

## **Economic Development Element**

### **Description of Economic Development Element**

The economic development element includes historic trends and projections on the numbers and characteristics of the labor force, where the people who live in the community work, where people who work in the community reside, available employment characteristics and trends, an economic base analysis and any other matters affecting the local economy. Tourism, manufacturing and revitalization efforts are appropriate factors to consider. (Comprehensive Planning Guide for Local Governments 2006)

### **Existing Condition and Economic Overview**

#### **Employment Status and Comparison**

Table ED – 1 shows the employment status for Conway residents. The total work force in Conway over 16 years of age in 2000 was 5,696. Of that total 5,040 were employed and 656 were unemployed for an unemployment rate of 7.2 percent.

A labor force comparison is shown in Table ED – 2 for 1980, 1990, and 2000. The number of individuals in the labor force actually declined from 1980 to 1990. Part of the decline can be explained by the eventual closing of the Myrtle Beach Air Base in 1993, as the employment at the base continued to decrease from 1980 to 1990. The downturn in the economy during the late eighties and early nineties coupled with the Census Bureau showing Conway's population actually declining from 1980 to 1990, were the major factors in the a lower number in Conway's labor force in 1990. The 2000 Census shows a substantial increase in the labor force of 1047 workers.

Table ED – 1: Employment Status for Conway

	Total	% of Total Population over 16	% in Labor Force
Population 16 and over	9,049	100.0	N/A
In labor force	5,696	62.9	100
Civilian labor force	5,696	62.9	100
Employed	5,040	55.7	88.5
Unemployed	656	7.2	11.5
Armed Forces	0	0	0
Not in labor force	3,353	37.1	N/A

Source: U. S Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census: 2000.

Table ED – 2: Conway Labor Force Comparison

	1980	1990	2000
In Labor Force	4,767	4,649	5,696
Armed Forces	74	42	0
Civilian	4,638	4,607	5,696
Employed	4,443	4,314	5,040
Unemployed	250	293	656
Not in Labor Force	2,569	2,708	3,353

Source: U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census: 1980, 1990, 2000.

## Employment by Occupation, Industry & Class of Worker

Displayed in Table ED – 3 are the numbers and percentages of Conway’s labor force by occupation, industry and class.

Table ED – 3: Employment by Occupation, Industry & Class of Worker for Conway

	#	%
Employed civilian population 16 years and over	5,040	100.0
<b>OCCUPATION</b>		
Management, professional, and related occupation	1,390	27.6
Service occupations	988	19.6
Sales and office occupations	1,498	29.7
Farming, fishing and forestry occupations	9	0.2
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	344	6.8
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	811	16.1
<b>INDUSTRY</b>		
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, mining	18	0.4
Construction	409	8.1
Manufacturing	477	9.5
Wholesale trade	181	3.6
Retail trade	816	16.2
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	177	3.5
Information	134	2.7
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	253	5.0
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	267	5.3
Educational, health, and social services	1,014	20.1
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodations and food service	774	15.4
Other services (except public administration)	236	4.7
Public administration	284	5.6
<b>CLASS OF WORKER</b>		
Private wage and salary workers	3,812	75.6
Government workers	976	19.4
Self-employed workers in own not incorporated business	238	4.7
Unpaid family workers	14	0.3

Source: U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census: 2000.

## Income Comparisons and Persons Below Poverty Level

Conway lags behind Horry County, the state of South Carolina and the United States in per capita income, median household income and median family income. This was the case in 1990 and still remained less in 2000 Census. Even though all income categories remain below county, state and national levels, the number of individuals below the poverty level decreased by 3.4% between 1990 and 2000.

Table ED-4. Income Comparisons

<b>1990</b>	Per Capita Income	Median Household Income	Median Family Income
Conway	\$10,797	\$21,241	\$24,508
Horry Co.	\$12,385	\$24,959	\$28,504
S. Carolina	\$11,897	\$26,256	\$30,797
U. S.	\$14,420	\$30,056	\$35,225
<b>2000</b>			
Conway	\$16,611	\$32,155	\$39,189
Horry Co.	\$19,949	\$36,470	\$42,676
S. Carolina	\$24,424	\$37,082	\$44,227
U. S.	\$29,845	\$41,994	\$50,046

Source: U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census 1990, 2000

Table ED – 5. Persons Below Poverty Level

Persons for Whom Poverty Status Is Determined (See Note 1)									Percent Change 1989 -1999
1979	1989	1999	Income Below Poverty Level (See Note 2)						
Not Available	9,628	10,842	1979 #	1979 %	1989 #	1989 %	1999 #	1999 %	-3.4
			1,735	N/A	2,273	23.6	2,195	20.2	

Source: U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Population and Housing; S. C. Office of Research and Statistics, 2000

1: All persons except inmates of institutions; persons in military group quarters and in college dormitories; and unrelated individuals under 15 years

2: The average poverty threshold for a family of four persons was \$12,674 in 1989 and \$17,184 in 1999.

