Blueprint COMMUNITIES

Gilmer County

A Community Profile of Current Conditions and Capacity

Prepared for the

West Virginia Blueprint Communities Initiative

April 2007

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Gilmer County is located in central West Virginia. Oil and natural gas was discovered in Gilmer County around the turn of the twentieth century and the industry continues to contribute to the local economy today. Other contributors to the local economy have historically included, farming (including some tobacco), coal, and timber. Glenville State College is located in Gilmer County and the WV State Folk Festival was started in Glenville in 1950. The Folk Festival has become a huge summer event bringing many visitors to the town to celebrate Appalachian culture, folk music and crafts.

The latest population estimates available (2005) for Gilmer County reflects a population of 6,950 people. About twenty percent (20.2%) of the population is under 18 years of age and fifteen percent (15.4%) is 65 years of age or older. There are 2,780 households in the county and about 1,860 families.

Introduction:

This community profile is provided for use by the Blueprint Team in order to provide a general overview of some of the more relevant measures of local conditions and community capacity. It is one of many tools you may find useful. The profile should be reviewed and kept in your community toolbox for future reference. Local Blueprint Teams will undoubtedly wish to examine some of the areas addressed in the profile in more detail once specific priorities are established for local community development. The profile should initially be useful in identifying areas of concern that may require further study and assessment by local citizens and later on it may provide guidance about measures that can used to monitor progress.

The Gilmer County community profile is intended as a resource for community builders. It is a portrait of current conditions and local capacities. Information presented here can be useful to local Blueprint Community Team members and other community residents in considering where to invest time and energy and in establishing both short and long term priorities and goals for community improvements. However, the statistics and other information summarized here are no substitute for local initiative. Objective facts and individual perspectives must be considered in the context of local knowledge, opportunities and desires which can only be gleaned from community members. For example, if the general profile suggests increased attention to healthy lifestyle choices, local health care professionals should be consulted to assist the community in understanding the links between lifestyle and health. If programs or facilities to encourage physical fitness are suggested, local residents should be asked what activities would be of interest and what types of facilities would be used. It is important to know what types of facilities or programs would be used before making plans for development. If people are involved in the planning they will be more likely to be involved in the doing.

A Few Words about Community Capacity and Capital:

Community Capacity may be defined as the level of resources, assets, human capital, and social capital available to a group of people (a community) to achieve the results they want and care about. "Community capacity, in a general sense, is what makes communities work. It is what makes well-functioning communities function well." (Chaskin, et.al., 2001). Capacity may be found in local people, in the strength of the relationships among people, in civic enterprises, in local institutions, in the value of property and buildings, in financial investment, and in the quality of the environment.

> *"Community capacity is what makes well-functioning communities function well"* – (Chaskin, 2001)

Sufficient levels of community capacity are necessary prerequisites for successful community development. Community capacity can be measured and it can be built. The Blueprint Communities Program is focused on increasing community capacity in order to build stronger and more prosperous communities.

The community profile is organized by capacity domains - important areas of influence defined by the *West Virginia Community Development Gathering*. A domain of capacity may be thought of as a significant area of influence that affects the ability of a community to get things done. If capacity is lacking in any particular area it should be built so that available resources and investments can be optimally utilized. Each of the seven domains (areas of influence) of capacity is discussed in the profile based on selected quantitative data and the opinions of Blueprint Team members reflected in their on-line survey responses.

"Capital" is another term that is helpful in organizing information within the profile. We are generally familiar with financial capital, the monetary investment that is made available to build something useful. Other forms of capital discussed in the profile are no less important. Human capital, social capital, cultural capital, and environmental capital are all local resources that can be drawn upon to improve community conditions.

Human Capital

Human Capital includes the health and well being of local residents as well as the knowledge skills and abilities of local people. There is considerable data available that can be used to measure health and well being. The measures of local health and well-being discussed here are reflective of Gilmer County. If the Blueprint Team wishes to look more specifically at towns within the county some data is available at that level.

Health and Well Being of Local People

Healthy People:
Three key measures of health were compiled for county residents. These measures include health insurance status, adult obesity, and low birth weight. Adult obesity, which is defined as significantly exceeding recommended healthy weight, is 27.4 % in Gilmer County. This is right at the average for West Virginia (27.7%) and significantly above the average for the U. S. (22.8%). The number of adults without health insurance is 31.5% of the adult population of the county. This is significantly higher than the state average of 22.8% and the national average of 18.2% of adults uninsured. The percentage of low birth weight babies (11.1% in Gilmer County) is also significantly above the national average of 7.8% and higher than the statewide average of 9.3%.

Obesity and low birth weight are significant risk factors for major health problems and these measures of health should be of concern to residents of the County. Local residents may wish to look closer at this issue by engaging in discussions with local health care professionals to get a more accurate picture of the health status of local residents. The high number of adults with no type of health insurance coverage is an issue of particular concern. Adults without access to third party payers will tend to put off needed healthcare and visits to a health care professional. Most children are able to qualify for health care insurance through public programs if they are not insured through a parent's employer; however, that is not the case for many adults residing in the state. Local health care professionals would have a good sense of the extent of this problem for adults and they should be consulted. A good measure of the extent of the problem locally might be secured from local rural health clinics or hospitals that serve county residents by checking to see how many people they see with no form of third party payment.

The high number of adults with no type of health insurance coverage is an issue of particular concern. Adults without access to third party payers will tend to put off needed healthcare and visits to a health care professional.

