

# Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

---

*Albemarle Commission*

Box 646 512 South Church Street  
Hertford, North Carolina 27944  
[www.albemarlecommission.org](http://www.albemarlecommission.org)

OCTOBER 2012

## Table of Contents

Member Governments .....	2
Introduction .....	3
1. Background .....	4
2. In-Depth Analysis .....	21
3. Goals & Objectives .....	23
4. Community & Private Sector Participation .....	24
5. Suggested Projects & Jobs Created .....	25
6. Identify & Prioritize Projects.....	27
7. Identify Clusters .....	29
8. Action Plan to implement Goals & Objectives .....	33
9. Performance Measures .....	35
10. Cooperating and Integrating CEDs with State .....	36
Appendix .....	37

## **Albemarle Commission Member Governments**

- Camden County
- Chowan County
  - Town of Edenton
- Currituck County
- Dare County
  - Town of Duck
  - Town of Southern Shores
  - Town of Kill Devil Hills
  - Town of Kitty Hawk
  - Town of Manteo
  - Town of Nags Head
- Gates County
  - Town of Gatesville
- Hyde County
- Pasquotank County
  - City of Elizabeth City
- Perquimans County
  - Town of Hertford
  - Town of Winfall
- Tyrrell County
  - Town of Columbia
- Washington County
  - Town of Creswell
  - Town of Roper
  - Town of Plymouth

## ***Introduction***

Initially organized in 1969 under the direction of the U.S. Economic Development Administration, the Albemarle Commission is sanctioned as the lead regional organization for Region R by the federal government. Through legislation, the Commission became one of five regional planning and development commissions. The Commission has been addressing regional needs since its doors opened in 1970 and has been instrumental in the development and/or enhancement of regional infrastructure; industrial recruitment business development, labor force development, travel and tourism, community reinvestment /rehabilitation, and health and human services. The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy was developed by the Albemarle Commission Planning Staff with the guidance of the CEDS Committee, and input from local governments in the region. The CEDS Committee represented leaders of the community and was composed of 51% private sector stake holders. Local government managers, planners, and economic developers provided input concerning the projects and needs of the region. Other sources of information include economic development strategies, land use plans, and capital improvement plans of local governments in the region.

## 1. Background

### Geography

Ten counties, and the towns within them, make up the Albemarle Region, located in the northeastern corner of North Carolina. The region is predominantly rural, with a great deal of wetlands and agricultural land. Most of the towns in the region are small, with populations less than 5,000. The largest population centers are located in the coastal communities of the Outer Banks in Dare County, and Elizabeth City in Pasquotank County. The Albemarle Region has a total land area of 3,222 square miles, making it the largest of the sixteen planning organizations in the State.

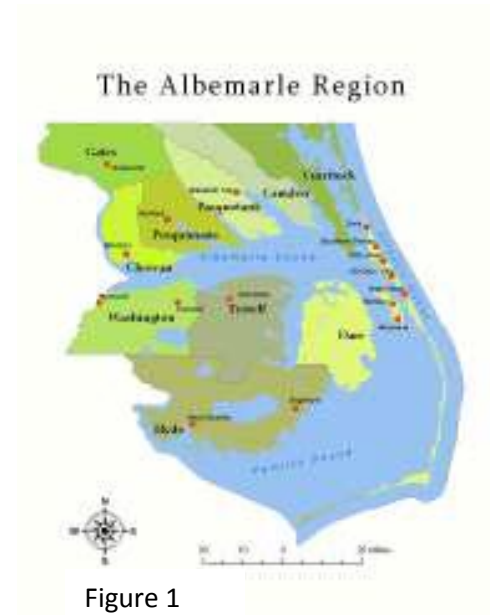


Figure 1

Furthermore, the region is separated by 2,360 square miles of water. Major water bodies include the Albemarle Sound, Currituck Sound, Croatan Sound, the northern portion of the Pamlico Sound, and several large rivers and lakes.

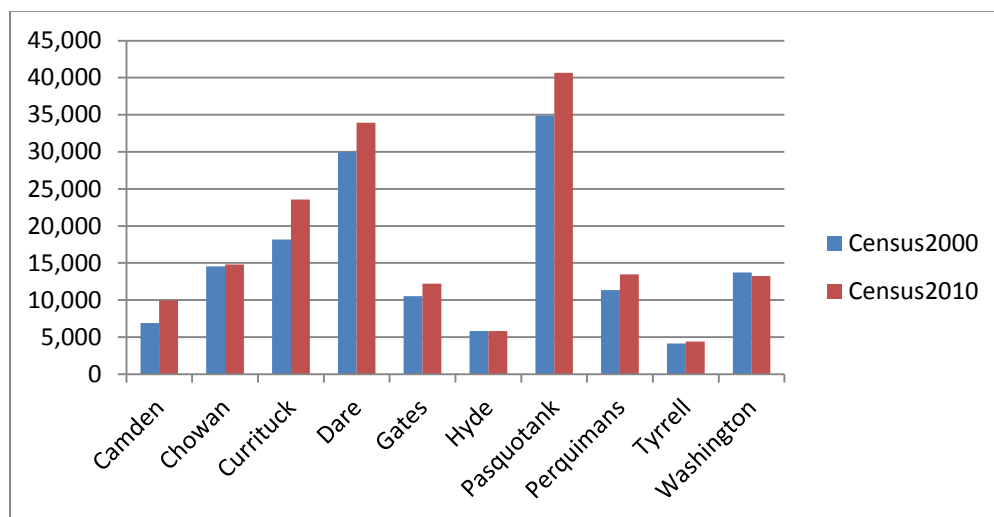
Due to the geography of the region, transportation, soil quality, and flooding are the primary obstacles to economic development. The large water bodies that separate the region make vehicular transportation time consuming and expensive. There is a great deal of congestion on major highway corridors. This is especially true where the transportation system transverses large water bodies with bridges and ferries. Much of the land in the region cannot be developed due to wetlands. Furthermore, poor soil makes much of the region incompatible for septic systems, resulting in a greater dependence on local governments for water and sewer services. Overall, the Albemarle Region is a vast region where population centers are separated not only by distance, but also by natural geographic barriers.

## Population

The Albemarle Region is characterized by an older population. Between 2000 and 2010 the population of the region grew by an average of 14.6%. Between 2010 and 2030 it is predicted that the population will slow and the growth will only be 0.1%.

Albemarle Commission Region Population Growth, 2000-2030								
County	Census 2000	Census 2010	Growth 2000-10	% Growth 2000-10	2020 Projection	2030 Projection	Growth 2010-30	% Growth 2010-30
Camden	6,885	9,980	3,095	45.0%	9,116	8,325	-1,655	-16.6%
Chowan	14,526	14,793	267	1.8%	15,103	15,443	650	4.4%
Currituck	18,190	23,547	5,357	29.5%	23,576	23,498	-49	-0.2%
Dare	29,967	33,920	3,953	13.2%	36,023	38,030	4,110	12.1%
Gates	10,516	12,197	1,681	16.0%	10,943	9,918	-2,279	-18.7%
Hyde	5,826	5,810	-16	-0.3%	5,825	5,837	27	0.5%
Pasquotank	34,897	40,661	5,764	16.5%	40,061	40,222	-439	-1.1%
Perquimans	11,368	13,453	2,085	18.3%	13,962	14,482	1,029	7.6%
Tyrrell	4,149	4,407	258	6.2%	4,341	4,341	-66	-1.5%
Washington	13,723	13,228	-495	-3.6%	12,651	12,069	-1,159	-8.8%
<b>Region Total</b>	<b>150,047</b>	<b>171,996</b>	<b>21,949</b>	<b>14.6%</b>	<b>171,601</b>	<b>172,165</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>0.1%</b>