## Daytime Population and Commuting to Work

Table ED – 7 shows that as a result of a large number of workers commuting to work from outside Conway, the daytime population increases from 11,788 to 19,012. This amount more than doubles the workforce during the day.

Table ED – 6. Daytime Population 2000

Place Name	Total Resident Population	Total Workers Working in the Area	Total Workers Living in the Area	Estimated Daytime Population	Daytime Population Change Due to Commuting #	Daytime Population Change Due to Commuting %	Workers Who Live and Work in the Same County #	Workers who Live and Work in the Same County %	Employment Resident Ratio See note below.
Conway	11,788	12,172	4,948	19,012	7,224	61.3	1,995	40.3	2.46
Horry County	196,629	99,512	95,732	200,409	3,780	1.9	86,744	90.6	1.04

Source: U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Journey to Work and Migration Statistics 2000

Note: Employment-residence (E-R) ratio: this is a measure of the total number of workers working in an area or place, relative to the total number of workers living in the area or place. It is often used as a rough indication of the jobs-workers balance in an area, although it does not take into account whether the resident workers possess the skills needed for the jobs that are available. E-R ratios greater than 1.00 occur when there are more workers working in the area than living there. These areas can be considered as net importers of labor. For example, an E-R ratio of 1.19 means that there are 19 percent more workers working in the area than living in the area. Values less than 1.00 indicate areas that send more workers to other areas than they receive, i.e., they are net exporters of labor.

As shown below in Table ED – 7 the largest percentage of workers drive to work alone. In fact 75.6% of all workers drive alone. Public transportation accounts for only 2.7% of the workers commuting to their jobs. These numbers only account for workers that already live in Conway and not workers that add to the daytime population.

Table ED – 7. Commuting to Work

	Total	%
Workers 16 years and over	4,948	100.0
Car, truck or van – drove alone	3,740	75.6
Car, truck or van – carpooled	762	15.4
Public transportation	135	2.7
Walked	189	3.8
Other means	87	1.8
Worked at home	35	0.7
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	23.2	(X)

Source: U. S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau: 2000

## **Economic Base Analysis and Regional Employment**

Since 1982, total employment in the Waccamaw region (Horry, Georgetown and Williamsburg County) grew by nearly 80% from 64,240 in 1982 to 115,360 in 1996. Over the 1992 –1996 period, Horry County total employment doubled and increased by 42,620 jobs. Horry County’s percentage of the total job gain during the 14 year period was 82% which shows the prominent role the County plays in the regional economy. (Myrtle Beach Planning Department)

Ten major employers in Horry County in 1997 had 400 or more employees. The Horry County School District topped the list with just over 3,000 employees. AVX Corporation is the largest industrial employer with 2,223 jobs. Horry County Government is the third largest employer with 1,150 employees. (Myrtle Beach Planning Department)

Table ED – 8 Total Employment Growth in the Waccamaw Region, 1982 -1996

Geographical Area	1982	1988	1996	1982-96 Change
Horry County	42,620	56,640	85,300	42,680
Georgetown County	13,400	15,170	19,970	6,570
Williamsburg County	8,220	10,770	10,090	1,870
Waccamaw Region	64,240	82,580	115,360	51,120

Source: “1997 Population and Economic Study” Waccamaw Regional Planning and Development Council  
Employment figures include all nonagricultural industries including government employment

Employment figures are a reflection of Conway and Horry County’s economic stability and growth. Table ED – 9 shows employment in the six most significant sectors of the Horry County economy and offers a comparison to South Carolina state totals. Employment has expanded significantly in Horry County growing from 19,760 in 1970 to 118,920 in 2005. (Envision 2025)

This represents an increase of 501.82%. Over the same period employment in South Carolina has increased by 117.67%. By sector in Horry County, construction has increased 519.60%, manufacturing by 69.7%, the wholesale sector by 277.11%, the retail sector by 607.69%, “FIRE” (finance, insurance and real estate) by 992.52% and services by 575.88%. Population figures for Horry County compliment these statistics and point to continued significant growth over the next twenty years. (Envision 2025)

Table ED – 9. Horry County Employment by Sector

Employment	1970	1980	1990	2000	2005
<b>SOUTH CAROLINA</b>					
Construction	64,460	92,040	133,830	154,540	159,390
Manufacturing	345,250	398,440	389,540	352,570	311,140
Wholesale	34,640	56,290	66,470	86,830	89,410
Retail	142,790	215,580	331,730	410,390	419,340
“FIRE”	44,170	79,000	109,160	139,520	165,650
Services	193,440	241,870	405,140	595,770	650,340
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>824,750</b>	<b>1,083,220</b>	<b>1,435,870</b>	<b>1,739,620</b>	<b>1,795,270</b>
<b>HORRY COUNTY</b>					
Construction	2,040	3,430	5,980	10,770	12,640
Manufacturing	3,710	7,490	6,120	7,390	6,290
Wholesale	830	1,540	1,830	2,870	3,130
Retail	5,200	11,500	24,690	34,690	36,800
“FIRE”	1,470	3,820	7,660	12,340	16,060
Services	6,510	12,960	24,440	39,930	44,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19,760</b>	<b>40,740</b>	<b>70,720</b>	<b>107,990</b>	<b>118,920</b>