School Readiness:
At least three long term research studies (Abecedarian, Perry Preschool, & Chicago Child-Parent Centers) have established a significant link between early childhood development and future success in school and later life. Two key measures of school readiness – that is early childhood development that prepares children for school – were considered. The percentage of kindergarten children enrolled in public preschool programs is a good measure of school readiness as is the rate of retention in preschool and kindergarten programs. Preschool enrollment as a percentage of kindergarten enrollment in Gilmer County is 80.3% which is exceptionally good. The statewide

average is 43.2%. When children are provided with preschool programs their success in later grades will be enhanced.

The percentage of pre-K and kindergarten students who are retained in Gilmer County (not promoted to the next grade) was 3.5% (2003-04 data). This is much better than the state average of 12.2% and most likely reflects the high percentage of four year old children participating in public preschool programs.

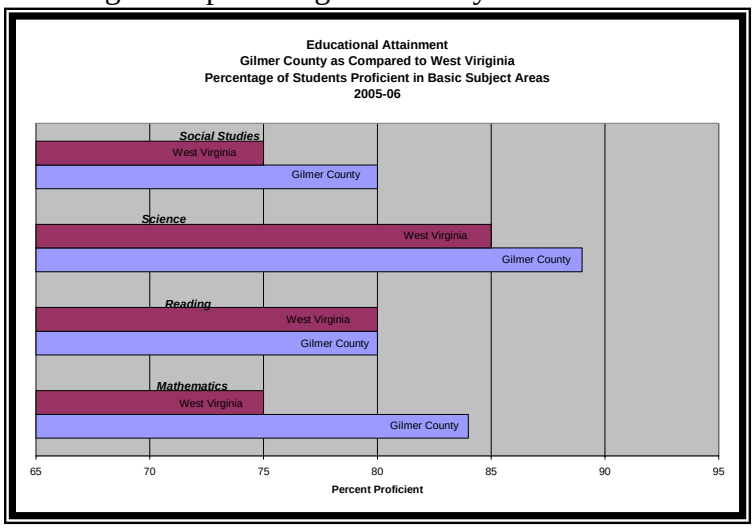
School readiness does not appear to be a an area of major concern for Gilmer County based on the measures reviewed; however, given the importance of early childhood development as a predictor of future success; the Blueprint Team may wish to consult with local preschool and kindergarten teachers to gather further information about how well children are prepared when they enter school.

Educational Attainment and Access:

Success in school may be measured by looking at several key indicators of continued education and achievement in the public schools. Measures selected for the profile include education levels of the population, high school graduation rates, students going on to college, and test scores on standardized testing.

Thirty percent (30.0%) of the residents of Gilmer County did not complete high school (2000 census data). This is a significantly higher percentage than the statewide rate (24.8%) and the U. S. population as a whole (19.6%). The current high school graduation rate in Gilmer County (2006), however, is 93.2%. This rate of current high school graduation is significantly higher than the statewide rate (84.6%). Thus, we might expect the overall rate of persons with a high school education in the county to be increasing.

Most likely due to the presence of Glenville State College a higher percentage of Gilmer County residents hold college degrees than is the case statewide. Over seventeen percent (17.1%) of Gilmer County residents over the age of 25 years hold a college degree. The statewide percentage is 14.8%. Although the percentage of county residents that are college educated is higher than the state average, it is somewhat lower than and the national percentage of 24.4%. There appears to be a significant dichotomy within the county population related to educational attainment - large numbers of people lack a high school education yet there is a fairly high rate of college graduates.



For the 2005-06 school year, students in Gilmer County schools exceeded state averages for proficiency in three of four basic subject areas. See chart.

Young people in Gilmer County appear to go on to college at a higher rate than the state average. One measure of the college going rate is

the percentage of high school graduates who take college entrance exams. In 2006, 67.6% of Gilmer County high school graduates took the ACT college entrance exam; the percentage of students taking the ACT test statewide is slightly lower at 64%. The composite ACT score for Gilmer students at 20.2 is just under the state average of 20.6.

The Gilmer County population is dichotomous related to educational attainment with 30% of the population lacking a high school education but over 17% holding a college degree. (2000 census data)

Community Safety:
The overall crime rate for West Virginia as a whole is one of the lowest in the nation at 28.98 crimes per 1,000 population. Crimes reported by Gilmer County law enforcement agencies are at a rate of 14.74 per thousand population – about half the statewide crime rate (2005 Uniform Crime Report). The Gilmer County Sheriff's Office reported 0.54 drug and narcotics related offenses per 1,000 population in the County.

There are seven sex offenders with Gilmer County addresses listed in the WV Sex Offender Registry. This is a rate of 1.01 per 1,000 population. The statewide rate is 1.39 per thousand.

Gilmer County appears to be a safe community with little crime; however, there may be local safety issues of concern. Not all safety related issues are related to crime and local residents are in the best position to assess any safety concerns county residents may have.

Family Stability:
Two measures of family stability were researched for the community profile – domestic violence investigations and the ratio of marriages to divorces. Statistics for Gilmer County indicate a rate of 5.76 investigations related to domestic violence per 1,000 households. This is a low rate as compared to the statewide rate of 16.39 per thousand households. The ratio of marriages to divorces in Gilmer County is 1.70 marriages to every divorce. This is higher than the statewide ratio of 1.49 marriages to each divorce.

A third measure of family stability that was selected for review is the rate of confirmed child abuse and neglect; however, reliable data at the county or local community level is not available. Local child protective services workers can provide considerable insight into this issue. If this is an area of concern for the local Blueprint Team it is recommended that local child protective service staff be consulted to obtain information about the extent of this problem in the community. In general, families in Gilmer County appear to be relatively stable based on the limited measures available.

