

***Economic Development Assessment  
for the Occaneechi Band  
of the Saponi Nation***

***July 2003***

Brenda Linton, Senior Associate, OED  
*and*  
Leslie S. Stewart, Associate Director, OED

***Office of Economic Development***  
[www.oed.unc.edu](http://www.oed.unc.edu)



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## ***Acknowledgments***

The UNC assessment team would like to acknowledge the important contributions of several Occaneechi tribal members who facilitated our work in conducting this assessment. Vivian Fuller provided copies of written documents, set up interviews with tribal members, and arranged for review of the team's findings and recommendations by the tribal council. Forest Hazel and Tony Hayes provided key information on the tribe's genealogy and programs during the interview process. In addition, Forest Hazel provided a tour of the Little Texas community and assisted in meetings with Occaneechi farmers and business owners. We would also like to thank Wanda Whitmore Penner, Tribal Chair, and the Tribal Council for reviewing the report draft and providing suggestions to make this report more comprehensive and useful to the Occaneechi 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. We also thank Brande Roberts in the Office of Economic Development at UNC-Chapel Hill in compiling data and Karen Becker for formatting and producing the final document.

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



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This assessment represents an objective inventory of the assets and opportunities of the Occaneechi 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 Occaneechi-run organizations, Occaneechi business owners and citizens, and the communities in which the Occaneechi 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 descendants of the current day Occaneechi Tribe were living near what is now the town of Hillsborough, N.C. in 1701 when explorers first visited them. Twelve years later, the Occaneechi united with the Saponi, Eno, Tutelo, and several other tribes as the Saponi Confederation to sign a peace treaty with the Colony of Virginia and settle at Fort Christianna. Acculturated members of the confederation occupied a small tri-border area in Greensville and Brunswick Counties in Virginia, and Northampton County, North Carolina.

By 1730, the Occaneechi had lost their tribal land in Virginia, and by the 1780s, individuals and bands of families had begun to migrate back to what was then the northwest section of Orange County (this area became Alamance County in 1849). Most of the people settled in Pleasant Grove Township, forming a community that acquired the name “Little Texas.” Other families migrated from Virginia to South Carolina or Ohio and other midwestern states. Some American Indians also eventually left Little Texas to join relatives in Ohio. Census records indicate that by 1830, the population of Little Texas was between 250 and 300 people, with at least 80 percent of its members having genealogical ties to the acculturated community in Greensville and Northampton Counties. A small remnant community still exists today in Northampton County near the town of Gaston on the Roanoke River.

Rather than work as sharecroppers, many Occaneechi families purchased land from white residents or used grant funds to buy state land. One Occaneechi farmer represents the ninth generation of farmers in his family, dating back to 1834. Although most tribal members farmed their own land, they also participated in communal events on July 4<sup>th</sup> and in the week between Christmas and New Year’s Day, when one family would host the tribe for hunting turkeys and rabbits or receive help with hog killings or building projects. American Indian children attended the small one-room Martin’s School.

### ***Governing Structure***

The Occaneechi Tribe reorganized in 1984 and initiated formal tribal elections 10 years later during the annual meeting held in Mebane, N.C. The election date of December 10<sup>th</sup> was selected to commemorate the 264<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the loss of the old Saponi reservation in Virginia.

The tribe is governed by a 12-member council elected every two years by the members at large. The council has four officers: chair, vice-chair, treasurer, and secretary. The tribal chair is the presiding officer, as there is no Occaneechi “chief.” The tribe employs one full-time staff person who serves as administrative assistant. The Federal Acknowledgment Officer conducts historical research for the tribe and serves as Project Coordinator for projects funded by the Administration for Native Americans (ANA). The tribal treasurer manages the budget and submits twice-yearly fiscal reports to ANA and monthly reports to the council. The tribe’s average annual budget over the last three years was approximately \$80–85,000.

The tribe was accorded tax-exempt status by the state of North Carolina in 1984 and became a 501(c)3 non-profit organization in 1996. The Occaneechi were officially recognized as an American Indian tribe by the Orange County Board of Commissioners in 1995 in response to a request for an endorsement of its application for state recognition. The tribe applied for state recognition in 1990 and became the eighth formally recognized Indian tribe in N.C. in February 2002 after a state court appeal.

### ***Demographics***

Occaneechi tribal members mainly reside in the northeastern section of Alamance County and adjacent parts of Orange County. In addition, tribal leaders report that about 30 percent of tribal members are spread among Caswell, Person, and Durham Counties and the cities of Burlington and Greensboro. There are 600 persons on the tribal roll.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there are approximately 1,003 Native Americans residing in Alamance and Orange Counties, representing 0.4 percent of the total population. Between 1980 and 2000, these two counties’ total population increased by 42 percent, compared to an increase of 37 percent for the state overall. Over the same 20-year period, the American Indian population grew by 203 percent, greater than the black and white population’s increase (27 and 33 percent respectively), but less than the dramatic increase (875 percent) in the Hispanic population. Table 1 provides population numbers and percentage share for American Indian, Hispanic, black, and white population groups.

