WHAT

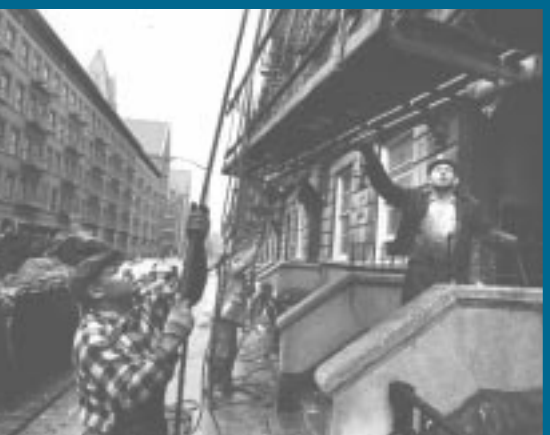
in the Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities

WORKS!

Volume III

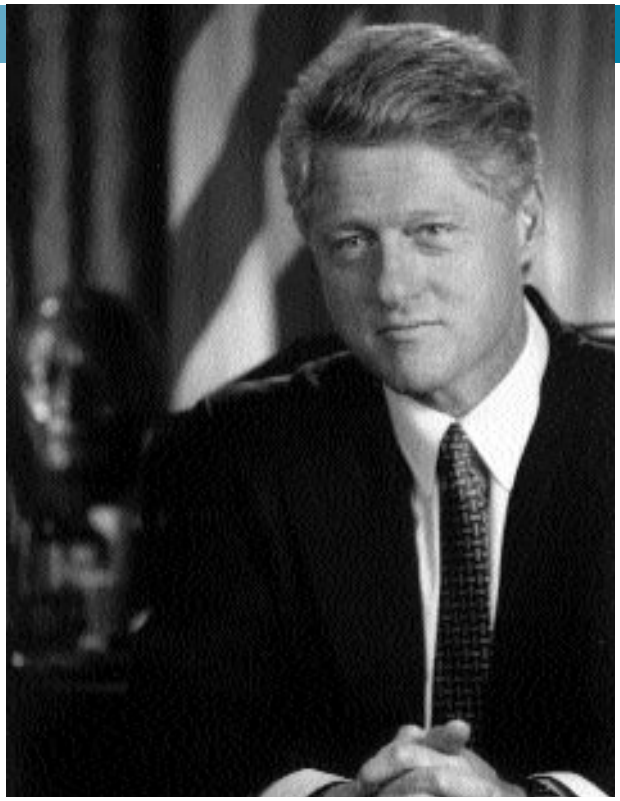
The President's Community Empowerment Board • Vice President Al Gore, Chair

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development • Andrew Cuomo, Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture • Dan Glickman, Secretary



"The present prosperity of our Nation is an opportunity and a responsibility to make sure that opportunity and prosperity reach every person in every corner of this country—into every neighborhood in this country."

President William Jefferson Clinton



"The Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community Initiative has been one of the central components of a whole set of policies that are working to help communities that have been left out in the past, to now participate and be a part of our Nation's prosperity. We can see our shining success in neighborhoods and communities all across America. We can see it in local residents, who are bridging the barriers that have divided neighborhoods in the past, but now are reaching out their hands across those barriers and joining in common dreams for a brighter future."

Vice President Al Gore

"Empowerment Zones are powerful engines of economic growth and prosperity that attract new businesses, create jobs, and revitalize communities. Private and public investment and tax incentives in the Zones are helping neighborhoods reverse decades of decline."

Andrew Cuomo
Secretary, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

"As the third volume of *What Works!* amply demonstrates, Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities everywhere are literally bursting with creativity and enthusiasm. I hope other communities will be energized by their spirit and that the example they have set will be replicated many times over."

Dan Glickman
Secretary, U.S Department of Agriculture

"Our community empowerment agenda has brought about changes that are a combination of extraordinary vision and concrete, measurable results. These are success stories that demonstrate the energy that has been created by EZs and ECs. I am certain that they will inspire you to tailor them as models in your own communities."

Cardell Cooper
Assistant Secretary for
Community Planning & Development
U.S. Department of Housing and
Urban Development

"The Community Empowerment Initiative has unleashed the creative talents of hundreds of communities all over the Nation, resulting in dozens of exciting and innovative solutions to local problems. I am extremely proud of the work being done by these hard-working citizens, and I am pleased we can share some of these successes with other communities."

Jill Long Thompson
Under Secretary for Rural Development
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Urban Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities

Atlanta, Georgia, EZ
Baltimore, Maryland, EZ
Boston, Massachusetts, EZ
Chicago, Illinois, EZ
Cincinnati, Ohio, EZ
Cleveland, Ohio, EZ
Columbus, Ohio, EZ
Cumberland County, New Jersey, EZ
Detroit, Michigan, EZ
El Paso, Texas, EZ
Gary/Hammond/East Chicago, Indiana, EZ
Greater St. Louis, Missouri, Regional EZ
Huntington, West Virginia/Ironton, Ohio, EZ
Knoxville, Tennessee, EZ
Los Angeles, California, EZ
Miami/Dade County, Florida, EZ
Minneapolis, Minnesota, EZ
New Haven, Connecticut, EZ
New York, New York, EZ
Norfolk/Portsmouth, Virginia, EZ
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania/Camden, New Jersey, EZ
Santa Ana, California, EZ
Sumter/Columbia, South Carolina, EZ

Houston, Texas, EEC
Kansas City, Kansas/Missouri, EEC
Oakland, California, EEC

Akron, Ohio, EC
Albany, Georgia, EC
Albany/Schenectady/Troy, New York, EC
Albuquerque, New Mexico, EC
Birmingham, Alabama, EC
Bridgeport, Connecticut, EC
Buffalo, New York, EC
Burlington, Vermont, EC
Charleston/North Charleston, South Carolina, EC
Charlotte, North Carolina, EC
Dallas, Texas, EC
Denver, Colorado, EC
Des Moines, Iowa, EC
East St. Louis, Illinois, EC
Flint, Michigan, EC
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, EC
Indianapolis, Indiana, EC
Jackson, Mississippi, EC
Las Vegas, Nevada, EC
Louisville, Kentucky, EC
Lowell, Massachusetts, EC
Manchester, New Hampshire, EC
Memphis, Tennessee, EC
Milwaukee, Wisconsin, EC
Muskegon, Michigan, EC
Nashville, Tennessee, EC
New Orleans, Louisiana, EC
Newark, New Jersey, EC
Newburgh/Kingston, New York, EC
Ogden, Utah, EC
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, EC
Omaha, Nebraska, EC
Ouachita Parish, Louisiana, EC
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, EC
Phoenix, Arizona, EC
Portland, Oregon, EC
Providence, Rhode Island, EC
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San Antonio, Texas, EC
San Diego, California, EC
San Francisco, California, EC
Seattle, Washington, EC
Springfield, Illinois, EC
Springfield, Massachusetts, EC
St. Paul, Minnesota, EC
Tacoma, Washington, EC
Tampa, Florida, EC
Waco, Texas, EC
Wilmington, Delaware, EC

Rural Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities

Desert Communities, California, EZ
Griggs-Steele, North Dakota, EZ
Kentucky Highlands, Kentucky, EZ
Mid-Delta, Mississippi, EZ
Oglala Sioux-Pine Ridge, South Dakota, EZ
Rio Grande Valley, Texas, EZ
Southernmost Illinois Delta, Illinois, EZ
Southwest Georgia United, Georgia, EZ

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Allendale County, South Carolina, EC
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Beadle/Spink Dakota, South Dakota, EC
Central Appalachia, West Virginia, EC
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Chambers County, Alabama, EC
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City of Deming, New Mexico, EC
City of East Prairie, Missouri, EC
City of Lewiston, Maine, EC
City of Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, EC
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Clare County, Michigan, EC
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Mississippi County, Arkansas, EC
Molokai, Hawaii, EC
North Delta, Mississippi, EC
Northeast Louisiana Delta, Louisiana, EC
Northwoods Niijii, Wisconsin, EC
Robeson County, North Carolina, EC
Scott-McCreary Area, Tennessee-Kentucky, EC
Southeast Oklahoma, Oklahoma, EC
Southwest Florida, Florida, EC
Town of Austin, Indiana, EC
Tri-County, Washington, EC
Tri-County Indian Nations, Oklahoma, EC
Upper Kanawha Valley, West Virginia, EC
Williamsburg-Lake City, South Carolina, EC
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EZ: Empowerment Zone EC: Empowerment Community EEC: Enhanced Enterprise Community

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TERMS AND DEFINITIONS .....INSIDE BACK COVER

INTRODUCTION

On December 21, 1994, President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore established an initiative that would effectively change the way some of America's most distressed communities worked and lived together. They designated 105 distressed communities across the Nation as Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities (EZs and ECs) through the EZ/EC Initiative. In January 1999 the initiative was expanded through a second round of designations to include 20 new urban and rural Empowerment Zones and 20 new rural Enterprise Communities. Since the inception of the program, the EZ/EC Initiative has been a catalyst for change, improving the lives of thousands of people in America's most distressed rural and urban areas.

The EZ/EC Initiative is an innovative approach to revitalization. It brings communities together through public and private partnerships designed to attract the investment necessary for sustainable economic and community development. The initiative recognizes that local communities, working together, can best identify and develop local solutions to the problems they face.

The EZ/EC Initiative is directed by Vice President Gore through the Community Empowerment Board. Through this cabinet-level, interagency task force, the Federal Government has been actively engaged in assisting the EZs and ECs in realizing their revitalization strategies. By providing tax incentives, technical assistance, and support, the initiative has helped spur private investment in communities that have experienced severe economic decline. The program also provides performance-oriented, flexible Federal grant funding so communities can design local solutions that empower residents to participate in the revitalization of their neighborhoods.

The EZs and ECs have used their Federal seed money to create partnerships that have leveraged more than $8 billion in public and private investment. Strategies resulting from these partnerships have generated jobs; provided business assistance and services; trained and educated youth and families; improved access to childcare, healthcare, and transportation; and increased residents' safety and involvement in their neighborhoods.

What Works! in the Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities: Volume III celebrates the programs and projects that exemplify the principles of the EZ/EC Initiative. The examples in this publication represent only a small part of the success stories in the 145 EZs and ECs. They demonstrate how America's communities are working together to effect change, create opportunity, and realize success in achieving their goals and dreams. We encourage you to learn more about the EZ/EC Initiative and the communities it is affecting in so many different ways.

WHAT WORKS!

WHAT WORKS

Strategic Vision and Community-Based Partnerships

Community collaboration is the key to success.

In community renewal, the Empowerment Zones (EZs) and Enterprise Communities (ECs) are finding a variety of ways to ensure that stakeholders from every segment of the community—individual citizens, business and civic leaders, grassroots non-profit organizations, government agencies, and many others—are involved at every step in the revitalization process. From initial organizing and strategic planning through project implementation and monitoring of results, EZ/ECs are fostering empowerment through broad-based participation and partnerships. The examples in this section reflect these innovative partnerships.

Tangible EZ Programs Attract Committed Partners

Cincinnati, Ohio, EZ

Within 30 days of Cincinnati, Ohio's, EZ designation in January 1999, 21 local organizations had mobilized to appoint 33 members to the Cincinnati Empowerment Corporation (CEC) board. The board, which will oversee EZ activities, gives residents, private businesses, government entities, and nonprofit organizations an equal voice in EZ decisionmaking.

The Cincinnati EZ encompasses a historic 7-square-mile area north of the city's central business district. Approximately 50,000 people live in the Zone's nine neighborhoods, where the poverty rate is 47 percent. Fifteen percent of EZ residents are unemployed and only 18 percent own their own homes. Half of EZ households have no vehicle.

Equal representation on the CEC board was only one strategy Cincinnati used to ensure that EZ programs would be successful and sustained. Creating partnerships and making sure partners had an equal stake in EZ programs were the goals of the city's strategic planning process, says EZ Coordinator Timothy Sharp. The city reached those goals in many program areas, assembling $2.2 billion in local contributions to match EZ funds. Collaboration among stakeholders is particularly evident in programs that address employment issues, says Sharp.

"Community leaders were concerned because they wanted EZ programs to be tangible and actually help residents improve their lives," he says. "So we designed programs to get residents trained for jobs, get them jobs, and get them to and from jobs. You can't get any more tangible than that."

Local businesses, in desperate need of qualified workers, were very interested in the job-training programs. They showed their support by making commitments to provide 10,000 new jobs for EZ residents over the next 10 years. "Programs like this are the ones we'll be able to sustain because they benefit the entire community," says Sharp.

The CEC board appointment process brought together many EZ partners who had never worked together, says Sharp. Three stakeholder groups representing the Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce, the African-American Chamber of Commerce, the Cincinnati Business Committee, and the Institute for Advanced Manufacturing Sciences each appointed 11 members to the board. Each of the EZ's nine neighborhood councils appointed one member to the board, but all nine council presidents had to work together—for the first time—to appoint two at-large members. Executives from 7 government entities and nonprofit organizations chose 11 board members to represent them.

"Everybody is ready to go; everyone is anxious to get this thing mobilized and up and running," says Sharp.

For more information contact Timothy Sharp, Cincinnati's EZ Coordinator, at 513–352–2457.

Cumberland County Prepares for the Future

Cumberland County, New Jersey, EZ

When officials in Cumberland County decided to apply for designation as an EZ, the question of pulling together such a massive proposal posed a considerable challenge. Rather than having the short time element become a hindrance, they turned it into an asset that has resulted in tremendous success for New Jersey.

"Because there was a short period of time to develop the proposal, we had to really focus on our mission," says Stephen Kehs of the Cumberland County Department of Planning and Development in Bridgeton, which served as the lead agency. "We had to define our region's strengths and weaknesses and use them in our application."

What resulted was a multipartnership approach involving the Cities of Bridgeton, Millville, and Vineland and the Township of Port Norris. "Our application was unique because it was a regional effort that involved governmental entities," says Kehs. "It also demonstrated diversity in that we combined a rural commercial township with urban cities."

Representatives from the county government, State government, and municipalities all worked together on a collaborative effort that reflected on the region as a whole. Particular emphasis was placed on incorporating elements of the area's rich historical heritage, such as the glass and food-processing industries that are currently undergoing considerable change. "By redeveloping areas that had a history and a heritage," says Kehs, "we were able to demonstrate a link to tourism and urban redevelopment that would help recruit and retain vibrant industries."

Because its EZ designation is new, Cumberland County is beginning to attend to the basic framework of the collaboration. "Our governing board right now is a work in progress," says Kehs. "We will make changes and work to solidify partnerships between government, business, and community." Plans include having some of the 54-member Advisory Board serve on the Executive Board.

According to Kehs, the success of the Cumberland County Intermunicipal EZ application lies "in the tremendous partnership that we have enjoyed in past years." This cooperative effort has laid a firm foundation upon which the EZ can now build for the 21st century.

For more information contact Stephen Kehs, Director, Cumberland County Department of Planning and Development, at 609–453–2175.

El Paso EZ Encourages Community Partnerships

El Paso, Texas, EZ

El Paso's leaders and community members have realized that the economic condition of the city depends on how well the community takes stock of its present conditions, analyzes its past, and collaborates on a plan of action for the future. The Round II EZ strategic planning process is the outcome of successful community-wide strategic planning initiatives which emphasize consensus building and collaboration.

The strategic planning process for the Round II EZ produced unprecedented levels of cooperation and collaboration among EZ residents and community leaders. It brought together the greater El Paso community in a manner rarely seen in any community. This is exemplified in both the human and capital resources. More than 2,500 people in El Paso were involved in the process with an in-kind contribution of volunteer hours calculated at more than $118,000.

The planning process began when Mayor Carlos M. Ramirez convened a group of community leaders from both the public and private sectors to announce the City's intent to apply for EZ designation. This initial group volunteered to commit the next few months to producing a winning EZ application.

The vehicle for mobilization of the EZ community was the myriad community-based organizations that are active throughout the proposed service area. A series of meetings held by the community-based organizations directly involved residents in the planning process.

Communication among the various stakeholders, including residents, was maintained via e-mail, open meeting announcements posted at city hall, weekly articles in the El Paso Times, and newsletters containing an EZ activities calendar.

Five working committees were established to recruit additional stakeholders, build community awareness of the planning process, assess the community's needs and resources, and formulate a strategic plan to achieve the community's vision. Together they scheduled more than 20 television, radio, and editorial visits that focused on the EZ and the importance it would have on the greater El Paso community. They involved corporate and business leaders in raising $40,000 for marketing and public relations. An additional $25,000 was raised for more than 30 community residents to travel to Washington, D.C., and accompany local leaders to present the EZ application to the Federal government in October 1998.

Three general committees were created under the broad services categories of economic opportunities, human development, and sustainable neighborhoods. A testament to the community commitment to the EZ process is that agencies, organizations, and private industry members recognized the need to allow the collective work of the city work on the EZ application development. Organizations released their staff members to work full-time on the formulation of the strategic plan.

The process used for the community meetings created a trust through which the residents contributed ideas and allowed committees the freedom to rework the general projects to specific strategies with measurable outcomes. The open committee meetings ensured resident involvement in the proceedings. The committees worked diligently to produce a comprehensive, integrated plan of action in which all activities would complement each other. The result is a well thought-out, interlaced strategic plan that represents a consensus of community organizations and residents. The success of the collaborative involvement of the community encouraged community partners to invest and multiply the strategic plan's first 2-year funding from $20 million to $248 million.

For more information contact Deborah G. Hamlyn, Director of Community and Human Development, City of El Paso, at 915–541–4643.

Northwest Indiana Benefits From New Regional Partnership—Calumet Area EZ Plan Sets Ambitious Agenda

Gary/Hammond/East Chicago, Indiana, EZ

Receiving one of the coveted second-round EZ designations did not come as a surprise to the residents of the Calumet area that includes the Cities of Gary, Hammond, and East Chicago, Indiana. They worked hard to create task forces, hold town meetings, and convene regular planning meetings over an intense 3-month planning period.

This cooperative team approach has led to a successful new regional partnership to address deeply rooted concerns about revitalizing the declining industrial areas of northwest Indiana, including brownfields and abandoned railroad yards, and ambitious plans to expand the Gary airport into a multimodal facility.

The partnership's agenda reflects a careful review of the needs of the three cities as well as an identification of long-term strategies and community-based solutions to creating economic opportunities, attracting new business investment, and improving the quality of life for Northwest Indiana residents.

This planning led to an innovative 1,000-Day Agenda to address job creation, environmental enhancement, safe neighborhoods, business expansion and retention, and a stable and viable economy. A key goal of the plan is to bring 1,000 new jobs into the workforce annually for the next 10 years.

The plan received strong endorsements and commitments from the EZ's three mayors and from local residents and businesses. The business community pledged to create a $55-million loan pool, and Purdue University-Calumet and Ivy Tech State College have pledged more than $28 million for the training of Zone residents. Local commitments totaled more than $688 million.

"The group has put an ambitious but realistic plan in motion to promote sustained and positive economic environment," states Taghi Arshami, Gary's Acting Director of Planning and Community Development. "We developed a winning

application with community support. The community itself set the agenda and is coming up with the goals and objectives to implement it."

For more information contact Taghi Arshami, Acting Director of Planning and Community Development, City of Gary, at 219–881–5075.

Library Expansion Expands Possibilities for Low-Income Residents

Nashville, Tennessee, EC

The Nashville Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency (MDHA), the City of Nashville's housing authority, formed a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) within the Nashville EC to make recommendations on how to improve the community so its children would be better prepared for life and careers in the 21st century. CAC envisioned a cultural icon for the community that would include the arts, dance, drama, and other media of expression. They wanted to empower community residents with educational and computer resources in a completely public setting.

The Mary and Charles W. Pruitt Library was a small, afterschool library in South Nashville that was open for only a few hours on weekdays. It was nestled between two major public housing developments, where many of South Nashville's low-income families live. CAC identified the small afterschool library as a resource through which its vision could be realized and decided to expand the existing library.

Extensive funding had to be secured for this major project. The library expansion project was a collaborative effort among MDHA, Metro Libraries, and the State of Tennessee. MDHA contributed $596,000 of CDBG funds toward the project. An additional $450,000 was contributed by Metro Libraries, and the remaining $150,000 came from the State of Tennessee.

An 8,000-square-foot wing with a new main entrance was added to the small library. The entrance was designed museum-style to create a showcase for displaying local art and special arrangements. The original general library space was expanded to make many more books and resources available to South Nashville's residents. In addition, a computer center with more than 20 workstations was developed in the new space. The expanded library includes a special reading and play area for children and several individual and group study rooms that are used for afterschool tutoring and mentoring programs. But the crown jewel of this project undoubtedly is the new 200-seat auditorium that includes a performance stage, state-of-the-art sound and lighting systems, and a full-service kitchenette.

Once the library expansion was complete, several local universities were recruited to provide tutoring to area school children. Some tutors are volunteers; others earn college credits. In the future, the residents hope that the library will partner with EC service providers to furnish space for GED and Adult Basic Education classes.

The Mary and Charles W. Pruitt Library now has extended hours and is open on Saturdays so that adults and children alike can enjoy, learn, and thrive in the new facility. This project was a great example of how community partners can identify the needs of a community and community providers can respond to those needs.

For more information contact Paul Johnson, Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency, at 615–252–8543.

Training Focuses Nonprofits on Outcomes, Not Output

Newark, New Jersey, EC

When nonprofit, community-based organizations apply for grants, they usually produce a litany of statistics to prove their effectiveness. Those statistics—the number of counseling sessions conducted, housing units built, or unemployed people trained—can be quite impressive, says Rawaa Albilal, Chief Operating Officer of the United Way of Essex and West Hudson in Newark, New Jersey. Unfortunately, she says, the numbers don't tell funding entities what they really want to know.

Albilal spends a fair amount of time teaching service organizations in the Newark EC that the agencies supporting them care more about outcomes than they do about output. Foundations and other funding sources don't necessarily want to hear about what an organization did, she says. They want to know what impact these activities have had on the community and its problems.

Through the EC-funded Community Development Resource Center, Albilal and her staff at the United Way teach community organizations how to measure, report, and market their outcomes. Managers and staff members working at EC service organizations also come to the center to learn how to write long-range plans, manage their finances and their staffs, market their programs, develop budgets, and write grant proposals. The center attempts to increase the effectiveness of nonprofit organizations and community partners so they can provide better services to their clients and bring more resources into the community, says Albilal.

"The funders are telling us that they are requesting certain information from the service providers and they are not getting that information," she says. "That tells us that the providers either don't have the manpower to provide that kind of information or they need training. After surveying the service providers, we found out that they wanted the kind of training that we are now providing."

Since its opening in 1998, the Community Development Resource Center has trained more than 500 individuals. The center received a $185,000 grant from the EC and in-kind donations from the United Way that include use of newly renovated space in the organization's Newark headquarters.

In addition to conducting training sessions, the center collaborates with the housing authority in Newark and the Center for Community Change in Washington, D.C., to train volunteers for the "Be Counted in 2000" program. The educational program aims to convince EC residents to participate in the upcoming decennial census.

"We want to bring back resources to the community, to empower the community, to make sure that everyone is counted, and that everyone sees the benefit of being counted," says Albilal.

For more information contact Rawaa Albilal, Chief Operating Officer of the United Way of Essex and West Hudson, at 973–624–8300, ext. 293.

Educational Opportunities, Increased Public Safety, and Community-Based Partnerships Come Together in Kingston EC

Newburgh/Kingston, New York, EC

Thirty years ago the local community college moved from Kingston to its current location 20 miles outside of the city. EC residents seeking to take advantage of educational training opportunities offered by Ulster County Community College have had to rely on limited public transportation services that rarely run during nontraditional hours. These residents live in a neighborhood that experiences 30 percent of the city's crime, has limited services, and has no centrally located public gathering place.

All that has changed. The Everette Hodge Mid-Town Community Center, funded with $525,000 in EC funds, is now home to Ulster County Community College's first satellite center. It also houses the first community policing substation in the City of Kingston and a local, community-based organization whose mission is to provide employment and housing counseling to EC residents.

The design and construction of the 4,300-square-foot facility were completed in less than a year and it opened in October 1998. Since then more than 25 local organizations and groups have used the community room for meetings and public gatherings. Courses ranging from computer classes and certification training for Certified Nurses Associates are held during the day and night. A full-time employment counselor, funded separately by the Newburgh/Kingston EC, has already provided one-on-one, job-related case management services to 30 EC residents. The Kingston Police Department has made a number of high-profile arrests in the community with the help of neighborhood residents.

Kingston Mayor T.R. Gallo, who serves as Chair of the Newburgh/Kingston EC Board of Directors, says, "In our wildest dreams, we couldn't have predicted how immediately the community would jump in and make the Hodge Center work so seamlessly. This really is a case of 'if you build it, they will come.'"

The community center was constructed by the Newburgh/Kingston EC on the site of a long-abandoned, municipally owned parcel of property in the EC, which had been the place of business for Everette Hodge, the founding father of the local NAACP chapter.

For more information contact Allison Lee or Sharon Hyder, the Newburgh/Kingston EC, at 914–569–1680.

Changing the Complexion of the City: Operation Makeover

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania/Camden, New Jersey, EZ

A few short months ago, residents in the 15th and Stiles area of North Central Philadelphia lived in fear of drug traffickers and had little faith that the city government or police department had their interests at heart. Now town watch groups made up of residents patrol the streets and the traffickers have vanished, thanks to Operation Makeover, an aggressive community safety campaign.

Project Director Carlton Hall says, "For years politicians and residents had been faced with the blatant need for change, but they truly believed change could not happen. This project epitomizes what can be done through active partnership with community agencies." Operation Makeover succeeded through the coordinated efforts of the Philadelphia EZ, 23rd Police District, Communities That Care under the Mayor's Office of Community Services, and other community-based organizations.

The 15th and Stiles area, the site of a highly organized drug operation that had paralyzed residents with fear, was the first to benefit from this partnership. The makeover occurred during 3 days in August 1998 with no outside funding. The 17th and Master and Stanley Street areas have since been addressed. Four more areas are targeted for facelifts.

The first phase of the three-phase operation involves elimination of all drug activity through increased police presence. The Drug Enforcement Administration and the U.S. Attorney's Office work with Philadelphia police to eliminate drug organizations. So far, police have made more than 100 drug-related arrests and confiscated more than $15,000 in drugs and cash.

Crews from the City Licenses and Inspections Department, the Anti-Graffiti Network, and community organizations work with residents to clean up the neighborhood. They seal and board up abandoned houses, clean trash-filled lots, and remove graffiti from dozens of buildings. By the end of the year, more than 15 abandoned cars that had served as places for drug stashes had been towed.

Once possession of the block is returned to the community, residents form town watch patrols to serve as eyes and ears for police. EZ money paid for bike patrol equipment and a mobile police substation that can be parked in problem areas until illegal activity disappears. The substation also provides a convenient way for residents to interact with police without going to the police station.

Operation Makeover is successful because decisions are made from the ground up. Hall says, "It's wonderful to see how the police listen to the recommendations of the North Central Crime and Public Safety Committee in deciding where to locate the mobile police station." The committee, made up of community residents and members of the police force, government, and community-based organizations, holds monthly meetings to identify community concerns and solutions, which are then taken to the EZ's Community Trust Board.

Barbara Carroll, EZ resident and member of the Crime and Public Safety Committee, commends Captain Tony Boyle and the 23rd Police District for their

commitment to building a relationship of trust with the community. "Because Zone residents are empowered to make their own decisions, even those concerning police actions, they trust police and city officials," says Carroll.

For more information contact Carlton Hall, Crime and Public Safety Project Director, Communities That Care, at 215–683–0435.

San Diegans Cooperate To Tackle Welfare-to-Work Transition

San Diego, California, EC

San Diego County, renowned for its perfect climate and dramatic scenery, is adding another facet to its appeal: unique, large-scale cooperation to help people move from welfare to good jobs. Spurred by the new level of communication engendered by the San Diego EC, eight agencies serving the EC have formed Community Works, a collaborative program that provides comprehensive welfare-to-work assistance to the people characterized as "hardest to serve," with an added focus on public housing residents.

"If we hadn't had the EC, this program could not have been created," explains Bonnie Contreras, the EC's Administrator. "But as a direct result of the EC's work on earlier programs, the agencies have learned to come together in Community Works to focus on serving the hardest-to-reach people." The program is enabling the eight broadly representative metropolitan agencies—led by the city's housing commission and including two community development corporations and groups providing comprehensive social services, labor advocacy, and homeless assistance—to cooperate in reaching out to provide intensive assistance to the target population.

The agencies seek to place at least 200 people in jobs and are particularly focusing their efforts on following up to help people keep the jobs they get. The program is reaching people through mailings, posters in housing projects, regular meetings for residents, and referrals from welfare caseworkers. Community Works is funded by a $1.4-million grant from the California Governor's office. Given its innovative nature and likely success, Contreras believes that Community Works will lead to similar locally funded efforts.

For more information, contact Bonnie Contreras, San Diego EC Administrator, at 619–236–6846.

New EZ Sets a Wide Range of Strategic Goals

Santa Ana, California, EZ

By encouraging EZs and ECs to envision strategic change, the EZ/EC Initiative invites them to think boldly about the future of their communities. The new Santa Ana EZ has accepted this invitation wholeheartedly by developing an ambitious strategic plan. The EZ's Empower Santa Ana Corporation (ESAC) is facilitating community-based planning for a wide range of concerns: arts and culture, business development, childcare, community building, community safety, education, governance, health and family counseling, housing, infrastructure and transportation, and recreation and youth.

"Since the EZ designation, the city has received extremely positive response from the community," says Santa Ana Mayor Miguel Pulido. "We have reconvened our stakeholders and are moving forward in implementing the strategic plan outlined in our original proposal. Through our continuous outreach efforts, we plan to include all representatives of our community in achieving the goals of the EZ program." A sampling of the EZ's planned activities follows.

In governance, ESAC will participate in the annual "Celebrate Santa Ana" event to celebrate the activities that have helped to improve the Santa Ana community's quality of life. ESAC representatives will conduct workshops and make presentations on the various components of the EZ program and solicit greater participation from the more than 300 businesses, organizations, and residents that attend each year. This event will provide ESAC with another forum to keep stakeholders within the EZ informed on EZ activities and ensure continuing grassroots participation.

In education the EZ will seek to provide a comprehensive program to decrease the risk of academic failure through early education, homework assistance, tutoring, mentoring, activities to develop personal skills and competency, and opportunities to recognize accomplishments.

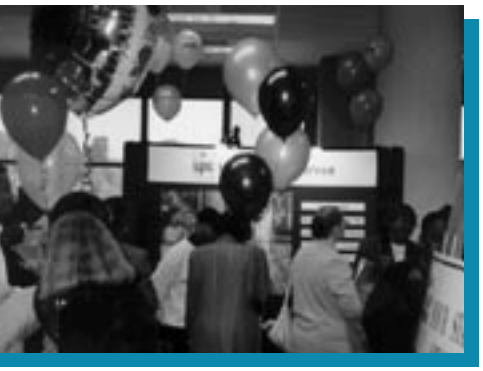
In business development the EZ will seek to upgrade commercial and industrial buildings and properties throughout the Zone, and target hiring and incentive programs to all Zone businesses to encourage business growth through collaborations.

In the arts and culture, the EZ will seek to develop an afterschool arts program that uses skilled arts professionals in training, education, and the computer arts; offers experiences in the arts; fosters acceptance of other cultures; and sparks creativity and imagination.

For more information, contact Patti Nunn, Manager of Economic Development, Santa Ana, at 714–647–5360.

Coalition Unites Employment Service Providers To Increase Job Opportunities

St. Louis, Missouri/East St. Louis, Illinois, EZ



The saying "united we stand" was never more appropriate than when applied to the Employment Partnership, a newly formed coalition of service providers in St. Louis seeking to address the employment needs of residents in the area's EZ.

"The goal of the partnership is to assist local service providers not only to work better but also to access clients in the EZ who have been traditionally hard to reach," says Sandy Ashurst, current Chairman of the partnership. "By forming this coalition, we will avoid duplication of services in the area and enhance the work of existing providers."

Established in 1998, the partnership provides a forum for increased innovation, communication, and resource sharing among employment agencies, government agencies, job-training programs, businesses, community organizations, and residents. One example of this collaboration is the partnership's successful Opportunity Fair, which invites local employers and providers to discuss issues

such as recruitment techniques, retention, and referral sources. Future projects for the partnership include a business referral system, resident outreach, and distribution of educational materials throughout the community.

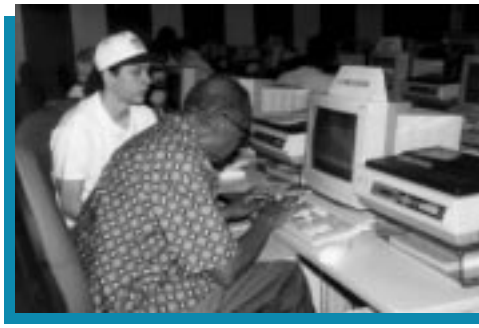
The Employment Partnership is continually growing. "We started with a solid core of 15 organizations," says Ashurst. "Every time we have any kind of exposure, others in the field want to join." The organization currently has 21 members, which has resulted in the development of new criteria designed to incorporate this growth. "We now require that any new organization attend our meetings quietly," says Ashurst, adding that new members must attend orientation meetings prior to becoming full-fledged members. "We also require that every partner be an active member of a committee." Among the committees offered by the partnership is the Service Delivery and Improvement Committee, which provides business outreach and training to service providers.

For more information contact Sandy Ashurst, Chairman, Employment Partnership, at 314–361–4598.

Internet Links Local Neighbors and Businesses

St. Louis, Missouri/East St. Louis, Illinois, EZ

"Where is my local polling place?" "What is the route of the King Day March?" "Will the Pope's visit affect my morning commute?" These questions and many more can be answered by the Community Information Network (CIN), an Internet-based project that connects St. Louis residents to neighborhood organizations, the city government, and each other.



What originally began in 1994 as the city's response to its communities' need for increased information has grown into a multifaceted project that combines the talents of many residents. In the beginning, "CIN was created to provide a comprehensive Web site to share information on government and community resources," says Sonya Pelli, CIN's Administrator. Using funds from the City of St. Louis' EC, CIN has become so successful that in addition to its primary goal as a valuable information source, it has generated two additional goals. "CIN has evolved into an Internet service provider for individuals and groups who may not be able to afford Internet access," says Pelli. "The project now offers a five-tier training curriculum for local residents that covers everything from Internet literacy to Web site development."

According to Pelli, the combination of available training and Internet access has allowed CIN to recruit volunteers from the community to serve as webmasters. In May 1997 CIN sponsored its first Neighborhood Web Fair to identify individuals in the community who were interested in assisting the project. With Internet and e-mail accounts provided by CIN, 130 neighborhood webmasters work together to create Web pages, update Web sites, and synthesize community information to be shared on the Internet. Because of this partnership, more than 50 of the 79 neighborhoods in the EC posted information on Web pages.

At the 1998 Web Fair, the number of participating neighborhoods rose to 69, and interest is still growing. "This project encourages networking between

neighborhoods and allows people to connect after the event is over," says Pelli. Plans are underway for a third Web Fair that will highlight a real estate database to help community planning efforts as well as new area residents.

The project isn't through growing yet. "We are now focusing on working with local nonprofit organizations to build Web sites and share their information," says Pelli. This is just another step in what has evolved into a successful and long-term collaboration between the City of St. Louis and its residents.

For more information contact Sonya Pelli, Administrator of the Community Information Network, St. Louis Development Corporation, at 314–622–3400.

City Envisions an Exciting New Cluster of International Firms

Tacoma, Washington, EC

The economic and financial changes in East Asia in recent years have opened up many opportunities for economic development in cities on the West Coast of North America. Now, despite the current troubles in Asia, the City of Tacoma is finding that the Pacific Rim situation still offers opportunities for growth. The Tacoma EC is capitalizing on this opportunity by envisioning a new development zone to attract international financial services firms and eventually create thousands of jobs. The EC strategic vision process is helping the city to fundamentally change its way of doing business.

"This project promises to change the face of downtown Tacoma," explains Shirl E. Gilbert II, who directs the Tacoma Empowerment Consortium, the agency enabling the city to create its strategic plan. "Both the planned facility construction and/or renovation will revitalize unused and underused properties, and the thousands of jobs that will be created will bring vitality and life to an area that has been very depressed over the last 10 to 15 years." The International Services Development Zone (ISDZ) project will be designed to be a magnet for the target firms.

ISDZ is not the first effort that Tacoma has made in this direction. But thanks to the EC planning process, it is the climax of the city's long-term work to find a home for a cluster of international financial services firms. The city and EC have recently secured local and State incentives that will be very attractive to such firms. They are also currently working to receive similar incentives from the Federal Government.

One of the first steps in developing ISDZ was a site study that details the factors that have the most impact in persuading financial services firms to locate in Tacoma. The EC is beginning to market the project in the Pacific Rim countries, with the assistance of officials of a similar project in Dublin, Ireland. By the time ISDZ starts up in January 2001, it is projected to employ 3,000 local residents. When it is mature (in about 6 years), it will likely employ 7,000 people.

For more information contact Shirl E. Gilbert II, Executive Director, Tacoma Empowerment Consortium, at 253–274–1288.

Chambers County Builds Community Enterprise

Chambers County, Alabama, EC

The Chambers County EC's new 25,000-square-foot speculative building is nearing completion. Once occupied, the building is expected to provide more than 100 new local jobs in an Enterprise Community with a total population of approximately 8,000.

The EC is marketing the building at half the cost of construction to provide an incentive for new industries to locate in the community. Prospective industries will be offered an additional discount of 1 to 3 percent of the sales price for each EC resident that they agree to hire. The actual percentage discount received will depend on the level of wages paid to the EC resident workers hired. "With the incentives we are offering industries to locate in the building, we are hoping to bring good jobs for residents of the community," says David Umling, Planning Director of the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission, the lead entity for the EC.

The EC is establishing computer training centers in three community locations to help improve residents' computer skills and make them more attractive to the new employer that will occupy the speculative building. By March 1999, when the building was within a month of completion, two industrial prospects had already been identified and interest in the facility remains strong. Umling says that the facility has the potential to "help diversify the local economy and elevate incomes throughout the rural portions of Chambers County."

For more information contact David Umling, Planning Director, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission, at 256–237–6741.

Neighborhood Resource Centers Revitalize Communities

Halifax/Edgecombe/Wilson, North Carolina, EC

The Halifax, Edgecombe, Wilson EC has announced the opening of three new community resource centers in the City of Wilson, North Carolina. EC funds were provided to the Wilson Community Improvement Association and the City of Wilson for the construction of the resource centers. Leveraged funds from State and local entities assisted in the centers' completion.

The Beacon Pointe, Adventura East II, and Elvie community centers are located in neighborhoods that had no facilities to provide enrichment activities for the whole family. Community activities to be coordinated from the centers include educational tutorials for youth, arts and crafts, senior citizen activities, exercise classes, health screenings, parenting classes, and tenant and homeownership counseling. More than 250 citizens participated in a "progressive" open house and dedication ceremony of the resource centers that included a luncheon at the Elvie center. Vera Pope of the Elvie Community Association says, "Sometimes there is good in our community," and proclaims it a day everyone in the Elvie neighborhood could be proud of.

For more information contact Debra Nesbitt, North Carolina Rural Development Coordinator, at 919–873–2042.

Research Project Will Study Communication Between Races

North Delta, Mississippi, EC

Four Mississippi universities, an EC, and an EZ are collaborating on a research project to study how people of different races communicate. The North Delta EC and the Mid-Delta EZ have joined together with Jackson State University, Mississippi Valley State University, the University of Mississippi, and Delta State University to conduct original research on communication between races in the Delta.

Stuart Guernsey, North Delta EC Administrator, says the idea for the research study came from years of observing how whites and African Americans communicate in the political, social, and business arenas.

"What we have found is that after years and years of African Americans being systematically shut out by whites from the development of ideas, the two groups now have understandable difficulties communicating with one another," says Guernsey. "What we are trying to do is build a bridge of communication so the gap between us can be narrowed."

The research will begin with a literature search funded by a $5,000 EC grant. A $15,000 USDA Rural Development Grant will allow researchers to obtain foundation funds to gather data on barriers to communication between the races in the Delta. At the end of the research project, Guernsey would like to sponsor workshops at local businesses, churches, and factories so residents can hear about the research and learn new communication techniques.

For more information contact Stuart Guernsey, Administrator, North Delta, Mississippi, EC, at 601–487–1968.

Childhood Advocacy and Family Resource Center Aids Local Families

Southwest Georgia United EZ, Georgia

The Crisp/Dooly EC, now the Southwest Georgia United Empowerment Zone under Round II of the EZ/EC Initiative, provided funding to assist the opening of the Gateway Center, a child advocacy and family resource center located in Cordele in Crisp County, Georgia. This project is the successful outcome of collaboration among the Crisp Council on Child Abuse, Crisp Regional Hospital, the Dooly County Community Enrichment Coalition, and the Crisp County Community Council. These four entities accepted the role as champions for their effort to establish a resource center to serve Crisp and Dooly Counties' families. They recognized the need for concerted efforts to address child abuse and related issues affecting local families. Their dedication produced a unique resource for these counties.

The four agencies signed a Memorandum of Understanding on September 4, 1997. Crisp Regional Hospital agreed to act as a fiscal agent, using a $76,250 EC grant. Partners providing support and collaboration include civic groups, Adventist Community Services, the Cordele Housing Authority, the Department of Family and Children's Services (DFCS), the District Attorney's office, Healthy Families, attorneys, law enforcement, local industry, other private citizens, and teachers. The center provides a broad spectrum of services, including rape crisis support, family visitation space for children in foster care, job-readiness seminars, parenting classes, distribution of baby products to families in need, distribution of household items to families experiencing loss through fire or family violence, and distribution of food to the elderly.

Family visitation for children in foster care is very important. "Visiting at a DFCS office is stilted and uncomfortable because of the lack of privacy and the associated negative connotations," Center Director Krista Hanson says, "and providing a neutral environment increases the enjoyment participants get from a visit." A visible change can be observed in parents who enter expecting to find curious stares in an impersonal office and instead find relaxed, private surroundings where they can concentrate on making the most of this important time with their children.

The center also is used as a place where children taken into the State's custody can be bathed, given clean clothes, and fed while awaiting placement or pickup by relatives. Interstate 75 bisects both Crisp and Dooly Counties, and an increasing number of traffic stops involve drugs, stolen vehicles, and other infractions committed by adults who are accompanied by their children. Three children, aged 4, 2, and 7 months, were found in a stolen moving van operated by their mother. The children had not been bathed in several days, were dressed in filthy clothing, and had head lice. They were cared for at the center, and the positive impact of being clean and adequately clothed was reflected in their faces: They were still scared but they were no longer hungry, and they felt better physically.

The biggest community impact is found in the child-friendly interview facility, which was designed by local professionals who investigate child abuse cases. Unlike impersonal, intimidating settings such as police stations, the center is warm, inviting, and comforting. Children can feel safe while revealing their secrets to the people whose job is to protect them. With equipment procured through a Georgia Bar Foundation grant, interviews can be recorded and preserved, eliminating the necessity for repetitive interviews with children. Most importantly, the environment lessens the trauma imposed by the interview process. In one recent case, three sisters, aged 9, 7, and 4, were sexually abused by their father. During the interviews, conducted separately, the sisters not being interviewed were distracted with toys and games and even performed an impromptu puppet show with the center's director while their mother was being interviewed.

Puppet shows, swing sets, and clean clothes don't offset parental abuse and neglect, and they don't lead families to the answers to their difficulties. They do, however, provide small increments of hope and improvement on a family's journey to

a better situation in life. "Like any puzzle piece," Hanson says, "the Gateway Center serves its niche and helps hold the big picture together a little tighter for the children and families it serves."

For more information contact Kim Sheffield, Executive Director, Southwest Georgia United Empowerment Zone, at 912-273-9111.

Historic School Becomes Local Cultural Center

Southwest Georgia United EZ, Georgia

The Lilly School, located in the Town of Lilly, Georgia, represents the joining of one rural community's past, present, and future. The Lilly School is located in what is now the Southwest Georgia United EZ under Round II of the EZ/EC Initiative. In Round I it was the Crisp/Dooly EC, which was awarded EZ status in Round II. The EC's assistance was supplemented by other local organizations, and the Lilly School will now become a countywide cultural center.

The two-story, wooden schoolhouse constructed in 1912 is one of only two known similar remaining structures in the State of Georgia. Built on land donated by local landowner Emma Watler McGough, the building was constructed by Perry Busbee, Sr., the father of former Georgia Governor George Busbee. The school served the children of this small agricultural community until 1942, following a 1933 consolidation of community schools into a county system. The building then was used as a county meeting place for agricultural and government groups until it was abandoned in the 1950s.

Initially the brainchild of the Lilly Women's Club, several of whose members attended the school, the schoolhouse restoration has become the focus of intensive efforts by the Women's Club, the City of Lilly, the Dooly County Arts Council, the Vienna Historic Preservation Society, the McGough and Busbee families, and other community members. Lilly is located at the center of Dooly County, which makes it a logical choice for a countywide cultural center. The Arts Council has chosen the schoolhouse as its permanent home, neatly blending an important remnant of local history and culture with modern artistic and cultural projects. While the restoration progresses, the building already has been used for several functions, including a luau and Christmas and New Year's radio plays, which raised funds through ticket sales. In addition to an $11,500 EC grant as well as funding from Georgia Heritage 2000, support comes from a thrift shop set up in Lilly by the Women's Club specifically to raise funds for the restoration project. The Women's Club has consistently raised $300 to $500 every month for the Lilly School.

