

***Economic Development Assessment
for the
High Plains Sappony Tribe***

July 2003

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Office of Economic Development
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Acknowledgments

The UNC assessment team would like to acknowledge the important contributions of several High Plains Sappony tribal members who facilitated our work in conducting this assessment. Dante Desiderio provided copies of written documents, suggestions and contact information regarding key informants outside the tribe, and ongoing feedback for the assessment process. Dante Desiderio, Otis Martin, and Lee Roy Epps supplied the team with key information on the tribe's genealogy, economic development plans, and current programs as well as a tour of the High Plains community. Fay Martin acted as the point person for the assessment team and organized the tribe's focus groups. We would also like to thank Dorothy Crowe, Council Chair, and the Tribal Council for providing direction to the UNC team at the onset of the assessment process, and review and suggestions for making this report more accurate and useful to the High Plains Sappony Tribe.

We thank the North Carolina Indian Economic Development Initiative, the N.C. Rural Economic Development Center, and the Progress Energy Foundation for sponsoring and supporting this assessment project conducted jointly by two UNC campuses, Chapel Hill and Pembroke. We also would like to thank Russell Hieb and David Kiel for their guidance and facilitation of this multi-faceted effort. And we appreciate the help of Greg Richardson and Kim Hammonds for hosting the September 2002 project kickoff meeting of all the tribes and associations at the offices of the North Carolina Commission on Indian Affairs in Raleigh.

The findings and recommendations contained in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Sappony of the High Plains Community or NCIEDI.

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This assessment represents an objective inventory of the assets and opportunities of the High Plains Sappony Tribe 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 High Plains Sappony-run organizations, High Plains Sappony business owners and citizens, and the communities in which the High Plains Sappony 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

The majority of the High Plains Community of American Indians is descended from members of the Sappony Nation who chose to remain in their ancestral homeland rather than migrate north to join the Iroquois or west in an attempt to outpace colonial expansion. The earliest traces of the Monassukapanough Tribe (later shortened to Sappony) are found on a 1612 map created by Virginia colonist John Smith, which shows the tribe west of the Chesapeake Bay, close to the Blue Ridge Mountains.

In 1714, the ancestors of the High Plains Community joined other eastern Siouan-speaking tribes in Williamsburg to sign a peace treaty with the Virginia Governor. They resided at Fort Christianna, established by the British as a trade center and defensive buffer against hostile northern tribes, until it closed three years later due to low profit margins. However, licensed traders had settled the vicinity around the fort, and the Sappony who eventually migrated to the High Plains took their surnames.

The tribe's ancestors settled in the High Plains because it was already familiar to the people and isolated enough to provide safe haven, and it contained fertile land and favorable conditions for growing tobacco. Tobacco became the centerpiece of the tribe's economy and drive for self-sufficiency for over two hundred years until the mid 1970s when a large proportion of the community's farmland was appropriated for a hydroelectric plant. More recently, tobacco farming has declined even further from an overall decline in the tobacco industry.

The natural boundaries of the "High Plains" are the Hyco River, Mayo Creek, and Blue Wing Creek with the North Carolina/Virginia border (created in 1728 by the surveying party of William Byrd and Sappony Indian guides) running through the heart of the community.

Governing Structure

The Sappony of the High Plains Community is made up of persons with blood ties to seven families.¹ The tribe's insignia demonstrates the cohesiveness of the community by paying homage to the founding families with seven feathers and seven stars. The Tribal Council is comprised of a representative from each family plus a Tribal Chairperson and Tribal Chief. All representatives including the Chief and Chair are elected to serve alternating four-year terms. An executive director, assisted by the treasurer and secretary, carries out the goals of the council, manages the tribe's budget, and provides fiscal reports to funding agencies and the council.

The tribe's governance operates as a non-profit organization called The High Plains Indians, Inc. and employs two full-time staff people, a project director, and an assistant project director working from the tribal office. The tribe's average annual budget over the last three years was approximately \$80,659. Tribal leaders have created standing committees to address specific community concerns and priorities such as access to education, economic development, and the organization of important events. In 1911, the tribe was formally recognized by the General Assembly of North Carolina as the "Indians of Person County." The tribe gained a seat on the board of the North Carolina Commission on Indian Affairs (NCCIA) in 1997.

Demographics

In the early 1900s, the state of North Carolina named American Indian tribes after the county in which they resided. However, not all of the High Plains Sappony live in North Carolina; 15-20 families live north of Person County in Halifax County, Virginia. For this reason, tribal leaders use "High Plains" to describe the location of the community and the term "Sappony" as the tribal designation, and they prefer "The Sappony of the High Plains" as their appropriate designation. There are 850 members on the tribal roll, with just under half currently living in or near the High Plains area.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there are approximately 288 Native Americans residing in Person and Halifax Counties, representing 0.4 percent of the total combined population. Between 1980 and 2000, the population of Person County increased by 22 percent, compared with a growth rate of 37 percent for North Carolina overall. Halifax County's population increased by 22 percent, compared with an overall growth rate of 32 percent for the state of Virginia. Between 1980 and 2000, the Native American population of the two counties increased by 37 percent. During that time the white population increased by 24 percent, the black population by 13 percent, and the Hispanic population by 160 percent. Table 1 provides population numbers and percentage share for American Indian, Hispanic, black, and white population groups.