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

Year			American Indian		Hispanic		Black		White	
			Orange	Alamance	Orange	Alamance	Orange	Alamance	Orange	Alamance
2000	119,894	130,800	480	523	5,395	8,894	16,545	24,590	90,880	98,885
1990	93,851	108,213	375	325	1,220	757	14,922	20,777	75,832	86,570
1980	77,055	99,319	231	99	771	695	13,331	19,069	62,646	79,852
2000	100%	100%	0.4%	0.4%	4.5%	6.8%	13.8%	18.8%	75.8%	75.6%
1990	100%	100%	0.4%	0.3%	1.3%	0.7%	15.9%	19.2%	80.8%	80.0%
1980	100%	100%	0.3%	0.1%	1.0%	0.7%	17.3%	19.2%	81.3%	80.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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

### ***Tribal Mission***

The Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation is committed to the preservation, protection, and promotion of its history, culture, and traditions while providing social, economic, and educational resources, opportunities, and services that contribute to the well being of the tribal community.

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

- The tribe initiated its Federal Acknowledgement Program in 1995. The Federal Acknowledgement Officer has conducted extensive historical research spanning more than a decade to support the tribe’s application. The tribe is preparing to submit this information to the Bureau of American Indian Affairs in 2003.
- In 2002, the Occaneechi obtained a one-year ANA grant to support a project to promote self-determination through the development of governmental and organizational infrastructure. As part of this project, tribal leaders are working with the tribal community to create a constitution and will establish a council leadership program and tribal administrative operations system.
- The tribe organized a youth council in September 2002 to help tribal youth develop winning attitudes and pride in their heritage, and to take responsibility for their lives. The Occaneechi Youth Council is an affiliate of the United National Indian Tribal Youth (UNITY) Network, with over 175 councils in 33 states. The youth council will conduct at least one project per year in each of the following areas: community service, cultural preservation, environmental awareness, and healthy lifestyles.
- The Occaneechi have begun development of a comprehensive Language Resource Development Plan (LRDP), funded by grants from the Administration for Native Americans, Department of Health and Human Services and the Administration for Children and Families. The project’s overall objective is to

determine the state of the tribe's ancestral language (Yesah) in order to implement a successful, community-based language learning endeavor. Some of the principles governing the project are:

- A viable approach to understanding the tribe's ancestry and cultural identity cannot be maintained as long as culture and language remain separated.
  - All research into the Yesah language is sacred. It is, in the end, a conversation with the tribe's ancestors.
  - The most effective learning environment is the home. Therefore the LRDP must be dynamic enough to accommodate each home, while at the same time embracing a community-wide curriculum.
  - The tribe must maintain creative control over the language project. The LRDP must be learner-centered and will explore active rather than passive models of language learning.
  - The respect, appreciation and participation of tribal elders will be built into the LRDP.
- In August 2003, the tribe is hosting an inaugural fundraising event: the Life Enhancement Expo and Golf Tournament. The two-day event will take place in Mebane and is funded by corporate sponsors and fees; proceeds will support the Homeland Preservation Project.

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

The Occaneechi Homeland Preservation Project is the centerpiece of the tribe's development strategy. The tribe proposes to construct a tribal center that can accommodate tribal administrative offices, an open-air pavilion for meetings and classes, and an historical museum and gift shop. The remainder of the 30-acre tract will feature a permanent pow-wow/ceremonial grounds, a series of nature trails with native plants, an 1850s-era log homestead, and a reconstructed 1700s Occaneechi village. The plan includes shaded picnic sites, a play area, and possibly a fishpond with fishing and trapping exhibits that would also be available for use by the non-American Indian community.

Tribal leaders estimate that the center will support 8 to 12 part-time employees during the summer and fall, and several full-time employees to handle administration and maintenance. The tribe is designing the project to ensure that there is low impact to the environment and preservation of the surrounding natural resources.

In August 2002, the tribal council formally launched a major fundraising campaign to support the project with approximately \$13,000 in tribal funds. Tribal members have also been asked to contribute volunteer labor or tax-deductible donations to supplement government and private funding.

