

Year End Progress Report

January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2010 Year

ARC LDD Section 302 (a) (1) Grant

Prepared by

**The Brooke-Hancock Regional Planning and Development Council
(West Virginia Region XI)**

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January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2010**

The Brooke-Hancock Regional Planning and Development Council (BH)

I. Regional Population and Economic Profiles

Since 1995, due to the devastation of international steel competition, our two-county region has lost 12,000 steel worker jobs. Our domestic steel companies are now international conglomerates. In 1995, our regional lynchpin industry, Weirton Steel was the top private sector employer in West Virginia. Today, West Virginia's top employer is Wal-Mart. As recently as January 28, 2010, the loss of another 180 steel related steel jobs was announced.

In sum, the region has a continuing cycle of manufacturing lost and pointedly evident need for job diversification. In the year 2000, 21% of all jobs were direct manufacturing jobs. In previous decades, 1980 and 1990, 35% and 28% of all jobs were direct manufacturing related. In 2008, Brooke and Hancock County had a documented lost of over 1300 jobs in the manufacturing steel industry while Mountaineer Race Track and Gaming Resort, an assumed replacement economy, cut 93 jobs in 2008.

On an unemployment and population basis, this regional divestment has unveiled in the following manner.

**Unemployment Rate
Brooke Co, Hancock Co, West Virginia and the US
Years. 2007 Through 2010**

				Feb	Apr	Jul	Aug	Oct	Dec
Yr	7	8	9	10	10	10	10	10	10
Brooke.	6.3	6.3	11.4	16.0	13.5	12.3	12.3	11.4	11.9
Hancock	5.9	6.6	11.5	15.5	12.8	13.0	13.2	11.5	12.8
WV	4.4	4.2	7.9	11.0	9.1	8.6	8.8	8.4	9.5
U.S.	5.0	6.7	9.3	9.7	9.9	9.5	9.6	9.6	9.1

Source: U.S. Department of Labor.

**Population Change
Brooke, Hancock and West Virginia.
2000-2009**

	Estimate 2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2009
Brooke	25447	24989	24525	23911	23520	23,509
% Change	-5.7	-0.7	-1.1	-1.4	-0.6	0.0
Hancock	32667	31957	31175	30623	30008	29,729
% Change	-7.3	-1.1	-1.3	-1.1	-0.6	-0.9

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

**Regional Unemployment Summary
Brooke-Hancock Region. January 2006 through May 2009.**

Date	Company	Jobs Cut
Jan-06	ArcelorMittal Steel	-850
Oct-07	ArcelorMittal Steel	-250
Aug-08	Banner Fibreboard	-38
Oct-08	Severstal Steel	-800
Nov-08	Mountaineer Race Track/Gaming	-93
Dec-08	Wheeling-Nissan Steel	-175
Jan-09	Weirton Medical Center	-36
Mar-09	Wellsburg Paper	-30
May-09	Severstal Steel	-88
Total		-1589

Source: Accumulated from documented regional newspapers.

These unemployment and population trends are best understood by the following 2005 through 2009 chronicled economic history.

February 15, 2005. *Wheeling-Intelligencer* in article “Wheeling-Pitt to Take Fourth-Quarter Hit” states Wheeling-Pitt expects to take a \$23 million hit to its fourth-quarter earnings because of an accident that shut down a furnace for 12 days in December.

February 24, 2005. *Wheeling-Intelligencer* in article “ISG, Weirton Steel Transformation Continues Through 2005” states in 2004, the Ohio Valley witnessed the end of Weirton Steel Corp. which operated locally since 1909, but it also saw the

company's core assets - both workers and facilities - become a part of a new global steel producer that is poised to become an influential player in the years ahead.

February 25, 2005 *Wheeling-Intelligencer* in article states the leader of the Netherlands-based Mittal Steel Co. NV said he wants to cut the company's work force by about 45,000 jobs after it merges with International Steel Group Inc. The cuts could amount to nearly 30 percent of the combined steelmakers' work force.

March 3, 2005. *Weirton Daily Times* in article "BHJ Ponders Development System Creation" states officials with BHJ are planning to hold a meeting later this month to discuss the potential creation of an Enterprise Development System. The meeting called Exploring Options for Developing an Entrepreneurial Region will help to explore the ideas behind fostering an entrepreneurial culture in the region.

April 28, 2005. *Brooke-Review* in article "WVU Community Design Team Offers Exciting Ideas for Wellsburg" states Wellsburg needs to enhance its riverfront area and embrace its historical significance, according to the West Virginia Community Design Team (CDT) which visited the city this past weekend. The CDT broke into five groups to discuss Economic Development, Tourism, Youth Activities, Downtown Revitalization and Recreation and Parks.