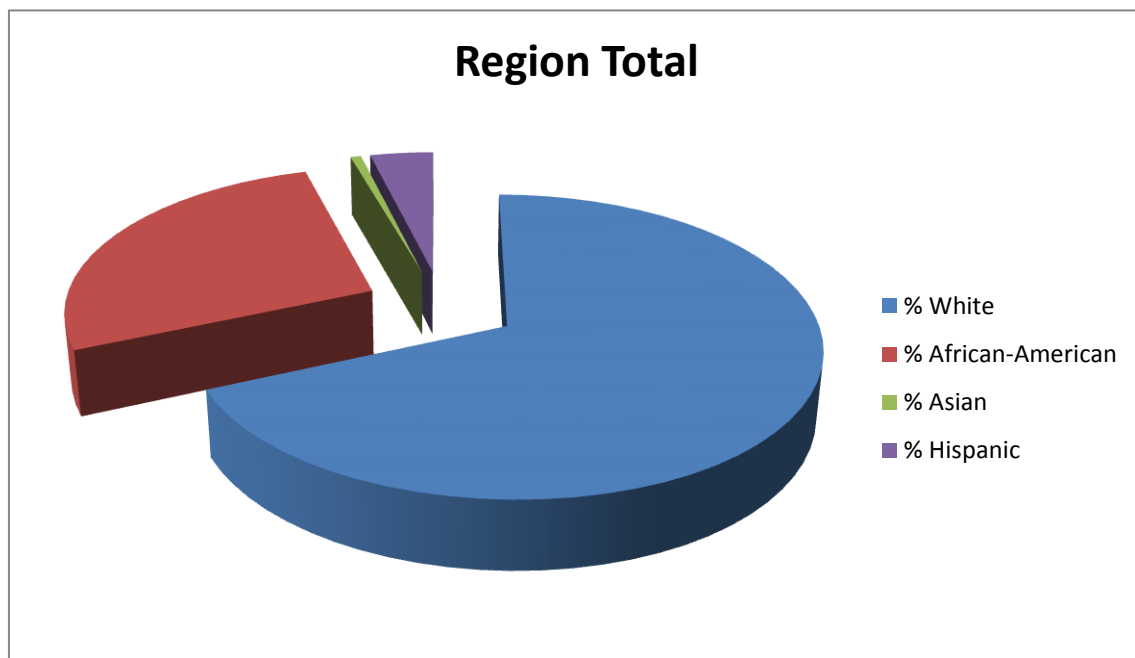
Source: Census 2000, Census 2010, NC Demographer



The region is predominately white (68.4%) with 27.1% African-American, 3.8% Hispanic and the balance being other races and ethnicity.

<b>Albemarle Commission Region Population by Race &amp; Ethnicity, 2010</b>								
<b>County</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>% White</b>	<b>African-American</b>	<b>% African-American</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>% Asian</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>% Hispanic</b>
Camden	8,193	82.10%	1,316	13.20%	146	1.50%	215	2.20%
Chowan	9,174	62.00%	5,070	34.30%	52	0.40%	467	3.20%
Currituck	21,268	90.30%	1,361	5.80%	9	0.00%	704	3.00%
Dare	31,313	92.30%	834	2.50%	212	0.60%	2,210	6.50%
Gates	7,768	63.70%	4,044	33.20%	17	0.10%	173	1.40%
Hyde	3,718	64.00%	1,836	31.60%	16	0.30%	411	7.10%
Pasquotank	23,059	56.70%	15,355	37.80%	454	1.10%	1,624	4.00%
Perquimans	9,694	72.10%	3,347	24.90%	38	0.30%	286	2.10%
Tyrrell	2,403	54.50%	1,683	38.20%	80	1.80%	240	5.40%
Washington	6,084	46.00%	6,587	49.80%	38	0.30%	466	3.50%
<b>Region Total</b>	<b>122,674</b>	<b>68.40%</b>	<b>41,433</b>	<b>27.10%</b>	<b>1,062</b>	<b>0.64%</b>	<b>6,796</b>	<b>3.84%</b>

Source: Census 2010



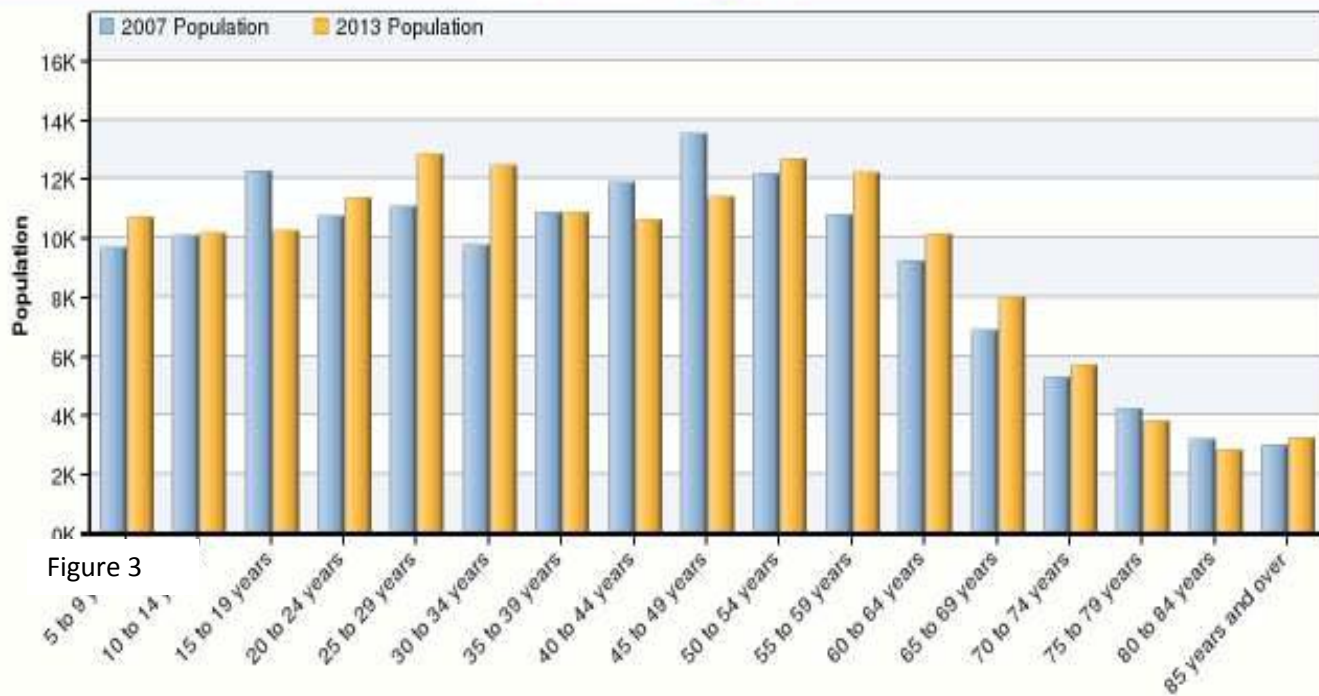
The 2010 Census reveals that 16.9% of the residents of the region are age 65 and older. The aging of the population places a tremendous burden on local governments: reduced revenues due to spending habits of senior citizens, a proportionally smaller workforce, and tax entitlements. Perquimans County is most negatively impacted by this trend, with 21.5% of its population 65 or older. The region continues to struggle with serving an aging population.