1. The seven surnames for the High Plains Community are Martin, Epps, Coleman, Johnson, Shepherd, Stewart, and Talley.

TABLE 1
Population Numbers and Percentage Shares of Population Groups
Person County, NC and Halifax County, VA, (1980–2000)

Year	Person		American Indian		Hispanic		Black		White	
			Person	Halifax	Person	Halifax	Person	Halifax	Person	Halifax
2000	35,623	37,355	214	75	657	748	448	10,046	14,195	24,509
1990	30,180	29,033	181	79	461	249	161	9,106	11,393	20,740
1980	29,164	30,599	161	50	321	272	189	9,159	12,268	19,808
2000	100%	100%	0.6%	0.2%	2.0%	2.1%	1.2%	28.2%	38.0%	68.8%
1990	100%	100%	0.6%	0.3%	1.6%	0.8%	0.6%	30.2%	39.2%	68.7%
1980	100%	100%	0.6%	0.2%	1.1%	0.9%	0.6%	31.4%	40.1%	67.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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

Tribal Mission

The tribe's mission is to offer and promote educational, economic, and social opportunities while maintaining and preserving its history as an Indian people.

Current Priority Programs

- Federal Acknowledgement has been a top priority for the tribe since 1995. To support this effort, the tribe procured a grant from the federal Administration for Native Americans (ANA) in 1997 to initiate an historical and genealogical study of the High Plains Indians to prove that they are directly descended from the Sappony Tribe. The positive results of the study were announced at the tribe's homecoming celebration in 1999. The tribe's formal petition was submitted to the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in March 2001.
- In 2002, the tribe worked with Person County to construct an exhibit for the Sappony of High Plains at the Person County Museum of History. Entitled *The Honestest & Bravest*,² the exhibit uses maps, records, drawings, photos, and crafts to document the tribe's history from the early 1600s. The formal opening of the exhibit took place in May 2002.
- The tribe's Cultural Youth Camp project was initiated in 2001 with a grant from the Golden LEAF (Long-term Economic Advancement Foundation). The first camp was held in 2002 and was considered a great success by tribal members. The tribe offered the Youth Camp again in 2003 and, based on the results of the last two years, believes the camp is a good model for other N.C. tribes. The main objectives of the youth camp are to instill cultural pride and build self-esteem in American Indian youth, and to help youth differentiate between the historical economic role of tobacco and the health risks of smoking. The

2. The title of the exhibit is taken from William Byrd's description of the Sappony in *Histories of the Dividing Line Betwixt Virginia and North Carolina* (1728).

youth camp is open to all American Indian youth and is conducted at nearby Mayo State Park adjacent to the tribal community.

- The tribe maintains a federally-funded Cultural Education Program that allows its youth to attend American Indian cultural events across the state, including pow-wows and exhibitions.

Plans for Economic Development

Economic development is a high priority for the Sappony of the High Plains. In fact, tribal leaders have held several community meetings and a Tribal Council retreat to gather input for creating an economic development strategy.

The tribe's economic development strategy has two main components: (1) centralization of information and services, and (2) use of technology to give tribal members timely access to information when they need it, no matter where they are located. Tribal leaders have designed three programs that they feel will meet the economic needs of all community members. The first program will advertise available jobs to both individuals residing in the Sappony of the High Plains community as well as those who would like to return. The second program will provide small business support and information to tribal members who already have businesses or wish to start one. The third program will promote the development of tribally owned businesses. Tribal leaders have already undertaken a community needs assessment as an initial step in implementation of this program.

Tribal leaders hope to establish a tribal office and community center as a physical base from which the tribe can implement its economic development strategy and programs. At the same time, in order to meet its goal of providing timely information to all tribal members, tribal leaders plan to create an intra-tribal web site. Individuals will be able to access the site to get up-to-date information on the job market so that they apply for available jobs in a timely way. A tribal web site will also help business owners to market their businesses and get information about contracting and funding opportunities as well as business support services.

History of American Indian Economic Development Activity

Occupations of Tribal Members

Tribal leaders believe that the Sappony of the High Plains demonstrate a good work ethic and have developed a broad base of talent and skills. Members work in the following industries and professions: computer technology, marketing, sales, retail food, plant management, utility operations, academic research, K-12 education, medicine, mental health, law, and banking. The tribe also considers education to be a strong priority, and this ethic serves the whole tribe as well as individual members. Several members have careers in the local school system and have used their writing and professional skills to support the advancement of community schools, such as the Bethel Hill Charter School.

Leaders report that the industrial sector in Person County has grown in the last few years and some members have taken advantage of this trend. However, the types of industry in Person and Halifax Counties are considered less than desirable, especially for young adults 18–30 years old.