Project supporters anticipate that the restoration project will generate fiscal growth as well as cultural growth. Kim Sheffield, Executive Director of the EZ, says, "With the establishment of the Arts Council and its programs, the City of Lilly hopes to realize economic benefit for itself as well as the county with dollars drawn from surrounding counties through attendance at cultural events. The project is also seen as the catalyst for efforts to preserve other buildings of historical significance, including the old doctor's office and the train depot."

The Dooly County Arts Council plans to facilitate activities for the general public with special emphasis on educational programs. Plans for future activities include exhibitions, artist-in-residence programs, live theatrical and musical performances, and presentations by local artists. “With the completion of the schoolhouse restoration,” Sheffield says, “the project partners will be well positioned to engineer a cultural rebirth with its attendant benefits for Lilly, Dooly County, and their citizens.”

For more information contact Kim Sheffield, Executive Director, Southwest Georgia United Empowerment Zone, at 912–273–9111.

WHAT WORKS

Economic Opportunity

All across our Nation, designated Empowerment Zones (EZs) and Enterprise Communities (ECs) are reassessing their strengths, forging new partnerships, and developing innovative projects to create economic opportunity for their residents. The results are impressive. Through **workforce development** activities, EZ/ECs are training residents and matching them to available jobs. With many large and small **businesses assisted**, EZ/ECs are strengthening and diversifying their local economic base. New community institutions providing **access to capital** are making it possible for new businesses to start and existing businesses to expand. This section describes examples of successful programs that are creating new economic opportunity in the EZ/ECs.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Plastics Training Project Molds New Job Force

Akron, Ohio, EC

With more than 30,000 jobs at 400 plastics and polymer companies in northeast Ohio, the Akron EC saw an opportunity to use the burgeoning industry to get inner-city residents off welfare and out of dead-end jobs. The EC collaborated with the University of Akron Polymer Training Center to produce the Sebert Project, a training program in polymers and plastics for EC residents.

The 60-hour, 4-week course provides the training necessary to get an entry-level job in the plastics industry. Trainees are given drug tests before the training, transit passes if they need them, and a $5-per-day food allowance. Tayba Tahir, Program Coordinator, says, "Two weeks of the program are dedicated to what we call soft skills—mathematical and writing skills—and the basics of how to be a responsible and productive employee."

The other 2 weeks are devoted to hands-on training in plastics molding, thermoforming, and extrusion work. Bob Digiantonio, Instructor for the project, teaches documentation, moisture analysis, and recognition of molding defects. He also covers Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards. "But we want students to go beyond merely receiving an entry-level job," says Digiantonio. "We want students to see the career potential of plastics industry jobs."

Graduates receive a referral to one of a dozen participating plastics firms. In 1998 three training sessions were held at the University of Akron's Polymer Training Center. Of the 34 people who participated, 23 graduated and were placed in jobs. Joe Quinby, who had no previous background in plastics, graduated last year. He is now a machine operator in the thermoforming department at Landmark Plastics. "This program has given me a second chance for school," he says. Olean Cherry also graduated last year. Now an employee at Spunfab Adhesives Company, she says, "The program offered me the chance to get off welfare and into a permanent job, which is what I had been looking for since I went on welfare in 1995."

Employers are also happy. Jim Camper, Plant Manager at Spunfab, says, "These are good employees and the training program has prepared them to work here. They have the chance to advance in the job." Four more sessions are planned for 1999.

For more information contact Jerry Egan, Akron Department of Planning and Urban Development, at 330–375–2090.

EZ Businesses Start and Stay in Business Thanks to Loan Funds

Baltimore, Maryland, EZ

Everyone knows that it takes money to make money. "Our business loan funds represent loan financing that isn't currently available in the marketplace," says William Rice, Director of the Business Empowerment Center for Empower Baltimore Management Corporation (EBMC). That is why EBMC has partnered with financial agencies to administer four loan funds to offer much-needed capital to EZ businesses. Just ask Keith Machen, Vice President of Ntegrity Telecontent Services Inc., a telecommunications company that located in Baltimore's EZ in 1998. His company received a loan from EBMC's Equity Investment program, which supplies capital to small and medium-sized businesses in return for the right to purchase equity in the company. With this "patient" loan, the business does not have to pay back its debt for a period of time agreed on by the business and the EZ. In this case, Ntegrity was freed from debt-service payments for 18 months. This fund is capitalized by $875,000 in EZ funds leveraged with $6 million from the Prudential and Ford foundations.

Another loan fund provides a subordinated bank loan that complements a conventional loan by lending up to 35 percent of the project debt—up to $150,000—at a low interest rate. The EZ portion of the loan does not need to be paid back until the first loan has been paid. EBMC also makes small business loans of $50,000 to $500,000. In an effort to revitalize physical sites in the EZ as well as assist businesses, EMBC offers grants and loans for the redevelopment of brownfields. Grants are given for Phase II environmental site assessments to determine remediation services needed. Loans are made for site development.

As of December 1998, 1 equity investment loan, 13 subordinated loans, 7 small business loans, 3 brownfields loans, and 1 brownfields grant have been made. The 25 investments totaling $3,344,459 created 368 new jobs in the EZ. Six more loans have been approved but have not yet closed. The EZ loan funds have leveraged $9 million for EZ businesses.

Because 80 to 90 percent of the businesses in the EZ have 10 employees or fewer, a fund called the Microloan Fund will be created for small businesses. Loans of $1 to $50,000 are geared toward businesses with limited resources in need of working capital or equipment.

For more information contact Michael Preston, Public Information Officer, Empower Baltimore Management Corporation, at 410–783–4413.

Walk Right Up and Get a Job

Birmingham, Alabama, EC

Which is easier: walking up to a bank teller's window or following the usual job-search process? The answer was obvious to the Birmingham EC, which has set up a walk-in job center in an old bank building with intact teller windows at an easily accessible location to serve EC residents. The EC Job Bank is located on a corner in a heavily traveled section of the neighborhood, surrounded by businesses,

private homes, apartments, and churches. Bus service runs to this area throughout the day. The Job Bank also has sidewalk access for pedestrians as well as free parking. The attractive building donated by AmSouth Bank is perfectly situated to help EC residents find good jobs. But the Job Bank's building and location are just the beginning.

"'Invest your time and energy for returns that can last a lifetime.' These words could serve as a slogan for the Job Bank," states Lisa Isay, the program's Director. "The Job Bank's mission is to advance the long-term employability and economic self-sufficiency of EC residents by linking jobseekers with local employers." With partners that include the State job agency and $331,000 in EC funds for 3 years, the program serves 200 to 250 people who walk up to the service windows each month. In the Job Bank's first year, a single Alabama Employment Service representative completed job placements for 264 EC residents. Job Bank staff contact potential employers and ensure that the people they refer to employers have a contact person who is expecting them. Once a person gets a job, the program follows up with support that includes childcare subsidies and intensive social services.

This year the Job Bank is adding several new services. Staff are designing a database to track the long-term progress of customers. A new Job Bank calendar, which is distributed throughout the community, lists the days and times its public and private partners—such as the State Employment Service, Job Corps, Easter Seals, the Independent Living Center, and Youthbuild—will be at the Job Bank. Partners do everything from making group presentations about an industry to recruiting for the Job Corps. Another new service is Fax-a-Job. Potential employers and related agencies will be given Fax-a-Job sheets on which to provide information they have about each job opening. The sheets can then easily be faxed to the Job Bank.

For more information contact Randall Wormley, Program Administrator, at 205–785–8941.

School-to-Career Program Links Students to Promising Careers

Boston, Massachusetts, EZ

"The Empowerment Zone's role as a partner in the School-to-Career program is to identify EZ businesses that will act as mentors to student participants," says Reginald Nunnally, Executive Director of the Boston Empowerment Center. The EEC became a Round II EZ in January 1999. The School-to-Career (STC) program is a national initiative designed to improve teaching and learning and to facilitate students' recognition of the connection between what they learn in school and the skills they need to be productive in the world outside of school.

A citywide school-to-work initiative is in force in Boston. Boston also has an STC program that focuses on EZ youth and the three high schools in the Zone. The EZ, the Boston Public School System, the Private Industry Council (PIC), Jobs for the Future (a nonprofit organization), and Jobs and Community Service (a city agency)

have created a local partnership to operate the program. Student participants who live and/or attend high school in the EZ work with PIC employees who are located at the schools to take part in job training that covers job-readiness skills such as resume writing and interviewing. Job counseling is also offered. Jobs for the Future participates in the counseling by informing students of growing industries with career opportunities.

As part of the STC program, the Boston Public Schools offer courses that enhance job placement, and the EZ identifies businesses willing to act as mentors for the students. PIC then cultivates the relationship between the business and students by acting as a link between the two. Eventually PIC works to place students in jobs at the businesses. The identification of business participants is ongoing. The EZ is adding to the 60 businesses already identified.

A 4-year, $2.5-million U.S. Department of Labor grant funds the program in the EZ. Across the city, 2,025 students participate in the school-to-work program. In the EZ the program has served 330 students, and Zone staff hope to double the number of participants in the future.

For more information contact Reginald Nunnally, Executive Director of the Boston Empowerment Center, at 617–445–3413.

Job-Training Program Targets Hispanic Community

Buffalo, New York, EC

In some West Side neighborhoods in the City of Buffalo, the unemployment rate for Hispanics runs as high as 20 percent. To remedy this situation, Mayor Anthony M. Masiello helped secure a $100,000 grant through the EC for the Construction Trades Program, which was coordinated in partnership with Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) and Casillio Development.

In February 1998 the first class of 18 students graduated from Hispanics United of Buffalo's first construction training program. The trainees, all neighborhood residents, received 4 months of classroom and worksite instruction in basic construction skills and carpentry at Habitat for Humanity and Hispanics United locations. They also received Occupational Safety and Health Administration safety certification.

Chosen from a pool of 150 economically and educationally disadvantaged applicants, 7 of the 18 graduates have obtained employment with area companies as cabinetmakers and electricians, and others have decided to further their educations.

Valedictorian Rosario Serrano, a single mother of three and the only woman in the program, is now working as an electrician for Wittburn Enterprises, an electrical contracting company. Serrano, who had previously worked in hotel maintenance, says, "I had to work a little harder to prove I could do the same thing, but I understand construction like I hadn't before." Her employer is now paying for her to attend an apprenticeship program that will allow her to qualify as a journeyman.

Julio Martinez, program manager of Hispanics United, says that the goal of the project is to foster economic development for the community. “Our hope is that the students will start their own crews and construction companies,” he says.

For more information contact Paula Rosner, Executive Director, Federal EC of Buffalo, at 716–842–6923.

From Welfare to Work and Beyond: Charleston EC Residents Get Valuable Occupational Skills

Charleston/North Charleston, South Carolina, EC

Finding permanent, productive jobs for residents who have been on the welfare rolls has been the primary focus of the Charleston, South Carolina, EC initiative. To accomplish this goal, the Charleston EC provided $30,000 in seed money to Agape Ministries to fund an imaginative program called Innovative Alternatives for Women (IAW). This program is designed to ensure that the women who reside in the Charleston EC area are equipped with the tools they need to secure a job and gain self-sufficiency.

The Charleston EC is a 7.3-square-mile tract composed of 11 complete and contiguous census tracts. The unemployment rate in these tracts is 45 percent, or 3.5 times the national average. The City of Charleston has estimated that single mothers with children make up 20 percent of the city’s population. With the decline of Federal welfare resources, the Charleston EC recognized if its population were to become gainfully employed, they would need to develop marketable skills that would be valuable in the workforce.

IAW helps them do that and more. The 12-week program provides the participants, mostly women who are unemployed or underemployed, with much-needed preemployment and life skills training. IAW has recruited professional women from various disciplines in the regional business sector to teach the participants job skills. These women serve as both instructors and mentors to IAW participants. Participants attend classes that are held during the time of a normal workday, 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. In addition to job skills, participants are taught computer skills, including word processing, spreadsheet design, and Internet use.

The success of the IAW program is largely due to the holistic approach that was incorporated into the program design. Graduates of the IAW program return once a month to attend group sessions that allow them to network, learn from each other’s experiences, and gain support from fellow graduates. At these group sessions, graduates share the experiences they encounter in the work environment. They also address the challenges that face them in everyday life as they struggle to balance family, career, and other responsibilities.

The success of the IAW program has been phenomenal. Since the inception of the program in January 1998, 27 women have graduated. Twenty-three (85 percent of the graduates) are employed full time in professional settings. IAW can boast an impressive list of employers of its graduates, including NationsBank, Wachovia Bank, the Medical University of South Carolina, the U.S. Border Patrol, and Embassy Suites Hotel.

IAW staff worked hard to leverage substantial resources for this program. Partners in this effort include NationsBank; First Union Bank; Wachovia Bank; Norrell Staffing Services; Nelson, Mullins, Riley and Scarborough, Attorneys at Law; Charleston Computer Training; Moore Computer Training; and Sears. In addition, $644,112 of public funds was raised. The Good Samaritan Program contributed $25,000, Welfare to Work contributed $45,000, the Healthy South Carolina Initiative gave $563,000, the Community Foundation contributed $10,000, and the Medical University of South Carolina gave $1,112.

In the future, the IAW program will be housed in the newly renovated Eastside Center for Community Concerns, a historic building located in the Eastside neighborhood within the EC. The renovation is a project of Agape Ministries, the parent of the IAW program. To complement the lives of newly self-sufficient IAW graduates, the center will also include a daycare center equipped to serve 50 children, medical and dental offices, and a legal assistance program.

This program's success is a shining example of what can be accomplished when private enterprise partners with public initiatives for the betterment of the community. By designing and implementing the IAW program, Agape Ministries is fulfilling its mission "to provide support and assistance to the residents in the EC."

For more information contact Patricia W. Crawford, Housing and Community Development, at 843–724–3766.

Training Program Teaches Unemployed To Work Hard

Charlotte, North Carolina, EC

Before they learn specific job skills such as how to operate a computer or repair an air conditioning unit, unemployed individuals in Charlotte, North Carolina, are learning how to work hard and be good employees. That's the purpose of the new Preemployment Job Training Program, sponsored jointly by the Charlotte EC, Piedmont Community College, and the Carolinas HealthCare System.

The 2-week program, which made its debut in 1998, covers basic topics like the work ethic and job interview skills, says EC Executive Director Preston McClain. "These are things that would lead individuals not only to find jobs but to be good employees once they were in the workforce," he says.

Establishing the low-cost program involved only in-kind donations from its three partners. Piedmont Community College donated faculty time to develop the training program, the EC marketed the program by distributing flyers in EC neighborhoods, the Carolinas HealthCare System agreed to hire some participants when they completed the program, and an EC resident who has experience in workforce development training facilitated the training sessions at no charge. The sessions took place in a local community center.

The training program is part of an overall strategy to increase job opportunities for EC residents at the Carolinas HealthCare System. Although the health system is willing to hire EC residents, it wants those employees to have the skills necessary

to be successful, says McClain. The training sessions, developed by the college in collaboration with the EC and the health system, were designed to meet this need.

The health system is an important program partner, says McClain, because it offers a wide range of employee benefits, including free hospitalization and up to $1,000 per year for continuing education. Health system staff members outlined those benefits during the training and took trainees on a tour of health system facilities.

"The fact that after a 6-month period, new employees would be eligible to get additional training and have that training funded by the employer, that was an incentive for many to complete the program," says McClain. "We wanted to show them that there was a real buy-in from that particular employer to provide job opportunities."

Eight local residents participated in the first training program and six completed it. Of those six, three now work for the health system and three found jobs in other fields. Piedmont Community College has added the training program to its list of course offerings, and the EC will pay the tuition for any EC resident who wishes to attend.

For more information contact Preston McClain, Executive Director, Charlotte EC, at 704–376–7374.

Unemployed Residents Rebuild Neighborhoods and Themselves

Charlotte, North Carolina, EC

Charlotte, North Carolina, residents Julian Wilson, 20, and Ronnie Boyd, 43, were both unemployed and discouraged in 1998, when they heard about a new program that would train them for the construction trades. The program, operating in the EC, required that participants spend 8 weeks in the classroom learning about the construction industry. From there they would walk to an adjacent neighborhood to spend an additional 8 weeks working as apprentices on construction projects sponsored by the Reid Park Community Development Corporation (RPCDC).

Wilson and Boyd signed up for the Community Uplift Partnership (CUP) program and received a $100-per-week stipend throughout the training process. Now both have jobs and work close to home. Wilson is even enrolled in a first-time homebuyers program that may have him living in his own home within a year.

"You can't get any better than that," remarks Theodore G. White, Executive Director of the West Enterprise Community, Inc.

CUP is a collaborative effort between the West EC, RPCDC, and the Housing Authority of the City of Charlotte. Since the program began in summer 1998, more than 50 EC residents have received training and job offers in the construction trades. CUP is open to EC residents who either live in public housing or have low incomes. In addition to employment training, CUP offers its participants access to myriad services, including free transportation and childcare, and the chance to start their own businesses or own their own homes.

"What's great about this program is that it provides an opportunity for EC residents to acquire skills very close to home that can lead to better employment and improve their overall quality of life," says White. "It also gives hope to other residents. It's inspiring to see a person who once had little hope and no vision becoming self-sufficient by rebuilding the neighborhood."

The West EC markets the CUP program and provides job development and job placement. The Housing Authority conducts the program's classroom training, and RPCDC oversees the apprenticeship program. RPCDC hires most program graduates to work on various EC projects. Those graduates will soon be renovating a blighted EC shopping center that will house a full-service economic empowerment center.

Two grants totaling $600,000, received from HUD and the Department of Health and Human Services, help fund the program. Local matches come from the Housing Authority, RPCDC, the EC, and the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services.

For more information contact Theodore G. White, Executive Director of the West Enterprise Community, Inc., at 704–373–2900.

YO! Program Offers Opportunities to Dropouts

Houston, Texas, EEC

Hundreds of Houston's at-risk youth have a better future now, thanks to the Youth Opportunities Program (YO!). Started in 1996, YO! provides job-readiness training to youth between the ages of 16 and 24 who have dropped out of school and are unemployed in the City's Fifth Ward, where unemployment rates for this age group have typically been above 50 percent.

At least 2,100 youth between ages 16 and 24 are known to be living in the EEC, but the true number is probably much higher, according to Claudia Aguirre of Employment Training Centers, Inc. (ETC), a for-profit organization that administers YO! out of three centers in the EEC. "There is an extraordinarily high mobility rate among the youth in this community," explains Aguirre. "For example, somebody's mother may be having a hard time, so he moves in with his grandmother, stays there for a while, then moves on to his uncle's, and so on and so on." As such, it is difficult to quantify precisely how many youth are living here at any one time. ETC, however, makes no distinction between youth who live in the EEC temporarily and those who are permanent residents. The organization will help anyone who seeks assistance.

As part of the program, youth learn how to write applications and resumes, how to prepare for interviews, what to know about professional etiquette, and other skills they will need once they are employed. ETC has worked with troubled youth and specialized in community outreach for 12 years. In some cases, ETC staff go door to door to talk with entire families.

YO! is funded through Houston Works as part of a $6-million national demonstration grant provided by the U.S. Department of Labor. Other partners include

Houston Independent Schools, which administers an in-school component of the program to work with kids who are at risk of dropping out and get to them before they end up on the street and out of work. Another component of the program involves gang intervention and prevention. Instead of fines and/or jail time, adjudicated youth perform community service in various projects within the EEC. More than 100 youth are enrolled and receive help from YO! gang-intervention specialists, including one-on-one and group counseling sessions.

"We have a lot to brag about," says John Bright of Houston Works. Indeed they have. Dropout rates in the EEC have been cut in half, and the employment rate in the target population is now approaching 70 percent, approximately the national average of dropouts within this age group. What do the employers think? In Houston, a boom in the construction industry has provided a steady source of recruiters. Bright adds that at job fairs held nearly every week, employers are showing up in droves and finding ready workers.

For more information contact Judith Butler, the Mayor's Office, at 713–247–2666.

Parents Learn the Business of Caring for Kids

Kansas City, Kansas/Missouri, EEC

Working parents always face the challenge of caring for their children. In the Kansas City Bi-State EEC, low-income parents are not only meeting this challenge, but also turning it into a new business opportunity. The Child Care Entrepreneur Project, funded with a 2-year, $75,000 EEC grant, has helped 64 low-income people learn how to start their own childcare businesses. In a relaxed classroom, they have explored all aspects of the childcare business with the help of experienced people already in the business. Their training has enabled the 64 graduates to start 15 new businesses caring for approximately 130 children.

The project was started by three local agencies that combined forces to create a comprehensive curriculum. The Women's Employment Network contributed its expertise with job-readiness and basic life skills training. The First Step Fund added its knowledge of how to help people start businesses. The Francis Institute of Child Development provided its know-how regarding early childhood education. On the basis of this curriculum, the project has conducted extensive outreach through flyers, word of mouth, mailings, and cooperation from other agencies, and gone on to effectively teach participants.

"The program has not only increased the number of good childcare slots, but also increased the number of people who have started their own businesses," explains Leigh Klein of the Women's Employment Network. "The program has been so successful that funds have been obtained for the First Step Fund to extend it to the entire community."

The quality of available childcare, of course, remains the ultimate measure of the project's success. Among the children and parents connected to both the project and the new businesses it has engendered, the consensus is that the quality of childcare has improved. Whether the topic is good nutrition or discipline, parents and service providers agree that the program has made a significant contribution.

For more information contact Leigh Klein, Executive Director, Women's Employment Network, at 816–822–8083.

Center Helps Point Residents in the Right Direction

Manchester, New Hampshire, EC

During their 1994 EC planning process, residents of Manchester, New Hampshire, recounted with surprising frequency the frustrating trips they had made "downtown" in search of city services. Typically, a mother would recall boarding the city bus early in the morning, children in tow, for what she thought would be a simple trip to a city agency that could help her with a particular problem. Many hours later, the family would most likely return home tired, hungry, and empty-handed, having been bounced around from one agency to another all day long.

Tired of negotiating Manchester's complicated service network alone, most residents said they wanted one place in the EC where they could find information about specific city programs and the agencies that offered them. Moreover, they wanted educational programs that would help them get better jobs and become economically self-sufficient.

Residents got all that and more on October 1, 1998, when the Manchester Community Resource Center opened its doors. The center, an 8,500-square-foot structure built on city-owned land, brings together numerous agencies that help EC residents develop job skills, find employment, and get information about city services. The center also houses a daycare center for center clients.

Within its first 2 months, the center served more than 200 EC residents through various programs. The center's job coach helped 17 clients find jobs and sent 37 to job interviews. By spring 1999, computer-training classes were so popular that each had a waiting list.

The Community Resource Center is a collaboration of three local agencies: Southern New Hampshire Services, New Hampshire Catholic Charities, and The Hope Resource Center. With a commitment of more than $1.5 million in EC funding and $140,000 of the city's CDBG allocation, the partners have leveraged approximately $500,000 in private contributions. The three organizations are now working to develop three boards of residents, educators, and local businesses that eventually will oversee center programs.

A number of agencies, including the State's Employment Security Office and the local Health Department and Housing Authority, come to the center on a regular basis to offer information programs. An Information Bank works with clients to determine what city services they need and which agencies provide those services. Residents prefer this information-and-referral program to having social service agencies onsite, says Amanda Parenteau, the city's EC Coordinator. "They did not want the center to be what they called 'a welfare mall,'" she says. "They didn't want people lining up at the door to collect food stamps."

The center held several open houses to attract clients. However, the building itself has been the most powerful marketing tool. "People are very involved and inter-

ested in this program because it is a concrete building in their neighborhood," says Parenteau. "They can see it. It's not just a faceless program somewhere downtown. It's a real place and it is right here."

For more information contact Amanda Parenteau, EC Coordinator, at 603–624–2111.

Memphis EC Jayhawk Program Soars: Computer Repair Training Leads to Successful Job Placements

Memphis, Tennessee, EC

With a job placement rate of 93 percent, the Memphis EC Jayhawk Program is proving that discipline pays off. Originally designed to train and place 60 EC residents in computer repair jobs, the program has trained 86 residents; 80 have been placed successfully in jobs.

The Jayhawk training consists of 6 weeks of classroom instruction, 2 weeks of job-placement instruction conducted by the Tennessee Technology Center at Memphis, and 4 weeks of cooperative work for participating employers and program partners. "Combining classroom and cooperative training has been a winning combination," reports Vernua Hanrahan, manager of Memphis' Center for Neighborhoods.

The need for repair technicians in the computer and cable industries has made employment in this field both attractive and competitive. Entry-level pay begins at $8 per hour plus benefits. The average graduate is paid between $9 and $10 per hour. The site-based work experience has provided many students with job offers before they graduate.

Each training class has 16 to 24 trainees, who must be at least 18 years old and have a high school diploma or GED. No prior experience is required, but trainees must be available full time for training and have visual acuity and a degree of manual dexterity.

Representatives from the computer industry helped to design the curriculum. Current training costs are $500 per trainee. Some graduates of the first two classes were not employed due to failed drug tests. Drug screening and more stringent entry requirements have resulted in higher graduation and employment rates.

Partners in the Jayhawk Program include the Tennessee Technology Center at Memphis, the Memphis City Schools, the Memphis Housing Authority, the Memphis/Shelby County EC, the Private Industry Council, and Sequel. Partners that are also participating employers include Logistics Management, Inc., Office Equipment Service, Tate Computers, and Cooperative Computers Ministries.

"The lessons that have been learned and the relationships established in the first year of operation lead us to believe that at the end of 2 years, we will have a curriculum and program that industry will support," states Bob Dixon, Assistant Director of the Tennessee Technology Center at Memphis.

For more information contact Keith Normon, Tennessee Technology Center, at 901–543–6169.

Milwaukee's EC Training Offers Path to Excellence

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, EC

Through the Milwaukee EC, the YWCA of Greater Milwaukee is providing employment-readiness training to EC residents that is resulting in an important increase in the EC's labor force.

More than 300 residents have completed YWCA's 2-week Academy of Excellence course, and more than 100 graduates have obtained family-supporting jobs. "The YWCA course reaches very low-income individuals and prepares them for employment in or near the EC," says Glenn Mattison, Milwaukee's EC Program Officer.

The training is part of Milwaukee Works, a YWCA program that includes working with employers to identify employment needs and developing training curricula to meet those needs. Milwaukee Works also addresses barriers to job placement and retention in the belief that a prepared and motivated workforce will benefit EC businesses as well as the residents they hire.

EC funds were awarded to the YWCA for a 2-year period that began in 1997. The EC's $110,000 in funding was matched by local support and contributions.

For more information contact Glenn Mattison, EC Program Officer, at 414–286–3760.

People Taking Care of People

Muskegon, Michigan, EC

"I heard that you help people," said the young boy who had just walked into the Muskegon Family Services Center, Inc. . . . and that is exactly what this program does.

Whether an individual needs help with housing issues, parenting skills, tutoring, or budgeting assistance, the Family Services Center is a one-stop shop that offers a variety of services to low- and very low-income residents in Muskegon's EC. "Our mission is to help families and individuals to develop whatever skills they need to become self-sufficient," says Blanche Smith, the center's Director. "If we don't have the resources to help these people, we know where to find them . . . and we will take them there."

What makes the Family Services Center unique is that it serves the whole family, from grandparents to infants. "Anyone who lives in the house can access our services," says Smith, who runs the center with a staff of 7 employees. "We help between 30 and 40 families at any given time, and we try to help each person increase their quality of life, regardless of age." In 1996 the City of Muskegon received EC funds to operate the Family Center for 3 years.

A large part of the Family Services Center's success can be attributed to its strong relationships with the local business community. "Through networking and building partnerships, we are able to increase the employment opportunities of our families," says Smith, the former Mayor of Muskegon. In addition, this cor-

porate exposure adds a special measure of public awareness of how valuable the program is for the community and the seven neighborhoods it serves.

For more information contact Blanche Smith, Director, Family Services Center, Inc., at 616–726–2626.

EC Store Offers More Than Ice Cream

New Orleans, Louisiana, EC

"There is no replacement for on-the-job experience," says New Orleans Mayor Marc H. Morial. "The Enterprise Ice Cream Project provides Central City youth with an opportunity to learn all of the facets of starting and operating a real business." The Enterprise Ice Cream Project is a collaborative effort of the Central City EC's lead agency, Central City Economic Opportunity; the Youth Entrepreneurship Program of Total Community Action Inc.; Brown Velvet Inc.; and First Commerce Community Development Corporation. These public and private partners have joined forces to develop a retail ice cream store in the EC that will act as a catalyst for neighborhood commercial revitalization in a once-thriving commercial corridor and present an opportunity for enhanced youth employment within the community.

The economic development project began in summer 1998 when the Central City EC and the Youth Entrepreneurship Program worked together to provide entrepreneurship training for 15 neighborhood youth. Training included business, marketing, and retail skill development. During the training program, students engaged in market research within the Central City community to gather valuable information on consumer preferences, which was then used to augment the developing business plan.

"The Central City Enterprise Ice Cream Project is an excellent example of neighborhood partnership and empowerment to address the needs of neighborhood youth," says Thelma H. French, EC Administrator. "This project embodies all segments of the empowerment philosophy." First Commerce Community Development Corporation will act as owner and developer of the property, which is located on a key commercial thoroughfare in the EC. The Central City Economic Opportunity Corporation and the Youth Entrepreneurship Program will partner as operators of the business and provide employment and entrepreneurship training opportunities for area youth. Brown Velvet Inc., the ice cream manufacturer that has been located in the EC for more than 30 years, will supply the product at cost.

The project's initial investment of $53,000 leveraged New Orleans EC funds with other public and private donations. The completed business plan for the ice cream store is now being proposed to area lenders for capitalization of the project. Designs for construction of the store are in progress.

For more information contact Thelma French, New Orleans EC Administrator, at 504–565–6414.

Job-Training Program in Norfolk Puts Tools in Women's Hands and Fixes Lives

Norfolk/Portsmouth, Virginia, EZ

Roxanne Hall wants to always remember how bad things were just a few years ago. It makes her appreciate how far she has come. Before she enrolled in the Norfolk Works Job Skills Training for Women Program in 1996, Hall was homeless, did not have a job, and had recently given up her three children to foster care. Today, she not only has a nice apartment and a steady job, but more importantly, she has been reunited with her family.

Hall is just one of several women within the Norfolk EZ who have been given a chance to help themselves by completing a preapprenticeship training program in heating/ventilation/air conditioning/refrigeration (HVAC/R). Women who show an aptitude for this type of work are enrolled in the program by Norfolk Works, the agency charged with carrying out the activities in the EZ. The women undergo a 16-week training program provided by Tidewater Community College (TCC) in Norfolk, the other partner in the project. Once they have completed the program, which has been endorsed by the local HVAC association, the women serve as interns with one of the private companies that helped develop the curriculum. For one class of graduates, part of their internship included working with Habitat for Humanity installing HVAC/R in new homes built within the EZ.

"One of the strengths of the program is that it fosters a strong work ethic," says Eleanor Bradshaw, Executive Director of Norfolk Works. All of those who are enrolled in the program are required to apply for a Pell Grant. For anyone who does not qualify for the grant, Norfolk Works will pay for tuition, books, and tools, as well as childcare for those who need it. Students still have to support themselves while they are enrolled in the program. Hall, for instance, held a full-time job while she was going to school. After a full day at TCC, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., she worked as a parking attendant for the City of Norfolk. It was an exhausting 16 weeks, but the discipline required to get through it was an important learning experience for her. "You can be successful, but it has to be you who does it," Hall says. "Nobody else can do it for you."

"When you make a difference in people's lives and give them the skills to do something they've never done before, that's a successful program," says Bradshaw. Just how successful has the program been? Of the nine women who graduated from the first class, including Hall, seven are now employed. The program maintains an 85-percent overall graduation rate, and all those who have finished have been able to find jobs. Hall was hired by the Norfolk Naval Shipyard, where she is now employed as a sheet metal mechanic. In the next few years, if things continue to go her way, she hopes to attend college and study engineering.

For more information contact Eleanor Bradshaw, Executive Director, Norfolk Works, 757–624–8650.

High-Quality Meat Processor Moves Into Central City and Creates Jobs

Oakland, California, EEC

As many manufacturers continue to desert central cities, it is heartening when a company expands into a city. A particularly good example of this phenomenon is in Oakland, where a pioneer in high-quality meat production, Niman Ranch, is being empowered by the EC to expand while renovating a vacant plant and creating jobs for EC residents.

"Niman Ranch has a business that is growing 50 percent per year," explains Ranch co-owner Mike McConnell. "We are building a national reputation for great meat, raised humanely. All we needed was working space and working capital to allow us to take the next step. This program provided both. Now it's up to us."

The new plant has enabled Niman Ranch to more than triple its processing capacity, and working capital provided by the EEC has enabled it to increase the number of animals in the feeding pipeline. The Ranch, which started more than 20 years ago, produces gourmet-quality meats from animals raised humanely and naturally, without artificial growth promotants. The Oakland plant is enabling Niman Ranch to expand a business that was proven and had the potential to become a national supplier. The EEC is gaining a vibrant, socially conscious, environmentally sensitive employer that is using EEC funds to expand its business, create jobs, and add a hub of activity at a formerly vacant site.

As it expands, the Ranch is committed to creating at least 35 jobs in the EEC within 2 years. These jobs include packers, butchers, drivers, and office staff. The jobs provide entry-level starting wages of $8 per hour with benefits and train people in a variety of skills depending on their attitude, aptitude, and aspirations. The Ranch has worked with several local agencies on job-training programs.

The Oakland plant was developed in collaboration between the EEC's One-Stop Capital Shop and the owners of Niman Ranch. The Ranch received a $1.2-million loan from the Enhanced EC Revolving Loan Fund. The loan has enabled Niman to purchase the vacant processing plant, improve both its functionality and appearance, outfit itself with equipment, and provide general working capital for the business to expand.

For more information contact Mike McConnell, Co-owner, Niman Ranch, at 510–808–0330.

Ouachita Takes Out Insurance Against Poverty

Ouachita Parish, Louisiana, EC

The Ouachita Enterprise Community (OEC) is using the most valuable resources it has—its existing residents and businesses—to fight poverty within the EC. OEC is a 19.6-square-mile area that comprises 12 census tracts with a population of approximately 35,000, 53 percent of whom live below the Federal poverty level. The per capita income is $5,101 per year. The area is riddled with crime and decay.

In the heart of this community is the regional office of the State Farm Insurance Company, a major area employer. Recognizing the condition of the community and the downside of the potential loss of Federal welfare dollars, State Farm Regional Vice President Guy Barr, in close consultation with OEC officials, decided to do something about the abject poverty within OEC. State Farm designed a demonstration project within OEC to show other businesses the value of Ouachita's most incredible resource: its people.

Also serving as Vice-chair of OEC, Barr's vision was to move people from welfare to work. He designed and implemented a program that led to real jobs for OEC residents. State Farm put on a series of breakfast meetings to educate OEC residents about the company and the potential for employment. State Farm then worked with the Department of Social Services to identify a list of OEC's employable residents. These residents were invited to a special breakfast meeting. The criteria for participation were simple. Potential employees had to be dressed in business attire, be on time for the meeting, and come alone. After a morning of motivational speeches, one of which came from a State Farm employee who was a former welfare recipient, interested applicants were asked to fill out a brief questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to identify residents who had a high school diploma, could pass a drug screening, and had no felony convictions.

A pool of 40 people was identified and invited to another breakfast meeting. On hand at this meeting were State Farm's human resources staff and managers, most of whom volunteered their time to conduct interviews. From this group the State Farm Insurance Company hired 27 OEC residents for full-time positions with full benefits. State Farm developed a Career Training Center for these employees, staffed by its top supervisors. The program has had a 95-percent success rate.

Although State Farm worked closely with OEC officials on this project, it accepted no EC funds or tax incentives from OEC. When asked why this insurance giant went out of its way to help the residents in the EC, Terrence Jones, Regional Public Affairs Manager at State Farm, states, "We not only had a moral obligation, we recognized the negative potential of people living without income."

Today the national office of State Farm Insurance Company is studying this model in hopes of designing programs in other communities that will have a similar impact.

For more information contact Eric Loewe, Executive Director, Ouachita Enterprise Community, at 318–329–4031.

Community Team Helps People Connect With—and Get—Jobs

Phoenix, Arizona, EC

For a disadvantaged inner-city resident, there may be a good job somewhere, but mustering the energy and persistence to find and get that job may seem an almost impossible task. Thanks to Project STRIDE (Successful Training Resources for Individual Development), residents of the Phoenix EC have new ways to find

both good job opportunities and the training and support they need to get and hold the jobs.

"In many cities, good-quality jobs tend to be outside the city in the suburbs. But in Phoenix, we have abundant jobs in the city. The problem is overcoming the disconnect between employers and the unemployed and underemployed," explains Carolyn Bristo, the city's Workforce Development Administrator. Project STRIDE helps link EC residents to jobs through an innovative team approach that involves all major stakeholders: employers, community agencies, training providers, neighborhood organizations, and support services agencies. The team seeks to build long-lasting relationships, establish the formal and informal networks that are critical to making a job connection, and build up the community in the process. Project STRIDE, empowered by this team approach, offers a comprehensive, 4-week training program on work maturity, goals management, computer skills, and other work-related topics. It provides extensive case management and follow-up services, and access to GED classes.

More than 80 people completed Project STRIDE training in its first year of operation, thanks to $200,000 in EC funds. Forty-two have jobs at an average wage of $8.25 an hour plus full benefits. Three people have started their own businesses, and 10 are pursuing GEDs or more training and education. More than 60 percent of these people previously received food stamps; the rest often were out of the job market because of social and health problems. Now they are striding toward economic self-sufficiency.

For more information contact Carolyn Bristo, Economic Development Administrator, Phoenix Community and Economic Development Department, at 602–262–5040.

Helping People Start Careers—Not Just Get Jobs

Pulaski County, Arkansas, EC

People making the transition from welfare to work may be able to get minimum-wage jobs. But how about getting jobs that will enable them to do more than just survive—jobs with career potential? This problem is being tackled in the Pulaski County EC in metropolitan Little Rock, where the Career Connection program is giving people the extra support they need to get living-wage jobs that can lead to careers.

"The thrust of welfare to work needs to move in the direction of assisting people not only to get entry-level jobs but also to develop careers with sustainable incomes," says Mark Johnson, who heads Career Connection. To help people do this, the program assigns a case manager to each participant in its job-training effort; case managers stay in touch with participants after they are placed in jobs to help them get the extra skills and support to begin a career. The participants are also given training to prepare them for careers in various fields—for example, preemployment courses in computer technology that last up to 3 months.

The program, which has an 18-month grant of $80,000 from the EC, has served approximately 170 people, 30 of whom have found jobs. Started by Pulaski

Technical College, Career Connection is located at the one-stop Little Rock Career Development Center. Nearly 1,000 people come to the center each week, and those who are eligible are steered toward Career Connection. Supporters of the project include firms that value the effort to nurture good job-retention skills. Along with Pulaski Tech, agencies involved with the program include the Arkansas Employment Security Department, the Arkansas Department of Human Services, the Little Rock School District, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Goodwill Industries, Our House (a homeless shelter), and the North Little Rock Housing Authority. Career Connection hopes to continue after the 18-month EC funding period ends, with additional funds from the EC and other agencies.

For more information contact Mark Johnson, Dean of Administration, Pulaski Technical College, at 501–812–2212.

Small Construction Workers Get Help for Long, Hard Journey to Independence

Pulaski County, Arkansas, EC

Many carpenters and other skilled construction workers who work for general contractors would rather work for themselves. Yet a worker's journey to independence is a long, hard one—starting with finding the time and energy to develop business skills, not to mention getting needed support. A successful program in the Pulaski County EC in metropolitan Little Rock is enabling construction workers to travel the road to their own businesses.

"The construction contracting business is a long, hard, tedious journey," states Raymond Frazier, who runs an established training consultant firm that is coordinating the Small and Disadvantaged Contractors Program for the EC. His firm has run similar efforts for more than 10 years. With the help of a 2-year, $68,000 grant from the EC, Frazier started this new program that, so far, has enabled 18 small craft workers to become bonded and win contracts for construction projects valued at more than $400,000. Targeted workers are EC residents who have marketable homebuilding, carpentry, and related skills but need additional support to start on the road to independence.

In the construction trades, this road is littered with red tape and other obstacles. This is where the Small and Disadvantaged Contractors Program begins. Workers in the program are given intensive training in setting up their own businesses, including how to get necessary permits and licenses. They also receive assistance with getting loans to finance their businesses. Finally they are taught how to find clients. The program offers support for all these components through strong partnerships with State and local construction firms; employment agencies; large, private homebuilding firms; and the local branches of organizations such as the National Association of Minority Contractors and the Contractors' License Association.

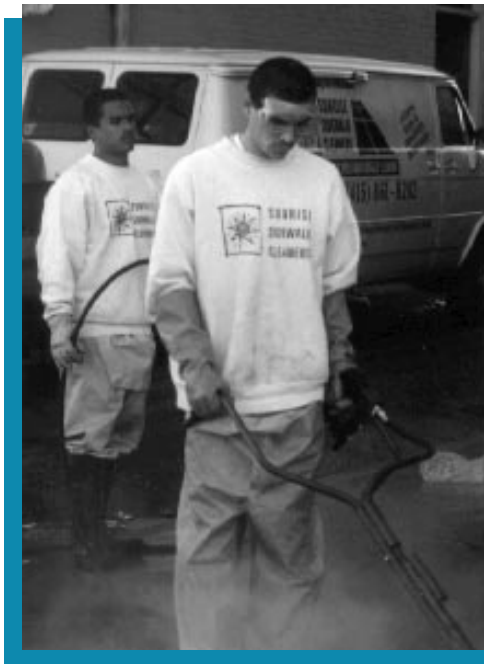
For more information contact Raymond Frazier, President, Raymond Associates, at 501–280–9110.

Former Troubled Youth Learn To Run a Business—and Help Keep a City Clean

San Francisco, California, EC

Formerly troubled youth in the Mission, one of San Francisco's liveliest multiethnic neighborhoods, are finding new hope by becoming entrepreneurs in their own sidewalk-cleaning business. Sunrise Sidewalk Cleaners, Inc., is turning the city's stringent sidewalk-cleaning law into a business opportunity, and in the process is becoming a thriving firm that teaches the youth how to run a business.

"Sunrise is the most effective youth development tool I've ever been involved with," says longtime youth advocate and project head David Mauroff. "It gives the youth hands-on business experience and teaches them skills they can't learn anywhere else." Sunrise started about 3 years ago when a group of teenagers and the Columbia Park Boys and Girls Club decided to try something really ambitious: Create not just another job-training program, but a full-fledged, self-sustaining business firm. The City of San Francisco's unusually strict law requiring businesses to clean the sidewalks in front of their facilities provided the opportunity. The project targeted kids who had fallen through the cracks; 80 percent had been expelled from high school. But with the vision of the project's leaders and the energy of the kids, Sunrise was launched.



Now Sunrise is thriving. It has contracts with firms throughout the Bay Area and a staff of 14 project participants. Twenty-two former participants have gone on to college or other jobs. The firm generates $8,000 to $12,000 per month in revenue. Youth on staff are paid $6 to $9.50 per hour to engage new clients, clean the sidewalks in their custom-designed uniforms, and run the office. The project has strong support from local businesses. The Gap has contributed a truck worth $75,000, Sees Candies has given a van and technical assistance, Bay Area Chemex contributes equipment for cleaning and training help, and Citibank is a major client. This year the City of San Francisco is contributing $30,000 in CDBG funds.

The project is publicized primarily through word of mouth, where people in the Mission see the Sunrise staff in their uniforms. Sunrise continues as a thriving business in the EC. One of its few "problems" is persuading participants to move on to other jobs or school.

For more information contact David Mauroff, Youth Enterprise Director, Columbia Park Boys and Girls Club, at 415–865–3860.

People Find Careers in Fast-Growing Hospitality/Tourism Industry

San Francisco, California, EC

The hospitality/tourism industry is the fastest growing industry in the San Francisco Bay Area—but how can individuals break into this field? A training course sponsored by the local Goodwill agency is the answer. Participants even get to work in a café as part of their training.

"Partnering with the EC allowed Goodwill to springboard an idea to start training in the hospitality industry," notes Mary Edington, President of Goodwill

Industries of San Francisco, San Mateo and Marin Counties, Inc. "Underserved and underemployed members who live near the downtown tourism businesses are able to compete, once trained, for first-source hiring jobs as they become available." The project consists of an 8-week hospitality associate course that teaches students the necessary skills to begin a rewarding career in hospitality and tourism. Once they have completed the course, local residents are ready for job opportunities in hotels, restaurants, cafés, tourism, and hospitals. The course is approved by the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education. Students who complete all the required school work and class hours receive a State-approved certificate of completion.

Once participants have finished the classroom part of the course, they may have the chance to experience the fun and challenges of the food service business by working at Café Vasco, owned by Business Advisory Council member Paul Lazzareschi of Vasco Restaurant. Café Vasco provides a training site for 90-day internships for many project graduates who specialize in hospitality. The café adds a practical component that enhances the classroom training and further prepares students by giving them experience with a real job in the hospitality industry.

The project's course of study was created by Goodwill in conjunction with the Hotel Council of San Francisco, the Golden Gate Restaurant Association, the Hotel and Restaurant Employees, and Bartenders Union Local 2. It was funded by the James Irvine Foundation, Wells Fargo Bank, and the Mayor's Office of Community Development. The project has an 83-percent graduation rate, with 79 percent of graduates placed into training-related positions at an average hourly wage of $7.76.