Source: Envision 2025

## **Globalization ,The Innovative Economy and Placeconomics**

### **Globalization**

Globalization is the emergence of a single global economy, a vast networked virtual economy that draws together every community, company, nation, religion, race and ethnicity. While the concept of a global economy is partly due to the vast amount of information that is available via the internet it is also a result of, at least in the United States, the fact that we are becoming a no-majority nation and overall the vast majority of population growth in the world will be on other continents. No-majority means no racial or ethnic group will constitute more than 50 percent of the total population.

(Placeconomics)

Overall growth rates in the United States over the next 25 years will be less than 19 percent. But the African-American population will grow 20 percent; the Asian population 21 percent, the Hispanic population 39 percent; the non-Hispanic white population will grow less than 15 percent. In California there are already dozens of no-majority communities, and there will be more no-majority states.(Placeconomics)

When John Kennedy was president there were 3 billion people in the world. Today there are over 6 billion. Every 143 days there are enough births in the world to populate a country the size of Canada. Over the next 50 years, 97 percent of all of the world’s net population growth will be in Asia, Africa and Latin America. (Placeconomics)

## **The Innovative Economy**

Successful economic strategies for communities in the future will include efforts to create an environment that embraces the innovative economy. The major innovation assets of a community are talent, connectivity and distinctiveness/uniqueness. The list below summarizes the general areas that communities must develop or nurture to capitalize on this growing economic segment of the overall economy. (Nitro Development, LLC)

- ❑ Entrepreneurial Climate
  - Develop new markets
  - Develop new technologies
  - Create wealth
  - Create employment opportunities
  - Better, faster, cheaper
  
- ❑ Community Infrastructure
  - “Third Spaces”– public/private spaces outside a traditional office; cell phone, computer and wifi
  - Downtown technology zones
  - Artist live/work space
  - Active fun downtown and community
  - Business incubator
  - Creative uses for abandoned buildings
  
- ❑ Assessing and Promoting Community Entrepreneurship Capacity
  - Eliminate traditional barriers
  - Quickly spreading – over 1600 colleges and universities
  - Emerging in K-12 and technical and community colleges
  - Beginning to extend beyond business schools to the sciences
  
- ❑ Technology, Talent, and Capital
  - Connect to higher education
  - Create environment to attract young professionals
  - 2004 – 20 million one person businesses existed
  - Connect to financial entities
  
- ❑ Intellectual and Financial Resources
  - Culture or cable
  - Use uniqueness to develop an economic model – Eugene Oregon/Nike
  - Solicit the support of the financial community

- Intersection of Technological Innovation, Globalization and Deregulation  
The result of the other areas being developed
- Other topics – regionalism, incubators, creative class, art community, etc.

### **PlaceEconomics**

PlaceEconomics is the firm of Don Rypkema, longtime supporter and promoter of downtown and community revitalization/historic preservation as a tool for economic development. Central to his philosophy is the concept of creating and maintaining a sense of place rather than simply allowing your community to become a location lacking in uniqueness. The ultimate goal of his argument is to achieve sustainability. Sustainability, according to Rypkema, requires a community to understand and practice environmental responsibility, economic responsibility, social responsibility and cultural responsibility. (PlaceEconomics)

To further explain this connection, for a community to be viable there needs to be a link between environmental responsibility and economic responsibility; for a community to be livable there needs to be a link between environmental responsibility and social/cultural responsibility; and for a community to be equitable there needs to be a link between economic responsibility and social/cultural responsibility.

### **Growing a Sustainable Economy**

The goal of community sustainability is to establish local economies that are economically viable, environmentally sound and socially and culturally responsible. Achieving this goal requires participation from all sectors of the community, both to determine community needs and to identify and implement innovative and appropriate solutions. (Sustainable Communities Network)

#### **Economics and Finance**

Residents from all segments of the community can play a role in the future of their local economy. Working together, business and government leaders, local non-profit organizations, and citizen groups can analyze needs and resources and guide the economy. Local financial institutions can invest in sustainable community initiatives. (Sustainable Communities Network)

#### **Urban/Rural Economic Ties**

It is in the interest of urban and rural residents to work together in mutually supportive ways. Cooperative efforts should include land preservation, sustainable agriculture, growth management, appropriate development of rural resources, improved trading and tourism, and development of low-impact regional planning and transportation systems.

## **Small Businesses**

Small businesses are sources of employment and providers and consumers of goods and services that sustain the local economy. Their operation should support the local ecology, minimize energy use and waste, and utilize recycled products and materials. Efforts should also be made to encourage innovation.