Tribal Member Businesses

Tribal members are self-employed as master-level tradesmen (e.g. electricians), artisans, and crafts producers. Service businesses include (but are not limited to) trucking, printing, equipment sales, retail food, grading and landscaping, heating and air conditioning, and transportation/shipping. Tribal entrepreneurs have traditionally relied on the support of extended family and friends as well as the established network of tribal members who live outside the High Plains area in creating new businesses.

Members cite the following key factors in business success:

- Good local reputation
- Visibility
- Providing good work and service (being honest, fair, prompt, and reliable)
- Risk-taking
- Networking
- Belief in God, self, and family
- Access to loans and credit

Key challenges facing the tribe in increasing economic and business activity and encouraging members to return to the community are:

- Lack of competitiveness
- Lack of communication with local governments
- Lack of representation on local boards
- Lack of respect and consideration as key community stakeholders
- Limited opportunities for returning members to purchase land and housing
- Tendency of entrepreneurs to start businesses where their contacts are
- Costs and disincentives of relocating (moving expenses, forming new contacts)

Land Issues

Although tribal leaders feel that the rural character of the High Plains community makes it less than ideal for business development, they consider its beauty to be a key economic asset. For example, the tribal community is in close proximity to recreational areas, such as the Roxboro Country Club golf course and Lake Mayo, with facilities for camping, fishing, and boating.

Lake Mayo was established 25 years ago by Progress Energy (then CP&L) as part of the construction of its power plant in Person County. Some of the utility's property is adjacent to land owned by tribal members and the tribe has considered a partner-

ship to enhance the lake area with nature trails, cabins, and other rustic amenities. There have been some mixed feelings about working with the power plant, however. This stems from the displacement of the community, despite protests, which included houses and graves being relocated to make way for the power plant and Lake Mayo. Furthermore, tribal landowners insist that CP&L officials promised them certain rights-of-way around the lake but these agreements were never written down and were not honored by the company. Progress Energy officials now say that the state and federal permitting required of Lake Mayo in the 1970s was considerably different and more stringent as regards the use of reservoir shorelines than Hyco Lake and others that were licensed in the 1950s. Although Indians and others can and do use the lake for hunting and fishing, there are strict limitations on building or leasing on the shoreline of Lake Mayo.

The growing of tobacco was the centerpiece of the tribe's economy for 200 years. Three years ago, the tribe conducted a parade in Roxboro using horses, farm machinery, and landscaping tools to celebrate its farming heritage. The tribe is looking at partnering with a local farmer to draw upon members' extensive experience with tobacco farming to grow replacement crops.³ Tribal members would lease the land and equipment and provide a percentage of profits to the landowner.

Tribal Enterprises

The tribe has procured rural economic development loans and grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The grant and loans are being used to fund the purchase of a tribal office, which should be completed by the end of 2003.

Partnering and Resource Pooling

Leaders believe that potential partnerships have been undermined because the tribe has asked little from the county and state (i.e. is not good at being a "squeaky wheel"). Rather, tribal members have relied on each other in the past. An important activity for leaders is to build a partner base of civic leaders as well as employer and business support.

3. North Carolina State University is currently working with Kings, Inc. to conduct research on "test crops" to replace tobacco. Now based in Winston-Salem, the British agricultural firm expects to contract with North Carolina farmers with large holdings to grow plants for use in the biotechnology industry.

SECTION 2

Strategic Assets and Critical Challenges

In evaluating the strategic assets and critical challenges of each North Carolina-based 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

Person County has 392 square miles of land area and just over 800 acres of available industrial sites for business development (0.32 percent of total land). Halifax County's land area is 819 square miles with 3,239 acres of available sites (0.62 percent of total land). There are no major municipalities in Person or Halifax Counties. The county seats of Person County and Halifax County are Roxboro and Halifax, respectively.

In Person County the average price today of prime industrial land, with amenities in place, ranges from \$20,000 to \$40,000 per acre, with location as well as sales in the area driving the price. Ten years ago, the price range for the same type of property was \$7,500 to \$10,000 per acre. Availability of industrial land has remained about the same over the years, because the county maintains an inventory of available sites and as they are sold, the county secures new ones. Class A office space in Person County runs about \$100 per square foot, but there is not much available.

In Halifax County the price of industrial land with infrastructure in place has changed little. The average price 10 years ago was between \$15,000 and \$20,000 per acre, and today it is still around \$20,000 per acre. There is currently less prime industrial land available because much has been purchased recently, but the county is in the process of extending infrastructure and looking for additional land to increase its inventory. The average price of office space in Halifax County is about \$8 per square foot.

In 1997, the tribe acquired 37 acres of undeveloped land in Person County. The Arlington County [Virginia] Community Services Foundation donated the land to the tribe in response to a written request from a key foundation donor. The council has not made a formal decision regarding how this asset will be used but is considering, among other options, a combined administrative offices and community center or a senior day care center.

