

***Economic Development Assessment  
for the  
Haliwa-Saponi Tribe***

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This document in its entirety represents the findings and recommendations of the Office of Economic Development of UNC's Kenan Institute for Private Enterprise to the North Carolina Indian Economic Development Initiative (NCIEDI). The opinions are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the tribe or association. The acknowledgments section of each report indicates the level of interaction we had with representatives of that tribe or association.

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The findings and recommendations contained in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Haliwa-Saponi Tribe or NCIEDI.



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This assessment represents an objective inventory of the assets and opportunities of the Haliwa-Saponi Indians related to improving the economic condition of their communities, including the development of jobs and Indian-owned businesses. It includes consideration of the economic resources and potentials of the tribal council, other Haliwa-Saponi-run organizations, Haliwa-Saponi business owners and citizens, and the communities in which the Haliwa-Saponi reside. This comprehensive and place-focused (rather than organization-focused) approach is consistent both with the way economic development is practiced and with the assessments UNC prepared for 10 other North Carolina tribes and associations. What each tribe and its members choose to do with those resources and potentials is a matter for local policy that this report is intended to inform.

## SECTION 1

# *Background*

### **Ancestry and History, Governing Structure, and Demographics**

#### *Ancestry and History*

Haliwa-Saponi tribal members are direct descendants of the Saponi, Tuscarora, Tutelo, and Nansemond Indians, and smaller Eastern Siouan-speaking tribes. The Saponi Indians traveled to Williamsburg in the early 1700s to join the Tuscarora and Nottoway tribes in signing a peace treaty with Virginia Governor Alexander Spotswood. For about three decades, the remaining members of these tribes lived at Fort Christianna, which was established to support trade and to Christianize and educate tribal members. In the mid-1700s, a fairly large body of Saponi left Fort Christianna and settled in Old Granville County in North Carolina.<sup>1</sup> They lived peacefully on the lands of trader Colonel William Eaton, hunting and fishing as well as interpreting for Eaton with the Catawba Nation. Tribal records indicate that Virginia traders who had formed associations with the Saponi followed them to North Carolina where they continued their business and marriage relationships.

In the mid-1700s, the Nansemond migrated to North Carolina from Virginia and bought several large tracts of land that make up the modern day Haliwa-Saponi community. This area, known as the Meadows, encompasses most of southwestern Halifax County and southeastern Warren County, as well as the rural communities of Hollister and Essex. The name Haliwa is a combination of Halifax and Warren. According to tribal elders, when the Tuscarora Nation abandoned their reservation in 1803 to join kinsmen in New York and Canada, a few stayed behind, joining the existing community in the Meadows. By the early 1800s, a somewhat isolated but tight-knit community had been established. These ancestors of the Haliwa-Saponi lived a semi-traditional life of farming, hunting, and fishing. Those who did not own their land lived with relatives or served as sharecroppers for white planters, some traveling as far as 30 miles from home to work and live.

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1. Modern day Warren, Franklin, Vance, and Granville Counties

**Governing Structure**

The tribe formally organized in 1953 when John Hedgepeth and other tribal members formed the Essex Indian Club, the predecessor of the contemporary tribal government. Currently, the tribe is governed by 11 council members, including a Chief and Vice-Chief, who are elected to three-year staggered terms in special elections held at the Haliwa Indian School. Elections are held the second week of June every year. Eligible voters are enrolled members of the tribe over 16 years of age. Tribal leaders conduct monthly meetings to inform and educate members about issues of importance to the tribe as a whole. The opinions and suggestions of tribal members are solicited during these meetings and are incorporated into the decision-making process.

The tribal council employs a tribal administrator to handle the day-to-day operations of the tribe. The administrator supervises the management of tribal grant programs and provides a monthly reporting of the status of grant activities to government agencies, private donors, and the tribal council and members. The financial officer prepares monthly fiscal reports for the tribe, processes the tribal payroll, and is responsible for preparing and sending quarterly and final reports to funding agencies. Eighteen staff persons, including 5 part-time, work under the supervision of the administrator. The tribe’s average annual budget over the last five years was approximately \$1.5 million.

The Haliwa-Saponi Tribe was recognized by the state of North Carolina in 1965 and incorporated as a 501(c)3 organization in 1974. The Haliwa-Saponi submitted a petition for federal acknowledgement to the U.S. Government in 1989.