May 5, 2005. *Herald-Star* in article "Mittal-USA Plans One-Week Work Stoppage" states "the President of the Independent Steelworkers Union at Mittal USA on Monday said his membership will participate in a plant wide vacation in July. The 2100 member union will join plant management during the week ending July 30 for a one-week planned vacation. The entire domestic steel industry is experiencing a weak order book at this time and we believe the one-week plant wide vacation for our union members will best allow our company to resolve inventory issues and will not harm our union members."

June 16, 2005. *Weirton Daily Times* in article "Layoffs May Be Less Than 700" states "ISU officials said last week that with the shut down of the blast furnace, the Basic Oxygen Plant and the continuous caster, about 700 workers could be idled for eight to 10 weeks. Meanwhile, the ISU has announced a weekly prayer meeting for all workers at the plant, union and nonunion.

July 15, 2005. *Steubenville Herald Star* in article states "Mittal Steel to close its hot end in an attempt to fight a buildup of inventory at steel end users that threaten to drive steel prices down."

August 16, 2005. *Weirton Daily Times* in article "Miller Says City's in a State of Flux" illustrates the changing economy, as stated by the City of Weirton mayor. He stated "I see positive changes in the future, but citizens will have to make sacrifices and the city will, too."

September 25, 2005. *Weirton Daily Times* in article “Jobless Rate on Rollercoaster” states according to the West Virginia Bureau of Employment Programs (BEP), Hancock County’ unemployment rate has been on a rollercoaster ride of ups and downs this year. Currently, the unemployment rate is at 7.2% for August, which gives Hancock County the eighth highest percentage of unemployed out of the 55 counties across West Virginia.”

November 8, 2005. In *Steubenville Herald Star*, Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corporation reported a \$21.1 million loss for the third quarter.

December 16, 2005. Editorial in the *Weirton Daily Times* states “to make Weirton a major player in the tin industry as it once was, a substantial investment of capital is going to have to be made and we are not sure if Mittal is willing to make that type of commitment when it currently has plants that can make the product cheaper.”

December 21, 2005. Editorial in the *Weirton Daily Times* states “the domestic steel industry received a crushing blow from Washington Wednesday the U.S. Senate voted to repeal the Continued Dumping and Subsidy Offset Act, better known to us in the Ohio Valley as the Byrd Amendment.”

December 21, 2005. West Virginia BEP released unemployment figures for November and states “West Virginia’s overall jobless rate remained at 4.5%. Hancock County led the state in unemployment with 8.6%. Ranking nearly a whole percent ahead of Mason County, at 7.7% which is second, Hancock County currently has 1,290 unemployed.”

January 7, 2006. In *Weirton Daily Times*, Mittal Steel USA’s Weirton plant, general manager Brian James stated in total, about 850 jobs will be lost once all layoffs are complete”

February 2, 2006. *Herald Star* in article “Weirton sheet mill to close” states “The sheet mill which produces galvanized steel products at Mittal Steel USA-Weirton, will be shut down in the near future, ending the jobs for 75 more plant employees.”

June 26, 2006. *Herald Star* in article “Pending deal leaves questions” states “The Independent Steelworkers Union at Mittal Steel USA - Weirton is looking for answers to the future of the Weirton mill with the pending merger of Mittal with No. 2 steelmaker Arcelor SA.”

August 2, 2006. *Herald Star* in article “Mittal’s hand may be forced. Company could be ordered to sell Weirton facility” states “While Mittal Steel is posting a \$1 billion profit word-wide for the second quarter, the fate of the mill lines in Weirton may be decided by the Justice Department in the near future. At issue are Dofasco tin capacity in Canada as well as Weirton and the tin mill at Sparrows Point, Md. Mittal reported its net profits of \$1 billion today, a day after the Justice Department filed suit in U.S. District Court in Washington to block Mittal’s \$33 billion merger with

European steel giant Arcelor if Mittal does not divest itself of tin capacity in North America.”

February 21, 2007. *Herald Star* in article “*Weirton future up in air*” states “A decision by the Justice Department to force Arcelor-Mittal to sell its Sparrows Point, Md., mill has put the future of the Weirton steel plant in confusion. Mittal owned two major tin assets, Weirton and Sparrows Point, when it merged with Arcelor, which also owned tin capacity in Hamilton, Ontario, at its Dofasco mill.

Weirton had been a fully integrated steel mill for a century prior to Mittal’s obtaining the plants in its purchase of ISG in 2005. One of its first moves was to shut down the plant’s iron making blast furnace and the steelmaking Basic Oxygen Plant and its continuous steel slab caster.

