

NC STEP Leadership Team  
Ned Delamar Center, Pamlico Community College  
October 22, 2009 @ 5:30PM

Mr. Himbry called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Mr. Himbry announced that he had recently attended a Pamlico Chamber of Commerce meeting and said that the Pamlico Chamber of Commerce was alive and well with expectations of great things to come. He then asked each committee member to introduce themselves and give their name and affiliation. We had one visitor, Jason Gray. Mr. Gray is the NC Rural Center Director of Research and Innovation. Refreshments were served.

Chilton Rogers, STEP Coach from the NC Rural Center, took the floor and again welcomed everyone. She gave a brief review of what has been accomplished and what is planned for subsequent meetings. The next steps involve the need to identify a project for the grant writing exercise that Pat Prescott and Misty Rasmussen attended on Oct 15<sup>th</sup>, do the ground work for implementation, and prepare a presentation to the Bayboro Town Council in December or January, inviting other municipalities to attend. Dr. Coon asked how projects will be prioritized and would all projects stay on the table. Ms. Rogers responded that the STEP Committee would prioritize the projects. Mr. Himbry also added that the STEP funding is not the only funding available that will help towards these projects and that eventually all projects will be addressed.

Ms. Rogers announced how pleased the Center was that Pamlico County is sending seven representatives to the NC Rural Forum of 2009. She then gave a brief overview of the Rural Partners Forum. Ms. Rogers then reviewed a recent grant writing workshop that would be beneficial to the STEP Committee. As mentioned above, two people from the Committee attended the workshop, Pat Prescott and Misty Rasmussen. Both workshop attendees stated that it was one of the best workshops they had ever attended and had learned the importance of keeping their focus in their grant writing. They came away with a homework assignment -- they have to take one of the STEP projects and write a proposal.

Ms. Rogers went on to say that by the end of 2009, the projects should be pretty well fleshed out and completed. At this point, the funding aspect will start being implemented and decided who will be responsible for project implementation, possibly encouraging more citizen involvement.

Ms. Rogers had each subcommittee give a brief overview regarding the progress of their economic development strategies and where they are in the project development phase. She stated that as projects come and go, each project will address issues in the implementation strategy statement and build upon one another.

Joseph Himbry, chairperson of the Tourism Subcommittee, gave a brief report. Mr. Himbry stated that the general consensus of the Subcommittee is to build upon what we have and to access what we need. He went on to say that during the tourism committee meeting on October 12, the list of projects was prioritized and the top five projects will be what they focus on first.

The first project involves creating a brochure listing the county's recreational sites and assets. This brochure idea was presented to the Pamlico Chamber of Commerce and it was well received. The Subcommittee feels that it would be beneficial to have the Chamber take the lead in establishing this brochure, with the idea that it would be marketed everywhere and answer the questions of where we are and what we have to offer. There should not be a problem with obtaining funding to support this project.

The second project is waterfront development. Pamlico County has a large portion of waterfront property that is underdeveloped. There are several resources and grants to provide funding, but the main emphasis at this point is to develop a viable plan of action for developing the waterfront. This project will probably be a private/public partnership.

The third project is a hotel complex. We know that when people visit us, they will need a place to stay. This project is leaning more towards a private partnership with private investors and may not be involving the STEP funds. This is a priority project simply because it falls in line with our tourism planning.

The fourth project is a flea mall incubator with a farmer's market. This project is still in the phase of being worked on and formulated. There are several organizations providing input towards this project.

The fifth and final priority project is reinstating the Blue Crab Festival with the possibility of organizing other festivals throughout the County.

Dr. Coon questioned if the Smart Growth Plan and the Pamlico County Tourism Plan are factoring into any of the projects. Mr. Himbry responded that the idea is to create a kind of overlay master plan by taking all the different plans and overlaying them to see if any ideas are consistent.

Ms. Rogers wanted to know who is going to pull these plans together and review the commonality and good ideas that most stand out in the plans. Mr. Himbry stated that the stakeholder's analysis should indicate who will be the most likely candidate with the most experience to handle the individual ideas as they become known. We will be utilizing the knowledge and information that we already have with regards as to who could head up a project rather than creating new positions.

The Commuters Subcommittee was unable to attend the STEP Committee due to the Chairperson being out of town and the rest of the subcommittee members were ill.

Ms. Rogers introduced the Retirees Subcommittee. Larry Moolenaar, chairperson of the Retirees Subcommittee, gave a brief report. The Retirees Subcommittee came up with four total projects; two planning projects and two implementation projects. Mr. Moolenaar stated in the Retiree Subcommittee Implementation Strategy Statement that even though Pamlico County has many of the amenities and services sought by retirees, such as four mild seasons, low cost of living, scenic beauty, and outdoor recreation, it lacks shopping opportunities, medical services, choices for cultural/ social/ spiritual engagement, a variety of housing options, and public transportation

services. When amenities are available, they are often limited in number and not well publicized.