Economic Security:
Perhaps the most telling component of family and individual well being is economic security. Unemployment, poverty, and a general lack of financial resources places families under severe stress that often leads to other problems and depletes the level of human capital in the community. Five measures of economic security are included in the profile.

The most recent (January 2007) unemployment rate for the county is 4.0%. This is lower than the state and federal rates of 4.8% and 5.0% respectively. Additional information about available jobs

and local industries will be discussed later in the profile in relation to financial and manufactured capital.

Significant levels of poverty are present in Gilmer County. In 2003, 19.6% of all families in the county were estimated to have household income below the federal poverty level. The poverty rate for all families in West Virginia is 18.5% and for the nation it is at 12.7%. What is more telling is the 2000 census data for families residing in the county. The 2000 census data is more accurate than the estimates for non-census years and reflects the poverty situation in Gilmer County in 1999. The poverty rate for all families reflected by the 2000 census was 20.2% (only a little above the state average); however, the rate for families with children was 27.3% in poverty. For families with children headed by a female with no husband present (109 total families) the poverty rate was exceedingly high at 69.4%. Many families, particularly families with children and female headed families in Gilmer County struggle to make ends meet.

The 2000 Census data reports 69.4% of female headed households with children below the federal poverty level.

Per capita annual income in Gilmer County for 1999 (as reported in 2000 census data) was $12,498. This is significantly lower than the state average of $16,477 and the national average of $21,587. Even though these figures describe the average personal income per person living in Gilmer County when the 2000 census was conducted, they provide a basis for relative comparison of income levels that is the most accurate available.

Income levels may have increased in Gilmer County to some degree over the past several years but, when adjusted for inflation, there is little reason to believe that Gilmer County residents are significantly better off than the 2000 census figures would indicate.

Data from 2000 also indicate that 23.6% of households have a severe burden related to housing costs as defined by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Severe housing cost burden is based on the number of low income families who pay more than 50% of household income for housing. In Gilmer County this burden is a little higher than the statewide percentage (21.3%) and slightly lower than the national figure of 25.8% of households.

A further measure of economic security is the *Universal Living Wage*. This is the hourly wage necessary to afford housing based on Fair Market Rents in any particular area assuming that someone works 40 hours per week and 52 weeks per year. For Gilmer County this wage is $7.10 per hour for a one bedroom apartment. The current federal minimum wage is $5.15 per hour although the Congress appears ready to increase it to $7.25 over a two year period.

The quantitative data tells us that many families in Gilmer County do not have an adequate level of household income and that families headed by single mothers are particularly vulnerable.

Survey Responses from Blueprint Team Members Related to Health and Well Being:

Responses to the survey from eight members of the Blueprint Community Team average -0.15 for the statements related to community capacity in this domain. (See appendix A for an explanation of

survey scoring and interpretation of this average score.) This average score would indicate that there is a lack of capacity present within this domain when all five components of health and well being discussed above are considered. The team's responses indicate rather severe deficits in areas related to the economic security and health of county residents while safety and education are seen as positives. These perceptions are generally reflected in the data discussed above.

Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities of Local People

Indicator areas related to using and enhancing skills, knowledge and abilities of local people, citizen engagement, and data driven decision making are included in this domain of capacity. Some information is available in existing data sets that can provide us with measures of citizen engagement; however, measures relating to using and enhancing skills knowledge and abilities will, at least for the present, need to be identified locally. The perception of Blueprint Team members as reflected in the survey results is one measure of this domain and team members are encouraged to consider relevant local information and knowledge to identify other measures.

There are no current depositories of local information about how people use and enhance their skills. The Blueprint Communities training program is an example of how local people (the Blueprint Team) are enhancing their skills and the participation of team members in the program is a positive measure of local capacity in this area. The level of participation on local boards, task teams, work teams etc. is another such measure. Other useful measures of this domain where information may be known to the Blueprint Team or information could be collected locally might be participation of citizens in community meetings; training programs offered locally in areas of leadership development, group facilitation or planning; number of local community members who have participated in such training, or observations about how local government or town meetings are conducted. Are there local opportunities to gain leadership skills? Are citizens encouraged to participate in local town meetings? Are diverse parts of the community represented and are all opinions welcomed?

Citizen Engagement:
Measures of citizen engagement have been compiled for consideration by the Blueprint Team members. Some information is available in existing data sets related to participation in elections and volunteerism. Participation in elections is often used as a measure of citizen engagement. In 2004 (a Presidential election year), 60.5% of registered voters in Gilmer County cast a ballot. Voter turnout in Gilmer County was less than the statewide voter turnout of 65.9%. An additional measure of citizen participation is the percentage of the voting age population that actually registered and exercised their rights as a citizen to vote for their elected officials. In Gilmer County the percentage of the voting age population that voted in the 2004 election was somewhat less than the state or national turnout. 51.1% of the voting age population voted in Gilmer County as contrasted to 54.7% in West Virginia and 55.5% across the nation.

Volunteerism is another measure of this domain for which we have some data. Local residents participate in the Adopt-A-Highway program at a much higher rate than the state average – 42.3 volunteers per 1,000 population in Gilmer County and 13.2 per 1,000 statewide. Another measure of volunteer interest is the number of persons expressing interest in volunteering through the state

registry maintained by the WV Commission on National and Community Service. This registry reflects 38.1 Gilmer County residents per 1,000 population and a state average of 9.1 per 1,000. This relatively high rate of volunteerism in the county is a very positive measure of the interest of county residents in using their skills and abilities to improve their communities.