Mittal officials had declared in mid-2006 that Weirton was for sale, and Independent Steelworkers Union (ISU) officials said the Sparrows Point plant, with its deep-water port capabilities fit better with Mittal’s overall business strategy.

March 3, 2007. *Herald Star* in article “*Tracks pushing for June votes*” states “Two northern West Virginia counties with sluggish economies and strong cross-border competition for gamblers could vote early this summer on whether to allow poker, blackjack and other table games at racetrack casinos.

“Table games could add 500 jobs in Chester and jump-start plans for indoor parking, a shopping mall, a golf course and housing,” according to Ted Arneault, president of Mountaineer Race Track and Gaming Resort.”

March 20, 2007. *Herald Star* in article “*Project Bootstraps*” states “The first Project Bootstraps graduation ceremony and dinner was held Monday at the Jefferson Community College Pugliese Training Centers. Several businesspeople were involved with Bootstraps’ Brighter Ideas - 12 Steps to a Better Business forums and mentoring program, overseen by Kathy Antinone, entrepreneurship coordinator.

March 25, 2007. *Herald Star* in “*Our opinion*” editorial states “Small businesses are the backbone of the economy. Finding the resources and expertise to get one started or to grow an existing one can be difficult, however. Project Bootstraps is a local small business that is made possible through sponsorship of several area businesses and organizations and a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission.”

March 30, 2007. *The Brooke Review* in article “*Rockefeller Pushes to Preserve the Ohio Valley Steel Industry*” states At the conclusion of a meeting recently to discuss the future of the Northern Panhandle steel industry, Senator Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) said that he had a “frank and productive conversation with Mittal Steel” CEO, Lois Schorsch.

“Steel has helped to shape and build the communities of the Ohio Valley,” said Rockefeller. “Following last month’s decision by the Department of Justice it is time to make a real commitment to preserving the livelihood of West Virginia’s steel industry and investing in our future. I encourage Mittal to reinvest in Weirton and demonstrate that they believe in our workers and the contribution they can make,” said Rockefeller.

April 25, 2007. *The Herald Star* in “Hancock County dependent on Mountaineer for budget” states “Cutbacks in county government could be the result of a failure to pass table gaming June 9 in Hancock County, according to county Commissioner Mike Swartzmiller. “ He explained that of Hancock County’s \$10 million budget, 48 percent - \$4.8 million - comes from video lottery revenues. Of that, \$1.6 million is used to balance the county’s budget.

May 11, 2007. *The West Virginia State Journal* in “Arcelor: Mittal Sees Big Profit for Quarter” states “Arcelor Mittal posted a \$2.25 billion joint profit for the first quarter 2007, up 40 percent from the same three-month period a year ago.’

July 1, 2007. *The Herald Star* in “Let the table games begin” states “The unofficial totals tallied by the resort, via calls from Mountaineer observers at each of the county’s 28 precincts, declared a 1,519-vote victory - 5,022 votes in favor of table games to 3,503 against, or a 59 percent to 41 percent margin of victory.”

October 10, 2007. *Steubenville Herald-Star* in “Slag firm to close Weirton location” states “When the blast furnace and Basic oxygen Plant at Weirton Steel closed in 2005, more than 800 employees lost their jobs. Now, 20 more people working at a facility that handled slag from the furnaces are losing their jobs. Holcim Inc. will be closing its slag production and grinding plant December 31, the company announced today.”

October 18, 2007. *The Wheeling Intelligencer* in “Hot Mill Closing” states “Global steel giant ArcelorMittal formally informed local government officials as well as union leaders Wednesday the Weirton hot strip mill are closed in mid-December. This closing will result in the loss of about 250 hourly and 15 salaried positions, leaving a workforce of just under 1,000 at ArcelorMittal.”

April 1, 2008. *Steubenville Herald Star* in “Weirton mill cuts detailed” states “About 45 workers who didn’t accept a severance package with the closure of the ArcelorMittal hot mill are being laid off.”

April 23, 2008. *Weirton Daily Times* in “W.Va. Leaders Mull Weirton’s Future” states “Weirton’s economic future could depend on finding new purposes for land and equipment owned by ArcelorMittal Steel, state and leaders said Monday. These ideas reportedly were among those presented during an economic roundtable discussion hosted by U.S. Sen. Jay Rockefeller, D-W.Va at the Serbian-American Cultural Center in Weirton on Monday. “

May 10, 2008. The *Weirton Daily Times* in “*Industrial site seminar set*” states “The Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Commission and the Northern West Virginia Brownfields Assistance Center will hold a conference on the redevelopment of former industrial sites, called brownfields, at West Virginia Northern Community College’s Weirton campus.”