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

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

Until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most members of the Little Texas community were involved in the agricultural sector, sometimes supplemented by day wage labor or factory jobs. In recent decades, the number of both full-time and part-time farmers has declined significantly. Most adults now work in offices and factories, as skilled workers or crafts persons, or in professional occupations such as law, dentistry, medicine, and education. A few tribal members are also employed as truck drivers, retail salespersons, and as clerks in the county tax office.

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

Businesses attempted by members include agriculture, general contracting, masonry and flooring, automobile body repair, restaurants, retail clothing, and diesel mechanics.

Tribal business owners report that they have experienced discrimination in trying to start or expand businesses. Business loans are very difficult to obtain with personal collateral so some have resorted to operating on a cash basis. As a result, clients must often be turned away unless they can provide a deposit to cover materials, and employees must wait until each job is completed to be paid. Although the technical expertise and high level of experience gained over 1–2 decades would usually support expansion, these businesses remain “one-person shops.” Other key barriers include unreliable or irresponsible employees and lack of payment by clients.

Many business owners initially learn their trades from immediate family members or by attending courses at technical institutes. Usually, these entrepreneurs hone their skills as apprentices or employees for a decade or more before starting a business. This apprenticeship period allows them to develop contacts and loyal customers, network with other business owners, and save money for start-up capital. Drawbacks to this system include being given more difficult and lower paid work.

### ***Tribal Enterprises***

Since 1995, the tribe has sponsored the Annual Homecoming and Pow-wow in October at Pleasant Grove Elementary School near Mebane. The pow-wow features traditional music and exhibition dancing, drumming, storytelling, arts and crafts, and food. Pow-wows are funded by a grant from the N.C. Arts Council and proceeds from the previous year’s event. Approximately 30 volunteers assisted tribal staff to put on the 2002 pow-wow, which drew approximately 10,000 people and produced a net profit of about \$9,000–10,000 for the tribe. The tribe plans to have its own food booth in 2003 with proceeds going to benefit the Homeland Preservation Project.

The two-day Occaneechi-Saponi Spring Cultural Festival and Pow-wow takes place in early June adjacent to the historic Occaneechi village site on the banks of the Eno River near Hillsborough. Some members also participate in the Occaneeche State Park Heritage Festival and Pow-wow in honor of tribal ancestors who lived within the boundaries of what is now Occaneeche State Park near Clarksville, Virginia. Hosted by the area Chamber of Commerce, the event is held annually in early May.

***Partnering and Resource Pooling***

In 1998, a group of tribal members worked with UNC-Chapel Hill on the construction of a replica of an 18<sup>th</sup> century Occaneechi village on a site owned by Orange County and located on the Eno River. The replica is based on archaeological research conducted by UNC faculty and sits just 1/4-mile from the historic site. A protective palisade fence of approximately 400 poles has been completed as well as several atí or huts, brush arbors, and a central sweat lodge. The Eno riverfront has been cleaned and an aboriginal garden planted with corn, beans, and squash to demonstrate the environmentally friendly agricultural methods of the tribe's ancestors. Each November, during "living history days," the Occaneechi and other tribes hold a re-enactment of tribal life that includes traditional native foods prepared in a cooking pit, crafts demonstrations, and Tutelo-Saponi language singing and dancing by Occaneechi tribal members.

Tribal leaders have initiated discussions with a variety of agencies in Alamance, Orange, and Caswell Counties including local governments, Chambers of Commerce, Convention and Visitor's Bureaus, news media, and some local businesses. The tribe hopes to educate mainstream organizations about its projects and how they can add value to the community at large as well as procure important information about area initiatives. This strategy is already bearing fruit. Tribal leaders are now negotiating with Alamance County to have the proposed tribal center become one of the premier sites in an historical driving tour that county leaders are putting together to support area tourism.

Some tribal leaders have also talked with individuals who are leaders in the arts in Raleigh, Chapel Hill, Hillsborough, and Wake Forest. The result of these discussions has been an increase in information about the local political environment and upcoming initiatives in both the public and private sectors.

## 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***

Alamance County has 430 square miles of land area and 3,695 acres of available sites for business development (1.3 percent of the total land in the county). Orange County encompasses 945 acres and has 1,212 acres of available sites (0.2 percent of total land). Major municipalities are Burlington in Alamance County and Chapel Hill and Carrboro in Orange County. The seat of Orange County is Hillsborough and Graham serves as the county seat of Alamance County.

In the last decade, the Occaneechi have experienced an out-migration of members and increased development of the “Little Texas” community. Both tribal leaders and businesspersons in the area report that land prices have increased substantially over the last 5–10 years. In particular, the value of property adjacent to Interstate highways has surpassed that of individual and industrial park sites, with average costs increasing from \$25,000 per acre in the early 1990s to a present cost of \$35,000–\$40,000 per acre.