## **Forestry and Wood Products**

Trees are important for both urban and rural ecosystems. Mature trees maintain desirable microclimates and shelter wildlife. Trees also have economic value as a raw material used in producing paper, buildings, furniture, and other wood products. Communities should pursue balancing these environmental and economic considerations.

## **Manufacturing and Industry**

Economically healthy businesses and industries with minimal environmental impact on communities should be encouraged. Communities should work to attract and support such industries and to reduce or eliminate negative impacts from existing industries.

## **Agriculture and Food Systems**

Community efforts can preserve agricultural land, encourage sustainable agricultural practices, support local food producers, and facilitate the production and distribution of locally-produced food through farmer's markets and cooperative food buying programs.

## **Fishing and Aquatic Ecosystems**

Aquatic wildlife play a major role in sustaining healthy freshwater ecosystems. It is therefore important that communities associated with aquatic ecosystems responsibly manage these resources. Community participation can provide support for sound management practices and remedial programs, as well as for persons and industries engaged in commercial and recreational fishing.

## **Technology**

Technological advances in business, health, education, and the environment provide new opportunities for communities. More information products are available, and some may have environmental implications. Communities must be current and guide their economies accordingly.

## **Local and Regional Economic Development Organizations**

### **City of Conway**

While the City of Conway is not an economic development organization many of the departments either directly or indirectly affect the general condition and growth of the local economy. The provision of water and sewer extensions, maintenance of streets, solid waste collection and stormwater management are basic services provided by the City. Tourism, recreation, parks and beautification projects help business recruitment efforts and provide amenities for the business community.

The City provides funding assistance for Conway Main Street USA and the Chamber of Commerce. Major projects in the City such as the Mill Pond Road improvements were completed with a Tax Increment Financing District, an incentive program for redevelopment of shopping centers, and using major grants to construct the Riverwalk. Additionally the City waives permit fees for historic structures in downtown and residential neighborhoods.

### **Conway Area Chamber of Commerce**

The Conway Area Chamber of Commerce was incorporated in 1958, and is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Currently, it has 3 full time staff persons, and the Executive Vice President serves as the CEO.

The five divisions are Economic Development Governmental Relations, Educational Affairs, Membership , Public Affairs and Community Affairs. Each of these divisions has a volunteer committee that carries out its responsibilities.

The mission of the Economic Development Government Relations Division is to promote and attract business and tourism into the greater Conway Area through marketing and by distributing information through a variety of means; to facilitate cooperation between government and business; to serve as a “voice” for business; and to increase interaction with State and Local Chambers to identify shared resources.

The goal of the Membership Services Division is to increase Chamber membership, retention, and to meet the needs of its membership through evaluation and development of increased membership benefits; to develop strategies to enhance Business After Hours; increase member recognition; and create a greater awareness of the Chamber’s efforts in promoting business opportunities in our community.

The goal of the Public Affairs Division is to create a greater awareness of Chamber activities and programs for the membership by sponsorship of the annual meeting and enhancement of the Chamber Quill; to promote Conway and Chamber member businesses by fostering relationships with the media; to support tourism and relocation efforts by developing brochures and publications.

The objective of the Community Affairs Division is to organize community festivals and Chamber events and to enhance our community spirit by involving as many volunteers as possible; to increase tourism opportunities by utilizing these festivals and events to promote our community thus creating a positive economic impact for our business community.

The Education Division is charged with the selection of recipients of its annual scholarship program for high school seniors, its leadership program for adults and junior leadership program for high school sophomores. The Chamber's Board of Regents oversees the adult leadership program. The Vice President of the Education Committee organizes the Salute to Education/Scholarship Program and the junior leadership program.

### **Conway Main Street USA**

Conway Main Street joined the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Program in 1986, making it one of the longest continuous downtown revitalization programs in the nation.

Conway Main Street USA goals are to stimulate economic development, encourage historic preservation and promote the vitality of Downtown Conway. Conway Main Street USA was founded in 1986 by a group of local citizens concerned about the economic health of downtown Conway. Established as a private, nonprofit organization with a twelve member Board of Directors and two staff persons, the program depends on a private/public partnership, with 50% of the annual funding coming from the City of Conway and 50% coming from memberships and sponsorships from community businesses and individuals.

Since the inception of Conway Main Street, U.S.A., downtown building vacancies have been reduced, property and business owner reinvestment has topped \$19 million, over 200 gross new businesses have been established, and over 35 businesses have opened or expanded. Additionally, there have been in excess of 600 new jobs and over 250 façade improvements.

Services provided by Conway Main Street USA include quarterly merchant meetings to give members an opportunity to discuss topics of interest and share feedback and a monthly e-newsletter to keep members informed.

Conway Main Street, U.S.A. publishes the Downtown Conway Shopping & Dining Guide. All downtown retail businesses and restaurants are listed in the brochure, which includes a locator map. This information is updated twice a year

Members can utilize the Shop Downtown Conway First public information program. Spreading the word about new products or events within your business is the goal of this service. Conway Main Street will distribute your information to local media outlets for consideration. In addition, all special events, sales, classes and other items of member news will be posted on [www.conwaymainstreet.com](http://www.conwaymainstreet.com) for easy access by the public.

