

**Region 2 Planning and Development Council
Regional Development Plan Annual Update
2016**



**Region 2 Planning and Development Council
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Huntington, West Virginia 25701**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since its inception, Region 2 Planning and Development Council has been very involved with the development and completion of infrastructure systems throughout the region, with water and sewer being the primary types of projects. As we continue to move into the 21st century, infrastructure must include broadband to rural communities, providing high speed internet and connecting the world to our region. Economic resiliency will need to be a focus, strengthening and diversifying the economic profile of the region.

Mission, Structure and Programs

Mission: It is the mission of Region 2 Planning and Development Council to strengthen the development potential of the six-county planning district and its member communities by efficiently providing skilled staff to augment local development efforts.

Structure: The Council is composed of the chief elected official of each member government, and additional community stakeholders who represent a variety of interest groups including business, education, healthcare, labor and minority interests. Total membership of 51 includes representation of six (6) county governments and twenty-five (25) municipalities.

Programs: The Council conducts a Regional Development Program that includes fulfillment of regional planning obligations to state and federal agencies and preparation of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which is the Regional Development Plan (RDP). A Technical Assistance program is in place to address a variety of local concerns, including project development assistance, strategic planning, project financing, data services and information and referral. A Grant Writing program produces sound applications for funding and other local needs. Grant Administration is provided to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations once funding is in place. Capacity Building for community leadership and development is delivered through special training events and routine programs during Council meetings.

General Description of Area

Region 2 Planning and Development Council is comprised of members representing six counties and twenty-five municipalities of southwestern West Virginia. The region is rich in natural resources and served by critical waterways that include the Kanawha, Ohio and Big Sandy Rivers, which provide economical transport for natural resources and manufactured goods. The valleys adjacent to the rivers provide high quality farmland and development sites.

Geographic Location

Cabell County is located along the Ohio River, bordering both Ohio and Kentucky. Cabell is comprised of approximately 282 square miles and is predominantly urban with 78% of the population living in the urban area. The rural parts of Cabell include 50 square miles of farmland, or 17.7% of the total area of the county, and 260 working farms. The rest of the county is considered timberland and/or mountainous.

Lincoln County is located east of Wayne County and southeast of Cabell County. Lincoln County covers approximately 437 square miles and is considered entirely rural. Approximately 10% of the county is made up of farmland with 363 working farms, while the rest is timberland and/or mountainous.

Logan County is located between Mingo and Boone Counties, south of Lincoln County. Logan County is approximately 454 square miles in area, with 71% considered to be rural. There are 264 working farms located in Logan County, and the remainder of the rural area is mountainous terrain and/or timberland. Logan has historically relied heavily on the coal mining industry, and continues to have a large mining sector compared to other counties in the region. Logan has a total of 22 working mines (8 underground and 14 surface mines) that produces a total of 9,562 short tons of coal. Although this number is high for the region, it is dramatically lower than previous years.

Mason County is located along the Ohio River and north of Cabell County. The county is approximately 432 square miles in size and 71% of that is classified as rural. Of all six counties in the region, Mason County is the most agricultural with farmland comprising 43% of the total county area and 1,204 working farms. Of the remaining area, 29% is urban and the remainder is made up of mountainous timberland, river basin and steep sloping hills.

Mingo County is located along the Tug Fork River, west of Logan County and south of Wayne County. Mingo County has roughly 432 square miles within its borders and 89% is rural. There are only 92 working farms in Mingo County due to the extremely mountainous terrain. Mingo is the second largest producer of coal in the region, having 6 working mines (2 underground and 4 surface). It produced 3,912 short tons of coal in 2015.

Wayne County is located south of Cabell County along the Ohio and Big Sandy rivers. Wayne County is the most western county in the state. The largest of the region's six counties, Wayne County covers 506 square miles made up of 38% urban and 62% rural area. Wayne County has less than 9% of its total area devoted to farmland on which 286 working farms exist.

Proximity to Markets

Region 2 is located in the Tri-State region of West Virginia, Ohio, and Kentucky. This area is approximately halfway between Pittsburgh, PA and Louisville, KY along a strategic east-west corridor. Thanks to an efficient transportation network that includes the Tri-State Airport, the largest tonnage barge port on the Ohio River, an interstate highway system that conveniently links the area to the Midwest, East Coast, and Southern markets and superior rail networks, people and products move smoothly throughout the region. The primary growth centers of the region are within a 24-hour drive of 44% of the U.S. industrial market and 37% of the U.S. consumer market. More than 66% of the U.S. population and 30% of the Canadian population are within an overnight delivery of the region.

In the region, a very small percentage of land is devoted to industrial sites, most of which are clustered in and around the growth centers. The designated growth centers are made up primarily of residential, retail, service and light manufacturing uses, while rural areas include mainly conservation, recreation and wetland uses scattered throughout the timberlands.

Natural Features

Natural resources play a major role in sustaining the economy, and some areas are extremely dependent on the market strengths of those resources. Coal, natural gas and timber are the most significant natural resources. Natural gas and timber are located throughout the region, while coal is formed in seams in Logan, Mingo, Lincoln and southern Wayne counties. Coal has played a dominant role in the economy of the southern counties since their founding. Unfortunately, these counties will not be able to rely on this type of economic foundation, as the downturn in coal has created a need to diversify and create a more resilient economy.

Although there are a variety of waterways and rivers in the region, many areas depend on groundwater from wells to supply residential and commercial needs. In many places, wells regularly run dry or become contaminated from leaking septic tanks or other pollutants.

Air pollution is an issue of concern in the central growth center, which has been declared a maintenance attainment area for ozone.

Solid waste disposal and landfill siting pose problems in many communities where existing landfills have been declared inadequate to meet the community's needs and ordered to close. Recycling programs exist in only a few places, adding to the load placed on landfill sites.

Wetlands are present to a very limited degree with one site of significance, Greenbottom Wildlife Management Area, located in northern Cabell County along the Ohio River.

Development Patterns

Infrastructure in the region has been labeled both an asset for its strong points and a deficiency to development where it is lacking. Major highways that serve the region include Interstate 64, which crosses the district's narrowest point from Kenova to Culloden, a distance of approximately twenty miles. It is along this corridor that the region's Primary Growth Center is located. That is the only portion of the Interstate system within the six county region. The only other four-lane highways in the region are located in a portion of Mason County with Route 35, portions of Route 10 in Logan County and the Appalachian Highway Corridor G, which crosses Lincoln County's easternmost tip and continues through Logan and Mingo counties.

Heavily traveled two-lane roads that connect major communities of the region include West Virginia State Route 10, West Virginia State Route 2, U.S. Route 35 and U.S. Route 52. Each of these highways has a long standing record of requests for improvement and upgrading to four-lane capacity. Various short segments of U.S. Route 52, in northern Wayne County, have been upgraded to four-lane status.

The bulk of potential industrial sites in the region are concentrated along the Ohio and Big Sandy Rivers and near Interstate 64. A number of other sites exist throughout the district, the most desirable of which are adjacent to good highway access. Potential sites have also been identified at reclaimed strip mine sites throughout the southern part of the region. The presence of transportation options in the form of river, rail and over the road service, as well as the proximity of low-cost power, which remains below the national average, add to the attractiveness of well-positioned real estate.