**Demographics**

Between 1980 and 2000, Warren County had a population increase of 23 percent, which was greater than Halifax County, whose population only grew by 3.8 percent, but less than the growth rate of 37 percent for the state overall. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, approximately 2,737 Native Americans reside in Halifax and Warren Counties, representing 3.5 percent of the total combined population. Between 1980 and 2000, the Native American population of the two counties increased by 48 percent. During that time the white population decreased by 5 percent, the black population increased by 15 percent, and the Hispanic population increased by 50 percent. Table 1

**TABLE 1**  
**Population Numbers and Percentage Shares of Population Groups,**  
**Halifax and Warren Counties (1980–2000)**

Year			American Indian		Hispanic		Black		White	
	Halifax	Warren	Halifax	Warren	Halifax	Warren	Halifax	Warren	Halifax	Warren
2000	57,370	19,972	1,778	959	574	320	30,177	10,885	24,268	7,689
1990	55,516	17,265	1,777	760	222	104	27,591	9,841	25,981	6,595
1980	55,286	16,232	1,216	633	498	97	26,040	9,658	27,809	5,827
2000	100%	100%	3.1%	4.8%	1.0%	1.6%	52.6%	54.5%	42.3%	38.5%
1990	100%	100%	3.2%	4.4%	0.4%	0.6%	49.7%	57.0%	46.8%	38.2%
1980	100%	100%	2.2%	3.9%	0.9%	0.6%	47.1%	59.5%	50.3%	35.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

provides total population numbers and percentage share for American Indian, Hispanic, black, and white population groups.

Currently, the tribe has 3,800 enrolled members. Leaders report that about 70 percent of members reside within a 6-mile radius of the town of Hollister, in Halifax and Warren Counties. Some tribal members are also located in Nash and Franklin Counties.

## **Tribal Mission, Current Priority Programs, and Plans for Economic Development**

### ***Mission***

The mission of the Haliwa-Saponi Tribe is to provide the community with a variety of services and activities to bring about economic, cultural, social, and educational advancements and benefits.

### ***Current Priority Programs***

- In 1979, the tribe increased its efforts to obtain federal recognition, submitting a formal application to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in 1989.<sup>2</sup> As part of this program, the tribe has established an Elders' Review Committee, held several community meetings, and conducted genealogical research on the historic Saponi, Nansemond, and Tuscarora tribes.
- Since 1998, the Haliwa-Saponi tribe has operated several housing programs using an annual appropriation from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These programs provide tribal members access to support as first-time homeowners, down payment assistance, homeownership counseling, and help with housing rehabilitation.
- The tribe's Workforce Investment Act (WIA) program has been in place for 12 years. Serving Halifax, Warren, Nash, and Franklin Counties, the program provides training, job search, and job placement for up to two years, usually in a non-profit agency such as the Twin Counties Rural Health Center. Some participants also receive job-related counseling and workforce orientation. The program helps tribal youth to find summer work placement, funding up to 300 hours of labor.
- The Haliwa-Saponi tribe started its own school in 1957, which was closed in the late 1960s due to federal desegregation laws. In 1999, with funds from the state Department of Public Instruction (DPI), the tribe established a charter school in the same building as the earlier tribal school. This new school is developing in space and enrollment over time, with plans to serve K-12 by 2007.
- The Haliwa-Saponi Day Care Center was first established in 1977 and served 22 children aged 2-5. Originally operated by the North Carolina Commission on Indian Affairs, the tribe assumed management of the center in 1990 and

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2. The Haliwa-Saponi people have sought recognition and assistance from the U.S. Government since at least 1896 (the first documented case).

expanded the center three years later to serve up to 35 children from newborn to five years of age. The day care center is funded through fees, a grant from USDA, and appropriations from the tribal budget.

- Using state-appropriated funds, the tribe manages two substance abuse prevention programs. The after-school program is part of a state initiative to eliminate drugs and violence from North Carolina schools and communities and is funded in part by a grant from RiverStone (formerly Halifax County Mental Health). The Family and Schools Together (FAST) program helps families to develop effective methods of communication.
- Since 1972, the tribe has operated a cultural retention program funded by the N.C. Arts Council and private contributions. Classes for tribal members of all ages are held twice weekly at the tribe's multi-purpose building. The program includes instruction in pottery, beadwork/regalia design and construction, dance/drum classes, and Haliwa-Saponi history, as well as day trips to culturally relevant locations.

### ***Plans for Economic Development***

The Haliwa-Saponi has initiated the following two projects and is looking at the feasibility of several long-term enterprises.

- The tribe has received \$250,000 from HUD's Rural Housing and Economic Development (RHED) program to begin development of Turtle Island/Native America USA, a tourist site that will educate the public about the tribe's culture and heritage while increasing revenues.
- In 1998, the tribe began an effort to restore the tribe's greenhouses in part through funding from the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service. The tribe is beginning to develop plans to cultivate and market medicinal herbs.