For more information contact Ernesto Rivas, Training Services Manager, Goodwill Industries of San Francisco, at 415–575–2126.

Pre-Apprenticeship Program Unites Minority Youth With Trade Unions

Springfield, Massachusetts, EC

Providing employment opportunities for disadvantaged minority residents who live in inner cities can be a very difficult job. The solution to this challenge may lie in the intriguing approach that the Dunbar Community Center in Springfield, Massachusetts, has taken to enlist the help of local labor unions to ensure success.

"We realized that labor unions in our area have a lot to offer in terms of employment possibilities," says Margaret Anoje, the center's Career Development Trainer. "However, they have had a hard time recruiting and maintaining employees who are people of color." A series of meetings between center staff and members of labor unions representing the construction, sheet metal, painting, roofing, and elevator industries resulted in the development of two free programs to bring African-American and Latino residents from the five neighborhoods of Mason Square in Springfield into the unions' work ranks.

The Pre-Apprenticeship Program, which has served 22 youths to date, provides 90 hours of training to male and female youth age 15 to 20. Average class size is 10 students. "The goal of the program is to help the young people be better prepared to enter the job market and to understand their career choices," says Anoje. In linking school subjects to work issues, she says, "We want to intervene at the appropriate time in the youth's course work so that if he or she needs an additional math or science class, there is enough time."

Anoje continues, "The trade unions have been very involved in the planning stages of the program. They helped to identify the barriers, challenges, and myths of working for a union, and they have provided resources to ensure the program's success." Serving as mentors and role models to the young participants, trade union representatives give presentations to the classes, host site visits, and develop hands-on portable exhibits.

The program has also had an impact on union policies such as the previous requirement that all applicants be high school graduates who are over the age of 18. "This policy forced a lot of young people to delay applying to the unions for work, resulting in finding employment in other areas," says Anoje. The unions have changed this policy to incorporate youths who are 17 years old during the period of the training but who will turn 18 upon completion of the program.

The center also offers the Construction Industry Training Assistance Program, which provides similar development to adult men and women over the age of 21. Special features of this program include providing participants with daycare money and bus passes to ensure completion of the program.

For more information contact Margaret Anoje, Career Development Trainer, Dunbar Community Center, at 413–788–6143.

New Building Promises Jobs in Fast-Growing Healthcare Field

Tacoma, Washington, EC

Finding places to house workers in the fast-growing healthcare field is a continuing challenge for central cities. The pressure on healthcare firms often seems to be to decentralize to cheaper, outlying locations. But Tacoma is meeting this challenge. The city and EC are about to complete the rehabilitation and refurbishment of a 100-year-old building in downtown Tacoma, the TRC Tower, as the new home of Total Renal Care. The TRC Tower will be the back office of a dialysis treatment center that was about to leave the city with its 250 employees. Also it plans to expand its workforce to 600 employees.

"The excitement that has been created by the total renovation of this building from a drab, empty, windowless structure to a bright, historic anchor for the reinvigoration of this area of downtown is phenomenal," notes Shirl E. Gilbert II, who directs the Tacoma Empowerment Consortium (TEC). "And this is just the beginning of a Tacoma renaissance that has been made possible by the partnerships of the EZ/EC Initiative."

TEC was instrumental in putting together a package that included access to private activity bonding, a Section 108 loan from the city, the development of parking and shuttle services for employees, and training of EC residents to be employed by the firm over the next 18 months. Total Renal Care's commitment to TEC is 100 jobs for EC residents.

In addition to the renovation and employment aspects of this effort, TEC is creating synergy in downtown Tacoma by sparking the revitalization of a portion of downtown that had been depressed for 15 years. This effort promises to be a catalyst for further development and more job opportunities for EC residents.

For more information contact Shirl E. Gilbert II, Executive Director, Tacoma Empowerment Consortium, at 253–274–1288.

New EC Jobs Filled at Historic Schoenfeld Building

Tacoma, Washington, EC

The historic Sandberg Building at 15th Street and Pacific Avenue in downtown Tacoma, the oldest reinforced concrete skyscraper on the Pacific Coast, was taken over by the Schoenfeld family in 1924 and served continuously as a highly successful landmark retail furniture store until 1985. In that year the family went out of business. The building sat empty as a 10-story testimony to the decay of downtown Tacoma for more than 3 years.

In spring 1998 the City of Tacoma, with the help of the Tacoma Empowerment Consortium (TEC) and other organizations, put the building back to use as the new home offices of Total Renal Care, Inc. The company was considering leaving Tacoma to find space in an adjacent city to accommodate its anticipated growth from approximately 250 to 600 jobs over the next 18 months.

With a package that included access to EC bonds and tax incentives for renovation of the building, local property tax abatement, additional funds, and the guarantee that 100 EC residents would be trained and ready to begin work on April 1, 1999, the city was able to keep Total Renal Care in Tacoma. TEC anticipates placing other EC residents in the remaining positions.

For more information contact Dr. Shirl E. Gilbert II, Tacoma Empowerment Consortium, at 253–274–1288.

Waco Develops Job Training

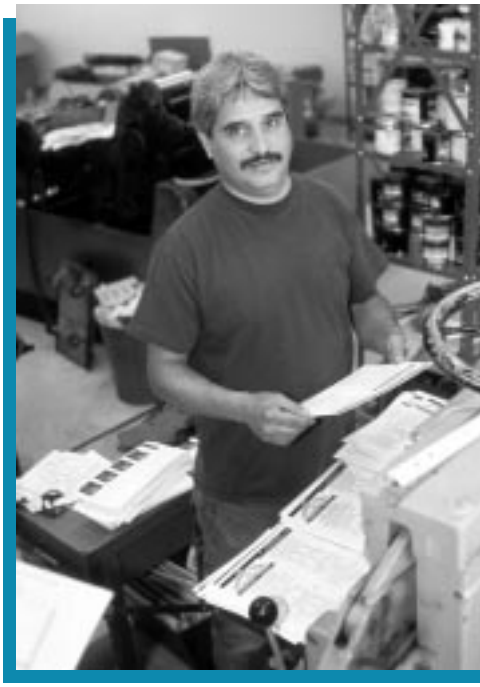
Waco, Texas, EC

The Waco EC has developed some innovative ways to attract businesses and jobs. The EC is a 20-square-mile area encompassing the central and eastern areas of Waco, as well as portions of Bellmead Lacy-Lakeview and McLennan County. The area, which is largely Hispanic, has an unemployment rate that is between 13 and 17.6 percent, almost three times the City of Waco's average.

The Waco EC focuses on job training, job development, development of "mini-market" business areas, and social and human services. To accomplish its goals, the Waco EC has provided permit assistance and potential capital funding through

the EC Revolving Loan Fund to businesses that agree to locate in the EC. The City of Waco will also provide assistance with site development and facility improvement when existing facilities are used to provide economic growth. The City of Waco and McLennan County offer tax-abatement policies for real and personal property (equipment) based on the amount of investment and the number of jobs created. Waco offers additional State benefits to any new manufacturing employer approved as a Texas Enterprise Project. Businesses that hire residents of Waco's EC area may be eligible for tax credits of up to $2,100 per employee per year through the Work Opportunity Tax Credit program.

For more information contact George Johnson, Jr., City of Waco, at 254–750–5640.



Imperial County California Job Resource Centers

Imperial County, California, EC

The Imperial County California Enterprise Community has developed an innovative approach to job development. The EC promotes the One Stop Shop Job Resource Centers for job applicants. Three such centers have been established throughout Imperial County. The offices are connected electronically to one another and to other major benefit and training resources used by job applicants in Imperial County.

Each center provides a variety of services, including links to job leads, help with resume development, interview techniques, support services, job search assistance, and one-to-one counseling. Services are provided universally and without cost to participants regardless of their eligibility for special funding through such initiatives as the Job Training Partnership Act or Vocational Rehabilitation. The services are tailored to the individual needs of each person seeking a job. "The centers are designed to provide a one-stop link to virtually all related services, training, and benefits through phone, electronic link, or onsite assistance," says Maria Matthews, the EC's Executive Director.

The centers have phone banks, computer banks, and access to an array of job resources through the Internet; local, State, and national job training; job search bulletin boards; and Web sites. Community participation and support for the program steadily expanded during 1998 and early 1999.

Each center follows the State of California's One Stop Shop initiative, as well as the major tenets of the federal Workforce Investment Act, which was enacted in 1998 and is to be fully implemented by July 2000. Staff resources have been expanded to engineer the efforts of the three centers into a collaborative partnership with one another and with the additional business and community partners mandated by the Workforce Investment Act.

For more information contact Maria Matthews, Valley of Imperial Development Alliance, at 760–337–7814.

Farmers Band Together To Feed Schools and Sustain Jobs in Agriculture

Jackson County, Florida, EC

If you were a student in elementary school, wouldn't you rather eat local fresh vegetables and fruits for lunch than soggy cafeteria fare? And if you were a struggling small farmer, wouldn't you like to have access to the large, secure market of school system lunch programs? In Jackson County, Florida, the answers to these two questions are a resounding YES—and the county has a project to prove it: helping farmers supply the schools with locally grown fresh produce.

"The Small Farmer School Lunch Project is really not just a project but a concept," explains Glen Holmes of the local U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural

Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). "The biggest thing we're trying to stress is helping the farmers organize through the Co-op. And the Co-op is not just running a project that needs outside funding. We hope to be here until the cows come home." The New North Florida Farmers Cooperative, which serves 15 farmers who plant an average of 1 to 20 acres, picks up leafy greens, cantaloupes, strawberries, blackberries, and grapes and delivers them to 32,000 children in schools in 3 counties. The project has received a 2-year, $4,000 grant from USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service and a $10,000 low-interest loan from the EC. The farmers study the schools' menus in advance to try to supply produce needed each day, and any mismatches between the produce delivered and the food served are dealt with by freezing the surplus.

This remarkable project was the result of a serendipitous meeting 4 years ago. Holmes was in Atlanta for a meeting and met school food service officials and others interested in this issue. They realized what a good match the farmers and the schools could be, and the project was born. Partners offering support include NRCS, the West Florida Community Development Council, and Florida A&M University's 2501 Outreach Project for small farmers. The project is now in its third year, and plans are for it to continue, as Holmes puts it, "until the cows come home." For the schoolchildren eating more healthily and the working farmers serving this sizable, stable school market, that is soon enough.

For more information contact Glen Holmes, Outreach Coordinator, NRCS, at 850–482–2002.

Flat Rock Furniture Opens New Plant in Jackson County

Kentucky Highlands, Kentucky, EZ

With $12.5 million in investment commitments, the Development Venture Capital Fund in the Kentucky Highlands EZ has been a catalyst for job growth. The latest company to locate in the EZ is Flat Rock Furniture, Inc., an Indiana-based company. In January 1999, Flat Rock Furniture opened a plant in Jackson County that when fully staffed will employ 30 EZ residents over the next 2 years making handcrafted hickory furniture.

The Development Venture Capital Fund also made commitments to American Woodmark Corporation in Wayne County, Kentucky, and will assist Fantasy Custom Yachts as it expands its houseboat plant for the third time.

The fund has made 15 commitments through January 1999, 11 of which were to locally owned operations and 9 were to startup companies. The fund has been sustainable, relending $400,000 from repaid principal on earlier loans. "The focus in our strategic plan is job creation," says Jerry Rickett, President of Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation. "The job growth fueled by the fund has exceeded all expectations. Our goal was to create 3,000 jobs during the 10 years of the Empowerment Zone. After only 4 years, we already have almost 1,500 jobs in place, and we have commitments to reach our goal in the next 2 years."

For more information contact Jerry Rickett, President, Kentucky Highlands EZ, at 606–864–5175.

Kentucky EZ Job-Training Program for Youth

Kentucky Highlands, Kentucky, EZ

A new training center has been developed for 16- to 24-year-old residents of the Clinton and Wayne Counties EZ. The center, called BRITE—Bringing Real Improvement Through Employment—is a one-stop center for people who need employment, education, and training but are not currently enrolled in school. There are six other centers of this type in the United States, but this is the first one located in a rural area.

Participants are evaluated as they enter the program and receive an individualized service strategy to meet their needs and help them find jobs. In addition to education and training, the center also helps them with childcare and transportation.

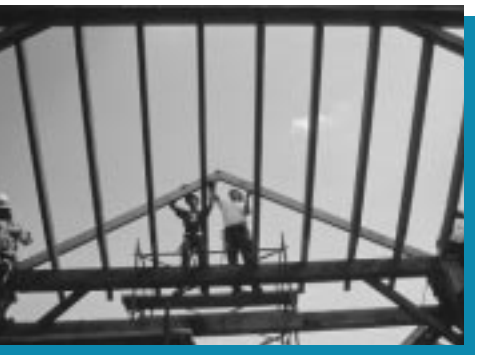
Rudy Thomas, the director of the Clinton EZ Community, Inc., says the center has been warmly received by local officials and employers. Employers say the program sends them new employees who have the attitude and skills needed to succeed on the job. All participants must complete a 2-week life skills and employability skills class before entering job training. In addition to classes for helping people earn a general equivalency diploma or high school diploma, the center offers the following job training programs: YouthBuild, teaching the building trade; computers; medical office assistant; maintenance and operations; security guard; certified nurse's aide.

The center stays in touch with employers to develop other classes to meet the specific needs of future jobs. The EZ surveys area businesses and relies on an advisory committee to assist the center in discovering what employers are looking for in employees. After participants finish their training, BRITE works to place them in jobs and follows up with them to make sure they continue to succeed on the job. People who finish the program get a bonus. If their performance is good in their jobs, they get another bonus.

"We want to teach them that there is a reward to working and learning more," says Lee Butcher, case manager for BRITE. "The training and new jobs will pay more in the long run."

The program began in July 1998 and has already evaluated, trained, and placed 53 participants in jobs through December 1998. The center plans to serve 454 out-of-school rural youth during the next 2 years. The program is assisted by a U.S. Department of Labor grant.

For more information contact Jerry Rickett, Kentucky Highlands EZ, at 606–864–5175.



Building Trade Boosts Local Employment in Macon Ridge

Macon Ridge, Louisiana, EC

Macon Ridge Economic Development Region, the lead entity in the Macon Ridge EC, formed a community development corporation (CDC) to take the lead in housing development within the EC. A milestone was reached in March 1998 when the Macon Ridge CDC received its designation as a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO). This CHDO designation enabled the EC to accomplish a major benchmark in its strategic plan. Subsequent to the designation, Macon Ridge CDC received approval of three applications to develop multifamily and elderly housing that will add 70 new housing units to the EC.

The EC plans to use its Building Trades Job Training Program, part of its strategic plan, to provide construction personnel for the housing development. EC residents will receive on-the-job training while enhancing the housing opportunities within their EC. This Building Trades Job Training Program is a partnership between the Macon Ridge EC and Motivation Education Training (MET), Inc., a Texas-based organization. MET focuses on finding education, housing, and other opportunities for agricultural workers.

Chip Rogers, Vice President of the EC, says that this project "enables us to take the trained EC residents and provide them with job opportunities through the housing development program." The project provides the community with a stable source of jobs.

For more information contact Chip Rogers, Vice President, Macon Ridge EC, at 318–757–3033.

Local Ingenuity Brings Shipbuilding Plant Up River

Northeast Louisiana Delta, Louisiana, EC

The economic life of Tallulah, Mississippi, changed forever one winter evening in 1998 when Moses Williams sat down to watch the television news. As the camera panned the New Orleans seaport, the newscaster announced that Avondale Industries, the sixth largest shipbuilding firm in the country, was looking for expansion sites in Louisiana. Williams, president of the Northeast Louisiana Community Development Corporation, knew exactly where he wanted Avondale to expand.

Williams called Tallulah Mayor Theodore Lindsey, and in February 1998 both sent letters to Avondale asking the company to consider opening a shipbuilding plant along the Mississippi River in Tallulah. That summer, the deal was closed and the Northeast Louisiana Delta EC had a new employer.

"When we started talking about a shipyard, people thought we had all gone crazy, because shipbuilding is supposed to happen on the coast," says Williams.

Williams soon discovered that because Avondale uses a modular approach to building its ships, the company could produce ship parts off the coast and then move those parts to New Orleans to be assembled. That made Tallulah a good can-

didate for the plant, he says. In their letters to Avondale, Williams and Lindsey pointed out Tallulah's other advantages: It already had a port facility on the Mississippi and a trained labor force of welders who were ready to work. In fact, says Williams, Tallulah had more welders than local businesses could employ. All had received their training through special courses offered at the local campus of Louisiana Technical College.

"The college had actually been catching flack for producing too many welders," says Williams. "Once those welders were trained, they couldn't find jobs here, so they were leaving Tallulah and going down south for part of the year to work offshore."

When Avondale executives showed interest in Tallulah's port facility, State and local officials got involved to induce the company to make its move. Avondale agreed to invest $2 million to renovate an existing building on the port. The Louisiana State Legislature contributed $1.3 million to make infrastructure improvements so the port could accommodate Avondale's operation. The company also qualified for Federal and State tax credits.

Avondale employs 75 local residents and expects to increase its workforce to 200 by the end of 1999. The new jobs are a welcome shot in the arm for an area where "unemployment is always double digit and always more than twice the State average," says Williams. Those jobs may be just the beginning of economic development success for Tallulah, as the shipbuilding operation attracts other businesses to the city. Not long after receiving a firm commitment from Avondale, the EC lent $118,000 to LAPCO, a sewing company that specializes in making jackets for welders. Intrigued by the possibility of selling its product directly to the shipbuilder, LAPCO leased a vacant, city-owned building and used its EC loan to purchase factory equipment. LAPCO, which opened its Tallulah plant in August 1998, expects to employ 50 to 100 EC residents.

For more information contact Moses Williams, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Northeast Louisiana Community Development Corporation, at 318–574–0995.

Capital Injection Helps Small Businesses Thrive

Rio Grande Valley, Texas, EZ

The EZ established this community investment fund in the Hidalgo County subzone to revitalize the local economy. The revolving loan fund has helped create and retain jobs through capital injection into 22 family-owned businesses for startup and expansion. "This investment fund gives local entrepreneurs who are trying hard to develop their businesses an opportunity to get into the mainstream with local private lenders," says Bonnie Gonzalez, Chief Executive Officer of the EZ.

One example of the program's success is the family-owned business, "Off the Coast," which makes rattan furniture. This business has created seven jobs, expanded its marketing range from Rio Grande City to Port Isabel, and is in the

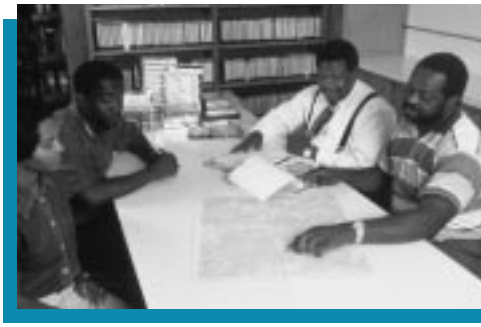
process of obtaining an agreement with a local furniture wholesaler. Other family-owned businesses include a bakery, a flower shop, and several restaurants.

For more information contact Yvonne "Bonnie" Gonzalez, Chief Executive Officer, Rio Grande Valley EZ, at 956–514–4000.

Business Center Makes Loans and Teaches Lessons

Albuquerque, New Mexico, EC

More than 200 small businesses in the Albuquerque, New Mexico, EC have received technical assistance through the New Mexico Business Resource Center. Fifty businesses have acquired startup loans through the center since it opened in 1996. However, the lessons city officials have learned from the center may constitute its most valuable impact on the EC.



The economic development multiservice center operates in a city-owned building in the EC's South Fourth Street Corridor, a 13-block area that the City of Albuquerque has been trying to revitalize for the past 4 years. Convinced from the start that access to capital is the major obstacle to small business development, four of the center's five partners assembled an impressive array of equity sources for entrepreneurs. The New Mexico Community Development Loan Fund (NMCDLF) and the Women's Economic Self-Sufficiency Team (WESST Corp) jointly administer three revolving loan funds capitalized at $14.5 million. The South Valley Small Business Development Center and the Industry Development Corporation help small and medium-sized businesses find seed capital. A fifth partner, Project Phoenix, provides computer training to low-income persons. All the partners provide technical assistance.

The City of Albuquerque bought, renovated, and maintains the center's building with $56,000 from the EC, $150,000 from CDBG funds, and $200,000 from the New Mexico Legislature Capital Fund. The EC also capitalized the South Valley Revolving Loan Fund with $259,000. The Micro Enterprise Loan Fund and a Pocket of Opportunity Loan Fund received $300,000 and $800,000, respectively, from the city's Housing and Neighborhood Economic Development Fund. WESST Corp and NMCDLF leveraged almost $13 million to supplement all three funds.

"The city provides very low-cost rent to encourage center partners to locate there, stay there, and cooperate with one another," says EC Coordinator Sylvia Fettes. "Our aim was not only to assist our EC entrepreneurs but also to encourage businesses to locate in the EC and to create employment for EC residents. The center is located in a very blighted corridor. We wanted to eliminate that blight."

The center has made a substantial number of loans and helped create 88 new jobs in the EC. It has also provided a valuable learning experience to all its partners, who discovered that it takes more than capital to make a business succeed. Primarily, says Ms. Fettes, it takes much more technical assistance than originally anticipated. It also takes a holistic approach to solving community problems that inhibit business investment.

"This involves reducing crime, bringing customers to a neighborhood so a business has an opportunity to be successful, and making sure entrepreneurs understand fully what it takes to run a small business," says Fettes. "Now we are setting our

sights on creating a multifaceted program that attempts to address all those issues." For more information contact Sylvia Fettes, EC Coordinator, at 505–768–2860.

Atlanta OSCS Exceeds Goals for Service and Assistance

Atlanta, Georgia, EZ

The Atlanta One-Stop Capital Shop (AOSCS) celebrated its second anniversary in February and is well on its way to fulfilling its mission of leveraging public and private resources and providing centralized and comprehensive technical assistance to Atlanta's emerging and expanding small businesses.

Client volumes have far exceeded expectations. The original program design called for serving five clients daily and making two loans a month. AOSCS currently averages 40 clients per day. Volume is projected to almost double this year due to a number of new initiatives and more intensive outreach efforts.

Since AOSCS opened its doors, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) reports that 105 loans have been made within the Atlanta EZ, resulting in more than $28 million in new investment through SBA alone.

AOSCS offers a convenient and resourceful way to collect information about starting or operating a business. "EZ residents can access our services, use our computer lab, and work with a business counselor all under one roof," says Joseph R. Reid, Executive Director of the Atlanta EZ Corporation.

From a population of nearly 50,000 residents, the Atlanta EZ Corporation has calculated that 5,000 individuals are potential entrepreneurs interested in starting or expanding business ventures. AOSCS is currently serving 60 to 80 percent of the Atlanta EZ's total entrepreneurial market.

AOSCS and SBA staff spend most of their time working with EZ businesses and potential entrepreneurs, implementing special initiatives, and fielding inquiries about locating existing or potential businesses within the EZ.

AOSCS has awarded 52 technical assistance grants to EZ businesses ranging from $250 to $2,000 for services such as store layout and design and for hiring EZ professionals to provide legal and business services. "The Atlanta One-Stop Capital Shop is an excellent resource for EZ residents who are interested in making their dreams of opening a business a reality," concludes Mr. Reid.

Plans include development of a microloan program—the "Buy Atlanta Campaign"—and organizing a Chamber of Neighborhood Commerce.

For more information contact Amy Triandiflou, Assistant to the Executive Director, Atlanta EZ Corporation, at 404–853–7370.

Canisius College Puts Small Businesses on the Map

Buffalo, New York, EC

Without a good map, one can get hopelessly lost. Knowing that, the Urban Community Service Program (UCSP) at Canisius College collaborated with the

Center for Entrepreneurship, the Office of Urban Initiatives, and Buffalo's Federal Enterprise Community to survey and train small businesses. This research and training project began in 1997 with a 40-page survey mailed to 1,200 businesses in the Ellicott, Marsten, and University districts, 80 percent of which lie in Buffalo's EC.

Canisius College students helped merge the responses into a database that mapped economic activity and allowed researchers to develop a no-cost, custom-designed training program for 10 to 15 small businesses. "The survey identified a void that was not being filled by other agencies and was able to target training at appropriate economic sectors," says Craig Rogers, UCSP Program Director.

A team of students and faculty goes onsite to assess a firm's business techniques and develop a business plan that would cost approximately $5,000 if a private consultant were hired. The business gets the information it needs to succeed, and Canisius students get hands-on experience in enterprise development, including the chance to create maps using state-of-the-art geographic information system software.

The centerpiece of the program is the 12-week Urban Entrepreneurial Training Program (UETP). Last year 22 businesses with an average gross receipts of $745,000 and an average of 7 employees participated in the program. This year UETP will continue under a grant from the Coleman Foundation.

Veronica Hogle, who started her home-based business, Finding Funds and Getting Grants, in 1997, says, "I came out of the program in 1998 reenergized and fired up to go with my business plan." She helps a number of large and small non-profit organizations secure financial resources. She recently won a grant from the HUD Community Development Block Grant program to train Buffalo businesses in grantsmanship.

UCSP has also attracted 200 small business owners to 5 forums on taxes, finances, and marketing. It publishes *UCSP Update*, which has a circulation of 1,700, and hosts speaker series, receptions, and open houses. UCSP's plan is to survey and extend services to three more districts using New York State funding. "The master plan," says Rogers, "is to cover all nine districts."

For more information contact Paula Rosner, Executive Director, Federal EC of Buffalo, at 716–842–6923.

Small Childcare Business Has Big Impact on EC

Charlotte, North Carolina, EC

Ann Knox of Charlotte, North Carolina, was convinced that if she could open a 24-hour childcare center along West Boulevard in Charlotte's EC, she could help area residents take jobs that required evening and night work. Moreover, by hiring area residents and training them as childcare workers, she thought she'd be able to have an impact on the neighborhood by helping to shrink the welfare rolls.

It never occurred to Knox that all of this might be too much to expect from a small business in a depressed neighborhood. She simply wouldn't take no for an answer,

however, even if fulfilling her dream meant piecing together a financing package that would impress most community development agencies. It included loans of $125,000 from a local bank, $83,000 from the U.S. Small Business Administration, $52,000 from Charlotte's "City within a City" program, and $20,000 from the EC. The EC money helped Knox buy the building's security system, appliances, computers, and office equipment. The balance was used to cover payroll expenses during the business' first month.

Knox was true to her word. Almost all of the 150 children served by the West Boulevard Child Care Center since it opened in March 1998 have been residents of the EC, says Theodore G. White, West Enterprise Community, Inc.'s Executive Director. About 90 percent of the center's 14 employees are EC residents, who Knox says now have the hope, confidence, and structure to become self-reliant.

"One of the barriers keeping many of our residents from gaining better employment was childcare," says White. "Many times, childcare is available during first shift, but not necessarily during second and third shift. In order to gain better employment, many of our parents are having to work second- and third-shift jobs and this childcare service provides them the opportunity to take those jobs."

For more information contact Theodore G. White, Executive Director, West Enterprise Community, Inc., at 704–373–2900.

Public/Private Partnerships Foster Business in the Dallas EC

Dallas, Texas, EC

The Dallas, Texas, EC has implemented an innovative economic development program that focuses on public and private partners for new business and community development projects. Since April 1996, $1 million in EC funds have been used. The money is set aside for businesses to locate and develop in the EC. The program is structured so that every $4 of private investment will yield $1 of public investment, thus creating a win/win condition for the businesses and the community. To be awarded this money, a company must agree to locate in the EC. For every $15,000 of EC funding granted to a company, the company must agree to create one job for an EC resident. The job must pay at least $6 per hour and provide benefits to the employee. This requirement is significant because 40 percent of the Dallas EC's population lives below the poverty line (population 95,315 people, 19.8-square-mile area). The fact that the company makes no financial concessions over and above its normal hiring practices makes this arrangement extremely attractive to new and expanding businesses. The program has expended $917,000 and has leveraged $11 million. The program initially was committed to creating 67 jobs, but has more than doubled this target by creating 146 jobs.

In addition to developing existing businesses, a Business Micro Lending Program has been created to stimulate new business development in the EC. This program provides microloans of $200 to $5,000 to startup businesses. On August 26, 1998, the Dallas City Council authorized $50,000 from the General Fund to match the $50,000 in EC funds apportioned for this program. New capital is far from the only

benefit afforded these new businesses. To further enhance and ensure the success of these up-and-coming enterprises, the program provides the new businesses with technical assistance and credit repair. Accion Texas, the microlender, uses the bank credit line to underwrite and service the loans. Once the borrower has satisfied the terms of the initial bank loan, the borrower has established not only a credit line with the bank, but a positive payment history that the business can use to establish accounts with other businesses for goods and services. Chase Bank, BancOne, and NationsBank are all partners in this program.

Since the inception of these programs, only 1 of the 19 businesses developed in the EC has failed. The EC has commitments from a majority of the businesses to continue to hire EC residents. The success of this program demonstrates what can be accomplished when affluent institutions commit to reinvesting in the community by assisting smaller businesses.

For more information contact Mark Obeso, EC Manager, at 214–670–5047.

Incubator Reduces Gamble in Small Business Ventures

Las Vegas, Nevada, EC

A brood of small businesses is incubating at the Business Center in the Las Vegas Enterprise Park. With a 20-percent failure rate in the first 5 years, small businesses require special care. “There is a crying need for this kind of help,” says Peggy Proestos, Senior Development Project Officer at Neighborhood Services Center. The incubator, funded by the Wells Fargo Bank and the South Nevada EC (SNEC), was 100-percent occupied when it opened March 2, 1998. The waiting list is growing.

Nested in the 17,000-square-foot site are 10 small businesses—8 of them minority owned—that have their own offices. SNEC subsidizes tenants’ monthly rent on a graduated basis. Tenants initially pay one-third of the rent; in the second year, they split the rent, which includes furniture, file cabinet, telephone, and computer. For an extra $50 per month, tenants can use the center’s reception services, conference room, copy and fax machines, laser printer, and private storage units, and receive business training and counseling.

Three industrial clients rent part-time or shared office space. They share a desk but have private storage areas and access to many of the same services. They can also use the conference room and training center. A new program, Incubator Without Walls, serves home-based business owners who need support services and a professional setting in which to meet clients.

By the end of the first year of their 2-year tenancy, business owners are required to purchase a city business license, attend six business development seminars, write a business plan, and obtain property and liability insurance. They attend monthly roundtable discussions that also offer the opportunity to network and exchange services. Local training and educational organizations offer workshops in recordkeeping, writing business plans, and marketing. The Business Information Center, the first in the State, will move in this year to provide

enhanced training. "The center has become the nexus for small business training in the entire valley," Proestos says.

Danelle Reddy, owner of All-American Court Reporter, graduated last year in a record 5 months after hiring 9 people. House of Flava, a hip-hop clothing business, uses the center as its corporate headquarters. The owners are thinking about graduating, but as Proestos says, "most of the businesses benefit so much they don't want to move out."

For more information contact Sharon Segerblom, Director, Neighborhood Services Department, at 702–229–4943.

Big City Comes Through With Tax Breaks for Inner-City Businesses

Los Angeles, California, EZ

Tax breaks for businesses are a basic aspect of the EZ/EC strategy that can be challenging to implement at the local level. So it is notable that the citizens of Los Angeles, one of the Nation's biggest, most complex cities, have voted to exempt qualified businesses in its EZ from the city's business tax.

"When we present to businesspeople the fact that they will [not have] business taxes for the first 5 years of their existence in the Zone, their eyes light up," says Rockard (Rocky) Delgadillo, Deputy Mayor of Los Angeles. "This program causes businesspeople to look beyond the initial stumbling block of negative perceptions and to give inner-city sites the same serious consideration they give to other sites." The new tax break effort, known as the Los Angeles Tax-Free Zone, was initiated by Mayor Richard J. Riordan, authorized by the City Council, and approved by voters as an amendment to the municipal code. It is being implemented by the city clerk's office and promoted by LA's Business Team, a task force of the mayor's office.

To qualify for the tax exemption, a business must be relocating or starting up in the EZ; pay all of its workforce a living wage as defined by the city; provide urgently needed goods or services; prove that it is investing in its workers by providing benefits to them; and, if a new firm, hire at least 50 percent of its workers from within or near the EZ. New businesses locating in the EZ may receive a 5-year exemption from city business taxes on gross receipts based on annual sales. Businesses that relocate from other parts of the city or businesses currently located in the EZ will have their city business taxes frozen at the current level for 5 years.

For more information contact Alfonso Salazar, Director, LA's Business Team, at 213–847–2666.

Old Mill Yard Helps Incubate New EC Businesses

Manchester, New Hampshire, EC

A former mill yard that once employed two-thirds of the residents of Manchester, New Hampshire, is again becoming the center of economic life in the city's EC. Once abandoned and deteriorating, the renovated Amoskeag Mill Yard now houses a variety of businesses, including local college and professional offices, fash-

ionable restaurants, and manufacturing operations. On the fourth floor of one Mill Yard building, the EC-funded Amoskeag Business Incubator is working hard to ensure that the economic revival lasts well into the future.

The incubator has helped 18 local business ventures get off the ground since it opened in 1996. New Hampshire College operates the incubator with help from a $175,000 EC grant, $200,000 in CDBG funds, $25,000 from the Bean Foundation, and its own in-kind donations. During the past 3 years, the incubator has created 33 new jobs in the EC and saved another 75 jobs.

Incubator tenants include a distributor of greenhouses and accessories, a bridal wear designer, a financial services company, and a payroll service. These and other businesses pay market rents for office space and receive a number of services, including technical assistance in starting and maintaining their businesses. They share the incubator's secretary and use the incubator's conference room and business equipment at no extra charge. They also gain access to something increasingly hard to come by in Manchester: custom-sized office space.

"If they only need 100 square feet, that's what they get and what they pay for," says EC Coordinator Amanda Parenteau. "It's really the only place around where a business can get space that fits its needs. Usually small businesses pay for more space than they really need."

To qualify for the incubator, entrepreneurs must write a business plan that is acceptable to the incubator board. The incubator provides technical assistance to help business owners develop and write the plan. Such assistance is also available to other EC businesses, even if they are not Mill Yard tenants. Once the incubator becomes profitable, it hopes to supplement its current services with a program that offers grants to help entrepreneurs get started in business.

"The center is there to help businesses in the EC flourish," says Parenteau. "The goal is for these businesses to grow strong enough to make it on their own and eventually leave the facility."

For more information contact Amanda Parenteau, EC Coordinator, at 603–624–2111.

EC Helps One Business Return to Its Roots

Muskegon, Michigan, EC

When the Muskegon Construction Company moved to its new location on the corner of West Western Avenue and Pine Street in Muskegon, Michigan, it wasn't just to get back to its roots. The move was part of a citywide plan to encourage downtown waterfront redevelopment within its EC.

"We were the first ones to move into the newly commercialized area," says Gary Post, President of Muskegon Construction Company, a general contracting firm that has served the Muskegon area for more than 70 years. "Returning to downtown Muskegon makes good economic sense and positively impacts on the city's effort to redevelop its urban area."

The company had previously been located in several downtown sites, including its last location in the heart of a secure Muskegon neighborhood. "It is easier to go into the suburbs and build on a clean piece of property," says Post. "But we chose not to do that." Instead, the company decided to move into the new 5,000-square-foot facility that provides space for growth.

As part of the relocation plan, Muskegon Construction purchased for $20,000 from the City of Muskegon a 1-acre parcel that had been vacant for more than 30 years. The company received a tax abatement of 50 percent over 5 years on real and personal property. The city also agreed to a minor environmental cleanup of the area.

Muskegon Construction's lead in helping the downtown area is beginning to pay off. Several businesses, including a credit union, a local university, and retail shops, plan to relocate to the area. "Our relocation to the downtown area is a reflection of our corporate response to the community," says Post. "A community is only as good as its weakest link, which in our case was the core area located in downtown Muskegon."

With the success of this effort, the City of Muskegon is continuing its plans for additional redevelopment efforts, including an eastward extension of Shoreline Drive, which the city hopes will be completed by the end of 2000.

For more information contact Gary Post, President, Muskegon Construction Company, at 616–726–3177.

Loan Program Provides Big Assistance to Small Businesses

Muskegon, Michigan, EC

Want to have your own business? This American dream is quickly becoming a reality for residents of Muskegon and Muskegon Heights, thanks to the Microenterprise Loan Fund, which gives small entrepreneurs a chance to launch and grow a business in the EC.

"We are interested in helping very small businesses in the area, especially home-based operations," says Jean Clingman-Scott, Executive Director of Neighborhood Investment, which administers the loan program. "So far, we have given 16 loans to local entrepreneurs whose interests cover a wide variety of business opportunities." Among those who have benefited from the loan program are retail shop owners, service agency providers, and machinists who needed equipment. Some small businesses have been very creative. "One client requested a loan to purchase video games so that he could host tournaments for kids in neighborhoods around the West Michigan area," recalls Clingman-Scott. "He showed us how this business would succeed by serving 200 to 300 children at one time and we thought this was a great idea."

By offering loans from $500 to $10,000, the program helps people legitimize the work they already do, such as providing foster care and childcare. "We have found

that a large number of people have particular talents, but they have not been able to translate these skills into an ongoing business enterprise," says Clingman-Scott.

To help potential owners develop solid business plans, the program offers educational assistance prior to completion of the loan application. Training covers all components necessary for a business plan, including planning and implementation, analysis of what elements will be incorporated into the business, inventory control, identification of suppliers, and cost and pricing issues. "We spent 10 hours of education for every 1 hour of loan application," says Clingman-Scott.

A loan committee of two commercial bankers, two business owners, and two representatives from the City of Muskegon oversees the loan application process, and funds are available within a month of submission. Once the loan application has been approved and the loan has been guaranteed by the owner, a team of mentors from the community—including representatives from the local chamber of commerce, local community colleges, and business professionals—assists the new business owner during the first year.

Repayment of the loans varies from business to business. "We don't want to kill a business by using an inflexible loan payment system," says Clingman-Scott. "The payments are geared to the individual business and business owner." To date, the project has given out more than $120,000 in loans to very small business owners. Total funding for the project is a $250,000 grant from the EC.

For more information contact Jean Clingman-Scott, Executive Director, Neighborhood Investment, at 616–727–0809.

Boilers Boost Economic Development in the Bronx

New York, New York, EZ

When A.L. Eastmond & Sons president Leon Eastmond said, "A.L. Eastmond is committed to employing and retaining workers in the Bronx so we can continue our expansion into new markets," few realized that the gravity of those words would be surmounted by a level of diligence and energy from the entire City of New York, especially the EZ. A.L. Eastmond & Sons is a major manufacturer of industrial boilers and steel storage tanks. Started in Harlem in 1925 as a small welding shop, A.L. Eastmond & Sons is now located in Hunts Point in the Bronx, within the EZ.

When Eastmond wanted to expand the plant and establish a greater national presence, he found that access to capital was scarce. An additional 60,000 square feet of production space was needed to expand A.L. Eastmond & Sons' existing facility to accommodate 50 more skilled workers. The company's resources had already been drained by recent expansion efforts, and market conditions would not allow lenders to provide it with $2.18 million to complete the project. In addition to this, A.L. Eastmond & Sons needed money to provide the complex training necessary to expand its workforce.

The project would involve the acquisition and renovation of another building. The former home of Western Bed at 440 and 444 Tiffany Street, four blocks southeast

of A.L. Eastmond & Sons' existing plant, was available. With $250,000 in private capital, A.L. Eastmond & Sons was able to approach the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (BOEDC), the administrator of the Bronx EZ, and secure a $450,000 loan. Once this money was in place, A.L. Eastmond & Sons found itself with an additional dilemma: training 50 employees in the skills needed to make the new facility productive. BOEDC granted A.L. Eastmond & Sons $350,000 to train 25 EZ residents for these high-paying union jobs. An additional $100,000 low-interest loan was secured from Fleet Bank through the Empire State Development Corporation, New York State's economic development agency. These funds were used to buy the space at 1190 East 156th Street, directly behind A.L. Eastmond & Sons' existing headquarters on Leggett Avenue.

Congressman Jose E. Serrano (D-NY, 16th District) summarized this overall effort when he said, "We are thrilled that A.L. Eastmond & Sons has once again demonstrated its commitment to the South Bronx community by expanding its operations and providing additional jobs to the Bronx Empowerment Zone residents. I am confident that the Bronx Federal Empowerment Zone initiative will continue encouraging business growth and attracting new investors who will make South Bronx their home."

For further information contact Jose Ithier, BOEDC, at 718–590–3549.

A Community Is Fed When a Grocery Store Owner Gets Help in Buying a Building

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, EC

For 11 years Charles Garner owned a grocery store, Budget Food, in the Capitol Hill section of Oklahoma City. In November 1998 Garner learned that the owner of the building he was leasing had sold the property to an out-of-State buyer who planned to double the store's rent. Suddenly Garner found himself out of business, but not out of hope.

With the help of the Oklahoma City Community Action Agency, Garner was able to purchase an abandoned building 500 yards from the site of his old building and begin renovating it into a bigger and better Budget Food store. Garner was able to purchase the property with the help of a $200,000 loan funded through the Oklahoma City EC.

According to Dick Lee, Executive Director of the Capitol Hill Main Street Program, Garner's experience has been a textbook study in how to run a successful business, so he was an ideal candidate for an EC loan. "When Garner first opened 11 years ago," says Mr. Lee, "70 percent of his customers were retired people. Then the community changed and the retired folks left while the Hispanic population grew. As this was happening, Garner adapted his products to the changing demographics of the neighborhood, continuing to provide the community with a valuable service while running a successful business."

Garner adapted to the point that, by the time he was forced to move out of the original Budget Food location, his store was considered the most successful ethnic market in the city, one of the few places where the Hispanic population could shop

for the goods they favored. Garner estimates that in the 11 years he was open at the previous site his customer base went from 70-percent retired to 70-percent Hispanic. "I've learned to adjust to what my people around me want, rather than me trying to sell them what I want them to have."

One of the stipulations in the EC loan was that the people he hired to work at the new store must be bilingual. That was not a problem because the original Budget Food's staff came from the neighborhood and were already bilingual. All Garner had to do was to offer them their jobs back. In this way, the opening of the new Budget Food store has not only restored a much-appreciated service to the community but has put a group of people who had lost their jobs back to work.

The new store will give Garner, who grew up in the community and has lived there his entire life, 2,500 more square feet of floor space than he had before and will allow him to stock hundreds of additional products preferred by his Hispanic customers. "We're real good for each other," says Garner about his relationship with the EC program. "Together we've taken an eyesore out of the community and given it back a viable business."

For more information contact Dick Lee, Executive Director, Capitol Hill Main Street Program, at 405–632–0133.

Lending Circle Helps Dreamers Become Entrepreneurs

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, EC

"The Lending Circle has been an answer to my prayers," says Joyce Larkins, who now owns and operates her own home daycare center, An Angel's Touch. With continued assistance from the program, she hopes to expand her business into a larger daycare center by the end of 1999. Larkins is just one of several beneficiaries of this program that targets the poorest residents in the Oklahoma City EC.

The Lending Circle was created to assist people in Oklahoma and Canadian Counties who want to be self-starters but are in need of a helping hand to get their businesses going. The program is an effort to reach very low-income individuals and give them access to capital. Applicants who qualify for loans are eligible for up to $2,500 the first time, with future loans available in increments of $1,500. The maximum amount a participant can receive is $15,000.

The program forms groups of 8 to 10 people who train together and then decide together which circle members will get small loans to start entrepreneurial activities out of their homes. Each member of the Lending Circle guarantees that each loan within their circle will be repaid.

The main attraction of the program is its high payback rate. "The secret to the payback rate is the peer lending and the coguaranteeing of loans," says Kristi Coker, Economic Development Coordinator with the Community Action Agency. "It is like a peer pressure situation to pay back the loan because everyone within the group wants the partners to succeed."

In addition to loans, participants receive training in management strategies and technical assistance to develop and expand their businesses. "The business

training, networking with other participants, and not to mention the loan funds, have helped me create new roads to success," says Irene Smith, who, like Larkins, has used Lending Circle financing to open a daycare center. Other businesses the program has helped start include a styling salon, a hauling service, and a mobile detailing service.

How successful has the program been? "We've had 20 clients who've graduated and don't need our help anymore," says Chandra Smotherman, who administers the program for the Community Action Agency. Smotherman says the program is distinguished by its goal to provide people who have the talent to be successful with a chance that they might never have received. In recognition of how successful Larkins has been, she was nominated for a Small Business Association Welfare-to-Work Entrepreneur of the Year award. Another program success story involves a woman who has expanded from selling gift baskets of bath soap within the EC to selling over the Internet.

For more information contact Chandra Smotherman, Program Manager, the Lending Circle, Community Action Agency of Oklahoma City, at 405–232–0199.

Faith-Based Community Development Corporation Creates New Businesses and Expands Existing Businesses

Ouachita Parish, Louisiana, EC

The banner in the Apostolic Lighthouse Church reads: "Everyone Dreams Dreams. Few Live Them. Welcome to Ours." Rev. Alvin Walker, Pastor of the Apostolic Lighthouse Church, sees greater Monroe as an area overwhelmed by the spirit of poverty. Rev. Walker and his church decided to form a nonprofit group, Renewal, Inc., for revival and to bring people out of poverty. Renewal's current focus is entrepreneurship, with a small business support group and youth entrepreneurship training. Everyone is welcome to apply, especially EC residents.