A few sites within the growth centers have good quality water and sewer service, while most of the potential sites rely on independent sources of wells and package treatment plants. The few existing industrial parks and potential sites within the region could be greatly enhanced by improved water and wastewater treatment facilities. There is a keen awareness of the need for improved service, with implementation constrained by available funding.

A small number of vacant manufacturing facilities are available throughout the region, most of which are over forty years old and located in areas with water and sewer service and near good transportation networks. New and previously existing commercial and retail space is available throughout the region. Speculative construction and rehabilitation of manufacturing structures is limited, but has occurred in Cabell County. Opportunities for attracting businesses requiring existing, modern space have been lost as a result of the lack of new manufacturing.

Progress Assessment

Policies and programs have changed only moderately during the past few years, as regional development interests have continued to focus on priorities of prepared development sites (ones with complete, functional utility service) and the extension of water and wastewater treatment. Job creation is uppermost in the mind of every community leader, with its recognition as the key to transformation of the struggling regional economy. As with all of the Appalachian Region, much progress has been made within the region, but there is much left to accomplish. Changes in policies related to development priorities have been adaptive ones, reacting to new opportunities resulting from technology and market opportunities. Each modification has been built upon a prior success and recognition of current and future market opportunities.

Industrial site development policies reflect recognition of broader opportunities including technology intensive businesses and cluster-industry development. Progress has been made in the region constructing new industrial sites and transforming existing ones. The City of Huntington is entering into a phase of rejuvenation and revitalization throughout the city. Coordinating with multiple groups and levels of government, Huntington is working to develop a workforce that is productive and innovative in regards to job training, industrial site development, and overall business attraction. The Polymer Center Project will help prepare and transcend the region in terms of job training and preparation for a more diversified workforce. Downtown Appalachia, a program that generates micro-level data packages that illustrate rural downtown market needs and feasibility analysis on existing strategically located downtown buildings, continues to apply for additional funding for further implementation. This community and property data allows for business and developer recruitment to meet the specific needs and goals of rural communities, rather than waiting for specific inquiries from external stakeholders and investors. The result of this intentional approach to downtown revitalization will put currently overlooked communities back on the radar of developers, investors, and entrepreneurs from inside and outside of the region. This vision of a fully employed, productive workforce is in line with Region 2 Planning and Development Council's goals for the entire region. Major projects being taken on in Huntington include the Riverfront Multi-Modal Project; the Highlawn Brownfields Project, in conjunction with the above mentioned Polymer Center Project, will assist in opening up and transforming the area along the Ohio River near downtown Huntington and Marshall University. The West Edge Factory solar power project, when funded, will be the first solar power plant in West Virginia. This solar power plant will increase solar energy capacity of the State of West Virginia by twenty percent.

Along with the growth in downtown Huntington, progress continues at Kinetic Park as it has expanded to include three hotels, three restaurants, various professional offices, a car dealership and an Amazon Customer Service Center, Kinetic Park's anchor business. Additional expansion is expected in the near future at a nearby industrial park. In Wayne County, the Prichard Industrial Park has continued to grow and reach capacity after completing a project to upgrade and expand wastewater treatment in the park and the community. In addition, there continues to be progress in securing funding for

making U.S. 52 into 4 lanes from Interstate 64 to Prichard. This project, once completed, will accommodate increased traffic to the Heartland Intermodal Gateway Facility in Prichard, strategically located along the Heartland Corridor. This intermodal facility sits between the Big Sandy River and Norfolk Southern Railway. The Heartland Corridor Project consisted of 29 tunnels being raised to allow trains to carry double-stacked containers, and includes construction of three intermodal facilities, including the one in Prichard, for easier transfer of containers between railroads, roadways, rivers and airways.

In Mingo County, and crossing over into Wayne County, Refresh Appalachia is an Agricultural Entrepreneurship Development Program. This project is a regional (cross-county, multi-state) economic and workforce development initiative to establish a sustainable training and development program to increase the success of new farmers and ranchers in West Virginia, the Mid-Ohio Valley Region, and eastern Kentucky. Refresh Appalachia builds on the existing assets of the region to integrate economic and workforce development to grow an intensive agriculture industry to supply the local food system, as well as aggregate production to meet regional and national markets. The initiative will enhance the sustainability of economically disadvantaged farmers and help them grow sales in their new farming enterprise. The initiative will leverage investments to 1) develop a Food HUB Distribution & Warehouse Park in Wayne County to aggregate regional food production to supply global markets (Wayne County Economic Development Authority); 2) support increased agriculture production on surface mine sites owned by the Mingo County Redevelopment Authority through Coalfield Development Corporation's on-the-job training and mentorship; and 3) establish a Health Innovations & Food HUB in partnership with Williamson Health and Wellness Center that will provide business incubation services and build a local food economy through a centralized food processing center, commercial kitchen, and co-op market. This economic development initiative is anticipated to generate 100+ jobs, leverage \$1.8 million in private investment and \$3.5 million in public funds, and result in an economic impact felt throughout the region in agriculture sales to local consumers.

Additionally, in Mingo County, a major industrial site continues to take advantage of the wood products industry cluster opportunity by creating local business and attracting expansions of related manufacturers. A kiln drying company and flooring manufacturer are the major employers at the site, which continues expansion plans. Mingo County also continues to move forward with the development of the Mingo County Motorsports Complex. Water and sewer infrastructure is in place, and private companies are working with the County to advance the development of the site. Funding for the infrastructure of the project was provided by EDA and the state. In Logan County, the Earl Ray Tomblin Industrial Park continues to develop after the completion of an access road and installation of water and wastewater service. Providing an additional boost to the local and regional economy, sewer services have been extended at Fountain Place Plaza in Logan County. In Mason County, a wastewater treatment project at the Lakin Industrial Park has been recently completed. This wastewater extension project allows for growth and development for companies within the industrial park thereby creating the possibility for additional, and higher paying jobs.

Other major accomplishments in the region over the reporting period include the continued expansion of the Hatfield-McCoy Trail System which adds measurably to the tourism potential of the history-rich community; continued development of the West 14th Street Historic District in Huntington with a farmer's market has helped facilitate the distribution of local foods throughout the region. Also, a multimodal facility is being planned for the marina docking area in the City of Huntington. This project will redefine the riverfront in Huntington in regards to river access. In conjunction with the broadband initiative, the Regional Council supports the TechConnect initiative for Economic Adjustment Assistance, which will integrate programs to accelerate commercialization, support advanced manufacturing, and spur innovation and entrepreneurial growth in the project region. Current efforts to conduct a Cluster Mapping initiative for the entire Region 2 area, as well other PDC's in West Virginia, Kentucky, and Virginia are ongoing. Many of the business in Region 2 have faced severe economic depression with the downturn in the coal industry, and they are in dire need of diversification into other industry sectors.

In the major growth center, Marshall University has reached completion of the engineering building which can serve as a catalyst to develop skilled professionals with higher paying jobs. The University continues to expand the forensics program and has partnered with a venture capital group to build upon outcomes of those programs, which have entrepreneurial potential. In order to build upon the forensics program, a cyber security program is in the process of being engineered. The medical school at Marshall University has established a cancer center and a school of Pharmacy, adding significantly to the positive economic impact of the medical center to the area. Other expansions of service and infrastructure at area hospitals and healthcare facilities continue to enhance the quality of medical care available regionally as well as contributing to the economy. In addition to Marshall University contributing to the regional economy, there is the Tri State Airport, which has recently expanded runway length as well as moved ahead with the Southside Industrial Park development. Work has included the provision of wastewater treatment as well as recently completing the improved water capacity with service to the industrial site and fire protection.