### ***Proposed Tribal Enterprises***

- Partnership with the state to provide canoe livery, horseback riding, guided tours, and a small historic Saponi village at the Medoc Mountain State Park
- Provision of broadband Internet service via satellite for rural customers
- Sustainable forestry project with North Carolina State University
- Creation of a Community Development Financial Institution (with technical assistance from the First Nations Development Institute)

## **History of American Indian Economic Development Activity**

### ***Occupations of Tribal Members***

According to the Native Opportunity Way Community Development Corporation (NOW-CDC), the primary occupation of the tribe's women who work outside the Haliwa-Saponi community is factory work, while men are more likely to work in the construction trades, e.g. sheetrock hangers. In the past, a sizeable number of members

worked for large logging companies, such as Arcola Lumber, but tribal leaders report that Latinos have begun to dominate employment in this industry. Approximately 40 percent of tribal members own small businesses. In addition, a small number of people are employed in various administrative departments of Warren County, e.g. health, tax, environmental, and clerk of court.

### ***Tribal Member Businesses***

Most Haliwa-Saponi businesses are sole proprietorships. Member businesses include logging, home improvement, propane products, hairdressing, retail clothing, household linens and bedding, day care centers, restaurants, florists, convenience stores, gas stations/short-order grills, tire washing, insurance, and car garages and repair shops. Farming employment has decreased dramatically over the last several decades, with only 10 or so tribal members still farming.

Some members have worked for many years for a non-Indian business owner or factory to learn the technical skills needed for their business. Others closed former businesses because the costs outweighed the benefits (e.g. long hours invested yielded little profit). Many have accumulated their own capital rather than applying for loans from mainstream financial institutions. However, one small business owner reported that obtaining a formal license and proof of state inspection increased the value of her products to customers and the legitimacy of her business in the community.

Business owners and tribal leaders have cited lack of confidence, capital, and suitable locations as key barriers to the success of small businesses in the Meadows. Factors such as experience with the type of business attempted, attention to high standards, and quality work were associated with success, and considered important to maintain the owner's good name in the community. Word of mouth and advertising in local newspapers, especially for sales events, have helped build clientele. Business owners expressed an interest in mentoring American Indian entrepreneurs.

### ***Land Issues***

In the late 1800s, tribal members lost much of their land to farming failures and inability to pay debts. Landowners with permits rather than deeds were also prey to unscrupulous traders filing claims on their land. The cohesiveness and relative isolation of the Meadows community was undermined in 1906 when the Forestburg Lumber Company bought land from tribal members, established a mill, and brought in a sizeable group of black workers. This influx of non-Indians coupled with longstanding social and legal discrimination prompted tribal leaders to increase efforts to formally organize the tribe.

### ***Tribal Enterprises***

- The tribe's annual pow-wow was instituted in 1965 in celebration of the achievement of state recognition. It is held the third weekend of April each year and is funded in part by ad sales, donations, corporate funding and gate receipts, in addition to grants from the North Carolina Arts Council. The pow-wow utilizes over 100 volunteers and staff. Attendance for the three-day event ranges

### *Haliwa-Saponi Tribe*

from 9,000 to 10,000, and net profits for over the last three years have ranged from \$18,000 to \$35,000.

- In the 1970s, the Haliwa-Saponi tribe established the Greenhouse Initiative to raise and sell nursery plants and vegetables. The business also offered lawn maintenance services. The tribe was able to sell its greenhouse products locally but was unable to secure any major contracts to make a profit.
- The Haliwa-Saponi tribe operated a crafts shop in Warren County that closed about five years ago due to lack of traffic at the site and a low volume of sales.

The business enterprises previously attempted by the tribe have been hampered by a lack of start-up funds and product research (greenhouse plants and vegetables), and low consumer demand (crafts shop, landscaping and lawn maintenance) that is likely related to the small population base in the Meadows.

### ***Partnering and Resource Pooling***

In order to create and maintain partnerships with important stakeholders in the local area, the Haliwa-Saponi tribe has hosted several economic development summits, inviting representatives from both the public and private sectors in Halifax and Warren Counties.

## SECTION 2

# *Strategic Assets and Critical Challenges*

In evaluating the strategic assets and critical challenges of each N.C. tribe and association, the UNC team used a framework that looks at four types of capital: physical, human, financial, and social. Economic developers have always recognized the importance of physical infrastructure and workforce; the addition of financial and social capital reflects an increased emphasis in the knowledge economy on business finance and networks.

Below we summarize our key findings from statistical data, focus groups, individual interviews, and review of tribal documents (where available).

### **Physical Capital**

#### *Land*

Halifax County has 725 square miles of land area and nearly 3,000 acres of available sites for business development (0.7 percent of total land). Warren County's land area is 429 square miles; the county has 306 acres of available business sites (0.1 percent of total land). The only major municipality in the two-county area is Roanoke Rapids in Halifax County. The county seats are Halifax and Warrenton.

Halifax County has two certified industrial sites, with 32 acres available in Halifax and 196 acres available in Roanoke Rapids. In addition to the certified sites, large-acre tracts are available in the county for \$10,000 per acre with infrastructure on site or within extension distance. There are also two industrial parks in Halifax County, one owned by the county and one privately owned. The county purchased the land to develop its industrial park in the mid-1990s for \$3,000 per acre. The county is currently asking between \$8,500 and \$10,000 per acre, but no land has sold at that price. Although the developers of the privately owned industrial park were successful at rapidly increasing the selling price from \$3,000–\$5,000 per acre in 1992 to up to \$13,500 in 1995, no land has sold at the current price of \$15,000 per acre.

