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## 1997-1998 CAEZ Annual Report

### A Message From the Chairperson

Dear Zone Residents,

This past year, our third year of operation, has been an exciting one. Since becoming the Chairperson in July, I have been continually reminded of the time and effort so many put into forming the CAEZ. We are beginning to see a return on that effort with improved infrastructure and opportunity for all of us. Possibly, the most important thing that came out of the formation process was the network of communication and cooperation we formed among the different communities. It has allowed us to have a say in our communities as we (and our Nations' founders) intended – **by the people and for the people.**

The Round II Empowerment Zone application gives us the opportunity to expand our dreams and visions and have a say in what takes places in the future. The application is not just a request for assistance, but a demonstration of how we can work together. The Board and our committees have been taking input from citizens, groups, and organizations to include in the application. We invite you to attend any of our meetings to discuss your ideas or just stop by our office to talk – **you are always welcome.**

This Annual Report is a good example of how much **we can accomplish.** I am proud of our organization and more importantly, proud of the people who helped make it happen.

**Get involved and join in our success – there's more to come.**

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Sampson, Chairperson

## Accomplishments

The Central Appalachia Empowerment Zone of West Virginia is a federally designated rural Enterprise Community. Its service area includes all of Clay, and portions of Braxton, Nicholas, Fayette, and Roane Counties. Incorporated in 1995, the CAEZ has diligently pursued the objectives identified in the 1994 strategic plan. The following is a summary of the organization's significant accomplishments since its inception.

### Housing

Many of the Zone's housing needs have been met through the CAEZ's various housing programs. The following grassroots efforts show what these programs have accomplished to date.

- Creation of a \$125,000 revolving loan fund for small and emergency home repairs in the zone. To date we have made 17 loans for such things as roof repair, bathrooms, repair of foundations, septic system repair, etc. totalling over \$48,585.08.
- Development of a \$590,000 housing rehabilitation program funded by Small Cities Block Grants, to provide funding for substantial housing rehabs for substandard homes within the zone. It is anticipated that 35 units will be rehabbed. To date 22 units have been repaired or replaced. Over 52 percent of this project is complete.
- The Housing Needs Assessment completed by Will Linders and Associates will be used to plan future housing projects.

### Economic Development

A list of our efforts to provide more job opportunities for zone residents are as follows:

- Creation of a \$450,000 Small Cities Block Grant Revolving Loan Fund provides "gap" financing for new and expanding Zone businesses. Spring Creek Natural Foods of Spencer received the first loan given by CAEZ.
- The CAEZ was awarded a \$30,000 grant to support and strengthen local economic development. The West Virginia Local Economic Development program funded the grant. As a part of the program, local development authorities agree to participate in the Certified Development Communities (CDC) program.
- Creation of an eight county arts and crafts cooperative with over 200 members in central West Virginia. These members will retail their products at "Poplar Forest", location at the Flatwoods Factory Outlet Mall on Interstate 79. The Appalachian Regional Commission has awarded the CAEZ with a \$63,750 grant to improve the business planning skills of cooperative members and to facilitate the creation of new businesses in the arts and crafts industry in central West Virginia.
- Secured \$500,000 in Small Cities Block Grant funds, \$500,000 in Appalachian Regional Commission funds, and \$1,000,000 in Economic Development Administration funds for the Mt. Hope Industrial Site development.
- Title opinion and survey has been completed for the Amma Site with identification of underground utilities.

- Through a variety of funding sources, some targeted to EZ/EC communities, a \$12 million regional water treatment and distribution project has been funded that will serve most of Clay and the southern portion of Roane Counties.
- Development of a \$500,000 micro-loan fund, by Mountain CAP, that serves the entire CAEZ and surrounding counties.
- Creation of an entrepreneurial development curriculum funded in part by the Appalachian Regional Commission that will train and assist approximately 30 people annually in business planning and the opening of a new business. The 10 week course has been completed in Roane and Clay Counties this year.
- The Capital Market Audit and Assessment by the Corporation for Enterprise Development provided information on available funds for economic development.

### **Education**

All preschools that have been in place throughout the zone for two or more years are now funded through the local school system.