The land around and near Lake Mayo, while controlled by Progress Energy, is also a potential asset for tourism-related development for the tribe — for example, with cabins and a gift shop — if a mutually beneficial agreement can be reached.

Buildings

The tribe does not own any buildings. Currently, the tribe uses a rented space for tribal council meetings and tribal administration; special functions and social events are held at the Calvary Baptist Church. Leaders are currently working with the USDA Rural Development and other sources to create an economic development activity center that can accommodate a growing tribal administration, business incubation, combined elder/day care center, and recreation (e.g. walking trails, soccer field).

Infrastructure

Although Person County borders the Research Triangle region, it is a fairly rural county with no Interstate highways. US Highway 501, a major north-south four-lane used by commuters, enters Person County from adjacent Durham County, runs through Roxboro and continues northward through Halifax County, Virginia. Highway 58/360 enters Halifax County from the west, skirts South Boston and continues east to Richmond and the Chesapeake Bay. Halifax County has no Interstate highways within its borders.

Kerr Area Rural Transit System, or KARTS, provides subscription and dial-a-ride transportation services for residents of Person County and the neighboring counties of Franklin, Granville, Vance, and Warren. Triangle Transit Authority operates vanpools and buspools in the Research Triangle metropolitan region to connect Raleigh, Durham, Cary and Chapel Hill with Research Triangle Park, Raleigh-Durham International Airport, and surrounding suburbs, including possible future destinations in Person County. Park-and-ride facilities also are available. Halifax County does not have local public transportation, but South Boston has a Greyhound bus terminal.

Dominion Virginia Power and Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative supply electricity to Halifax County. Columbia Gas of Virginia provides natural gas. South Boston, Halifax, Clover, and Scottsburg provide water and sewerage services to their residents while Virgilina supplies water alone. In Person County, water and wastewater services are provided by the City of Roxboro. Progress Energy and Piedmont Electric Corporation supply electricity and Public Service Company of North Carolina provides natural gas.

Over 62 percent of households in Person County have access to high-speed Internet.⁴

Person County has abundant water resources: the Mayo and Hyco reservoirs in the north, plus the Hyco, Flat, and Tar rivers. The Staunton River flows through Halifax County, and the county is also home to the Staunton River State Park and the Staunton River Bridge Battlefield State Park.

There is a lack of infrastructure for business development in the High Plains community and other areas in northern Person County and southern Halifax County. Water and sewer systems in Person County are focused on the southern portion of the county, as are DSL and cable services for high-speed Internet. Similarly, the infrastructure in Halifax County, Virginia is concentrated in South Boston and is much sparser in the small towns like Mayo near where the Sappony are located.

Housing

According to the 2000 Census, there are approximately 14,000 households in Person County and 15,000 households in Halifax County. The homeownership rates for Person and Halifax Counties are 70 percent and 76 percent, respectively. Since the Sappony of the High Plains did not join the NCCIA until 1997, the tribe has not received any federal housing monies administered through that agency and does not operate any housing programs.

Human Capital

Leadership

The leadership of the Sappony of the High Plains includes the tribal council as well as tribal business owners and professionals. Many council members and business owners are recognized and respected by local and state leaders for their participation in community institutions such as chambers of commerce, electric cooperatives, and boards of county agencies (e.g. Person County Museum of History).

Leaders cite self-sufficiency as an important value for tribal members as well as dedication, perseverance, spirituality, quality relationships, and pride in their heritage. Members are willing to help each other and want to invest in each other. Among leaders, self-sufficiency is viewed as a means to economic development. Leaders expressed a sense of urgency in moving the tribe forward economically to prevent disintegration of the community.

Economic Development Committee or Staff

The tribe already has an economic development committee in place that was created in 1998. The committee has nine members, five of whom reside outside the High Plains area (in Littleton, Roanoke Rapids, Durham, and Charlotte, N.C. and Kennesaw, G.A.). The main function of the committee is to make recommendations to the council about prospective business opportunities for the tribe. Normally, the committee meets several times each year; however, additional meetings may be scheduled to meet a par-

4. These data are readily available for North Carolina counties from the Rural Internet Access Authority, which has no counterpart organization in Virginia.

ticular objective or in response to community need. The committee chair reports to the council monthly about the committee's activities and recommendations.

Key Employers & Entrepreneurs

Table 2 lists the 10 largest private-sector employers in Person and Halifax Counties. Two of the prominent employers of Sappony workers are Collins & Aikman and Person Memorial Hospital. In the period from 1997–2002, while industrial employment has grown in some sectors, approximately 900 workers were laid off in Person County.

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

<u>Person County, NC</u>	<u>Halifax County, VA</u>
Collins & Aikman Fabrics Inc.	Halifax Plant
GKN Automotive Components Inc.	O'Sullivan Industries Virginia
Progress Energy	Halifax Regional Hospital
Person Memorial Hospital	Dollar General
Eaton Corporation	ABB Service Company Division
Georgia-Pacific Corporation	Lasco Bathware Inc.
Noranex Inc.	Wal-Mart Associates Inc.
Wal-Mart Associates Inc.	Presto Products Company
Vector Tobacco Ltd.	JPSA Acquisition Corporation
Adecco North America LLC	Clover Yarns Inc.