In an effort to restore and rehabilitate the historic buildings in the downtown area, the city of Conway approved an ordinance in 1989 called the Historic District Design Guidelines. The boundaries of the district are: Kingston Lake to Elm Street and Second Avenue to Fifth Avenue. The riverfront area, below Second Avenue, is covered by the Riverfront Guidelines.

The Conway Main Street USA program provides design assistance to merchants and property owners who are making exterior alterations. Once the Conway Main Street Design committee reviews the proposals and assists with the design the City's Community Appearance Board oversees the design approval process for the Downtown Historic District and the Riverfront District. This board meets twice monthly.

To encourage appropriate facade rehabilitations and to provide some financial assistance, Conway Main Street USA offers Facade Incentive Grants. These 50% matching grants of up to \$1,000 are awarded to businesses as an incentive for them to make improvements that will enhance the downtown streetscape.

Architectural services through the South Carolina Downtown Development Association are also available. Owners or tenants of those buildings in need of color renderings, which show appropriate rehabilitation and color selections, may apply for these free services through Conway Main Street USA.

### **Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments**

Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments (WRCOG), a regional agency serving county governments, municipalities, and citizens of Georgetown, Horry and Williamsburg Counties, offers a wide variety of planning, economic development and social services to aid in the orderly growth and development of the area. (Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments)

The Economic Development program at WRCOG concentrates its efforts on the continued economic progress of Georgetown, Williamsburg and Horry Counties. Regional activities are closely associated with Economic Development Administration (EDA) programs designed to create employment opportunities by encouraging private enterprise to locate and expand businesses in economically distressed areas. (Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments)

Five of the programs that WRCOG administers are listed below:

- ❑ EDA's Partnership Planning programs help support local organizations in their long-term planning efforts and their outreach to the economic development community through EDA's programs and policies.
- ❑ The Research and National Technical Assistance Program supports research of leading edge, world class economic development practices as well as funds information dissemination efforts.
- ❑ The Economic Adjustment Program assists state and local interests to design and implement

strategies to adjust or bring about change to an economy. The program focuses on areas that have experienced or are under threat of serious structural damage to the underlying economic base.

- ❑ The Title IX Revolving Loan Fund Program is a low interest loan program available to businesses and industries within the three-county area of the Waccamaw Region. Funds for this Program have been provided by the Economic Development Administration for the purpose of creating jobs and improving the economy of the Waccamaw Region. Applications for loans are reviewed by a nine-member loan committee appointed by the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments Board of Directors. Final approval is made by the WRCOG Board under the guidelines established by the Revolving Loan Fund Plan. The staff of WRCOG assist the applicants in preparing the applications according to the eligibility requirements of the RLF Plan.
- ❑ Federal Legislation - the Workforce Investment Act requires each state to establish Workforce Investment Areas. South Carolina is divided into twelve (12) workforce areas. Each area is led by a Workforce Investment Board (WIB) principally made up of private business leaders and education/employment/training professionals. In our area, the designated administering agency is the WRCOG who provides staff support to the Waccamaw Workforce Investment Board, its committees, and the lead state agency, South Carolina Department of Commerce.

### **Myrtle Beach Regional Economic Development Corporation**

The Myrtle Beach Regional Economic Development Corporation (MBREDC) is a public/private partnership dedicated to developing a community-wide strategy for attracting new businesses throughout Horry County and its municipalities. Formed in 1994, MBREDC, represents a joint effort of the public and private sectors, which includes businesses, chambers of commerce, higher education facilities, and utility providers. It is the mission of MBREDC to help bring together a cross-section of talent and resources to facilitate planning for the region's growth. Membership of the Corporation is governed by a twelve member executive committee elected by the Board of Directors which operates under section 501 (C) (6) of the Internal Revenue Code. (Myrtle Beach Regional Economic Development Corporation)

The South Carolina Department of Commerce has designated the Myrtle Beach Regional Economic Development Corporation as the point of contact for all inquiries that are received at the state level regarding business relocation to our area. Assistance is provided by MBREDC to new businesses in the areas of site selection, dealing with tax and permit issues, managing the regulatory process and identifying incentives that may be available. Additionally, the MBREDC offers financial consulting, development planning, leadership development, tourism development and technology assistance. The MBREDC also serves as a resource center for grant and loan coordination. (MBREDC)

A major five-year goal of the MBREDC is to create 1,500 jobs having a minimum annual average wage of \$26,500. Manufacturing jobs, according to the MBREDC, are seen as a more stable source of employment compared to service industry jobs many of which are associated with tourism and not only pay less overall but are seasonal leaving many employees without jobs or making less in the

winter. (MBREDC)