The small business support group currently has 29 individuals interested in business, including many husband/wife teams. Eight businesses are up and running. Rev. Walker provides overall direction and spiritual and material support for each family or individual. The Ouachita EC's (OEC's) business team and partnerships and the North East Louisiana University-Small Business Development Center (NLU-SBDC) provide much of the hands-on business assistance to help each business owner to realize his or her potential. In effect, Renewal and OEC are operating a full service "incubator without walls."

The first youth entrepreneurship class for 16- to 24-year-olds will graduate in May 1999. Twenty-two youth began the class in October 1998 and 11 serious young business entrepreneurs remain. Three already have small businesses up and running, while others have created business plan outlines. Renewal and OEC are already preparing and recruiting, with assistance from NLU-SBDC, for the next class to take place during the summer. Rev. Walker is enthusiastic about the discussions he overhears of people whose vision is no longer of "working a second job, but of business ownership." As to faith-based involvement in the material world, he quotes the Bible's Book of James in saying, "Faith without works is dead."

For more information contact Rev. Alvin Walker, Executive Director of Renewal, Inc., at 318–387–0686.

Heart of American Street EZ Remediated and Developed

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania/Camden, New Jersey, EZ

"Last year's biggest success," says Dan Gundersen, "was the Empowerment Zone's first new construction in 15 years." At the center of the American Street corridor lie three strategic acres that had been the bane of city leaders for more than 10 years. Formerly home to Sovereign Oil, the site was an environmental disaster, "a godforsaken parcel of land everyone had given up on," says Gundersen, Director of Economic Development for the EZ.

Down the street, the second largest distributor of Asian foods in the Mid-Atlantic region had just received its walking papers. The property had been bought and Asia Foods had to vacate in 8 months. The food distributor—the employer of 46 employees, the majority of them EZ residents—had to decide whether to leave the city and its 30,000-square-foot warehouse or to stay and build.

Bringing the site and distributor together resulted in a $4.2-million project. The city and the EZ convinced Asia Foods' principal owners to stay. Eyeing the contaminated site down the street, they decided to remediate. The EZ helped to secure $900,000 in State funds and the city provided $300,000. The State Department of Environmental Protection, the Coast Guard, the Licenses and Inspections division, and other city services descended on the area. Prostitutes and drug addicts were moved out of an abandoned office building. Above- and below-ground storage tanks were removed. The ground, which had once oozed so much oil that the street had to be barricaded, was drained.

Remediation of the site was finished in 90 days. Construction of a new warehouse began in December 1998. Gundersen says people watched "dumbfounded" as, over the next 3 months, the foundation was laid, girders rose, and the roof went on. The site was dedicated on March 23, 1999. The pace at which the project progressed was due to "the impeccable timing of State and city agencies working together," says Gundersen. The EZ provided $500,000 for construction of the new facility in addition to more than $1 million from the City of Philadelphia's development authority.

The principal owners of Asia Foods plan to hire a minimum of 24 additional people from the EZ. They are partnering with other companies in the EZ and envision Phase II, a plan to bring in six to eight small distributors of fresh produce, fish, and other foods to complement their primarily dry and canned food enterprise.

For more information contact Daniel C. Gundersen, Director of Economic Development, Philadelphia EZ, at 215–683–2025.

Liberties Construction Brings Jobs and Growth to Zone

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania/Camden, New Jersey, EZ

John Wallace and his three partners capitalized on their combined 80 years of experience to become, in a few short years, a true catalyst to economic growth in the American Street area of the EZ. In 1995 each partner contributed $1,500 and, with a $25,000 small business loan from the EZ's North Philadelphia Financial Partnership, they started Liberties Construction Corporation. For the past 2 years, Liberties has grossed more than $4.2 million.

Housed in a converted factory of more than 4,000 square feet, Liberties provides construction management services to the private sector and municipally affiliated organizations. Liberties has worked with the EZ community since 1995 to provide job training, create jobs, and revitalize the economy. Liberties employs 5 people full-time and uses 10 subcontractors with a total of 50 to 75 employees, about one-third of whom are minorities or EZ residents.

Many EZ residents are thankful for the job training and apprenticeship programs provided to and through subcontractors hired by Liberties. Danny Scott, a minority carpenter working for Liberties Construction, says, "You can get the basics in books, but they can't teach you how to deal with problems that come up. You have to figure that out on the job."

Wallace hopes to bring more minorities into the construction field. One idea is to team with the Philadelphia School District. The schools could provide training and education, especially in literacy. In turn, Liberties employees would work on future school building projects. "Literacy training," Wallace says, "could broaden the participation of Latinos in the construction field."

Liberties is looking to form joint venture partnerships like the one it formed with Barclay White, Inc. In a $2.6-million project completed in 1997, the two companies renovated six branch libraries for the Library Foundation. Liberties is also working to strengthen other EZ and minority-owned businesses. Wallace is initiating a new concept with the Omnimax Group, a group of seven minority contractors that is pooling its resources to increase bonding capacity. Collectively, the contractors can pursue larger opportunities than they can individually. Liberties has also established an informal network that connects less experienced companies with other minority or EZ businesses. Wallace currently works with 102 small contractors in Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties; Chester, Pennsylvania; and the State of Delaware.

Wallace recently purchased a paper product manufacturing company that was based in New York. This company, which will run three shifts, is slated to reopen in the EZ later this year. Wallace hopes to create 40 new jobs through these efforts during the next 6 to 8 months.

Liberties Construction continues to capitalize on its resources, making it the mentor and catalyst it is today in the EZ. As Wallace notes, "The City of Philadelphia is moving aggressively in the EZ arena to assist local businesses." He has responded in kind with his commitment to economic growth.

For more information contact John Wallace, Liberties Construction Corporation, at 215–978–5999.

Recycling the City From the Inside Out—Camden Draws New Business

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania/Camden, New Jersey, EZ

James Ansel, Liberty Concrete Products, Inc., Executive Vice President, says "We're essentially recycling the city from the inside out." Liberty Concrete, a for-profit concrete products manufacturer, is designed to have a social impact. It recycles material from Camden's decaying infrastructure while employing Camden residents to transform eyesores in the community.

Founder John Bartlett was looking for a new site for the company, originally based in Flourtown, Pennsylvania, and decided to move to Camden. Says Ansel, the EZ's "high degree of professionalism and willingness to work with us [helped us] overcome some of our concerns and problems and put incentives in place that made it possible for us to locate there."

Liberty Concrete plans to invest more than $8 million in the relocation. The city and the Camden EZ Corporation will contribute incentives, including tax breaks and a Federal grant, that will bring the total project funding to about $10 million.

Liberty Concrete will begin hiring its 35 employees early this year. Ansel hopes to reach full capacity in 5 years with 110 new production positions. These unionized jobs offer $8 to $16 per hour for laborers and more than $20 per hour for supervisors, with benefits and opportunities for advancement. Liberty has pledged that 80 percent of these new jobs will be available to EZ residents. "Outside of our initial management team, it's our desire to fill as many jobs locally as possible. I would say 90 jobs [out of 110] is a fair ballpark figure," Ansel says.

The labor pool is being developed through partnerships with the Camden County Workforce Investment Board and Save Our Waterfront, a prominent community-based organization. The two groups are working with Liberty Concrete to identify potential employees and design a customized training program. After the first 35 people have been hired, Liberty Concrete will promote from within the company.

For more information contact Brian Finney, City of Camden EZ Corporation, at 609–365–0300.

Roadmaps to Success: Entrepreneurs Receive Training in Camden

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania/Camden, New Jersey, EZ

Ericka Ayers has EZ-funded job training to thank for "providing me with the road map I need to make my dream possible." The road map was a 9-week course in small-business development she took in spring 1998. The Entrepreneurial Development Training Project (EDTP) taught her to write a business plan, manage finances, market her services, and obtain a microloan. Last fall Ayers, who works

days as a substitute teacher in the Camden School District, started Maid to Serve, a professional commercial and residential janitorial cleaning service.

In 1997 the City of Camden EZ Corporation provided the Latin American Economic Development Association (LAEDA) with $100,000 to expand EDTP to 25 participants per session. Thirty-one EZ residents have since been trained to develop business plans. During 1998 EDTP trained 52 promising entrepreneurs and assisted in the development of 27 businesses, 13 of which are in the Camden EZ.

LAEDA partners with the Cooperative Business Assistance Corporation (CBAC), which is involved in a $2-million small business loan initiative with the EZ to provide startup funds for entrepreneurs. CBAC borrowers are required to complete the entrepreneurial training course before receiving a loan, and EDTP graduates are referred to CBAC for loans.

EZ funds were used to recruit local residents and hire personnel and teachers for the EDTP training. LAEDA worked with the Hispanic Family Centers of Southern New Jersey to recruit participants at churches, community-based organizations, and nonprofit agencies. Invitational flyers were also mailed to every household.

Ayers plans to hire six people in 1999. After the training, EDTP gave her free technical assistance for 1 year. Because she completed the EDTP training, Ayers was selected to enter the Community Janitorial Venture's training program, which will give her additional training and access to commercial cleaning markets. She recently won a large subcontract to provide service to the Southern New Jersey headquarters of the U.S. Census Bureau.

For more information contact Brian Finney, City of Camden EZ Corporation, at 609–365–0300.

Manufacturing Company Produces Jobs

Springfield, Illinois, EC

"The emergence of the new business will provide for the creation of more than 100 new full-time positions. Fifty-one percent or more will be filled by individuals living in the EC," says Tim Rowles, Executive Director of the Springfield EC. The EC has teamed with the City of Springfield to assist new business ventures in the EC by providing a deferred loan in the amount of $250,000 to help with startup costs. Superior Walls of Central Illinois, Inc., a manufacturing company of precast concrete walls and foundation systems, is one such new business. The company is building a new, 31,500-square-foot facility on a 2-acre industrial site within the EC, which is designed to produce 600 foundations per year. Groundbreaking for construction of the manufacturing company took place on October 22, 1998, and operation of the business is scheduled for May 1, 1999.

Total cost of the project is $2.5 million. The following costs are being paid for by EC and CDBG funds ($125,000 from each): licensor training fee, licensor periodic inspections, costs associated with 15 training sites, training of personnel, an accounting system, a Computer Assistance Design Drawing (CADD) system, an office system, advertising literature, videos, displays, and legal costs.

Plant construction is now 85 to 90 percent complete and training for new employees has begun. Fifty new jobs will be created within the first 2 years that the company is open. Hourly wages will range from $8 to $19. Fifteen job types will be available including plant manager, equipment operator, carpenter, excavator, form setter, maintenance worker, finisher, sales representative, crane operator, office/clerical worker, CADD operator, mobile crane operator, superintendent, truck driver, and mechanic. Some newly hired EC residents will be able to walk to work once the business opens. Adding to the predicted success of this business is the fact that the owner presently has another successful construction company in the EC.

For more information contact Tim Rowles, Executive Director, Springfield EC, at 217–789–2377.

Williams Hill Project Increases Economic Opportunities for Businesses and Residents

St. Paul, Minnesota, EC

What do you do with 1,000 acres of undeveloped and underutilized land? The answer may come with the approach of developers in St. Paul, Minnesota, who have created the Williams Hill Project, a $10-million, development-ready industrial park to help growing manufacturing and light industrial businesses in the area.

Making this industrial dream come true was a challenge for the developers because the area was covered with more than 400 cubic yards of blight. In addition, the area had once been the site of a cemetery and a railroad, which made the cleanup even trickier and required more sensitivity. “When they mined the hill,” says John Young, Vice President of Redevelopment at the St. Paul Port Authority, “they found skeletons.”

Another unique aspect of the Williams Hill Project has been the technique used to raise funds for the development. “There are 10 sources of funds that took almost 5 years to assemble,” says Young. “One innovative financing note is that we borrowed $5.5 million from CDBG funds, which will be taken out by general obligation tax-increment finance bonds in 2003.”

Since 1996, when the property was acquired, the developers have made considerable progress on the project, and its impact on the local community has already been felt. “We had projected that the project would provide 350 new jobs,” says Young. “In reality, it has already produced twice that amount and more than half of the 650 jobs are brand new as a result of this project.” As part of the Neighborhood Brownfields Redevelopment Project, businesses located at Williams Hill must guarantee at least one job per 1,000 square feet of building space, that wages will be paid at rates of $8 per hour or more, and that at least 70 percent of the new hires will be St. Paul residents.

With the first occupant slated for June 1999, the Williams Hill Project is currently looking for new businesses and training initiatives. “We have sold five parcels so far,” says Young, “and three more are under construction.” Once completed, it is

estimated that the project will create new taxes of approximately $400,000 per year, and its potential for future impact on the city is unlimited.

The Williams Hill project is the most recent brownfield remediation. Funding was given through a $5.5 million CDBG grant from the City of St. Paul's Department of Planning and Economic Development. Additional funds came from the EC and other sources.

For more information contact John Young, Vice President of Redevelopment, St. Paul Port Authority, at 651–224–5686.

Educating and Assisting Entrepreneurs in Upper Manhattan

Upper Manhattan, New York, EZ

Upper Manhattan EZ residents have been given a valuable resource to assist their businesses with securing grants and funding. This resource is largely due to an innovative technical assistance (TA) program sponsored by the Upper Manhattan EZ (UMEZ) Development Corporation. This $1.5-million initiative is provided in partnership with local and citywide TA providers, including the Harlem Venture Group, The Institute for Not-for-Profit Management at Columbia University, the Harlem Partnership Center at the City College of New York, and the Baruch College School of Public Affairs of the City University of New York.

The program's primary goal is to increase the number of well-articulated proposals and business plans submitted to UMEZ and other funding sources by Upper Manhattan EZ residents, nonprofit organizations, and businesses. UMEZ would like to see an increase in funded projects and businesses in the EZ.

Participants in the TA program can receive assistance at one or more of three levels. The Basic Assistance program offers "one-stop workshops" that consist of a series of 3-hour sessions. These workshops, which are offered in both English and Spanish and are open to the public, consist of a wide range of topics to help UMEZ residents qualify for loans and grants under the EZ program. Participants are familiarized with the Business Resource and Investment Service Center (BRISC), a "one-stop capital shop" funded by UMEZ and the U.S. Small Business Administration. Topics covered in the workshops are UMEZ/BRISC funding criteria, UMEZ application instructions and requirements, developing a business plan (basic overview), compiling marketing research, and compiling relevant financial data.

The Intermediate Assistance program offers comprehensive training and preparation courses in full business plan development. These courses are also open to the public and are provided in both English and Spanish at least once each quarter. At the intermediate level, UMEZ partners with BRISC to offer specialized seminars in areas such as strategic marketing, computer technology skills, and financial analysis.

In the Advanced Assistance program, participants who have submitted applications for funding to UMEZ can receive one-on-one assistance. UMEZ also collaborates with the Columbia Business School's intensive management education program

to sponsor nonprofit middle managers and executives in courses designed to strengthen critical management and leadership skills.

This year UMEZ expects to serve 750 individuals and organizations in its business planning workshops and specialized seminars and support more than 30 individuals and organizations through customized one-on-one consultation.

Various other groups recognize the UMEZ TA program as a leader and partner in helping to provide EZ businesses with the assistance they need to grow and prosper. Deborah Sanders, Executive Director of the Harlem Venture Group (HVG), an organization founded to help minority entrepreneurs launch new businesses and strengthen existing ones, states, "It is crucial for community residents and entrepreneurs to be an integral part of the economic development changes taking place in Upper Manhattan. As a business organization, HVG is very excited about being able to provide its constituency with critical technical skills for business success. UMEZ has provided us with a unique opportunity to advance our organization's goals while addressing a great need."

One business that took advantage of this assistance is the Photographic Center of Harlem. Its Executive Director, Jim Belfon says, "What has come out of the UMEZ technical assistance program is an extremely marketable package, one worthy of support."

For more information contact Deborah Wright, Director, Upper Manhattan EZ Development Corporation, at 212–410–0030.

Small Business Development Center Expands Business in EC

City of Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, EC

"The Lock Haven University Small Business Development Center has been successful in [its] efforts to create jobs in the City of Lock Haven. Last year 75 jobs were created through the one-on-one consulting efforts of the Lock Haven University SBDC," says Dawn Datt, Director of the SBDC. Lock Haven University partners with the EC, the West Branch Technology Center, the Clinton County Economic Partnership, and the Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers to offer consulting and loans to small and startup businesses in the EC. One example of the center's success is its work with the Faber Burner manufacturing company. Started in 1997, the company has expanded from 9 to 15 jobs and plans for further expansion are in the works.

The center reported that it had a particularly good year in 1998. In 3 years the center has consulted with 290 clients, providing 2,580 consulting hours to small businesses. Clients have been approved for 27 loans for a total of $2,600,400 in financing, which has helped to create or retain more than 75 jobs in the EC.

In April 1998 the center was designated a subcenter of the Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers. This designation created additional funding in the amount of $50,000 from USDA. The USDA grant was combined with $134,000 in EC startup funds. Datt notes that with the initial EC funds and the center's success, the SBDC will be a permanent resource for small businesses that will last after the EC funds and designation end.

For more information contact Maria Boileau, Federal Enterprise Coordinator, Lock Haven EC, at 570–893–5907.

Business Promotion Project

McDowell County, West Virginia, EC

The McDowell County Action Network (McCAN) EC worked with Federal, State, and local officials to put together a major loan package of $1,084,143 aimed at upgrading and diversifying the local economy. The funding comes from the Rural Business Cooperative Service's Intermediary Relending Program and serves as a source of financing for small and medium-sized businesses. "The funds can be used for business startups and expansion, for working capital and expansion, and for working capital and fixed asset purchases," says Dr. Clif Moore, Chief Administrative Officer for the EC.

As a result of this program, local residents interested in establishing a new business, expanding an existing business, and creating employment opportunities now have a funding source from which they can borrow up to $150,000.

The interest on the loan is set to reflect the local lending climate and will be negotiated on a per-loan basis. As a target, however, the negotiated rate will start at

prime plus 1 percent. The EC's loan review committee will determine the appropriateness of the loan terms.

Bobby Lewis, State USDA Rural Development Director, said that the establishment of this Intermediary Relending Program in McDowell County is a direct result of the county's EC designation. He says, "This is another example of the importance of the Enterprise Community designation, and those of us in USDA Rural Development are proud to be part of McCAN's ongoing effort to revitalize McDowell County."

For more information contact Dr. Clif Moore, McDowell County Action Network EC, at 304–448–2118.

Small Business Incubator Meets Local Need

Rio Grande Valley, Texas, EZ

The Rio Grande EZ began a small business incubator in Port Isabel, Texas, to help small businesses become sustainable. "And it's been booked solid since the day it opened," says Bonnie Gonzalez, Chief Executive Officer of the EZ. Since its inception the 35,000-square-foot Laguna Madre Enterprise Center has been fully contracted. Space rents for 25 cents per square foot for as long as 3 years. "We're already looking at expanding the center because of the phenomenal need for this type of service," Gonzalez says.

The incubator gives businesses access to Internet services and the One-Stop Capital Shop, a business planning resource for startups. One example of its success is U.S. Classic Billiards, Inc., a startup business that signed an agreement with Sam's Club, a division of Wal-Mart Stores, to supply 25,000 pool tables. To fill such a large order, approximately 120 new employees will be hired.

With the support of the Rio Grande Valley EZ and the Port Isabel/San Benito Navigation District, the Laguna Madre Enterprise Center has established a strong business presence in the Cameron County subzone area. Other subzones are looking to emulate this project, says Gonzalez.

For more information contact Yvonne "Bonnie" Gonzalez, Chief Executive Officer, Rio Grande Valley EZ, at 956–514–4000.

Akron Parents Use Small Loans for Transportation

Akron, Ohio, EC

The transition to economic self-sufficiency is not easy. Most households do not have enough income or reserves to weather even the smallest financial crises. If they qualify for loans, which they often do not, they pay exorbitant interest rates.

Akron's Family Loan Program, piloted through Family Services, a private nonprofit group, has been helping EC residents become self-sufficient since 1996. Ways to Work, a revolving loan program funded by the McKnight and Knight foundations, provided the seed money for the Family Loan Program, one of three replication sites of a program piloted in Minnesota in 1984. Ways to Work hopes to raise $28 million this year to expand the program from 19 to 45 cities during the next decade.

Akron's program provides small loans to low-income residents with children to support work, education, or vocational training. Parents must be working at least 20 hours per week or pursuing school or vocational training and have enough income to make the monthly payments. The maximum is a 2-year, $3,000 loan at 8 percent, which can be used for transportation, housing costs, medical care, childcare, or work-related expenses.

Kevin Stewart, Coordinator of the Family Loan Program, says, "I was overwhelmed at the number of requests and the consistency of requests for car loans." Ninety-five percent of the requests are for car loans and most come from single women.

The program works carefully with all applicants, providing consumer credit counseling, advice about credit restoration, and credit bureau report review through the Consumer Credit Counseling Service. The loan approval rate is about 50 percent, says Stewart. But if the applicant is denied a loan, Stewart always asks, "Is this the final 'no'?" He considers individual circumstances and helps applicants devise financial plans of action. Since the beginning of the program, nearly 180 loans totaling $380,000 have been made to EC residents.

"We've been very, very pleased with the loan repayment rate," which is 88 percent, higher than the national average, says Stewart. With a revolving loan fund, it is essential that borrowers pay off their loans so that funds are available for the next person. "The repayment rate indicates a sound program and says even more about the seriousness with which borrowers take their responsibility."

Borrowers benefit in other ways, too. Stewart asks, "How do you put a value on being able to go to a child's afterschool function instead of sitting on a bus for 2 or 3 hours? There is a quality-of-life issue involved that is easy to see and harder to document, but I know it's there." A case in point is Samantha Jones, who juggles rearing her three children, working at a part-time job, and taking social work classes at the University of Akron. With a loan and Stewart's advice, she got a good deal on a used car. "This will definitely help me in being able to reach the goals that I have," she says, "financially, academically, and for my family."

For more information contact Jerry Egan, Akron Department of Planning and Urban Development, at 330–375–2090.

Customized Job Training—the Bridge to High-Tech Jobs

Baltimore, Maryland, EZ

"The only thing standing between the people who need jobs and the people who need skilled workers is the training," declares Margaret B. Penno, Associate Professor of Medicine at Johns Hopkins University. Penno works closely with both Baltimore City Community College (BCCC) and the Empower Baltimore Management Corporation (EBMC) to develop customized job-training programs that upgrade EZ residents' skills and place them in jobs that have career potential. In 1997 the group, interested in opening up jobs in the high-technology sector for EZ residents, met with Chesapeake Biological Laboratories (CBL), an EZ business that manufactures pharmaceuticals. By working closely with the prospective employer, the partners determined the job skills and interests of potential employees. Based on their assessment, 9 EZ job applicants were selected to attend an intense, 13-week training course for laboratory technician positions in CBL's "clean rooms," where sterile batches of products are prepared and packaged. In the classroom and on the job, an instructor from BCCC and current CBL employees taught residents technical skills ranging from the proper operation and cleaning of syringe and vial fillers to the maintenance of records for customer and regulatory review.

By January 1998 all nine applicants were hired by CBL, eight as lab technicians and one as a batch writer. "Perhaps the best testament to how well the training is working is that all 9 are still employed 15 months later and that CBL accompanies us when we go to talk to other businesses about this program," says Michael Preston, Coordinator/Marketing and Public Information Officer for EBMC. CBL, which receives tax credits for businesses that hire in the EZ of up to $3,000 on wages paid to hired program trainees, is currently seeking another group of EZ job applicants for the program; another EZ company, Osiris Therapeutics, is replicating this training as well.

As of March 1998, nearly 20 companies located across the Baltimore metropolitan area have created positions for 132 EZ residents through the EZ customized training program. At the successful completion of training, all customized training positions pay at least $6.50 per hour plus health benefits.

For more information contact Michael Preston, Coordinator/Marketing and Public Information Officer, Empower Baltimore Management Corporation, at 410–783–4413.

From Vicious Cycle to Lending Circle: Credit for the Creditless

Denver, Colorado, EC

If your credit is bad, here's the vicious cycle: You must have credit to get credit, but you can't get credit without credit. Credit is thus nearly impossible to imagine for a poor person, let alone one who wants to start a business. A beam of hope is shining through this wall of impossibility in the Denver EC. Colorado Microcredit Inc. (CMC) is successfully acting on its vision of a world without

poverty through equal access to credit. The company provides unsecured credit for self-employment to low-income people, especially women, through microcredit lending circles.

Since its start in June 1997, the nonprofit CMC has made 153 loans to 94 business owners—94 for $500, 45 for $1,000, and 14 for $2,000—totaling $120,000. Forty-five of the owners have paid off their first $500 loans and have borrowed more at a second level of $1,000. The lending circles through which CMC makes these loans follow a straightforward path, far removed from the endless forms and red tape of commercial lenders. Any group of five disadvantaged people who want to start their own individual businesses can form a circle. Once formed, a circle must follow careful yet simple CMC procedures to ensure that all circle members have solid business plans. Each member then becomes eligible for a $500 loan at 12 percent annual interest, with the understanding that the circle members must mutually support each other in paying back their loans. For example, all members must be current on their payments before a new loan can be made to any member. Once all members have repaid their $500 loans, the group members can borrow $1,000 each on similar terms. Once their $1,000 loans are repaid, they can borrow $2,000 each.

Beyond their cooperative financial processes, the lending circles often become intensive support groups. For instance, when a member of one of the first circles had an illness in her family but no medical insurance, she had to stay in the hospital with one child, lost time from work, and soon became homeless. The members of her circle decided to stand by her even though they were slowed down in their own loan processes because she couldn't repay her loan. Together they provided living space in their homes, food and care for her other child, and emotional support. Within months her child was well, she had found another job and a home, and she began to focus on her business again. CMC seeks to build on this kind of grassroots strength, its solid support from Denver community institutions, and its own financial base of individual and foundation contributions. By 2005 CMC plans to extend credit to 10,000 people.

For more information contact Colleen Boyle, Executive Director, Colorado Microcredit Inc., at 303–435–1449.

Technical Assistance Equals Access to Capital

Indianapolis, Indiana, EC

For Promotional Concepts, an EC business that provides marketing materials such as printed pens and shirts to businesses, the ability to secure additional capital for expansion was a critical issue. The business was growing and had reached a critical expansion point. The company needed additional capital or it risked losing a large corporate client. During the strategic planning process, the Indianapolis EC determined that the availability of capital was not as significant a problem as the ability to access it. As a result, the EC partnered with two organizations to create the Technical Assistance (TA) Voucher program and the Marketing EC Program. The TA Voucher program, led by the Indianapolis

Regional Small Business Development Center (IRSBDC), assesses small-business needs and provides general entrepreneurial training. The EC also provides the services of an attorney, an accountant, a marketing consultant, and a business planning consultant through the TA Voucher Program. The experts and the Indianapolis Regional Small Business Development Center are available free of charge.

After the small business receives TA, it has the option of working with the Capital Marketing organization run by Cambridge Capital Management Corporation. Cambridge Capital informs small businesses of the financing tools that are available and works with the banks to make conventional financing more attainable for EC businesses.

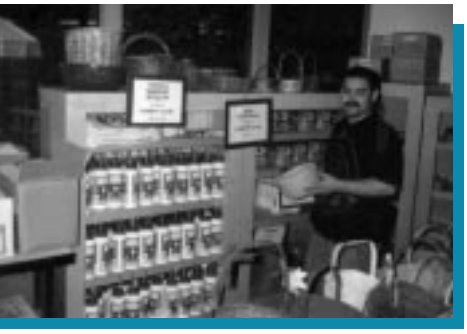
In 1998 Promotional Concepts and 99 other EC businesses were assisted by the TA and marketing programs. As a result of the assistance it received and by working with the Marketing EC program, Promotional Concepts received a capital boost of $550,000 from Cambridge Capital Management Corporation and the U.S. Small Business Administration. With the additional capital, the company purchased and rehabilitated a vacant structure in the EC that was a known crime magnet. In addition to significantly improving the neighborhood's appearance, the business expansion has resulted in the creation of new jobs for EC residents.

For more information contact Glenn Dunlap, Indianapolis Regional Small Business Development Center, at 317–261–3030, or Charles Montgomery, Cambridge Capital Management Corporation, at 317–469–9704.

Attention EZ Shoppers! Free Equipment and Supplies for Schools and Nonprofit Organizations

Los Angeles, California, EZ

Instead of letting their extra materials rot in landfills or gather dust in warehouses, businesses in Los Angeles can now donate surplus equipment and supplies to needy schools and nonprofit organizations in the EZ. Thanks to cooperation fostered by the EZ and L.A. SHARES, a local nonprofit organization, two "free shopping days" have enabled the schools and organizations to obtain more than $2 million of equipment and needed supplies at no cost—and the businesses get tax breaks for their donations.



"The three Rs of environmental protection are reduce, reuse, and recycle," points out Bert Ball of L.A. SHARES. "But companies are not often given the chance to reuse." L.A. SHARES—an independent firm that has evolved from a city program supported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency into the world's largest materials reuse program—has been working for 4 years to get donations from large local corporations for everything from trailer trucks to floppy disks. When a survey by the EZ showed that schools and firms in the Zone could use these surplus supplies, the first EZ free shopping day was set up. It was targeted toward 12 especially needy schools, which got a total of $24,000 in goods. Several months later, another free shopping day was held for more than 40 eligible schools

and 1,000 eligible nonprofit organizations in the EZ. This time, the shoppers received approximately $2 million worth of items.

More free shopping days for EZ schools and firms are being planned by L.A. SHARES. The only requirement for the shoppers is that they register so that their needs can be included in the L.A. SHARES database—which facilitates efficient corporate donations and recipient reuse—and that they write a thank-you letter to the donor firms. These letters are not empty gestures. They symbolize direct relationships that are growing between firms with surplus materials and needy organizations in the city. The letters also symbolize the fact that as L.A. SHARES continues to grow (it now has two warehouses donated by the city and last year enabled about 1,600 groups to get almost $5 million of free surplus equipment and supplies), it is becoming an established broker for the reuse of materials. The enhanced promotion and cooperation made possible by the EZ can only further strengthen this effort.

For more information contact Bert Ball, Executive Director, L.A. SHARES, at 213–485–1097.

Louisville Community Development Bank Restores Businesses, Jobs, and Neighborhoods

Louisville, Kentucky, EC

"It is hard to be a minority starting a business. You just don't have the resources. The Louisville Community Development Bank was a big help," says Gina Peoples, owner of KidzWheels, a company that provides transportation for children in the Louisville EC. The Community Development Bank opened in January 1997 and has been restoring businesses, jobs, and neighborhoods. A self-sustaining institution, the bank does not rely on public funding or grants. Loans that the bank makes are funded solely through certificates of deposit that have been purchased by individuals or corporations that believe in the wisdom of rebuilding Louisville's inner-city neighborhoods. With 38 percent of the bank's investment-area residents living below poverty and unemployment rates three times the national average, the bank's mission is to stimulate economic growth by making loans to small businesses.

KidzWheels is one of 52 businesses that were either started or expanded with the help of the Louisville Community Development Bank in 1998; the total number of businesses assisted has reached 82 since the bank opened. Business startup or expansion led to the creation of 200 new jobs in 1998 and a total of 394 jobs since 1997.

In 1998 the bank also became a partner in the financing of a $4-million, multiplex cinema complex in the EC. The facility, which will seat 1,650 people and employ 120, is scheduled to open in May 1999. The cinema will fill a void in the community because there are no other movie theaters in the area. Bank officials point out that, although the assistance of small businesses may not receive the same amount of attention as a 10-screen movie theater, it is just as important. "By supporting these businesses, the mom-and-pop stores, we rebuild a sense of

neighborhood in the community," says Gary Gambrell, the bank's Marketing Director. The bank's support is demonstrated by the loans made to three daycare facilities, two new and one expansion, in 1998.

"Small businesses are the backbones of neighborhoods," says Gambrell. That's why the Community Development Bank's nonprofit affiliate, the LCDB-Enterprise Group, which received $1 million in EC funds, will continue to offer a revolving loan fund for businesses that would not normally meet bank loan criteria. Technical assistance and a business incubator for small businesses are also available. "They work hand in hand and provide powerful tools for development in the EC," says Carolyn Gatz, EC contact for the City of Louisville.

For more information contact Gary C. Gambrell, Marketing Director, Louisville Community Development Bank, at 502–775–2510.

New Individual Development Accounts (IDA) Program Creates Financial Planning and Saving Vehicle for EC Residents and Others

Lowell, Massachusetts, EC

"We have recognized for some time," says Anita Moeller, Executive Director of Acre Family Day Care Corporation (AcreFDCC), "that the lack of an asset base and systemic disincentive for long-range financial planning can jeopardize or significantly inhibit the growth of childcare providers' businesses and careers, and seriously undermine the financial stability and education opportunities for the families who use our childcare services." The AcreFDCC Individual Development Accounts (IDA) program is a natural outgrowth of AcreFDCC's mission to train low-income women of color to become self-employed childcare providers, and has been part of the organization's long-range planning since 1995. The IDA program is a subsidized savings and financial education vehicle that is designed to bolster the financial stability of low-income individuals and boost their chances of permanently emerging from poverty.

To address the issue of lack of access to capital in the EC community, last year AcreFDCC obtained funds from the EC and the Massachusetts Department of Economic Development to establish a revolving loan fund to provide AcreFDCC-trained childcare providers with loans for equipment, insurance, and other costs. In addition, they pay providers "up front" when the State lags behind in its reimbursement to help stabilize their family incomes.

However, to address the longer range issue of asset acquisition and financial education for AcreFDCC-trained childcare providers, parents, and others in the EC, AcreFDCC launched the city's and State's first IDA program. The IDA program was established to educate providers on long-term financial planning and saving for businesses and family stability. IDAs help them save toward specific long-term goals, such as college, purchasing a house, business capitalization, or retirement. To date, there are 27 participants in the program, and another 20 are being recruited. Program participants are mostly below 200 percent of the poverty line

and are immigrants and people of color, primarily Hispanic, Cambodian, and African-American.

For the first time, AcreFDCC is now including 10 low-income Lowell High School 10th graders in its new IDA training program. The AcreFDCC High School IDA pilot program offers students—most from Lowell's Hispanic and Cambodian communities—the experience of long-term investing and an understanding of how money can be used toward important long-term goals. Ten Lowell High School sophomores from the EC, like other program participants, now make monthly deposits that are matched on a three-to-one basis. Deposits from EC participants are matched by $20,000 in EC funds and other matching funds come from foundations and other contributors. Mandatory economic literacy classes teach financial information and skills, with many sessions open to parents and guardians of participating students.

AcreFDCC is simultaneously helping young people overcome basic obstacles to secure a better employment future, encouraging them to pursue educational and economic opportunities, and building an asset base that will, in turn, increase access to credit for a population traditionally underserved by financial incentives. AcreFDCC believes that this will be a groundbreaking model for a savings vehicle and financial education program for low-income students and their parents in Lowell. Given AcreFDCC's successful track record in helping to establish family daycare as a viable business opportunity for women, these new programs are already leading to additional vehicles for stabilizing low-income neighborhoods by creating economic assets.

For more information contact Anita Moeller, Executive Director of AcreFDCC, at 978–937–5899.

Small Businesses Get Collateral To Expand and Create Jobs

Phoenix, Arizona, EC

The problem of acquiring loan collateral stymies many small business owners' expansion dreams. In the Phoenix EC, the EXPAND program is enabling small firms to obtain collateral if they can demonstrate that their expansion will increase job opportunities in the EC.

"More than 90 percent of Phoenix businesses have fewer than 100 employees. The strength of the small business community is key to the economic vitality of the city. The growth of small business firms is explosive," says Carolyn Bristo, the city's Economic Development Administrator. In fact, during the next decade, 50 percent of all new jobs will be generated by small businesses. Small firms with a net worth less than $7.5 million and after-tax profits of less than $2.5 million can apply to the EXPAND program for collateral up to 50 percent of their loans, to a limit of $100,000. The program requires these applicants to create at least one new job for each $15,000 in collateral. Applicants also must make at least 51 percent of their jobs available to low- and moderate-income people. The city works

closely with applicants to ensure that the targeted population in the EC has access to and training for these jobs.

An eligible small firm that wants to participate in EXPAND must first form a relationship with a potential lender. The firm typically must provide at least 10 percent of the total project cost as equity. Once the firm and lender agree on financing terms and the loan is approved, EXPAND provides the lender with the collateral through a special reserve deposit account for up to 4 years. EXPAND is truly helping small firms realize their potential while increasing job opportunities. Since the program began in 1994, it has leveraged $416,000 with other money to generate loans exceeding $3.1 million, and the business expansions financed by these loans have created more than 130 jobs.

For more information contact Carolyn Bristo, Economic Development Administrator, Phoenix Community and Economic Development Department, at 602–262–5040.

Flagship Program Sails Strongly Along

Providence, Rhode Island, EC

Whether it is a middle-aged woman with multiple skills who has not worked for 10 years or a young man who dropped out of high school and does not know what to do with his life, the South Providence Development Corporation (SPDC) can offer help to those who are willing to receive it. SPDC provides EC residents in South Providence with training and support services that allow them to make a permanent transition to long-term, well-paying careers.

As the flagship program of the Providence EC strategic plan, SPDC accounts for slightly more than one-third of the plan's total budget of $3 million. The $1 million in EC funds earmarked for SPDC has been matched by its partners, making SPDC the best-funded program in the Providence EC.

SPDC's program goal is to place 250 people in jobs in 5 years. In the 3 years since the program began, it has been able to train and place 200 people. Of the 200 now employed, 94 were receiving public assistance before they entered the program.

"A measure of the program's success has been simply providing these 200 individuals with the job-readiness skills necessary to start working," says Kim Rose of the Providence Plan, the nonprofit agency responsible for administering this and other EC programs in Providence. "These are some of the most difficult to employ individuals within the EC," adds Rose.

Nearly half of those who have found jobs through SPDC are working in the health-care field; at least half of them are employed at Rhode Island Hospital and St. Joseph's Hospital, two of the largest corporate entities in South Providence. "Initially we thought we'd be able to make almost all of our placements in the hospitals," says Rose, but when budget problems at the hospitals arose, which meant hiring freezes, SPDC had to look for other partners. Other partners include the United Way and the Department of Human Services in Providence. Other industries providing jobs have included construction and manufacturing.

In addition to training and job placement, SPDC provides support services. "In trying to move people off welfare, there are often other obstacles to overcome," says Rose. For instance, SPDC provides childcare when its absence would prohibit someone from obtaining a job. Approximately $40,000 in supportive services has been provided to participants to help them obtain and retain their positions.

For more information contact Kim Rose, the Providence Plan, at 401–455–8880.

Self Starters Find a Place To Nurture Their Entrepreneurial Spirit

Providence, Rhode Island, EC

Would-be entrepreneurs in South Providence, one of the city's poorest sections, now have a place to get help in starting a business. The Business Information Center (BIC) of South Providence is the place to go for EC residents who are seeking anything from general information on how to narrow their areas of interest to specific advice from a trained consultant on how to write a business plan.

"The project has been a tremendous success," says Kim Rose of the Providence Plan, citing almost 4,000 client visits last year alone. The program has been running for 2 years and its success is due in large part to the location of BIC within the EC. "Typically, you don't find BICs in poor areas like this," says Rose, who adds that this tends to discourage would-be entrepreneurs who are nervous enough about starting a business of their own without having to shuttle downtown to the Federal building in Providence's wealthy business district. "Who wouldn't be intimidated?" she asks.

Businesses that are already established can also get help from BIC. The South Providence BIC provides training in computer technology and software, marketing, accounting, personnel issues, and a host of other important topics that enable a business to compete effectively. All these services are free, available to anyone who lives within the EC and who dreams of being his or her own boss.

The project is a partnership between the Providence Plan, a nonprofit agency that oversees funding of all projects within the Providence EC, and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). The Providence Plan provided $147,000 to fund the project and SBA has provided additional funding as well as consulting services as part of its SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives) program. Other partners include Bank Boston, with a $100,000 grant; Apple Computer and Compaq Computer, which donated a total of $100,000 of computer equipment when BIC opened 2 years ago; and Bryant College in Providence, which provides technical assistance and consulting services through its Small Business Development Center on campus.

For more information contact Kim Rose, the Providence Plan, at 401–455–8880.

Turtle Island Theme Park Emphasizes Native American Culture

Halifax/Edgecombe/Wilson, North Carolina, EC

As a way to increase cultural diversity and highlight individuality, members of the Haliwa-Saponi Tribe in Halifax County, North Carolina, are planning to open Turtle Island, a Native American theme park, by the year 2005.

"We want to highlight our culture and other cultures throughout the United States and Canada," says Barry Richardson, Tribal Administrator for the Haliwa-Saponi Tribe. "This theme park will offer representatives from each tribe and showcase its culture within one setting." Local foods and cultural rituals are just part of the participatory education component that is being incorporated into the theme park.

Plans for the theme park are currently being developed. As a result of a recent feasibility study, two possible sites, either historic Halifax or Enfield, are under consideration for the theme park's location. The first phase of planning is concentrating on the development of shops, a museum, and a lookout tower.

However, the project's leaders are currently concentrating on raising the capital required for the $21-million park. "We have been aggressively trying to raise the funds," says Richardson. "So far, we have raised about $400,000 of in-kind and cash contributions." Donors include the County of Halifax, the State Legislature, and North Carolina State University. Additional resources, such as foundations, banks, and the Federal Government, will be approached during the project's future fundraising efforts.

For more information contact Barry Richardson, Tribal Administrator, Haliwa-Saponi Tribe, at 252–586–4017.

Small Business Loan Program Grows Tomatoes and Much More

Josephine County, Oregon, EC

"The Small Business Loan Program is probably our most effective method for stimulating small business growth and economic development in northern Josephine County," says Gary O'Neal, Executive Director of the Sunny Wolf Community Response Team, the operational arm of the Josephine County EC. The Sunny Wolf Community Response Team has developed a Small Business Loan Program for individuals living in the EC who need loans to help them create or expand their small businesses. Loans are offered only to nonbankable businesses in the EC. Businesses assisted by the program include a greenhouse that grows high-value tomatoes, a home sewing company, and an ironworks business.

To date, 17 loans have been made, and all are performing and successful. The loans were funded by an initial investment of $45,000 in Social Services Block Grant funds from the EC and $50,000 from a Rural Business Enterprise Grant. The banking services from the local bank are free and the loan board is made up of volunteers from the local community. The program has money in its capital fund

for more loans at this time. In addition to assisting small businesses, the 17 loans represent jobs for this small community.

For more information contact Gary O'Neal, Executive Director, Sunny Wolf Community Response Team, at 541–866–2600.

North Delta Mississippi EC Revolving Loan Assists Variety of Small Businesses

North Delta, Mississippi, EC

In 1994 many people in the North Mississippi Delta talked about ECs in terms of dreams of "starting your own business," according to Stuart Guernsey, Administrator of the North Delta, Mississippi, EC. Guernsey says that in 1999 that vision has become a reality for many businesses in this EC, because of a business revolving loan fund (RLF) for Quitman County, administered by the County's Economic Development District (EDD). The EC has funded 19 small businesses from its revolving loan fund. The businesses provide job and entrepreneurial opportunities for local residents.

The EC's vision for a RLF became a reality for Quitman County when the EC board approved the Quitman County EDD as administrator for the fund. In 1998 the business plan application process led to 19 loans, all but one of which were made to minorities. The total amount lent was $166,300, which was used for a variety of purposes from business expansion or purchasing equipment to inventory replenishments for existing businesses. One-third of the $250,000 available was set aside for businesses moving to the new business incubator in Lambert, Mississippi, which will be in operation in fall 1999.

One example of the assistance provided was a $10,000 loan from the Quitman County EDD to Pee Dee's Soul Food Restaurant in Marks, Mississippi. The loan helped the business buy a new stove, make some sanitation improvements, install a new lunch counter, and renovate its front entrance. "It really spiffed up their look," says Guernsey.

For more information contact Stuart Guernsey, Administrator, North Delta EC, at 601–487–1968.

Hugo Lake Holds Key to EC's Economic Development

Southeast Oklahoma, Oklahoma, EC

The day after a 46-foot houseboat took its maiden voyage on Hugo Lake in southeastern Oklahoma, two local newspapers displayed pictures of the event on their front pages. The boat, launched in February 1999, was the first of its kind to use the newly constructed marina now operating at Hugo Lake. Its arrival signaled the lake's emergence as a tourist attraction in the Southeast Oklahoma EC.

In 1995 the City of Hugo and the Little Dixie Community Action Agency (CAA) leased a 289-acre section of Kiamichi Park, where Hugo Lake is located, from the U.S. Corps of Engineers. Since then numerous partners have been working to develop the area into a resort that will bring tourists and jobs to the EC. More than $2.5 million in resources have already been committed to the project.

Until recently the land around the lake, featuring $1 million in roads, comfort stations, playgrounds, pavilions, boat ramps, and picnic tables, was closed to the public due to Corps of Engineers budget cutbacks. When parts of Choctaw and McCurtain Counties received EC designation in 1994, the Little Dixie CAA saw an opportunity to open the lake area and develop lakeside facilities that would help invigorate the local economy.

The first phase of development involved the 1997 construction of a $100,000 Hospitality and Training Center using donations from local businesses and individuals. The center will play an important role in the EC's economic development activities by housing company presidents, economic development prospects, and top government officials who visit the area. Local businesses also will use the center for training purposes.