<b>Albemarle Commission Region Population by Age Group, 2010</b>								
<b>County</b>	<b>Under 18</b>	<b>% Under 18</b>	<b>18-44</b>	<b>% 18-44</b>	<b>45-64</b>	<b>% 45-64</b>	<b>65 &amp; over</b>	<b>% 65 &amp; over</b>
Camden	2,557	25.60%	4,048	32.30%	2,093	29.20%	1,282	12.90%
Chowan	3,317	22.40%	4,109	27.70%	4,459	30.20%	2,908	19.70%
Currituck	5,591	23.70%	7,547	32.10%	7,368	31.30%	3,041	12.90%
Dare	6,792	20.00%	10,819	32.00%	11,142	32.80%	5,167	15.20%
Gates	2,903	23.80%	3,738	30.60%	3,725	30.60%	1,831	15.00%
Hyde	1,229	21.20%	1,967	33.70%	1,739	30.00%	875	15.10%
Pasquotank	9,199	22.60%	15,348	37.80%	10,601	26.00%	5,513	13.60%
Perquimans	2,769	20.60%	3,705	27.40%	4,092	30.50%	2,887	21.50%
Tyrrell	795	18.00%	1,261	28.60%	1,609	36.60%	742	16.80%
Washington	3,043	23.00%	4,004	30.40%	3,767	28.40%	2,414	18.20%
<b>Region Total/Avg</b>	<b>38,195</b>	<b>22.09%</b>	<b>56,546</b>	<b>31.26%</b>	<b>50,595</b>	<b>30.56%</b>	<b>26,660</b>	<b>16.09%</b>

Source: Census 2010



## Population by Age



Source: Economic Modeling Specialists, 2007

### Socioeconomic

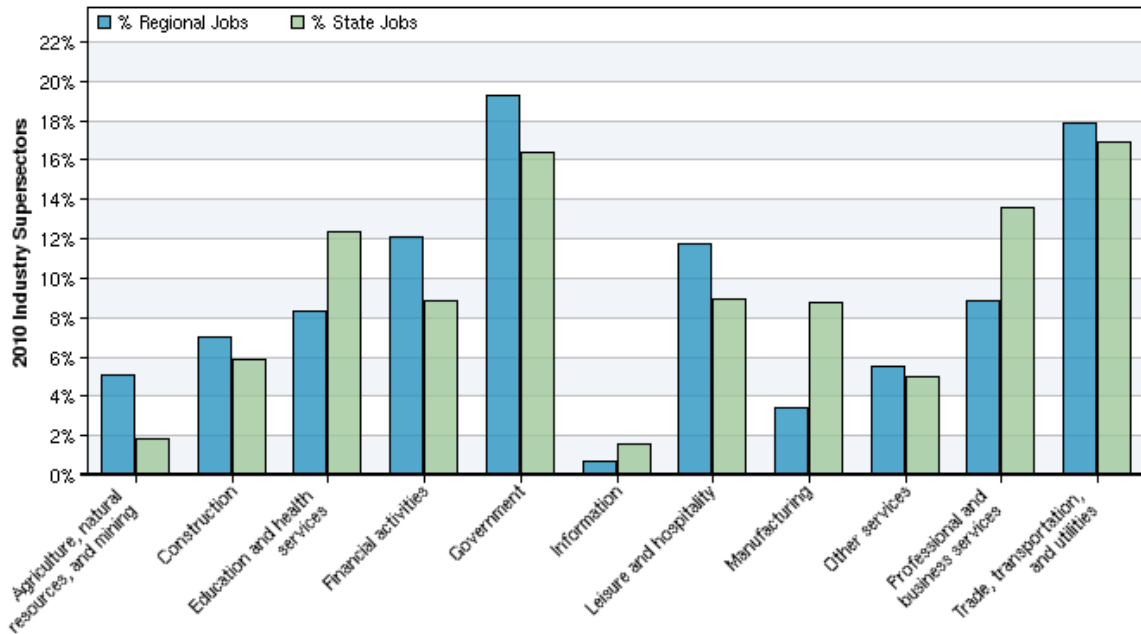
The rate for all persons in poverty in the region is 18.4% with a poverty rate of 28.4% for children. Both poverty rates are highest in Tyrrell County. The region's average median household income is \$42,323 with the highest in Camden County and the lowest in Tyrrell County. Dare County's economy is supported by a vibrant tourism industry on the Outer Banks. Camden County is very close to the Virginia State Line. Although, there is region-wide economic depression, there is an economic void in the center of the region with the counties of Tyrrell and Washington. These central counties lack the tourism industries of coastal communities, as well as close proximity to employment generators in southeastern Virginia.

<b>Albemarle Commission Region Poverty Rates and Median Household Income, 2010</b>					
<b>County</b>	<b>All Persons</b>	<b>All Persons Poverty Rate (%)</b>	<b>Under 18</b>	<b>Under 18 Poverty Rate (%)</b>	<b>Median Household Income</b>
Camden	970	9.70%	342	13.40%	\$59,522
Chowan	3,047	21.10%	1,101	33.60%	\$36,176
Currituck	2,611	11.10%	1,005	18.10%	\$53,939
Dare	4,157	12.30%	1,604	24.00%	\$50,203
Gates	2,122	17.50%	687	24.10%	\$43,010
Hyde	1,093	21.90%	313	29.70%	\$35,206
Pasquotank	8,616	22.90%	2,828	31.30%	\$39,381
Perquimans	2,201	16.40%	804	29.40%	\$40,772
Tyrrell	1,087	28.70%	341	43.30%	\$31,732
Washington	2,923	22.40%	1,116	37.30%	\$33,293
<b>Region Totals/Avg.</b>	<b>28,827</b>	<b>18.40%</b>	<b>10,141</b>	<b>28.42%</b>	<b>\$42,323</b>

Source: SAIPE

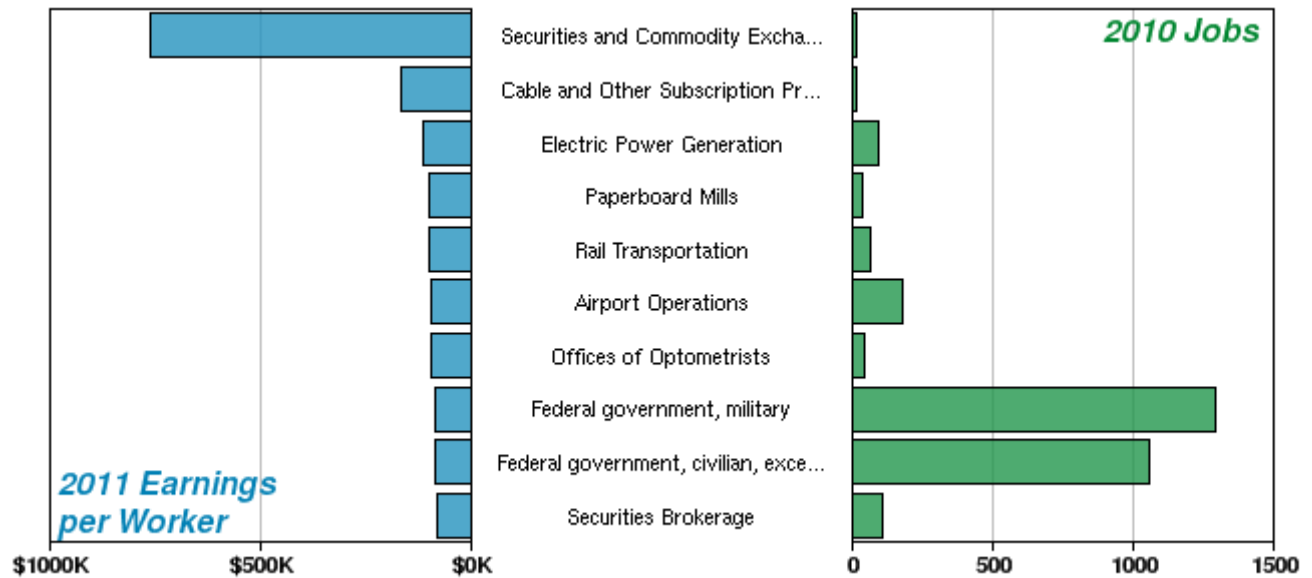
### Economy

There are many healthy aspects to the regional economy. Government jobs make up a large percentage of the jobs in the region (Figures 6a, 6b & 7a, 7b). The US Coast Guard base located in Pasquotank County is one of the large government employers in the region. Resident's outside income includes outside property income, transfer payments, and the income of commuters that work outside the region. Commuters that live in the northern counties of the region and work in Virginia account for the large Residents' Outside Income portion of the economic base. Although these jobs provide income, the cost for providing services to these residents far exceeds the tax revenues produced within the local governments that must provide the services. The services, construction, and tourism bases of the region's economy are healthy. However, communications plays a dangerously small role in the Albemarle Region. Communication is an important part an economy because it is a key component to all other clusters.