Warren County has 40 acres available in its certified industrial site in Norlina. All site analyses have been completed and water, sewer, electrical, natural gas, and telecommunication services are available. Depending on location, industrial land in Warren County currently costs between \$6,500 and \$9,000 per acre. Land values have ap-

preciated very little over the last five to seven years, e.g. industrial land costs have increased about \$500 per acre, mainly to cover the cost of expansion of infrastructure to sites. Although business sites are plentiful, there is a lack of office space.

The Haliwa-Saponi people consider land to be a major asset, particularly in light of the sizeable losses experienced by tribal members over the last century. In fact, one motivation for the tribe's emphasis on housing programs is a desire to "buy back the community — house by house." The tribe currently owns approximately 160 acres of communal land; in addition, individual members of the tribe own over 3,000 acres.

Because federal monies carry many restrictions on their use, 25-30 tribal members decided to invest in the land market through the purchase of 290 acres in Warren County from Continental Can (formerly International Paper). The tribal council supported the venture and provided financing for 25 acres; however, the council decision was not timely as regards the market, thereby limiting the size of the tract. TOT Properties sold the timber for around \$75,000 and is now offering housing lots to tribal members, with financing and low down payments.

### ***Infrastructure***

Interstate 95 runs north/south through the center of Halifax County. Interstate 85 and U.S. 1 run parallel through the northwestern corner of Warren County to the Virginia border.

Choanoke Public Transportation Authority, or CPTA, provides subscription and demand-responsive transportation services for residents of Halifax County and the neighboring counties of Bertie, Hertford and Northampton. Greyhound provides inter-city service to the Roanoke Rapids terminal. Kerr Area Rural Transit System, or KARTS, provides subscription and dial-a-ride transportation services for residents of Warren County and the neighboring counties of Franklin, Granville, Person and Vance.

Halifax County operates its own water and wastewater facilities. Some residents are also served by the Town of Weldon and the Roanoke Rapids Sanitary District. Electrical service is available through Dominion N.C. Power, Progress Energy, Halifax Electric Membership Corporation, Roanoke Electric Membership Corporation, the Town of Enfield and the Town of Scotland Neck. North Carolina Natural Gas serves customers in certain areas of Halifax County. Progress Energy and Halifax Electric Membership Corporation supply electricity to Warren County. Natural gas service is available from Frontier Energy. The proportion of households with high-speed Internet access in Halifax and Warren Counties is 64 percent and 51 percent, respectively. This compares with 75 percent statewide.

For the second consecutive year, Warren County's Kerr Lake Regional Water System has received a citation for producing the best drinking water in North Carolina. Water and Sewer District II, which provides water to the northwest and north central portions of the county, is now nearing completion. Water and Sewer District III will serve the eastern half of the county; installation of lines will be accomplished in several phases beginning March 1, 2003. The Hollister area only received county water service a few years ago and is still lacking wastewater disposal and treatment. Haliwa-Saponi leaders stress that leaders from both Halifax and Warren Counties need to be

brought into discussions with the tribe regarding installation of a treatment plant, if the tribe is to attract commercial and retail development.

Lake Gaston stretches across Warren and Halifax Counties' northern borders, with the Roanoke River, which flows southeast from the lake, forming Halifax's eastern border. Also, part of Kerr Lake is in Warren's northwestern tip. In addition to these water resources, Halifax County is home to Medoc Mountain State Park, located near Hollister.

### ***Buildings***

In 1972, the Haliwa-Saponi tribe built its current tribal administration building. In 1987, the tribe constructed a multi-purpose building, which houses a small library (open by appointment) and serves as the administrative center for tribal cultural arts and youth services programs. The facility is also available to tribal leaders and members for meetings, trainings, social activities, and recreational events. The interior of the building was refurbished in 2002.

The tribe plans to construct a new 18-office complex adjacent to its current office. The tribe hopes to work with Halifax County to locate a law enforcement branch or county police station in the complex to satisfy the security requirement of local banks to establish a branch office or ATM machine for the community.

### ***Housing***

According to the 2000 Census, there are 22,134 households in Halifax County and 7,715 households in Warren County. Home ownership rates in Halifax and Warren Counties are 67 percent and 77 percent, respectively. However, many tribal members live in sub-standard housing or mobile homes. Tribal leaders report that procuring consumer loans, even for affordable housing, is a challenge for many members given that they have neither checking nor savings accounts with local banks.