- Establishment of six preschool programs throughout the zone serving approximately 90 children between the ages of 3 and 4.
- Expansion of Adult Basic Education programs at six sites in the zone serving an additional 100-150 adults annually.
- Creation of six Family Resource Centers in the zone to link school resources with the needs of each immediate community, particularly those related to social services and family preservation.
- Establishment of a Building Construction Trades program at Clay County High School serving approximately 100 students annually who have learned how to build a modular home which was sold to a low-to-moderate income family. The program is self-perpetuating through the proceeds of the sale of the home.

### **Emergency Services**

- CAEZ awarded Braxton County \$50,000 to implement an enhanced E-911 program that went online in October 1997.
- CAEZ awarded Clay and Nicholas Counties \$100,000 to implement and enhanced E-911 program located in Nicholas County. The E-911 service went online in late 1997.
- Big Otter Fire Department was awarded \$10,000 by the CAEZ to start-up the facility located 1/2 mile south of the Big Otter Exit of Interstate 79. An ambulance will be stationed at the fire department to make response time quicker. This facility will be serving the community in the fall of 1998.

### **Health**

- Funded two wellness centers in Clay and Roane Counties to provide fitness and nutrition training to zone residents. Each center received \$150,000 to implement the program. The Clay

County Wellness Center plans to open in the fall of 1998. The Roane County "Fitness Complex" opened in February 1998. The Fitness Complex offers a variety of exercise programs as well as other classes, programs and support groups to promote fitness and healthy lifestyles.

- Clay Primary Health Care, a non-profit rural primary healthcare facility, has received \$710,000 loan from USDA Rural Development to expand its facility. Services offered include family practice, internal medicine and minor surgery. The facility also offers diagnostic services, emergency care, lab and radiology, EKG, family and adult screenings. The center offers wellness center in high school and middle school in conjunction with the Clay County Health Department.

## **Round 2**

The CAEZ is assembling the application for Round II Empowerment Zone designation.

Funding of \$40,000,000 for rural communities will be made available through the US Department of Agriculture. Governor Underwood has agreed to provide \$1,000,000 in State funds as match.

We are conducting public meetings in each of the census tracts to gather information from the public. Organizations operating in the CAEZ are working together to develop strategies for addressing concerns with housing, education, health, and community development.

This combined input will be used to develop programs to serve our community over the next 10 years. The first draft has been submitted to the State. The final draft is due in Washington, D.C. on October 9, 1998.

**Operation of the CAEZ is funded in part by the following agencies: EDA, ARC, HUD, USDA, and DHHS.**

**Staff**

Harold Butler, Executive Director

Lynn Sizemore, Business Coordinator

Dee Murphy, Administrative Assistant

**CAEZ Board of Directors****OFFICERS**

Elizabeth Sampson, Chairperson (Clay)

Peter Silitch, Vice Chairperson (Braxton)

Wanda Taylor, Secretary (Clay)

Dennis Vance, Treasurer (Clay)

**BRAXTON COUNTY**

Peter Silitch

Teresa Frame

**CLAY COUNTY**

Joe Jelich

Dennis Vance

Wanda Taylor

Ronald Haynes

Logan Rhodes, Jr.

Ronald Cruikshank

Sharon Roebuck

**FAYETTE COUNTY**

John Witt

Michael Martin

Danny Matheny

NICHOLAS COUNTY

Birl O'Dell

Joe Hoffman

Russell Deering

ROANE COUNTY

Larry White

Brent Wilson

Doyle Tawney

## **CAEZ Goals & Objectives**

Our community planning process resulted in the adoption of the following goals and objectives.

### **Improve Educational Opportunities**

- Develop and implement six family resource centers
- Develop six new preschool programs
- Implement a building construction trades program
- Provide adult education to 100-150 people not currently served
- Develop a regional training institute
- Implement full day/everyday Kindergarten

### **Provide Job Opportunities**

- Identify and develop five commercial/industrial sites
- Provide low interest financing for businesses
- Increase the number of loggers by 10 percent
- Provide entrepreneurial assistance to 10 businesses every year
- Construct a regional water treatment and distribution system

### **Provide safe and affordable housing**

- Establish grassroots housing organizations in underserved areas
- Develop a revolving loan fund
- Develop and implement a housing repair program
- Develop a new home construction program

### **Improve the Accessibility and Quality of Healthcare**

- Expand primary healthcare facilities and services
- Create wellness centers and training programs
- Establish an ambulance station to serve southern Roane and western Clay Counties
- Provide E-911 service in Nicholas, Clay and Braxton Counties