Source: EMSI Complete Employment 2011.4

Description	2010 Regional Jobs	% Regional Jobs	2010 State Jobs	% State Jobs
Agriculture, natural resources, and mining	4,359	5.1%	93,611	1.8%
Construction	5,981	7.0%	301,373	5.9%
Education and health services	7,067	8.3%	636,983	12.4%
Financial activities	10,293	12.1%	453,895	8.8%
Government	16,413	19.3%	843,265	16.4%
Information	609	0.7%	81,428	1.6%
Leisure and hospitality	10,035	11.8%	458,954	8.9%
Manufacturing	2,923	3.4%	451,441	8.8%
Other services	4,723	5.5%	256,407	5.0%
Professional and business services	7,557	8.9%	700,225	13.6%
Trade, transportation, and utilities	15,259	17.9%	871,562	16.9%



Albemarle Commission Region Employment, 2000-2010								
County	2000	2005	2007	2010	Change 2000-10	% Change 2000-10	Change 2007-10	% Change 2007-10
Camden	3,215	4,229	4,455	4,189	974	23.25%	-266	-6.35%
Chowan	6,226	6,686	6,715	5,711	-515	-9.02%	-1,004	-17.58%
Currituck	8,958	11,792	12,185	11,630	2,672	22.98%	-555	-4.77%
Dare	17,958	21,635	21,650	19,616	1,658	8.45%	-2,034	-10.37%
Gates	4,491	4,755	4,794	4,456	-35	-0.79%	-338	-7.59%
Hyde	2,702	2,756	2,547	2,733	31	1.13%	186	6.81%
Pasquotank	14,834	16,550	17,446	15,649	815	5.21%	-1,797	-11.48%
Perquimans	4,586	4,936	5,081	4,891	305	6.24%	-190	-3.88%
Tyrrell	1,743	2,042	2,097	2,044	301	14.73%	-53	-2.59%
Washington	5,641	5,751	6,024	6,412	771	12.02%	388	6.05%
<b>Region Total</b>	<b>70,354</b>	<b>81,132</b>	<b>82,994</b>	<b>77,331</b>	<b>6,977</b>	<b>9.02%</b>	<b>-5,663</b>	<b>-7.32%</b>

NC Employment Security Commission

NAICS Code	Description	2010 Jobs	2015 Jobs	Change	% Change	2011 Average Earnings
52321	Securities and Commodity Exchanges	14	18	4	29%	\$763,908
51521	Cable and Other Subscription Programming	12	13	1	8%	\$165,351
22111	Electric Power Generation	90	60	-30	-33%	\$115,858
32213	Paperboard Mills	35	21	-14	-40%	\$100,844
48211	Rail Transportation	63	69	6	10%	\$100,238
48811	Airport Operations	182	272	90	49%	\$96,572
62132	Offices of Optometrists	40	46	6	15%	\$94,156
91200	Federal government, military	1,294	1,241	-53	-4%	\$87,168
91100	Federal government, civilian, except postal service	1,058	1,069	11	1%	\$85,945
52312	Securities Brokerage	110	167	57	52%	\$80,553

\*Note: Industries with fewer than 10 employees are not shown.

Source: EMSI Complete Employment 2011.4

Albemarle Commission Region Average Annual Wage per employee, 2000-2010								
County	2000	2005	2007	2010	Change 2000-10	% Change 2000-10	Change 2007-10	% Change 2007-10
Camden	\$ 22,828	\$ 28,860	\$ 34,840	\$ 39,988	\$ 17,160	42.91%	\$ 5,148	12.87%
Chowan	\$ 22,776	\$ 26,572	\$ 28,496	\$ 30,212	\$ 7,436	24.61%	\$ 1,716	5.68%
Currituck	\$ 21,892	\$ 24,544	\$ 28,652	\$ 30,888	\$ 8,996	29.12%	\$ 2,236	7.24%
Dare	\$ 20,956	\$ 25,688	\$ 27,924	\$ 28,236	\$ 7,280	25.78%	\$ 312	1.10%
Gates	\$ 23,140	\$ 25,168	\$ 26,676	\$ 28,912	\$ 5,772	19.96%	\$ 2,236	7.73%
Hyde	\$ 19,604	\$ 22,672	\$ 25,324	\$ 26,156	\$ 6,552	25.05%	\$ 832	3.18%
Pasquotank	\$ 24,180	\$ 28,236	\$ 30,784	\$ 32,448	\$ 8,268	25.48%	\$ 1,664	5.13%
Perquimans	\$ 20,696	\$ 23,504	\$ 26,416	\$ 27,144	\$ 6,448	23.75%	\$ 728	2.68%
Tyrrell	\$ 20,852	\$ 22,516	\$ 24,648	\$ 26,312	\$ 5,460	20.75%	\$ 1,664	6.32%
Washington	\$ 21,060	\$ 22,776	\$ 24,336	\$ 34,580	\$ 13,520	39.10%	\$ 10,244	29.62%
<b>Region Avg.</b>	<b>\$ 21,798</b>	<b>\$ 25,053</b>	<b>\$ 27,809</b>	<b>\$ 30,487</b>	<b>\$ 8,689</b>	<b>28.50%</b>	<b>\$ 2,678</b>	<b>8.78%</b>

NC Employment Security Commission

Tourism is the life-blood of the counties that border the Atlantic Ocean and the area sounds. Between 2000 and 2010 even with the recession, the region averaged a 24.14% increase in tourism spending. Dare County increased by 40.17%. Currituck County increased by 38.02%.

<b>Table 11</b> <b>Albemarle Commission Tourism Economic Impact</b> <b>\$(millions)</b>				
<b>County</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Change 2000- 2010</b>	<b>% Change 2000- 2010</b>
Camden	1.29	1.71	0.42	24.56%
Chowan	13.62	16.45	2.83	17.20%
Currituck	72.59	117.12	44.53	38.02%
Dare	499.19	834.29	335.1	40.17%
Gates	4.19	5.28	1.09	20.64%
Hyde	23.66	30.9	7.24	23.43%
Pasquotank	35.33	50.67	15.34	30.27%
Perquimans	7.01	8.66	1.65	19.05%
Tyrrell	2.94	3.12	0.18	5.77%
Washington	9.7	12.48	2.78	22.28%
<b>Region Totals/Avg</b>	<b>669.52</b>	<b>1080.68</b>	<b>411.16</b>	<b>24.14%</b>

Source: NC Division of Tourism

### Housing

In 2000 there were 83,003 housing units in the region. By 2010 that had increased by 17,268 (17.2%) to 100,271. Since the recession the number of housing units being built has slacked off, but affluent coastal areas are not affected as much. There continues to be a

concern regarding the lack of affordable workforce housing in the region, especially in the tourist areas where it is needed the most.