Safety and security continues to be of the highest importance to communities in times following 9/11. Every public body has addressed those issues with plans and equipment to improve awareness and protect critical structures, such as hospitals, emergency response centers, schools and fire stations. Improvements to 911 systems continue to be made throughout the region, with a focus on site identification and access for residents. In addition to 911 improvements, the Regional Council has taken on the responsibility of producing a multi-county hazard mitigation plan that will be updated every five years. Better preparing for any and all possible hazards that may fall upon the region.

In a region with great needs for basic public infrastructure to furnish available, potable water and treatment for wastewater, major accomplishments have continued to take place. Numerous projects in each of the six counties have provided thousands of

new customers with water or wastewater treatment within the reporting period. With rugged terrain and sparse population in many areas, the work required to achieve that number is as staggering as the outstanding outcome.

Regional Planning Process

The planning process is a continual one that occurs throughout every program year. Local elected officials and development leaders provide input through facilitated meetings, surveys and questionnaires. Information is gathered by Council staff and presented in the Regional Development Plan. As a check to the process, annually, each community is asked to submit a project priority list for inclusion in the planning document. In some instances, a community wide plan may have been developed, in which case, that document will also be used to prepare the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy / Regional Development Plan. Staff then develops work programs and a regional development plan, which are approved by the Comprehensive Economic Development Committee. Included in the development plan is the project priority list. Staff continually works with Council members to advance projects in that list. Comprehensive planning is encouraged at every level, so that broad based plans may be developed to reflect specific local needs and interests.

Strategies & Implementation

1. Identification of Principal Opportunities and Constraints to Economic Development and Improved Quality of Life

Cabell County

The I-64 / Huntington / Milton Primary Growth Center Corridor cuts straight through the middle of Cabell County, bringing with it many advantages for economic development. The county's prime location and proximity to river, rail and highway transportation have served as an invaluable recruitment tool for business and industry. Current census data shows that while 13,585 workers leave the county each day to go to their employment, 29,210 additional workers come into the county to work each day, an influx of over 15,000 workers daily. Planned improvements to the transportation system include improved access from I-64 to the downtown area of Huntington. The Hal Greer Boulevard (16th Street) entrance to the city is being revamped to make for a more enticing and welcoming thoroughfare into Marshall University and downtown, including Pullman Square, a retail / entertainment complex located in the heart of the city. People are drawn to this area for its attractiveness, affordability and centralized location. Pullman Square strives to provide job opportunities, improved development in downtown, and a higher quality of life to residents. Community leaders also believe that one of the greatest opportunities is the ability to cooperate at a regional level.

Cooperation is not only key at the regional level, but it is essential when it comes to the City of Huntington's relationship with one of its largest employers, Marshall University. The opportunities that result from this valuable partnership include not only a direct influence on the population and demographics of the area, but also an ability to strengthen the market through continued growth and success. Local officials believe the motto "success breeds success" is a fitting way to describe one of their greatest opportunities. Successful economic development and job growth will continue to be the catalyst that moves the city and county forward. Furthermore, current and future projects to upgrade the sidewalks and pedestrian pathways for the city of Milton will increase the quality of life and health for its residents, and promote better economic development.

Lincoln County

Lincoln County has one of the lowest tax bases of any county in the state of West Virginia. This is due in large part to the lack of job opportunities within the county, as well as a lack of adequate transportation access. Census data shows that over 83% of the Lincoln County workforce drive outside the county to their employment, compared to just over 38% in the Region 2 Planning and Development area as a whole. With so much of the workforce traveling outside the county for employment, so are the dollars earned by those same workers. Another major constraint to economic development is the outmigration of educated and skilled persons to areas away from the county to find gainful employment. With only 1,654 workers coming into the county and a total of 5,757 leaving, Lincoln is experiencing a drastic negative net migration out of the county. It is believed that through increased participation in educational and technical training opportunities provided in conjunction with Marshall University and Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College, the county can develop a competitive workforce. The development of an industrial park is a proactive economic development tool that the county looks forward to as an opportunity for job growth. County leaders continue to look for manufacturing companies to bring into the area. Lincoln County benefits from close proximity to Interstate 64 and Corridor G (US 119). However, it also suffers from limited highway access in rural parts of the county, no river access, and no access to air service. The lack of transportation access in general is a determinant to business recruitment due to the isolation of the county. Increased transportation access, such as improvements to WV Route 10, would offer opportunities for business and industry development. Lincoln County is at a serious disadvantage, especially with regard to basic infrastructure. While there have been improvements to parts of Lincoln County's water and sewer infrastructure, many residents are still without adequate water and sewer service, and such utility service at potential development sites is nonexistent. The county continues to work towards telecommunications and broadband access, but technological progress has been too slow to aid development. Lincoln and Boone Counties welcome the opportunity to develop the existing Hobet mine site into what will become the Rock Creek Development Park. With on-site rail service, this flat 12,000-acre site will become a hub for industrial, commercial, and residential development. As of last year, the National Guard has already invested to

utilize a large chunk of the redeveloped land for a training facility that will provide new jobs for the area.

Logan County

Logan County has many opportunities related to four-lane access provided by Appalachian Corridor G (US 119) and the presence of the mining industry in the county. The declining mining industry and lack of highway transportation has recently been viewed as deficiencies. Both of those issues have changed as the result of completed construction of the corridor and the focus of reclaimed mining sites as opportunities for development. Reports from 2015 indicate that Logan County had more mining employees than any other county in the Region 2 Planning and Development Council area, with over 2,030 such jobs. In addition, Logan County mines produced more than 9,562 short tons of underground and surface coal, far and away the most tonnage of any Region 2 county.

Retail and commercial growth continues to occur at a rapid pace adjacent to the four-lane highway and the opportunity for that to continue is great. The synergy of the businesses located at Fountain Place continues to attract others. Additional water and wastewater treatment capacity is currently being constructed to ensure that retail growth may be sustained at that site. The Town of Chapmanville continues to experience commercial growth along the corridor as well, including facilities that have capitalized on capturing the growing tourism trade. Setting the groundwork for future economic development, the Town has progressed in further developing its water and sewer systems.

Capitalizing on the growing tourism industry, the opportunity for further development is exceptional. Expansion of the Hatfield -McCoy Trail System, now with over 500 miles, continues to provide vast numbers of visitors each year to Logan County and the surrounding area. The Trail is now recognized as one of the premier trail systems in the eastern United States. The presence of the four-lane highway connecting the area to the Interstate System makes access from the greater regional area, and beyond, more convenient. Additional opportunities for visitor growth are the result of improvements at Chief Logan State Park and additional trail heads planned for the Hatfield-McCoy Trail System, as well as other advantages where mining operations have created flat land, a scarce commodity in southern West Virginia.

The presence of Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College presents the opportunity for job training, secondary education and technical training in a setting familiar to many residents. Current data shows an influx of 5,950 workers to the county, but an emigration of 7,006. A total of 58.2% leave the county to find jobs elsewhere, stunting their economic growth. Access to training and the college's aggressive program for economic development have combined to address retraining needs as well as needs of first-time entrants into the job market. One of the greatest concerns for the area is readjustment from an almost exclusively mining economy to one of greater diversity. Census data indicates that education attained at the level of a

Bachelor's degree in Logan County can almost double the median income to that of a high school diploma or lower education attainment. Expansion of career training programs to take advantage of tourism, wood products and recreation sector growth will support that transition.