Survey Responses from Blueprint Team Members Related to Knowledge and Abilities of Local People:

The measures reported above related to voting and volunteerism drawn from available data provide some useful information; however, we are forced for the most part to rely on the perceptions of Blueprint Team members about the level of capacity in this domain as reflected in their survey responses. Based on the survey responses of the team members, some degree of capacity exists in Gilmer County within this domain. The average score for this domain was +0.20 indicating team members believe a low level of local capacity is present. Three of the five variables related to this domain were seen positively by team members. Variables related to local people being willing to help and decisions based on good information were seen as lacking by the team as a whole but there was a lack of consensus about both of these issues among the team members. The team may want to develop some local measures of this domain to get a better feel for how local skills knowledge and abilities are utilized and to identify more specifically in what ways local people's skills and knowledge can be enhanced.

Social Capital

"Although some…continue to believe that healthy economies create vibrant communities, in fact, the reverse is more often the case. A strong community is a prerequisite for creating a healthy economy because it alone produces social trust." (Jeremy Rifkin, 2000)

Two domains of community capacity make up social capital – ***Relationships and Interpersonal Communications*** and ***Community Initiative Responsibility and Adaptability***.

These domains address levels of shared values, trust, connectedness, participation, collective vision, leadership planning, and sense of hope in the community. There are currently few if any sources of local data that effectively measure these important components of community capacity. One measure that may be useful was secured from school survey data. Youth in Gilmer County schools were asked if they participate in community activities such as scouts, sports teams, youth clubs, etc. Participation in such activities is one way social capital is built among young residents in the community. For 2004-05, 23.6% of Gilmer County students reported participation in such activities which is lower than the statewide rate of 26.7%.

With the exception of this one measure of relationship building in the community state and national data sets are not very useful in measuring levels of social capital. We can gain some insight into this domain of local capacity through the perceptions of Blueprint Team members (survey data). However, the levels of social capital are best considered locally by observing local interactions among people, identifying local leaders, and encouraging a collective vision and plan for the community. Are public issues discussed in local newspapers or community forums? How many adults attend youth activities? Are pot luck dinners a routine event and are new members of the community welcomed at community events? Are local organizations and local government connected to one another and engaged in joint planning to improve the community? Do communities work (and play) well with other communities in Gilmer County? Does the College community work together with the larger community and are people engaged in joint planning and development efforts? Do community residents resolve disagreements amicably and trust one another? The Blueprint team can develop its own local measures of social capital by asking themselves these types of questions and then asking: how would we know?

Local information can also be gathered by talking to local government officials, college officials, and local agency directors about their vision for the community and how they plan for the future. Is there a collective vision for local development? How many citizens are engaged in discussions about the future? What is the level of resources dedicated to planning?

Survey Responses from Blueprint Team Members Related to Relationships and Interpersonal Communications:

This domain of capacity within the community is seen as an area where some small levels of capacity exist. The average score for this domain across the five variables is +0.23 which is

indicative of a belief in some low to moderate level of existing capacity within the community by the team members.

Survey Responses from Blueprint Team Members Related to Community Initiative, Responsibility, and Adaptability:

Overall, team members see very little existing capacity in this domain with an aggregate score of +.03. This overall score would indicate a collective belief among team members that little capacity exists in this area; however, there was no clear consensus of opinion about four of the five variables making up the aggregate score. Some team members saw this domain positively while others saw it as deficient. Team members are encouraged to discuss their perceptions of community initiative, responsibility, and adaptability in order to better understand one another's points of view. It would probably be helpful to identify local measures of this domain as well, and to engage the larger community in discussions about how to build capacity in this area. Survey responses tend to indicate that team members believe county residents have a significant degree of trust in one another and want to help improve local conditions but that capacity may be lacking in how to translate those attributes into action.

Cultural Capital

Cultural Diversity and Quality of Life

This is another domain where existing databases offer little useful information. The 2000 census data reflects a very limited degree of cultural diversity within the population of Gilmer County. 97.3% of the population reported themselves as White. The data does reflect a total of 65 African Americans and 30 Asians residing in the county; thus, there are people in the county who can provide for some cultural diversity but they may need to be sought out.

Gilmer County has no museums or art galleries located in the county and one library. Very few people (actual figures not reported due to very low numbers) in the county are employed in the Arts, Entertainment, or Recreation sector.

Survey Responses from Blueprint Team Members Related to Cultural Diversity and Quality of Life:

Blueprint Team members believe the quality of life in Gilmer County is generally good. The average score for this domain is +0.65. This score reflects a moderate level of capacity within this domain that can be drawn upon as community projects are developed and implemented. Some members of the team feel that county residents lack opportunities for enrichment through music and the arts and some see recreational opportunities as limited within the county.

The local Blueprint Team may want to build on the positive aspects of quality of life they perceive in Gilmer County and it may also be useful to further assess how others see this issue. Do community residents want more access to live music performances and the arts? How can the positive aspects of the local quality of life be leveraged to improve other domains of community capacity? What types of projects or activities can tap into the positive perception of local quality of life?

Financial and Manufactured Capital

Investments in Community and Financial Resources

A significant number of measures have been identified from existing data sets to describe levels of community capacity and current conditions within this domain.

Financial Investments:
Data obtained from the WV Secretary of State Business Organization Information System indicates that about six percent (6.08%) of the for-profit businesses in Gilmer County have started up within the past year. This is a little above the statewide percentage of new business start ups at 4.18%. This level of new business activity may be a positive development for the county or it may indicate a lack of stable businesses. This is an area where local knowledge is necessary to interpret this measure in the context of local business activity.

Data from the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act database provides some measure of new housing starts. There were 10 home purchase loans made per 1,000 existing housing units in the county during 2005. The state rate is 32 per 1,000 housing units and the national rate of new home loans is 75 per 1,000. Thus, there were relatively few new investments in housing made in the county.

