



**2007 – 2008 CAEZ Annual Report**

**September 2, 2008**

**Central Appalachia Empowerment Zone of WV**

**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      John Gibson - Braxton

Mardell Nevans – Clay      Birl O’Dell – Nicholas

Malcolm Parker – Fayette      Janine Potasnik – Clay

Peter Silitch – Braxton      Doyle Tawney – Roane

Larry Dent – Roane      Earl Elliott – Clay

**Central Appalachia Empowerment Zone Staff**

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The Central Appalachia Empowerment Zone of WV is a federally designated Enterprise Community which operates under the oversight of the United States Department of Agriculture and the Rural Development Program. This Enterprise Community includes all of Clay County, and parts of Braxton, Fayette, Nicholas and Roane Counties. The Federal designation covers the period 1994 – 2004 and benchmarks set up by the citizens continue as the focus of our operations. The Federal Designation expired December 31, 2004, at which time CAEZ became a USDA Champion Community. 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.

CAEZ of WV has played the role of developer, facilitator, and resource coordinator. In most cases, CAEZ has taken the lead in project conceptualization, and then found the appropriate entity for implementation. If an appropriate implementing group is not available, the CAEZ will assist with organizing one. This approach has been taken to ensure the grassroots participation remains strong in the program.

The period from July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008 marked the end of our 14<sup>th</sup> (fourteenth) fiscal year in existence. Completed audits show that assets of CAEZ continuing to grow and the growth represent an expanded ability to promote economic development 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. We are meeting in one of the on-going projects that were begun with citizen involvement. The construction of the JG Bradley Campground and Lodge consists of thousands of hours of volunteer effort and community involvement. The majority of the material to construct the building was donated by local businesses. CAEZ of WV provided the funding for the roof system and through the West Virginia Development Office, we have been able to use NIP Tax Credits for businesses donating cash and building material. The funds for the sewer system were obtained through a grant from USDA. By early Fall of this year we will have sewer and water hookups for campers. We have spoken with the instructor of the Building Trades Program at the High School is a very successful program that CAEZ of WV had a big part in getting started and is still in existence today.

- ✓ The proposal from Amvest Minerals in the construction of a new 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. We have met with a representative from WVU with the Landscape Architect Program to work with Amvest Mineral and CAEZ to develop a collaborative venture with the Clay and Nicholas County Commission. The project essentially entails design and construction of a new transportation route and creation of developable lands explicitly capturing the potential benefits of land reconfiguration for economic development in the Clay/Nicholas region of West Virginia
- ✓ CAEZ continues to operate the following housing programs:
  - (1) New Home Construction
  - (2) Home Repair
  - (3) Renovation projects

CAEZ has funded projects for 40 homes that now supply safe, decent, and affordable housing. This has included septic systems, wells, window replacement, new roofs, home additions, and handicap accessible ramps. CAEZ has applied to West Virginia Housing Development Fund to become a CHDO (Community Housing Development Organization) which will serve all five (5) of our covered counties.

- ✓ CAEZ continues to develop our business loan portfolio:
  - The continued development of our business loan portfolio with a capitalization of \$340,000.00 remains the center piece of economic development. This portfolio provides income for CAEZ to meet daily operating expenses through interest collected on the loans. \$167,031.66
  - CAEZ has applied for and received confirmation for a grant of \$100,000 to capitalize our Micro-Loan Fund to aid in the start-up of new businesses and in the expansion of existing businesses.
  - Two (2) businesses which began with funding from CAEZ continue to operate and have paid off these loans. Development of loan portfolios continues to expand our capability to aid business ventures in our area. CAEZ has financially assisted a total of fifty-four (54) new or

expanded businesses in our service area: Clay 9 (nine); Braxton 29 (twenty-nine); Fayette 1 (one); Nicholas 14 (fourteen); Roane 1 (one).

- For the third year, CAEZ received the Neighborhood Investment Tax Credit for economic development from the WVDO. This credit is in the amount of \$5,025.00 and can be used to help donors offset taxes.
- CAEZ continues the development of the Mount Hope Industrial Park. There are approximately 450 employed by the four (4) businesses located at the Industrial Site with an \$8 million dollar a year payroll that is returned to the local economy.
- CAEZ sold one (1) acre to American Refractory Company which has seven (7) full time employees with intentions of hiring additional staff.
- CAEZ received two (2) Community Participation grants of \$5,000.00 each from Senator Randy White and Delegate John Pino to assist with economic development in the CAEZ service area. We have also received commitment from Delegate Pino for \$10,000.00 for water line extensions for our proposed housing development.
- CAEZ has given grants to the 4-H Leaders Association, Youth Advantage, JG Bradley Campground, and Small Time America Celebration.
- CAEZ purchased and renovated the Valley Fork Elementary School with grants from USDA. Classes will begin classes September 9, 2008 at the new Valley Fork Entrepreneurial and Education Center, a division of the West Virginia State Community and Technical College. Clay County Commission and Clay County Business Development Authority granted CAEZ \$10,000.00 each to help this project. This has been a true community involvement project. Without the volunteers to help in getting the property ready for renovations the cost would have been astronomical.

As Director of CAEZ for two (2) years, I have been privileged to see the positive changes taking place in our service area. I began work in April 2003 as Economic Development Coordinator with CAEZ and have worked diligently to carry out the mission, goals, and objectives as established by the people 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, raise our children, grandchildren and work to help the citizens of the CAEZ area to be a self sustaining force in our communities and state. The work which we have begun is vital and CAEZ must continue as the lead entity in promoting and developing our area. I would personally like to express my sincere appreciation to each board member 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.