Mason County

Mason County has been primarily an agricultural-based economy, but with the decline of this industry the county is looking for new ways to create jobs. Currently, Mason County has one of the higher unemployment rates in the State of West Virginia. However, recent data does show that this is an area of improvement with unemployment now under 10%, lower than two other counties in the Region 2 six county area. Situated on the Ohio River, with adequate rail service, Mason County is a prime business and industry recruitment location in which highway development is the next step in bringing economic development. The county has the 2nd highest acreage of flat land in West Virginia, and good, cooperative local leadership, Mason County has the potential to draw substantial new industries to the area. The greatest opportunity is the ongoing expansion of a four-lane highway, U.S. Route 35. This will not only improve safety to the drivers and local residents, it will provide a new opportunity to current businesses and future development. Mason County is also rich in culture and history ranging from the first battle of the American Revolution, which is celebrated with a Battle Days Festival complete with reenactments, to the mystery of the Mothman, which continues to gain national recognition in response to the major motion picture film. Mason County plans to capitalize on its plentiful tourist attractions, including the Riverfront Park and accompanying murals, which illustrate the local history of the Point Pleasant region; this has been a successful effort through intense marketing and the incredible volunteerism exhibited by its residents. Additionally, the River Museum illustrates the history of the region in downtown Point Pleasant. Local leaders continue to face the constant challenge throughout the county of infrastructure that includes water, sewer and telecommunications needs. Advancements have been made in the Lakin area, and the county continues with strong efforts to stay one step ahead of development and industrial site needs.

Mingo County

Mingo County's economy has suffered greatly from the decline of the coal industry that for years supported the economy of the county. However, the focus of reclaimed mining sites as opportunities for development have begun to create an opportunity for the county's economic future. While 4,900 of the county's workforce now travels outside the county for employment, 3,700 residents from outside the county travel into Mingo County for their jobs, bringing revenue into the county on a daily basis. The county's strongest opportunity is maximizing the presence of strong leadership. In a display of thinking 'outside the box', Mingo County took steps to create the Mingo County MotorSports Complex on previously mined lands. While this project continues to develop, once fully complete it will bring jobs and visitors to the county. Mingo County has been successful in converting abandoned strip mine

sites into developable sites with infrastructure already in place suitable for industrial and recreational uses. While infrastructure is important for business development, basic infrastructure such as water, sewer and telecommunications services remain a top priority for the residents of the county. Mingo County leaders strongly believe that by creating educational opportunities, such as technical training programs designed specifically to meet the needs of a potential employer, they can successfully recruit new businesses and improve the quality of the workforce. As an added benefit, skilled and educated residents would have a reason to stay and work in the county. By keeping the families in the county, this would increase the county's tax base and allow for an increase in public services such as public transportation.

Mingo County's Land-Use Master Plan has facilitated the creation of large, post-mined development sites that have been configured to create unique diversification opportunities. Public-Private Partnerships with coal companies, land companies and regulatory agencies have resulted in the creation of industrial parks, highways, and an air transportation park, all positioning Mingo County for diversification into new industries.

The Mingo County Redevelopment Authority continues to diversification opportunities on former surface mine sites such as the Wood Products Industrial Park, which represents optimal environmental re-use. The Mingo County Redevelopment Authority has commenced working with coal mining companies and land companies to craft post-mining land uses that include industrial development sites. The Mingo County Wood Products Industrial Park is the first of those completed projects. The transformation required the development of Public-Private Partnerships, the implementation of innovative financing techniques, and the remediation of a 650-acre development site with access and infrastructure.

Though costly, the development of this industrial park has led to the opening of seven businesses, the location of one state agency outpost, and the most recent opening of the WV National Guard's Logan-Mingo Readiness Center. The total private and federal capital investment of these entities, including a Mohawk hardwood flooring and dry kiln facility and a state-of-art industrial concrete business, is in excess of \$68 million, and approximately 447 jobs have been created and/or retained to date.

The Air Transportation Park can demonstrate a similar nexus to economic diversification, and the investment of critical infrastructure into this project will allow Mingo County to continue its success in utilizing post-mine lands for economic benefit. The Park now boasts a 5,000-foot runway, state-of-the-art lighting, fencing and wind instrumentation, as well as 500 developable acres adjacent to the runway. The increased capacity will directly lead to the formation of new businesses and the growth of the nascent air industry in Mingo County.

Wayne County

Wayne County's current unemployment is approximately 7%, the second lowest rate in the Region 2 PDC area, and its geographic location is one of its greatest assets. Transportation is currently viewed as one of the most important factors for American business. Transportation has always been an important economic factor and transformation of that sector to one of greater efficiency through analysis, intermodalism and modernization has heightened its economic value for industry. Bordered by two navigable rivers, Wayne County enjoys the presence of a major coalfield highway (U.S. 52) and a major railroad (Norfolk Southern), adjacent and parallel to one of the rivers. The Heartland Corridor project is taking advantage of these geographical benefits, culminating in the construction of an intermodal facility in Prichard. This will create a huge boon in the county and the region for advancing transportation for industrial growth. In addition, the northern part of the county is also served by Interstate 64, intersecting U.S. 52. Much of southern West Virginia's coal travels through Wayne County to its final global destinations. Trains carrying much of that coal also carry container freight or empty containers. The Heartland Corridor project will begin to utilize container freight shipment to the level of its success in overseas markets. Containerization, intermodalism and the growth of waterborne commerce are opportunities for the county. U.S. 52 is part of the National Highway System that has programmed improvements to four-lane status. Over the long term, southern West Virginia continues to plan highway corridors that will increase area accessibility.

Growth in the county has been most evident along West Virginia State Route 152 from Interstate 64 to the county seat of Wayne. The county's favorable, affordable housing market compared with nearby urban areas has resulted in growth in residential construction. Affordable land and real estate enhance the opportunity for additional service and retail growth in response to the housing boom. Furthermore, current and future projects to upgrade the sidewalks and pedestrian pathways for the town of Wayne will increase the quality of life and health for its residents, and promote better economic development.

Location of industry in the county has increased the area's ability to support additional development through local contributions. Improvement and expansion of wastewater treatment services at Prichard continue to give the Industrial Park new life. The completion of the wastewater project and the presence of the intermodal facility will allow Wayne County to attract new business and increase the number of jobs. Wayne County, with over 13,870 workers, is currently second to only Cabell County in terms of the number of workers it has residing within its borders in the Region 2 PDC area. Focus is now on other industrial sites in the county, so that opportunities to recruit new businesses ready to locate can be met with prepared sites.

Extension of water and wastewater service throughout the county is a high priority for local leaders, as is widening of roads to respond to increased traffic and mounting congestion. Residents in Wayne County, as most residents in Region 2's six counties,

have to drive a considerable amount of time to and from work. Data from 2014 indicates that over 10,600 workers who live in Wayne County travel outside its borders for employment, with 5,391 workers traveling into the county for jobs. Over 65% of Wayne County's residents have to drive over twenty minutes one-way to and from work on narrow roads. The people of the county, though, are viewed as loyal, productive employees. Businesses continually praise the workforce as responsible for high productivity.