Construction of the new, 1,200-square-foot marina and 10 primitive camping cabins was completed in 1998. AmeriCorps members built the primitive cabins in 1998 and will construct eight full-service cabins in 1999. A private company operates the marina through a lease agreement with Little Dixie CAA. Future construction of a 21-room lakeside lodge will complete the development.

The debt-free development has been funded with $1.2 million in USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grants; $500,000 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and a 3-year, $540,000 AmeriCorps grant. Money and services valued at more than $250,000 came from the Public Service Company of Oklahoma, the Choctaw County Commissioners, Little Dixie CAA, the Oklahoma Department of Corrections, and local contractors and individuals.

David Davies, EC Tourism Director, says the project will bring many benefits to southeastern Oklahoma, including at least 50 jobs at the lakefront and many others in tourism-related businesses. However, he says, the project's most important benefit may be the boost it gives to the morale of an economically distressed area.

"Many of the lake improvements are things that local folks visualized a long time ago but had accepted as unachievable," says Davies. "Now we have facilities out there that the community didn't used to have, facilities that are very attractive and in which local residents can take pride."

For more information contact David Davies, Director of Tourism, Southeast Oklahoma EC, at 580–326–2167.

EC Helps Attract South Carolina Industrial Investments

Williamsburg-Lake City, South Carolina, EC

An EC designation is a tremendous asset in securing partnerships and dollars for economic development. In 1998, 14 industrial expansions resulted in approximately $130 million in industrial investments and 1,100 additional jobs in Williamsburg County due to the Federal EC designation.

The anchor business of the industrial park, Palmetto Synthetics, also used USDA Business and Industry funds for machinery purchases and operating capital.

Palmetto Synthetics began operations in January 1999 with 25 employees and by late 1999 will employ 100 people.

According to Hilton McGill, Executive Director of the Williamsburg County Development Board, "The Board feels that the Federal Enterprise Community designation ensured the successful approval of funds from USDA for the purchase and engineering of the property for the Williamsburg County Industrial Park. The project presently counts more than 32 partners and $3,308,000 in the industrial park venture." The project began with $400,000 in funding from USDA, which leveraged other funding contributions from the Economic Development Administration, other Federal sources, State funds, and local bankers. "We have been devastated by foreign competition and have the highest unemployment rate in the State," McGill says, "and this project provides a great economic opportunity for our citizens." Public and private partnerships have enhanced the county's ability to provide a Class A industrial park necessary for the successful recruitment of potential Williamsburg County businesses.

For more information contact John Whittleton, Executive Director, Williamsburg Enterprise Community, at 843–354–9070.

WHAT WORKS

Sustainable Community Development

Investing in the future of our country means actively working on all areas that affect the well-being of a community and its citizens. Of high priority is providing safe, affordable **housing** for low-income residents and offering new opportunities for homeownership. Many citizen initiatives and new community policing programs are significantly reducing crime in EZ/EC neighborhoods, improving **public safety** and security. EZ/ECs are also augmenting their basic **infrastructure**, providing facilities for shops and other businesses and developing new transportation systems to link formerly isolated areas to the mainstream economy. Improving the **environment** is another priority, involving activities such as neighbors organizing cleanup days and restoring old industrial brownfields to productive uses.

The EZ/EC program is enhancing the quality of life for residents in several other ways as well. Many initiatives concentrate on improving the **health** and well-being of EZ/EC residents and working with neighborhood schools to enrich **education** for the children and youth of the EZ/EC. **Human services** programs, in many cases operating from new, EZ/EC-funded community facilities, are offering employment-related, recreational, and supportive services to families and youth. And EZ/EC **technology and communications** initiatives are linking residents to the world of information and the workplace of the future. This section explores outstanding examples of activity in each of these areas.

HOUSING

EC's Vacant Lots May Yield New Homes

Albuquerque, New Mexico, EC

Staff at the nonprofit United South Broadway Corporation (USBC) spent 1998 taking an unusual census in the Albuquerque, New Mexico, EC. Instead of counting residents, the field workers counted vacant lots on which the city hopes to build 100 new homes in the next 2 years.

The first phase of the In-Fill Housing Project, funded with $50,000 from the city's Housing and Neighborhood Economic Development Trust Fund, involved a windshield survey of the area to determine how many vacant lots actually exist. Now the corporation is retracing its steps to determine which lots can be developed into single-family homesites. When that research is complete, the city will request proposals from nonprofit housing developers to build the homes, using $1.3 million from the same fund. The city hopes to select developers by summer 1999 and begin construction in the fall.

"They wanted the homes to match the architecture of the neighborhood, whether that be Pueblo Revival style or Victorian," says Sylvia Fettes, EC Coordinator. "They didn't want the homes to stick out like sore thumbs. They didn't want it to be obvious that these homes were subsidized."

While USBC was trying to determine where the city could build the new homes, architecture students from the University of New Mexico were busy figuring out what those homes would look like. Students held two design charrettes with local residents to talk about possible designs. Most residents offered one simple directive: Make the new homes as inconspicuous as possible.

The City of Albuquerque initiated the housing project to meet two major EC needs: affordable housing and economic development. The median home price in Albuquerque is $129,000 and the average rent is $600, says Fettes. With median incomes in the EC hovering at $15,500, she says, most residents cannot afford to purchase their own homes without some assistance.

Fettes says she hopes nonprofit developers participating in the housing project will be able to sell the new homes for $80,000 or less, depending on what subsidies the city can make available to homebuyers. The homes are expected to stimulate commercial activity in the EC by bringing new residents to the neighborhood who will patronize struggling EC businesses.

For more information contact Sylvia Fettes, Albuquerque's EC Coordinator, at 505–768–2860.

Chicago EZ Streamlines Acquisition and Rehabilitation Financing of Multifamily Buildings

Chicago, Illinois, EZ

A new initiative is streamlining the acquisition and rehabilitation financing of small, multifamily buildings in the Chicago EZ area. The Small Multifamily Preservation Project is one of two EZ housing activities funded with $2 million by the Chicago City Council during 1998. To augment EZ funding of the project, Chicago's Department of Housing is contributing an additional $2 million and private financing will add another $1 million. These funds are anticipated to assist 50 housing units.

The Small Multifamily Preservation Project is modeled after the Pilsen/Little Village Small Building Program that is currently administered by the Department of Housing. This program focuses on maintaining the viability of 4- to 10-unit residential buildings.

Through the Small Building Program, the department has contributed almost $1 million toward the acquisition and rehabilitation of 17 units in 4 buildings. One of these properties is located within the EZ, and all of the units are affordable to persons earning 60 percent or less of the area median income.

The Small Multifamily Preservation Project will fund a second phase of small building acquisition and rehabilitation in the Pilsen and Little Village communities. The developer, The Resurrection Project (TRP), is an EZ business. TRP will manage the property and its construction cooperative will subcontract most of the work to other EZ businesses that are co-op members.

A second community will be selected for participation in the Small Multifamily Preservation Project. Other areas of the EZ have similar housing problems and will benefit greatly from this program. "Preference will be given to buildings that can be made accessible and available to EZ residents," says Sharone Brown, the EZ's Communications Officer.

For more information contact Sharone Brown, Communications Officer, Chicago EZ at 312–744–9623.

Recycled Materials Used in Recycled Building

Detroit, Michigan, EZ

"This project is a tangible sign of success for the Zone. A wonderful historical building has been restored and a new building is a powerful symbol for change," declares Denise Gray, Executive Director of the EZ Development Corporation. The renovation of the Architects Building, a 27-unit historic structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and the construction of the 24-unit Ghandi-McMahon building are prime examples of the revitalization taking place in the Cass Corridor area of the Detroit EZ. In 1998, having witnessed the effects of past disinvestment and decay, the Cass Corridor Neighborhood Development Corporation decided to undertake the innovative 51-unit housing project.

Built in 1924, the Architects Building was originally used as a one-stop shop for designers, engineers, contractors, and lending groups. The redevelopment of the building was unique because all the materials used to renovate it were recycled. Some examples of the recycled materials used include carpets made from plastic bottles, ceiling tiles containing newspaper scraps, recycled paint, and studs containing recycled steel. During the interior demolition of the building, 65 tons of wood, glass, roofing, and wall material; 360 tons of hard fill; and 55 tons of metal were recycled or reprocessed. The Architects Building now features 7, 2-bedroom units of approximately 650 square feet. The units include central air conditioning and heat and new appliances; they rent for between $350 and $420. Environmentally sensitive materials and techniques were also used in the new construction of the Ghandi-McMahon building across the street. Unit size, amenities, and price are similar to that of the Architects Building. All units are handicapped accessible. Low- to middle-income applicants who meet income requirements are eligible for occupancy.

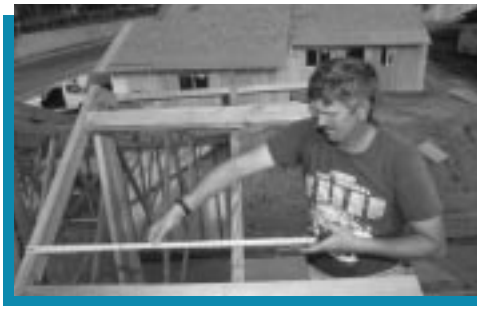
A $250,000 pilot grant from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Solid Waste Alternative Program provided seed money for the project. The program is designed to lessen the impact of construction materials on landfills, which make up an estimated 30 percent of all landfill materials. Additional funding of $6.1 million came from various sources, including Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, Historic Preservation Tax Credits, City of Detroit HOME and CDBG funds, the Detroit Local Initiatives Support Corporation, the Michigan Foundation, the Hudson-Webber Foundation, and SEEDCO.

For more information contact Keith Kaminski, Communications Director, Detroit EZ Development Corporation, at 313–872–8050, or see "Innovative Housing Project Changes Detroit Landscape" in the Winter 1998 issue of *EZ Exchange*.

Eagle Ridge Summit: A New Tax Credit Program To Build Low- and Moderate-Income Housing

Flint, Michigan, EC

What does the future of housing development look like? The answer may come from the Eagle Ridge Summit housing community, which is currently under construction to serve the needs of low- and moderate-income residents in the City of Flint, Michigan.



"We tried to incorporate all aspects of living in the design of this development," says developer Mary A. Rolfe of Mary A. Rolfe and Associates, Inc., in Flint. "What makes Eagle Ridge unique is that we included the construction of a daycare center to answer the needs of the community's children and parents."

The addition of the 7,000-square-foot daycare center serves to highlight the emphasis on family living that envelops the project. "The center was designed to provide services for 100 children," says Rolfe. "In addition to being fully furnished, the center will have computers that will be used for educational and recreational pursuits." A licensed daycare provider will supervise the center.

The center is just part of what Eagle Ridge has to offer. Situated within a fully gated and secure environment, the project includes 2- and 3-bedroom units that will be available to 104 families. Construction is also underway for a community building and a swimming pool. The first building will be open in August 1999.

Eagle Ridge is a $9-million project, $6.5 million of which has been syndicated to the Columbia Housing Corporation.

For more information contact Mary A. Rolfe, Mary A. Rolfe and Associates, Inc., at 810–239–8566.

Residents Take Back Their Neighborhoods

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, EC

Louis Rotegliano got tired of watching absentee landlords in his neighborhood neglect their properties. "Some of these absentee owners don't want to put any money into their properties, they just want to milk them," says Rotegliano. Since his involvement in Harrisburg's Citizen Inspection Program (CIP), nine properties on Rotegliano's block have been painted or improved. At the laundromat across the street, sidewalks that were once littered are now swept regularly. Things are different in the neighborhood because CIP provided Rotegliano with a way to pressure neglectful property owners to comply with city codes.

CIP empowers citizens like Rotegliano to take action to improve their neighborhoods. Citizens are trained by the Codes Bureau to identify exterior code violations in their neighborhood, such as overgrown grass and weeds, broken windows, peeling paint, or improperly contained garbage. The citizen inspectors give property owners "friendly warnings" to correct the violations. If the violations aren't corrected within a specified period of time, the citizen inspectors notify the Codes Bureau for official action.

Tara Hixon, who has cited property owners for tall grass and broken windows, became involved because she wants to protect the charm of her historic neighborhood. "My goal was to maintain the integrity of this neighborhood," she says. Other residents join CIP simply because they want to protect their investments.

Since the program began in 1997, more than 100 citizens have completed training to become citizen inspectors. The training instructs citizens in code laws and the legal processes the Codes Bureau must follow to gain codes compliance when a property owner is in violation. The program is based on similar ones in Baltimore (Maryland) and Minnesota.

CIP has added more eyes and ears to the Codes Bureau, allowing housing enforcement officers to focus on more serious violations. The program operates at very little cost to the city, less than $100 per year, and the partners are the citizens who volunteer and the Codes Bureau, which is happy to receive the help.

For more information contact JoAnn Partridge, City of Harrisburg, Department of Building and Housing Development, at 717–255–6424.

Historic Designation Reverses EC's Downward Spiral

Jackson, Mississippi, EC

Forty years ago, Jackson, Mississippi's Farish Street district was a thriving commercial and residential area where African-American businesses and blues clubs flourished. The 125-block district traces its roots to a settlement founded by freed slaves in the 1860s. Desegregation, which took hold 100 years later, takes the blame for its demise.

"From the 1920s through the era of Jim Crow, Farish Street was really in its heyday," says Michael Hervey, Executive Director of the Farish Street Historic District Neighborhood Foundation. "It was a self-contained community because African-Americans had no place else to go. After integration, though, many residents elected to move out and look for the American Dream in the suburbs."

Like other inner cities across the country, the Farish Street district experienced its share of disinvestment during the 1960s and 1970s. However, Farish Street was luckier than other inner-city neighborhoods that watched urban renewal change their unique characters. Historic buildings along Farish Street remain standing and intact. When the area received a historic district designation in 1994, its downward spiral began to reverse.

The first sign of that reversal was the Farish Street Housing Project, a $2.5-million, foundation-initiated project that renovated 35 historic shotgun houses in one EC block during 1998. The foundation is now seeking support for a $15-million project to create an entertainment district in the EC that Hervey hopes will become a regional tourist destination.

The housing project, completed in March 1999, involved a host of partners. The EC contributed a $125,000 low-interest loan and a $50,000 grant to the project. The National Equity Fund provided $1.6 million from the sale of Historic Preservation Tax Credits. A consortium of local banks furnished $600,000 and the City of Jackson gave $175,000 from its CDBG allocation.

The shotgun homes, built between 1930 and 1950, were completely gutted inside and their outside structures were retained and restored. Each home required new plumbing, electrical wiring, fixtures, and appliances. EC residents who qualify for Section 8 rental subsidies will be able to rent the one-, two-, and three-bedroom bungalows. After the 15-year tax credit compliance period ends, the homes will be sold to qualified buyers. For now, tenants won't pay more than 30 percent of their incomes for rent.

The project will provide much-needed housing in an area where more than half of the residential stock is vacant, substandard, or abandoned, says Hervey. In addition, the project already has helped the local economy by providing construction jobs for almost 60 local workers. Minority-owned firms received 80 percent of the project's business.

EC resident Larry Samuels, owner of Samuel's Construction, was the primary subcontractor for the project. "I grew up in the neighborhood and

watched it deteriorate," Samuels told the local *Clarion-Ledger* newspaper. "It's somewhat of a dream come true for me to help."

For more information contact Michael Hervey, Executive Director, Farish Street Historic District Neighborhood Foundation, at 601–949–4000.

Park DuValle Revitalization Offers Homeownership Opportunities

Louisville, Kentucky, EC

"I'm excited about this phase of Park DuValle because it offers many opportunities for families to become homeowners," says Louisville Mayor David Armstrong. Indeed, the transformation of the Cotter and Lang Homes public housing developments into a diverse, mixed-income community with traditional-style homes has many western Louisville residents excited. That is because the much-anticipated Phase II of the Park DuValle revitalization, which includes the construction of 213 rental homes and 125 homes for sale, is underway.

The Villages of Park DuValle will be made up of homes closely integrated with recreation, retail, and civic spaces. The neighborhood, which will be pedestrian friendly with a well-planned system of sidewalks and interconnected streets, is a traditional design based on the principles of New Urbanism. The Park DuValle Revitalization Plan grew from Louisville's EC planning process. The vision of the EC Community Board was "a return to neighborhoods ... and a demise of the massive, concentrated public housing of the 1950s that have become warehouses for families entrapped in poverty." Neighborhood residents and organizations continue to have input into the plan through the Park DuValle Neighborhood Advisory Council (PDNAC).

The new homes are being constructed by eight premier builders (four of which are minority-owned businesses) and will include architectural details and styles drawn from historic Louisville's character. Home styles at the Villages will include Victorian, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman. Thirty house styles offering a wide range of sizes, prices, and amenities will be available. The Villages will offer increased homeownership opportunities for families of all income levels through comprehensive counseling, courses, and services.

Partners in the development of the Villages include HUD, the City of Louisville, the Housing Authority of Louisville, the Louisville Real Estate Development Company, the Kentucky Housing and Finance Agency, the Louisville Development Authority, Park DuValle Development Corporation, PNC Bank, The Community Builders Inc., the Housing Partnership, Inc., and National City Bank. The effort is being financed by public housing resources, investment capital from the sale of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, and CDBG funds provided by the City of Louisville. A $20-million HUD HOPE VI grant was awarded to the Housing Authority of Louisville in 1996 for the revitalization project.

Approximately 1,200 single-family homes, townhomes, and apartments, including both for-sale and rental opportunities, will be built in Park DuValle during the next few years. A model village of eight houses and a marketing center is being

built to showcase the architectural designs of the for-sale homes. It is due to be completed in spring 1999. Vikki Stone, Park DuValle Revitalization Spokesperson, is pleased to report that response to the homeownership opportunity has been great. Those seeking to buy homes in the Villages include families from all income levels.

For more information contact Vikki Stone, Spokesperson, Park DuValle Revitalization, at 502–574–3420.

Capacity-Building Program Helps CDCs Develop Housing

Newark, New Jersey, EC

After its executive director resigned last year, Corinthian Housing Development Corporation felt a crisis coming on. The organization, which had 49 units of affordable housing under construction in the Newark EC, worried that losing such an important staff person might slow its momentum and damage its effectiveness.

Corinthian turned to the Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC), which has provided technical assistance and funding to community development corporations (CDCs) in Newark since 1987. LISC responded by providing an $87,000 grant that Corinthian used to update its strategic plan, choose an executive director who could implement that plan, and ensure that its remaining staff wouldn't seek employment elsewhere.

A portion of the Corinthian grant came from a capacity-building program that LISC has administered since April 1998 with a $500,000 EC grant, $500,000 of its own money, and close to $22 million in leveraged funds. The goal of the 3-year program is to build the capacity of 10 CDCs and produce 200 housing units in the EC. So far LISC has provided $260,000 in grants to 6 organizations that have completed 50 housing units. An additional 37 units are under construction, 43 units are in the development and predevelopment stages, and 70 more units are planned. LISC anticipates bringing two more organizations into the program during 1999.

Although the housing goal is an important one for both LISC and the EC, the capacity-building program is about more than bricks and mortar, says LISC Program Director Gerard Joeb. "This program is about developing human capital," says Joeb. "It is about enhancing the ability of community development organizations to do what they do best."

The capacity-building program certainly worked for Corinthian, which was able to complete its housing project and expand its programs. Even before it found a new executive director, Corinthian had applied for and received $115,000 from the Governor's Faith-Based Community Development Initiative to establish a Safe Haven afterschool program. It also received $55,000 from LISC and the National Football League to upgrade a park adjacent to its new housing complex.

"This is a perfect example of the type of capacity building we want to do through this program," says Joeb. "If Corinthian hadn't had the ability to secure and

manage its current staff, it couldn't have kept things going either on its construction site or in its other programs. Instead, it came out of this year much stronger than when it went into it."

For more information contact Gerard Joeb, LISC Program Director, at 973–624–6676.

Throw Out the Lifeline in San Antonio

San Antonio, Texas, EC

The San Antonio Alazon Apache Housing Community has been thrown a lifeline. With dedicated and caring staff, well-planned and well-implemented programs, and enriching services, the Carmen P. Cortez-AVANCE Family Center is providing the much-needed hope and opportunity that for so long could not penetrate the boundaries of this community.

Entrenched in the perils of poverty, crime, and despair, there was little hope for the residents of the Alazon Apache Housing Community, part of the San Antonio EC. Living in an area with the highest murder, burglary, assault, and car theft rates in the city, these low-income residents—lacking the financial, educational, and social skills necessary to escape their environment—were losing out to poverty and urban war. A lifeline was desperately needed. The small Alazon Family Center, housed in a dilapidated facility provided by the San Antonio Housing Authority, tried to be that lifeline by providing essential parenting and early childhood education to parents and children of the Alazon Apache community. The needs of this growing community quickly surpassed the capacity of the small center's resources. Adding to its plight, the center was dealt a disabling blow when it was denied a childcare license due to the facility's rundown condition. The center and its community needed help.

The San Antonio chapter of AVANCE (whose name is derived from the Spanish word "avanzar," meaning to advance), in collaboration with the San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA), answered the community's call for help. In 1994 AVANCE, a member of the San Antonio Enterprise Communities Commission, and SAHA began devising a plan to address not only the need for adequate childcare but also the need for adequate and affordable housing, community development, education, job training, and a host of other services.

This collaboration yielded impressive results. SAHA, recognizing AVANCE's nationally acclaimed reputation as a successful provider of programs and services to at-risk families and children, did not hesitate to do its part. SAHA agreed to build AVANCE a state-of-the-art, 10,000-square-foot facility in the Alazon community where the desperately needed services would be provided. The City of San Antonio Planning and Development Agency donated the land for the new building. With the donation of both the building and the site, AVANCE raised $63,000 from private foundations and local corporations to completely furnish the new facility.

After many months of strategizing, coordinating, and fundraising, the plan reached fruition with the May 8, 1998, dedication of the Carmen P. Cortez-

AVANCE Family Center, named after the late Carmen P. Cortez, one of the founding AVANCE team members. More than 250 adults and children participated in the dedication and the event was attended by many government representatives, SAHA commissioners and staff, members of the AVANCE board of directors, and other community supporters.

Enrollment at the center has increased by 21 percent since its rededication; the new center serves 78 parents and 170 children. SAHA and AVANCE have continued to coordinate their efforts to make the best possible use of limited resources. SAHA has implemented a Family Self-Sufficiency Program that uses self-sufficiency coordinators to help public housing families overcome barriers to independence and achieve self-sufficiency within a 5-year period. AVANCE provides parenting education, childcare, ESL courses, GED preparation courses, computer literacy courses, and a host of other supportive services. Cohoused in the Carmen P. Cortez-AVANCE Family Center, SAHA self-sufficiency coordinators and AVANCE staff work closely to identify individual family needs and coordinate services to satisfy those needs. AVANCE hopes to further expand its services to reach a greater number of families by implementing more empowerment programs.

One such program is the Education for Work Initiative, aimed at meeting new welfare reform requirements. A total of $200,000 in EC funds were allocated for the development and operation of the initial parenting and training classes. Some CDBG funds were also leveraged. AVANCE leveraged $193,275 in cash and $62,926 in equipment donations from a Community Service Block Grant, the United Way of San Antonio, various city agencies, local foundations, and community businesses to implement the program. Using a 3-year estimated completion cycle, the program institutes a three-component system consisting of parenting education and resiliency training; literacy education; and job-readiness preparation to increase the employability and independence of families served. A new group of participants enters the program each September.

The Carmen P. Cortez-AVANCE Family Center has brought new hope, enlightenment, and empowerment to the residents who live in a community that was once characterized as a hopeless, impoverished neighborhood of despair.

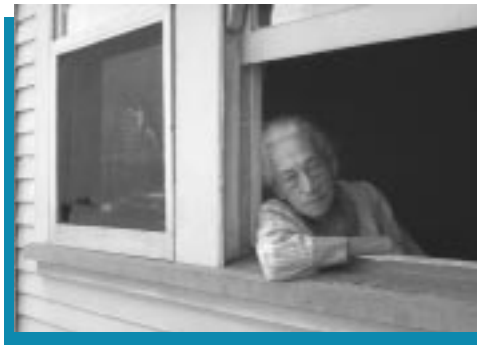
For more information contact Curley Spears, City of San Antonio, at 210–207–6605.

Tampa EC Stems Housing Emergencies; Program Provides Repairs for Elderly Homeowners

Tampa, Florida, EC

The Tampa EC has found a way to address the growing emergency home repair needs of many of its senior homeowners. To stop the escalation of emergencies and to make seniors safe and secure in their homes, the EC is drawing from the community's support and the talents of Tampa's nonprofit Center for Women, Inc.

The EC will utilize the center's Senior Home Improvement Program (S.H.I.P.), which began in 1980, to provide emergency home repairs for low-income home-



owners who are over 60. Priority will be given to addressing the emergency needs of elderly homeowners at risk of losing their shelter.

Most of Tampa's and Hillsborough County's emergency housing repair needs are in the EC. Calls for assistance have increased each year due to spiraling living costs and fixed incomes. Because of deferred maintenance, the need for more extensive and costly repairs has also been growing.

S.H.I.P. has made more than 5,500 such repairs in the past 15 years. S.H.I.P.'s staff includes four crew supervisors and nine crew members. EC funds will be used to match contributions from the City of Tampa, Hillsborough County, TECO, and the West Central Florida Area Agency on Aging to make the repairs.

The center was founded in 1998 to provide services to displaced homemakers to help them become emotionally and economically self-sufficient. Last year the center served more than 1,000 clients.

For more information contact Jeanette LaRussa Fenton, City of Tampa, at 813–274–7954.

HOUSING

Housing Partnerships Develop Neighborhoods

Fayette County/Haywood County, Tennessee, EC

During their strategic planning meetings, the citizens of the Fayette/Haywood EC identified housing as a critical issue. The community used EC funds to match Tennessee Housing Program funds in a far-reaching leverage effort to benefit Haywood County residents living in Brownsville. The city received $800,000 in State funds for a designated Bicentennial Neighborhood. Another $500,000 in State rehabilitation funds were leveraged using $100,000 in EC funds.

Eight new single-family homes for low-income residents were built in Haywood, and five units were repaired. Eleven units in Fayette were repaired. This neighborhood initiative has become a model of cooperation among Federal, State, and local housing agencies and the community residents.

John Sicola of the EC hopes to expand this effort by using a hybrid community housing development organization (CHDO) that will be piloted in Fayette. "If feasible, this hybrid CHDO will become the housing entity for the whole county," he says. CHDOs have been primarily used in urban areas; this would be the first of its type in rural Tennessee, Sicola says. A CHDO is a nonprofit entity with half of its members appointed by local government. It can receive Federal funding to engage in housing development, and is accountable to the public scrutiny.

For more information contact John Sicola, Fayette/Haywood EC, at 901–545–4610.

County Provides Housing Opportunities for Disadvantaged Neighbors

Halifax/Edgecombe/Wilson, North Carolina, EC

One example of neighbors helping neighbors lies in rural Halifax County, North Carolina, where local housing developers, agencies, and organizations have joined together to upgrade the living standards of low-income residents in their community.

"Housing in areas such as Enfield and Hollister lacked proper water and sewer systems," says Sallie Surface, Executive Director of the Choanoke Area Development Agency. "As a result, many of our neighbors didn't even have working bathrooms." Of particular concern were households that included elderly residents, individuals with disabilities, and large families.

The agency began a $273,000 housing rehabilitation project in 1995 that benefited 16 families during an 18-month period. Funds for the project were provided from a variety of sources, including the Enterprise Alliance, a USDA Rural Development Housing Preservation Grant, the local Council on Aging, the Weatherization Assistance program, a Heating Appliance and Replacement Program and other funding from USDA.

Services for the program were provided by local small businesses and entrepreneurs. "We were able to pull together the money, people, and skills for this project," says Surface. "We had all of the parts of the puzzle." Despite dwindling funds, this project has been so successful that, according to Surface, "We have a waiting list of 50 to 75 families at any given time."

For more information contact Sallie Surface, Executive Director, Choanoke Area Development Agency, at 252–539–4155.

Wilson Community Improvement Association: Laying a Firm Foundation for the Future

Halifax/Edgecombe/Wilson, North Carolina, EC

By using housing construction and rehabilitation as a community development tool, the Wilson Community Improvement Association (WICA), Inc., has been quietly changing the face of Wilson, North Carolina.

"All of our activities either revolve around or tie into housing," says Barbara C. Blackston, WICA's Housing Director, "because there is such a tremendous need for housing in our community. We believe that if people have a decent place to live, everything else in the community, such as education, employment, and resident responsibility, falls into place."

Since 1968 WICA has attempted to bring prosperity to the East Side of Wilson through various housing programs that make up the East Wilson Revitalization Project. In addition to development of the 104-unit Beacon Pointe Apartments, the 98-unit Adventura East housing development, and the Gee-Corbett Village for senior citizens, WICA has been helping low- and moderate-income residents to acquire housing and business loans. "Each potential borrower receives extensive counseling prior to purchase," says Blackston. Each applicant is required to participate in one-on-one counseling and group counseling sessions that address topics such as budgeting, credit and financial analysis, and maintenance.

The most recent additions to benefit the 38,000 people who live in Wilson are the construction of two Neighborhood Resource Centers that were developed to promote family values and provide one-stop training, referral, and support services to local youth and families. "These centers give our residents additional support to enhance their communities and themselves," says Blackston.

Working with local organizations, banks, and agencies, WICA is now focused on furthering community development by expanding its job creation program and targeting economic development through its Mercy Business Training and Development Center.

For more information contact Fannie M. Corbett, Executive Director, Wilson Community Improvement Association, Inc., at 252–243–4855.

Developers Join Forces With Nonprofits To Improve Housing Stock

Mississippi County, Arkansas, EC

Deteriorating housing stock in the Mississippi County EC area has lowered the standard of living for many low-income families. In response, nonprofit and for-profit housing developers have joined forces in the Mississippi County Housing Alliance and, with the strong involvement of the EC, have created an innovative private-public project to rehabilitate and increase the stock of both rented and owned housing units.

"It's exciting to see both nonprofit and for-profit housing developers come together to meet a common need: affordable housing," says Sam Scruggs of the EC staff. "And to start by developing the kind of comprehensive housing strategy that we had never had—that's particularly inspiring." Project leaders developed and implemented a comprehensive affordable housing plan that coordinates efforts to help people become homeowners, fosters rental opportunities, and promotes community improvement projects. To address the problem of a lack of information about credit and housing opportunities, the EC has also implemented a credit repair and homeownership training program. The project targets all age groups and low- to middle-income people who meet the standard criteria for aid.

Since the project's inception, approximately 125 households have participated in credit counseling, and 70 have moved into improved housing. The project has surpassed its original goal of rehabilitating 20 housing units, and is now up to 43 improved homes. The EC has also focused on creating clean, affordable rental units for low-income residents. The EC has constructed 57 new rental houses for families, far surpassing its original goal of 20 new homes. The project is publicized in local newspapers and on public access television. There are regular seminars for potential participants, and information is displayed in public housing. The project is being funded by $2 million in HUD grants over 4 years.

For more information contact Sam Scruggs, Executive Director, Mississippi County EC, at 870–532–2348.

EC Triples Dollars In Housing Loan Fund

North Delta, Mississippi, EC

As one of its first items of business in 1994, the North Delta, Mississippi, EC established a $300,000 revolving loan fund that would provide housing rehabilitation dollars for homeowners in the EC's three counties. Despite the fact that there was a long list of applicants waiting for the loans, EC Administrator Stuart Guernsey did not disperse all the money. Instead, he took steps to make the fund grow.

Guernsey used a portion of the loan fund to match a $100,000 USDA Rural Development Grant that would help even more residents make needed home repairs. In 1998 the EC distributed $50,000 of that USDA grant to fix three houses. It then used the remaining $50,000 as leverage to obtain still another grant: $380,000 from the Historically Black College and Universities (HBCU) program.

The HBCU grant, made to EC partner Coahoma Community College, will allow the EC to give housing rehabilitation money to homeowners who are elderly or have disabilities.

Guernsey is not finished yet. He has submitted three more grant applications that, if successful, will allow the EC to leverage its loan fund again, this time to build new housing and establish construction-training programs for women.

"The bottom line is that we started out with a little bit of our own money and we are leveraging it anyway we can conceivably think of," says Guernsey. "We started with a very simple program and a relatively small amount of money. We have almost tripled it by leveraging it against additional housing repair dollars, now against HBCU dollars, and hopefully in the future against new home and apprenticeship program dollars."

The enlarged pool of funds gives the EC the flexibility to make loans and grants for housing rehabilitation, says Guernsey, who anticipates that the fund can now serve 35 homeowners. No homeowner will receive more than $20,000.

"Many of the people we are serving with these programs are very poor folks and their houses are what we call shotgun shacks," he explains. "In some cases, you cannot repair them. We have set a maximum of $20,000 so that we don't pour money into a house that really can't be repaired. Hopefully, we'll get to those folks with some of the new housing programs."

For more information contact Stuart Guernsey, Administrator of the North Delta, Mississippi, EC, at 601–487–1968.

Buffalo Blooms with 50,000 Daffodils

Buffalo, New York, EC

Buffalo residents planted 50,000 donated daffodil bulbs as part of their annual rite of spring this year. They have not only enjoyed greater numbers of the yellow flowers—up from 26,000 last year—but they have benefited from trash pickup, weed removal from alleyways, and demolition of crack houses since the Mayor's Impact Team began visiting neighborhoods suffering from blight in 1994.

The Mayor's Impact Team has brought the resources and talents of several city departments together to collaborate with community stakeholders. City crews manage a labor force of resident volunteers. People under court order to perform community service and those from Help Individuals Reach Employment (HIRE), a State social service agency requiring community service in exchange for social service stipends, have the opportunity to work off their commitments by serving the community.

Jim Pavel, Buffalo's Director of Support Services, says, "The Mayor's Impact Team is a partnering organization that doesn't take the lead. We do logistics and support to make it easy for the community to accomplish its goals." The team creates or works with existing block clubs to strengthen their position in the community. Residents identify troublesome areas and the team brings appropriate city services to bear on the problem. City crews handle uncomplicated housing demolitions, many of which, community residents agree, are essential to the health of their neighborhoods.

When the team descended on the longstanding eyesore at 45 Leslie Street, residents were relieved. Crews towed away six abandoned cars and cleaned up weeds, debris, and broken glass. "This is great for us," says Robert Morber, President of Bison Laboratories at 100 Leslie Street. "We employ quite a few people from the neighborhood. It's better for our clients to have a nice, clean street to come down."

The Mayor's Impact Team also handles emergencies. When snow and ice pile up, the team mobilizes snow removal forces to clear driveways or clean flooded basements. It provides a tool lending library, promotes community and personal gardens, and supports Brush Up Buffalo, a housepainting event.

This year the Glad Corporation donated 77,000 garbage bags for April's Great American Clean Up. Last year's event included an environmental fair featuring 25 to 30 conservation and environmental displays, a kite giveaway, and a neighborhood cleanup with the help of 900 college students who turned out for the event. This year's cleanup will be extended to adjacent counties.

For more information contact Paula Rosner, Executive Director, Federal EC of Buffalo, 716–842–6923.

Burlington Public Safety Project

Burlington, Vermont, EC

Throughout the creation of the Burlington EC's Strategic Plan, residents continually stressed the need for projects that would empower them to address neighborhood problems themselves. The result was the creation of a strategy to help residents organize at the grassroots level and increase public safety in Burlington's Old North End EC. City government, represented by the Mayor's office, the Community and Economic Development Office, and the Burlington Police Department, joined five community-based organizations including the Burlington Community Land Trust, The American Red Cross, and Women Helping Battered Women to create the EC Public Safety Project. Using AmeriCorps*VISTA community organizers, the first-year goal of this project was to organize residents from five community streets into neighborhood associations. Four years later, more than 500 EC residents are involved in 28 formal neighborhood associations, working to rebuild the EC street by street.

The success of this project hinges on the community ownership that is evidenced in its organization. The three AmeriCorps*VISTA workers are located at the Burlington Police Department. Their unique status as community advocates who work in partnership with the police and city departments such as Public Works and Parks and Recreation allows them to effectively work with citizens to address such issues as drug dealing, noise, absentee landlords, abandoned and vacant housing, traffic, and park improvements. During Burlington's transition to community-based policing, the Police Department has recognized the Public Safety Project as a valuable resource. Lieutenant Bill LaWare says, "I have learned to depend upon the Public Safety Project to provide me with an accurate picture of what is really going on within our neighborhoods."

An example of the work of this partnership is the establishment of cleanup teams that unite city departments and the public safety strategy to support neighborhood cleanup efforts at the invitation of organized neighborhood associations. Each year, residents of 6 to 8 streets work to dispose of an annual average of 23 tons of trash, 10 tons of recyclable material, 170 old tires, 40 cubic yards of leaves and brush, and 6 truckloads of hazardous household waste.

Annual priorities for the Public Safety Project are set by its steering committee, which includes seven representatives from Neighborhood Associations. During its 4 years of operation, the project has evolved to emphasize leadership development and problem solving. The Public Safety Leadership Development Series offers a free monthly community dinner and workshop to any interested EC resident on such topics as meeting facilitation, resolving neighborhood conflicts, and finding solutions to problem properties. The project also raises approximately $10,000 to be distributed annually through the Public Safety Project Grant program. Neighborhood associations apply for up to $1,000 each for "green-up" and cleanup projects, block parties, pet-awareness events, installation of deadbolt locks and motion sensor lights, and park improvements.

The Public Safety project has been in the forefront of developing special initiatives based on common themes that emerge in neighborhoods. The Vacant Property Action Team and the community-based policing task force are just two examples of resident-driven workgroups pushing for social change on a citywide level.

For more information contact Lisa Guccione at (802) 865–7547.

Patrols Keep Crime at Bay in EZ's Commercial District

Cleveland, Ohio, EZ

Merchants in Cleveland's EZ have been breathing a little easier since October 1998, when security guards in jeeps began cruising their neighborhoods from 3 p.m. to 7 a.m. daily. Eight security guards and 23 off-duty police officers, who are employed by the EZ-funded Commercial Security Program, take turns riding along a predetermined route to watch for suspicious behavior and keep groups of teens from loitering near area businesses.

The 3-year project, funded with $2 million in EZ funds, is designed to deter crime and encourage investment in local neighborhoods. EZ funds pay salaries and were used to purchase four vehicles in which the patrols cruise neighborhoods. Uptown, Inc., a nonprofit organization that administers the Commercial Security Program, worked with the EZ's community-based development organizations to identify areas where the perception of crime was a clear deterrent to economic development.

"All of the areas have drug activity," says Gina Johnson, EZ Assistant Administrator. "Because the patrols have been so visible, the crime and drug activity in the commercial district has gone down."

Security patrols have no authority to arrest individuals, although the patrols can detain them until police arrive. Mostly, the patrols serve as the eyes and ears of the neighborhood. In addition to reporting suspicious activities to police, security personnel help the community in ways that are not related to crime.

"They do the extra little things that a police officer doesn't have the time to do," says Johnson. "If a traffic light is out, they will help direct traffic. If a water main breaks, they will report it to the proper city agency."

Uptown, Inc., is now working with area businesses to ensure that the security patrols continue after the 3-year EZ funding has expired. Several businesses have expressed a willingness to pay an annual subscription fee to fund the program on an ongoing basis.

"I see Uptown's patrol vehicles daily, and they are extremely capable in responding to our special needs," says Ramona Welch, a representative of the Hattenbach Company, a firm that has expanded its industrial operations with the help of an EZ loan.

For more information contact Gina Johnson, EZ Assistant Administrator, at 216–664–4165.

EC's Community Outreach Program Addresses Domestic Violence

New Orleans, Louisiana, EC

"We have worked in New Orleans to bring together the law enforcement, criminal justice, and social service provider communities to provide a coordinated response to domestic violence," says Mayor Marc H. Morial. In keeping with the city's domestic violence ordinance and the Mayor's Domestic Violence Advisory Committee, the Algiers EC Council is assisting battered women and their children, some of whom may experience both domestic violence and homelessness resulting from the violence. The EC offers outreach and referral services for educational prevention, counseling, and emergency shelter through its Community Outreach Program.

Although most of the City of New Orleans is located on the East bank of the Mississippi, the Algiers neighborhood is on the West bank, separating victims of domestic violence who live there from services available to the rest of the city. Many victims are low-income women with children who cannot afford transportation to ongoing counseling services and emergency shelter on the opposite side of the river. The Community Outreach Program provides counseling and emergency shelter within the Algiers community for battered women and their children.

The program was established in January 1997 with the assistance of the YWCA. It is presently supported by $64,000 in funding from the New Orleans EC, as well as additional funds provided by the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement, and an Emergency Shelter Grant. The staff consists of a counselor/coordinator, a crime victim advocate, and a bookkeeper/clerk. Victims are referrals from the courts, churches, health agencies, the Fourth District Police Precinct, and walk-ins.

In 1998 the program provided shelter for 136 victims, transportation and meals for 41 victims, and counseling for 99 children after acts of domestic violence. Program staff also received 114 crisis hotline calls. The program is now registered with the National Domestic Violence Hotline and America Responds With Love, Inc. According to Mayor Morial, "The Algiers Community Outreach Program is providing the missing link in our efforts to reach the victims of domestic violence in the Algiers community."

For more information contact Thelma French, New Orleans EC Administrator, at 504–565–6414.

Taking Control of St. Louis' Neighborhoods

St. Louis, Missouri/East St. Louis, Illinois, EZ

If the streets and neighborhoods in St. Louis' EZ feel safer and cleaner, it is due to the hard work and dedication of volunteers in the area's Crime Deterrence Program. Originally designed as a way of taking control and combating the increasing crime and vandalism rates in 12 local neighborhoods, the program instills a growing sense of community involvement as local residents band together to make a difference.

"Ever since we began this program, our crime rates have gone down quite a bit," says volunteer Pat Horak. This has been accomplished by building gangway gates to prevent local thieves from having easy access to apartments and businesses. In addition, the program enlisted the help of a local church, which enhanced the lighting on selected streets to deter crime.

Volunteers in the program work in close collaboration with other crime prevention organizations in the city. One such partnership has been with Operation Safestreet, a citywide program that provides deadbolt locks, peepholes, and smoke detectors to victims of burglaries, the elderly, and the disabled. This partnership also provides a car collar program to protect area residents' cars from being stolen. "As a result of this antitheft program, car thefts went down in our area," says Horak. "We only had two cars broken into during a 2-month period, which is amazing considering the environment in our neighborhoods."

The program's success can best be measured by the residents' feelings of safety and community. Instead of feeling devastated and insecure as a result of being a victim, the residents who participate in the Crime Deterrence Program are empowered with a sense of control and strength that enhances the entire EZ area.

For more information contact Pat Horak of the Crime Deterrence Program, at 314–772–5908.

Community Policing Program Attacks Drug Abuse and Other Crime

City of Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, EC

"Since the inception of this program we have seen an unprecedented level of cooperation and support from residents, small businesses, agencies, and schools," says Jeff Fritts, Community Policing Officer. "We are making a tremendous difference together. This is a good idea, a good concept, and a good program." The City of Lock Haven's Community Policing Program is benefitting from Federal programs and local contributions in 1999. The program recently received a Federal grant from the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Program to hire a second officer. The $75,000 grant, coupled with local funds, will provide resources for one officer's salary for 3 years. The new officer will assist in implementing the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program and will provide more services under community policing. A local car dealer donated a minivan to the city's Community Policing Program. The van will be used to expand community policing services to serve more neighborhoods.

The Community Policing Program has also set up an anonymous tip phone line paid for by EC funds. This line will enable community residents to feel safe sharing tips that help solve or stop crime. The phone calls will not be monitored. In addition to the phone line, the Community Policing Program has a home page at http://www.goplay.com/lhpd.

The DARE program will be coming soon to EC elementary schools. A local officer will receive DARE training in early 1999 and upon completion of the program will provide the drug education and awareness program to elementary school students in the fall.

For more information contact Maria Boileau, Federal Enterprise Coordinator, Lock Haven EC, at 570–893–5907.

Courtesy Patrol Combines Welfare to Work With Public Safety Assistance

McDowell County, West Virginia, EC

In a project combining public safety and job creation, the McDowell County-based West Virginia Courtesy Patrol is making highways in West Virginia safer and more hospitable while employing 133 people through West Virginia's welfare reform program, West Virginia Works. The project includes a coalition of State, Federal, and local entities, including several departments of the West Virginia State government and the McDowell County Action Network (McCAN), the local EC, under the leadership of Dr. Clif Moore.

West Virginia Governor Cecil Underwood says, "The program puts people to work patrolling our eight interstates and five Appalachian Corridor highways by helping drivers in need, contacting emergency crews when appropriate, removing hazards from the roadways, and enhancing the safety of our highways."

This $3.6-million program is a joint venture of the West Virginia Department of Education, the Department of Transportation, the Bureau of Employment Programs, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the West Virginia State Police. The West Virginia Citizens Conservation Corps, under the leadership of Bobby Martin, manages the Courtesy Patrol, and Welch native Jennifer Douglas directs it. Twelve employees are from McDowell County. The patrol works 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Motorists who need help may call for free assistance at 1–888–359–3683. Although 22 States have courtesy patrol programs, West Virginia's program is the first in the country to operate on a statewide basis.

Jennifer Douglas, the project's Coordinator, says that "McCAN and Dr. Clif Moore were among the partners on this project and they were instrumental in pushing it along." For example, McCAN provided support and logistical assistance from the beginning of the project, such as providing transportation for McDowell County employees to attend the training seminar for the project. "All the partners are crucial, and we have appreciated the EC's support, "Douglas said.