The Haliwa-Saponi Tribe has leveraged over \$2.1 million of USDA funding for 502 Loan Guarantee/Homeownership and grants for Home Rehabilitation. The tribe operates housing construction and down payment assistance programs and employs local contractors. Since the tribe started building houses, both property values and county regulations regarding infrastructure development have increased. The tribe has also received funding from the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency for homeowner rehabilitation for the past three years. In addition, the tribe manages 16 units through the HUD-sponsored Mutual Help Home Ownership Opportunity program.

The tribe also manages two tribal units of rental housing owned by the tribe prior to 1998. In addition, the tribe manages 30 rental units of 1937 housing stock with an annual rental income of approximately \$30,000 and an annual subsidy from HUD of approximately \$114,000.

## Human Capital

### Leadership

Over the last 30 years, leaders and administrators have built a broad and stable base of federal, state, and local programs to benefit tribal members. Some of the current leaders left the community for a number of years to work in other states or parts of North Carolina. They are now putting the experience they gained in housing, strategic planning, agency administration, and the management of cultural and educational events to use in leading the tribe’s economic development.

Tribal leaders have served on the boards of local, state, and national organizations and have become recognized leaders outside of the native community. For example, W.R. Richardson is a former chief of the tribe who was recognized by the governor as an effective and dedicated North Carolina leader. As a Warren County Commissioner, the late Glen Richardson worked to improve the tribe’s visibility, establish a network of key contacts at both state and local levels, and create an institutional legacy to further development. Mr. Richardson was the first Native American county commissioner in Warren County.

Although tribal leaders have also worked hard to establish profitable enterprises for the Haliwa-Saponi, they have had less success in direct business creation than in the acquisition of a range of federal and foundation grants. Many feel that the tribe’s leadership could profit from management training, which would be particularly useful for planning and implementation of future tribal enterprises.

### Economic Development Committees or Staff

The tribe employed an economic development director for a few years; however, the position was funded through a grant. As a result, the position was terminated in June 2002 when grant funding expired.

### Key Employers & Entrepreneurs

Table 2 lists the 10 largest private-sector employers in Halifax and Warren Counties. In the period from 1997–2002, approximately 1,400 workers in Halifax County and 185

TABLE 2  
Largest Private-Sector Employers in Halifax and Warren Counties

Halifax	Warren
International Paper Company Inc.	Warren Hills Nursing Center
Safelite Glass Corp.	Ravenwood International Corp.
Westpoint Stevens Inc.	Cochrane Furniture Co. Inc.
Wal-Mart Associates Inc.	Inland Paperboard & Packing
Interim Health Care Morris Group	Elberta Crate & Box Co.
Food Lion LLC	Food Lion LLC
AAA Carolinas	McDade Apparel LLC
Resers Fine Foods Inc.	Eckerd Family Youth
Vencor Nursing Centers East LLC	Murphy-Brown LLC
Patch Rubber Co. Inc.	Lowes Food Stores Inc.

Source: N.C. Employment Security Commission

workers in Warren County were laid off. The Halifax and Warren County industries most affected by closings include textiles, clothing and apparel, and general merchandise products.

In Halifax County, the rate of business start-up was 8.7 percent and the business failure rate was 7.2 percent. In Warren County, business start-up and failure rates were 7.2 percent and 6.6 percent, respectively. These startup rates are considerably lower than the state average of 11.6 percent. Investments for expansion of businesses in Halifax County totaled 81.1 million and created 167 jobs; in Warren County, business owners invested 31.9 million to expand their business and created 62 additional jobs for the economy.

### ***Workforce Attributes and Existing Skills***

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2001, there were approximately 17,881 Halifax County residents and 4,173 Warren County residents in the work force. The average unemployment rate in 2001 was 11.2 percent in Halifax County and 10.3 percent in Warren County. In both counties, government is the leading sector, employing over one-quarter of residents in Halifax County and one-third in Warren County. Table 3 provides a breakdown of the shares of employment in each employment sector.

**TABLE 3**  
**Employment by Sector, Halifax and Warren**  
**Counties, Second Quarter, 2001**

Employment Sector	Percent Share of Labor Force in	
	Halifax	Warren
Construction	3.2	5.9
Manufacturing	16.7	19.9
Services	18.5	18.1
Trade	24.7	11.5
Fin., Ins. & Real Estate	2.5	1.7
Government	28.5	33.8

Source: N.C. Department of Commerce,  
<http://emedis.commerce.state.nc.us/countyprofiles/>

The 2000 Census revealed that in Halifax County, 34.6 percent of the general population 25 years of age and older have not completed high school, compared to nearly 51 percent of Native Americans. Slightly over 33 percent of Halifax County residents have only a high school diploma, 5.3 percent have associate degrees, and 8.0 percent have completed a bachelor's degree. Approximately the same proportion of Native Americans as total population in the county have only a high school diploma, just under 1.0 percent have associate degrees, and 2.3 percent have completed a bachelor's degree.