June 26, 2008. The *Weirton Daily Times* in “*Severstal to Buy Esmark*” states “Russia-based OAO Severstal announced Wednesday it plans to buy Esmark Inc for \$1.25 billion. The metals and mining company said it has an agreement to buy Esmark for \$19.25 per share. Esmark has been at the center of a bidding war between Severstal and India’s Essar Steel Holdings.”

July 30, 2008. The *Steubenville Herald Star* in “*Our Opinion: New energy plants promising to area*” states “The promise of jobs and a brighter economic future based on a new energy plant is exactly that for now: a promise. The latest move toward making the Upper Ohio Valley a new energy corridor for the United States came with an announcement Monday by Consol Energy and Synthesis Energy Systems of a new coal-to-liquid fuel plant to be built at Benwood, south of Wheeling.”

August 3, 2008. The *State Journal* in “*Banner Fibreboard Closes Doors at Wellsburg Location*” states “After 52 years in business, Wellsburg’s Banner Fibreboard Co. has closed its doors. The closing leaves 38 people without jobs.

October 9, 2008. The *Steubenville Herald-Star* in “*SeverStal to lay off 800: Parts of local plant to operate intermittently as world economy slows*” states “About 800 employees at the Steubenville North Plant of SeverStal Wheeling will be laid off in coming days as the global economic crisis takes its toll on the basic steel industry.”

October 18, 2008. The *Wheeling Intelligencer* in “*Hot Mill Closing: More than 250 to lose jobs by mid-December*” states “An ArcelorMittal news release said closure will result in the loss of about 250 hourly and 15 salaried positions, leaving a workforce of just under 1,000 at ArcelorMittal Weirton. Mark Glyptis, president of the United Steel Workers Local 2911 said “The potential shut down of the hot strip mill is very difficult to accept. We started rebuilding the hot mill in 1988 and literally rebuilt the facility with our blood and sweat and we created a world class operation that has been the envy of other steel mills.”

November 22, 2008. The *Steubenville Herald Star* in “*Mountaineer cuts 93 jobs*” states “The cuts represent a 4 percent reduction in the permanent employment force at Mountaineer.” Tamara Pettit, Mountaineer director of public relations said “the cuts are across the board while increased competition from Pennsylvania, increased gasoline prices and the faltering economy all impacted our business.”

December 11, 2008. The *Wheeling Intelligencer* in “*Steel Plant to Lay Off 90*” states “Ninety of about 175 employees at Wheeling-Nisshin Inc. have been laid off in

response to what company officials have described as a dramatic downturn spurred by a sluggish economy.” Richard Carter, the firm’s president and chief operating officer stated “We have never had a layoff in our 20-year history, and we do this with great reluctance.”

January 17, 2009. The *Steubenville Herald Star* in “Mountaineer cutting its work force by 175” states “Approximately 175 hourly and salary employees lost their jobs Friday at Mountaineer Casino, Racetrack and Resort as the company prepared to deal with a poor economy and increased competition from similar operations in Pennsylvania.”

January 24, 2009. The *Steubenville Herald Star* in “Severstal to idle plant for March” states “Local United Steelworkers officials have been told to expect the shutdown of the Severstal Wheeling plant stretching from Steubenville to Mingo Junction for the entire month of March, affecting about 1,100 union positions and an unavailable number of salaried workers.”

April 6, 2009. The *Steubenville Herald Star* in “Hancock County slashes budget by \$1.26 M” states “With West Virginia’s northern most county facing declining revenues, Hancock County commissioners slashed its fiscal 2010 budget by \$1.26 million compared to last year’s budget.”

January 16, 2010. The *Steubenville Herald Star* in “Restart delayed for Severstal plant” states “A lack of metal coming from Severstal Sparrows Point facility in Maryland is causing the announced restart at Severstal Wheeling’s Martins Ferry mill to be delayed.”

January 25, 2010. The *Steubenville Herald Star* in “Plant almost at full capacity” states “Production at the Mountain State Carbon coke plant at Follansbee, a part of Severstal North America’s local operations, will be back to full capacity at the end of the month.”

March 2, 2010. The *Steubenville Herald Star* in “Follansbee bracing for cuts” states “Follansbee officials are bracing for cuts to the city’s budget, citing declining revenue, and considering how much summer help to hire for the city’s park and swimming pool. City Manager John DeStefano told council Monday the budget will have to reflect a drop of about \$65,000 in property taxes paid by residents and an increase of about \$84,000 in contributions for city employees’ pensions ...”

April 14, 2010. The *Steubenville Herald Star* in “Start of sewer project marked” states “Area officials marked the start of the Eldersville Road-Mahan Lane-Bruin Drive sewer project... Among those on hand was US Rep. Alan Mollohan, D-Fairmont, who had secured a \$9.8 million grant from the federal Environmental Protection Agency for the project in 2001.”