Recreation is important to residents and plans for its growth rank high on their list of priorities. The presence of two lakes, Beech Fork and East Lynn, are centerpieces to hopes for expanded tourism and visitor attraction. Beech Fork Lake is moving forward with plans for a Conference Center and Lodge, which will provide an anchor site for visitors and tourism to the area. South of the lakes are planned segments of the Hatfield-McCoy Trail System, which have proven to be substantial attractions where development is complete. Heritage Farm Museum and Village continues to have a positive effect on tourism at the county and regional level. Personal pride and knowledge of the subject matter make the owner/tour guides unique purveyors of history, and can be tailored for any age or special interest group. The museum has grown to an entire village of bed and breakfast lodges, replica businesses, a church, school, visitor's center and museums, and poses educational and meeting options for frequent regional and state gatherings.

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Performance Measures and Outcomes

The completion of the CEDS document is a very important annual step for the Region 2 Planning and Development Council area. With thirty-one Council Members, the updated CEDS report is important for two reasons: 1.) The CEDS annual report allows the Regional Council to evaluate the successes of projects over the past year as well as the development of plans; 2.) The annual CEDS update provides the Council a way to set priorities / goals for the coming year. The Region 2 Planning and Development Council evaluates the success of the CEDS with the following measurements:

1. Number of Applications Completed – this measurement shows the continued need of Region 2 PDC’s services and the types of projects / priorities local communities are aiming to complete.
2. Number of Projects Managed by Staff – this measurement illustrates the need for Region 2 PDC’s services in providing project administration duties in completing the region’s priorities.
3. Number of New Customers Served with Infrastructure (i.e., water, sewer, broadband) – this measurement reflects the number of new customers receiving water, sewer, and/or broadband. Since these types of projects continue to be one of the top priorities this region identifies annually, the Council sees this as a true measurement to see how successful the Region continues to be in providing new water and/or sewer services to the area.
4. Amount of New Jobs Created/Retained as a result of the CEDS – this measurement illustrates the amount of new jobs created and/or retained with assistance from Region 2 PDC.

The CEDS committee and this Council wanted to identify these particular measurements so the results could be easily quantifiable. There are many undocumented accomplishments the staff completes for its communities that cannot be depicted with numbers, so the Council agreed to utilize the measurements listed above to get a better idea of the agency’s value to the region.

A number of the specific accomplishments made and outcomes achieved over the last year by Region 2 Planning and Development Council are detailed on the following pages.

FY2017 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

NUMBER OF APPLICATION COMPLETED:

- A total of 17 applications were written and submitted with a total cost of over \$47,369,000.
- Of the four SCBG submitted, to date, two have been funded.
- The types of applications submitted were as follows:

4	CDBG- WV Small Cities Block Grant applications
3	ARC Grant applications
1	ARC LDD Planning Grant application
1	EDA Planning Grant application
5	WV Infrastructure and Jobs Development applications
2	Transportation Alternative Grant applications
1	ARC Flex-E Grant application

NUMBER OF PROJECTS MANAGED BY STAFF:

- A total of 15 projects are currently being administered with a total of over \$61,802,000.
- The types of projects managed by the Council are as follows:

9	Water Extension and Improvements Projects
3	Sewer Extension and Improvements Projects
1	Storm Sewer Improvements Projects
2	Planning / Capacity Building Grants

NUMBER OF NEW CUSTOMERS SERVED WITH INFRASTRUCTURE

- Over 1,510 households received new and improved water service.
- Over 720 household received new and improved sewer service.

AMOUNT OF NEW JOBS CREATED / OLD JOBS RETAINED AS A RESULT OF THE CEDS

- Approximately 200 jobs were created and/or retained as a result of the objectives outlined in the CEDS and Region 2 Planning and Development Council's involvement.

SWOT

-Strengths

Throughout the Region 2 planning district, numerous projects, programs and initiatives impact targeted industry clusters in the region. Industry clusters within the region include the Chemical Alliance Zone, the Polymer Alliance Zone and the Interstate 64 Automotive Corridor. Also, technology and biotechnology is an emerging industry cluster in the region that is being advanced throughout the entire region, including the Robert C. Byrd Biotechnology Center and the recently constructed School of Engineering at Marshall University. The City of Huntington is entering into a phase of rejuvenation and revitalization throughout the city. Coordinating with multiple groups and levels of government, Huntington is working to develop a workforce that is productive and innovative in regards to job training, industrial site development, and overall business attraction. The Polymer Center Project will help prepare and transcend the region in terms of job training and preparation for a more diversified workforce. Downtown Appalachia, a program that generates micro-level data packages that illustrate rural downtown market needs and feasibility analysis on existing strategically located downtown buildings, continue to apply for additional funding for further implementation. This community and property data allows for business and developer recruitment to meet the specific needs and goals of rural communities, rather than waiting for specific inquiries from external stakeholders and investors. The result of this approach to downtown revitalization will put currently overlooked communities back on the radar of developers, investors, and entrepreneurs from inside and outside of the region.

This goal of a fully employed, productive workforce is in line with Region 2 Planning and Development Council's goal for the entire region. Major projects being taken on in Huntington include the Riverfront Multi Modal Project; the Brownfields Project, in conjunction with the above mentioned Polymer Center Project, will assist in opening up and transforming the area along the Ohio River near downtown Huntington and Marshall University. The West Edge Factory solar power project will construct the first solar power plant in West Virginia. This plant could increase solar energy capacity of the State of West Virginia by twenty percent.

Along with the growth in downtown Huntington, progress continues at Kinetic Park as it has expanded to include three hotels, three restaurants, various professional offices, a car dealership and an Amazon Customer Service Center, Kinetic Park's anchor business. Additional expansion is expected in the near future at a nearby industrial park. In Wayne County, the Prichard Industrial Park has continued to grow and reach capacity after completing a project to upgrade and expand wastewater treatment in the park and the community. In addition, there continues to be progress in securing funding for making U.S. 52 into 4 lanes from Interstate 64 to Prichard. This

project, once completed, will accommodate increased traffic to the Heartland Intermodal Gateway Facility in Prichard, strategically located along the Heartland Corridor. This intermodal facility sits between the Big Sandy River and Norfolk Southern Railway. The Heartland Corridor Project consisted of 29 tunnels being raised to allow trains to carry double-stacked containers, and includes construction of three intermodal facilities, including the one in Prichard, for easier transfer of containers between railroads, roadways, rivers and airways.

In Mingo County, and crossing over into Wayne County, Refresh Appalachia is an Agricultural Entrepreneurship Development Program. This project is a regional (cross-county, multi-state) economic and workforce development initiative to establish a sustainable training and development program to increase the success of new farmers and ranchers in West Virginia, the Mid-Ohio Valley Region, and eastern Kentucky. Refresh Appalachia builds on the existing assets of the region to integrate economic and workforce development to grow an intensive agriculture industry to supply the local food system, as well as aggregate production to meet regional and national markets. The initiative will enhance the sustainability of economically disadvantaged farmers and help them grow sales in their new farming enterprise. The initiative will leverage investments to 1) develop a Food HUB Distribution & Warehouse Park in Wayne County to aggregate regional food production to supply global markets (Wayne County Economic Development Authority); 2) support increased agriculture production on surface mine sites owned by the Mingo County Redevelopment Authority through Coalfield Development Corporation's on-the-job training and mentorship; and 3) establish a Health Innovations & Food HUB in partnership with Williamson Health and Wellness Center that will provide business incubation services and build a local food economy through a centralized food processing center, commercial kitchen, and co-op market. This economic development initiative is anticipated to generate 100+ jobs, leverage \$1.8 million in private investment and \$3.5 million in public funds, and result in an economic impact felt throughout the region in agriculture sales to local consumers.