In the Chapel Hill/Carrboro area of Orange County, office space runs from about \$12 to \$25 per square foot, with prices for some locations as high as \$170 per square foot. Office space in Hillsborough generally ranges from \$6 to \$15 per square foot.

The small tract of land (approximately 30 acres) in Alamance County that the tribe hopes to acquire will serve as a “living memorial” to Occaneechi history as the first tribally owned land since the loss of the reservation in Virginia in the 1720s. A

major milestone set by tribal leaders is to hold the 2003 fall pow-wow on tribal land for the first time in over 270 years. One possibility is a lease-to-purchase contract with a successful Occaneechi farmer. The tribe might continue to farm a portion of the land to bring in income for the tribal center.

### ***Buildings***

The tribe does not currently own any buildings; its administrative offices are located in rented space in downtown Mebane. As part of the fund-raising program for the Homeland Preservation Project, members can purchase an engraved brick for \$50, which will become part of the Tribal Center facility. With a donation of \$250 or more, the donor can have his/her name inscribed on a plaque in the main building of the center.

### ***Infrastructure***

Interstate 40 enters Orange County in its southeastern quadrant and intersects with I-85 outside of Efland. I-85/40 runs in an east-west direction through both Orange and Alamance Counties. Alamance County Transportation System Inc., or ACTS, provides deviated fixed-route, subscription, and dial-a-ride transportation for residents of Alamance County. Ridesharing Services and Vanpooling of the Piedmont, or RSVP, coordinates commuter transportation services for the Piedmont Triad region, including possible destinations in Alamance County.

Orange Public Transportation (OPT) provides deviated fixed-route, subscription, and dial-a-ride transportation for county residents who reside outside Chapel Hill and Carrboro. Chapel Hill Transit operates fixed-route and shared-ride services for Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and UNC-Chapel Hill. Triangle Transit Authority connects Chapel Hill (and Raleigh, Durham, Cary) with Research Triangle Park, Raleigh-Durham International Airport (RDU) and surrounding suburbs, including possible destinations in Alamance County. Park-and-ride facilities are available in both Orange and Alamance. Greyhound Lines Inc. provides scheduled intercity bus service to the Chapel Hill, Burlington, and Graham terminals. North Carolina's state-supported Carolinian and Piedmont trains have scheduled daily service to the Burlington train station.

Residential and commercial water and sewer services in the two counties are provided by a variety of municipal and county agencies, authorities, and inter-system agreements.<sup>1</sup> Tertiary sewage treatment plants serve municipalities and the Efland area. All systems have excess capacities available for both water and wastewater. Duke Power furnishes electricity to Alamance County and most incorporated areas and the Interstate corridors of Orange County while Piedmont Electric Membership Corporation serves most unincorporated areas of Orange County.

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1. Examples include Orange Water and Sewer Authority, Orange-Alamance Water System, Efland Sewer System, and Graham-Mebane Water System.

Piedmont Natural Gas Company and Public Service Company of North Carolina supply natural gas to both counties. Most commercial areas are located at or near existing pipelines; lines can be extended for significant users. Nearly 86 percent and 89 percent, respectively, of households in Alamance County and Orange County have access to high-speed Internet, compared to a state average of 75 percent.

Alamance County is home to the Burlington Reservoir and the Haw River, which begins north of Burlington and flows south into Jordan Lake. The Eno River flows through Orange County, with Eno River State Park located on a bend in the river east of Hillsborough. University Lake is in southern Orange County.

### ***Housing***

According to the 2000 Census, there are 51,722 households in Alamance County and 45,916 in Orange County. The homeownership rates for Alamance and Orange Counties are 70 percent and 58 percent, respectively.

The Self-Help Credit Union is a community development lender that provides low-cost, low interest home loans on properties located in North Carolina to people who are underserved by conventional lenders. The Self-Help office for the Triad Region is located in Greensboro. Six Burlington banks participate in the N.C. Housing Finance Agency's program that offers low-interest mortgages for first-time homebuyers with income and net assets under specified limits.

## **Human Capital**

### ***Leadership***

Like other tribes, the Occaneechi are looking for ways to create revenues from tourism. However, tribal leaders stress that they want to promote their culture in healthy ways that dispel myths and correctly educate non-natives about their history. Leaders believe that as an "infant" tribe in the eyes of the public, they have an opportunity to shape public perception about the tribe. They hope to follow the example of tribes in other states who have creatively used their natural resources and history to attract tourists to their area.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Economic Development Committees or Staff***

There are currently no committees or staff with a title of economic development. The Occaneechi Tribal Government does have the following standing committees:

- Land restoration
- Fund-raising
- Cultural/Education
- Enrollment
- Nominating

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2. The Seminole brand of tourism in Florida features boar hunting in the swamps of the Everglades and a café with traditional Seminole food.