Source: N.C. Employment Security Commission, Virginia Employment Commission

Person County industries most affected by closings include textiles, clothing and apparel, and lumber and wood products (except furniture).⁵ In Person County, the rate of business start-up in 1999 was 9 percent and the business failure rate was 6.4 percent, compared to a state average of 11.6 percent and 7 percent, respectively.⁶ Investments for expansion of business in Person County totaled \$82.6 million and created 609 additional jobs for the economy. Investments for expansion of business in Halifax County totaled \$45.9 million and created 585 additional jobs for the economy.

Workforce Attributes and Existing Skills

The total labor force in the two counties where the Sappony of the High Plains reside is just over 25,000 people.⁷ The average unemployment rate in 2001 was 7.9 percent in Person County and 9.3 percent in Halifax County, compared with average unemployment rates for North Carolina and Virginia of 5.5 percent and 3.4, respectively. Manufacturing employment dominates the economy in both counties, followed by the trade

5. Mass Layoff Statistics for Halifax County are unavailable. Virginia does not publish that information below the state level.

6. The equivalent information is not readily available for Halifax County, VA.

7. In the 2nd quarter of 2001, there were approximately 12,000 Person County residents and 14,300 Halifax County residents in the work force.

TABLE 3
Employment by Sector,
Person County, NC and Halifax County, VA,
Second Quarter, 2001

Employment Sector	Percent Share of Labor Force in	
	Person	Halifax
Construction	6.5	4.9
Manufacturing	31.1	30.4
Services	15.2	19.3
Trade	20.5	22.1
Fin., Ins. & Real Estate	2.0	1.8
Government	18.2	15.8

Source: N.C. Department of Commerce,
<http://emedis.commerce.state.nc.us/countyprofiles/>;
 Virginia Economic Development Partnership,
<http://virginiascan.yesvirginia.org/thePDF.asp?PDFCode=129>

sector supplying approximately one-fifth of each county's jobs. Table 3 provides a distribution of employment by sector for each county.

The 2000 Census revealed that in Person County, about 25 percent of the general population 25 years of age and older have not completed high school compared with 47 percent of Native Americans. Over 38 percent of Person County residents have only a high school diploma, 7.7 percent hold associate degrees, and 7.7 percent have completed a bachelor's degree. By contrast, the data show 42 percent of Native Americans have only a high school diploma, and nearly 11 percent have attended college, but *none* have received associate or bachelor's degrees. The statistics are incorrect, as we know there are college graduates who are tribal members living in the county; the data are based on a very small sample of people who filled out the Census "long form" and who must not have included any college graduates. Still, the number of Native Americans holding associate and bachelor's degrees and living in Person County is small.

In Halifax County, slightly over 36 percent of both the general population and the Native American population 25 years and older have not completed high school. Nearly 34 percent of the general population have only a high school diploma, 5.2 percent have an associate degree, and 6 percent have completed a bachelor's degree. Approximately 27 percent of Native Americans have only a high school diploma, 15 percent have completed some college with over 16 percent completing associate degrees, and 5 percent hold a bachelor's degree. Associate degrees are thus a more common pursuit among the American Indians in this area than in the general population.

Median household income in Person and Halifax Counties in 1999 was \$37,159 and \$29,929, respectively. Nearly 12 percent of the Person County population was below the poverty level while 15.7 of residents were living in poverty in Halifax County. The mean travel time for workers 16 years and older is 29.7 minutes in Person County and 25.1 minutes in Halifax County.

Workforce Development Institutions

Piedmont Community College (PCC) offers customized training programs that support specific industry needs and can deliver training on campus or at industry location. PCC's Person County Campus is located in Roxboro.

Area 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. Person County's JobLink Career Centers are located in Roxboro, at PCC and the Employment Security Commission.

Danville Community College (DCC) has two outreach centers in Halifax County, in Volens and at the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center (SVHEC) in South Boston. SVHEC offers courses for students planning to transfer to four-year institutions, computer and business classes, and some cosmetology courses. The Volens center offers introductory computer courses. DCC's main campus is located in Danville, about 30 miles west of South Boston.

The Virginia Employment Commission's (VEC) South Boston Field Office offers job referral and placement, referral to training, and job search skill building activities. VEC staff assists employers by screening and referring applicants for job vacancies and providing critical labor market information for business planning.

Rural to Urban Migration

The tribe has placed a strong emphasis on promoting education and providing support for young people coupled with high expectations of achievement by parents and tribal elders. Although this ethic has borne fruit in the attainment of a higher level of skills and education among tribal members, one unintended consequence has been increasing migration to more urban areas of North Carolina, Virginia, and Georgia, particularly over the last generation (30 years). While tribal leaders cite this as one of the major challenges in revitalizing their community, the time members spend away from the rural community can be viewed as a long-term investment should they decide to return. In fact, tribal members often become seasoned by leaving and can use the maturity, experience, and skills (management, advocacy, networking, etc.) they acquire to help the tribe reach its development goals.