Along with the Refresh Appalachia project, a major industrial site continues to take advantage of the wood products industry cluster opportunity by creating local business and attracting expansions of related manufacturers. A kiln drying company and flooring manufacturer are the major employers at the site, which continues expansion plans. In addition to the industrial site, Mingo County also continues to move forward with the development of the Mingo County Motorsports Complex. Water and Sewer infrastructure is in place and private companies are working with the county to advance the development of the site.

Region 2 works with communities and local development authorities to coordinate efforts toward opportunities with regard to the targeted industry

clusters. Council staff has been actively involved with the Polymer Alliance Zone, having been involved at its inception. Approximately 72% of U.S. auto assembly plants are within 24-hour trucking distance of the Alliance Zone. Having been added to the Interstate 64 Automotive Corridor a few short years ago in the Wayne County Prichard Industrial Park, Sogefi, a manufacturer of automotive parts, has continued to invest millions of dollars in added production of engine filter systems to its manufacturing plant in Prichard, and to continues to employ more workers from the region. This will be the first engine filter systems production site in North America for the Italian automotive component manufacturer. The emerging industry cluster target of technology and biotechnology in the primary growth center is represented by the Kinetic Park, the opening of Marshall University's Robert C. Byrd Biotechnology Center and the School of Engineering, as well as the established and growing Forensic Science Center.

Moreover, Region 2 encourages industry cluster development through continued support and development of industrial sites throughout the region, especially with regard to infrastructure attainment on the sites. Through these efforts, the sites will become recruitment tools to bring business and industries into the region to capitalize on the already established clusters.

Infrastructure of the region has been labeled both an asset for its strong points and a deficiency to development where it is lacking. Major highways that serve the region include Interstate 64, which crosses the district's narrowest point from Kenova to Culloden, a distance of approximately twenty miles. It is along this corridor that the region's Primary Growth Center is located. That is the only portion of the Interstate system within the six county region. The only other four-lane highways in the region are located in a portion of Mason County with U.S. Route 35, portions of Route 10 in Logan County and the Appalachian Corridor G, which crosses Lincoln County's easternmost tip and continues through Logan and Mingo counties.

Heavily traveled two-lane roads that connect major communities of the region include West Virginia State Route 10, West Virginia State Route 2, U.S. Route 35 and U.S. Route 52. Each of these highways has a long standing record of requests for improvement and upgrading to four-lane capacity. Various short segments of U.S. Route 52, in northern Wayne County, have been upgraded to four-lane status.

Taking a look at the individual citizens, the median family income levels across all six counties have increased from 1990 to 2000, but they are still not at the level of the rest of the State of West Virginia or the United States. Per capita income has steadily increased through the last 30+ years as well. Most significantly, however, data shows a decrease in the percent of families living below the poverty level across all of Region 2's counties. Also, a reflection of the region can be seen in the amounts of deposits on a county by county basis.

While Cabell County has remained consistent over the past five years, with a combined 2.1 billion each year from mid-2010 through mid-2014, Logan County has actually shown the most upward trend of each of the six counties within Region 2's geographical area. While on a smaller scale than Cabell, Lincoln County has increased from 520 million in deposits in mid-2010 to over 558 million in mid-2014.

Natural resources play a major role in sustaining the economy, which in some areas responds directly to the market strength of a given resource. Coal, natural gas and timber are the most significant natural resources. Natural gas and timber are located throughout the region, while coal is formed in seams in Logan, Mingo, Lincoln and southern Wayne counties. Coal has played a dominant role in the economy of the southern counties since their founding.

SWOT

-Weaknesses

Loss of population can be an ongoing weakness for a region for many years. Its effects can be felt in different ways and the results can be measured in multiple manners. Based on 2010 Census Data, the population of Region 2 has been declining since 2000. This is attributed to outmigration and natural decrease, both of which are trends affecting most of West Virginia's population decline. A result of population decreases, along with unemployment rate increases, can be measured in counties such as Mingo County which has experienced a downward trend in terms of individual financial deposits. In mid-2010, Mingo County reported deposits of approximately 455 million dollars. By mid-2014, deposits were reported at only 405 million dollars, a drop of ten percent in a four-year span.

Current state data shows a downward trend in the civilian labor force since 2008 with fluctuations in various counties. Over the past five years Region 2 counties combined have seen approximately a 4,000 person decrease in their civilian labor force. Region 2's employment level has decreased from 102,560 in 2008 to 98,239 by the end of 2013. The unemployment rate according to recent data (end of 2013) shows an increase from 4.12% in 2008 to a current level of 7.4%. Individually, Cabell County has the lowest unemployment rate in the region at 5.4% and Mingo County has the highest at 13.1%. A lack of job training and diversity in the region has led to persistent high unemployment in the majority of counties outside of Cabell and the northern portion of Wayne Counties.

The median age of the counties within Region 2 continues to hover around 38 years of age. This is representative of a statewide trend of young people leaving the state to find better employment opportunities, particularly in adjacent

states. According to population by race and sex statistics, the outmigration of young residents is equally represented by both males and females illustrating that women are just as likely to leave the state for employment opportunities these days as men. This affects the number of persons of childbearing age, which ensures a continuing upward climb in the average age of our civilian labor force. The outmigration of these young residents illustrates the immense need for higher paying jobs across the board, but especially in the new information systems and technological fields.

Solid waste disposal and landfill siting pose problems in many communities where existing landfills have been declared inadequate to meet needs and have been ordered to close. Recycling programs exist in only a few places, adding to the load placed on landfill sites. Dealing with this shortage of landfill space can lead to unsightly debris scattered throughout some community hillsides and streams causing unsafe, unhealthy environments for the regions residents.

SWOT

-Opportunities

Our region's greatest opportunities lie with our future generations. Current educational data used from the 2012 American Communities Survey Census Data indicates that attainment levels within Region 2 is not where it should be, but it is improving. Overall, the number of people who only completed an elementary education decreased sharply since 2000, from 25,502 to 20,293 in 2012. High school graduates increased from 63,349 to 68,035, with the most recent data showing a graduation rate of over 75%. College graduates showed an increase from 30,691 to 39,631, nearly 30,000 more than in 1990. Cabell County, home to Marshall University, continues to lead the region with over 21,000 college graduates, followed by Wayne County with over 5,600. These figures definitely show improvement over previous years, but there is still room for improvement. The high school graduates level, which surpassed the elementary category in 1980 in size, is now the largest education attainment category. It is anticipated from the most recent figures that we will continue to see an increase in college level attainment in years to come, hopefully placing a majority of our population in this level.

The bulk of potential industrial sites in the region are concentrated along the Ohio and Big Sandy Rivers and near Interstate 64. A number of other sites exist throughout the district, the most desirable of which are adjacent to good highway access. Potential sites have also been identified at reclaimed strip mine sites throughout the southern part of the region. The presence of transportation options in the form of river, rail and road service, as well as the proximity of low cost power that remains below the national average, add to the attractiveness of well-positioned real estate.

