

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

A strong economy will support and facilitate many of the goals set by Greene County which makes economic development a continually important endeavor. Prosperous households, thriving businesses, and a government with a sufficient and diverse tax base will be better equipped to meet the challenges Greene County faces and improve quality of life for all citizens.

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As Greene County sees more growth and development, it is imperative for the employment base to continue to expand at least in proportion to population growth. Providing jobs closer to home reduces strain on transportation infrastructure, builds a strong tax base for the county, and attracts new investment in the community. Greene is a business-friendly community, and each element of the comprehensive plan ought to consider how it will create better conditions for a healthy economic climate.

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Greene County's commercial land use is already concentrated along Routes 29 and 33 corridors and the county intends to continue to encourage growth specifically in the growth areas defined in the Future Land Use Chapter of this Comprehensive Plan. Doing so makes the most efficient use of infrastructure, opens up prime transportation corridors, and protects rural areas from more intensive uses.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

EMPLOYMENT

Commuting Patterns	
People who live and work in the area	1,203
In-Commuters	1,822
Out-Commuters	6,666
Net In-Commuters (In-Commuters minus Out-Commuters)	-4,844

According to the Virginia Employment Commission's November 2020 report, Greene County has a total of 3,025 jobs. With a total population of 21,197, there are 7.0 persons per job within the county, which indicates that out-commuting exceeds in-commuting substantially. For every one Greene County resident that remains in the county, 5.5 leave the county for work, categorizing Greene County as a "bedroom community."

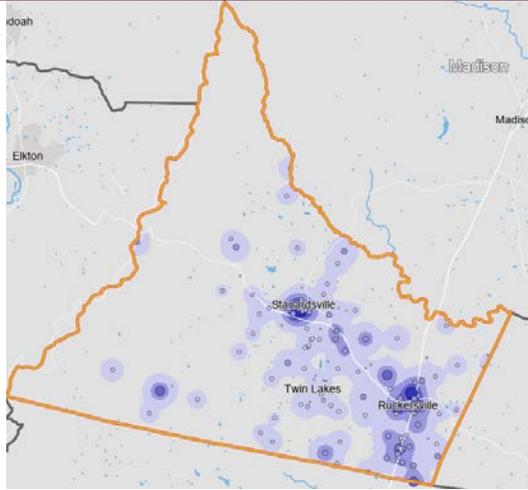
Most workers commute to either Albemarle County (2,412 commuters) or City of Charlottesville (1,409 commuters). Increasing the number of employment opportunities would not only increase the tax base and improve quality of life for residents, but it may also reduce commutes for Greene County residents.

The unemployment rate in Greene County was 2.0% at the end of 2019, (pre-COVID 19) Greene County's unemployment rate has been consistently below the rate for Virginia by around 0.5% and below the national rate by around 2.5%. . During the height of the pandemic, Greene County reached a high of 9.4%. During the pandemic, Greene County was impacted less than the State and National unemployment rates, 1.2% less than the State, and as much as 5.5% below the National rate.

The U.S. Census indicates that the median income of workers in Greene County is \$67,398 which is above the national median income. According to the Virginia Employment Commission's Community Profile (updated 11/21/2020), wages in the county range from \$1,563 per week for a Technical Service Provider to \$296 per week for an Arts/Entertainment Provider.

Most of the employers in Greene County are small-scale operations. Out of 500 establishments, 374 employ less than five workers. The largest employers in the county are the Greene County Public School system, Greene County, and most of the rest being large retail establishments.

Although jobs are distributed throughout the county, there is a discernable spatial pattern of concentration. Smaller firms tend to be more widely distributed, while the larger employers tend to be more concentrated along important corridors. The following map is produced [by the](#) U.S. Census Bureau's [OntheMap program](#).



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Employment in the county can be spatially categorized into four distinct Employment Centers that together contain 66% of all employment. The Stanardsville area contains the highest concentration of jobs, which can be explained by the predominance of public-sector employment located here. A set of industrial and business parks south-east of Stanardsville along US 33 constitute 9% of all employment. Finally, a large portion of commercial and transportation-related employment is located in Ruckersville or near the Corner Store area by the border with Albemarle County.