Local Financial Resources:
One measure of local financial resources is deposits in local banks. This measure for Gilmer County was calculated from available 2004 data at $11,367 in per capita deposits (average deposits per county resident). The state average per-capita deposit is higher at $12,472. Gilmer County has two banking locations in the county and a total of $79 million dollars in total deposits (2004 data).

Another measure of local financial resources is average wage per job. Gilmer County residents' earnings are, on average, $27,202 per job held. This is less than the state average of $30,879 (2005 data).

These measures tend to indicate a lower level of local financial resources than are present in the state as a whole.

Access to Outside Financial Resources:
Several measures of federal spending and investment of federal financial resources in the area have been identified. The most recently available data for Gilmer County (2004) documents an average federal investment in personal transfer receipts of $6,787 per capita. These federal dollars are related to federal payments to individuals for unemployment benefits, retirement, social security, disability payments, and other forms of payment not attributable to earnings from work. Statewide the per capita amount is $6,929. Gilmer County residents appear to be about as dependent on these federal programs as the general population of people in West Virginia.

Federal per-capita spending in Gilmer County for salaries and benefits of federal employees, military personnel, procurement contracts, grants and other forms of investment averaged $9,292 per person in 2004. This is a little more federal investment than the state per capita average of $8,364. Federal grant funds received in Gilmer County during 2004 totaled $16,238,000. These

grant funds include grants made directly to local governments or organizations as well as federal grant funds distributed by state government to the county.

Business Efficiency:
One measure of business efficiency is retail sales. The Economic Census of 2002 reported per capita retail sales in Gilmer County as $3,707. This is much less than the statewide retail sales which were $9,277 per capita. This may be partially due to county residents spending less but is more likely an indication that county residents do a substantial portion of their shopping outside the county.

Job creation and changes in net employment are other measures that can be used to assess business efficiency within the county. During 2005, Gilmer County had a net gain of 29 jobs with 112 new jobs created during that period. Average new hire earnings are reported at $1,492.75 per month. These measures indicate very minimal growth in jobs within the county during 2005. The net increase in county-based jobs from 2000 to 2004 was only 324 jobs. Data available seems to indicate a small increase in available jobs within Gilmer County in recent years.

Business Diversity:
Business diversity within the county is reflected in the number and types of business establishments and in the types of jobs available. Total non-farm business establishments in Gilmer County in 2004 were 125. The 2002 Survey of Business Owners conducted by the Census Bureau included 118 businesses with employees. The WV Secretary of State Business Organization Data System lists 181 current (2007) for profit businesses and 34 registered non-profit organizations in Gilmer County.

Employment in Gilmer County for 2004 (the most recent available data) reflects a total employment of 3,100 persons. Sixty-three percent (63.1%) of the employment is in private sector jobs while government employment accounts for 28.2%. The remaining 8.7% is farm employment.

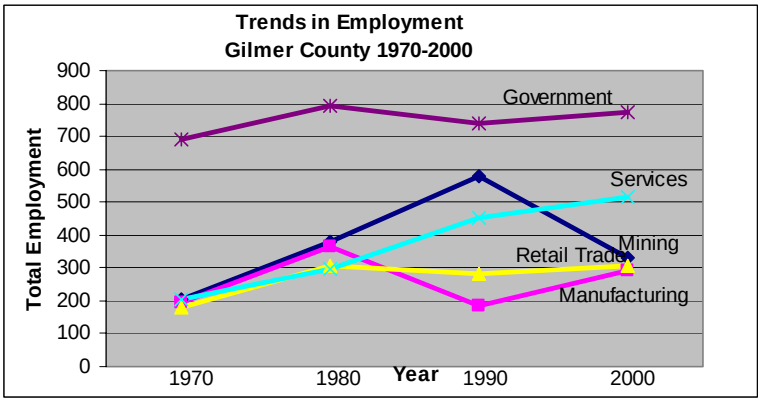
2000 Census data for Gilmer County reports 2,470 residents employed. Sixty-two percent (62.1%) were private sector employees, 29.2% were government employees, and 7.7% were in their own business at that time. Gilmer County residents' occupations in 2000 were listed as:

Management and Professional – 28.4%
Service Occupations – 21.6%
Sales and Office – 22.1%
Farming, fishing and forestry – 1.8%
Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance – 11.9%
Production, Transportation – 14.2%

Trends in Employment 1970 to 2000: If we look closer at selected industries over the past thirty years the total employment in Gilmer County within these particular industries shows a modest increase (3,449 jobs in 1970 and 4,217 jobs in 2000). However, the type of employment is a more important consideration.

Employment in government jobs is the single most important sector for the county economy. The highest numbers of jobs are consistently found in this sector over the thirty year period. Service

sector jobs have increased steadily during the 30 year period while the number of mining and manufacturing jobs has fluctuated. Jobs in retail trade have been relatively stable over the period. The rate of increase in service jobs is particularly notable. See chart showing trends in these selected industries over thirty years.



Cultivating Entrepreneurship:
Limited data is available in this area. Some measure of entrepreneurship within Gilmer County may be implied from statistics indicating that 7.7% workers were self employed in not incorporated businesses; however it is hard to draw any hard conclusions about the level of entrepreneurial activity from this measure.

Community Resident Assets:
Resident assets may be measured to some extent by looking at the value of owner occupied housing. For most home owners their home is the greatest asset they have. In 2000, 72.3% of Gilmer County householders owned their homes. This is a little lower than the state average of 75.2% and higher than the national home ownership rate of 66.2%. The average value of the homeowner's property in Gilmer County was $75,082 in 2000 while the average value of owner occupied housing statewide was $86,995 and nationally it was $158,934.