A few sites within the growth centers have good quality water and sewer service, while most of the potential sites rely on independent sources of wells and package treatment plants. The few existing industrial parks and potential sites within the region could be greatly enhanced by improved water and wastewater treatment facilities. There is a keen awareness of the need for improved service, with implementation constrained by available funding.

A small number of vacant manufacturing facilities are available throughout the region, most of which are over forty years of age and located in water and sewer service areas near good transportation. New and previously existing commercial and retail space is available throughout the region. Speculative construction and rehabilitation of manufacturing structures is limited, but has occurred in Cabell County. Opportunities for attracting businesses requiring existing, modern space have been lost as a result of the lack of new manufacturing or distribution space.

The I-64 / Huntington / Milton Primary Growth Center Corridor cuts straight through the middle of Cabell County, bringing with it many advantages for economic development. The county's prime location and proximity to river, rail and highway transportation have served as an invaluable recruitment tool for business and industry. Current census data shows that while 13,585 workers leave the county each day to go their employment, 29,210 additional workers come into the county to work each day, an influx of over 15,000 workers daily. Planned improvements to the transportation system include improved access from I-64 to the downtown area of Huntington. The Hal Greer Boulevard (16th Street) entrance to the city is being revamped to make for a more enticing and welcoming thoroughfare into Marshall University and downtown, including Pullman Square, a retail / entertainment complex located in the heart of the city. People are drawn to this area for its attractiveness, affordability and centralized location. Pullman Square strives to provide job opportunities, improved development in downtown, and a higher quality of life to residents. Community leaders also believe that one of the greatest opportunities is the ability to cooperate at a regional level. Cooperation is not only key at the regional level, but it is essential when it comes to the City of Huntington's relationship with one of its largest employers, Marshall University. The opportunities that result from this valuable partnership include not only a direct influence on the population and demographics of the area, but also an ability to strengthen the market through continued growth and success. Local officials believe the motto "success breeds success" is a fitting way to describe one of their greatest opportunities. Successful economic development and job growth will continue to be the catalyst that moves the city and county forward.

Lincoln County has one of the lowest tax bases of any county in the state of West Virginia. This is due in large part to the lack of job opportunities within the county, as well as a lack of adequate transportation access. Census data

shows that over 83% of the Lincoln County workforce drive outside the county to their employment, compared to just over 38% in the Region 2 Planning and Development area as a whole. With so much of the workforce traveling outside the county for employment, so are the dollars earned by those same workers. Another major constraint to economic development is the outmigration of educated and skilled persons to areas away from the county to find gainful employment. With only 1,654 workers coming into the county and a total of 5,757 leaving, Lincoln is experiencing a drastic negative net migration out of the county. It is believed that through increased participation in educational and technical training opportunities provided in conjunction with Marshall University and Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College, the county can develop a competitive workforce. The development of an industrial park is a proactive economic development tool that the county looks forward to as an opportunity for job growth. County leaders continue to look for manufacturing companies to bring into the area.

Logan County has many opportunities related to four-lane access provided by Appalachian Corridor G (US 119) and the presence of the mining industry in the county. The declining mining industry and lack of highway transportation has recently been viewed as deficiencies. Both of those issues have changed as the result of completed construction of the corridor and the focus of reclaimed mining sites as opportunities for development. Reports from 2015 indicate that Logan County had more mining employees than any other county in the Region 2 Planning and Development Council area, with over 2,030 such jobs. In addition, Logan County mines produced more than 9,562 short tons of underground and surface coal, far and away the most tonnage of any Region 2 county.

Retail and commercial growth continues to occur at a rapid pace adjacent to the four-lane highway and the opportunity for that to continue is great. The synergy of the businesses located at Fountain Place continues to attract others. Additional water and wastewater treatment capacity is currently being constructed to ensure that retail growth may be sustained at that site. The Town of Chapmanville continues to experience commercial growth along the corridor as well, including facilities that have capitalized on capturing the growing tourism trade. Setting the groundwork for future economic development, the Town has progressed in further developing its water and sewer systems.

Capitalizing on the growing tourism industry, the opportunity for further development is exceptional. Expansion of the Hatfield -McCoy Trail System, now with over 500 miles, continues to provide vast numbers of visitors each year to Logan County and the surrounding area. The Trail is now recognized as one of the premier trail systems in the eastern United States. The presence of the four-lane highway connecting the area to the Interstate System makes access from the greater regional area, and beyond, more convenient. Additional opportunities for visitor growth are the result of improvements at Chief Logan State Park and additional trail heads planned for the Hatfield-McCoy Trail System, as well as

other advantages where mining operations have created flat land, a scarce commodity in southern West Virginia.

The presence of Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College presents the opportunity for job training, secondary education and technical training in a setting familiar to many residents. Current data shows an influx of 5,950 workers to the county, but an emigration of 7,006. A total of 58.2% leave the county to find jobs elsewhere, stunting their economic growth. Access to training and the college's aggressive program for economic development have combined to address retraining needs as well as needs of first-time entrants into the job market. One of the greatest concerns for the area is readjustment from an almost exclusively mining economy to one of greater diversity. Census data indicates that education attained at the level of a Bachelor's degree in Logan County can almost double the median income to that of a high school diploma or lower education attainment. Expansion of career training programs to take advantage of tourism, wood products and recreation sector growth will support that transition.

Mason County has been primarily an agricultural-based economy, but with the decline of this industry the county is looking for new ways to create jobs. Currently, Mason County has one of the higher unemployment rates in the State of West Virginia. However, recent data does show that this is an area of improvement with unemployment now under 10%, lower than two other counties in the Region 2 six county area. Situated on the Ohio River, with adequate rail service, Mason County is a prime business and industry recruitment location in which highway development is the next step in bringing economic development. The county has the 2nd highest acreage of flat land in West Virginia, and good, cooperative local leadership, Mason County has the potential to draw substantial new industries to the area. The greatest opportunity is the ongoing expansion of a four-lane highway, U.S. Route 35. This will not only improve safety to the drivers and local residents, it will provide a new opportunity to current businesses and future development. Mason County is also rich in culture and history ranging from the first battle of the American Revolution, which is celebrated with a Battle Days Festival complete with reenactments, to the mystery of the Mothman, which continues to gain national recognition in response to the major motion picture film. Mason County plans to capitalize on its plentiful tourist attractions, including the Riverfront Park and accompanying murals, which illustrate the local history of the Point Pleasant region; this has been a successful effort through intense marketing and the incredible volunteerism exhibited by its residents. Additionally, the River Museum illustrates the history of the region in downtown Point Pleasant. Local leaders continue to face the constant challenge throughout the county of infrastructure that includes water, sewer and telecommunications needs. Advancements have been made in the Lakin area, and the county continues with strong efforts to stay one step ahead of development and industrial site needs.