Douglas said that many people who have been stranded on West Virginia's highways have been profoundly grateful for the courtesy patrol's help. "They have said, for example, 'I don't know what we would have done without the patrol when our car broke down in the cold weather.'"

For more information contact Dr. Clif Moore, McDowell County Action Network, at 304–448–2118.

EZ Helps Reduce Emergency Response Time

Rio Grande Valley, Texas, EZ

Doctors and ambulances are few and far between in the Rio Grande Valley, Texas. Five years ago, emergency response times averaged from 42 to 50 minutes, which meant long and sometimes lethal waits for medical assistance. That response time is now down to 12 minutes thanks to EZ resources.

The EZ's work in this project has received national attention. An article in the Wall Street Journal in January 1999 described the various issues facing the Southwest border region. The Journal observed that many rural residents along the border who live far from hospitals lack adequate transportation and cited the Rio Grande Valley EZ's work in reducing emergency responses time as an example of how to effectively attack the problem. The EZ helped a business, Advanced Cardiac and Trauma, reduce emergency response time by providing an $80,000 grant toward the $700,000 startup costs. The money helped buy six used ambulances and other emergency medical care equipment. The EZ also provided resources to train EZ residents as emergency medical technicians and paramedics.

The project was doubly successful because it met the goals of both developing businesses and reducing emergency response time for rural residents in the Rio Grande Valley EZ, says Bonnie Gonzalez, Chief Executive Officer of the EZ.

For more information contact Yvonne Gonzalez, Chief Executive Officer, Rio Grande Valley EZ, at 956–514–4000.

New Shopping Center To Keep Dollars in Community

Albany/Schenectady/Troy, New York, EC

Residents of Arbor Hills in Albany will soon be spending their dollars at a local shopping center. The Gateway Commons initiative, sponsored by the Urban League of Northeast New York, will help redevelop the Henry Johnson Boulevard commercial corridor. The new 120,000-square-foot neighborhood shopping center in historic Arbor Hill will give residents access to quality, affordable goods and services close to their homes and will create permanent private-sector jobs.

The $11.4-million initiative will receive $150,000 in EC funds. Because the Commons has both EC and EZ designations, it can provide incentives for businesses to locate there, including employment tax credits; property tax abatement; discounted telephone and utility services; and low-interest property, equipment, and working capital loans.

Gateway Commons will include up to 14 new retail stores and nearly 50,000 square feet of professional office space. The Commons will have a supermarket, bank, dry cleaner, video store, fast-food restaurants, a sitdown family restaurant, a hair care products store, a dollar store, and a newsstand. The office space will be occupied by Millennium Technology Solutions, a subsidiary of National Finance Corporation; a medical facility; a satellite office of a local college; and city agencies.

The money residents spend at Gateway Commons will directly benefit their community by stimulating commercial and residential development in the area and by creating training, education, and employment opportunities for residents. The Urban League has promised to provide a minimum of 75 private, permanent, full-time jobs for EC residents and is projecting the creation of up to 400 such jobs.

Gateway Commons will have a “main street” feel created by awnings and wide sidewalks to encourage foot traffic. The site will also have benches, trees, antique streetlighting, and a clock tower. At the same time, the buildings are designed to be “smart” buildings with sophisticated communications infrastructures and advanced energy and technology services, making them serviceable and marketable for years to come.

For more information contact Anthony Tozzi, Center for Economic Growth, at 518–465–8975.

Return of Wimpy Burgers Signals Corridor’s Rejuvenation

Albuquerque, New Mexico, EC

When the Red Ball Café reopened it doors in April 1998, residents of the Albuquerque EC knew something important was happening. Most residents still remembered the original café, an area landmark where they often gathered to socialize and eat Wimpy Burgers. The return of the café—and its famous

burger—was a hopeful sign for an area that had not experienced much hope since the 50-year-old café closed in 1979.

The South Fourth Street Corridor where the café is located has had a long and somewhat rocky history. Originally part of the Camino Real or "Royal Road" built by the Spanish, the corridor was a vibrant commercial area until the 1970s. Then business declined for the local railroad yards, decimating the local economy. Not long afterward, a downtown redevelopment project closed a portion of Fourth Street and diverted traffic away from the corridor, striking a final blow to the EC's commercial area. Until 1995 the corridor was "literally dead," says EC Coordinator Sylvia Fettes. Vacant, boarded-up, and rundown buildings were plentiful.

To get businesses and customers back to the area, the city used $1.4 million in general operating funds and approximately $100,000 in leveraged money to begin the South Fourth Street Revitalization in 1995. Through the Streetscape Improvement Project, the city replaced streetlights in the area with lamps that matched the corridor's southwestern architecture. The city also installed tile murals throughout the neighborhood.

With an additional $500,000 in operating funds, the city began offering $2,000 grants to any business interested in improving the facade of its building. Through the ongoing program, EC businesses can also apply for deferred loans of up to $25,000 to upgrade their properties, as long as they match the loan amount with private funds. Almost 50 businesses have taken advantage of the city's grants. So far 25 businesses have accepted the loans and brought $100,000 in private money to the area.

The Red Ball Café has become a symbol of the revitalization's success. Determined to rescue the landmark eatery, the city purchased the café building for $60,000 and later sold it to local builder Jim Chavez for $10,000. Chavez, an EC resident who grew up eating Wimpy Burgers, used both the $2,000 facade improvement grant and the $25,000 deferred loan to renovate the building, matching loan monies with more than $50,000 of his own funds. Because the café is located in a historic district, Chavez also used Historic Preservation Tax Credits to fund the project, which he estimates cost more than $100,000.

"I think [the café] has great potential," Chavez told the *Albuquerque Journal*. "We're hoping that it will be the link to tie the whole community together and we're hoping that other businesses will want to start moving in here."

For more information contact Sylvia Fettes, Albuquerque's EC Coordinator, at 505–768–2860.

Renovated Factory Brings Hope of Economic Renewal

Cleveland, Ohio, EZ

An abandoned shock absorber factory located in the Cleveland, Ohio, EZ stood for many years as a demoralizing reminder of the Glenville neighborhood's economic decline. Now, the two-story brick building houses the Glenville

Enterprise Center and is offering its neighborhood hope of economic revitalization.

The center serves as the headquarters of Shorebank Cleveland, a nationally recognized community development bank. It also provides space for a full-service retail bank branch, a 42-company business incubator, offices for six community-based organizations, and the EZ-funded Center for Employment Training (CET).

"What you had there 3 years ago was an abandoned factory, right in the middle of what you could call the downtown of the Glenville neighborhood," says EZ director Chris Warren. "It was sapping the neighborhood's strength and not giving anything back to the community. What we have today is a restored building housing over 40 companies and a very strong industrial trades program. The factory has been revived as a community-based effort to help residents acquire and make use of capital and wealth."

The factory renovation, completed in 1998, was funded by a $926,000 EZ loan together with a $600,000 U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration grant. Shorebank, which owns the building, leveraged another $7 million in investments to make the renovations possible. Shorebank runs the business incubator, and CET operates the job-training program.

CET's Cleveland operation is a spinoff of a successful labor force development program started in San Jose, California. With assistance from the U.S. Department of Labor and Cleveland EZ funding, CET has established a hands-on, no-frills program to train EZ residents in welding, machine tooling, shipping and receiving, and graphic arts. More than 90 residents completed the program in its first year. Recent renovations to the building will allow CET to add training components in the future.

For more information contact Chris Warren, EZ Director, at 216–664–3611.

Residents Use Paint To Wage War

Columbus, Ohio, EZ

Residents and businesses in the Columbus, Ohio, EZ, are waging an all-out war to protect public and private property in the EZ. No one gets hurt in these battles, which are waged with paintbrushes and power washers.

"Graffiti is detrimental to the health, safety, and welfare of our urban neighborhoods, not just its physical image," says Jerolyn Barbee-Fombi, a staff person with Columbus Compact Corporation, the official board of the EZ. "Graffiti creates a perception in the community that laws protecting public and private property can be disregarded, and that a neighborhood is in a state of decline."

Through the Graffiti Busters Program, the Compact works in partnership with community residents, organizations, and local government to remove graffiti. Compact staff members meet with residents to discuss their concerns, secure graffiti-removing supplies for community groups, and contact property owners who have graffiti on their buildings.

During 1998 the Compact created a Graffiti Hotline that residents can use to report graffiti. In addition, a Youth Mural Project matches local artists with property owners who want murals painted on their commercial buildings. Community youth and adult volunteers have completed seven art murals to date.

"The Youth Mural Project is creating a sense of community and neighborhood pride and making the city more beautiful for residents and tourists," says Barbee-Fombi. "It also is creating partnerships between neighbors, property owners, artists, and the community. Plus, it gives the young people a positive alternative to graffiti writing."

In 1999 the Compact organized a special daylong event during which residents and representatives from 12 community organizations fanned out across the EZ to remove graffiti. Throughout the year, volunteer teams will remove graffiti on private property once the property owner agrees to the removal. The Compact is working with the Columbus City Council to evaluate and possibly strengthen current regulations. The Compact also is partnering with the City of Columbus Department of Code Enforcement, the Columbus Police Department, the Franklin County Environmental Court, Keep Columbus Beautiful, and the Franklin County Solid Waste Authority to make plans for additional graffiti removal projects.

The EZ's $10,000 investment in the Graffiti Busters Program is supplemented by a $20,000 grant from the Columbus Foundation; the grant allows the program to operate in entire neighborhoods, not just EZ census tracts within neighborhoods. The Compact also received a $300 grant from the National Paint and Coatings Foundation of Washington, D.C., for paint supplies. Local paint stores also have donated supplies.

For more information contact Jerolyn Barbee-Fombi or Peggy Murphy, Columbus Compact Corporation, at 614–251–0926.

Streetlights Create Safe Corners

Indianapolis, Indiana, EC

"EC residents could not afford to install new lights in their neighborhood. The Lighten Up the EC program has allowed for the installation of streetlights in the community," says Amy Arnold, Indianapolis' EC Coordinator. In an effort to reduce its utility costs, the City of Indianapolis placed a moratorium on the installation of new streetlights in the 1970s. After the moratorium, residents were required to pay the utility costs of streetlights they wanted installed in their neighborhoods. The Indianapolis EC recognized that residents living in the EC often could not afford to install much-needed streetlights. With the goal of keeping the EC streets well lit, the EC partnered with the Indianapolis Foundation to establish an endowment that would pay for the installation and the utility costs of 200 new streetlights. The Lighten Up the EC program has brought EC residents, grassroots organizations, and police officers together to identify the darkest corners in the EC. In the Mapleton-Fall Creek neighborhood of the EC, the neighborhood association picks dimly lit areas for new lights, concentrating on areas where the residents are elderly.

A total of 182 streetlights have now been installed and the EC is pleased to report that well-lit street corners, combined with other public safety efforts, have helped to deter property crime and drug transactions in the EC. Al Polin, Neighborhood Coordinator for the Mapleton-Fall Creek Neighborhood Association, tells of a woman who had tried for years to get a streetlight installed in front of her home. With the new streetlight in place, she feels safer going in and out of her house at night. "Lighting placed in the community has been a positive movement for helping alleviate home burglary, vandalism, and other crime taking place in the neighborhood," says Polin.

For more information contact Amy Arnold, EC Coordinator, City of Indianapolis, at 317–327–7876.

Philadelphia Field of Dreams

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania/Camden, New Jersey, EZ

This North Philadelphia community scored a home run when it celebrated the inauguration of its ballfield in May 1998. After a ribbon-cutting and children's parade, ownership of the ballfield was transferred from the city to this mostly Latino community adjacent to a dilapidated manufacturing section.

"The community had wanted a ballfield for 20 years," says Anthony Washington, an American Street resident and Recreation Department employee. Youth had few places but vacant lots and abandoned industrial sites to play. The nearby intersection at Third and Cumberland Streets was a haven for drug addicts. When the area received EZ designation in 1994, "We held a town meeting to designate EZ projects, and recreation got the most votes," says Washington.

Community organizations, residents, city government, local utility companies, and the EZ Community Trust Board, collaborated to bring about the ballpark. The EZ contributed $150,000, and the city contributed $400,000. Planners had to fight critics who said that EZ money should be used solely for economic development, not recreation. But others, including Michael DiBerardinis, EZ Trust Board member and the city's Recreation Commissioner, disagreed. "We have to create a neighborhood that can sustain [economic development], that can enhance and support the process by making the area a place where people want to live and businesses will want to come."

Where to build the ballfield was also a problem. The intersection of Fourth and Dauphin Streets was chosen because it was surrounded by vacant lots. It was also adjacent to the John Welsh Elementary School, which exchanged some of its property in return for rights to the complex during school hours. The intersection was eliminated and traffic rerouted to create the huge field. Electric and phone lines had to be moved and several properties were demolished. Ground was broken in May 1997.

The ballfield has been a success. More than 40 coaches and assistant coaches signed on last year for approximately 20 Little League baseball teams. The ballpark also contains space for a soccer field and basketball courts. Teenage parents are now getting the opportunity to enjoy activities they couldn't participate in as

children. Rosalie Sotomajor, 18, lives close to the ballpark. "It's a great park," she says, adding, "My son loves the grass."

For more information contact Eva Gladstein, Executive Director, City of Philadelphia, at 215–683–0462.

15th Street Gateway To Become an Artistic City Welcome

Tacoma, Washington, EC

A recent Rural/Urban Design Assistance Team study included recommendations for development of a core 10-square-block area of the Tacoma EC that includes both residential and commercial properties. The Tacoma Empowerment Consortium (TEC) is working with the implementation team and the City of Tacoma to implement the plan.

A major entry point into the City of Tacoma off the interstate highway (I–5) is the I–705 spur, which leads directly to the main downtown artery, Pacific Avenue and 15th Street.

One of the study's major recommendations is a special gateway design using environmental art to create a distinct sense of arrival at the Pacific Avenue intersection and extend up along the entire length of 15th Street to Tacoma Avenue. A thematic "art walk" will have other distinct gateways located at the cross streets of Broadway, Market, and Fawcett.

TEC expects that the project will commence during 1999 and that both temporary construction jobs and permanent jobs will grow out of the effort. TEC will advocate that EC residents have access to those jobs and to resulting entrepreneurial opportunities.

For more information contact Dr. Shirl E. Gilbert II, Tacoma Empowerment Consortium, at 253–274–1288.

Rite-Aid Store Will Foster New Business Growth

Tacoma, Washington, EC

The Tacoma EC worked with community leaders and the leadership of the Tacoma "Main Street" effort to put together a project to demolish a full block of historic, but old and poorly maintained, buildings and build a much-needed, full-service Rite-Aid drugstore in the area.

The project is located in the heart of the Tacoma EC and will anchor a revitalization of the historic Upper Tacoma business district, formerly a vibrant, predominantly African-American business enclave. This project will provide more than 100 jobs for inner-city Tacoma and the EC and will spin off new businesses, which the Tacoma Empowerment Consortium will catalyze using its participation in the collaboration for the area and its microloan outreach and awards programs.

For more information contact Dr. Shirl E. Gilbert II, Tacoma Empowerment Consortium, at 253–274–1288.

Waterway Development and Municipal Dock Building Renovation Will Bring Community Together

Tacoma, Washington, EC

The most comprehensive, far-reaching development project initiated in Tacoma in more than 20 years will be the development of the Thea Foss Waterway, a 1.5-mile inlet off Commencement Bay that runs along the downtown shoreline. After several years of study and review by city officials and citizens of Tacoma, the city purchased 27 acres of property on the western side of the waterway at a cost of $6.8 million.

The city's plans for this former industrial area focus on one goal: public access. The development will include a shoreline promenade that will accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, and rollerbladers and will feature landscaping, play areas, and public piers. It will include a civic plaza and a place for open-air concerts, art displays, and other public gatherings overlooking the waterway.

The Thea Foss Public Development Authority (TFPDA) has also combined with city agencies, the Tacoma Empowerment Consortium (TEC), and private businesses and individuals is considering a total renovation of the more than century-old Municipal Dock Building. The project would create a festival marketplace of shops and eateries with a theme that embraces the historic maritime history of the old dock area and include water-based recreational activities on the Thea Foss Waterway. The project will be part of the larger renovation and revitalization of the Tacoma Dock Street and waterfront areas. TEC and TFPDA envision a culinary academy as part of the dock building renovation effort, which will train EC residents in culinary skills specializing in seafood and Pacific Northwest cuisine.

The Thea Foss Waterway project will create hundreds of temporary and permanent jobs. The dock building renovation effort will provide hundreds of additional jobs for EC residents in the daily operation of the marketplace and through the academy and recreational activities. TEC will work to ensure the involvement of EC residents in the workforce as well as in the entrepreneurial opportunities that result from the development.

For more information contact Dr. Shirl E. Gilbert II, Tacoma Empowerment Consortium, at 253–274–1288.

Innovative Bus Service Allows Rural Residents To Reach City Jobs and Services

Accomack-Northampton, Virginia, EC

People who live in rural areas almost always depend on their cars to get around. But what if a person is too young or old to drive, or is disabled or in ill health? The Accomack-Northampton EC is alleviating this problem with its Shore Transit and Rideshare (STAR) Project, which enables people to get to jobs and social services.

"One of the things I'm most proud of is that persons with disabilities who have no other means of transport can use our buses, all of which are accessible," notes George Goodrow of STAR. "People are spared the red tape of social services-supplied transit, and the public is spared the cost of it." The project has transformed lives. Goodrow cites the example of a woman who was on welfare for years. She started working at a fast-food restaurant using STAR. She found a better job and still rode STAR. One day she wasn't on the bus. By accessing public transportation she was able to find a job and eventually save up enough to buy a car.

STAR has started five bus lines that serve the rural Virginia portion of the Eastern Shore's Delmarva Peninsula, allowing people to travel across the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel to the populous Hampton Roads metropolitan area for $1 each way, without having to pay the $20 bridge toll. The buses run three round trips each day, in the morning, midday, and evening. Approximately 3,000 people use STAR services each month.

The project is funded primarily by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration. This year's grant totals $92,000. The Virginia Department of Transportation is contributing another $42,000, and the two counties that make up the EC are donating $30,000. STAR is raising about $8,000 from ads on the sides of the buses. A STAR survey shows that, for every $1 of local funds spent on the transit service, the EC's economy benefits to the tune of $18 in Accomack County and $40 in Northampton County. The total return on investment was approximately $1 million in 1998. Each of the 100 bus stops has schedules available, and local radio, television, and newspapers run public service ads for STAR. Other partners include the community college and businesses that contribute through a partnership donation program.

For more information contact George Goodrow, Public Transit Manager, STAR, at 757–665–1994.

EC Helps Township Win 30-Year Quest To Gain Affordable, Safe Heating

Lake County, Michigan, EC

The Lake County EC worked with State, local, and private-sector officials to bring natural gas to Yates Township. The community had been trying to get access to natural gas for 30 years. Officials of MichCon, which will bring natural gas to the

community, said, "We're very proud to welcome Yates Township into the family of communities [that] depend on MichCon to heat their homes and businesses and to fuel industry throughout Michigan."

Local officials said this development would provide affordable heating for senior citizens, while enhancing year-round promotion of the community. The local community became the first village in Michigan to provide money up front for the installation of natural gas services.

"We had to overcome the initial resistance of the gas company to put natural gas into that area," says Mary Trucks of the Lake County, Michigan, EC. More than 60 percent of the gas users are expected to be low-income households, with the great majority of the users being residential and noncommercial customers; thus, the company was at first concerned that profit margins would not be large enough for them to justify providing this service. The EC and other local supporters of the project negotiated a price to get the gas, which is not only cheaper but safer. Trucks explains that when users had to use fuel from their own tank, they had no one to call to fix a problem with an individual tank. Now, the gas company will come out and repair problems. She emphasizes that "our motivation was not only economic development, but also improving the quality of life."

Trucks says that one of the key actions in getting the company to bring natural gas service to the local area came in the form of legislation exempting the EC "from a personal property tax, so that the utility did not have to pay it." The EC gained crucial support for the legislation from State Senator Bill Schuette, and Governor John Engler signed it into law in December 1998. "This legislation would not have been possible if we were not an Enterprise Community," Trucks says.

As part of the agreement, the supporters of the project had negotiated that if they succeeded in getting the legislation passed, funds from the tax savings would be returned to the EC and applied to fund assistance for low-income residents of the community. After the tax exemption legislation for the EC became law, the company sent a substantial check to the EC representing the savings from the taxes that it did not have to pay.

Harry Brummer of USDA's Rural Development in Michigan says that the natural gas project for Yates Township "is what the EC is supposed to be about. It is a combination of State, Federal, and private enterprise."

For more information contact Mary Trucks, Lake County EC, at 616–757–3785.

EC Pursues Ambitious Infrastructure Projects

Macon Ridge, Louisiana, EC

Rural areas facing the challenge of building infrastructure can be inspired by the story of the Macon Ridge EC, which is one of the largest rural ECs in the Nation. It covers 12 parishes (counties) and includes 10 municipalities. But its size has not stopped Macon Ridge from pursuing a range of basic infrastructure projects that are dramatically improving its water supply and other essential services.

"It's refreshing to know that during a time when the public seems apathetic about projects for poor people, the EZ/EC initiative is helping the poorest people in rural America," says Buddy Spiller of Macon Ridge Economic Development Region, Inc., a nonprofit that works closely with the EC. "It's obvious from the amount of money funded in our EC and the number of people benefiting that this initiative is succeeding here."

Examples of Macon Ridge's success abound. The Turkey Creek Water System received a $1.8-million grant and a loan of $695,000 to build a rural water distribution system, including production wells, elevated storage tank, distribution lines, and service connections for approximately 400 households in Franklin Parish. In the town of Ferriday, a Rural Business Enterprise Grant of $225,000 was used to acquire the land and building for the EC Resource Center. In Harrisonburg, a $250,000 grant and $200,000 loan were used to finance a new wastewater treatment facility. In the Concordia Parish Water District, a $1.3 million grant and $482,000 loan enabled an inadequate water system to be upgraded with three new water wells, four exchange units, a new metal building, and a 200,000-gallon potable water storage tank. In the towns of Wisner, Newellton, and St. Joseph and in Catahoula Parish, USDA Community Facilities grants were used to buy better firefighting and police equipment.

The Macon Ridge infrastructure development effort was begun by the EC, which easily received the cooperation of public officials throughout the region. The infrastructure projects began in 1998 when the EC received USDA Rural Development funding. The projects will continue over the next 6½ years.

For more information contact Buddy Spiller, President, Macon Ridge Economic Development Region, Inc., at 318–757–3033.

EC Brings Water and Sewer Service to County Residents

Scott-McCreary Area, Tennessee-Kentucky, EC

"In our 80-year existence, we'd never had a sewer system in this county and still wouldn't without the EC," says Bruce Murphy, Deputy County Judge/Executive. Once the county received EC designation, the Water District began two major public infrastructure projects. Both were completed in fall 1998. The first is McCreary County's first publicly owned and operated sanitary sewer system. It provides access to sanitary sewer services for 365 households and businesses in the Whitley City and Marshes Siding communities.

The second infrastructure project expanded the district's water delivery system to provide access to potable water for 127 households and businesses in the Indian Knob, Nevelsville, Sawyer, and Wolfe Ridge communities. USDA and the Economic Development Administration (EDA) provided funding for a new one-million gallon per day water treatment facility to provide safe, clean water for the residents of McCreary County.

For more information contact Leslie Winningham, Scott McCreary Area EC, at 615–741–6852.

Historic District Gets Set To Rise Again

Houston, Texas, EEC

For nearly 5 years, community activists on Washington and Houston Avenues have struggled to bring relief to the distressed conditions of this historic neighborhood on Houston's West side. For most of that time it was a lonely effort, but now these committed volunteers have the city backing them with a $20,000 grant to supplement the $30,000 they have raised themselves. At last this beleaguered neighborhood, once at the heart of Houston's famed streetcar district, is set for major urban renewal.

In November 1998 the Washington and Houston Avenues Historic District became an official economic development corridor program. The project is a collaborative effort of local businesses, organizations, neighborhood associations, government agencies, and residents to bring about a more positive image of the area and attract new businesses and development. "It's one of the few programs that has put together a coalition of not only the businesses, but the residents that surround the corridor so that everyone has a voice in it," says Judith Butler of the Mayor's Office.

"In the next couple of years, we want you to see new businesses and pedestrian traffic on tree-lined streets," explains Barbara Coffee, Executive Director of the Washington and Houston Avenues Corridor Revitalization. This vision is in sharp contrast to the barbed wire and boarded windows that have dominated the view for so long. A mixture of residential, commercial, and industrial properties, this area contains some of Houston's oldest structures.

The timing could not be better for a full-fledged revitalization program in the neighborhood. "With all the exciting developments in downtown Houston, this is the perfect time for Washington and Houston Avenues to put on their best faces," notes Coffee. "These thoroughfares are key entrances to the theater district, the municipal complex, and soon-to-be ballpark."

While the project is still in its infancy, already there are several reasons to celebrate. R&F Antiques, a major retailer in Houston, has relocated from the Morningside area of the city onto Washington Avenue, filling 60,000 square feet of abandoned office space. Vacant lots have been subdivided by developers and planned new apartment buildings are expected to accommodate 4,000 additional residents. "That will be a huge jump-start for other development along the corridor," says Coffee.

"The main purpose is to bring people back into the area," says Mike Montalbano, a member of the project's oversight board who grew up in the area. "We want to bring businesses back and residents back." The way things are going, it looks like they will.

For more information contact Judith Butler, the Mayor's Office, at 713–247–2666.

Milwaukee's Brownfields Create Employment Opportunities

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, EC

Residents and community groups in Milwaukee's EC are joining with investors, social services agencies, job-training agencies, and land developers to address job creation in communities with brownfields.

Once an area of thriving foundries and manufacturers, the contaminated soils of the Menomonee River Valley are once again contributing to a strong Milwaukee economy. "The goal is to enable cleanup of brownfields and to prepare trainees for jobs in the environmental industry," states Glen Mattison, Milwaukee's EC Program Officer.

With $50,000 from the EC and a recent $200,000 training grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, underemployed and unemployed residents from Milwaukee's low-income neighborhoods are being assigned to complete building trade projects and environmental initiatives such as park improvements.

Under the pilot program, trainees join the Milwaukee Community Service Corps (MCSC) and receive guidance from skilled instructors. MCSC has provided youth ages 18 to 23 with successful job training and placement for the past 7 years. As part of their environmental training, corps members receive 40 hours of instruction in lead and asbestos abatement and the safe handling of hazardous materials.

For more information contact Glenn Mattison, EC Program Officer, at 414–286–3760.

Phillips Eco-Enterprise Center Combines Business With Environment

Minneapolis, Minnesota, EZ

Is it possible to combine the needs of office and industrial businesses with environmental concerns? Yes, and the Green Institute in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is leading the way by constructing the Phillips Eco-Enterprise Center, one of the "greenest" commercial buildings in the Midwest.

Located at Hiawatha Avenue and 28th Street, this $5-million building will be one of "the most environmentally sound and energy-efficient buildings of its kind in the Nation," says Michael Krause, President of the Green Institute. As a tenant in the building, the institute will be developing business assistance and workforce readiness services in addition to its existing programs, such as the DeConstruction Services and Reuse Center, which offer residents training opportunities and employment related to the environmental field.

Scheduled to open in July 1999, the 64,000-square-foot facility includes unique design features such as wind and solar energy systems, ground source heating and cooling, advanced daylighting systems, high-efficiency light and energy controls, and the use of salvaged materials in construction. The Center will use 45 percent less energy than structures built to current building code standards, according to

Krause. In addition, all of the project's storm water will be treated onsite. The facility also includes a half-acre native prairie restoration and a 4,800-square-foot rooftop garden.

Funding for the project comes from Bremer Bank and the Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic Development. Future tenants of the facility will include businesses from Minnesota's growing environmental and energy-related sectors such as environmental technology, recycling, and energy conservation. Once completed, the center will bring 150 new jobs to the Phillips neighborhood, at least half of which are projected to be filled by local residents who receive public assistance or live below the poverty line.

For more information contact Michael Krause, Director, Phillips Eco-Enterprise Center, at 612–874–1148.

Cleaning Up Omaha One Block At a Time

Omaha, Nebraska, EC

The Block-by-Block 2000 Program is sweeping the streets—literally—of Omaha's most depressed neighborhoods. Volunteers come together, armed with shovels, chainsaws, and heavy-duty garbage bags to clean and repair some of the city's ugliest eyesores. The volunteers are predominantly residents of the neighborhood, but they come from other areas of the city as well.

Mayor Hal Daub, for example, has participated in several of the program's Action Days, and is one of the most enthusiastic volunteers. "It's a real example of individuals and employers caring for their communities," he said on the first Action Day in August 1998. Since then block cleanups are occurring at an average rate of one per week.

"Block-by-Block 2000 is based on the idea that a clean neighborhood is a safe neighborhood," says Scott Knudsen, Executive Director of the Omaha EC. "And a safe, clean neighborhood," Knudsen insists, "nurtures pride and invites investment, which leads to prosperity and an enhanced quality of life."

Individuals, neighborhood associations, and churches that wish to see their blocks included in the program are invited to nominate the block by calling the mayor's office. Once a block is selected, assessment teams of neighborhood association leaders, block residents, and city employees make a curbside assessment of public and private properties. The assessment checklist covers such infrastructure needs as streets, sidewalks, and sewers and can include basic structural restoration recommendations. Once the preliminary work is done and the block is approved for improvement, the Action Day is planned. Neighborhood volunteers, community leaders, city leaders, corporations, charitable organizations, churches, and anyone else who wants to participate get together for the cleanup. The majority of the work includes minor structural repair and removal of weeds, brush, tree limbs, and litter.

The goal of the program is to clean up, fix up, and achieve full city code compliance for the benefit and enjoyment of the neighborhood residents and the entire

community. Although the program is supported by EC and City of Omaha funding, broad community and private-sector volunteerism and involvement is essential to this program's success.

For additional information contact Scott Knudsen, EC Coordinator, at 402–444–5381.

Extension Agents Help Small Firms With Environmental Complexities

Seattle, Washington, EC

Small companies often find the challenge of complying with complex environmental regulations burdensome. A project in the Seattle EC is giving these firms the extra help they need with environmental services.

"This is one of the first private nonprofits to form a bridge between government regulatory agencies and businesses," notes Charlie Cunniff, who directs the Environmental Extension Service project for the Environmental Coalition of South Seattle, Inc. (ECOSS), an established nonprofit organization. The project, which is patterned after the agricultural extension agent programs sponsored by land grant universities throughout the country, employs three environmental extension agents. The agents provide technical assistance to small and medium-sized industrial firms in cleaning up brownfields, preventing pollution, and practicing conservation. The agents also serve as bridges between and interpreters for the industrial firms and environmental consulting industrial firms and regulators. When a firm gets a complex report on contaminated dirt on its property, an agent can help it determine what needs to be done, a task that would otherwise require a staff of environmental specialists.

The project has served 65 businesses in the South Seattle industrial area, which includes and extends beyond the EC. These firms have had 104 positive environmental outcomes and have saved approximately $200,000 in related costs. The project has been funded for approximately $120,000 during a 1½-year period by the EC in cooperation with the city, King County, and private and foundation contributions. The project is marketed to small firms through newspaper articles, letters, newsletters, and meetings of the local business community in which ECOSS is heavily involved. The project is expected to continue permanently and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is expected to join existing donors.

For more information contact Charlie Cunniff, Executive Director, Environmental Coalition of South Seattle, Inc., at 206–767–0432.

Virginia Project Is First Eco-Industrial Park in America

Accomack-Northampton, Virginia, EC

The Cape Charles Sustainable Technologies Industrial Park is the Nation's first eco-industrial park, one of four national demonstration projects of President Clinton's Council on Sustainable Development. Eco-industrial parks are designed to maximize efficient use of energy and resources while eliminating waste and pollution. A portion of the park is located on land known as "brownfields." The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines brownfields as "abandoned, idled, or underused commercial and industrial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environment contamination." However, Cape Charles is a rural brownfields success story.

The County of Northampton received numerous grants from Rural Economic and Community Development's Rural Business Enterprise Program, the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and other agencies. The first tenant in the eco-industrial park is Energy Recovery, Inc. (ERI). The company manufactures products that improve many wasteful pumping processes and make seawater desalination affordable for coastal communities worldwide. "The Cape Charles Sustainable Technologies Industrial Park provides the ideal environment to showcase our products and the evolving technology," says Lief J. Hauge, President of ERI. "We're pleased to be part of America's first eco-industrial park."

The town of Cape Charles and the County of Northampton, located on a narrow strip of land between the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean, are home to rich farmlands, productive waters, vast wetlands, and miles of unspoiled coastline, but they are also home to a 155-acre former dump, docks, railyard, and an abandoned industrial site. The eco-industrial park is designed as one way of attacking the threat of hazardous substances in the area and is intended to provide solutions to many local environmental and social problems.

A variety of local, State, and Federal people are collaborating on this project. Thomas Voltaggio of EPA's Hazardous Waste Management Division says, "This program was developed with the idea of returning jobs to locations where people live, rather than building new industrial parks over farm fields." The redeveloped brownfields will provide the eco-industrial park with 50 acres of manufacturing space, conference facilities, restored wetlands, a nature trail, an environmental education facility, and a tertiary sewage treatment system. The park contains more than 200 total acres, and more than 750,000 square feet of building space are planned. Phase one of the park began in spring 1999.

The park hopes to attract other manufacturing, research and development, and technology companies, as well as aquaculture firms, organic farms, and other companies that have byproducts that can serve as another firm's raw material. "This is an example of how effective collaboration between government of all levels, industry, and grassroots community decisionmaking can produce an

innovative and cutting-edge product," says Arthur Carter, Executive Director of the Accomack-Northampton EC's lead entity.

For more information contact Arthur Carter, Virginia Eastern Shore Economic Empowerment and Housing Corporation, 757–442–4509.

Stamping Out the Scourge of Lead Poisoning

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, EC

Ninety-five percent of Harrisburg's housing units were constructed before 1980 and have high concentrations of lead-based paint. Approximately 82 percent of these housing units are occupied by very low- and low-income families. In 1995 through a $1.2-million HUD Lead Hazard Reduction Grant, Harrisburg established a program that includes efforts to reduce lead hazards in homes as well as education and awareness activities geared toward children who are the most susceptible to lead poisoning.

Children can get lead poisoning by inhaling or ingesting lead dust. At high levels, lead can cause seizures, coma, and even death. Even at low levels, lead poisoning can adversely affect children's intelligence.

Each summer the Pinnacle Health System's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Center (CLPPC), in partnership with the City of Harrisburg, conducts a Lead Hazard Awareness Campaigns. Through a variety of interactive and fun activities, children learn what to do to avoid lead poisoning. These educational programs have featured "Sesame Street's" Oscar and Elmo in 1996, "Sergeant Lead" in 1997, and the "Lead Detective" in 1998. The 1998 Lead Awareness Campaign reached 70 preschoolers at city daycare centers with its lead-poisoning prevention message.

In addition to activities aimed at children, specially trained contractors remove lead hazards in homes where children have been identified by Pinnacle's CLPPC as having elevated lead levels in their blood. The lead reduction is conducted in conjunction with other housing rehabilitation to bring the homes into compliance with city codes. Families can temporarily relocate to a safe house while the lead hazard reduction is underway in their homes. The program also eliminates lead hazards in vacant houses being rehabilitated for sale to homebuyers under the city's Homeownership Opportunities Program.

Recently, the city was awarded another $1.2-million HUD grant, as well as a $500,000 State grant to continue this successful program. With the extra funding, a public health nurse was hired to conduct special public education events for children and door-to-door screening in high-risk areas and at homeless shelters, soup kitchens, and city schools. The nurse also provides family counseling on managing lead hazards and reducing a child's exposure. She conducts testing in houses prior to rehabilitation and conducts dust wipes following lead reduction activity.

A measure of the program's success so far has been the 50-percent reduction in positive blood test results in initial screenings.

For more information contact JoAnn Partridge, City of Harrisburg, Department of Building and Housing Development, at 717–255–6424.

Drug Treatment Program Addresses Spiritual Needs

Jackson, Mississippi, EC

Seven years ago Larry Perry was the first client to walk through the doors of the New Day Drug Rehabilitation Ministry (NDDRM) in the Jackson EC. Today he runs the program.

"The Lord has blessed me considerably through this program," says Perry, who was addicted to drugs and alcohol for 23 years. "I came off the streets as a drug addict and a homeless person and now I am a responsible husband and a responsible father and a leader in the community and a deacon in my church."

Since 1992 Perry has shepherded almost 300 men like himself through the program that saved his life. Most clients come to NDDRM after they have completed a primary drug treatment program elsewhere in Jackson. Rather than return to the environments in which their drug habits flourished, recovering addicts live in one of New Day's 2 transitional housing sites for 6 months. Each client in the housing program must abide by an 8 p.m. curfew for his first 30 days and get a job with the help of the program's job-placement service. Clients also spend at least 40 hours in community service "giving back what they took from the community," says Perry.

At the core of the New Day program is a 12-step, Bible-based recovery curriculum called "Basic Christian Life Skills." Clients attend classes that teach them how to pray and study the Bible, manage their finances, keep a job, respect themselves, and live a holy life. Perry says the NDDRM program is different from secular drug rehabilitation because it treats addiction as a spiritual as well as a physical problem. The program has a 65-percent success rate, he says. Most participants remain self-sufficient and employed for years after they complete the program.

NDDRM, which received a $55,000 grant from the EC, is sponsored by New Horizon Ministries, an affiliate of Jackson's New Horizon Church. The EC grant supplemented the program's annual budget, set at $64,000 for 1999. Other program funds come from individuals, churches, and local businesses. The program can accommodate 14 men at one time. Seven men are on the waiting list.

In addition to its transitional housing program, New Day takes an active role in helping the Jackson EC deal with problems caused by substance abuse. During 1998 NDDRM held a conference during which Jackson law enforcement agencies taught 100 EC residents how to address substance abuse problems in their families and neighborhoods. Every 3 months, NDDRM volunteers take their message to the streets, visiting targeted neighborhoods to talk with residents and distribute antidrug literature.

"During these neighborhood visits, we also feed people, setting up barbecue pits on street corners and bringing the community together," says Perry. "We want to let them know that we are all in this together."

For more information contact Larry Perry, Director, New Day Drug Rehabilitation Ministry, at 601–371–1427.

Medical Students Bring Hope and Fight Costs With Free Clinic

Los Angeles, California, EZ

South Central Los Angeles is among the most impoverished and medically underserved inner-city regions of the United States. In response to this dire situation, several medical students from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and Charles R. Drew University founded the University Free Clinic (UFC) in September 1996.

"The clinic is working," notes David Eder of the EZ staff. "It is totally free to residents and there is a high rate of return. There is also a good referral system to hospitals for cases that the clinic cannot handle." UFC was created to provide medical care to uninsured and underinsured local residents; it also serves indigent and working poor EZ residents. More than 7,900 residents have received free care. Half of these patients made follow-up visits—a remarkable figure for a free clinic.

UFC is located in the heart of the EZ on the site of a former gas station that, after environmental rehabilitation, was transformed into a state-of-the-art medical clinic with six examination rooms. The clinic serves a growing population of indigent children, women, and families. Integral to its program is well-baby care, expansion of immunizations, and provision of preventive medical services. The clinic also offers a broad range of other basic family medical services, such as an onsite monthly mobile van that provides free HIV testing.

To make the clinic a reality, several major partners were involved. The City of Los Angeles provided the site and building. Charles R. Drew provided funding, personnel, administrative support, equipment, and insurance. Charles R. Drew currently provides funding, physicians, nurses, and other medical assistance. Doctors from the community donate their time and training for the students.

The clinic also has a tremendous volunteer base in the larger community. More than 250 student volunteers have donated more than 11,000 hours of service so far. More than 200 medical school faculty volunteers, 36 volunteer doctors from local hospitals, 30 medical students, and 2 volunteer nurses donate their time.

Along with these donations of time, substantial quantities of medicine and supplies are donated by pharmaceutical companies and by individuals and associations. These donations complement the project's funding. The estimated total project cost (1996–2000) is $2.7 million. This includes more than $600,000 from the City of Los Angeles, $704,000 from the EZ in Title XX Social Services Block Grants, and about $1.4 million in varied grants from Charles R. Drew University.

For more information contact David Eder, Los Angeles EZ/EC Program Coordinator, at 213–485–2956.

Health Is the Hype in Ogden

Ogden, Utah, EC

On Saturday, August 15, 1998, more than 550 residents of the Jefferson target area of the Ogden, Utah, EC participated in a free Jefferson Neighborhood Health Fair. More than 300 participants were children, 150 of whom had their immunizations brought up to date.

The primary goal of the health fair was to link the people in the Jefferson target area with existing health providers and identify the barriers that prevented residents from using the providers. For the convenience of neighborhood residents, the health fair was held from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. in the Ogden Area Community Action Agency Building in the heart of the community.

The Jefferson target area has a population of approximately 5,000 residents, which is about 7 percent of the entire City of Ogden population (approximately 70,000). Average income in the Jefferson target area is $19,014, 37 percent of the area median income. The poverty rate is 40.9 percent. The unemployment rate in this neighborhood is approximately 22.5 percent, a strong indicator that healthcare resources are sorely needed. The neighborhood has a 60-percent immunization rate and more than half of its residents lack health insurance.

The health fair provided healthcare screenings, physicals, and immunizations to children from the Jefferson target area, most of whom come from low-income families. A number of screenings for adults were also available. The health fair also included public information booths, representing 16 local and regional health and wellness organizations.

In addition to health screenings and information booths, the health fair included many fun activities sponsored by the Treehouse Children's Museum, 4-H, the Ogden Nature Center, the American Youth Soccer Association, and Head Start. The first 500 participants received a free lunch courtesy of the local supermarkets and wholesale vendors.

This Neighborhood Health Fair is Ogden's ninth neighborhood fair and will be an annual event in the Jefferson Neighborhood. The goal of the City of Ogden is to provide annual neighborhood fairs in each Ogden EC target neighborhood. These neighborhood fairs give service providers the opportunity to talk with and interact with neighborhood residents to identify their concerns and needs and bridge any gaps in services.

The Jefferson Neighborhood Health Fair was produced in partnership with the Ogden Area Community Action Agency, the Weber University School of Allied Health, and the Weber-Morgan District Health Department. The out-of-pocket cost of the event was approximately $800, which came from EC funds. In addition, $2,500 of in-kind contributions were leveraged from the local business and nonprofit communities, and more than 50 professionals contributed more than 250 hours to the health fair, time valued at approximately $7,000.

With the development of 24 housing units for low-income homeownership, a Head Start program that provides care to more than 300 children, and a new park in the planning stages, these neighborhood health fairs are critical to servicing the needs of the Jefferson neighborhood's growing population. It is hoped that the culmination of these efforts will help to stabilize the community.

For more information contact Karen Thurber, Coordinator, Ogden City Enterprise Initiative, at 801–629–8943.

Rural Partners Help People Pay for Healthcare

Accomack-Northampton, Virginia, EC

Of the catastrophes that can befall anyone, and particularly a poor person, one of the worst is a health crisis that requires an expensive hospital stay and costly prescriptions. A local hospital on Virginia's Eastern Shore is combining efforts with the Accomack-Northampton EC to help poor people cover these kinds of healthcare costs while enabling them to maintain their financial self-sufficiency.

"The EC Healthcare Project allows low-income people to keep their assets and their pride by being able to participate in paying their medical costs but get the assistance they need," explains Arthur Carter, the project's Coordinator and head of the EC. The project has four main components: a mobile mammography testing unit, case-by-case help with hospitalization costs, assistance in paying for hearing examinations and hearing aids, and help with eye care costs. The program allows more than 5,000 eligible low-income households to pay as much as they can afford, so that in each case charges may be reduced and the remaining charges made affordable through a low-interest loan from the EC.

Shore Memorial Hospital is a partner with the EC in the project. The hospital has deeply discounted its charges and people needing ear care have received 20-percent discounts. The EC has set aside almost $58,000 to provide revolving loans for the project and the hospital and its resident doctors will continue to adjust their charges as appropriate. The loans are also supplemented by Title XX grants.

Along with the hospital, doctors, and the EC staff, local social services agencies and the community college are publicizing the project, although notifying possible participants has not been a problem. Stories in the local newspaper have publicized the project to the extent that people call the EC about it each day. The project is just starting up, but given the need and response so far, Carter expects it to become a permanent part of the local healthcare effort.

For more information contact Arthur Carter, Executive Director, Virginia Eastern Shore Economic Empowerment and Housing Corporation, at 757–442–4509.

Health Centers in Roane and Clay Counties, West Virginia

Central Appalachia, West Virginia, EC

The Central Appalachia EC worked with local communities to bring two health and fitness centers to Clay and Roane Counties in West Virginia. The project features nutrition education and fitness opportunities for a local population that suffers from an unusually high incidence of heart disease, due in part to lack of physical activity. The building, with commercial-grade equipment and professional trainers as well as a coordinated, countywide fitness program, is designed to help alleviate this problem.

The Central Appalachia EC worked with Roane General Hospital to obtain a $150,000 grant to establish the Roane County Fitness Center. Renovations include a fitness center, aerobic classes, assistance from a physical therapist, and an Adult Healthy Heart class involving a monitored exercise program targeting people who may be at high risk for cardiac problems due to high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity, sedentary lifestyle, or other health risks. Community outreach programs help low-income people to participate in the program. Membership costs are kept at a minimum. The facility provides youth with a safe, supervised place to go on Friday and Saturday nights.