Standing committees meet monthly on the third Saturday. Tribal administrators are in the process of forming new committees to assist with projects under the ANA Self-Determination grant (citizen-based constitution, tribal council leadership program, tribal administrative operations system).

***Key Employers & Entrepreneurs***

Table 2 lists the 10 largest private-sector employers in Orange and Alamance Counties. From 1997 to 2002, approximately 2,275 workers were laid off in Alamance County and 879 residents of Orange County lost their jobs. Alamance County industries most affected by closings include textiles, manufacture of electronic and electrical equipment (except computers), and retail food service. Business start-up and failure rates in Orange County were 10.9 percent and 6.1 percent, respectively. The business start-up rate in Alamance County at 17.6 percent was considerably higher than the state average of 11.6 percent. The rate of business failure in Alamance County was 8.1 percent, compared with a state average of 7 percent. In the two counties, combined investments for expansion of businesses totaled almost \$122 million and created 1,645 jobs.

**TABLE 2  
Largest Private-Sector Employers, Orange and Alamance Counties**

<u>Orange</u>	<u>Alamance</u>
Blue Cross & Blue Shield	Laboratory Corp of America
General Electric Corp.	Alamance Regional Medical Center
Harris Teeter Inc	Culp Inc
East West Partners Club Management	Elon University
PHE Inc	Gold Toe Brands Inc
Job Strategies	Carolina Temporaries Inc
Sports Endeavors Inc DBA Euersport	Burlington Industries IV LLC
A Southern Season	Westpoint Stevens Inc
Carol Woods	GKN Automotive Components Inc
Aramark Campus Inc	Wal-Mart Associates Inc

Source: N.C. Employment Security Commission

Occaneechi leaders believe that a well-maintained American Indian business directory as a central repository of information and resources is very important for economic development. The tribe is currently seeking a Native American architect for the Homeland Restoration Project but has been unsuccessful to date.

***Workforce Attributes and Existing Skills***

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2001, there were approximately 63,000 Alamance County residents and 56,500 Orange County residents in the work force. However, the Alamance County unemployment rate of 5.7 percent was nearly three times that of Orange County (2.2 percent). Manufacturing and services provided over half the jobs in Alamance County but represented less than one-quarter of employment in Orange County, while government employment was the largest sector in Orange County because of the public

university there. Table 3 provides a distribution of employment by sector for each county.

**TABLE 3**  
**Employment Sectors in Alamance and**  
**Orange Counties, Second Quarter, 2001**

Employment Sector	Percent Share of Labor Force in	
	Alamance	Orange
Construction	5.3	3.4
Manufacturing	28.3	4.3
Services	26.4	18.6
Trade	22.4	19.8
Fin., Ins. & Real Estate	3.4	5.0
Government	10.2	45.8

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

The 2000 Census revealed that 23.5 percent of Alamance County residents 25 years of age and older have not completed high school, compared to 37 percent of Native Americans. About 31 percent of Alamance County residents have only a high school diploma and 7.4 percent have associate degrees while 22 percent of American Indian residents have only a high school diploma and 4.6 percent have completed associate degrees. Baccalaureate and advanced degree achievement levels for Native Americans in Alamance County exceed those of both the general population and the white population (25 percent vs. 19.2 percent and 22.7 percent, respectively). However, the substantially larger proportion of Native Americans without a high school diploma (nearly 14 percent higher than for all residents) reveals a wide disparity in education levels within this population group.

In Orange County, the percentage of American Indians who have not completed high school is nearly twice as high as for the population overall (24 percent vs. 12.5 percent). Similarly, 31.7 percent of Native Americans in Orange County have only a high school diploma, compared with 16 percent of Orange County residents generally. Although the percentage of American Indians with associate and bachelor’s degrees is 2.5 percent and 10.6 percent, respectively, compared to 5.4 percent and 24.4 percent in the general population, a large proportion has attended college (44 percent). Moreover, Orange County’s educational attainment rates are among the highest in the state, and its numbers are somewhat skewed by having a large population of undergraduate students at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Median household income in Alamance and Orange Counties in 1999 was \$39,168 and \$42,372, respectively. Eleven percent of the Alamance County population was below the poverty level while 14 percent of residents were living in poverty in Orange County. The mean travel time for workers 16 years and older was 21.6 minutes for Alamance and 22 minutes for Orange County.

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

The Business and Industry Services division of Alamance Community College (ACC) tailors courses and programs to meet the needs of area companies. ACC's Small Business Center offers free and low-cost workshops to help people start or expand a small business and provides free confidential counseling services, a resource library, and a referral network of business professionals.