Tribal leaders have conducted a needs assessment of the community as the first step in development of a long-term economic development strategy and to inform decision-making regarding future tribal enterprises. The needs assessment revealed that members feel the following activities are important for economic stability and growth of the High Plains community:

- Access to high-speed Internet and other technology
- Access to capital
- Information about available resources in a variety of media
- Opportunities to mentor and to be mentored

- Child care
- Services and facilities for seniors, e.g. health clinic, meals, social events
- Spec building for business or offices
- Technology center for youth
- Museum and recreation area (walking trails, gym, ball fields)
- Training seminars via PCC
- Same standard of living and pay scales as nearby urban areas
- Grocery and/or convenience store

Financial Capital

Federal or State Grants

The tribe has used discretionary funding from ANA over the last five years for federal recognition research, its highest priority program. In the near future, tribal leaders plan to seek state housing and service grant funds from both North Carolina and Virginia. American Indian families living in Halifax County and other parts of Virginia also receive a discount on sales tax. Tribal members cited perseverance, establishing and maintaining relationships, and personal follow-up as the most important factors for success in procuring grants.

Sources and Amounts of Program Funds

In Table 4, we present detailed information on the tribe’s most important programs as reported by tribal leaders:

TABLE 4
Current Priority Programs

<u>Program Name</u>	<u>Funding</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Program Activities</u>
Federal Recognition	ANA	\$400,000	1984 – present	Federal recognition has been a top priority for the tribe since 1995. The tribe’s petition was submitted to the BIA in March 2001.
Historical and Genealogical Study	ANA	\$90,000	1997– present	This study is documenting the history and roots of the Indians of Person County as descendants of the Sappony tribe.
Cultural Youth Camp	Golden LEAF Foundation	\$12,000	2001 – present	The youth camp instills cultural pride and builds self-esteem in American Indian youth; helps youth differentiate between the role of tobacco in the tribe’s history and the health risks of smoking.
Exhibit at the Person County Museum of History	Tribal funds Person County	\$70,000	Opened May 2002	The exhibit uses maps, crafts, records, drawings, and photos to document the tribe’s history from the early 1600s.

In addition to the above, the High Plains Sappony participate in a cultural education program through which the tribe's youth attend American Indian events across the state, including pow-wows and exhibitions.

Tribal Funds

The tribe has two special funds: (1) education fund (see *Scholarships*) and (2) land development fund. The latter has been set up to receive donations from individual members for developing the 37 acres of communal land.

Non-profits and Foundations

Tribal leaders feel that the tribe gets channeled into American Indian "tracks" by foundations and other private funders, and that the tribe may need a creative strategy to approach these sources of funding.

Scholarships

The Tribal Scholarship Fund uses member donations to provide one \$500 scholarship per year for a college student from the tribe. The student is asked to work *pro bono* in the tribe's administrative offices during the summer months.

Utilities with ED funds

Progress Energy, which serves Person County, has an economic development rider that offers discounts over a five-year period on the electricity demand charges for new loads over 1,000 kilowatts. To be eligible for discounts, business owners or corporations must satisfy certain employment and investment conditions. Dominion Power, which serves Halifax County, provides economic development services free of charge to businesses.

Venture Capital Programs

There are several venture capital firms located in the Research Triangle region, including Eno River Capital and Intersouth Partners in Durham and the Halifax Group and Palisade Ventures in Raleigh.

Local Banks

Table 5 provides information on the services provided by financial institutions to businesses and investors in the area.

Social Capital

Institutions

The High Plains Indian School was established in 1878, with funding from both North Carolina and Virginia, even though at that time the state of Virginia did not recognize any American Indian populations within its borders. The school and a separate American Indian church, established in 1830, served as the institutional keystones of the

TABLE 5
Assets and Services of Local Banks

<u>Financial Institution</u>	<u>Established</u>	<u>Assets</u>	<u>Services</u>
Community National Bank	10/11/1985	\$228,989,000	commercial lines of credit and loans (single pay and installment), real estate loans
Roxboro Savings Bank, SSB	1/1/1923	\$143,105,000	lines of credit, real estate and non-real estate loans, access to USDA's Rural Development Loan Guarantee program

Source: Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

community. Although the school was closed as a result of desegregation in 1962, the Calvary Baptist Church continues to act as a unifying force for the tribe.

Technology-based Resources

Piedmont Community College (PCC) is seeking funding to establish public access centers and conduct digital literacy training in the most rural areas of Person County. Target areas include rural churches and the High Plains community. Two public access centers currently exist in Roxboro at the public library and the PCC library. PCC staff persons are also in the planning stages of a human resources development project that will assess the skills and abilities of residents in the service area to inform job skills training programs.