February 25, 2010. The *Wheeling Intelligencer* in “Economy Preventing Sale of Mill Properties” states “... a sluggish economy may be one reason ArcelorMittal has not had success attracting buyers. He said he speaks with James about once a month, and as far as he knows there has been no activity on any of the property.”

March 13, 2010. The *Steubenville Herald Star* in “MTR Gaming Posts \$24 M Loss” states “Revenues at Mountaineer (Chester/Hancock County) fell 13 percent in the most recent quarter, from \$63.3 million to \$55 million.”

May 16, 2010. The *Steubenville Herald Star* in “MTR Prepares for Erie Table Games Debut” states “When looking at the bottom line, MTR Gaming Group had an average first quarter, according to Robert Griffin, chief executive officer and president. The report noted a \$3.3 million loss, including a 12 percent decline in revenues in the Mountaineer Casino Racetrack and Resort.”

June 19, 2010. The *Steubenville Herald Star* in “BHJ Taking Bids for Freight Study” states “The study is hoped to make several findings, according to Mike Paprocki, transportation study director for BHJ. We want to know the volumes and the nature of freight, to, from and through the area, as well as the impediments, the potential growth and the infrastructure needs.”

August 12, 2010. The *Wheeling Intelligencer* in “Severstal Seek to Sell Plants” states “Roughly two years after acquiring the former Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corp. from Esmark Inc., Severstal North America is looking to sell the local mills and its other North American holdings, published reports indicate.”

September 2, 2010. The *Wheeling Intelligencer* in “Track Up, ArcelorMittal Down in W.VA. Employment Ranking” stated “On the negative side of the ledger, the area’s tradition as a major steel producer took another blow. The figures (Work Force West Virginia) show ArcelorMittal Weirton has fallen to 61st among the state’s private employers with about 1,000 employees a drop from 45th last year.”

“Was-Mart Associates Inc. continues to employ more West Virginians than any other private entity, maintaining the position it has held since 1998 with 12,420 Mountain State employees, according to its website.”

October 9, 2010. The *Steubenville Herald Star* in “Options sought on MTR future” states “The largest stockholder in MTR Gaming has issued a statement requesting discussions with the board of directors about options up to and including potential sale of the company.”

October 31, 2010. The *Steubenville Herald Star* in “ArcelorMittal posts profit, worries ahead” states “ArcelorMittal posted a 48 percent jump in third-quarter net profit, but said higher raw material prices and muted demand dampened its expectations for the rest of the year.”

December 8, 2010. The *Steubenville Herald Star* in “Gas drilling likely to lead ’11 regional development” states “*The ramp-up of Marcellus shale gas drilling isn’t the only economic effort that will be advanced in 2011, though it is poised to be the biggest. Chesapeake Energy stated they plan to average 34 rigs n the Marcellus formation, which includes the Northern Panhandle and Jefferson County. That’s up from 27 drilling rigs this year.*”

The task of economic diversification lies in the hands of regional organizations like the Brooke-Hancock Regional Council and local public leaders. Similar to the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), the Brooke-Hancock Regional Council (BH) is a performance-driven organization. BH can have the most impact in achieving parity for the Region by leveraging resources, securing partnerships and developing regional approaches to economic development. BH continually evaluates regional economic progress and investment results, revises investment policies accordingly, and relies on clearly defined priorities and strategies.

BH and its membership embrace all four of ARC’s general goals (*Moving Appalachia Forward: Appalachian Regional Commission Strategic Plan*). These goals are as follows.

- Increase job opportunities and per capita income to reach parity with the nation.
- Strengthen the capacity of the people of the region to compete in the global economy.
- Develop and improve the region’s infrastructure to make the region economically competitive.
- Build the Appalachian Development Highway System to reduce Appalachia’s isolation.

II. 2010 Administrative Program and 2011 Expectations

Through state funding and local dollars to balance an Appalachian Regional Commission grant (302-A-1) in the amount of \$49,627 Region XI created the following investment projects in calendar year 2010.

To carry out these administrative programs, the BH has one full-time community development specialist for infrastructure investment planning while the executive director is responsible for entrepreneurial development, brownfield development and related job creation programs. In the case of the community development specialist, ARC funding is the primary financial source.

In addition, BH works closely with the Business Development Corporation of the Northern Panhandle (BDC) to create job opportunities. In 1993, the five existing economic development organizations in Brooke and Hancock Counties were consolidated to form the BDC. The county commissions appointed board members and provided funds to the new organization. These funds were matched by the West

Virginia Development Office. Chartered as a 501-C3 (private, not for profit) organization, the BDC has established Brooke and Hancock Counties as a Certified Development Community.