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

In the last decade, land development and out-migration of tribal members has increased dramatically. As the smallest N.C. tribe, the Occaneechi have limited human resources. And many members are not interested in getting involved in the tribe's activities; committees are composed of 5–6 people. The Occaneechi hope to use the Homeland Preservation Project to turn around this trend.

## **Financial Capital**

### ***Federal or State Grants***

The Occaneechi have used funding from the local and federal levels, particularly through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. They have received very little assistance from the state. Over the last 12 years, a high proportion of grant funds and other tribal resources have gone to support the tribe's bid for state recognition. Although it will not receive as intense a focus, a certain proportion of ANA funds will continue to be used to support the tribe's application for federal acknowledgement (with less financial support for other programs). One drawback of grant funding is the high level of restrictions; e.g., grants cannot be used for land purchase or to erect buildings.

### ***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**

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Program Activities</b>
Federal Acknowledgment Program	ANA	\$65,000	1995–present	Historical research to support the tribe’s application for recognition.
Self-Determination through Government & Organizational Infrastructure	ANA	\$135,000	2002–2003	Citizen-based constitution for the federal recognition process; council leadership program; tribal administrative operations system.
Tribal Youth Council	Tribal funds	\$1,000	Ongoing from 09/02	Youth projects in community service, cultural preservation, and environmental awareness.
Language Resource Development Plan (LRDP)	ANA	\$65,000	1999–2000	Determine the status of the tribe’s ancestral language for a community-based language learning project.
Homeland Preservation Project	Tribal fundraising	\$20,000	Fundraising campaign launched 08/02	Tribal center with offices, meeting facilities, museum & gift shop, nature trails, “living village” and Pow-wow grounds.
Life Enhancement Expo & Golf Tournament	Fees, corporate sponsors	Sponsorship \$500–\$7,500	Annually beginning August 2003	Raise funds for the Homeland Restoration Project.

***Tribal funds***

The tribe has created the Occaneechi Land Fund to support the Homeland Restoration Project. Tribal leaders are asking for donations or monthly pledges from tribal members and other interested individuals to supplement grants or private funds, especially in the initial stages.

***Scholarships***

The tribe provides between one and four annual scholarships of \$100–150 for Occaneechi college students. Recipients must hold and maintain at least a C average. The tribe’s ability to fund educational scholarships has been hampered in recent years by heavy legal fees associated with its application for state recognition.

***Community Resources and Networks***

Table 5 provides information on the services provided by financial institutions based in the two-county area to businesses and investors. Examples of nonprofit organizations in the region include the Research Triangle Regional Partnership and the Piedmont Triad Partnership, Good Work Inc., and the Carrboro Revolving Loan Fund.

**Table 5. Assets and Services of Local and Regional Banks**

<u>Financial Institution</u>	<u>Established</u>	<u>Assets</u>	<u>Services</u>
1st State Bank	1/1/1914	\$341,616,000	commercial loans, lines of credit
Mid Carolina Bank	8/14/1997	\$169,395,000	commercial loans
Alamance National Bank	9/14/1998	\$125,955,000	commercial and real estate loans, lines of credit

***Venture capital programs***

Tri-State Investment Group is located in Chapel Hill, and there are several venture capital firms located in the Triangle, including Eno River Capital and Intersouth Partners in Durham and the Halifax Group and Palisade Ventures in Raleigh. A list of venture capital funds active in North Carolina is available from the Small Business and Technology Development Center.

**Social Capital**

***Institutions***

The tribe petitioned the federal government in 1934 for support to found an American Indian school but was unsuccessful. In 1984, some of the residents of Little Texas, in conjunction with an offshoot community called “Oaks,” formally reorganized as the Eno-Occaneechi Indian Association with the goal of preserving the community’s heritage and teaching tribal youth about their own history. The main goals of the association were to conduct historical research and to correct the racial misclassifications on birth certificates and other official documents. In addition, the association initiated the tribe’s annual pow-wow. In 1991, the association joined with the state to erect an historical marker off Highway 70 near Hillsborough to recognize the tribe’s contributions to development of the area and to commemorate the former Occaneechi village site on the Eno River. The Occaneechi tribal council amended the name of the organization to “The Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation” in 1995 to more accurately reflect the tribe’s history.

The homes of American Indian families in Little Texas were clustered around the community’s general store, school, and two churches. Jeffries Cross Church was established before 1867 and Martin’s Chapel Baptist Church in 1909. The latter was destroyed by fire shortly after its construction in 1918 but was rebuilt with volunteer labor and donations from the community. Both churches were named after tribal members who provided land for the church building or cemetery.