In Warren County, 32.5 percent of the general population 25 years and older have not completed high school, compared to 51.3 percent of Native Americans. Nearly

32 percent have only a high school diploma, 5.5 percent have associate degrees, and 7.1 percent have completed a bachelor's degree. Slightly over 28 percent of Native Americans in Warren County have only a high school diploma, 1.8 percent hold associate degrees, and 1.6 percent have earned a bachelor's degree.

Median household income in Halifax and Warren Counties in 1999 was \$26,460 and \$28,350, respectively. Nearly 24 percent of the Halifax County population was below the poverty level while 19 percent of residents were living in poverty in Warren County. The mean travel time for workers 16 years and older was 24 minutes in Halifax and 30 minutes in Warren County.

Currently, about 70 percent of Haliwa-Saponi tribal members commute to Rocky Mount, Roanoke Rapids, Warrenton, and other nearby cities and towns. Construction workers travel as far as Richmond, Wilmington, and Charlotte to find work. Some tribal members with high-technology skills, such as computerized billing, can only put these skills to use in areas with both large employers, e.g. county/regional hospitals, and the necessary telecommunications infrastructure.

Tribal leaders report that even though the local job market has improved over the last decade, members need more workforce development opportunities, particularly related to computer technology and Internet use. Both types of classes are offered at area community colleges; however, many members are reluctant to spend the time and money to commute to evening classes, especially given that they also commute daily to work.

### ***Workforce Development Institutions***

Vance-Granville Community College's Warren County campus, located in Warrenton, offers courses for students planning to transfer to four-year institutions, plus some computer and cosmetology classes.

Halifax Community College (HCC) operates several programs designed to help residents in its service area find and qualify for employment, including JobLink and WIA. As part of the Welfare to Work program, HCC offers courses that assist participants to conduct job searches and to improve their job interview skills. HCC has instituted a nursing assistant program in cooperation with the N.C. Department of Social Services. HCC has counselors working with disadvantaged population groups and has recently established a program to help turn around a high dropout rate in its associate degree programs.

The local school boards of Halifax and Warren Counties administer the federal Department of Education's Title IV Indian Education Program for K-12 students. The tribe manages its own charter school, currently for K-8, and described further below in "Social Capital."

### ***Rural to Urban Migration***

Brain drain is a major problem — in this part of the state generally, as well as for the Haliwa-Saponi — and tribal leaders are searching for ways to lure people back to the Meadows. There have been several major periods of migration: (1) after the two world

wars, tribal members moved north to seek new employment opportunities; (2) in the 1960s, as part of the Indian Relocation Program, members moved to Greensboro and Lexington; (3) in the late 1970s, approximately 800 people migrated to northern urban areas such as Richmond, Silver Springs, and Philadelphia.

## **Financial Capital**

### ***Federal or state grants***

A central development strategy for the tribe has been to achieve a high rate of success in seeking out and winning set-aside grant funding. Guided by the tribe's mission statement, Haliwa-Saponi council members and administrators have built an impressive roster of programs funded by federal and state grants over the last 30 years. These programs have provided a variety of benefits for tribal members: early childhood and youth education, retention and promotion of the tribe's heritage and culture, mental health and communication skills, home ownership and energy assistance, and employment counseling and placement.

Haliwa-Saponi tribal administrators have shared copies of the tribe's applications for Native American housing grants with other N.C. tribes. However, tribal leaders believe there is little incentive for N.C. tribes to join together on grant applications since the total amount of money available remains the same.

### ***Sources and Amounts of Program Funds***

The tribe's most important programs, as reported by tribal leaders, include:

- **Federal recognition.** The tribe has been working on this since its first petition letter in 1989. Grants for \$69,000 from ANA and Warren County for \$10,000 have helped continue this effort, including answering the Letter of Obvious Deficiencies.
- **Tribal housing programs.** Over the past five years, the tribe has received \$5 million in grant funding from HUD, to provide tribal members with support for first-time home ownership, down payment assistance, counseling, and housing rehabilitation.
- **Workforce Investment Act.** The tribe has administered this program, as well as CETA and JTPA before it, since 1975. WIA provides training, job search, and job placement for 2 years as well as counseling and workforce orientation. The tribe receives \$71,000 in funding from the U.S. Department of Labor.
- **Day care center.** The Haliwa-Saponi Day Care Center, in operation since 1990, is funded by the tribe with \$125,000 per year. The day care center serves up to 35 children from newborn to five years.
- **Charter school.** The Haliwa Charter School, re-established in 1999, is recognized by the N.C. Department of Public Instruction. It currently serves children in grades K–8 with plans to expand to K–12.
- **Substance abuse prevention.** The tribe works with the state as well as RiverStone, an affiliate of Halifax County Mental Health, on programs to elimi-

nate drugs and violence from schools and to help family members deal with substance abuse.