<b>Albemarle Commission Region Housing Units, 2010</b>				
<b>County</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Change 2000-2010</b>	<b>% Change 2000-2010</b>
Camden	2,973	4,104	1,131	27.56%
Chowan	6,443	7,289	846	11.61%
Currituck	10,687	14,453	3,766	26.06%
Dare	26,671	33,492	6,821	20.37%
Gates	4,389	5,208	819	15.73%
Hyde	3,302	3,347	45	1.34%
Pasquotank	14,289	16,833	2,544	15.11%
Perquimans	6,043	6,986	943	13.50%
Tyrrell	2,032	2,068	36	1.74%
Washington	6,174	6,491	317	4.88%
<b>Region Totals</b>	<b>83,003</b>	<b>100,271</b>	<b>17,268</b>	<b>17.22%</b>

Data Source: Census 2000 & American Community Survey

### Education

An educated workforce is needed to attract business and industry. The American Community Survey data shows that 81.9% of the region's residents are high school graduates and that 16.2% of them have a bachelor's degree or higher. Tyrrell County has the lowest number of both high school and college graduates and Dare County has the most of both high school and college graduates.

The region's K-12 schools are also of concern to business, industry and citizens. Families with school-age children do not want to locate in areas where there are concerns about the K-12 school system. Regionally only 61.7% of the schools are making adequate progress according to the state's Division of Public Instruction. However 100% of the schools in both Camden County and Currituck County are making adequate progress. The region's average four year cohort graduation is 76.6% with the Dare County having the highest graduation rate not only in the region, but in the state as well.

Albemarle Commission Region Education Attainment, 2010		
County	HS Graduates age 25+ 2006-2010	Bachelor's degree or higher age 25+ 2006-2010
Camden	88.4%	19.0%
Chowan	77.4%	15.7%
Currituck	84.7%	17.2%
Dare	91.8%	32.1%
Gates	82.6%	10.5%
Hyde	76.7%	11.7%
Pasquotank	81.9%	18.7%
Perquimans	85.3%	18.1%
Tyrrell	73.9%	8.4%
Washington	76.0%	11.8%
<b>Region Avg.</b>	<b>81.9%</b>	<b>16.2%</b>

Data Source: American Community Survey

Albemarle Commission K-12 Progress 2009-2010		
County	% Schools Making Adequate progress	% 4 yr. cohort graduation rate 2009-2010
Camden	100.0%	79.5%
Chowan	50.0%	74.7%
Currituck	100.0%	79.8%
Dare	81.8%	90.5%
Gates	60.0%	80.3%
Hyde	80.0%	67.8%
Pasquotank	41.7%	70.7%
Perquimans	50.0%	83.2%
Tyrrell	33.3%	58.6%
Washington	20.0%	80.8%
<b>Region Avg.</b>	<b>61.7%</b>	<b>76.6%</b>

Source: NC Department of Public Instruction



### Workforce Development

The region is at a critical point in its evolution. It goes on to say that no longer are communities competing just against neighboring communities, nearby regions, or even neighboring states. Communities are now competing against other nations in a global economy that is constantly changing. The region has weathered the changes of the new economy and it must now re-position itself to not only survive, but to thrive. To do so it must create a competitive advantage by developing strong community partnerships and identify a vision for the future.

The IWPD is a North Carolina grant program available to businesses for training their employees. The purpose of the grant program is to support trainings that result in layoff aversion through skill attainment for employees. Businesses can receive up to \$25,000 per training project with a lifetime maximum of \$40,000. Approvable trainings include trainings in occupational and educational skills designed to meet the special requirements of the business. In 2011, six businesses obtain a total of \$134,552 through this grant program.

The Northeastern Workforce Development Board was awarded a \$1.27 million dollar State Energy Sector Partnership (SESP) grant from DOL in the spring of 2010 to serve the counties of Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hyde, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell, and Washington. The purpose of the grant is to target energy efficiency and renewable energy as well as other green industries that build and strengthen partnerships dedicated to building a skilled workforce. The grant promotes career pathway development and skill attainment (education and training) that leads to industry recognized certifications in renewable energy as well as energy efficiency with the intent that all training will lead to employment in the Energy sector. SESP grant staff consists of the Grant Project Manager, a Training & Employment Specialist (with a second TES to begin July 2011), Green Intermediary (contract funds exhausted & contract ended May 2011) and an Administrative Assistant. Under the heading of Sustainability Initiative of Northeastern NC, NWDB has chosen to concentrate training efforts in the direction of:

- energy efficient building, construction, and retrofit industries;
- renewable electric power industries (particularly wind and solar);
- deconstruction and materials use industries;
- energy efficiency assessment industries
- water quality issues associated with farming and building
- manufacturers that produce sustainable products using environmentally sustainable processes and materials.

### Transportation

The inter-regional highway system is inadequate for many businesses that may otherwise relocate to the area. Widening, bridge replacement, ferry upgrades, and new construction are necessary to allow business to efficiently import resources and export goods. Furthermore, the current system creates long commute times, placing additional burdens on working families.

The following is a table of public transportation available in the region:

Provider	Counties	Restrictions
Inter County Public Transportation Authority (ICPTA)	Camden Chowan Currituck Pasquotank Perquimans	No Restrictions
Gates Inter-regional Transit System (GITS)	Gates	Available to all, but limited availability
County Operated Van	Dare	Available to all, but limited availability
Social Services Van	Tyrrell	Available to all, but limited availability
Center Human Resources	Washington	Limited
Hyde Transit	Hyde	Limited

### Resources

Elizabeth City State University (ECSU) is a public, historically black college located in Elizabeth City, North Carolina. ECSU enrolls nearly 2,500 students in 37 baccalaureate programs and three masters degree programs, a member-school of the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, as well as a member-institution of the University of North Carolina system.

The College of the Albemarle is one of the North Carolina Community Colleges. The main campus is located in Elizabeth City with satellite campuses located in Edenton and Manteo (two locations). They serve 4,000 students in the region. The College of the Albemarle has a Small Business Center and a Career Readiness Center.

### Environment

Eastern North Carolina is blessed with four mild seasons. It is located about half way between New York and Florida. There are a number of rivers that flow through the region. There are several sounds in the coastal environment, of which Pamlico Sound is the largest. Coastal estuaries, rivers and creeks, along with the Atlantic Ocean, are sought after by tourists, developers and retirees.

The coastal area contains sensitive habitats that must be protected. Wetland areas abound and there are restrictions on their use and development. All these factors combined make the coastal area a difficult place to locate industry of any size.

Sea-level rise is a controversial subject that pits coastal developers and land owners against regulations that would limit growth and development in areas predicted to be affected. The jury is still out on how coastal counties and coastal communities will respond to predictions. The NC State legislature is addressing these issues.

Much of the Albemarle Commission's region remains rural, providing ample space for farming, recreation and other forms of development.

Where the region's coastal environment is an attraction for development, it also presents several threats. For example, seasonal hurricanes make the area unattractive to some potential residents and businesses. Area beaches are also prone to erosion from storms, currents and natural shifts, which for many communities have been remedied by federal and State funds allocated for beach nourishment. As federal and State budgets get tighter, there is the threat of funding losses, shifting the cost to local governments. Beach erosion affects not only residents but the area's attractiveness for tourism and retirees. Continuous dredging of local inlets has also been deemed costly and in some cases prohibitive by the Army Corps of Engineers, again affecting residents, tourists and retirees.

### Housing

Housing costs are extremely prohibitive to economic development in the region. Possible employers are unable to locate to the region because housing is not available to support their workforce needs. Lack of affordable housing is especially damaging to the economies of coastal towns. Tourism on the coast generates jobs for the entire region. However, housing cost in close proximity to these jobs forces workers to commute from the inland. These long commutes detract from the value of wages. Some occupations require workers to reside near the communities they serve, such as health and safety workers that must be on call. The overall quality of life, and safety on the Outer Banks, is diminished by a lack of affordable housing.