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RETAIL AND SERVICES

Retail and food services [are](#) the largest private-sector industries in Greene County. 22% of all new hires in the first quarter of 2014 were in the retail or food service industry, indicating that this is the fastest growth sector in the county.

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Ruckersville's location along Route US 29 is situated to benefit from traffic along this important corridor. Approximately 28,000 vehicles a day pass through the segment of Route 29 between the Albemarle County line and the intersection with US 33. 16,000 vehicles per day pass through the busiest portion of 33, directly to the west of the 29 intersections. This general area includes the Gateway Center, located north of the intersection of Routes 29 and 33, which includes a Walmart Superstore in addition to a [Lowe's Home Center](#) and other nationally known businesses.

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[Located near the Albemarle County line](#), Tierney Plaza contains several smaller retail establishments anchored by the Holiday Inn [Express](#). [Most of the existing services along this corridor are for larger volume retail, chain outlets, gas stations, and services catering to residents and visitors passing through.](#) [In addition to commercial vitality, the Ruckersville area has potential for expansion of offices and](#)

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professional employment. Another prime location for retail and service expansion is downtown Stanardsville. Although there has been little growth here for the last several decades, there have been renewed economic development efforts in recent years. The Stanardsville area has lost a large portion of its former commercial base, as a result of fire, abandonment, and conversion to housing. This commercial base must be restored if the town is to have a critical mass of businesses to attract visitors/customers from other parts of Greene and beyond.

Because of its size and location, the Stanardsville area will not be attractive to national retail chains nor do town residents want it to be. Therefore, it must develop an ambiance and market positioning built around its historic designation, small-town atmosphere, and special services. Thriving commerce will be focused on a range of eating and tourist experiences, specialty stores and services, professional firms attracting employees who want to work in a relaxed rural environment, and services for county government and town residents. Stanardsville would not compete with the Ruckersville corridor but serve a complementary function.

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INDUSTRY

Although manufacturing and warehousing do not comprise a large share of the total Greene County economy, they serve an important function for economic development and job creation nevertheless. Greene County has seen a significant increase in prospects looking for distribution facilities. Most industry is concentrated along US 33 southeast of Stanardsville. The Spotswood Business Park on US 33, one mile east of Stanardsville, is a prime location for business offices, distribution/warehousing, and light manufacturing. An older industrial park on US 33 west, the Greene Industrial Park, is also a location for business offices, distribution/warehousing, and light manufacturing. A 70-acre tract of land on US 33 west, next door to the Greene Industrial Park, is currently zoned for industrial use. This land is available for future expansion but is currently not on the market.

DEFENSE PRODUCTION ZONE

In 2020, the Board of Supervisors designated the entire County as a Defense Production Zone. The defense industry remains one of Greene County's primary target industries. Our proximity to Rivanna Station and other unique qualities makes the defense industry one of our key opportunities to recruit businesses. Defense production businesses that focus on design and development associated with Rivanna Station have a very limited impact on the community and surrounding properties. In addition, these businesses create high-paying jobs that attract citizens who will contribute positively to our community. This is an opportunity for Greene County to play an indirect role in the mission of these businesses that are critical to the security of our country.

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PROMOTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Greene County has invested in future economic development with the establishment of the Economic Development and Tourism (ED&T) Department. The department is charged with emphasizing Greene County's competitive features to attract new industrial, retail, commercial, and tourist businesses, while helping existing businesses grow. The County's full-time director coordinates these efforts.

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The ED&T department performs several services, including helping prospective businesses with site selection, offering a variety of financing options to local enterprises, acting as a liaison between the business community and local government, collecting data, and creating promotional material. The

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Greene County website contains comprehensive information for customers, travelers, potential business startups or transplants, and existing businesses to meet their particular needs.

The Greene County Economic Development Authority (EDA) is a separate local government agency with the authority to issue bonds to carry out the economic development of the community, manage the affairs of the Greene County Industrial Park, establish and manage a revolving loan fund for the expansion of existing businesses and prospective new businesses, and support the Economic Development Director's initiatives.