- **Tourism development.** The tribe received a \$250,000 grant from HUD's Rural Housing and Economic Development program to explore the development of a tourist site called Turtle Island Native America, USA along I-95 intended to educate the public about the tribe's culture while increasing revenues.
- **Greenhouse development.** The N.C. cooperative extension service is assisting the tribe to restore its greenhouses and outfit them to grow medicinal herbs.
- **Cultural retention.** In partnership with the North Carolina Arts Council, the tribe holds classes twice weekly and provides cultural day trips.

### ***Non-Profits and Foundations***

The Native Opportunity Way Community Development Corporation (NOW-CDC) located in Hollister has developed a slate of programs to support the needs of both natives and non-natives in the community for individual and small business loans, business development assistance, and homeownership opportunities and counseling. The CDC is also planning to set up a small business center, and a for-profit business that individuals in the community can invest in. Although its programs are not exclusively for American Indian persons, Native Opportunity Way represents another source of resources and technical assistance for Haliwa-Saponi tribal members.

NOW-CDC is funneling resources from various non-profits and foundations to community members through loans to individuals, families, and business owners. The Board of Directors recently appointed a loan committee to develop application criteria. Loan committee members represent federal and state agencies, local banks, electric cooperatives, and citizen organizations. Recent funding sources for business and home ownerships loans include the Halifax Edgecombe Wilson Enterprise (HEW) Alliance and the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. The CDC also provides information in its newsletter about state programs such as the Homeownership Mortgage Loan Program, Single Family Rehabilitation Program, and the Urgent Repair Program.

NOW-CDC owns four acres in Essex and is hoping to involve community members in developing the property. Current plans include constructing a service station, and perhaps a restaurant and business incubator. NOW is publicizing the proposed development to the community as a business opportunity that will accommodate individual investors. The objective of this project is to keep more money and control over development in the community.

### ***Corporate Sponsors/Partners***

NOW-CDC is working with banks such as BB&T, First Citizens, and Centura to locate tenants for a 30-unit subdivision in Warren County. USDA and HUD are contributing funds for organizational and capacity-building support. The project will provide much needed housing and profits can be funneled back into community programs.

### ***Utilities with Economic Development Funds***

Incentive rates for electrical service are available to both new and expanding businesses under certain conditions. For example, Progress Energy, which serves Halifax and Warren Counties, has an economic development rider that offers discounts over a five-year period on the electricity demand charges for new loads over 1,000kW. To be eligible for discounts, business owners or corporations must satisfy certain employment and investment conditions.

### ***Community Resources and Networks***

Halifax County has two local banks, both based in Roanoke Rapids. Although they do not have commercial services, they offer consumer loans and mortgages.

## **Social Capital**

### ***Institutions***

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Haliwa-Saponi leaders used the establishment of separate American Indian institutions as a strategy to promote self-sufficiency, to improve educational and social opportunities for tribal members, and to mitigate repression of American Indian identity by authorities. The tribe established two American Indian schools: Secret Hill School in Halifax County and Bethlehem School in Warren County. Although both schools eventually closed, tribal leaders built upon these efforts to found the Haliwa Indian School in 1957. The only non-reservation, tribally supported educational institution in the state, the school remained in operation until desegregation laws forced its closure in 1969.

The school was re-opened as a charter school in 1999. The first year, the school served children in grades K–4. Now in 2003 the school includes grades K–8, with plans to expand to include K–12 and serve 300 students in the next four years. The school has added 8,000 square feet of classroom space in the past three years. One classroom is a computer lab with 18 computers, and each other classroom has a computer as well. The school also purchased two new buses and a 15-passenger van.

The influx of African-Americans in the 1910s to work in the timber processing industry prompted tribal leaders to look for ways for the tribe to maintain a distinct identity within the general “free colored” population.<sup>3</sup> As a result, tribal members established the Mount Bethel Indian Baptist Church, formally the Saponi Indian Baptist Church, which continues to act as a unifying force for the community. The presence of the NOW-CDC, discussed above, is also an important asset for the tribe in these communities in networking with various resource providers and programs.

### ***Technology-based Resources***

The tribe has created a computer database for organizing the genealogical enrollment information and historical research on ancestor tribes collected as part of its Federal

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3. In North Carolina, American Indians as well as Blacks and Mulattoes were generally considered “free colored.”

Recognition project. The tribe has developed a web site but it is not currently available to Internet users due to lack of maintenance. Halifax Community College has plans to establish a distance learning facility in Hollister but has not been able to procure funding.

### ***Small Business Centers***

Offered through Halifax Community College's Continuing Education Department, *Focused Industrial Training (FIT)* is a special training program for North Carolina's manufacturing industries. FIT uses individualized needs assessments and consultations to design and implement targeted, customized training for organizations that need to upgrade workers' skills because of technological or process advances.

JobLink Career Centers provide job and training seekers access to information on unemployment insurance, education and training opportunities, and services such as career guidance, resume preparation, job placement and referral to partner agencies. Services available to employers include work recruitment assistance, rapid response assistance for plant closings, and information on worker training and tax credits and hiring incentives. The Northampton/Halifax County JobLink Career Center is located in Roanoke Rapids. Warren County's JobLink Career Center is in Warrenton.