The churches continue to provide focus and educational/social organization for the community. For example, in fall 2002, the tribe hosted a free slide presentation and lecture at Martin’s Chapel Baptist Church called *Bringing the Past and Future Together: An Historical Look at the “Little Texas” Community*. The event featured displays of documents and photographs collected as part of the tribe’s extensive genealogical research. Donations were solicited for the church building fund.

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

Since 1997, the Occaneechi tribe has maintained a well-designed and attractive web site ([www.occaneechi-saponi.org](http://www.occaneechi-saponi.org)). Tribal leaders' goals are to provide a state-of-the-art web site that accommodates a wide range of tribal interests and competencies. The web site has two tiers: the first is available to the general public and the second only to tribal members, via an assigned password.

The web site provides information on the tribe's history, status of the tribe's federal and state recognition processes (documents, press releases, & news articles), language recovery efforts, and currently funded projects as well as upcoming social, cultural, and governance events. The web site also features a link to a separate web site created by the tribe's Federal Acknowledgment Officer that contains extensive historical information based on the results of genealogical research and high-quality, digital photographs.

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

The JobLink Career Centers in Orange and Alamance Counties 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. Alamance County's JobLink Career Center is located in Burlington. The JobLink Center in Orange County is in Chapel Hill.

Chapel Hill also has a Small Business and Technology Development Center, which offers management counseling and educational services.

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

Research conducted by UNC-Chapel Hill in the late 1980s linked the Occaneechi families then living in Pleasant Grove to earlier Siouan tribes, including the Occaneechi, Eno, Shakori, Sissipahaw, and Sara (Cheraw). In 1991, the Occaneechi published their own documented history in the journal of the North Carolina Archaeological Society entitled *Occaneechi-Saponi Descendants in the North Carolina Piedmont: The Texas Community*.

Occaneechi leaders have already begun discussions with local economic development stakeholders; however, they have limited resources to prepare for more substantive meetings with these potential partners. As one means to bridge the gap and increase future resources, they hope to recruit and mentor the tribe's young people to assist with outreach to the larger community.



## SECTION 3

# ***Most Promising Opportunities for Economic Development***

### **Conclusions**

- Over the last two decades, the general population in the tribe's two-county area increased faster than the state average, and the American Indian and Hispanic populations increased most dramatically (203 percent and 875 percent, respectively).<sup>3</sup>

The area has a thriving business climate: the business start-up rate in Alamance County is considerably higher than the state average (17.6 percent vs. 11.6 percent) and the business failure rate is only one percentage point higher.

- The area's general population is highly educated and ethnically diverse — with temporary and permanent residents drawn from all other regions of the U.S. and many other countries.
- There is a wide disparity in education levels among American Indians in both counties — many highly educated, as well as many without even a high school degree.
- The two-county area has excellent transportation systems, telecommunications resources (over 85 percent of the population has access to high-speed Internet), and physical infrastructure, with excess water and wastewater capacity. Despite the current recession, the Occaneechi communities are in and near the most prosperous economic engine in the state, the Research Triangle Park.

### **Key Assets**

- Extensive, published historical research/documentation
- Successful partnering with community stakeholders

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3. Note, however, that there is no way to know from the Census data how many of the American Indians are Occaneechi vs. other tribes; the Occaneechi's own tribal rolls may not reflect this same increase.

- High number of college and advanced degrees
- Two-tiered web site with excellent content and links
- Use of county-owned reconstructed Occaneechi village near Hillsborough
- Location in/near a prosperous and high-profile region of the state

## **Key Challenges**

- Out-migration of members
- Rapid rise of land values and tax rates
- Decade-long strain of state recognition process on financial resources
- Small number of members doing most of the work over a long period, leading to burnout and tension in the community.
- Few natural resources around which to focus a tourism effort

## **Recommendations**

### ***General Recommendations***

- Tap the extensive amount of existing high-quality historical research to develop information products that will appeal to highly educated members of the mainstream community. Disseminate these through a variety of media: published articles, lectures, visiting exhibits, and web-based multi-media presentations.
- View the development of a heritage 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 tourism and nature tourism models that have been successful in the U.S. and other countries (e.g. Costa Rica).