The average value of farm land and buildings in Gilmer County is less than state and national averages as well. The 2000 census of agriculture documents an average value for farm land and buildings in Gilmer County of $205,064. The average value of farm land and buildings statewide in West Virginia was $231,999.

Gilmer County resident's assets appear to be a little less than the state average based on these limited measures of home and farm value.

Community Infrastructure:
Community infrastructure is an area where local resident knowledge generally exceeds available statistics drawn from large data sets. Blueprint Team members can most likely assess infrastructure issues fairly accurately based on their own local knowledge.

Census data provides us with some information related to housing infrastructure. About 40% (39.8%) of the occupied housing units in Gilmer County were built prior to 1960 and 23% were built prior to 1940. Most occupied houses are heated with gas (77.4%) and 14 occupied housing units lacked complete plumbing facilities in 2000.

Twenty-seven percent (27.2%) of workers commute outside the county to work. This is somewhat higher than the state average of 20.18% and much more than the national average (3.6%). Average travel time to work (30.2 minutes) is only a little higher than the state average of 26.2 minutes, however. Net commutation (persons coming into the county to work minus those leaving to work)

is -316 telling us that more people work outside the county than those that travel into the county for work. Commuting patterns may have implications for highway infrastructure or the development of public transportation systems.

Other measures of local community infrastructure should be examined by the Blueprint Team. One measure of the increase in local assets is the number and type of building permits sought by local residents. This data may be available for Glenville and perhaps for other local municipalities and it is good measure of investment being made to increase the value of homes or business property.

Survey Responses from Blueprint Team Members Related to Investments in the Community and Financial Resources:

Survey responses of the Blueprint Team members indicate that capacity is lacking in this domain. The average score for this domain was the lowest of the seven domains of community capacity with an average score on the variables related to this domain at -0.23. This score indicates a general perception on the part of team members that the county lacks capacity in this area and there is little in the way of local financial resources to draw upon. Team members see business opportunity and business climate as particularly negative. This perception is supported by some of the more quantitative data discussed under this domain. Blueprint Team members may wish to focus attention on planning and strategy development to build capacity within this domain through entrepreneurship programs, small business development workshops, and further assessment of what types of economic activity might attract investment.

Environmental Capital

Sustainable Healthy Ecosystems with Multiple Community Benefits

Local environmental issues are another area where existing data sets are not particularly useful. Information about the environment is available from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency and the State Department of Environmental Protection as well as the State Department of Natural Resources.

There were no grant awards made to Gilmer County by the state Department of Environmental Protection REAP office for 2007. Although this is not necessarily a measure that would indicate a lack of environmental efforts in the county it is one of the few measures available from state level data that provide some indication of activity to enhance the environment.

There were no environmental clean up sites or significant levels of toxic waste emissions listed for Gilmer County in state and federal databases.

The percentage of surface waters with impaired or threatened uses in Gilmer County is 9.62%. This ranks Gilmer County 39th in West Virginia where the highest percentage of threatened surface water quality for any county is 55.1% and the lowest is 5.01%.

Local environmental issues may be monitored and potential problems identified through local projects to monitor water quality and bio-diversity. Local schools might be encouraged to conduct tests on local streams or conduct wildlife counts as student science projects. Recycling is another development option that can be considered to maintain a high quality environment. Any local environmental organizations should be included in visioning and planning for local development to provide some assurance that projects are environmentally sensitive and environmental capital is preserved.

Survey Responses from Blueprint Team Members Related to Sustainable Healthy Ecosystems with Multiple Community Benefits:

This domain of community capacity is seen by the Gilmer County Blueprint Team members as an important asset and considerable stores of environmental capital are reflected in the team responses to the survey. This domain of capacity was seen as strong by all team members and the average score for this domain was +0.83. Four of the five variables used to calculate the team perception about this domain were strongly positive. Planning for land use within the community is an area that was not seen as positively as other variables related to this domain by team members although there was a lack of consensus about land use planning among the team responses. Land use planning may be an area the community wants to consider if there are concerns, but generally the community capacity related to environmental issues appears to be a community strength that should be drawn upon as plans are made for further development.

Appendix A

Methodology and Technical Information

A Capacity Assessment Framework was used as the basis for constructing a community profile for each of the ten West Virginia Blueprint Communities. The framework is based on a community capitals model and it addresses levels of capacity - that is stores of capital- that might be drawn upon to improve local conditions. Seven domains or "areas of influence" effecting community capacity were defined by a group of stakeholders known as the "Community Development Gathering" in West Virginia during 2006. These domains were adapted from work done by the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development at Iowa State University. To the extent possible, measures for each domain were selected from relevant existing databases and these selected measures are discussed in the profile. The community profile discusses current conditions in the context of five capitals, seven domains and defined indicator areas that say something significant about each of the domains of interest. This framework is included as Appendix B.

Compiled and published information at the level useful for local assessment and planning is very limited for some areas of influence that determine local community capacity. Consequently, domains relating to social capital, cultural capital, and environmental capital are more difficult to measure using existing data sets. Given this lack of good information readily available for some of the defined domains, a survey was developed to assess the opinion of key informants about the levels of capacity within each of the Blueprint Communities. Blueprint Community team members were asked to complete the web-based survey in order to secure information about how the team members see their community and identify (from the perspective of the team members) areas where local capacity appears to be present. Because of the makeup of the Blueprint Teams, the Blueprint Community Team members are considered to be appropriate key informants knowledgeable about the local community.