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There are regional economic development organizations that support Greene County as well. The Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development (CVPED) serves the greater Charlottesville area. In July of 2008, the Piedmont Workforce Network joined with CVPED to consolidate their workforce enhancement efforts with economic development. The CVPED Board of Directors consists of private and public sector leaders from around the region. In addition, the Central Virginia Small Business Development Center is instrumental in supporting small businesses in the region. They provide free counseling on several small business needs. They often partner with other services that include SCORE, Charlottesville Investment Corp, and the Virginia Small Business Financing Authority.

WORKFORCE PREPAREDNESS

Workers in Greene County are employed in various sectors, each requiring a different kind of training and experience. According to Virginia Employment Commission data, the major sectors of employment are relatively evenly split between professional jobs and service sector jobs in the fields of retail and food services. A smaller, but not insignificant, portion of jobs are in the construction and manufacturing industries.

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Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC) offers several college credits at the Eugene Giuseppe Center located in Stanardsville. In collaboration with William Monroe High School, high school students are given the opportunity to graduate with both a high school diploma and an Associates's Degree. In addition, PVCC offers customized training programs for individual businesses to offer their employees. PVCC's main campus is located in Charlottesville, VA, and offers a full range of Associate Degree programs, workforce certificates, and continuing education credits. Starting in the fall of 2016, PVCC began offering an advanced manufacturing program at the main campus. In addition to PVCC, there are many opportunities in the region for workers to gain training and accreditation. The University of Virginia in Charlottesville is the largest institution in the region with the most comprehensive offering of professional degrees, including business, medicine, and law. James Madison University is located 30 miles from Stanardsville and is a highly regarded four-year institution. The Greene County Technical Education Center, in conjunction with William Monroe High School, offers courses for training in a technical field for high school students. The Tech Center works closely with local trade companies offering paid internships and apprenticeships for graduating highschool seniors in lucrative industries such as HVAC, electrical, plumbing, and construction.

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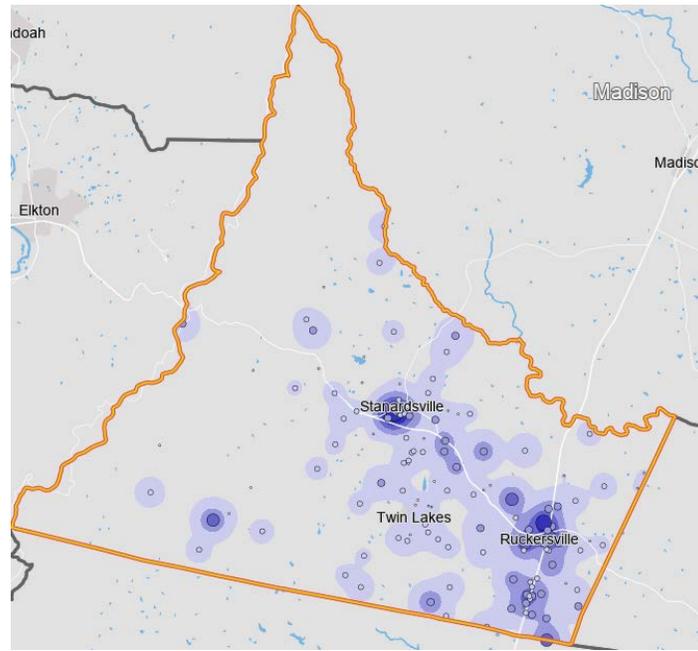
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GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

To inspire Small Businesses to locate, expand, and remain in the County, Greene County through the ED&T Department will:

- continue the Small Business Investment Grant Program;
- build a strong relationship with Chamber of Commerce Greene/Charlottesville;
- create/support entrepreneurial development Initiatives;
 - Continue to build Relationships with Real-estate brokers to keep available Greene properties high on the priority list;
- develop and promote a Buy Local Campaign.