The facility holds smoking cessation classes, diabetes support group meetings, nutrition classes, tobacco/drug-free seminars, and other health programs. Periodic health fairs are held at which community residents can have their blood pressure and cholesterol checked by health professionals.

Central Appalachia EC also worked with the Clay County Board of Education to obtain $150,000 in funding to build the Clay County Fitness Center. The 3,100-square-foot center will house fitness equipment, aerobic classes, and training sessions on the health benefits of physical activity.

For more information contact Harold Butler, Central Appalachia EC, at 304–587–2034.

Community Centers Provide Needed Services

Fayette County/Haywood County, Tennessee, EC

One of the needs identified by the Fayette/Haywood EC in West Tennessee was the need for more community facilities in Fayette County. They allocated $600,000 of Social Services Block Grant funds to build four multipurpose centers, one in each EC census tract in the county. “Mobility is a problem when you’re dealing with the target residents in the EC,” says John Sicola, Executive Director of the Memphis Area Association of Government, explaining the need for four community centers rather than one.

A community center in Census Tract 601 was completed in 1998 at a cost of approximately $150,000. Work is continuing on the other three community centers, but costs and land availability have hampered efforts. These problems have been at least partially solved by partnering with the small-town governments and the utility services in the census tracts. In Census Tract 605, a site was selected, plans developed, funds matched from local and other sources, and land purchased for a joint community/ambulance center. Census Tract 606 has accepted a site donated by a local citizen, and the Town of LaGrange has agreed to share costs on a 55-percent/45-percent basis to build a community center/municipal complex.

The value of the first community center was demonstrated when it was recently used as a Red Cross disaster headquarters in the aftermath of devastating tornadoes that tore through West Tennessee and nearby States. The facility is also being used for health screenings, immunizations, recreation, and other community meetings.

For more information contact John Sicola, Executive Director, Memphis Area Association of Government, at 901–545–4610.

Health Clinics

North Delta, Mississippi, EC

Como, Mississippi, home of the famous blues artist "Mississippi" Fred McDowell, is an underserved town in the Delta with 1,500 residents in town and 1,500 residents in the outlying country. "It's a sleepy, laid-back town that's had a little health clinic since God was a boy," says EC Administrator Stuart Guernsey. Then, as happens in many rural areas, the for-profit hospital that operated the clinic gave 2 weeks notice and left town.

This posed a huge burden for many residents. For the aged and disabled who lived far from town, the additional 10 miles to the next town was a logistical and economic burden. Many couldn't afford the $20 it would cost to be driven there and back.

The town publicized the need the raise money to tide the clinic over to the next funding cycle. They sponsored many events, including one at the elementary school on Martin Luther King Day, and managed to raise $10,000 in goods and services. They still needed $20,000 to keep the clinic open for 6 months. Then Guernsey hit on a new idea. He had the elementary school principal ask the fourth- and fifth-grade students to write an essay beginning, "We need a health clinic in Como because…."

Responses ranged from the touching to the hilarious. Sixty of these letters were sent overnight to Doris Barnett and Janet Wetmore of the Health Resources Services Administration, with whom Guernsey had been corresponding. Three days later, he received a call. The money had been awarded. "We would probably have gotten the money anyway," says Guernsey, "but the timing of the letters was perfect and their poignancy bumped things along."

The Aaron Henry Community Health Center reopened in April to the delight of Como residents and students. The EC helps the clinic with transportation for clients and publicity and brings partners to the table in cases such as the closure. The EC also assists another clinic in Crenshaw that has a dental office, pharmacy, and general family practice clinic. Crenshaw is even more isolated than Como, with the nearest town 15 to 20 miles away.

For more information, contact Stuart Guernsey, EC Administrator, at 601–487–1968.

High School Students Get Head Start on Health Careers

Northeast Louisiana Delta, Louisiana, EC

High school students in Tallulah, Louisiana, are getting a head start on careers in healthcare through a nursing assistant program jointly sponsored by the Northeast Louisiana Delta EC and Louisiana Technical College. Through the program, students interested in becoming Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) attend training sessions at the college while they are still in high school. Students spend their mornings in high school classes and take buses to the college for afternoon training sessions.

The Northeast Louisiana Delta EC contributes $30,000 per year to the program to pay the instructor's salary. Moses Williams, President of the Northeast Louisiana Community Development Corporation, says the program will offer high school students marketable skills and will increase the number of healthcare workers in Madison Parish, where Tallulah is located. The parish has an acute shortage of such workers, he says.

"We are hoping that kids in the program will become interested in working as CNAs," says Williams. "But we also hope their interest in healthcare will be so great that they will want to continue their studies and become registered nurses or doctors."

Twenty-two students graduated from the program in 1998. Another 20 students will graduate in 1999.

For more information contact Moses Williams, President and Chief Operating Officer of the Northeast Louisiana Community Development Corporation, 318–574–0995.

Training Program Prepares Health Workers

Rio Grande Valley, Texas, EZ

The Starr County subzone, one of the smallest in the Rio Grande Valley EZ, is nonetheless a strong subzone, implementing 10 projects totaling $4.6 million. "The health occupations training program is one of the most successful," says Bonnie Gonzalez, Chief Executive Officer of the EZ.

In partnership with South Texas Community College and Rio Grande City, this program has helped approximately 100 students enroll in the program, 25 of whom have continued their health occupations training at the local community college between 1997 and early 1999. Although the closest university or college is almost 50 miles away, this has not hampered the motivation and enthusiasm of the students and instructors in the program.

For more information contact Yvonne "Bonnie" Gonzalez, Chief Executive Officer, Rio Grande Valley EZ, at 956–514–4000.

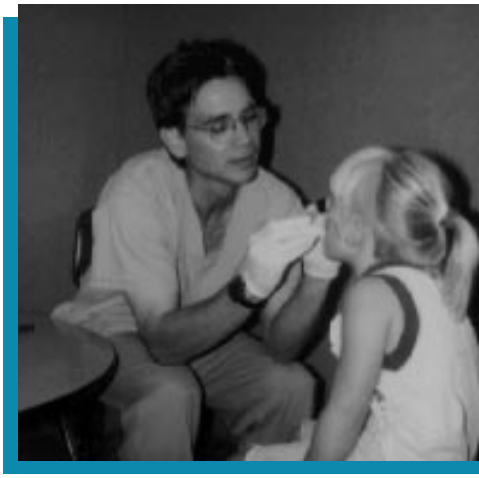
Healthcare Agencies Bring Medical and Dental Services to the EC

Robeson County, North Carolina, EC

"This project is exemplary of a true partnership and collaboration between healthcare agencies," says Cynthia Johnson, Executive Director of the Robeson Enterprise Community Development Corporation. Southeastern Regional Medical Center has teamed up with Robeson Health Care Corporation to bring medical and dental services to an EC neighborhood. Southeastern Regional Medical Center is financing the construction of a new 6,100-square-foot medical facility that will be connected to a 1,100-square-foot dental office. The medical clinic, named the A.J. Robinson clinic after a physician who practiced in the area, and the People's Dental Clinic will be located in the Southwest Lumberton EC tract. The Southwest Lumberton Local Council has provided input on the project.

Medical services at the clinic will be provided by the Southeastern Regional Medical Center, whereas dental services will be administered by the Robeson Health Care Corporation. From the Lumberton EC discretionary fund, council members voted and approved funding in the amount of $80,000 to purchase dental equipment for the Robeson Health Care Corporation. The projected number of dental appointments for the dental clinic's first year is 3,400. Construction of the new facility will begin in April. The clinic is scheduled to open in October 1999.

For more information contact Cynthia Johnson, Executive Director, Robeson Enterprise Community Development Corporation, at 910–618–0722.



EC Improves Access to Healthcare

Scott-McCreary, Tennessee-Kentucky, EC

Many EC residents do not receive prompt healthcare and early diagnosis due to the shortage of doctors and other medical professionals in rural areas. Residents are not able to visit doctors as often as they need to and are not diagnosed and treated for illnesses before they become more serious and costly. Residents also shoulder the burden of seeking treatment at facilities in other cities.

The SMART (Scott-McCreary Area Revitalization Team) EC provided Scott County with $200,000; this seed money succeeded in leveraging an additional $1.2 million to address this problem. The EC leveraged an Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) grant of $850,000; $160,000 from The Thompson Foundation; $100,000 from the State of Tennessee; and $150,000 from Scott County government to establish a rural health clinic. It also provided an ambulance station, 911 services, and additional physicians. "The residents now have much better and quicker access to health care," says Leslie Winningham, lead contact for the SMART EC. "The access to the health center is successful in providing care and wellness programs to people who otherwise would not be able to see a doctor."

For more information contact Leslie Winningham, Scott McCreary Area EC, at 615–741–6852.

Junior Museum Provides Education and Economic Opportunities

Albany/Schenectady/Troy, New York, EC

"Most people don't see a museum working like we do. We're in fact a community center," says Ralph Pascale, Director of the Junior Museum in Troy, New York, which provides children with weekend and afterschool activities in science. "We're open morning, noon, and night," Pascale says, noting the "sleepover" programs the museum offers.

"In 1990 we began looking at ways we could work hand in hand with urban revitalization," Pascale recalls. The museum formed a partnership with the city and began looking for a site for a new, expanded museum. They found one in the Winslow Building, the oldest building on the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) campus. They began collaborating with RPI and Russell Sage College. The EC is providing $300,000 for construction and renovation toward the $1.25-million initiative.

Beyond RPI are census tracts whose populations suffer from the lowest educational attainment and greatest poverty in the area. "We contribute to the goal of economic development on several fronts," says Pascale. The museum serves as a tourist site, drawing outside dollars into the community. It also provides job training and economic opportunity for residents, who will benefit because the region is being developed as a site for microchip fabrication. The new museum will create 50 new, full-time jobs and 745 part-time jobs and will deliver at least $600,000 in salaries to EC jobholders.

Students develop communication and job skills through hands-on learning and volunteerism. As children progress through the museum's programs, which are intended for preschool and elementary school students, they can become helpers and junior guides. Adolescents and high school students then become involved in the administration of the museum. Students learn from older students and from college interns, who provide learning experiences and serve as positive role models. "The museum serves as a link between the community and the institute because we bring together local children and college students. A child with negative aspirations gets to meet a young person whose goal is to man the next Mars flight," says Pascale.

The museum has been in a rehabilitated 5,500-square-foot firehouse since 1974. Construction on the 17,000-square-foot historic Winslow Building began in January after community volunteers gutted the building, removing 21 dumpsters of debris. Built in 1866, the Winslow Building was originally the Chemical Laboratory, the first place in the United States where chemistry was taught using hands-on methods. "We like to think that we are continuing that tradition," says Pascale.

Open 7 days a week, the museum will serve a geographic area of 3 States and 14 counties, welcoming more than 1,000 people per week.

For more information contact Anthony Tozzi, Center for Economic Growth, at 518–465–8975.

Tech Education Centers Are a Family Affair

Albany/Schenectady/Troy, New York, EC

"The 100 Net Initiative is a family affair," says Gregory Fields, Chair of the 100 Net Committee in Albany, New York. The technology centers will provide education and technology training to entire families, including computer training for seniors. Fields recently watched a 12-year-old work at a computer with his 8-year-old sister looking over her brother's shoulder. The parents were absorbed in training in the next classroom.

The regional chapter of 100 Black Men, a national organization of professional men whose goal is community enrichment, is developing a regional program with help from the Albany/Schenectady/Troy EC, the Nation's only regionally governed EC. The chapter will receive more than $294,000 in regional EC funds to establish a $1.5-million, regionally directed, community-based technology center in each city.

The 100 Net Initiative will provide 4,000 modules of training and serve 200 people per day. Under the initiative, GEDs and Adult Basic Education certificates will be awarded. The program will provide adults and high school students with training in computers, applied science, and technology. The program will provide tutoring and academic enrichment to children and will serve 140 Head Start and daycare children. The program will also provide high school students with teen parenting and daycare training.

The City of Albany provided a 10,000-square-foot building in 1997. One-third of the building has been refurbished and volunteers are currently teaching 24 people in 3 classes. The building includes space for classrooms, training, photocopy services, and offset printing. There will be a cybercafe with four tables and three computers and a business incubator on the second floor. A videoconferencing center will allow communications with 11 other sites in the region.

For more information contact Anthony Tozzi, Center for Economic Growth, at 518–465–8975.

High School Students Learn While Their Children Play

Albuquerque, New Mexico, EC

On weekday afternoons, visitors to Rio Grande High School in the Albuquerque EC find themselves tiptoeing down the hall so they don't wake the napping infants and toddlers. The 14 children are enjoying the school's daycare center while their parents, who range in age from 14 to 19, earn their high school diplomas. Nine newborns will join the program before the end of the academic year.

Without the Graduation Reality and Dual Role Skills (GRADS) program, says EC Coordinator Sylvia Fettes, the 39 students who attend classes next door to the daycare center would have dropped out of school long ago. Instead, 16 program participants have graduated from high school during the past 2 years. Twelve plan to graduate this June, equipped with both academic knowledge and the skills they need to be responsible parents.

GRADS is one of the many programs sponsored by the EC-funded Rio Grande Human Services Collaborative (RGHSC), a partnership between the Albuquerque Public School District and 14 community agencies. The collaborative instituted the GRADS program in response to Rio Grande High School's 44-percent dropout rate and a 5-percent pregnancy rate among teens in Bernalillo County. RGHSC also administers a program to encourage high school students to abstain from sexual activity.

In all of its programs, RGHSC attempts to address health issues that can inhibit how well students learn. Primarily, it does that by offering medical care and mental health services at 11 school sites. Doctors, psychologists, social workers, and nurse practitioners who work for the participating agencies treat students in kindergarten through grade 12. Some agencies maintain a daily presence at certain sites, while others visit sites only when a need arises. The largest demand, even among elementary school students, is for treatment of depression, says Fettes. Most practitioners receive Medicaid reimbursements.

Community residents, often the parents of school students, also take advantage of RGHSC programs. Parents are encouraged to attend special programs that help them earn high school diplomas, learn English as a second language, or find out more about available community services.

Working with a $350,000 EC grant, the collaborative has served more than 6,000 students and their parents since 1996. It also relies on in-kind donations of more than $1 million from participating agency service providers and more than $100,000 in grant funds. The collaborative received two grants from the State of New Mexico Department of Education (DOE) to establish the GRADS program and pay its teacher. A third DOE grant funds the abstinence program.

"Our aim is to provide essential services in a holistic manner," says Fettes. "Perhaps by making conditions better for these families, by addressing their [physical] health and mental health needs, we can also improve educational outcomes."

For more information contact Sylvia Fettes, Albuquerque's EC Coordinator, at 505–768–2932.

Bridgeport EC Makes Learning a Family Affair

Bridgeport, Connecticut, EC

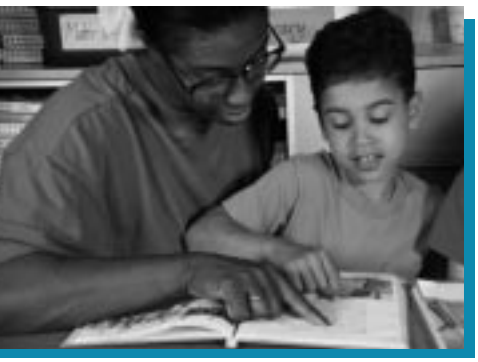
At a 1997 Town Youth Meeting of the Bridgeport EC, parents expressed their strong desire to assist their children with homework and their frustration at being unable to do so because of language barriers.

All members of the community—parents, residents, teachers, business leaders, and students—were represented at the meeting, which was part of the intensive neighborhood planning process used to develop programs and projects in Bridgeport's EC.

To follow up on these concerns, the EC's Youth Committee, assisted by EC community organizers, began to work immediately with the Bridgeport Recreation Department to sponsor an evening tutoring program for students. Out of these meetings grew the community-based Hollow Development Corporation's Tutoring Center, which has been in operation since October 1998.

"The tutoring center was designed and is being implemented by the entire community," states Stacey Ray, a special education teacher and Hollow Development Corporation Board member. "The ideas came from parents and the community, all working together for the benefit of each other."

The tutoring center assists neighborhood students with homework and provides tutoring jobs for responsible teenagers, which gives them the opportunity to make money while giving something back to the community. It also provides the opportunity for parents to learn with their children and to take an active role in their education.



The program is open to everyone in the community. Approximately 120 youth, ages 7 to 18, are receiving one-on-one assistance from tutors and supervisors recruited from the neighborhood, Columbus School, and Sacred Heart University, which runs a reading program at the center. Many parents who bring their children stay while their children are being tutored. Some parents even work with the tutor to learn how to help their children at home.

Ray reports that the center gives students the individual attention they need to learn. "The tutors help me learn how to do my math. A lot of my friends and I come here every day. I want to come back next year after I graduate," said sixth-grade Columbus student Latasha Bulerin.

Tutors are responsible for maintaining a nightly log and for corresponding with the student's teacher. Communication with the teacher, as well as teacher feedback, assists in the assessment and success of the program. All tutors receive training from Connecticut-certified teachers about how to answer questions, find information, and include parents in the tutoring process.

Tutors benefit from the guidance of the center's two supervisors, who are bilingual special education teachers at Columbus. "The center would not be successful without the full support of the school's administration and teachers," says Jackie Simmons, a sixth-grade teacher and program organizer.

The program is funded by a $43,000 seed grant from the Bridgeport Enterprise Community Partnership. The Connecticut Education Association has donated funds to purchase a computer and the center is raising additional funds to continue its operation and purchase more equipment and software.

For more information contact Janice Willis, Central Grants Office, at 203–332–5662.

EZ Schools Become the Heart of the Community

Detroit, Michigan, EZ

"The School as the Heart of the Community program takes schools that would normally be dormant at 3:00 and turns them into bustling community centers with afterschool programming for children and adults," says Keith Kaminski, Communications Director for the Detroit EZ. In 1996 the Detroit Recreation Department joined forces with Detroit Public Schools, the Children's Center, Southwest Detroit Community Mental Health Services, and others to establish social, cultural, educational, and leisure programming in EZ schools during expanded hours.

Sixteen elementary and middle schools are now participating and offer a variety of programs including computer classes, ESL, adult education/GED, arts and crafts, puppetry, swimming, golf, photography, and sign language, to name a few. One recent program focused on health education and another celebrated Black History Month. Children also enjoy taking field trips with the program. More than 100 staff members, including site administrators from each participating school, work to make schools into resource centers for adults and kids 2 to 5 days per week from 3 to 10 p.m.

Funding for School as the Heart of the Community comes in part from a $7.8-million grant from the EZ. Additional funds are leveraged from the Detroit Recreation Department and Detroit Public Schools. Program money is used to plan field trips, purchase new playscapes, order materials, hire and train staff, and evaluate the program.

"Not only does the program fill the void of extracurricular activities in the community, it also serves to make the community feel that it is a part of the school," says Yvonne Johnson, the Project Coordinator. The Detroit Recreation Department estimates that an average of 2,000 EZ residents attend School as the Heart of the Community each month. Approximately 30,260 people were served in 1998. Forty of the 100 jobs created by the program are staffed by EZ residents. Program administrators hope to have youth and family services operating in 24 EZ schools by July 2000.

For more information contact Dr. Shirley Harbin, Program Administrator, School as the Heart of the Community, at 313–224–1114.

At-Risk Teens Gain New Appreciation for the Law

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, EC

The Law Academy at Harrisburg High School offers an alternative education program to at-risk students in grades 9 through 12. One of the first of its kind in the country, the Law Academy draws students enrolled in the high school's Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program and helps prepare them for careers in law enforcement, law, public administration, and State and Federal jobs.

"Some of these kids have not had a good relationship with the law," says June Brand, Director of the Academy. "They need to know that law enforcement is here to help them, not to hurt them." Most of the students are considered at high risk for dropping out of school, truancy, and teen pregnancy. When they enter the program, some have been involved in the juvenile justice system for years. Miguel Medina, for example, had been in trouble with the law since he was 11. Now he is president of the Law Academy, has joined the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and is a leader of the school's Students Against Violence program. Last year he met with the mayor and was praised as an exemplary student of the Academy, which has already transformed the lives of many students in just 1 year.

Because the Academy is located in Harrisburg High School, it functions much like a "school within a school." Students take most of their classes in the same classrooms with the same group of dedicated teachers. The curriculum is integrated so that the common thread of law, criminal justice, and public administration is woven through all of the students' classes. In addition, professionals in the legal, law enforcement, and public administration communities serve as guest lecturers and hosts for field trips. Mock trials are conducted with professionals from the legal and law enforcement communities acting as attorneys, judges, and witnesses and the students acting as jury members. Students are also required to put what they learn into action by assisting the elderly, cleaning up the school, working in soup kitchens, and participating in other community services. "You can't teach a child values if you don't let him or her practice those values," says Brand.

In addition to a new appreciation for the law, students develop note-taking, employability, social, resume-writing, and test-taking skills. As they move to higher grades, they will have opportunities for internships and part-time jobs where they can apply these skills. Twenty-four freshmen completed their first year at the Academy in June 1998, which had a total of 40 students enrolled in the program. Eventually, the Academy plans to teach up to 200 students—50 in each grade level from 9th through 12th.

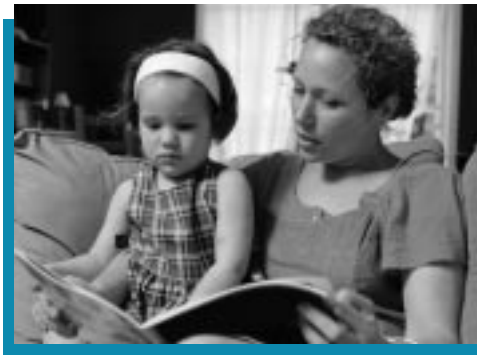
The Academy was established through a partnership between Communities in Schools of Greater Harrisburg and the Navy Junior ROTC. Initial funding was provided through grants from the U.S. Departments of Defense and Justice totaling $275,000. The City of Harrisburg provided $50,000 in EC funding and the Harrisburg School District provided $190,000 of in-kind contributions. Numerous agencies continue to provide support for the program, including the Dauphin

County Human Services Office, the District Attorney's and Public Defender's Offices, the City of Harrisburg, Widener and Temple Universities, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executive Officers, the Community Action Commission, and city law firms.

For more information contact Joan Brand, Law Academy Director, at 717–255–2449.

Acre Family Day Care Corporation Emphasizes Self-Employment

Lowell, Massachusetts, EC



"By emphasizing continuing education, networking, and high standards for childcare providers, AcreFDCC continually redefines the potential of this field for providing well-paid and fulfilling work for the low-income women who enter this program," says Anita Moeller, Executive Director of Acre Family Day Care Corporation. Through its Family Child Care Orientation program, AcreFDCC encourages self-employment in family childcare as a professional development vehicle for low-income women of color. During the past 10 years, AcreFDCC has trained hundreds of women to become providers. One-third of those trained are EC residents.

AcreFDCC has made significant inroads in making family childcare training much more responsive to the needs of linguistic and cultural minorities. AcreFDCC conducted the first family childcare training program in New England to provide comprehensive, family childcare training in Spanish and was the first in New England to train Cambodian women in Khmer. These women, in turn, provided the first culturally matched childcare to low-income families in the Lowell community. "To our knowledge, AcreFDCC has the only licensed Cambodian providers anywhere in the U.S. and the only Child Development Associate-certified bilingual providers in New England," says Moeller. AcreFDCC's work has motivated other agencies to meet the needs of EC residents. A list of multicultural resources available statewide now exists, including Hispanic and Cambodian family childcare trainers, CPR instructors, and others.

AcreFDCC has set new standards both in the training of women prior to licensing and in the continuing education of providers. The program has been nationally recognized by such organizations as the Ms. Foundation, the Association of Enterprise Organizations, and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation for the excellence of its family childcare training programs for low-income women. The training portion of the program far exceeds State requirements. Massachusetts requires that family childcare providers receive 15 hours of training over 3 years to maintain a license. AcreFDCC provides 240 hours of prelicense instruction, half of which is an internship with an experienced provider. The program also provides many opportunities for professional and business growth of the licensed providers, including one-on-one technical assistance; monthly networking workshops; classes in ESL, GED, and computer use; Child Development Associate certification training; and college-level courses in early childhood education and

other related topics. EC funding pays for a portion of the training and the ongoing technical assistance for providers.

For more information contact Anita Moeller, Executive Director of AcreFDCC, at 978–937–5899.

Summerbridge Inspires EC Students To Love Learning and Teaching

Manchester, New Hampshire, EC

A Manchester, New Hampshire, program that encourages preteens to love learning is also instilling a love of teaching in local high school and college students. Summerbridge Manchester is a year-round, tuition-free program that provides 70 students from the city's public middle schools with an academically challenging 6-week summer session, a weekly afterschool program, and monthly educational activities. High school and college students teach in the program, which is affiliated with a national Summerbridge network.

Students enrolled in the summer session attend required courses in math and English and take other classes in the sciences, history, and foreign language. They also can choose from among a variety of electives, including computers, visual and performing arts, and athletics. Students receive educational advice, go on investigative field trips, perform onstage at school meetings, participate in community service, and complete 2 hours of homework every night.

Summerbridge students continue to take enrichment courses during the school year. At the weekly School After School program, they attend accelerated math and English classes and receive individual tutoring. During monthly Summerbridge Saturday meetings, students take part in theme-based, cross-curricular educational activities. Students can attend only two summer sessions, but they can continue to participate in the school-year program as long as they want to. Last spring, Summerbridge helped some of its first students plan for college.

Summerbridge Manchester receives $91,000 from the EC and donations of varying amounts from local and national foundations, service groups, area businesses, and individuals. Its EC contract requires that Summerbridge enroll 3 or 4 EC residents each year, but 11 EC students have joined the program in the past 2 years. Last summer, one-third of the program participants came from the Beech Street School, which serves the EC and surrounding center-city neighborhoods.

Since Summerbridge opened its doors at the Derryfield School in 1991, more than 88 percent of its graduates have enrolled in college preparatory high school programs. The program has been a success story for student teachers as well. More than 75 percent of the high school and college students who taught in the program have pursued careers in education.

"In fact," says Director Natalie Koepp, "of 13 former teachers who have completed college in the last 3 years, 10 have become professional educators and 6 have become Summerbridge directors around the Nation."

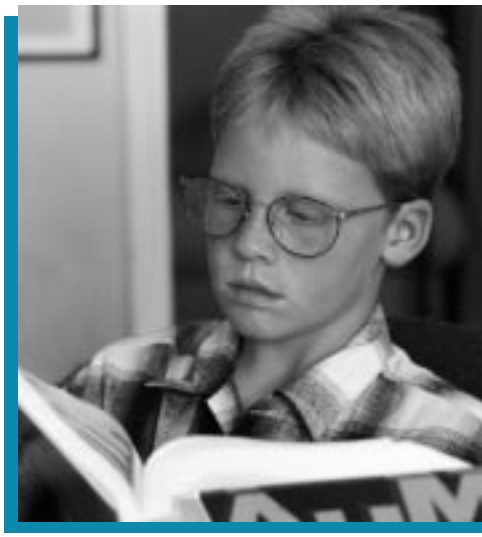
"The best thing about Summerbridge Manchester is that it works," says one program teacher. "The passion, the energy, the love, the intellectual fire, and the emotional commitment that are brought to every moment at every level of the program make it the most extraordinary educational phenomenon I've ever witnessed or experienced. I never could have anticipated the degree to which Summerbridge matters."

For more information contact Natalie Koepp, Director, Summerbridge Manchester, at 603–641–9426.

New Haven Partnership Leads to Dramatic Improvement in Performance and Test Scores

New Haven, Connecticut, EZ

Students at two New Haven elementary schools who received free home computers and participated in a learning partnership showed significant improvement in their school performance and test scores. The two schools, Helene Grant and Isadore Wexler, are located in the Dixwell area of the EZ.



The improvements were a result of the partnership formed by the Dixwell Enterprise Community/Management Team, the New Haven Board of Education, and the Connecticut Academy for Mathematics, Science, and Technology to provide students and teachers with access to technology, new classroom materials, and professional support.

School teams worked with Academy consultants to design activities that encouraged students to work in cooperative groups to complete assigned tasks. The program focused on learning deficiencies, test proficiency, and problem solving in math and science. According to Gemma Joseph Lumpkin of the Academy, "This really represents a true collaboration with the community, the Mayor's Office, the Board of Education, and educators stepping up and saying, 'We can work together to improve student performance.' "

As part of a $40,000 seed grant from the EZ to the Connecticut Academy, new computers were also provided to the schools and a technology consultant was hired to provide ongoing training for teachers, parents, and students. The Academy matched the grant with technical assistance for the principals and teachers in planning and professional development. The New Haven Board of Education provided classroom materials and other resources, and teachers participated in workshops and dialogues to stimulate their professional growth in math and science education.

"The computers allowed students and their families to learn at home and improved their performance on their school-based computers," says Jeffie Frazier, principal of Helene Grant Elementary School. Refurbished computers and software were purchased with a $15,000 contribution from Beacon Corcoran Development Corp., the New Haven Housing Authority, and the EZ. EZ funds also supported the training of students and their parents in the use of the computers.

With these efforts, fourth-grade students at the Helene Grant Elementary School improved their 1998 mathematics scores on the Connecticut Mastery Test by 15 points and students at Isadore Wexler increased their scores by 10 points. Because of the program's success, the New Haven EZ awarded the Academy a $99,000 grant in February 1999 to expand the project to include the Jackie Robinson Middle School.

For more information contact Rhoda Zahler, Office of Business Development, City of New Haven, 203–946–7059.

Tampa EC Supports Education of Domestic Violence Victims; Facility Normalizes Life of Special Needs Children

Tampa, Florida, EC

Remodeling a 10,000-square-foot warehouse in Tampa's EC enabled The Springs, Florida's busiest domestic violence shelter, to expand its daycare slots by 60 percent and increase the classroom space available for school-age children by 66 percent.

The project, costing roughly one-third of the price of new construction, created a children's educational facility across the street from the residential shelter. Volunteer architects oversaw the project, which took approximately 6 months to complete. Additional funding support was provided by a local foundation.

Relocating and expanding existing daycare and school programs allows The Springs to normalize life for its special needs children of domestic violence victims. "With the addition, more clients are able to come without having to worry about their children encountering problems in the community," states Lisa Landers, Director of Communications at The Springs.

By freeing space formerly occupied by daycare classrooms, the new facility also allowed The Springs to increase its residential capacity by 33 percent. Homeless and in crisis, victims and their families stay at The Springs for about 1 month.

The new facility includes a library, a basketball half-court, and K–12 public school classrooms with computer links to other schools. The facility is estimated to serve 900 children annually.

For more information contact Mabel Bexley, Executive Director, The Springs of Tampa Bay, at 813–247–5433.

Adult Education Programs in Clay County, West Virginia

Central Appalachia, West Virginia, EC

Scholastic Programs for Reentry (SPREE) is designed to assist adult learners who do not have a high school diploma or GED. The program is funded by an Urban/Rural Opportunities Grant awarded to the Clay County School-to-Work Partnership and the Central Appalachia EC. Instruction is offered during the day and evenings at the Clay County Board of Education. "SPREE participants gain skills that lead to employability, better basic skills, higher paying jobs, increased self-esteem, and improved technological skills," says Greg Knopp, who operates the program.

SPREE began in February 1999 and 27 Clay County residents had enrolled by March, with 9 participants in the high school diploma program. Participants in the program have emphasized that they returned to school because they could not get a good job without a high school diploma or GED.

Another opportunity for adults is the daytime Adult Basic Education program operating through the Clay County Multicap Head Start office. This program targets the parents of students enrolled in the Clay County Head Start program. Judy Vaughan, the Clay County Head Start Director, has worked with Clay County schools and the Central Appalachia EC to offer this program. This project provides education in language, writing, reading, mathematics, social studies, and science.

For more information contact Greg Knopp, Clay County Board of Education, at 304–587–4266, or Judy Vaughan, Clay County Head Start office, at 304–587–7460.

Early Admissions Program Opens Doors to a College Education

City of Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, EC

In an effort to help good students attend college who might not otherwise be able to for financial or other reasons, the Lock Haven EC is supporting the Early Admissions Eager Eagles Program for high school seniors. These students are still 12th graders at Lock Haven High School, but several have already earned three college credits and attained a 4.0 average in a college chemistry course.

Wendy Stull and Sam Snyder are 2 of 37 local high school students who took part in the early admissions program funded by the Lock Haven EC and administered by Lock Haven University and Keystone Central School District. "It offers kids who may not have otherwise gone to college an opportunity to get there," says Tom Lindquist, high school History Teacher and Program Director. "Some of these kids may not have even considered college … because they knew their parents couldn't afford it … or for other reasons," Lindquist says.

Stull and Snyder say they had no doubt they wanted to go to college after high school, but they knew finances could be a problem. "I loved it … plain and simple," says Stull, referring to her 3-week stint as a college student last summer. She says her experience living on campus and taking a college course "reinforced how much I want to go to college." She plans to major in physical therapy at Lock Haven University. Both students took chemistry and Pennsylvania history; after their senior year, they will take three courses for seven more credits, or a total of 13 over a 3-year period. Upon successful completion of the program, all students are guaranteed admission to Lock Haven University. Lindquist, who spent 3 weeks living with the students at the university last summer as a teacher, counselor, and chaperone of sorts, says it was a "wonderful experience. What's really great about it is that many of these kids never even thought about going to college for one reason or another. The retention rate is excellent, with only one or two students dropping out of the program, mostly for personal reasons."

"To see them challenged ... I saw the other side of the kids and what they're really capable of. They can do so much more than even they think they can do," Lindquist observes. The students take full-fledged college courses taught by college professors. The students have all passed, with several, like Stull and Snyder, getting straight As.

For more information contact Maria Boileau, Federal Enterprise Coordinator, Lock Haven EC, at 717–893–5907.

Youth Go From Computer Novices to Junior Web Masters

City of Watsonville/County of Santa Cruz, California, EC

How can Generation Y youth at low academic levels be inspired to learn—especially during the summer? In Watsonville, California, they have figured out an answer to this question. In summer 1998 the EC offered youth with learning problems an opportunity to learn about computers and Web site creation.

"This project proved that youth who were testing far below grade level and who had never touched a computer (they had to be shown where the power button was located) were able to develop basic computer skills," says Lisa Brinton, who coordinated the project. "The youth were able to develop a publishable Web page in a 6-week period. To me this showed how key motivation is in teaching our youth. Because of their interest in computers, they pushed themselves to learn and produce good-quality work."

Through the Y-CREW Summer Project, 24 disadvantaged youth, ages 14 to 18, were paid to design Web pages for four local, nonprofit social service agencies. The youth came from low-income families and tested below the eighth-grade level. They learned how computers work and became proficient in a number of software applications while designing the Web pages. The youth learned about computers and about the issues that the service organizations address, including domestic violence, alcohol and substance abuse, and prevention of teen pregnancy.

The project paid participants minimum wage and covered instructors' salaries and expenses. The Santa Cruz County Human Youth Employment and Training Program made the project possible by awarding the EC a contract to implement it. The EC provided the facility and equipment, hired staff, and supervised the curriculum. Community-based organizations volunteered staff time.

The project led to an increase in the participants' reading, writing, and computer skills. The social agencies also benefited, because they previously could not use the Internet to promote their cause and share information about their services. Of the participants who completed the training, 64 percent (18 of 28) have been placed in jobs with local retailers. One participant had been on welfare. As a result of participating in the project, she found work in a local department store, was later offered a permanent job there, and was eventually promoted to lead manager. She is now able to support herself and no longer receives welfare.

For more information contact Lisa Brinton, Program Coordinator and Youth Services Division Manager for Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services, Watsonville/County of Santa Cruz EC, 831–763–4033.

Families Learn To Read—and To Open Doors to the World

Imperial Valley, California, EC

California's huge, sparsely populated Imperial County, just north of the Mexican border, has had only limited cultural and educational resources. Its libraries, for example, recently had approximately 1 book in Spanish for each 120 Spanish speakers. But there is hope for the curious who aspire to be readers, thanks to an innovative reading project started by the local branch of Literacy Volunteers of America that serves adult new readers and their children for whom English is a second language.

"In the past, we have had the vision, but not the money, to try new ways to teach reading. Now the EC has given us the money to make things happen beyond what we would otherwise have been able to do," explains Phyllis Colter of the Literacy Volunteers of America/Imperial Valley. "Opening doors of opportunity—being able to try and establish these innovative ways to teach reading—is the joy of the EC. Infrastructure projects are always needed, but this kind of project adds the precious human element." The project enhances literacy services within all five census tracts of the EC. Seven library teaching sites have been opened, 140 people have been enrolled, and progress is being made in connecting with remote rural areas. More than 70 students and their families are learning to read with the help of 5 instructors. The family dimension is crucial. While the parent learns to read, usually in a library setting, he or she brings the rest of the family to the library, where they too begin to want to read.

Along with these family benefits, students find whole new worlds of opportunity as they start to read. For example, 3 schools challenged their 1,200 kids to read as many books as they could in 2 weeks. The students read 69,000 books!

The project is receiving almost $50,000 over 10 years from the EC. Its annual budget is approximately $100,000. The project raises money to cover its budget through an adult spelling bee and a reading rally for local businesses. Both events are great tools for marketing as well as fundraising. Supporting these efforts is the project's solid foundation in the local communities. Its partners include the Imperial County Board of Supervisors, the Imperial County Board of Education, and 19 school districts in Imperial County, Campesinos Unidos, Region XI Headstart and Migrant Headstart, local and State libraries, Computers in Your Future, the business community, preschools, and churches. Because the program is locally sustainable, it will last after the EC funding ends.

In addition to Families for Literacy, Literacy Volunteers of America/Imperial Valley administers the California High School Proficiency Examination, worksite literacy courses, and one-to-one tutoring in basic reading.

For more information contact Phyllis Colter, Executive Director, Literacy Volunteers of America/Imperial Valley, at 760–352–8541.

Center Lessens Rural Isolation While Helping Families Learn

Josephine County, Oregon, EC

Most preschoolers who come to the Oregon Parent Information and Resource Center in Wolf Creek have never played with other children their own age. Typically, they live miles away from their nearest neighbors and many have never been left in the care of adults who were not their parents. "This isolation can be a hindrance to development and a setback once they begin school," wrote Joyce Riha Linik in a recent article about the center published in *NW Education* magazine.

All that isolation seems to fade quickly when the preschoolers arrive at the center with their parents and enter into activities planned by Child Development Specialist Marion Schneider. Through these activities, some of which involve parents, the children learn important lessons, including how to socialize and how to follow instructions. Linda Blackburn, a kindergarten teacher at Wolf Creek Elementary School, welcomed the center's first graduates to her class in September 1998. She told *NW Education* that the children who attended classes at the center were considerably more advanced than those who started school without the kind of preparation the center offers.

While Schneider readies the young children for school, Center Director and Wolf Creek Principal Michael McManus meets with their parents to talk about the challenges of raising children in a rural environment. Exploring such topics as appropriate discipline or the qualities of a good parent, the gatherings are described by *NW Education* as "a blend of group therapy and gab session, interspersed with pearls of wisdom from McManus." During these conversations, participants talk about parenting issues that are important to them, share their own experiences, and learn from McManus and from other parents.

The center operates with $500,000 of a $1.5-million grant that the U.S. Department of Education awarded in 1998 to the Albina Head Start Program in Portland. The project's goal is to test two parent education models, both of which were developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Albina Head Start operates the urban model in Portland. The Sunny Wolf Community Response Team, the organization that administers EC funds in the southern portion of rural Josephine County, operates the rural model through its affiliate, the Sunny Wolf Family Coalition. The center has served 39 preschoolers and their parents since it opened in the 1997–98 school year.

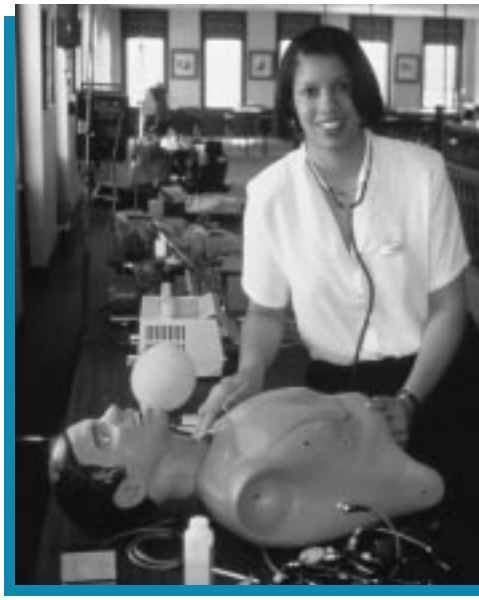
For more information contact Gary O'Neal, Director of the Sunny Wolf Community Response Team, at 541–866–2600.

Community Education Program's Computer Lab Gains Momentum

Josephine County, Oregon, EC

"The Community Education Program has been a tremendous success! With the new computer lab we have a tool in hand to really make a difference in our community and economic development efforts. Both the community at large and the business community have enthusiastically embraced the unique program. We are proud of our accomplishments," says Winifred Danke, Executive Director of the Illinois Valley Community Response Team (IVCRT). IVCRT, the southern arm of the Josephine County EC, partnered with the Three Rivers School District and the Illinois Valley High School to develop a learning center for the entire Illinois Valley community. The focal point of the community learning center is a $136,247 Community Education Program computer laboratory at the Illinois Valley High School.

This project was spearheaded by IVCRT's Education Committee and developed through countless hours of volunteer service in close partnership with the Three Rivers School District. In 1996 IVCRT financed a first phase of the computer lab development with $49,400 in Social Services Block Grants (SSBGs) for computer upgrades. The following year IVCRT spent $6,647 in SSBG funds to install Internet service and related equipment at the lab. In 1998 purchase and installation of 25 state-of-the-art computer workstations complete with high-speed Internet access, two portable LCD projectors, one stationary LCD projector, software, and miscellaneous supportive equipment were made possible through grants from the USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Fund; the Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development, Inc., Regional Strategies/Rural Investment Fund; and the Carl Perkins Foundation. These recent additions have transformed the Community Education Program laboratory into one of the most powerful and advanced computer labs in Oregon.



The computer lab is used day and night by both high school students and community members. On any given day, approximately 150 high school students use the computer equipment in their coursework and to complete homework assignments. Up to 30 high school students voluntarily attend computer classes on Saturday mornings.

At night community members who are enrolled in workforce training classes through the Community Education Program frequently use the computer lab. For the current semester more than 100 students have enrolled in computer classes such as Beginning Internet and Introduction to Computers and Windows 95. In addition, one of the Illinois Valley's largest employers, Fire Mountain Gems, is taking advantage of the facility. Establishment of the advanced computer lab at the high school has enabled the Community Education Program to successfully reach out to the local business community, thus demonstrating its potential to become a major element in a comprehensive workforce development initiative for the Illinois Valley.

IVCRT is exploring using the computer lab as the first "tax super-site" in Southern Oregon for electronic filing of income tax returns for elderly and low-income residents. During tax season IVCRT and community volunteers assist Illinois Valley residents in preparing and filing their taxes through a partnership with the American Association of Retired Persons and the Internal Revenue Service.

For more information contact Winifred Danke, Executive Director of the Illinois Valley Community Response Team, at 541–592–2838.

Rural County Prepares Young People for Jobs of the Future

McDowell County, West Virginia, EC

McDowell County might appear to have a bleak future if you didn't look past the scarred surface of its abandoned mines. Since 1960, as the coal mines have closed, the county's population has dropped from 100,000 to 28,000. Of 55 counties in West Virginia, McDowell ranks 53rd in child well-being; 83 percent of the county's children qualify for the school lunch program. The future now looks brighter for these kids, thanks to the EC's strong School-to-Work program.

"The most exciting thing about the Federal, State, and now local School-to-Work initiative is that there's the flexibility for a county to actually zero in on its needs and what's going to benefit its students in the future," according to Tom Hatcher, the county's Facilitator for this program. "The EC grant has given us great impetus in this effort." The McDowell County Action Network (McCAN), the local EC, has put together a multipronged attack on the no-jobs hopelessness that could easily plague students. The program is developing a variety of practical educational efforts in such growing fields as nursing, horticulture and hydroponics, caregiving for senior citizens, and computer technology. To further strengthen the local educational infrastructure, program funds are enabling McCAN to build a new middle school and set up horticulture and hydroponics retail centers for students to get hands-on experience. The program first targeted elementary school children, but next year will be broadened to include high school students as well.

The McDowell School-to-Work program received a $491,069 grant from the Federal School-to-Work program that is being supplemented by money from the State. The program depends on strong local partners, including the schools, busi-

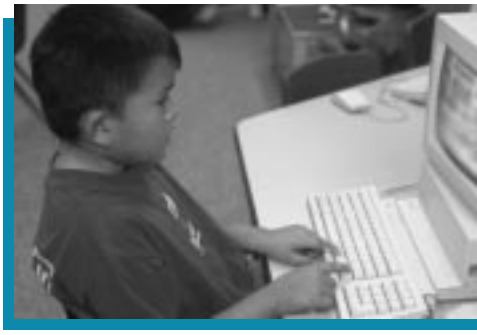
nesses, community and labor organizations, the housing authority, and an organization seeking to stop physical abuse. Building on this support, the program is able to get the word out and increase its effectiveness through such activities as publishing career handbooks for students and parents and creating a job-shadowing project that allows kids to follow a person doing the job to which they aspire. The program is now entering its third year and looks forward to another 5 years of helping students reach toward careers of the future.

For more information contact Tom Hatcher, Facilitator, McDowell School-to-Work, at 304–436–8441.