HCC's Small Business Center offers non-traditional seminars and workshops that can be presented on virtually any business-related topic that the small business community demands. Counseling services are provided for start-up businesses or existing businesses seeking help with problems. A resource center with periodicals, tapes, and books is located in the Continuing Education Center. HCC also offers on-line small business courses. HCC conducts small business development workshops and seminars at the Haliwa-Saponi tribal administration center if there is sufficient demand (one per year). The college has also participated in the tribe's economic development forums.

### ***Economic Development Programs/Activities***

Five years ago, the tribe conducted a survey of members within a 200-mile radius to get their views regarding potential business opportunities. The tribe also conducts quarterly business support workshops. The tribe has also been proactive in hiring local contractors for construction as part of its housing programs.

### ***Community Resources and Networks***

Tribal members report they still face discrimination when dealing with county/state agencies administering workforce training and social service programs, such as longer-than-average wait times and rudeness. As a result, many members are reluctant to use existing service networks. Tribal leaders feel there would be a higher level of usage of these resources if members could fill out applications in the tribal community center.

## SECTION 3

# *Most Promising Opportunities for Economic Development*

### **Conclusions**

- Between 1980 and 2000, Warren County's population increase fell far short of the state average (23 percent versus 37 percent) and population growth in Halifax County was minimal at 3.8 percent. However, the population of the two-county area is becoming more diverse with Native American and Hispanic population groups experiencing the most (and relatively comparable) growth. The American Indian population grew by 48 percent over the last two decades while the white population decreased by 5 percent, the black population increased by 15 percent, and the Hispanic population increased by 50 percent.
- There are low employment and business opportunities in both counties where the Haliwa-Saponi reside, compared with the state at large. Expansion of water and sewer in eastern Warren County is underway, but there is a lack of office space in the county.
- The amount of communal land is large but there are restrictions vis-à-vis its market use, e.g. decision processes are slow, benefits should accrue to most or all tribal members.
- Economic development planning to date has been linked to specific grants rather than being long-term and strategic.

### **Key Assets**

- Broad and stable base of programs
- Substantial amount of tribal land
- Visibility of leaders, and contacts and experience from larger community (local elected bodies, national boards, other urban areas)
- High level of existing workforce skills (construction trades and computer)
- Demonstrated ability of the tribe to win and leverage federal grant funds

## **Key Challenges**

- Lack of local infrastructure/services
- Leakage of disposable income of tribal members to adjacent urban areas
- Lack of affordable, decent housing for some tribal members
- Longstanding reliance on grants procurement to support development
- Low education levels compared with other American Indian tribes and the general population.

## **Recommendations**

### ***General Recommendations***

- Exchange ideas with other tribes, such as the Sappony of the High Plains Community, for developing strategies to bring tribal members back to the rural community and attracting the necessary services and infrastructure to keep them there.
- View the development of a tourism marketing strategy as a process with several tiers, beginning with a focus on local and regional tourists and eventual expansion to state- and nation-wide marketing. Explore heritage and nature tourism models that have been successful in the U.S. and other countries (e.g. Costa Rica).
- Use the Haliwa Charter School as a vehicle to increase the number of college and advanced degrees earned by tribal youth and to raise the basic education levels of interested adults.
- Begin marketing the space in the proposed 18-office complex to businesses and non-profits in Warren County.

### ***Specific Projects/Activities***

- The tribe should designate a person or create a standing committee that will partner with NOW-CDC, Halifax Community College, and NCIEDI to broker training for tribal leaders, workers, and business owners. Suggested training topics are: (1) leadership and effective participation on boards, (2) computer/Internet skills development (all levels), (3) writing business start-up and expansion plans, and (4) management training for tribal enterprise managers.
- Create an economic development committee with a technical focus. The committee's role is to research and consider business opportunities for profit-making enterprises (separate from the services and programs maintained by the tribal council). The committee should work directly with the administrator (similar to a county manager and departments), who will systematically report the results to the council.
- Building on earlier forums, host a one-day Project Development Workshop on a specific opportunity (e.g. tourism) that includes participants from all relevant sectors: local elected officials, state officials, public service companies, local

businesses, financial institutions, and directors of parks and recreation and local/regional tourism agencies. Use the meeting to determine what would be needed to get the project done and who will do it, e.g. market research, locating suppliers, getting media attention. The output of the meeting will be a detailed business plan with designated responsibility for activities.

- Design and construct an independent tribal web site and hire a part-time computer technician who will program and maintain the content, and regularly update the web site with new information. Make use of student volunteers with computer and Internet skills from area high schools, community colleges, and the e-NC's TechForce program (if established in Halifax and Warren Counties).

Resource: Rural Internet Access Authority: [www.e-nc.org](http://www.e-nc.org)