<b>Albemarle Commission Region Housing Units, 2010</b>				
<b>County</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Change 2000-2010</b>	<b>% Change 2000-2010</b>
Camden	2,973	4,104	1,131	27.56%
Chowan	6,443	7,289	846	11.61%
Currituck	10,687	14,453	3,766	26.06%
Dare	26,671	33,492	6,821	20.37%
Gates	4,389	5,208	819	15.73%
Hyde	3,302	3,347	45	1.34%

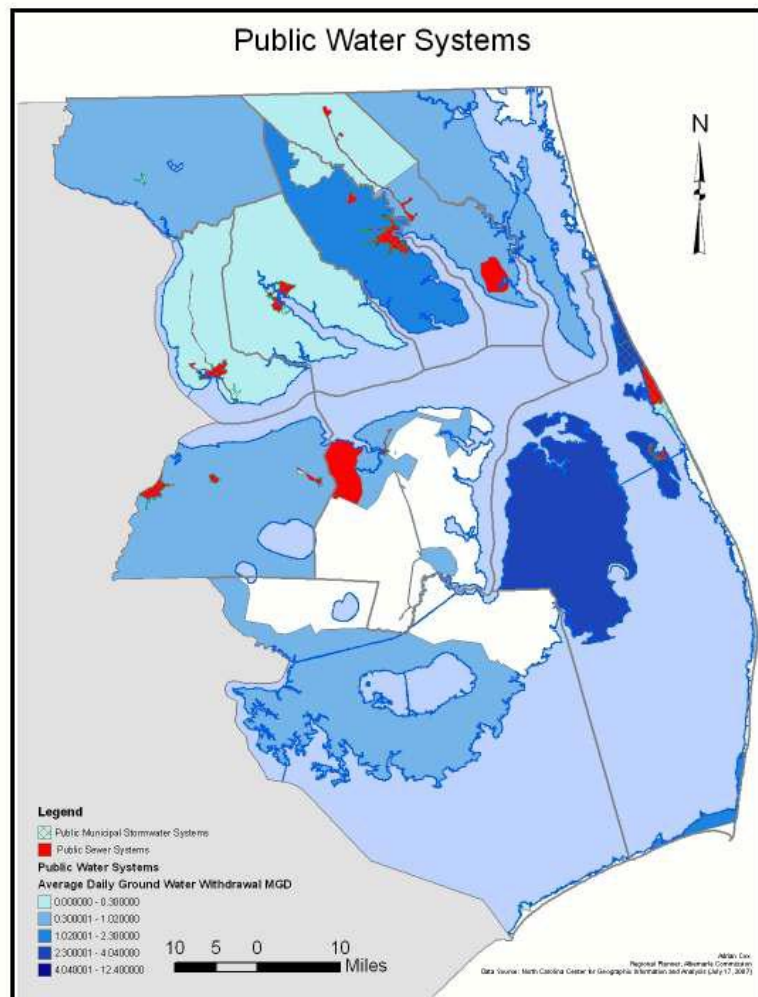
Pasquotank	14,289	16,833	2,544	15.11%
Perquimans	6,043	6,986	943	13.50%
Tyrrell	2,032	2,068	36	1.74%
Washington	6,174	6,491	317	4.88%
<b>Region Totals</b>	<b>83,003</b>	<b>100,271</b>	<b>17,268</b>	<b>17.22%</b>

Data Source: Census 2000 & American Community Survey

### Infrastructure

Water capacity and water quality concerns are paramount in the region. There are nine county-wide, one regional, and several municipal water systems in the region. Many systems within the 3 region expect demand levels would exceed 80% of available supply by 2020. Figure 5 shows the Albemarle Region's water systems. Due to a lack of available ground water, several local governments in the region are engaging in prolonged and expensive reverse osmosis projects. Financial assistance from outside sources is necessary to maintain current water systems, meet future demand, and allow for economic growth.

Additional infrastructure deficiencies include a lack of affordable high speed internet access, and availability of natural gas. Essential to the success of the region is that it must link and act as a single entity. There must be a connection between educational, environmental, workforce, economic and



community development efforts. This connection will support growth and sustainability by helping communities function effectively.

## **2. In-depth Analysis**

### ***Other relevant material and consistency with applicable State and local workforce investment strategies***

#### **S.W.O.T**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreational and natural amenities</li> <li>• Rural and small town life style</li> <li>• Strong agriculture industry</li> <li>• Strong tourism industry</li> <li>• Well preserved historic areas</li> <li>• Higher education and job training facilities</li> <li>• Close proximity to urban centers in Virginia</li> <li>• Large federal government employers</li> <li>• Several airports</li> <li>• Geography ideal for both aircraft and marine facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor connectivity of transportation system</li> <li>• Difficulties attaining potable water</li> <li>• Low educational attainment</li> <li>• Insufficient communication network</li> <li>• Storm and flood prone areas</li> <li>• Tax-base/service-requirement imbalance</li> <li>• Lack of affordable housing</li> </ul>

#### **Opportunities**

Workforce development through state universities and community colleges

- Vacant buildings hold promise of reconstruction and infill development
- Many tourism activities remain unutilized
- Differentiation of agriculture products such as organic or wild-fish might strengthen the industry
- Further expansion of airports for commercial and leisure use
- Potential for aeronautic and marine research
- Residents commuting to Virginia present a market for services within the region
- Improved water capacity through utilization of new technologies, state and federal funding, and regional connectivity of water systems

#### **Threats**

- Rapid residential development, without commercial balance
- Possible coastal shift due to global warming

- Declining profitability in agricultural industries
- Loss of natural and recreational amenities to development
- Declining economic competitiveness due to changes in global and national economy
- Unfunded mandates and other encroachments on local government resources
- Increasing demand for services from local governments

*Identification of past, present, and projected future economic development investments in the region*

Past – Since 2004 EDA invested significantly in the expansion of the runway at the airport in Elizabeth City that was connected to the Coast Guard Air Station.

Present- EDA is participating with Gates County for the expansion of a sewer system to provide for commercial development in the County. Also along with the Partnership Grant, EDA has also provide funding as a result of Hurricane Irene to enhance preparedness in the region for future disasters.

Future – Due to the regions rural and agrarian nature we anticipate there will be a continuing need for infrastructure as the region emerges to fully use its natural resources such as solar and wind energy. Additionally, since the region is located in coastal North Carolina, we are often affected by hurricanes and winter storms that can devastate our coastal communities' economies. EDA funding will be needed to recover from the effects of these storms.

### ***3. Goals and objectives***

The Goals and objectives can be found in the appendix to this document.



#### ***4. Community and private sector participation in CEDS effort***

The 2012 Albemarle Commission Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Update (CEDS) is the result of input from both the public and private sector. The CEDS Strategy Committee's membership includes persons from the following fields:

- Private sector representatives
- Public officials
- Community Leaders
- Representatives of workforce development boards
- Representatives of institutions of higher education
- Minority and labor groups
- Private individuals

Individuals from these groups were solicited for participation and input in the update of this CEDS. Additionally, the staff of the Albemarle Commission has met privately and publicly with the Economic Developers, regional developers, Planners, Municipal and county Managers, and elected county and municipal officials within the region to solicit their input for the plan. The CEDS was made available for public comment for thirty days before submission to the Economic Development Administration.

A yearly performance report will be generated and forwarded to the EDA as required. This report will document the progress of the CEDS implementation efforts as well as the goals and objectives set forth in the plan. Any performance report that results in a major change of the technical components of the EDA-approved CEDS will be made available for review and comment by the public for a period of at least 30 days prior to submitting the performance report to EDA.

A new CEDS will be developed at least every five years, unless ECC determines that a new CEDS is needed earlier due to changed circumstance within the region.