The information discussed in the community profile was compiled from existing data sets and from analysis of survey results solicited from local Blueprint Team members. The profile is a portrait of current community conditions and existing areas of capacity with some historical trend information related to key indicators when such trends in the data appear helpful in understanding current community conditions.

Methodology for Analysis of Survey Responses:

Blueprint Team members were asked to complete a survey in order to measure beliefs held by each of the team members related to 35 measures of local capacity. The survey is composed of a series of 35 statements. Each of the seven domains of community capacity defined in the framework is measured by five statements contained in the survey. Survey respondents (Blueprint Community Team members) were asked to evaluate each statement based on their personal knowledge of the larger community (county or town designated as a Blueprint Community) and choose the degree to which they agree or disagree with the 35 statements using a five point Likert scale. Responses for each statement can range from "strongly disagree" to strongly agree".

Individual survey responses were analyzed to produce a composite score for each of the thirty-five variables. For purposes of analysis individual responses were scored from -2 to +2. Responses were scored as follows: “a response of strongly disagree was assigned a value of -2, disagree was valued at -1, neither agree or disagree received 0 value, a response of agree was valued +1, and strongly agree was assigned a value of +2. The average of the assigned values for each team was then used as the team score for each individual statement (variable). Finally, a score was calculated for each of the seven domains by averaging the team scores of the five variables related to each domain. The score for each domain is based on a total of five variables multiplied by the number of team members responding. Thus, if eight team members completed the survey the score for the domain is based on a total of 40 responses (5 variables X 8 team members). Domain scores can range from minus two (-2.0) if all respondents strongly disagree to plus two (+2.0) if all respondents strongly agree. For any given statement it is highly unlikely that the average response will approach either -2 or +2. In general, positive domain scores indicate capacity is present and negative scores indicate the community lacks capacity in the area defined by the domain. Higher scores are interpreted as indicative of higher levels of capacity.

Since this “capacity score” was derived from the opinion of a small number of key informants, it is reflective only of the collective belief or opinion of the Blueprint Team members about the level of capacity that exists within the designated Blueprint Community. Survey results are used to supplement the more objective quantitative data related to community capacity when such data is available.

Appendix B - Framework for Assessing Community Capacity

Capacity Domains (Areas of Influence)	***Indicator Areas***
Human Capital	
1. Health and Well-Being of Local People	1(a) Healthy People 1(b) School Readiness 1(c) Educational Attainment & Access 1(d) Community Safety 1(e) Family Stability 1(f) Economic Security
2. Skills, Knowledge, and Ability of Local People	2(a) Using Skills, Knowledge, Abilities 2(b) Enhancing Skills, Knowledge, Abilities 2(c) Citizen Engagement 2(d) Data-driven Decision Making
Social Capital	
3. Relationships and Interpersonal Communication	3(a) Shared Values 3(b) Participation 3(c) Internal Connectedness 3(d) External Connectedness 3(e) Trust 3(f) Ability to Solve Problems
4. Community Initiative, Responsibility, and Adaptability	4(a) Shared Vision 4(b) Leadership 4(c) Planning 4(d) Building on Local Resources 4(e) Seeking alternative ways to improve 4(f) Sense of Hope
Cultural Capital	
5. Cultural Diversity and Quality of Life	5(a) Heritage 5(b) Arts 5(c) Recreation 5(c) Spirituality
Financial and Manufactured Capital	
6. Investments in Community and Financial Resources	6(a) Financial Investments 6(b) Local Financial Resources 6(c) Access to Outside Financial Resources 6(d) Resource Mobilization 6(e) Business Efficiency 6(f) Business Diversity 6(g) Cultivating Entrepreneurship 6(h) Community Resident Assets 6(i) Community Infrastructure - Housing - Facilities - Water/Sewer - Transportation - Communications
Environmental (Natural) Capital	
7. Sustainable, Healthy Ecosystems with Multiple Community Benefits	7(a) Air Quality 7(b) Water Resources 7(c) Biodiversity 7(d) Soil 7(e) Landscape (sense of place) 7(f) Ecosystem Knowledge and Appreciation

Appendix C

Data Sources and References

Data and information used within the community profile has been drawn from a wide range of secondary data sources. For purposes of the Blueprint Community Profiles, secondary data is defined as information and statistics collected by government agencies or private organizations that are useful in describing and measuring the defined domains or areas of influence of local community capacity.

A great deal of data is readily available through internet based websites and documents that are related to the defined domains of community capacity. Some of this data is readily available at the local community (municipality) level, some is available at the county level, and some is only available for regional or statewide areas. Some of the information referenced within the community profile is reported at the county level since that is the geographic unit of analysis that is generally available to the public. Local communities also operate within the larger context of the county in which they are located. Thus, county level data is often useful in providing measures of local capacity and community conditions. In cases where the designated Blueprint Community is a town or city, information is reported for that smaller geographic area when the specific small area measure could be obtained.

Over fifty data sets were reviewed in order to identify relevant measures that would provide local Blueprint Teams with meaningful information about their community. The information compiled within the profile paints a portrait of current community conditions and provides guidance for planning and priority setting. Since the data profile is organized under seven areas of influence (or domains) that collectively define community capacity, the profile also provides some level of insight into specific areas (domains) where local capacity may need to be built.

Much of the information reported in the community profile is drawn from publicly available data sets published on the Internet by federal and state agencies. Local Blueprint Teams may wish to access one or more of these sites for further information or more detailed information about specific local issues determined to be an area of concern or identified as a priority for local planning. The community profile provided for use by the Blueprint Team is designed to provide a general overview of some of the more relevant measures of local conditions and community capacity. Once the Blueprint Team begins to focus on specific areas for community development, additional or more detailed information about that area may be useful. Therefore, the most useful and comprehensive data sites reviewed in developing these profiles are listed on the following pages with web addresses.