Brownfield Assessment: The program objective is to return prime location properties to the tax role and create new employment opportunities.

Since 2003, BH has obtained three brownfield assessment grants from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Through the first grant, BH initiated Phase 1 assessments. BH grouped these sites into five development geographic areas and prepared development briefs for these sites. Three local jurisdictions and three private property owners participated in this program.

Through the second EPA assessment grant, BH completed ten Phase 1 assessments and five Phase 2 assessments. In 2008, ArcelorMittal announced their intention to divest/sale over 1400 acres in the City of Weirton. With this forthcoming divestment, the public effort to create jobs through the brownfield program was enhanced. In the case of a plant site, 36 jobs were saved through the Phase 2 assessment. Significant private sector involvement has been obtained through the second grant.

The third grant, received in October 2009, has expanded the brownfield program to petroleum sites while continuing further hazardous site identification. Both these grants will expire September 2012.

In 2009, BH received \$5,000 through a FOCUS WV grant to address barriers to the redevelopment of the Weirton Rail Yard site. BH received the Manager's Choice: Best Overall Project Award at the 2009 FOCUS WV Brownfields Showcase for their Weirton Rail Yard Project. The Manager's Choice: Best Overall Project Award was granted to the project demonstrated savvy in leveraging additional technical and financial resources, creatively included community or stakeholders, and connected with other community initiatives.

In late 2009, BH received \$12,000 in additional funding to further investigate site development at the Weirton Rail Yard. Through these funds, \$48,000 in additional dollars were leveraged and applied to a regional freight study. Completed in late 2010 by Cambridge Systematics, the Freight Study has uniquely defined cargo movement advantages of the Weirton Rail Yard and adjacent sites. The full study is available through our web site www.bhjmpc.org and listed under "Transportation."

Business Incubator: The program objective is to provide start-up businesses with below-market space, shared office services, technical assistance, networking opportunities, and financing to foster the growth of entrepreneurial development.

In 2004, the West Virginia Extension Office and the West Virginia University Institute of Technology's EDA Center worked cooperatively to complete a business incubator study. The results supported a broad and general perspective incubator with a component to initiate personal service assistance businesses.

In 2005, BHJ in coordination with the West Virginia EDA Representative proposed a site specific financial feasibility study for the Cove School structure in Weirton. Upon the recommendation of the Weirton City Manager, this consideration was deferred.

In 2007, the Cove School as a regional incubator was initially reviewed as a site; however, given the estimated improvement costs and the preference of the public owner, the City of Weirton, alternative sites were considered. Through the assistance of Valley Ventures, an entrepreneurial task force to create new local businesses, alternative sites has been considered in Weirton and Wellsburg. A full-time director for Valley Ventures, initiated through BH over the past four years, was hired in 2007 and focuses on the regional incubator program.

In 2009, Valley Ventures acquired a 20,000 square foot office building in downtown Weirton as its headquarters. The building, known as Valley Commerce Center, already houses a dance academy and an outpatient treatment program, According to the Valley Ventures Director, Lou Stein, "It's a tremendous building. It was available, it was affordably priced, and it had the space we wanted for the things we have planned and want to do. We also wanted to take an active role in the redevelopment of Main Street Weirton."

Recent events include the following items.

[Chamber Signs Contract](#)

Tuesday, January 18, 2011

Valley Ventures / Wetzel County [[More...](#)]

[Krazy Bout Sportz](#)

Sunday, January 09, 2011

Family Fun [[More...](#)]

[Snooty Pig](#)

Wednesday, December 22, 2010

New Restaurant [[More...](#)]

[Stein Shares Vision](#)

Tuesday, December 21, 2010

New Martinsville [[More...](#)]

[The Past Lives Downtown](#)

Sunday, December 19, 2010

Fourth Street Antiques [[More...](#)]

[New Restaurant](#)

Sunday, December 12, 2010

Snooty Pig [[More...](#)]

Community Outreach for Services: The program objective is to allow membership communities to best utilize BH's staff and expertise. Throughout our ARC funding period, BH has acknowledged how we help create opportunities and aid local communities. Newsletters, web sites, and forums for local contacts are key program ingredients.

In 2010, BH published a quarterly newsletter; maintained/updated a regional information web site; held a regional open house to better communicate the purpose and intend of BH; and held an annual awards dinner to acknowledge volunteers.

In addition, in 2010, BH created a Face Book page to better communicate with our customers.

Entrepreneurial Development: The objective of this program is to allow potential business investors and start-ups best understand their challenges through a support network. This critical component of business growth was identified as one of the core strategies in *A Vision Shared* (West Virginia Development Office. 2002).