#### Resources:

- Funding sources for heritage preservation projects: [www.achp.gov/funding.html](http://www.achp.gov/funding.html)
  - Information and technical assistance on tourism from the National Trust for Historic Preservation: [www.nthp.org/heritage\\_tourism/index.html](http://www.nthp.org/heritage_tourism/index.html)
  - Success stories: [www.nthp.org/heritage\\_tourism/Success\\_Stories.html](http://www.nthp.org/heritage_tourism/Success_Stories.html)
  - Partners in Tourism network, and principles of successful cultural tourism: [www.aam-us.org/initiatives/other/cultural.cfm](http://www.aam-us.org/initiatives/other/cultural.cfm)
  - Information about and examples of cultural and heritage tourism: [www.mrsc.org/Subjects/Econ/ed-TourCulture.aspx#Examples](http://www.mrsc.org/Subjects/Econ/ed-TourCulture.aspx#Examples)
  - North Carolina's state historic preservation officer: Dr. Jeffrey J. Crow, 919/733-7305
- Use the reconstructed Indian village — the only one between Williamsburg and Florida — as a lynchpin in a heritage tourism strategy. Network with other

N.C. and Virginia tribes in rural areas who are interested in developing heritage tourism programs, particularly the Meherrin, to pay for some joint marketing to both urban and rural areas.

- Take advantage of national and state resources to support the tribe's history/culture recovery programs and economic and community development plans. For example, use of a spoken Indian language in the proposed living village will provide educational benefits for the community and have unique appeal to the heritage tourist.

Resources:

- The Indigenous Language Institute (ILA); [www.indigenous-language.org](http://www.indigenous-language.org).
  - Oral History Program at UNC-Chapel Hill offers workshops on how to construct an oral history. Web site is [www.unc.edu/depts/csas/](http://www.unc.edu/depts/csas/) and contact person there is Jacquelyn Hall, 919/962-0455.
- Once the Homeland Preservation Project has some momentum, begin to engage Occaneechi business owners and farmers in the process.
  - Take advantage of community planning efforts in Orange and Alamance Counties:
    - Alamance County's chamber of commerce hosts an annual Community Retreat for leaders from around the county, and last year they began implementing their Destination 2020 strategic plan. One of the divisions of the chamber is the convention and visitors bureau, which promotes tourism.
    - Orange County has an economic development commission whose near-term plans include a public process to develop a new strategic vision for the economy of the county. This commission includes people with strong interests in the arts, agriculture, historic preservation, conservation, etc.

The Occaneechi can participate in the activities of both counties as a way to partner with others to promote its own economic development plans.

### ***Specific Projects, Activities and Resources***

- Consolidate standing but dormant committees into fewer committees with broader scopes, and develop a strategy for more effective and targeted outreach to other members to broaden the base of leadership. Incorporate elements of the Homeland Preservation Project as one focus area (among others) for every standing committee, or create a single project-focused committee. Design youth projects also to support and directly feed into the Homeland Preservation Project. Consider including academics and other local residents who are not Occaneechi but knowledgeable about and interested in the tribe.
- Build a clientele of "resident heritage tourists" in Orange and Alamance Counties. Offer interested people the chance to participate in research and construction for the Homeland Preservation Project (e.g. 1850s-era log homestead) and the recovery of Occaneechi history (e.g. language recovery project).

**Resources:**

- The Center for the Study of the American South at UNC-Chapel Hill includes several research historians and anthropologists; its web site is [www.unc.edu/depts/csas/](http://www.unc.edu/depts/csas/).
- Break down the business plan for the Homeland Preservation Project into several focus areas, identify potential sources of public and private funding for each, and engage experts in the larger community to help write funding proposals.
- Get *pro bono* assistance from area MBA students or community college Small Business Centers in developing the business plan and training tribal council members in business plan development so they can do it in the future.

**Contacts:**

- To request one or more MBA students from UNC's Kenan-Flagler Business School for this project, please write a brief description of the required task for the students and email it to Lingmei Howell at [lingmei\\_howell@unc.edu](mailto:lingmei_howell@unc.edu) or call her at 919/962-2686. (Ms. Howell works down the hall from Ms. Leslie Stewart at the Kenan Institute.)
- Create and train a Board of Directors for the Homeland Preservation Project that can devote itself to the specialized and technical tasks of managing the business component of the enterprise (e.g. museum/gift shop, tourism events).

Keep the Alamance County chamber of commerce (and convention and visitors bureau) and the Orange County economic development commission apprised of tribal initiatives so their plans can help promote compatible goals. Although the majority of Occaneechi members reside in Alamance County, the plans of Orange County are also likely to be relevant to projects of the tribe. Economic development contacts in both counties have expressed interest in working with the tribe on its Homeland Preservation Project and other initiatives relevant to local economic development. Over time the tribe can work to get a member appointed to the local chamber board or ED commission.

**Contacts:**

- Sonny Wilburn, Alamance County, 336/228-1338, [www.alamancechamber.com](http://www.alamancechamber.com)
- Dianne Reid, Orange County, 919/245-2325, [www.co.orange.nc.us](http://www.co.orange.nc.us), go to Economic Development Commission.