Small Business Centers

PCC's Small Business Center offers specialized seminars on improving management or technical skills, computer training classes, online computer and business classes, free counseling services for new and existing businesses, and a resource center with literature, an Internet connection and audiovisual materials.

Danville Community College's Center for Business, Industry, and Government provides a variety of educational opportunities for companies and organizations in Pittsylvania and Halifax Counties, including tailored training programs, workshops, and seminars.

Economic Development Programs/Activities

The tribe's own committee activity around economic development issues is an important example of a social network related to a specific topic. This committee also gives potential businesses a point of contact with the tribe that can speak knowledgeably about business development opportunities and community assets.

Community Resources and Networks

There is general consensus among tribal leaders that "who we are and what we do is a secret" and that this lack of knowledge extends even to some members of the High

Plains Sappony community. This was validated by interviews with non-native members of the community, such as PCC staff.

At the same time, tribal leaders have established good contacts with particular groups in both Person and Halifax Counties. Individual members have developed both personal and business support networks and contacts with potential investors.

In 1999, tribal leaders shared historic information with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Staunton River Battlefield Foundation. These two agencies are renovating an old train depot in the Staunton River Battlefield Park near Clover, Virginia that will focus on Native American lore. In addition, an archaeological team has uncovered sacred remains in a park that is believed to be Saponi that could provide valuable links to the Sappony past before the arrival of the Europeans.

Leaders stress the need for the tribe to increase efforts to push outside its current boundaries (physical and otherwise) and to bring outside knowledge into the community through more frequent contact with tribal members and clients living outside the High Plains community.

SECTION 3

Most Promising Opportunities for Economic Development

Conclusions

- Between 1980 and 2000, total population grew at the same rate in both Person and Halifax Counties but fell far short of North Carolina and Virginia's population growth rates (22 percent vs. 37 percent and 32 percent, respectively). However, the growth of the American Indian population in the two-county area (37 percent) exceeded that of other major population groups, except Hispanics (160 percent). Unemployment rates and poverty levels in both counties were higher than state averages, with the area economy still largely dependent on manufacturing employment.
- The education data are troublesome. In Halifax County, the 2000 Census data show that over three times as many American Indians have earned associate degrees as the general population (16 percent versus 5.2 percent) but 27 percent have only a high school diploma. In Person County the Census reports that 47 percent of Native Americans have not completed high school, approximately 42 percent have only a high school diploma, and *none* have received associate or bachelor's degrees. We know that these data are incorrect, because there are tribe members living in Person County who are college-educated, but the data are based on a very small sample of people who filled out the Census "long form." Nonetheless, the number of college-educated residents is very low, which is distressing in light of the tribe's focus on improving the education of its members. The out-migration of members, especially youth, to nearby urban areas suggests that a large proportion of those with higher levels of education no longer have their primary residence in the High Plains community.
- The longstanding emphasis on self-sufficiency of the High Plains Sappony has created a strong cohesive community but has also limited the amount of available resources from local, state, and federal sources and precluded participation in some programs, e.g. housing. In the last few years, tribal leaders

have begun to look for opportunities to increase the visibility and engagement of tribal members in the larger community while retaining tribal values and pride of heritage.

- Despite the current recession, the High Plains community is adjacent to the most prosperous economic engine in the state, the Research Triangle Park and the Raleigh-Durham metro area. At the same time, Native Americans are competing with a highly educated workforce for jobs.

Key Assets

- Community cohesiveness and well-established political/governance structure
- Self-sufficiency that creates strong position for partnering
- Economic development strategy and committee already in place
- Needs assessment of community already implemented
- Success in efforts to focus on and raise education levels of members
- Excellent reputation of tribal members in larger community as educators, board members, and successful business owners
- Extensive farming experience and pride in farming heritage
- Proximity to natural and heritage resources and recreational areas

Key Challenges

- “Brain drain” and consequent high number of High Plains residents without high school diplomas
- Limited availability of land and housing for returning tribal members
- Lack of area banks and access to credit
- Long-standing insulation of tribe from larger community and lack of visibility as key community stakeholders
- Lack of office space, major transportation routes, and physical and telecommunications infrastructure
- Mixed feelings about working with Progress Energy as a partner because of broken promises in the past
- Having a community that straddles the state line; it has to deal with policies and programs from two states, as well as feelings of loyalty to one or the other

Recommendations

General Recommendations

- Develop an ethic of partnering as a means to leverage the tribe’s current assets and resources. View the cohesiveness and self-sufficiency of the tribe as strengths that can support its contribution to partnerships and coalitions without compromising key tribal values.