To enhance the image of Greene County as a business-friendly community, the county through the ED&T department will:

- work with county staff to streamline the zoning and permit process;
- serve as the liaison between small businesses and county agencies;
- encourage County staff and BOS to support consistent enforcement of ordinances;
- work with Planning/Zoning to adjust ordinances to facilitate economic growth;

To encourage and grow small business growth the County through the ED&T department and EDA will

- will develop and implement a revolving loan program for small businesses;
- create a dynamic database of all ED&T business contacts to better manage business and contact information;

● ***(What do we plan to do with this ?)***

- maintain continual contact with current businesses to assess needs and trends;
- actively promote potential locations and benefits of locating a business in the County;
- actively recruit lucrative manufacturing sectors such as
 - Advance Manufacturing Defense and Security Industry Medical/BioScience;
- work with the owner of the Tall Oaks Technology Center to acquire leases to reach full capacity;

To increase available locations for business development the County through the ED&T department will:

- explore available land to negotiate with potential buyers;
- research potential properties, particularly in the Ruckersville area
- investigate public/private partnership opportunities; Research providing key utilities to identified industrial growth areas (gas, fiber, water, sewer)

To Inspire small businesses to locate, expand, and remain in the Town of Stanardsville the County the ED&T department and partnership with the Town of Stanardsville will:

- research designating the town as a tourism district with tax incentives;
- promote first floor retail with apartments on upper levels;
- seek solutions to aged water and sewer system;
- leverage the potential of community venues in town (Farmers Market, music, and artesian shelter)

To rebrand and market the Stanardsville and surrounding area as a tourism destination the County through the ED&T department and in partnership with the Town of Stanardsville will:

- capitalize on SNP and outdoor tourism opportunities;

- capitalize on the art tourism opportunities;
- support reasonable tourism lodging in the county;
- facilitate festivals/events to help bring more regional and state tourist foot traffic to the town (Virginia Clay Festival)
- identify potential monthly events in town (concert on the lawn, 4th July, Parade of Lights, ...)
- capitalize on National Park and outdoor tourism opportunities near the town;
- market local trout fishing streams

In order to capitalize on art tourism and grow new opportunities for new arts based economic development the County through the ED&T department and in coordination with the Greene County Art Guild will:

- build on the success of the Virginia Clay Festival seeking new events to promote the county's artistic assets;
- promote new artisans moving into the area to increase the draw to a larger artesian community (pottery);
- establish an art apprenticeship program to support start-up artists;
- create an Artist Trail with supporting signage.

To grow and foster commercial vitality in Stanardsville the County through the ED&T department and in partnership with the Stanardsville town council will:

- establish Stanardsville Merchants Alliance;
- establish a micro Buy Local campaign;
- install directional signage for retail in town and on bypasses;
- increase pedestrian-friendly street crossings.

To grow and foster commercial vitality in the town of Ruckersville the County through the ED&T department and in coordination with the Ruckersville Advisory Committee will:

- create a vision for Ruckersville that builds a sense of "place" (landscaping, signage, etc.), is enticing to new quality businesses, and is endorsed by current businesses. and begin taking steps towards a vision;
- create a Ruckersville Business Alliance;
- promote the establishment of ordinances that address public safety, aesthetic value (blight and basic architectural standards), and community connectivity (bike paths, walking paths, connector roads);
- assesses communities' needs and desires (i.e. small engine repair, coffee shop/meeting place) through an online survey.
- attract one national restaurant chain.

To ensure Greene County's unique economic development and tourism opportunities are communicated most effectively the County through the ED&T department will:

- develop and implement an annual marketing strategic plan;
- develop a robust information campaign focused on the Massanutten and Shenandoah Crossings Resorts
- conduct regular outreach to and offer familiarization tours to Resort Concierges and regional Tourism Directors;
- explore opportunities with the Virginia Tourism Board;
- collaborate with SNP Regional Tourism Directors for Regional Marketing.

To support and enhance the vitality of the County's local tourism sectors (Antiques/Artisans, B&B, Wineries, Stanardsville, Weddings) the County through the ED&T department will:

- organize quarterly cohort group meetings to unify and share successes;
- create website landing pages for each group unique cohort;
- consider collaborative marketing opportunities that cross cohorts.

To more effectively utilize state VDOT signage opportunities to promote tourism the county through the ED&T department will

- install a VDOT Historic Stanardsville sign;
- investigate and invest in VDOT tourism signage for wineries, potteries, etc.