

# Central Appalachia Empowerment Zone of West Virginia

## Alliance of Champion Communities



### Annual Report

September 4, 2007

135 Main Street  
Clay, West Virginia 25043

Serving all of Clay County and portions of Roane, Braxton, Nicholas and Fayette

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**Officers**

**Michael Martin - Fayette - Chairperson**

**Russell Deering - Nicholas - Vice-Chair**

**Linda Rhodes - Clay - Secretary**

**Peter Triplett - Clay - Treasurer**

**Board of Directors**

**Mike Chapman - Braxton**

**David Boothe - Roane**

**Ken Eskew - Fayette**

**Joe Hoffman - Nicholas**

**Earl McCune - Clay**

**Ben Murphy - Clay**

**Mardell Nevans - Clay**

**Birl O'Dell - Nicholas**

**Malcolm Parker - Fayette**

**Janine Potasnik - Clay**

**Peter Silitch - Braxton**

**Doyle Tawney - Roane**

**Larry Dent - Roane**

**Earnest Workman - Clay**

## **Directors Note:**

The period from July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007 marked the end of our fiscal year. Completed audits show that asset of CAEZ continues to grow and this growth represents an expanded ability to promote business in the CAEZ service area.

CAEZ's staff, board members, businesses, and citizens have committed a large amount of time and effort into establishing the beginning of a sustainable tourism based industry within the CAEZ zone. The JG Bradley Campground at Dundon has seen a lot of firsts this year: the "Taste of Clay"; a shooting match; auctions; farmers market & flea market. The formation of the Buffalo Creek and Gauley Railroad Cooperative continues to be the focal point of establishing rail excursions and camping as part of the tourism goal. The transportation Enhancement Grant from DOT will bring this dream much closer to reality. The opening of the Wallback Lake has provided recreational activities for Clay County and the surrounding areas. The reputation for fishing and the attractive walking trail bring individuals, friends and family out to enjoy the view. The proposal from Amvest Coal and Mineral to construct a new two (2) lane highway to connect Rt. 16 to Rt. 19 in Summersville and to leave developable land behind will be a major boost to the economy in Clay, Nicholas, and Fayette County.

As Director of CAEZ for a little over 18 months, I have been privileged to see the positive changes taking place in our service area. We have had several prospects looking at our vacant lot at the Mt. Hope Industrial Site, the city of Mt. Hope has applied for and is being considered for the designation of a National Historic District, applications are being completed to designate the Elk River as a Scenic Byway, negotiations are ongoing for the acquisition of the Old Dundon Bridge to be used as part of the planned walking trail and to maintain the only safe access for pedestrians and bicyclist to cross the Elk River to the ball field and homes in the Dundon area and to access proposed walking trails around the campground, Buffalo Creek and the Elk River. As Director of CAEZ 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 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 would personally like to express my sincere appreciation to each board member and resident 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 our citizens.

## **Introduction:**

The Central Appalachia Empowerment Zone (CAEZ) of West Virginia was incorporated in 1994 to address the needs of citizens living in distressed communities in Central West Virginia. CAEZ operates under the oversight of the United States Department of Agriculture and the Rural Development Program. In 1994, this area was classified as a Rural Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community (Rural EZ/EC) by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) because of its need to develop infrastructure, stimulate economic development, and increased access to housing, education and health/emergency services. This Enterprise Community includes nine (9) census tracts and is comprised of all of Clay County, and parts of Braxton, Fayette, Nicholas, and Roane Counties.

The benchmarks set up by the citizens in 1994 continue to be the focus of our operations. Following is a summary of activities completed or currently in progress as part of our efforts to make our community a better place to live and work:

### **I. Housing**

CAEZ continues to operate low interest loans for (1) New Home Construction (2) Home Repair and (3) Renovation projects. CAEZ has funded projects for over 40 homes that now provide safe, decent and affordable housing for citizens of our zone. These have included septic systems, wells, window replacements, new roofs, home additions, and handicap assessable ramps. CAEZ continues to work with local providers in order to access the best possible solution for new homes and repairs.

One very important project that CAEZ is exploring is the proposed single family housing development in Clay County. This will consist of 10 - 12 single family homes.

### **II. Economic Development**

✚ The continued development of our business loan portfolio with a capitalization of \$140,000.00 remains the center piece of economic development. This portfolio provides income for CAEZ to meet daily operating expenses through interest collected on the loans. CAEZ has financially assisted a total of sixteen (16) new or expanded businesses in our service area: Clay 6 (six); Braxton 6 (six); Fayette 1 (one); Nicholas 1 (one); and Roane 1 (one).

✚ For the third year, CAEZ has received the Neighborhood Investment Tax Credit for economic development from the WVDO. This credit is in the amount of \$ 13,625.00 and can be used to help donors offset taxes. The tax credit has been used to acquire a yard car to be used by the Buffalo Creek

and Gauley Railroad Co-Op and was also used to help offset the cost of lumber for construction of cabins at the JG Bradley Campground.

- ✚ CAEZ continues to market the Mount Hope Industrial Park. The total project was funded by EDA \$1,000,000.00, ARC \$500,000.00, SCBG \$500,000.00, and CAEZ \$500,000.00, for a cost of 2.5 million dollars.
- ✚ Global Contact Services currently has over 500 employees as a result of our efforts. The annual payroll is around \$8 million dollars that is returned to the local economy.
- ✚ The Juvenile Detention Center employs over 52 individuals and provides a quality working environment.
- ✚ Mankin Equipment has fifteen (15) employees and continues to be a major employer in Fayette County.
- ✚ Received a \$ 200,000 grant from WV DOT for purchase of rail.
- ✚ CAEZ received funding of \$75,000.00 from USDA and is being used to construct a sewage treatment facility at the new J.G. Bradley Campground. Michael Baker Engineering has been contracted to design the facility.
- ✚ Partnering with Amvest Coal and Mineral 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 housing, shopping centers, industrial parks, hotels and recreational facilities are just a few of the businesses that could be located on the property.
- ✚ CAEZ has partnered 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.

### **III. Education**

- ✚ CAEZ has received 10 mobile computers to use for training throughout the CAEZ Zone. Training will also be held at the CAEZ office. Classes are scheduled to begin in October.

## Infrastructure

- ✚ Public Service Districts are eligible for preferential funding with set aside monies for public projects. Gauley River PSD has completed 95% of the water line in Nicholas County.

CAEZ serves the community 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.