- Build a partner base of civic leaders, corporations, community development organizations, and local governments. Research and take advantage of community and economic development planning efforts in Person and Halifax Counties. The High Plains Sappony tribe can participate in planning activities as an initial effort at partnering while also promoting its economic development plans. Keep area chambers of commerce, convention and visitors bureaus, and economic development commissions apprised of tribal initiatives to help foster compatible goals.
- Develop a mechanism, such as an economic development newsletter, or at least a section in the existing newsletter, to build interest and support from tribal members living outside the High Plains community by systematically informing them of the tribe's progress towards its development goals.
- Gather information about existing business and work skills training in the mainstream community to determine their value and adaptability for tribal members and entrepreneurs. Examples include Piedmont Community College's specialized business seminars and business development programs for youth; and Dominion Power's economic development services for businesses in Virginia. One idea is to designate a business assistance emissary from the tribe, who is an experienced businessperson, to attend these other programs to glean the useful information and bring it back for the other tribe members.
- Continue to develop the tribe's relationship with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Staunton River Battlefield Foundation to explore a combined advisory/economic role in development of the historic resources in the Battlefield Park. Consult with other N.C. tribes that are also working on heritage tourism. Work to include one or two Sappony sites on a jointly promoted driving tour. Explore a tourism-related project on Lake Mayo with Progress Energy.
- If there is interest among the few remaining tribal farmers, invite the county extension agent to meet with them to discuss the benefits and costs of new crops such as kenaf, borage, and aquaculture.

Resource:

- Person County office of NC Cooperative Extension Service: 336/599-1195

Specific Projects/Activities

- Focus the time and efforts of the Economic Development Committee in a more strategic way. Invite two or three economic development or business professionals from the larger community with an interest in and understanding of rural and minority development to join the committee. Create a sub-group to network and share information about process and project development with other native ED committees (e.g. GNAA) and systematically report back to the full committee and Tribal Council.

Resource:

- Dr. James Owen, President, Piedmont Community College, 336/599-1181. Knows Leslie Stewart from another project and is a forward-thinking leader in economic development circles.
- Track the progress of a high-end regional employment hub that is currently just in the concept development phase as a collaborative regional effort among Person, Granville, Vance, Franklin and Warren counties. As a long-term project it could provide higher-tech employment opportunities for tribal members. See www.kerrtarhub.org
- Conduct informational interviews with representatives of selected foundations and private companies to better understand what kinds of projects they are interested in funding. To make the information flow both ways, create and distribute a concise and attractive information product with supporting demographic data that describes the tribe's economic development plans and how they will benefit the region if realized.
- One example of a foundation is the Progress Energy Foundation, which has recently re-iterated its openness to a proposal from the High Plains Community to develop a tourism project near Lake Mayo. Possible elements could include educational trails, an Indian education center and gift shop and/or cabins to supplement those offered by Person County Parks and Recreation. As long as the project would not interfere with the shoreline and the wildlife management of the lake, it could be feasible.

Resource:

- Contact Martha Thompson at Progress Energy to discuss ideas for a formal proposal, at 252/438-1900.
- Another specific idea related to Progress Energy is for the tribe to apply for scholarships for one or more Sappony high-school students to attend the "power careers" training program that is now being offered at Piedmont Community College. The impetus behind the program is that power plant operation is now technical enough that applicants need to have special training to qualify for jobs there. The Power Careers Program is designed to attract the most promising high school students, provide an introduction to power plant operations, support the completion of a two-year associate degree and ultimately offer a career opportunity with Progress Energy. High school students entering one of these programs can apply for a \$1,000 Progress Energy scholarship.

Resource:

- See www.progress-energy.com/aboutus/employment/college/powercareers.asp and/or contact Martha Thompson, 252/438-1900.
- Organize a facilitated half-day retreat with area business owners, local government representatives, and community development organizations to develop a business plan for a tribal enterprise suggested by members during the

needs assessment. In preparation for the retreat, create a small task force of native business owners and economic development committee members who will conduct and present the results of preliminary research on the proposed enterprise.

- Partner with Piedmont Community College to improve digital literacy levels in the northern part of Person County by establishing a rural public access and training site. PCC staff could conduct a “pilot” digital literacy training session for interested tribal members (which would improve their job skills and prepare them to use the intra-tribal web site). In return, the tribe might provide some volunteer staffing of the public access site.

Resource:

- Paula Butler, Piedmont Community College: 336/599-1181.

- Solicit the help of PCC computer technology students and members of SWAT (Students Working to Advance Technology) at Person County High School to assist in development of the intra-tribal web site. Explore with administrators or department heads how the task might be framed as a student project or work-study (rather than volunteer) experience to demonstrate the mutual benefits of both this activity and the PCC digital literacy/training project to area educational institutions, local governments, and media.
- On a related note, talk with PCC and Person High School about establishing a “chapter” of the NC TechForce program in Person County. This is a statewide cadre of volunteer technology-trained students from high schools, community colleges and universities assembled to provide Internet assistance in their communities. They answer questions about the Internet and computers, help communities to use the Internet more, assist community groups with seminars and discussions on the uses of technology, and help businesses with system setup, web design and implementation. Currently the closest one is in Caswell County but the state hopes for each county to establish one. The natural home for one in Person County would be at the high school or at PCC.

Resource:

- The Rural Internet Access Authority’s NC TechForce program. See www.e-nc.org/community/nctechforce.shtml