### **E. Craig Wall, Sr. College of Business Administration/B. B. & T. Center for Economic and Community Development**

The mission of the Center is to be a bridge between the University and the Community, to establish the Center as the economic data repository for this region, and to develop and fund opportunities for both faculty and students to conduct applied research, surveys, and studies for local businesses, organizations, and government agencies. The Center utilizes the faculty and resources of the University to enhance the Community's economic development and planning, and works to place the University in a position to provide the expertise necessary for community leaders to achieve their goals of regional economic success and diversity, as well as enhance the quality of life for the region. (B. B. & T. Center for Economic and Community Development)

### **Small Business Development Center**

The mission of the Small Business Development Center is to promote the growth and development of small businesses by providing management and technical assistance. Further, the mission is to contribute to economic growth and prosperity by encouraging entrepreneurship and the success of small businesses. (Coastal Carolina University)

Coastal Carolina University, through the Division of Academic Outreach, operates the Small Business Development Center (SBDC). The office serves both Horry and Georgetown counties by providing a variety of services and management training courses tailored to the needs of small businesses. SBDC consultants provide managerial and technical assistance to those starting or expanding a business. (Coastal Carolina University)

### **Service Core of Retired Executives (SCORE)**

SCORE is a 501-C-3 non-profit organization that partners with the U. S. Small Business Administration to provide volunteer counseling for the formation, growth and success of new and existing small businesses. Nationwide they have over 10,500 counselors with over 600 different business skill areas. The counselors are either working or retired business owners, executives, or corporate leaders who share their business experiences. Since their formation in 1964, they have helped over 7.8 million small businesses. Horry County has a SCORE office in Myrtle Beach. (SCORE)

### **Better Business Bureau**

The Better Business Bureau's vision is to promote through its efforts an ethical marketplace based on its mission and values. The values central to this effort are, excellence and accountability; integrity; teamwork; trust and respect. Their mission is to be the leader in advancing marketplace trust accomplished by the following:

- Creating a community of trustworthy businesses

- ❑ Setting standards for marketplace trust
- ❑ Encouraging and supporting best practices
- ❑ Celebrating marketplace role models
- ❑ Denouncing substandard marketplace behavior

The Better Business Bureau has a local office in Conway.

## **State Organizations**

### **Department of Commerce**

The South Carolina Department of Commerce provides the State of South Carolina with coordination of a wide variety of economic programs. Its efforts include the following:

- ❑ **Technical Assistance** – The goal of the Community and Rural Division is to strengthen and continue to improve the leadership capacity and education of local community leaders. The division offers technical assistance to all South Carolina communities.
- ❑ **Product Development** – The goal is to promote well-planned industrial parks offering prepared sites that meet the needs of a vast majority of projects and are a major attraction for manufacturing companies.
- ❑ **Community Planning** – Individualized for each county or community the staff of this division will lead elected officials, business leaders, and/or citizens through a strategic planning process for future growth and development.
- ❑ **Workforce Development** – The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) focuses on meeting the needs of businesses for skilled workers and the training, education, and employment needs of individuals. Key components of the Act enable customers to easily access the information and services they need through the “One-Stop” system; empower adults to obtain the training they find most appropriate through Individual Training Accounts, and ensure that all State and local programs meet customer expectations.
- ❑ **Grants Administration** – The primary mission of this division is the responsible and productive administration of federal and state community grant and business assistance programs. These programs include Community Development Block Grants (federal) and the state programs – Economic Development Set-Aside Program; Enterprise Zone Program; Rural Infrastructure Fund; and the Tourism Infrastructure Development Grants.

### **Coordinating Council for Economic Development of the S. C. Department Commerce**

The Coordinating Council for Economic Development was formed in response to a general need for improved coordination of efforts in the area of economic development by state agencies involved in the recruitment of new businesses and the expansion of current enterprises throughout South

Carolina. Formally established in 1986 by the General Assembly, the Council is comprised on the heads of the 10 state agencies concerned with economic development. These agency heads are either board chairpersons or cabinet officials and meet quarterly to conduct the Council's business. (S. C. Department of Commerce)

### **Main Street South Carolina/National Trust Main Street Center**

Main Street South Carolina empowers citizens with the knowledge, skills, tools and organizational structure necessary to revitalize their downtowns, neighborhood commercial districts and cities/towns into vibrant centers of commerce and community. Main Street South Carolina follows the **National Trust Main Street Center's** Four Point Approach - Organization, Promotion, Design and Economic Restructuring. Main Street South Carolina is a division of the Municipal Association of South Carolina. (Municipal Association of South Carolina)

Since 1980, thousands of communities throughout the nation have applied the incremental Main Street approach to revitalization, building upon gradual improvements and successes to sustain lasting change. The **National Trust Main Street Center** has been the pioneer of the preservation-based commercial district revitalization movement for a quarter of a century and has proven its volunteer-based, comprehensive strategy, known as the Main Street Four-Point Approach, is a viable and successful economic development tool (National Main Street Center)