In 2009, Valley Ventures received a second round of foundation funding to sustain its objectives through the next two years. Valley Ventures provides businesses with critical hands-on technical assistance, financial resources, business education, and important business-to-business networking. Valley Ventures also networks with existing private organizations and public agencies to provide additional business support for existing business programs in the region.

Geographic Information System: In 1993, BH initiated a GIS mapping program. A basic building block for BH, this program has created an extensive map overlay program for social-economic, infrastructure and transportation planning.

In 2008, BH expanded the application of BH's GIS system to brownfield usage. BH continues to expand this program and is presently coordinating GIS site information with the Northern West Virginia Brownfield Assistance Center.

Port Development: One of the most underutilized resources in the region is the Ohio River. In coordination with the West Virginia Public Port Authority, this effort focuses on river development and off-site spin-offs such as warehousing. The mandate for river port development is obvious. According to the Federal Highway Administration, between 2000 and 2015, transportation tonnage will have doubled. In 2000, the federal highway system was at 70% capacity, rail was at 90% capacity and river barge was at 33% capacity.

With the recent ArcelorMittal Steel announcement of property divestment and through the City of Weirton’s Redevelopment Authority, BH created further private sector partnerships with companies such as ArcelorMittal.

In addition, the West Virginia Area Port Authority (WVAPA) with the cooperation of BH and the Weirton Area Public Port Authority has participated in a statewide port facilities plan. This study is expected to be completed in 2011.

In 2010, the B-H Executive Director, as a designated member of the West Virginia Area Port Authority, reinstated a port agency in the Northern Panhandle.

Public Works Investment Planning: In 2009, in cooperation with the Business Development Corporation of the Northern Panhandle, BH prepared a strategic action site management application to obtain \$215,000 in US Economic Development Economic Adjustment Assistance dollars. Funded in October and anchored by a related targeted industry study, the project purpose was to carry out a detailed, step by step, project specific, and regionally consensus built action strategy for stabilization and diversification.

Throughout 2010, through the leadership of AE COM Consultants, the strategic action plan has been prepared. The plan will be unveiled in March 2011 and, based upon the analysis/recommendations of the study, and maximize site investments.

Strategic Planning: Through the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) program, BH is dedicated to obtaining its fair share of public works investment. This program allows the preparation of grant/loan/joint funding projects.

In 2010, through BH Council meetings, BH coordinated and organized an infrastructure priority rating system for the region. \$504 million in potential project need were rated. In addition, with a successful grant writing staff, BH sought appropriate grant/loan funding to advance BH’s goals.

Project Comparison. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs).

Brooke-Hancock Regional Planning and Development Council. January 2011.

Prepared by the Brooke-Hancock Regional and Development Planning Council Staff

Category	CEDS 2010	CEDS 2011
Entities Requesting Funds	23	24
Projects	112	98
Projects Marked High/Medium/Low	90/21/1	75/21/1
Requested Dollars	504,885,075	368,542,698

Change between CEDS 10 and CES 11

Projects Added and Funded	4
Projects Added and Unfunded	13
Projects (Existing) Amended	21
Projects Removed and Completed	10
Projects Removed/Downgraded	11

In addition, B-H changed (December 15, 2010) council membership to 12 elected officials, 13 labor, chamber and private members and six exofficio non-voting members. In April 2010, led by Anne Cavalier/US EDA Representative for West Virginia, this recommendation was made during a regularly scheduled “District Organization Evaluation.” According to the USEDA summary report the “evaluation was positive, helpful and encouraging for continued annual funding. The review was completed over a two-month period with considerable document exchange and a site visit.

Transportation Improvements: BH has a companion metropolitan planning organization (MPO) designation for regional transportation planning.

In 2010, BH completed a ten point transportation improvement program.

Training and Development for Administrative Staff: Throughout our ARC funding period, BH has emphasized training and development for its staff.

In 2010, BH provided the BH Region with state of the art technical assistance and training and continued to advance the knowledge and skills of BH staff.

Water and Sewer Infrastructure Improvement: BH coordinates public service district, county commission and regional water and sewer efforts.

In 2010, BH created funding, administered grants/loans, assisted in infrastructure design and managed project BH investments. These investments included the following projects.

- Brooke Public Service District. Mahan’s Lane Sewer Project. \$9.87 million. A preferred contractor has been selected. A loan closing is expected in March 2010. Construction is anticipated in spring 2010.
- Route 8 Sewer Extension. \$16.068 million. Construction completed except for restoration and punch list items.
- Village of Beech Bottom. Water Line Extension Project. \$1.192 million. Design and construction completed. Project completed. Closeout anticipated spring 2010.