## ***5. Suggested projects and projected number of jobs to be created as a result of those projects***

Suggested projects and projected number of jobs to be created as a result of those projects:

### ***Infrastructure (create 300 jobs)***

- Water systems to increase capacities/pressures/service area/ storage/ regionalization
- Sewer systems to increase capacities and service areas, regionalization
- Systems to dispose of treated effluent or residuals from water treatment systems
- Expansion of electric distribution system and capacity, regionalization
- Miscellaneous infrastructure improvements to service business/industry
- Development of industry and/or technology parks (infrastructure)
- Disaster-proofing local infrastructure

### ***Facilities (Create 1175 jobs)***

- Construction of facilities for job training/retraining
- Construction of municipality-owned facility to be occupied by a company
- Construction of a municipality-owned road
- Business/Industrial incubators
- Downtown revitalization projects
- Development of tourism venues
- Development of meeting venues
- Development of building reuse projects
- Private sector investment

### ***Military (save jobs)***

- Prevent encroachment on military facilities and low level flight paths
- Develop projects that protect military assets from Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) actions

***Transportation (create 57 jobs)***

- Improve existing and develop new options for public transportation.
- Improve existing road, air, water, and rail systems to accommodate additional usage and freight movement

***Miscellaneous***

- Create projects and programs that help develop and encourage entrepreneurs.
- Create projects and programs that attract retirees to the area
- Ensure that all local areas have “senior friendly” environments, policies, and practices
- Create plans that assist in the development of economic development projects and clusters.

According to the NC Employment Security Commission the average annual number of job in the region for 2011 was 76,615. We anticipate that over the five-year period of this CEDS (by December 2017) there will be an additional 1,532 jobs (2%) created.

***6. Identification and prioritization of vital projects, programs and activities that address the region's greatest needs or that will best enhance the region's competitiveness, including sources of funding for past and potential future investments.***

The vital projects, programs and activities are identified and prioritized as follows:

- Ones that recruit and secure new employers that will diversify region's economy, that will enhance clusters, that will promote new enterprise development, that provide employee benefits including health care and preferably ones that pay higher wages.
- Ones that retain existing jobs in the Region and encourage expansion wherever possible.
- Ones that upgrade the skills of those presently in the workforce and those entering the workforce through continual training and advanced education.
- Ones that help develop and support entrepreneurs.
- Ones that continue the resourceful and intelligent use of the region's natural resources.
- Ones that extend high-speed communications networks.
- Ones that address infrastructure needs within the region.
- Ones that improve transportation access.
- Ones that prepare the region for the predicted increase in the number of senior citizens residing in and moving to the region.
- Ones that assist small, rural local governments to improve the quality of life for their citizens.

Sources of funding for past and potential future investments include Federal funding (EDA, USDA, Department of Education, EPA, DOE, Federal Highway Administration, etc.), State funding (Division of Water Quality, Division of Water Resources, Department of Commerce, Division of Division of Coastal Resources, Clean Water Management Trust Fund, State Revolving

Loan Fund, Department of Transportation, Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, etc.), Local funding (fund balance, tax revenues, bed tax, etc.) and other (private foundations, Golden Leaf, NC Rural Center, etc.)

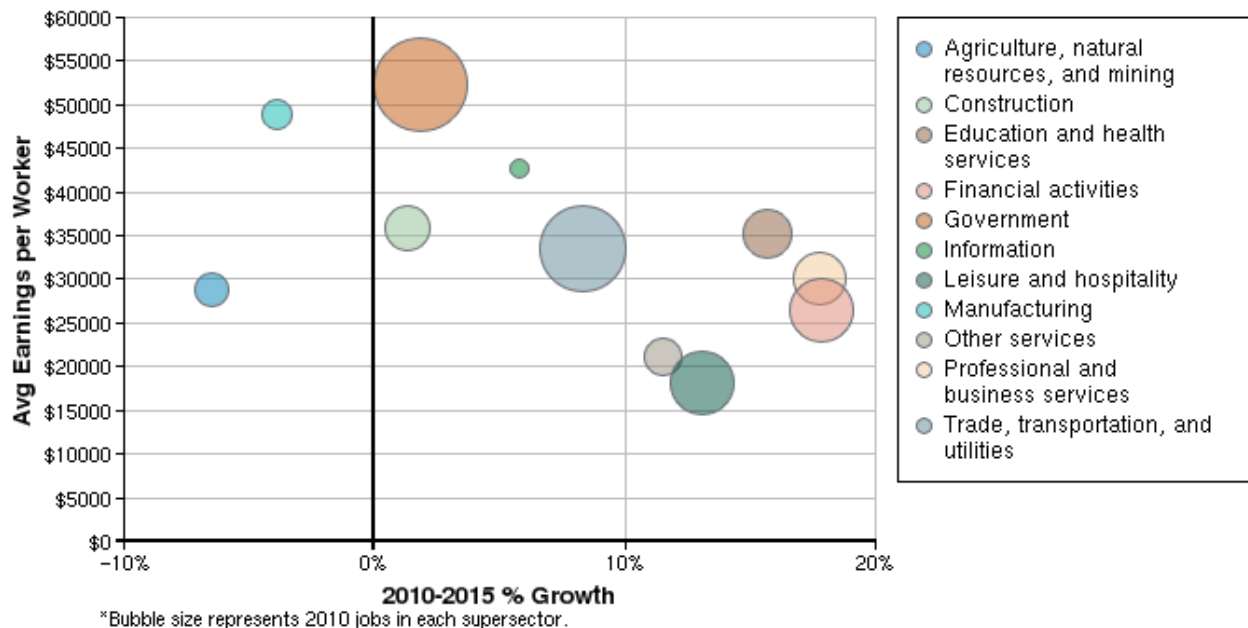
EDA funding is primarily used for the following types of projects:

- Water systems to increase capacities/pressures/service area/storage
- Sewer systems to increase capacities and service areas
- Systems to dispose of treated effluent or residuals from water treatment systems
- Expansion of electric distribution system and capacity
- Construction of a facility for job training/retraining
- Construction of facility to be occupied by a company
- Construction of a municipality-owned road
- Miscellaneous infrastructure improvements to service business/industry

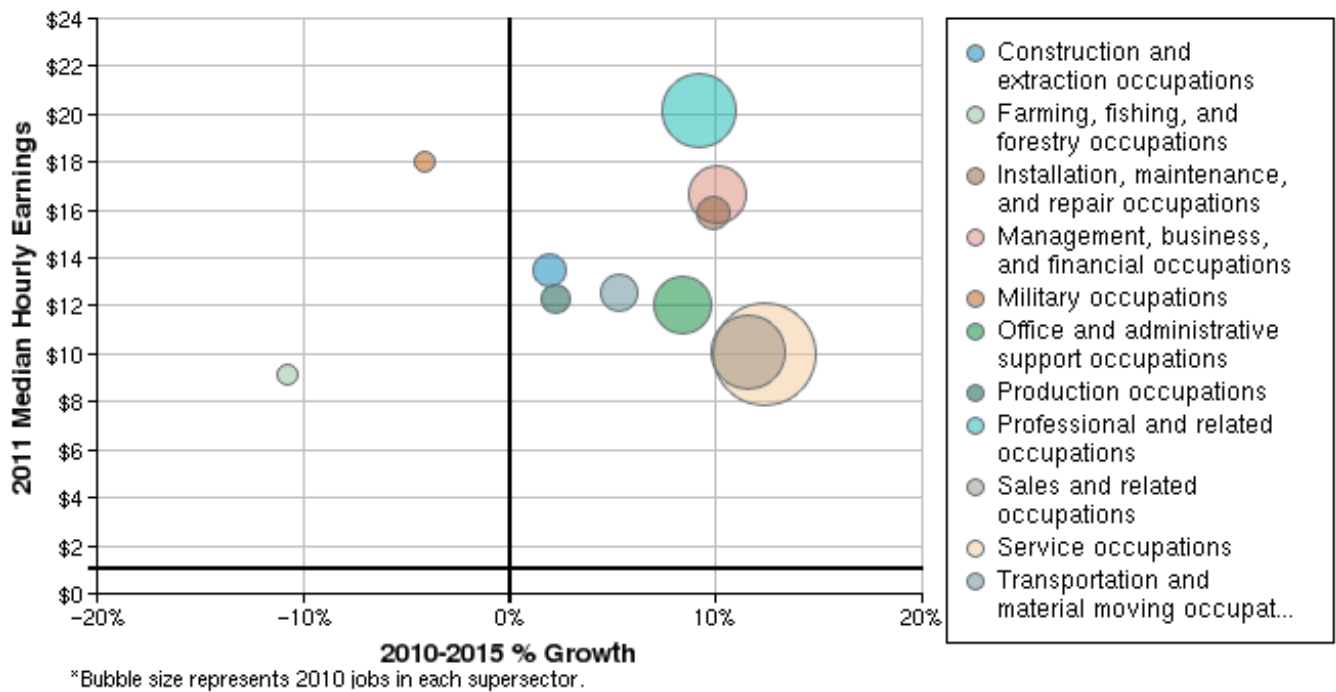
## 7. Identification of economic clusters (especially ones growing or declining)