Learning Center Offers Local Access to Training and Education

Scott-McCreary Area, Tennessee-Kentucky, EC

The Scott-McCreary EC helped the McCreary County Learning Center expand its facilities by 12,000 square feet. Renovation of the original 7,500-square-foot building was completed in January 1999. "We're extremely proud of this project, our answer to centralized educational programs. We don't draw traditional academic lines," says Bruce Murphy, Deputy County Judge/Executive. The center, 30 miles from the nearest college, provides local access to higher education and vocational training. The center just received its first distance learning grant and offers courses ranging from adult education to training for daycare workers.



The learning center represents a partnership of local government, the citizens of McCreary County, Somerset Community College, and the McCreary County Educational Development Foundation. Funding for the $1.6-million investment came from a $711,000 Rural Housing Service (RHS) loan, a $91,000 RHS grant, a $250,000 Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) grant, a $97,800 ARC grant, and local contributions of $534,000.

For more information contact Leslie Winningham, Scott-McCreary Area EC, at 615–741–6852.

Art Club Reaches Out To Help Kids Rekindle Their Artistic Energies

Birmingham, Alabama, EC

Wisdom holds that every child is an artist, but these creative impulses usually are buried by external pressures to conform. The Birmingham Art Club, with support from the EC, is working to bring the arts to local children and rekindle their artistic appreciation and abilities. The club knows that even if the kids do not become artists, they will be enriched, better citizens.

"If we can get students to learn to appreciate the arts even though they may not become artists, they will be better people," says Cleophus Vann, who helps direct the effort. The Art Club, which has been pursuing this and other community efforts since the 1960s, has a 3-year, $90,000 grant from the EC to expose more kids to art. The grant has enabled the club to broaden its activities. Starting from its base in the A.M. Brown Community Center, the club has added activities in three more community centers and four schools. Since 1996 nearly 1,300 children have learned a wide variety of visual and performing arts and crafts in 3-, 4-, and 6-week courses. Each course ends with performances that have reached more than 4,000 people in the community. Thanks to the program, the Art Club also has a writer-in-residence in a high school and an arts and crafts specialist-in-residence in an elementary school.

The program's partners and supporters include the State humanities association, local arts organizations, corporations, and individual donors. Corporations have underwritten entire sessions of the 3-week courses. Given this ongoing level of support, Vann is confident that the established Art Club will further increase its outreach to children even after the EC grant ends.

For more information contact Cleophus Vann, Assistant Director of Programs, Birmingham Art Club, at 205–929–1457.

Neighborhood Outreach Center Revitalizes Heart of Buffalo

Buffalo, New York, EC

When 5-year-old Robbie stepped up on Gary Welborn's porch in 1992 and casually asked "Wanna buy some marijuana?" he lent a face to the underclass existence of the West Side Buffalo neighborhood. Rather than avoiding that face, Welborn and his wife Eileen stayed to found the Massachusetts Avenue Project (MAP), a resident-driven social action organization working to revitalize the heart of Buffalo's West Side.

West Side residents have brought their neighborhood a long way from the dangerous summer of 1992. With 3 drug houses and 5 shootings in the 11-block area, the ethnically diverse community—home to Italian Americans, African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics, and a growing Asian population—lived in fear.

In 1994 MAP organized its signature Playground Project. That project brought out more than 500 volunteers in 5 days to build Sunshine Park, the city's only supervised playground, with materials paid for with a $140,000 grant. Now more than 200 children visit Sunshine Park daily. After that successful project, residents were surveyed to see what they wanted. The result was a mural project to help children envision their community more positively.

Last year MAP opened the Neighborhood Outreach Center next to Sunshine Park. Local residents designed and painted a mural that served as a backdrop for the opening ceremonies. The one-stop center offers EC residents direct help or referrals and family support services such as counseling, parenting workshops, and family violence prevention. It provides a site for block clubs and community groups to hold meetings and events. In its first 9 months, the center's activities included 213 referrals, monthly youth meetings attended by 10 to 15 young people, and a bimonthly WIC program attended consistently by more than 25 women.

Collaborating for Community supports the Neighborhood Outreach Center with $200,000 to pay for operating expenses and full-time director Diane Picard's salary. The city provided the building for $1 per year in rent and has agreed to pay the utilities. But the center really is a product of the community. According to Gary Welborn, Sociology Professor at Buffalo State College and MAP Cochair, MAP is alive and well because residents have refused to give up.

For more information contact Paula Rosner, Executive Director, Federal EC of Buffalo, at 716–842–6923.

Good News Garage Gets People's Lives Rolling

Burlington, Vermont, EC

What can you do if you are a low-income person and your car breaks down, leaving you without a way to work? What can you do if you need to have regular dialysis treatment but can't afford to buy a reliable vehicle and public transportation is unavailable? What can you do if you are a single parent with two children who receives public assistance and you are unable to afford a car to drive your children to childcare or yourself to a job-training program? You can call the Good News Garage, a nonprofit garage in Burlington, Vermont, where hope and helping hands serve people in need.

The Good News Garage, a program of Lutheran Social Services of New England, provides donated, reconditioned vehicles to people in need. Eligible buyers are charged only the repair costs. The program has also provided apprentice mechanic training to six individuals, three of whom are women. In almost 3 years of operation, more than 250 households have received affordable, reliable vehicles that enabled their families to drive to work, medical services, childcare, and the grocery store. The program receives two to three donated vehicles daily from all over New England; donors receive a tax write-off. The Good News Garage works in partnership with the Vermont Department of Social Welfare's Reach Up program. Seventy-five percent of the Reach Up referrals who have received vehicles have moved from the welfare rolls to full-time payrolls. The innovative program, which

is being used in Burlington's EC, has received national recognition from such media as CBS, NBC, National Public Radio (NPR), and Smithsonian magazine. The Good News Garage recently received an Innovation Award from the Peter F. Drucker Foundation for Non-Profit Management and the NPR story about it received the Edward R. Murrow Award for Journalism. More than 100 communities have been sent information to start their own programs.

The Good News Garage is a faith-based, community-based project that arose out of need. The program founder and director, Hal Colston, was working at Chittenden Community Action 5 years ago, when a single mother of two children who was receiving public assistance came to him distraught because the used car she had just bought for $500 had broken down and the dealer had told her that it was her problem and not his. Colston was outraged at the injustice and tried for 2 weeks to resolve the matter. Although the used car lot managed to escape its obligation to deliver a working vehicle, it occurred to Colston that a solution could be a community garage that serves low-income people.

The Good News Garage brings transportation equity to people in need all over Vermont. Its staff of seven full-time employees and five volunteers contribute more than 60 hours per week and manage a waiting list of 250 low-income persons, as well as the incoming vehicles that need work. The program has attracted attention and support from the State of Vermont because its services to welfare recipients allow the State to realize cost savings of approximately 8 to 1. A recent recipient of a Good News Garage car got a full-time job earning five times more than her welfare benefits paid. This program demonstrates that low-income persons don't want to be poor, but are just looking for a break. And breaks at the Good News Garage happen to have four wheels.

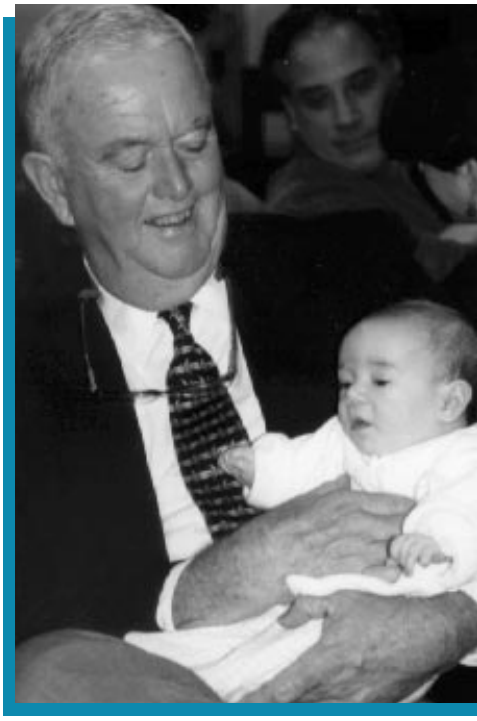
For more information contact Hal Colston at (802) 864–6017.

McClure Multi-Generational Center Celebrates Grand Opening

Burlington, Vermont, EC

The McClure Multi-Generational Center, an innovative community development project in Burlington, Vermont, celebrated its grand opening on March 22, 1999. The project included redevelopment and cleanup of a brownfield site located in the heart of Burlington's Old North End, relocation of two human service programs, and a community effort to raise $1.2 million from the private sector to complete the project.

The McClure Multi-Generational Center is the new home of the Burlington Children's Space and the Champlain Senior Center. The Burlington Children's Space is an accredited, nonprofit childcare center that offers day, evening, weekend, and second-shift childcare services for children birth to age 12. The Burlington Children's Space currently serves 145 community families. The Champlain Senior Center is an activity-based program for citizens age 60 and up living in the community. The Champlain Senior Center serves 10,000 meals each year to more than 600 senior citizens.



This unique facility provides improved program space for the two organizations while bringing together young and old. Children, senior citizens, college students, and baby boomers all interact on a daily basis. Joint activities include a book buddies program that focuses on literacy. Senior citizens are book buddies for toddlers and preschoolers. Reading brings buddies together regularly and offers opportunities for children and senior citizens to share in an invaluable activity. The Legacy Project creates books and incorporates storytelling, history, and the community. Children and senior citizens make Legacy Books to share. Intergenerational activities are endless; music, gardening, field trips, exercise, and computer activity are all regular events that children share with senior citizens.

Also included in the design of the McClure Multi-Generational Center is space for community use, including two conference rooms, a computer library, and a large multipurpose space. Within 1 week of the grand opening, groups were signing up to use the space for meetings, training sessions, community development activities, and playgroups. Located in the heart of the EC, this community space is an invaluable resource.

The Burlington Children's Space interfaces with a network of family-based childcare providers in the neighborhood. This group of providers will use the community space for playgroups and other meetings. In addition, the Burlington Children's Space will share resources, materials, and professional development opportunities with the network. This way, the Burlington Children's Space and network of providers can support each other by providing high-quality childcare while sharing resources and opportunities.

The McClure Multi-Generational Center is a model project in community development. The project used funding from a variety of sources: the EC, CDBG funds, a tax-exempt bond, and substantial private-sector contributions. A total of $1.2 million was raised in the private sector in less than 8 months. This effort marks the commitment of community members to improving the quality of life in their community. More than 250 people contributed to the campaign.

For more information contact Angela Irvine at (802) 658–1500.

Phoenix From the Flames

Burlington, Vermont, EC

Burlington's first downtown affordable housing cooperative has risen from the ashes of a twice-burned building. Called the Park Place Cooperative, these 34 new affordable apartments overlook City Hall Park and Lake Champlain in Burlington, Vermont's EC and contribute to the rebirth of a critical city center block that used to house the bus station and 51 very affordable apartments. Because of its prime location and lake views, the original owner had it slated for luxury housing. This project ensured that downtown Burlington would remain affordable and accessible to all residents regardless of income.

The project involved the renovation of the historic Huntington Hotel using the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit, as well as Low-Income Housing Tax Credits,

city HOME funds, and State housing funds. The project includes 9 efficiency apartments; 24 1-bedroom apartments; and a 2-bedroom apartment. It is organized as a housing cooperative where residents are owners in the corporation that master leases the housing. As owners, the residents set house rules, generate operating budgets and rents, choose new residents, and hire a property manager. Rents range from $230 to $610 per month and include heat and hot water costs.

The project also includes commercial/retail space in a highly visible downtown location, contributing to the vitality of Burlington's downtown.

For more information contact Brenda Torpy at (802) 862–6244.

New Family Center Builds on Successful Model

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, EC

"My family and I needed help!" says Danny Williams, a resident of the Hall Manor Public Housing Complex and an example of many people in his building and the surrounding community who have received help at the Hall Manor Family Center. "The first place I went when I moved to Hall Manor was the Family Center," Williams explains. "We found a place that helped us when we were down. Now they are helping us to move up."

Since April 1998 the Hall Manor Family Center has been providing social services to people in need of help like Williams. Case managers assist them with goal setting, job-readiness skills and training, GED preparation, and budgeting, all designed to help them achieve a higher level of self-reliance. "The staff of the Family Center shows that they really care and want to help you do better," say Felicia and Curtis White, other members of the community who have sought help from the Hall Manor Family Center.

In addition to case management services, the Family Center works to establish partnerships with other organizations in the community. For instance, the Family Center has collaborated with several area elementary schools and the District Justice Office to prevent truancy.

The Hall Manor Family Center is similar to another family center established in 1994 in the Harrisburg EC. The Lincoln Family Center, located at the Lincoln Elementary School, was created with a grant from the Department of Public Welfare. Capitol Area Head Start administered the Lincoln Family Center until July 1997 when the Community Action Commission took over its administration. The Community Action Commission now administers the Hall Manor Family Center as well.

The idea of establishing a family center in Harrisburg originated in 1992 when a task force of partners came together to study what it would take to create a facility to provide a range of family support services in one location. The task force held community meetings to invite parent participation—parent involvement is the lifeline of these two family centers—and provide a forum for parents to discuss problems that could be addressed at a comprehensive family center. One way

the family centers team up with parents is by hosting fun-filled days for the entire family every month.

The family centers were created with $165,000 of EC funding, less than one-quarter of which has been used thus far, leaving plenty of funding available to add other family centers around Harrisburg as well as improving the Hall Manor and Lincoln Family Centers. Partners include the Community Action Commission, the City of Harrisburg, the Dauphin County Commissioner's Office, the Harrisburg School District and Housing Authority, and Dauphin County Human Services.

For more information contact JoAnn Partridge, City of Harrisburg, Department of Building and Housing Development, at 717–255–6424.

Philadelphia Hires Its Own To Survey Community Childcare Needs

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania/Camden, New Jersey, EZ

When the Philadelphia EZ decided to evaluate its residents' childcare needs, it came up with an innovative solution. Rather than contract the job out, the EZ, along with Cabot Community of Concerned Citizens, Inc., developed the idea as the Child Care Survey Employment Training Project.

The project trained 32 residents in data collection in 1996 for the door-to-door survey. Some served as supervisors and directed assigned groups. They all worked the streets in pairs, dressed in blue and white uniforms of T-shirts, caps, and canvas bags. Interviewers and writers worked together to record the responses of more than 1,000 residents from single-family homes, Philadelphia Housing Authority units, and businesses. The interviewers also served as EZ information ambassadors.

The survey gathered data on children, employment, daycare, transportation, and educational issues. The survey found 2,558 children between 1 and 18 years old. Most of the 899 children 5 years old and younger received childcare from a family member. Of 993 households polled, 551 lived on $10,000 a year or less. Of parents polled, 430 would work if their childcare needs were met.

The investigators concluded that a need for childcare existed in the community. Residents would take advantage of alternative daycare arrangements or would work second or third shifts if daycare services were available. Many residents surveyed needed transportation to access daycare and many wanted afterschool or educational programs for their children. Residents believed that these programs were available, although that perception was not borne out by the data.

The survey provided a springboard for assessing North Central's childcare needs while training EZ residents. Many trainees continue to serve the community in youth development programming and other capacities. Project Assistant Denise Brown used her training to become an administration manager at a local firm.

The survey is only one example of the Zone's commitment to childcare. The EZ has funded several childcare worker and parent training and certification programs and at least 10 existing childcare centers, more than any other EZ. As

Malaika Davis, Coordinator of Policy and Linkages in the Zone, adds, EZ residents are not to be forgotten. There is great passion among residents, signifying the dedication and sincerity with which they embrace the Empowerment Zone concept.

For more information contact Malaika Davis, Coordinator of Policy and Linkages, Philadelphia EZ, at 215–683–0465.

R.B. Brown: A One-Stop Community Center

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania/Camden, New Jersey, EZ

Sometimes a small failure is a sign of a big success. When the R.B. Brown Community Center used EZ funds to expand an emergency dropoff program for children, parents didn't use it. They liked what they saw so much that they decided to enroll their children in daycare at the center instead. And why not? The R.B. Brown Community Center has served North Central Philadelphia for 52 years and provides, according to Director Yvette Fuller, "one-stop shopping" when it comes to community services.

The multipurpose center provides daycare for 180 children, afterschool programs for 121 children, and teen and evening recreational programs. It also offers specialized foster care for court-adjudicated youth who are referred to placement as a last chance before prison. In this successful program, young people are matched with mentor homes and provided training in life skills, communication, and goal setting.

The center also provides drug treatment programs for pregnant women and mothers who can enroll their children in childcare while they participate in the addiction program and parenting classes.

"What makes us successful," says Fuller, "is the fact that our programs work together and our doors are open to other community organizations. This, coupled with a dedicated staff, has been the key to our success."

R.B. Brown has a staff of 110 full-time and part-time employees, 40 of whom are childcare workers. Some teachers have been at the center as long as 19 years. Many are beneficiaries of the Early Childhood Education and Child Development Associate (CDA) training program, an affordable method for childcare professionals to earn an associate's degree in early childhood education.

The center also trains parents. According to Fuller, "Some programs think that the less parents know, the less accountable the program has to be, but our goal is just the opposite." Through monthly parenting meetings, center educators train parents to recognize best practices in early childhood programs. "Our parents call us on the carpet if they don't see best practices in action," says Fuller. Parents are more active in the center because they have a say in programming and because staff take a genuine interest in parents and their families.

R.B. Brown initially responded to an EZ Request for Proposals to provide daycare and teen afterschool programs to EZ residents at a time when welfare cuts pushed residents to find employment. EZ daycare funding gave residents extra time to get

better paying jobs that would allow them to become self-sufficient. The center also developed parents' self-sufficiency by helping them find other ways to pay for daycare once EZ money ran out. When the EZ contract ended in March 1998, parents kept their children at the center, and the center stayed in the EZ network.

For more information contact Yvette Fuller, Director, R.B. Brown Community Center, at 215–763–0900.

One-Stop Shopping for Family Services at the People's Building Project

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, EC

"What we wanted was to create a hub for services," says Kate Garvey of the Allegheny Intermediary Unit (AIU). And they have. The People's Building Project in the Pittsburgh EC has brought together more than 30 human services agencies that serve the McKeesport community in one location. Services available include family therapy, educational training, and transitional housing for people who lose their homes.

"None of the agencies felt that the project was superseding what they were already doing in their previous locations," says Garvey, who is in charge of the project. She explains that the project began as expansion of an existing family support center. "The People's Building was designed with a more systematic view of family services in mind," says Garvey. The facility also serves as an incubator for groups and organizations in the community, providing a place for meetings. Small resident councils, block clubs, or women's support groups can come to the building and use the resources there—not just the fax machine and computers, but the people who staff the facility.

AIU managed the expansion, which included bringing in the needed agencies and services, providing them with rental subsidies to relocate, installing a computer network to link participating agencies with other resources for more efficient and effective service delivery, and adding a common area. Approximately $750,000 of EC funding earmarked for the project has made it possible to renovate a site, the former McKeesport Bank Building, large enough to accommodate so many services in one location.

The project represents a collaborative effort among families, the City of McKeesport, churches, human services providers, businesses, educators, and many other community partners. To provide leadership to the project, representatives from these many sectors are included on the Peoples' Building board. Board members have been selected through an effort to represent as many sectors of the McKeesport community as possible.

For more information contact Kate Garvey, People's Building Project Coordinator, Allegheny Intermediary Unit, at 412–394–5940.

Helping Women Become Self-Sufficient

Springfield, Massachusetts, EC

Disadvantaged women in Springfield, Massachusetts, are becoming more self-sufficient and independent with the help of the recently created Access Enterprise program at the Massachusetts Career Development Institute, which provides ongoing educational and work assistance in Hampden County.

"Because we match the person with individual training needs, our educational programs for these students varies," says Doreen Fradus, Coordinator for the institute's McKinney Program for the Homeless, which oversees the program. "As a result, completion of the program depends on the person's level of skills and commitment to learn." The program, which began in fall 1998, currently serves 154 low-income women.

In addition to the traditional adult education programs offered through the institute, the Access Enterprise program highlights three critical components: direct job placement, intensive case management, and varied work experiences. A 16-week work experience program allows a student who has never worked to develop a positive employment record. Financial compensation for the student includes a salary for a 23-hour work week in addition to Department of Transitional Assistance benefits.

A second program, the Supported Work program, provides the same opportunity for growth for individuals with prior work experience. Once these programs are completed, the students are hired by the employer as permanent employees. Among the employers involved in this program are the Early Childhood Center of Greater Springfield, Goodwill Industries, Partners for a Healthier Community, the Springfield Housing Authority, Holyoke Community College, the WARE Group, Springfield Technical Community College, and Child and Family Service of Pioneer Valley.

For more information contact Jerry Phillips, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Career Development Institute, at 413–781–5640.

North End Youth Center: A Home Away From Home

Springfield, Massachusetts, EC

What is a home? One definition can be found at the North End Youth Center, a nonprofit facility that provides mentoring, training, and recreational activities for youth who live in Springfield, Massachusetts.

"We work to meet the needs of our community," says Louis Manzie, Director of the center. "Initially we offered programs for older kids in the area. However, the need for afterschool programs for younger kids has resulted in our drop-in program for 6- to 10-year-olds." The center currently serves 350 children from the community, the biggest portion of the EC.

The center has worked in close collaboration since 1997 with various local organizations, such as the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, the Springfield Parks and Recreational Departments, and the New North Citizens Council to provide a

nurturing and fun environment for the area's youth, most of whom are Latino. It operates with funds from the City of Springfield and local nonprofit organizations, including the Community Foundation.

Among the offerings of the center are an AIDS Teen Team, a GED preparatory course, lifeguard training, CPR and first aid training, a computer club, and a writers' workshop. "This center is for youth," says Manzie, "and it is run by the youths." A youth advisory board collaborates with an adult advisory board to tailor pertinent and educational activities to participants.

The center's affiliation with the YMCA has even placed Springfield youth in seats of government. The center participates in the Statewide Youth in Government program, which teaches high school students about the governing process. "For 4 months each of our teenagers learns to write a legislative bill by researching what is currently available, who will pay for the particular bill, and why it is important to the community," says Manzie.

Upon the completion of this phase, the teenagers travel to Boston where, with other children from around the State, they meet at the State House in Boston and make mock presentations of their bills in actual State House rooms. "Over the course of one weekend, the teenagers experience what it is like to be a senator or representative and they see firsthand how the legislative process works," says Manzie. "This teaches the kids about the importance of collaboration and teamwork to get things accomplished."

For more information contact Louis Manzie, Director, North End Youth Center, at 413–739–5820.

EC Child Care Initiative Puts Children First

City of Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, EC

A unique partnership regarding childcare was formed in March 1998. Recognizing that affordable, quality childcare is an important factor in attaining self-sufficiency, a round table discussion was organized by Stacey Glantz, a client of an intensive case management program funded by Lock Haven EC. As a welfare mother enrolled full time at Lock Haven University, she personally experienced the gaps in childcare. Her situation was poignant because she did not qualify for childcare subsidy since she is attending a 4-year university and her work schedule did not qualify her for aid. She was concerned that she was not alone in her experiences.

In 1998 she held a meeting with childcare professionals and childcare providers to discuss the gaps in obtaining childcare. As a result of her efforts, the Clinton County Child Care Initiative was formed with a mission to educate businesses as well as the community in general on affordable, quality childcare.

The Clinton County Child Care Initiative is a monthly gathering of childcare professionals and interested community representatives who share information and new ideas about childcare issues.

Organizations participating in this initiative include Keystone Central School District's Pregnant and Parenting Teen program, Pennsylvania State University's Cooperative Extension office, Infant Development program, Clinton County assistance office and Head Start programs, Lock Haven University, childcare providers, and the City of Lock Haven EC. In 1999 the Child Care Initiative has developed plans for an education strategy for business and the community regarding childcare. The plans include applications for funding to educate the community on healthcare issues, a conference with employers in Clinton County, and the development of brochures and educational presentations for local residents about the options available for their children's care.

"This is the first time we have seen childcare providers, professionals, community residents, and representatives of the local government working together on the issues of affordable, quality childcare in our community," said Mark Egley, Executive Director of Lycoming Child Care Services.

For more information contact Maria Boileau at 717–893–5907.

New Center Provides Services to Victims of Domestic Violence

Fayette County/Haywood County, Tennessee, EC

Rural victims of domestic abuse sometimes live miles from town and may not even have a phone or television hookup. The Journey Center in rural Fayette, Tennessee, is reaching out to these women and children thanks to a $20,000 EC grant to Fayette Cares, a local social services organization. The money will be

used to turn three rooms in the existing Fayette Cares building into offices housing the Journey Center.

Fayette Cares already has an efficiency apartment to be used in emergencies, as well as storage, a thrift store, and a food pantry. The Journey Center offers group counseling and individual listening sessions, a court advocacy program, a lending library, and community outreach to senior citizen centers, schools, churches, and businesses. The center also offers workshops in stress and anger management, the effects of abuse on children, and ways to promote effective living.

Staffing for the facility will come from a pool of professional psychologists and social workers who volunteer their time and expertise to do counseling and referrals. A 24-hour crisis line is also planned.

The Journey Center has served 45 women since it opened last summer. Alexandra Wardlaw, Director of the center, plans to expand its services to underserved populations, especially Spanish speakers and the physically challenged. "The number of calls we've received has grown tenfold since we opened in July 1998," Wardlaw says. "The community is very receptive and lots of people have expressed a deep need for these services. It takes an entire community to make this kind of change, to send the message that domestic violence affects whole communities and children."

Journey Center partners include the Tennessee Office of Criminal Justice, the Tennessee Department of Human Services, the Family Life Resource Network, the county justice system and health department, the Methodist Hospital, local churches, and the Family Trouble Center of the Memphis Police Department.

For more information contact John Sicola, Fayette/Haywood EC, at 901–545–4610.

St. Gabriel Education Center Provides Help for Local Residents

Mid-Delta, Mississippi, EZ

Parents, teenagers, and children benefit from the counsel, practical assistance, and compassion given by the Mercy Care Program of the St. Gabriel Center in Mound Bayou, Mississippi. The primary focus of the program is to teach parents about the developmental stages of children during the years of rapid growth from infancy to age 3. The program teaches parents about the need to support children with understanding, and ways to detect developmental problems. It also refers parents to resources for help. The program teaches parenting skills that will help promote strong parent-child relationships.

Sister Helen Papan, the Project Director, has done an exemplary job of reaching out to the residents of Bolivar County. Every other week she gives a session to approximately a dozen teenage girls at the Mental Health Center in Cleveland, Mississippi. She provides advice that may lead them to promising futures, while pointing out the hazards along the way. Sister Helen talks with the girls about avoiding teen pregnancy, building values and self-esteem, and obstacles they will

face. The sessions provide an opportunity for feedback from the counselors and the girls. The Acting Director of the Mid-Delta EZ (MDEZ), Shirley Williams, says, "Sister Helen is an excellent role model for these teenage girls, many of whom don't have self-confidence, and she provides that. She's someone who is always there for them."

Because of the financial assistance provided by MDEZ, Sister Helen has been able to get electricity and gas turned on for several needy families, while remaining within her budget. On one occasion, when furniture was removed from a home by a storekeeper because of past-due balances, money was provided to buy beds for the children. The EZ provided $23,000 in funding for Mercy Care, and this seed money leveraged another $30,000 from local charitable organizations to raise the necessary $53,000.

As Sister Helen visits various homes, she offers assistance to increase parental skills. She understands the deprivation of the families and has been instrumental in having several new homes built by the Rural Economic County Development Farmers' Home in Cleveland, Mississippi. The first families moved into these homes during summer 1998. In addition to assisting parents with parenting skills, she has given clothing to needy families and provided transportation to doctors' offices and welfare departments.

"We have many single-parent families here," Williams says, "and Sister Helen uses the Mercy Care van to pick them up and take them to medical appointments, and that has been very helpful in improving their access to healthcare."

With the assistance of an AmeriCorps volunteer, classes are held three times a week for fourth-grade students at the I.T. Montgomery Elementary School to enhance study skills. As Williams says, "Sister Helen has given a lot more than she has received, and she's doing a tremendous job of reaching out to the people of the community."

For more information contact Shirley Williams, Mid-Delta EZ, at 601–254–9957.

Boston TV Show Informs Residents

Boston, Massachusetts, EZ

"This program is a way for us to advertise things that are going on with the EEC program. It uses a different approach to inform the residents," says Reginald Nunnally, the Executive Director of the Boston EEC. In partnership with the Boston Neighborhood Network News (BNN), the EEC that became an EZ in January 1999 has created a half-hour cable program, "Boston EZ Update," to keep EZ residents informed of what is going on in their neighborhood. The program is aired live at 4 p.m. every Tuesday and is rebroadcast four to five times during the week. Topics covered on the show include governance, real estate development, business development, health-related issues, daycare, job opportunities, and other human services topics. Each week the program welcomes a guest from the community or from city government. Viewers have the opportunity to call the program and ask questions pertaining to the EEC/EZ initiative of Nunnally, who hosts the program, or of the guest.

"Residents actively call the show," says Nunnally. Eight shows have been aired and many residents have called to speak with guests such as the Director of the Redevelopment Authority or the EEC Chairperson.

Program participants have informed the community about the $10.5-million revitalization taking place in Dudley Square as well as the redevelopment in the Grove Hall neighborhood. The program costs the EEC $14 per show.

The show has already been expanded from 14 weeks to 48 weeks and the BNN General Manager, himself an EZ resident, is exploring changing the format of the program into a dialogue show where residents, city representatives, and community leaders could come together to discuss the revitalization of the EZ. The EZ is also working to partner with the banking and insurance industries to sponsor an expanded program in the future.

For more information contact Reginald Nunnally, Executive Director, Boston Empowerment Zone, at 617–445–3413.

Communicating the Ouachita EC's Progress

Ouachita Parish, Louisiana, EC

The Ouachita EC (OEC) communicates its progress through a weekly column in the Business section of the local Gannett newspaper, the *NewsStar;* a weekly quarter-page advertisement in a minority-owned weekly newspaper, the *Free Press;* and a weekly 30-minute program on the LA CableVision access channel. "Our Chairperson does occasional articles in both the minority-owned weekly newspapers, the *Free Press,* the *Monroe Dispatch*, and the newsier *NewsStar,*" said Eric Loewe, Executive Director of the OEC.

OEC has an extensive physical presence in the community according to Loewe, with administrative offices and full-time shared facilities at four prominent neighborhood centers. One community center, where OEC has a full-time presence, takes CableVision payments and has up to 2,500 visitors per month.

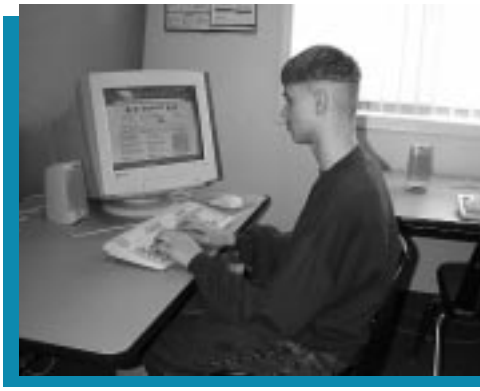
OEC representatives attend neighborhood watch meetings and OEC has partnerships with the three chambers of commerce, the economic development corporation, local government, nonprofit organizations, and local churches and corporations.

For more information contact Eric Loewe, Executive Director, Ouachita Enterprise Community, at 318–329–4031.

Rural County Helps Its People Reap the Rewards of the Telecommunications Revolution

Kentucky Highlands, Jackson County, Kentucky, EZ

The telecommunications/Internet revolution theoretically will benefit people everywhere—even those in rural areas. But the infrastructure of high-speed data lines, computers, and related equipment is expensive and complex. That is exactly the challenge being met in the Kentucky Highlands EZ. The new CenterNet facility is making Jackson one of 40 counties in eastern Kentucky that are being linked for teleconferencing, Internet access, and other related services thanks to the regionally based Center for Rural Development.



"Some high school students in a drafting class connected at CenterNet to the Louisville Science Center hundreds of miles away," explains Norma Thomas of the local school district. "The students—and students at eight other high schools in eastern Kentucky—were able to speak with and get help from architects at the center. This kind of interaction would never have been possible before CenterNet."

The Center for Rural Development donated the equipment and support to enable Jackson County to set up its CenterNet, as it is also doing for each of the 39 other counties. Jackson County's CenterNet is temporarily housed in the EZ office. The facility includes four public terminals with Internet access and a room where local students, business executives, and others can participate in teleconferences by appointment.

Thomas and the staff of the local telephone company, electric company, and court system are publicizing CenterNet with presentations for interested groups, a brochure, and coverage by the local newspaper and television station. Another partner in the project is Eastern Kentucky University, which will offer courses through a video link. The CenterNet project came about through the leadership of U.S. Representative Harold Rogers, who was also instrumental in the founding of the Center for Rural Development.

For more information contact Norma Thomas, Project Manager, Jackson County Schools, at 606–287–7181.

EC Residents Empowered by Technology Skills

Robeson County, North Carolina, EC

As part of its Decade of Home Strategic Plan, the Robeson Enterprise Community Development Corporation envisioned a rural society in which people are equitably empowered with technology skills. The EC recognized that in a society increasingly dominated by technology, people who are socially and/or economically disadvantaged will become further disadvantaged if they lack access to computers and computer-related technologies.

Today, people who cannot use computers have to be considered candidates for a new form of poverty that is both cultural and economic in nature. The EC felt that the only way to fight this emerging poverty was to provide quality education, training, and Internet access. Using EC funding, the EC began a campaign against "technological poverty" by offering free computer and introductory-level Internet tutoring and training to EC residents, organizations, and businesses. The goal of the program was to provide a service initially and eventually make the program self-sustaining.

"Overall, the program was successful [in] identifying additional brokers in the community to continue providing technical assistance and training in the future," says Cynthia Johnson, Executive Director for the Robeson EC Development Corporation.

Seven state-of-the-art multimedia computers were purchased and placed in accessible community locations throughout the EC communities of Maxton, Fairmont, Rowland, Marietta, Red Springs, South Lumberton, and West Lumberton. Internet access and computer time were provided at no charge and were subject to the availability of open time periods. Initial training sessions covered introduction to computers, computer basics, hardware configurations, and DOS/Windows operating systems. A total of 126 community residents received training through 72 training sessions over 336 hours.

A community-based EC Web site was created as part of the program. Access to the Internet helped create new and exciting opportunities for growth and jobs by providing communities with the ability to communicate with one another, conduct business, enhance job skills, and exchange information and ideas. The project represents a creative approach to electronic community networking and empowerment by helping EC residents identify ways in which computers and the Internet can solve day-to-day problems. Based on feedback from participants, the project has offered opportunities for individuals to improve education levels, gain job-related skills, and build individual and community capability. The EC grant for the program ended in February, and the program is now run by volunteers.

For more information contact Cynthia Johnson, Executive Director, Robeson Enterprise Community Development Corporation, at 910–618–0722.

Looking To The Future: Regional Development Initiatives

Communities in regions throughout the country have found that working together within a regional development initiative can yield a variety of benefits for economic and community development. Communities that join together in a regional initiative have discovered major advantages in speaking with a regional, united voice. Regional initiatives can enhance efforts to attract Federal resources and ensure accountability while allowing residents and entrepreneurs to gain access to capital resources for the creation and expansion of business. Regional infrastructure funds can create opportunities for capitalizing innovative public/private projects. The cooperative, regional approach provides a sharing of information and expertise across communities throughout a region that faces common social and economic challenges.

Many regions throughout America have seen the wisdom in developing a unified regional approach to developmental issues, including Appalachia, the Pacific Northwest, the Northeast, the Mississippi Delta, the Southwest Border, and other regions. The following two articles review the progress made in the last few years by two of these initiatives: the Mississippi Delta Regional Initiative and the Southwest Border Regional Partnership.

SOUTHWEST BORDER REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Vice President Al Gore's support: In the 1990s, many community leaders in Texas, California, Arizona, and New Mexico expressed strong interest in developing a united, regional approach to economic and community development. The ideas that originated with local people along the border gradually came to the attention of the White House. On April 16, 1997, at the White House Empowerment Conference in Detroit, Michigan, Vice President Al Gore challenged the communities in the Southwest Border Region to work together to develop a regional approach to shared issues and concerns.

Responding to the Vice President's challenge, in June 1997 the Rio Grande Valley EZ and USDA held a Southwest Border Region Conference at the University of Texas-Pan American in Edinburg, Texas. Representatives of EZs, ECs, and Champion Communities from California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas attended and signed a mutual agreement to form the **Southwest Border Regional Partnership.** The Vice President personally witnessed and applauded the signing of this new partnership.

The Southwest Regional Partnership identified seven areas of priority: housing, infrastructure, education, workforce development, environment, trade, and health. In October 1997 the Partnership held a meeting including representatives from across the region, as well as representatives from the Tennessee Valley Authority and USDA. The partnership developed a framework from a comprehensive strategy and formed a steering committee. A capitalization strategy was

developed, and the region was defined as encompassing all rural communities with long-term endemic poverty within 150 miles of the border.

In July 1998 U.S. Representative Ruben Hinojosa of Texas and U.S. Representative Joe Skeen of New Mexico, Chairman of the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, held discussions with the regional initiative's leaders. Rep. Skeen asked the partnership to prepare a formal proposal for presentation to the United States Congress.

Responding to the congressional request, the partnership developed an in-depth proposal based upon research by the community leaders, the four State governments, private-sector organizations, academic institutions such as the University of Texas-Pan American, and numerous Federal departments including Labor, Agriculture, Treasury, and others. The partnership pointed out a vast array of statistics concerning the need for development along the border. The border has a rapidly growing population that increased by a dramatic 15 percent between 1990 to 1996, compared to 6.6 percent for the Nation as a whole. The region suffers from endemic poverty; in 1995 more than a quarter of the region's counties had a per capita income of less $10,850. Unemployment figures for the region soared well beyond the rates for the country as a whole, yet fundamental infrastructure lagged far behind. In the areas of environment, housing, health, education, and other issues, the partnership has also developed a mass of data demonstrating the compelling needs of their region. In late 1998 and early 1999, the partnership continued to gain input from the communities throughout the region.

The vision of the Southwest Border Regional Partnership is fixed on the future, in its efforts to attract greater funding and other resources from local, State, regional, and Federal resources to address the great challenges the region faces. Yet the process of regional planning and shared information has already been beneficial, according to Maria Matthews (Imperial County, California, Enterprise Community) and Yvonne "Bonnie" Gonzalez, the Co-Chairs of the Partnership's Steering Committee. Ms. Gonzalez, Chief Executive Officer of the Rio Grande Valley Empowerment Zone, said that the process of developing networks all across the region has been helpful, as "the communities feel they're not alone. The process of regional planning has been very successful in enabling communities to develop comprehensive solutions to common problems rather than looking at it piecemeal."

Unless a comprehensive plan is developed and implemented into a structure of coordinated decisionmaking, many community leaders in the region feel that it will suffer rapid growth without prosperity. After an in-depth review of the region's staggering demographics, historic circumstances, and common challenges, the Southwest Border Regional Partnership believes that a comprehensive regional strategy is the key to unlocking the gateway to a regional border economy for the 21st century.

MISSISSIPPI DELTA REGIONAL INITIATIVE

The regional development approach in the Mississippi Delta received a powerful impetus from the establishment of the Southern EZ/EC Forum. This Forum began as an informal organization of rural and urban EZs and ECs in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. This organization held quarterly meetings starting in 1995 to share program ideas and discuss issues of mutual concern. The Chair is Thelma French, New Orleans EC (urban), and the Vice Chair is Moses J. Williams, Northeast Louisiana Delta EC (rural). The USDA Office of Community Development (OCD) discussed with Forum leaders in August 1997 the possibility of forming a Delta regional initiative. In October 1997 USDA began implementing a Cooperative Agreement with the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Center (LMDDC), which was formerly known as the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission. The commission, under the chairmanship of then-Governor Bill Clinton of Arkansas, published a major report in 1990, called *The Delta Initiatives*, which contained an in-depth series of recommendations that have motivated many policy decisions in the Delta during the 1990s. USDA and the Southern EZ/EC Forum developed a partnership with LMDCC. By using the remaining years of priority funding in Round I and leveraging other resources, they could effectively aid in implementing the recommendations in *The Delta Initiatives.*

The forum and USDA cooperated in forming a regional initiative consisting of LMDDC, the EC of the Delta, the forum, and the Foundation for the Mid-South. The forum then expanded to include all the EZs and ECs throughout the seven States studied by the Commission in 1990—Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, and Illinois—and also voted to add Alabama.

Vice President Gore's endorsement: In April 1998 a Delta Partnership Agreement was drafted in the form of a social compact between the organizations to work cooperatively for sustainable economic and community development in the Delta. The parties signed the agreement in New Orleans in April 1998, with Vice President Al Gore, USDA secretary Dan Glickman, and the Department of Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater signing as witnesses. The Delta Partnership plans to have a Board of Directors composed of community leaders from the EZs, ECs, and Champion Communities. The Board will develop an overall Delta Regional Initiative strategic plan based on the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Center's recommendations, and upon the strategic plans of the EZ/EC members of the forum.

Like the Southwest Border Partnership, leaders of the Delta initiative believe that while the process looks toward gaining greater resources for the immediate and long-term future, there have already been benefits from the process of information sharing and cooperation among the Delta communities. Moses Williams, Vice-Chair of the initiative, said, "Sharing ideas about common problems was very helpful." Initially, communities were not familiar with the process of establishing benchmarks, but what they learned from each other, as well from USDA and HUD,

helped them understand that process. “We’ve also helped each other with organizational structure. Few of us at first knew about 501(c)(3), but we’ve learned how to organize to get the most bang for your buck.”

Before the Southern EZ/EC Forum and the Delta regional initiative, Williams said, “You tended to think you were alone in your community with your problems, as if you were on an island. You feel better knowing you’re not by yourself … and then you start solving problems.” With its grassroots support, the Mississippi Delta Regional Initiative shows great promise of expanding the horizons of economic and community development for the people of the Delta in the years beyond 2000.

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Available Publications for Urban Communities

Federal Programs Guide: Provides a list of Federal Government programs available to distressed communities. Applicants can use this Guide to identify current or prospective Federal Government programs that can be used to help revitalize their neighborhoods.

Strategic Planning Guide: Provides a comprehensive overview of how to prepare a Strategic Plan: including a discussion of the planning process and the ways in which residents, community-based organizations, businesses, nonprofits, government entities, and others come together to create a shared vision for the future.

Performance Measurement System Guide: Provides communities with a "how-to" approach to establishing and implementing a performance measurement system. Performance measurement systems provide an organized process for gathering information to track how well programs and projects are meeting their goals, and then using that information to improve performance and report to interested stakeholders.

Internal Revenue Service Publication 954, *"Tax Incentives for Empowerment Zones and Other Distressed Communities,"* Rev. February, 1999.

What Works! in the Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities, Volume III: A compilation of successful projects from current Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities (includes contact names and telephone numbers).

The Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community Initiative: A Guide for Business: Business is key to the Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community Initiative. This practical hands-on guide is designed to provide information to businesses on the advantages and benefits of locating and expanding in the Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities.

The President's Community Empowerment Board: The Community Empowerment Board (CEB) includes the heads of 26 Federal agencies. The CEB is responsible for the development of the overall community empowerment efforts with particular attention given to the implementation of the Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community Initiative.

To request publications for urban communities, please call 1–800–998–9999.

Available Publications for Rural Communities

A Guide to Strategic Planning for Rural Communities: Leads communities through the process of establishing a vision, evaluating problems and opportunities, assessing their strengths and weaknesses, and setting goals and strategies.

A Guide to Implementation and Benchmarking: Helps rural communities turn their Strategic Plans into specific work programs and create performance measures to evaluate their own progress.

Federal Programs Guide: Provides a list of Federal Government programs available to distressed communities. Applicants can use this Guide to identify current or prospective Federal Government programs that can be used to help revitalize their neighborhoods.

Internal Revenue Service Publication 954, *"Tax Incentives for Empowerment Zones and Other Distressed Communities,"* Rev. February 1999.

What Works! in the Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities, Volume III: A compilation of successful projects from current Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities (includes contact names and telephone numbers).

To request publications for rural communities, please call 1–800–851–3403.

Other Resources

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance

Two CD-ROMS that detail information on Federal procurements valued at more than $25,000 for an entire fiscal year, the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance and the Census Bureau's Federal Assistance Award Data Systems are available. This information helps to identify who buys what, who gives grants and loans, and who gets Federal funding.

Program/Agency Contact:

Governmentwide Information Systems Division
U.S. General Services Administration
Phone: 202–708–5126
Web site: www.gsa.gov

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

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Web site: http://www.hud.gov

Community Connections (HUD's Resource Center)

For information on programs to help build communities:
P.O. Box 7189
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Rural Economic Development Resources

Web site: http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric

Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities

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Terms and Definitions

CDBG	Community Development Block Grant
COPC	Community Outreach Partnership Centers
DoD	U.S. Department of Defense
EC	Enterprise Community
ED	U.S. Department of Education
EDI	Economic Development Initiative
EEC	Enhanced Enterprise Community
ESL	English as a Second Language
EZ	Empowerment Zone
GED	General Equivalency Diploma
HHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
HOME	HUD HOME funding program
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
JTPA	Job Training Partnership Act
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
SBA	U.S. Small Business Administration
SEZ	Supplemental Empowerment Zone
SSBG	Social Services Block Grant
TANF	Temporary Aid to Needy Families
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture

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