III. Work Program 2011 Expectations

Brownfield Assessment: Over the past four years, led by a task force of 20 regional representatives, BH has prepared a comprehensive assessment strategy of over 31 sites, prioritized sites for job creation and participation, completed Phase 1 and Phase 2 assessment, initiated a clean-up grant and started site mapping through a GIS system.

In 2011, expects to complete the following items.

- Taylor, Smith and Taylor Site/Chester. FOCUS Grant. Funded in December 2010, this \$5,000 grant from the Northern West Virginia Brownfield Assistance Center will allow the BH Task Force to create a site vision and expand site opportunities.



Taylor, Smith and Taylor Brownfield Site. An 11 acre superfund site adjacent to a primary Chester, WV, neighborhood.

- Brooke-Hancock Hazardous Waste and Petroleum Grant. This \$400,000 grant will allow the BH Brownfield Task Force to further assess hazardous and petroleum sites with strategic redevelopment opportunities.

Business Incubator: In 2011, Valley Ventures will initiate structural improvements at its downtown Weirton incubator location.

Community Outreach for Services: In 2011, BH will publish a quarterly newsletter; maintain and update a regional information web site and Face Book page; and hold a regional open house to better communicate the purpose and intend of BH.

Entrepreneurial Development: In 2011, Valley Ventures, as a related development agency to BD, will create a revolving loan fund and a micro-loan fund to provide another source of funding projects for small business owners.

Geographic Information System Mapping: In 2004, BH obtained new aerial photography and began a new street overlay system to match the new aerial photography. In 2005, BH assisted the local development corporation, the Business Development Corporation (BDC) of the Northern Panhandle, to create a commercial-industrial site file. In 2006, through the preparation of site profile aerials, BH continued to build and assist the BDC.

In 2011, BH will assist the Northern Brownfield Assistance Center to create a more marketing/concise brownfield site inventory reference.

Port Development: In 2011, BH as a member of the Weirton Area Port Authority, through the support of the West Virginia Public Port Authority and the West Virginia Department of Commerce, will seek to build a 4G communication backbone for the Northern Panhandle.

Public Works Investment Planning: In 2011, BH in cooperation with the Business Development Corporation of the Northern Panhandle will unveil a regional investment strategy and seek opportunities to full the following strategies.

- To identify land development constraints at site specific locations
- To accurately profile the availability of a skilled workforce and training needs to maximize the region's workforce.
- To create further opportunities in tourism
- To optimize foreign trade opportunities and allow the region to participate in the competitive world trade market.
- To expand our regional information services and place the region on a competitive and internationally equal playing field
- To retain, build upon and expand existing businesses
- To sustain and illustrate our regional advantages through an aggressive and active business recruitment program

Strategic Planning: BH staff at the direction of its membership continues to prioritize and coordinate funds. To retain its professionalism, BH attends training and professional development events on ARC grant applications, block grant applications, brownfield reporting, and general administration.

Transportation Improvements: In 2011, BH's sister agency, the Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Organization (BHJ) will hold five meetings to formally amend and select future local transportation projects. BHJ will continue a program to carry out bridge access improvements in an 18 mile river corridor. Throughout the year, BHJ will continue a location/environmental study for a new river crossing in the region.

Training and Development for Administrative Staff: In 2011, BH will complete the following task.

- Attend the *Development District Association of Appalachia Annual Conference*
- Continue GIS training for brownfield inventory work.
- Attend the National Brownfield Conference.
- Attend regularly schedule meetings of the West Virginia Regional Planning and Development Council.
- Attend any and all training required by the EPA to assure compliance of the Brownfields Assessment Grant.
- Continue to coordinate BH council meetings
- Continue to update and complete annual CEDS priority/inventory evaluations.

Water and Sewer Infrastructure Improvements: In 2011, BH will continue projects as so noted in the 2009 section and develop future projects. Priority projects for the upcoming year are as follows.

- Brooke Public Service District. A \$9.7 million Phase I sewer project to be continued throughout 2011.
- Oakland Public Service District. A \$3.2 million water system upgrade/water line extension and tank construction.
- Wellsburg. A \$1.1 million combined sewer separation project.

BH is helping the City of Follansbee with the administration of the Safe Routes to School Grant Program. \$96,000.

BH is assisting nine incorporated Brooke-Hancock communities with the Division of Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program application. \$289,000 in targeted energy funds has been provided through the federal Department of Energy. As required by the West Virginia Division of Energy, all applications were submitted to and reviewed by the Regional Council. Nine applications were submitted and the dispersal of funds was allocated equally on an approximate \$32,000 per application basis.