This preservation-based revitalization program has also gained wide credibility as a very powerful economic development strategy. Not only does the Main Street Four-Point Approach strive to save historic buildings and protect a community's sense of place, it creates jobs, generates new businesses, brings investment to neighborhoods, and stimulates local economies. Since its inception, the collective economic impact of local Main Street programs to date has yielded \$18.3 billion in total reinvestment, 244,545 net gain in new jobs, created 60,500 businesses, and rehabilitated 96,283 buildings. (National Main Street Center)

### **The Economy and Education**

#### **Horry County Schools**

Horry County Schools (HCS) offers a variety of learning experiences to prepare students for their future in the workplace. Also offered by Horry County Schools is the opportunity for adults to either earn their Graduate Equivalency Designation (G.E.D.) or take adult education classes.

The Academy for Technology and Academics offers a wide variety of career majors, career programs and certifications for high school students throughout Horry County, predominately for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders and has an attendance of approximately 700 students. The mission of the Academy for Technology and Academics is to provide an integrated, rigorous academic and career major instructional focus which will enable students to be self-directed learners, to gain and refine employability skills, and to enter education and career pathways that allow them to participate as successful and contributing members of a global society. (Horry County Schools)

The mission of the Academy for the Arts, Science, and Technology, a new kind of secondary school organized around specific career majors, is to ensure that our students are successfully prepared to

enter their career choice or next level of education in pursuit of life goals through personalized, integrated, technologically-supported, mastery-based programs of study. A \$27.5 million facility was constructed in 2006-2007 to house and accommodate the attendance of 600 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students from Horry County. (Horry County Schools)

The Scholars Academy was established in 2003 through a partnership between HCS and Coastal Carolina University (CCU) to provide advanced learners with a quality education in a supportive learning environment. Its mission is to educate these students at the rate and with the level of academic rigor commensurate with their abilities so that they graduate as confident, responsible, lifelong learners who are prepared to succeed in higher education and in the world beyond. Ninth and tenth grade students are taught and supervised primarily by HCS teachers with some integration into college courses. Eleventh and twelfth graders take a combination of Advanced Placement and college courses taught by HCS teachers and CCU professors and attend most classes with college students. Students graduate with a high school diploma and as much as two years of college course credits. (Horry County Schools)

The Conway Education Center also serves the Conway area as a Family Living Center with free childcare for parents taking adult education classes. Other locations for adult classes are Horry-Georgetown Technical College at 2050 Highway 501 Bypass, the South Carolina Department of Vocational Rehabilitation at 3009 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and St. James Catholic Church at 1071 Academy Drive. Classes offered include GED (Graduate Equivalency Designation) Preparation, Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language, and computer courses. (Horry County Schools)

### **Coastal Carolina University**

The university has 39 major fields of study and 36 undergraduate minors. Coastal Carolina also offers master's degrees in business administration, education, and coastal marine and wetlands studies. Coastal Carolina has 241 full-time faculty members with 82% holding doctoral or terminal degrees. The university enrollment for Fall 2006 was 8,049 students from 44 states and 32 foreign countries. The Fall 2007 registration total is 8,300. (Coastal Carolina University)

Coastal Carolina plays an active role in partnership with Horry County Schools and the community in offering programs that positively affect the economy of Conway and Horry County. They also house the B.B. & T. Center for Economic and Community Development and the area's Small Business Development Center. (Coastal Carolina University)

### **Horry-Georgetown Technical College**

Horry Georgetown Technical College (HGTC) offers more than 60 associate degree, diploma and certificate programs of study for students seeking quick entry into the workforce or even desiring to transfer to pursue a bachelors degree or beyond. HGTC also specializes in continuing education and professional training for employees and employers who want short-term, skill-specific learning. (Horry-Georgetown Technical College)

## **Summary of Findings**

Horry County and Conway have enjoyed economic growth since the mid 1990's. While Conway's income figures have remained below the County, State and national totals, the percentage of individuals below the poverty level has decreased as population has increased.

While much of the economic data available is at the County level, the large increases in total number of jobs in all major categories is significant for Horry County and for Conway as well. This upward trend has been occurring over several years.

Positioning Conway for future economic growth will depend on how well the community can develop a sustainable economic development strategy in a global economy. Assuming economic responsibility, environmental responsibility and social and cultural responsibility will provide the central core to guide the community in maintaining a viable economy within the context of practicing proper environmental stewardship in order to assure that Conway remains a special place and not just another location.

## **Primary Goal**

The City of Conway should strive to establish community sustainability by fostering local economies that are economically viable, environmentally sound and socially and culturally responsible. Achieving this goal requires participation from all sectors of the community, both to determine community needs and to identify and implement innovative and appropriate solutions.

### **Goal 1: Economic Base Development**

**Foster opportunities for capitalizing on the economic growth that is occurring in Horry County.**

Objective 1: Recognize and follow Horry County's efforts to expand the economic base in manufacturing.