Federal Data Sites:

- United States Bureau of the Census http://www.census.gov
  - USA Counties – Provides many data sets from decennial census and annual estimates organized by county
    Web address: http://censtats.census.gov/usa/usa.shtml
  - American Communities Survey – Provides data from the annual American Communities Survey for larger geographic areas. Data is generally not available from the ACS for rural counties and towns in West Virginia.
    Web address:
    http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DatasetMainPageServlet?_program=ACS&_submenuId=&_lang=en&_ts=
  - Consolidated Federal Funds Report – Provides information about a wide range of federal expenditures at state and county levels.
    Web address: http://harvester.census.gov/cffr/
  - Quarterly Workforce Indicators – Provides current and recent information about economic indicators and employment by quarter (every three months).
    Web Address: http://lehd.dsd.census.gov/led/datatools/qwiapp.html

- United States Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis – Provides detailed information about economic conditions, jobs, employment, labor markets, industry types, etc.
  Web Address: http://www.bea.gov/

- United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics – Provides information about labor markets, employment, occupations, economic conditions, etc.
  Web Address: http://www.bls.gov/

- United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Toxic Release Inventory – Provides detailed information about reported releases of toxic chemicals into the environment.
  Web Address: http://www.epa.gov/triexplorer/

- Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Call Reports and Thrift Financial Reports – Database of information about all FDIC insured Banks and Savings and Loans that contains detailed financial status reports by quarter.
  Web address: http://www2.fdic.gov/call_tfr_rpts/search.asp

- United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service – Data by county about farms and farm products.
  Web address: http://www.nass.usda.gov/Census/Create_Census_US_CNTY.jsp#top

- Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reporting System – Local, state, and national statistics of crime.
  Web address: http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/05cius/

State Data Sites:

- WV Department of Health and Human Resources - Bureau for Public Health; Health Statistics Center – Statistics related to births, deaths, marriages, divorces, etc.
  Web Address: http://www.wvdhhr.org/bph/oehp/vital04/index.htm

- WV Department of Health and Human Resources – Office of Accountability and Management Reporting – Information related to recipients and expenditures for major social welfare programs.
  Web address: http://www.wvdhhr.org/oamr/DAMRreports.htm

- WV Department of Health and Human Resources - Bureau for Public Health; Behavioral Risk Factors Survey Reporting – Results of the Behavioral Risk Factors Survey addressing wide range of health status and health behavior indicators.
  Web address: http://www.wvdhhr.org/bph/oehp/BRFSS_2003/default.htm

- WV Coalition Against Domestic Violence – Statistics on prevalence of domestic violence in West Virginia.
  Web Address: http://www.wvcadv.org/

- WV State Police Uniform Crime Reports – Statistics on crime in West Virginia.
  Web address: http://www.wvstatepolice.com/ucr/ucr.htm

- Sex Offender Registry – Locations of known sex offenders in West Virginia.
  Web address: http://www.wvstatepolice.com/sexoff/websearchform.cfm

- WV Department of Education – Wide range of information about educational facilities, performance, accountability, enrollment, expenditures, personnel, etc.
  - Report Card Data – Accountability indicators, testing data, graduation rates, etc. for every school in West Virginia.
    Web address: http://wveis.k12.wv.us/nclb/pub/rpt0506/pickreportcard.cfm
  - West Virginia Education Information System – Detailed statistics for every school and county school district related to personnel, expenditures, facilities, enrollment, needy students, etc.
    Web address: http://wveis.k12.wv.us/

- West Virginia Secretary of State Business Organization Information System – Searchable database containing information about types and numbers of businesses registered in West Virginia.
  Web address: http://www.wvsos.com/wvcorporations/

- WV Department of Environmental Protection – Information about the environment including air quality, watersheds, waste sites, permits, etc. Information is provided on a regional basis.
  Web address: http://www2.fdic.gov/call_tfr_rpts/search.asp
  - WVDEP Enviromap Explorer – Interactive geographic information system containing environmental information for West Virginia regions and local areas including aerial maps (large files).
    Web address: http://gis.wvdep.org/

- WorkForce West Virginia Labor Market Information – Information drawn from federal and state data sets related to workforce, employment, and economic conditions in West Virginia.
  Web address: http://www.wvbep.org/bep/LMI/default.htm

Private Organization Data Sites:

- Universal Living Wage – Information about Fair Market Rents and household income levels necessary to afford housing.
  Web address: http://www.universallivingwage.org/

- Scorecard – This website compiles a wide range of information related to environmental pollution, air and water quality, and other environmental information about larger municipalities and counties in the U.S.
  Web address: http://www.scorecard.org/

Compiled Data Sets and Profiles for Counties and/or Local Municipalities:

Local Area Data Sets:

- DataPlace - http://www.dataplace.org/
- EPodunk - http://epodunk.com/
- West Virginia Development Office State Data Center Profiles of WV places from 2000 Census - http://www.wvdo.org/business/2000CensusProfiles.html

West Virginia County Data Sets and Profiles:

- WorkForce West Virginia County Profiles - http://www.wvbep.org/bep/LMI/CNTYPROF/DEFAULT.HTM

- West Virginia Development Office State Data Center Profiles of WV counties from 2000 Census - http://www.wvdo.org/business/2000CensusProfiles.html

- West Virginia University Bureau for Business and Economic Research – County profiles of business and economic conditions. http://www.be.wvu.edu/bber/data_profiles.htm