. These groups ranged in age from 13 to 75, and consisted of youth, parents, volunteers, and community leaders. The strengths of having in-school programming is a major issue. In-school programming allows all youth to be subject to 4-H and community involvement. Youth learn public speaking skills, increase their self-confidence, and have a sense of membership through a highly respected program in the community. The weaknesses of instituting these programs back into schools are: producing quantity not quality programming; lack of volunteer involvement; and time constraints. Due to decreased membership in 4-H, the ELC felt that this will be the key to rebuilding the county 4-H programs.

**VCE’s role in addressing this issue:** VCE is currently pursuing this issue. Recently, two county elementary schools have received the 21st Century Grant. This grant allows these schools funds to run active after-school programming, recruit volunteers, and provide transportation home for the students. This grant will allow youth to participate in a 4-H club, which is based on the current Standards of Learning (SOL’s). This will allow the clubs to be volunteer led and also, allow for sufficient time to provide quality youth programming. Grant funding will assist in the hiring of adult leaders, by the school system, if volunteers are not available. The 4-H agent has also received training from the State Extension Office to assist in the development and organization of these after-school clubs.

**Issue 2: Increase of Specialty Clubs and Programming**

**Description:** Extension analysis, through community involvement, expressed concern for the limited amount of specialty clubs and programs in 4-H. Suggestions were expressed to offer clubs and programming that will attract youth and adults in the community who have a variety of interests. Several examples include; sewing, expressive arts, wildlife, and shooting sports.

**VCE’s role in addressing this issue:** VCE offers various forms of curriculums in all areas of youth interests that can aid in the establishment of new specialty clubs and programs. 4-H can advance forward in these areas with the assistance of funding and volunteer support. Local FCE clubs have offered support along with community leaders who possess a variety of specialized skills. Opportunities in the area of increasing specialty interests in the community are already in place. The Rockbridge Regional Fair offers a great showcase that identifies potential adult leaders within the community who possess specialty skills in a variety of venues, including; crop and livestock production, photography, arts and crafts, baking, clothing design, and many others.
Issue 3: Volunteer Support

Description: Volunteerism, within Rockbridge County, is another concern derived from the analysis, in all areas of Extension and civic organizations. Youth, singles, parents, and the retired find that they have limited spare time to contribute to specific organizations due to work schedules, school, and ongoing extra-curricular activities. The largest challenge gathered in the analysis is time constraints. Thirty-one percent of the county works in the service industry, while the other majority, 28%, is employed in the manufacturing industry. The main careers within the community are those resulting in long work hours, extended work weeks, with varied work shifts and schedules. Thirty-three percent of these families are a one-parent, (mainly mother), household. Most parents feel they do not have the time or energy to commit to leading a 4-H club or in joining other groups and organizations. The baby-boomer generation is rapidly approaching retirement age and there continues to be an influx of retired newcomers to Rockbridge County. The recruitment of this identified group of individuals, for volunteer positions, should be a top priority.

VCE’s role in addressing this issue: VCE needs continued involvement with the recruiting of new volunteers for 4-H activities. This issue can be addressed through various media and county contacts. Efforts to promote volunteerism will be the focus of presentations conducted at schools and local civic organizations. Emphasis will be conducted through local media utilizing the county newspapers, local radio stations, and working with local college groups and organizations. Many college fraternities, sororities, and clubs require members to participate in community service. Extension can provide these young adults with a fun and rewarding way to fulfill such requirements. The college students from Southern Virginia University, Washington and Lee University, and Virginia Military Institute will be targeted.
Plan of Action for Goal Attainment

With assistance from the community, the Rockbridge County Extension Office was able to gather data and analyze key issues in the Agriculture, FCS, and 4-H program areas. After thorough analysis, several goal attainment objectives were identified on ways to address and satisfy these issues.

In compiling this final analysis, it was felt that it would be of more benefit to prioritize issues by program area. This eliminated the possible concern of one program area being recognized as more important than others. It was also felt, that by setting issue priorities in this manner, it would allow those involved to take a more unified approach across all program areas, rather than lobbying only for those issues that involved them directly.

All of the issues that were presented dealt with the need to maintain and expand quality Extension programs in Rockbridge County. Visiting schools on a regular basis, recruiting membership and volunteers, organizing programs in the county and continuing to increase FCE and 4-H club programs, are all difficult tasks with only two VCE professionals in Rockbridge County. A need for additional support staff was recognized. It was determined that it is essential for the addition of a full time FCS agent and 4-H program associate. With this additional staffing, Rockbridge Extension Unit can better service the community needs now and in the future.

4-H is centered around youth development, while at the same time, quality of programming continues to be a top priority. Efforts to increase membership will be implemented through after-school and community clubs. Efforts to increase 4-H agricultural programming, 4-H Expos, and specialty workshops, on an annual basis, will help to expand 4-H youth and volunteer participation.

Agricultural clientele will be best served through the existing model of ANR Specialty Agents across Planning District Six. Extension expertise and delivery of agricultural information is very competitive with the private sector. Agents with specialty roles will continue to maintain credibility in addressing pertinent issues at a high level of expertise. VCE agents in PD6 continue to be recognized and sought after by the agricultural clientele base.

Volunteerism and funding to increase VCE programming will be sought. The agents will continue to focus on presenting programs that promote VCE to various civic and community groups. Increased volunteers will also be targeted through word of mouth, recruitment by existing leaders, and formal structured recruiting efforts.

The opportunities for future partnerships and improving our total Extension programming efforts have been assessed. Through the help of the community, several organizations have been identified to continue existing partnerships. Several new partnering prospects for the future have been identified. Parents, supervisors, and community clubs; such as
the Interact Club, Future Framers of America (FFA), and the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), will allow for endless opportunities.

Along with the public school districts, support will be targeted towards assistance from government entities such as the County Board of Supervisors, Health Department, Water Control Board, Natural Resource and Conservation Service, Virginia Department of Forestry, Farm Service Agency, Natural Bridge Soil and Water Conservation District, and local Fire and Rescue Departments.

Other community partners that have been recognized include; civic organizations, the Lexington Downtown Development Association, Rockbridge Area Partnership, Farm Credit and other commercial lending institutions, local veterinarians, Farm Bureau, local attorneys, accountants, and agricultural businesses. Additional assistance from local businesses, the Rockbridge Area Master Gardeners, and the Rockbridge Master Naturalists, will benefit the Rockbridge Extension Unit and the Rockbridge County community.