Strategies: Establish a relationship with Myrtle Beach Regional Economic Development Corporation in order to capitalize on their industrial recruitment efforts.

Develop a local industrial development committee to position Conway for possible industrial recruitment. Include utility providers in the effort. Provide input during the transportation plan meetings with Carter Burgess, the City's consultant.

Research possible funding sources for industrial development including Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments.

Objective 2: Improve Conway's appearance along major corridors with business and other development as part of the plan.

Strategies: Communicate with existing property owners and potential investors when Developing plans for public improvements.

Partner with the private sector to make improvements when possible.

Consider incentives that may be used to entice quality development along these corridors.

Objective 3: Develop a list of potential businesses that will fill gaps in Conway's position in the regional market.

Strategies: Use the market information being developed by Conway Main Street and other sources to use in business recruitment/development efforts.

Identify and market suitable locations for new businesses and industries capitalizing on Conway's growth and concentrate in prime areas for annexation while protecting our natural/fragile and scenic areas.

Establish a program for the reuse of existing buildings downtown and throughout Conway.

## **Goal 2: Workforce Development**

**Promote and support efforts to improve workforce capabilities.**

Objective 1: Establish a program for addressing workforce issues.

Strategies: Work with the local non-profits to determine measures for identifying and addressing the specific needs of existing businesses in the Conway area.

Encourage the expansion and development of the areas educational institutions' programs that are geared toward economic development. Stress the need to continue to diversify our economic base.

Work with Horry County Schools to lower the dropout rates in area schools. Stress the growing need for education in the current job market and especially in the future.

Objective 2: Identify ways the City may assist in lowering the unemployment rate.

Strategies: Provide assistance in promoting the existing Graduate Equivalency Designation (GED) programs. Stress the yearly income increase that occurs by obtaining this designation. Use the City's communications tools to promote the program.

Promote locally the need for associate degrees (at least) in the workplace of the future. Tie this need into the promotional efforts of the need to complete GED's.

Work with non-profits and others to hold a local Job Fair aimed at this issue.

**Goal 3: Innovative Economic Development**

**Recognize and encourage entrepreneurship/innovation in business development in Conway.**

Objective 1: Develop programs/projects, which will be attractive in targeting the needs of the business community.

Strategies: Find ways to take advantage of the expanding arts community such as a relocation program.

Target businesses downtown that will make downtown attractive for people to live – “24 Hour Downtown”

Develop strategies/incentives for reuse of large spaces/buildings throughout Conway.

Partner with local economic development groups to develop a business incubator with technology zones and 3<sup>rd</sup> spaces as part of the development strategy.

Establish PSI (Production, Service and Industry) areas in the Land Use

Element and on the Future Land Use Map and work to develop incentives for industrial development.

Establish free internet service zones where possible in Conway, especially downtown and in the Riverfront District/ City Marina area

Consider a Municipal Improvement District for Downtown

Objective 2: Use the City's resources to research and provide assistance to new small business prospects.

Strategies: Encourage the development of entrepreneur based programs in the educational systems of Horry County.

Explore possible programs with the Chamber and Main Street for promoting and assisting in small and one person businesses. Consider industry and talent clusters.

**Goal 4: Placeeconomics and Quality of Life**

**Use historic preservation, improvements to the community’s appearance and protection of natural resources as economic development opportunities in addition to ways to enhance our quality of life.**

Objective 1: Continue and expand Conway historic preservation efforts.

Strategies: Expand the programs in place to promote quality infill construction.

Analyze and consider a downtown and riverfront Tax Increment Financing for public improvements that will entice private development.

Ensure that the transportation plan promotes development in suitable areas for development.

Consider providing “gap” funding for major historic preservation projects.

Consider the use of CDBG funds to establish a Low Interest Revolving Loan Program.

Objective 2: Promote ecotourism in our natural areas.

Strategies: Create incentives for small businesses involved in ecotourism. Use the Visitor Center and City website and access channel to promote ecotourism.

Coordinate promotional efforts of the Waccamaw River trails and recreational opportunities on land with the Department of Natural Resources and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Promote the efforts of the Waccamaw River Keepers program.

Objective 3: Encourage quality development community-wide.

Strategies: Incorporate smart growth principles into the Land Use Element on a community-wide basis.

Strategies: Develop fully the Greenway Plan.

Strategies: Complete the City Thoroughfares Improvement Plan.

Strategies: Incorporate Complete Streets design into all of Conway’s street system.

**Goal 5: Sustainable Development**

**Develop an economic strategy based on sustainable growth concepts to ensure local economies that are economically viable, environmentally sound and socially and culturally responsible.**

Objective 1: Complete an economic strategy for all segments of Conway's economy stressing sustainability.

Strategies: Work with the Chamber of Commerce and Main Street to develop a comprehensive economic strategy and participate in the County's effort to complete a strategy as well.

Hold a series of public meetings throughout the process to assure that all segments of the community are included.

Make every effort to ensure the entire process is broad-based.