Mingo County's economy has suffered greatly from the decline of the coal industry that for years supported the economy of the county. However, the focus of reclaimed mining sites as opportunities for development have begun to create an opportunity for the county's economic future. While 4,900 of the county's workforce now travels outside the county for employment, 3,700 residents from outside the county travel into Mingo County for their jobs, bringing revenue into the county on a daily basis. The county's strongest opportunity is maximizing the presence of strong leadership. In a display of thinking 'outside the box', Mingo County took steps to create the Mingo County MotorSports Complex on previously mined lands. While this project continues to develop, once fully complete it will bring jobs and visitors to the county. Mingo County has been successful in converting abandoned strip mine sites into developable sites with infrastructure already in place suitable for industrial and recreational uses. While infrastructure is important for business development, basic infrastructure such as water, sewer and telecommunications services remain a top priority for the residents of the county. Mingo County leaders strongly believe that by creating educational opportunities, such as technical training programs designed specifically to meet the needs of a potential employer, they can successfully recruit new businesses and improve the quality of the workforce. As an added benefit, skilled and educated residents would have a reason to stay and work in the county. By keeping the families in the county, this would increase the county's tax base and allow for an increase in public services such as public transportation.

Wayne County's current unemployment is approximately 7%, the second lowest rate in the Region 2 PDC area, and its geographic location is one of its greatest assets. Transportation is currently viewed as one of the most important factors for American business. Transportation has always been an important economic factor and transformation of that sector to one of greater efficiency through analysis, intermodalism and modernization has heightened its economic value for industry. Bordered by two navigable rivers, Wayne County enjoys the presence of a major coalfield highway (U.S. 52) and a major railroad (Norfolk Southern), adjacent and parallel to one of the rivers. The Heartland Corridor project is taking advantage of these geographical benefits, culminating in the construction of an intermodal facility in Prichard. This will create a huge boon in the county and the region for advancing transportation for industrial growth. In addition, the northern part of the county is also served by Interstate 64, intersecting U.S. 52. Much of southern West Virginia's coal travels through Wayne County to its final global destinations. Trains carrying much of that coal also carry container freight or empty containers. The Heartland Corridor project will begin to utilize container freight shipment to the level of its success in overseas markets. Containerization, intermodalism and the growth of waterborne commerce are opportunities for the county. U.S. 52 is part of the National Highway System that has programmed improvements to four-lane status. Over the long term, southern West Virginia continues to plan highway corridors that will increase area accessibility.

Growth in the county has been most evident along West Virginia State Route 152 from Interstate 64 to the county seat of Wayne. The county's favorable, affordable housing market compared with nearby urban areas has resulted in growth in residential construction. Affordable land and real estate enhance the opportunity for additional service and retail growth in response to the housing boom.

Location of industry in the county has increased the area's ability to support additional development through local contributions. Improvement and expansion of wastewater treatment services at Prichard continue to give the Industrial Park new life. The completion of the wastewater project and the presence of the intermodal facility will allow Wayne County to attract new business and increase the number of jobs. Wayne County, with over 13,870 workers, is currently second to only Cabell County in terms of the number of workers it has residing within its borders in the Region 2 PDC area. Focus is now on other industrial sites in the county, so that opportunities to recruit new businesses ready to locate can be met with prepared sites.

Extension of water and wastewater service throughout the county is a high priority for local leaders, as is widening of roads to respond to increased traffic and mounting congestion. Residents in Wayne County, as most residents in Region 2's six counties, have to drive a considerable amount of time to and from work. Data from 2014 indicates that over 10,600 workers who live in Wayne County travel outside its borders for employment, with 5,391 workers traveling into the county for jobs. Over 65% of Wayne County's residents have to drive over twenty minutes one-way to and from work on narrow roads. The people of the county, though, are viewed as loyal, productive employees. Businesses continually praise the workforce as responsible for high productivity.

Recreation is important to residents and plans for its growth rank high on their list of priorities. The presence of two lakes, Beech Fork and East Lynn, are centerpieces to hopes for expanded tourism and visitor attraction. Beech Fork Lake is moving forward with plans for a Conference Center and Lodge, which will provide an anchor site for visitors and tourism to the area. South of the lakes are planned segments of the Hatfield-McCoy Trail System, which have proven to be substantial attractions where development is complete. Heritage Farm Museum and Village continues to have a positive effect on tourism at the county and regional level. Personal pride and knowledge of the subject matter make the owner/tour guides unique purveyors of history, and can be tailored for any age or special interest group. The museum has grown to an entire village of bed and breakfast lodges, replica businesses, a church, school, visitor's center and museums, and poses educational and meeting options for frequent regional and state gatherings.

SWOT

-Threats

Outmigration of younger generations have and continue to be a major threat to the advancement and development of the region. The average age of residents continues to stay above 38 years, making its population considerably older on average than similar regions across the country. Loss of labor force, taxes and revenue all are factors that have to be addressed annually and each can be attributed to outmigration.

Aside from outmigration, a more direct threat to the region has been the increased use of drugs and resulting drug addictions and overdoses. The increase in overdoses in the region have hit a national high in the rate of deaths; even more alarming is the rate of newborn drug addicted babies are far and away higher than the national average. Drug abuse and addiction is having a direct effect on our society, especially in the communities battling crime related issues due to drug addiction. The local economies are having a difficult time finding applicants to fill positions for jobs due to the inability to pass drug tests. This is occurring at a time when unemployment is well over 13% in the counties located in the southern portion of the region. With the lack of job diversity compiled with the growing drug epidemic, the threat to the regional economy and even its everyday life is threatened.

Infrastructure development has been a part of the Regional Council's focus for many years, and advancements have been made throughout each of the six counties. However, though water is plentiful near the rivers, many areas still depend on groundwater from wells to supply residential and commercial needs. In many places, wells regularly run dry or become contaminated from leaking septic tanks or other pollutants. This creates a lack of growth due to water situations. The possibility of disease and poor health conditions for children and older adults are quite evident in multiple communities throughout the region. In addition, air pollution is an issue of concern in the central growth center, which has been declared a maintenance attainment area for ozone. Steps are being taken to create a strong and safe infrastructure for all residents in each of the six counties. Local leaders realize the threats they face and continue to work hard to overcome these obstacles.

Lincoln County benefits from close proximity to Interstate 64 and Corridor G, but suffers from limited highway access in rural areas of the county, no river access, and no access to air service. The lack of transportation access in general is a determinant to business recruitment due to the isolation of the county. Increased transportation access, such as improvements to Route 10, would offer opportunities for business and industry development. Lincoln County is at a serious disadvantage especially with regard to basic infrastructure. While there

have been improvements to parts of Lincoln County's water and sewer infrastructure, many residents are still without adequate water and sewer service, and such utility service at potential development sites is nonexistent. These issues, as a whole, are a threat to the region's economy and its potential for growth and development. Plans for a new, county-controlled wastewater plant is in the planning stages and funding is being sought currently. The need to have a clean environment for families and their children is essential to not only health, but also education. In addition, the county continues to work towards telecommunications and broadband access, but technological progress has been too slow to aid development. Without access to the world beyond the county borders, the threat of being left behind economically grows each day.

One final obstacle the region faces is the lack of manufacturing. Beyond the 90-plus manufacturers located in Cabell County, the region faces a real economic threat in terms of a lack of manufacturing locations in the remaining five counties. Mason County, located along the Ohio River and with rail access, appears to offer great opportunities to attract manufactures to the area. However, even with the efforts of county officials, the development of manufacturing sites has been limited in recent years. Lincoln County, in the latest census data, is shown to have only a few manufacturing sites in the entire county. With the downturn in the coal industry, the labor force will be in need of options. Without growth in the manufacturing sector, the threat of high unemployment and lower wages will continue to be a hindrance to the labor force and the region as whole.