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Annual Report

2008 - 2009

Directors Report

As Director of CAEZ since January of 2006, I have been privileged to see many positive changes taking place in our service area. Citizens and local leaders have pulled together for several different projects in the communities we serve. From the four (4) municipalities in Fayette County that has come together to clean up abandoned buildings in their towns, the Youth Advantage students from Clay that picked up trash along the highway, the Summer Youth kids that completed some landscaping projects at the Kanawha Valley Community and Technical College, Valley Fork Education Center and to clean up camping sites at the JG Bradley Campground, the members of the Buffalo Creek Railroad Co-op that has spent countless hours volunteering their time working on the lodge and the Buffalo Gals that sponsored the Taste of Clay and numerous fundraisers for the Campground, the citizens that helped get the College ready for renovations and the volunteers that are helping a needy family in need of a place to live in Braxton County, proves that citizen participation is alive in our small, rural counties in West Virginia!

I will continue to work diligently to carry out the mission, goals, and objectives as established by the citizens of the zone and the CAEZ Board of Directors. I have seen many projects of CAEZ's to come to fruition and we have overcome many obstacles. Our work needs to continue and each small gain represents a better place to live, work, raise our children and grandchildren and to retire. The work which we have begun is vital and CAEZ must continue to work with the local and state leaders and citizens of the five (5) county area in promoting and developing our existing businesses and to encourage new business development.

I also want to thank the staff of CAEZ, Michelle Rogers Bodkins and Tamera Summers. Without their support this office could not function in the manner it does.

I would personally like to express my sincere appreciation to each board member and citizens who has consistently supported my efforts to carry out the mission of CAEZ. Your commitment to the community has allowed CAEZ to “**Make a Difference**” in the lives of not only the citizens of our zone but to the state of West Virginia.

Accomplishments

Central Appalachia Empowerment Zone of WV was formally organized in 1994 as the result of the designation as an Enterprise Community. We continue to implement the strategic plan that was developed as a result of community meetings throughout our five (5) county areas.

This Enterprise Community continues to address needs in housing, health care, emergency services, education, economic development, and to develop local capacity to meet other needs as identified by the community. We have accomplished many of our goals set out in the original strategic plan and now have a strong organization to continue our efforts in addressing the Benchmarks that the community has identified as important to them and their families.

Housing

Benchmark #'s 10, 11, 12 and 13 is to address the housing needs of the citizens of our five (5) counties. CAEZ has been certified as a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) through the West Virginia Housing Development Fund. We have been awarded \$ 400,000 to construct safe, affordable and energy efficient homes for citizens in the zone. We have just been notified that we will also receive \$ 400,000 for Phase II.

We continue to receive applications for our home repair loans that are used for roofs, septic systems, wells, etc.

Economic Development

The development of our business loan portfolio continues to grow and remains the center piece of economic development. This portfolio provides income for CAEZ to meet daily operating expenses through interest collected on the loans and the principal goes back into the fund to keep it solid. CAEZ has financially assisted a total of 25 new or expanded businesses in our service area with a total of \$ 425,000 in loans. Out of those 25 loans, approximately 150 people in our zone are now employed or retained their jobs.

We now have four (4) businesses located in our Mt. Hope Industrial Park with approximately 400 employees. Plans are coming together to construct a new 30,000 square foot Technology Building on the remaining five (5) acres.

We have met with a prospective tenant that will locate in the Technology Building and provide High Tech jobs to citizens of the area.

We continue to partnering with Consol in the construction of a proposed two lane, 23 mile Corridor that will connect Route 16 at Hartland to Route 19 in the Muddlety area of Summersville. Along with this project, land will be made available for development. Projects such as suitable land to construct a new high school with adequate land for an athletic field, vocational training center, housing, shopping centers, industrial parks, hotels and recreational facilities are just a few of the businesses that could be located on this property. Congresswoman Shelley Moore-Capito has informed us that we will be receiving \$ 190,000 to assist us with the Post Mine Land planning.

CAEZ continues to partner with Workforce WV and Ross Learning by providing office space for the Youth Advantage mentor to work with at risk youth in Clay County and to provide a very important link to employment and training opportunities for citizens in Clay County.

We have just submitted an application to HUD for special appropriations funding through Senator Robert C. Byrds office for \$ 190,000 to complete the construction of the lodge at the JG Bradley Campground at Dundon.

Education

The most exciting accomplishments in Higher Education for Clay, Roane, Braxton, Calhoun and the Clendenin area is the new Kanawha Valley Community and Technical Center, Valley Fork Education Center, located at the old Valley Fork Elementary School. With this center located within 35 minutes of the population of our service area, we can cover most of the educational needs of anyone wanting to attend college for the first time or to return for continuing education credits. Courses in Phlebotomy, EKG Technician, Licensed Practical Nursing, Business Computers, Math and English are just a few of the courses offered. The need in Higher Education in our area has been great and now we have an avenue to address these needs close to home!

Final Note:

In the 15 years of existence, CAEZ has served the communities as a developer, facilitator, and resource coordinator. In most cases, CAEZ takes the lead in the project conceptualization and then finds the appropriate entity to implement the project. If an appropriate group is not available, CAEZ organizes one. This approach ensures the grassroots participation remains strong in the program.

The first priority in revitalizing distressed communities is to create economic opportunities for all residents. The creation of jobs provides the foundation on which residents will become economically self-sufficient and communities can revitalize themselves. To create economic opportunities, CAEZ's focus is twofold—to create jobs and facilitate the training necessary for residents to be successful in those jobs. To create a livable and vibrant community where human initiative work, and families flourish, CAEZ also focuses on sustainable community development.