Also, many potential retirees come first as visitors to the place where they will eventually retire. Because visitors to Pamlico County are not aware of the available amenities and services, even though limited, they are more inclined to retire in surrounding counties. By implementing a senior friendly community strategy that assesses, catalogues, and markets existing retiree amenities and services, Pamlico County will attract amenity seeking retirees.

Mr. Moolenaar went on to introduce the Retiree Subcommittee's four projects. The first project is to complete a county-wide senior friendly community assessment to evaluate senior friendly attributes, and catalogue amenities and services.

The second project is to take information from the assessment, develop a marketing piece and web presence aimed at visitors, boaters and day-trippers that accentuates the positive senior friendly attributes in Pamlico County. We are suggesting a rack card with basic information that leads visitors/ potential retirees to a web-listing (map?) of amenities and services.

[Mr. Himbry stated that after listening to the different projects, a lot of the projects are meshing together with other subcommittee projects. Ms. Rogers stated that as the projects and knowledge is pooled together, we may see projects overlapping and may decide to create additional committees to oversee these overlapping projects.]

The third project is to take information from the senior friendly community assessment, develop a gap analysis that identifies those amenities and services that are missing or need improvement and then recommend strategies, partners and funding strategies to fill amenity and service gaps for seniors.

The fourth project is to implement projects identified in the gap analysis.

Ms. Bohmert stated that there is a need to speak with the medical community with regards as to how to implement more medical amenities for incoming retirees. The existing doctors are getting upset when someone states that there are not enough specialized medical facilities and amenities for retirees. There needs to be a line of communication opened with existing medical facilities to see what they can and are willing to offer. Ms. Rogers stated that we need to have the input of everyone who is involved. We need to identify who will be involved with the project and get them involved with that project.

Ms. Rogers then called upon the Business/Entrepreneur Subcommittee. Jerry Prescott, chairperson of the Business/E-ship subcommittee, stated in the implementation strategic statement that the economic future of Pamlico County and its towns is dependent on the nurturing of existing businesses and the creation and growth of new business.

We need to build on the strengths of the talent pool within the community, our location, the existing recreational opportunities, a friendly and courteous business environment for small businesses, and the excellent quality of life through opportunities to:

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- create entrepreneurial spirit at all levels
- capitalize on our people resources
- develop a highly qualified workforce
- utilize the resources of the military alliance and the SMART Growth Plan

We need to overcome the critical weaknesses of the infrastructure deficiencies, absent core business capability, the exodus of families and children, the need for local government vision and support, and a small population. We are threatened by:

- an environment that encourages out of county shopping, both physically and on-line
- waning participation and a growing apathy within the communities
- static or declining population
- competition from Carteret and Craven counties
- the persistent economic downturn

The first project of the Business Subcommittee is to identify and validate up to three Core Business Capabilities (CBC), and develop a mechanism for their fruition.

The second project is to create support networks to provide direct, customized assistance to entrepreneurs as they develop their business.

Ms. Rogers thanked the committees for their reports. There were some discussions regarding each of the subcommittees' strategic implementation plans and how they overlap other strategic plans. There has been a lot of planning done in the past with no implementation. The general idea is to take those past plans and see where they may fit in today's plans, thereby bypassing some steps. There was some discussion of creating a proposal for a feasibility study.

As Misty Rasmussen and Pat Prescott have attended the grant writing workshop, they have been assigned to use the brochure project as a homework project to write a grant proposal. Dr. Coon spoke about the Core Businesses and how they may impact on the future of youths in the school system today. He also stated that a group of educators that will be attending the Entrepreneurship Educational Forum in November and will be developing an educational action plan geared toward educating the youth on how to run their own business around their own interests.

The Cherry Branch/Minnesott Beach Ferry was discussed. The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, November 19, 2009 and is to be held at the Ned Delamar Center located at the Pamlico Community College. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Barbara Baker, Coordinator

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**In Attendance:**

Chilton Rogers, STEP Coach  
Jason Gray--Dir. of Research and Innovation  
Barbara Baker  
Candy Bohmert  
Jim Coon  
Clark Dimond  
Jude Bloom/Dodds  
Alice Garrison with son Mathew age 15  
Judy Hills--ECC  
Joe Himbry  
Vinnie Himbry  
Mark Howell  
Doris Krauss  
Larry Moolenaar  
Linda Potter  
Jerry Prescott  
Pat Prescott  
Misty Rasmussen  
Ruth Rice  
Candy Roberts  
Bill Sage  
Dee Sage  
Joyce Swimm  
Judy Thaanum