The real estate and healthcare industries are likely to experience the greatest growth over the next six years (Figures 8a, 8b). These industries have low average earnings/worker in relation to other industries in the region, and the industries with the highest earnings/worker, government and manufacturing, are likely to only grow by about 8%-12%. However, examining forecasts of key occupations reveals that management, a high earning occupational sector, is likely to grow. Growth in management indicates the emergence of new businesses, and greater commitment to the region by corporations with existing business interests.

### 2010 - 2015 Size and Growth



### 2010 - 2015 Size and Grow



Description	2010 Jobs	2015 Jobs	Growth	% Growth	2011 Median Hourly Earnings
Construction and extraction occupations	4,772	4,864	92	2%	\$13.47
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	2,168	1,935	-233	-11%	\$9.12
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	3,837	4,216	379	10%	\$15.92
Management, business, and financial occupations	9,790	10,777	987	10%	\$16.67
Military occupations	1,294	1,241	-53	-4%	\$17.99
Office and administrative support occupations	10,170	11,019	849	8%	\$12.00
Production occupations	3,078	3,146	68	2%	\$12.30
Professional and related occupations	13,375	14,607	1,232	9%	\$20.14
Sales and related occupations	12,991	14,491	1,500	12%	\$10.07
Service occupations	18,975	21,326	2,351	12%	\$10.00
Transportation and material moving occupations	4,768	5,023	255	5%	\$12.56
Total / Average	85,218	92,646	7,428	9%	\$13.37

Comparing the job change of economic clusters within the region, to the changes that would be expected given the national trends, provides a measure of competitive effect.

Competitive effect represents the amount of job change that can only be explained by factors

that are unique to the region. Cluster Analysis reveals that the Albemarle Region has a significant competitive advantage in the health and construction industries. Economic clusters are industries, or sub-industries that are interconnected through shared inputs and outputs. Regional clusters have a synergistic effect in which success in one industry produces success throughout the cluster. Examining the industries that currently compose key clusters in the Albemarle Region reveals that developing the following business sectors are most likely to improve economic stability throughout the region:

1. Management of Companies and Enterprises
2. Architecture and Engineering
3. Employment Services
4. Telecommunication not including cable and other program distribution
5. Wholesale Trade (Construction, Agriculture Products/Equipment, Food Products, and Medical Supplies)
6. Advanced Manufacturing

Management of Companies and Enterprises includes parties that hold financial interest in corporation. This industry sector has a tremendous multiplier effect on other industries. However, many industries in the Albemarle Region are managed by CEOs and owners entirely outside of the region. For example, although the health industry composes a large portion of the economy, hospital management is largely outside of the region.

Architecture and Engineering plays a major role in the construction and materials cluster. Construction is a major industry within the region, yet architecture and engineering is primarily provided by firms located outside the region.

Employment services encompass a wide-range of businesses which provide services including temporary staff, executive searches, payroll, and various other human resource support functions.

Employment services are essential to many industries. The health industry is especially dependent upon employment services because large diverse staffs require the outsourcing of many human resources functions.



The entire economy of the region is hindered by a lack of communication and information industries. Telecommunication includes the development and maintenance of computer and telephone networks. Communication networks allow businesses to function more efficiently and reach larger markets. The technologies supporting these networks changes rapidly and systems must be updated and maintained continuously. The development of this sector within the region, will significantly improve recruitment and entrepreneurial capabilities while enhancing the productivity of existing businesses.

Wholesale trade benefits all other clusters. Developing this industry within the region will allow service providers easy access and collaboration to their input resources. Furthermore, increased wholesale trade will improve the access to markets for the producers of raw materials, agricultural products.

The regional economy would benefit greatly from the recruitment and development of advanced manufacturing industries. Biotechnology such as the manufacturing of pharmaceuticals/vitamins might be supported by the region's diverse agricultural industry. Advanced manufacturing of Aeronautical and Marine components could realize advantages from the region's government customer base and geography.

## ***8. Plan of Action to implement the goals and objectives of the CEDS***

### *Promoting economic development and opportunity*

The Albemarle Commission will continue to cooperate with North Carolina's Northeast Commission, county economic developers, Committees of 100, Chambers of Commerce and other interested groups to attract new industries to the region. These organizations will assist in implementing the goals and objectives of the CEDS as warranted.

### *Fostering effective transportation access*

The Albemarle Rural Transportation Planning Organization (ARPO) is housed in the Albemarle Commission. The ARPO is responsible for prioritizing transportation projects for the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). The ARPO is also concerned with public transportation, bike planning, pedestrian planning, and other modes of transporting people and goods. This organization will assist in implementing the goals and objectives of the CEDS as warranted.

### *Enhancing and protecting the environment*

Projects proposed in the region should be constructed in such a way that they enhance and protect the environment. The Albemarle Commission will assist local governments as requested to plan project and program which help enhance and protect the environment. The Albemarle Commission will participate on committees, councils and commissions that address the environment (e.g., the Coastal Resources Advisory Council).

### *Maximizing effective development and use of the workforce consistent with any applicable State or local workforce investment strategy*

The Northeastern Workforce Development Board (NWDB) is housed within the Albemarle Commission. The local and State workforce investments strategies are implemented by the NWDB. The NWDB participated in the development of this CEDS and will assist in implementing it as well.

*Promoting use of technology in economic development, including access to high-speed telecommunications*

The Albemarle Commission will continue to champion the need for high-speed internet coverage for the entire region. There are still pockets where it is not available. Major companies will not consider locating in an area where this connection is not available. The Albemarle Commission will work with e-NC to promote the extension of high-speed internet coverage.

*Balancing resources through sound management of physical resources*

Local governments are monitored by the Local Government Commission to ensure that they are fiscally responsible and financially sound. Most are wrestling with the problem of crumbling infrastructure in a time of economic recession when tax collection is down. Grants for infrastructure projects are also getting more difficult to secure. The public is unwilling to pay additional for bonds to make the needed repairs. Public safety will become an issue at some point and the local government may be forced to make needed investments. This situation will be coming to a head in the coming years. This is a difficult balancing act for elected and appointed officials. The Albemarle Commission will continue to look for opportunities for EDA projects to fund needed infrastructure to support new jobs and retain existing jobs.

*Obtaining and utilizing adequate funds and other resources*

The Albemarle Commission continues to be a resource to the region on the subject of grants. When appropriate, the Commission staff assists local government to complete applications. As projects are identified, the Albemarle Commission helps to identify sources of funding in addition to EDA.

## ***9. Performance measures used to evaluate the successful development and implementation of the CEDS***

### *a. Number of jobs created after the implementation of the CEDS*

According to the NC Employment Security Commission the average annual number of job in the region for 2011 was 76,615. We anticipate that over the five-year period of this CEDS (by December 2017) there will be an additional 1,532 jobs (2%) created.

### *b. Number and types of investments undertaken in the region*

By December 2017, it is estimated that a minimum of three new investments will be undertaken in the region representing an investment of greater than \$6,000,000.

### *c. Number of jobs retained in the region*

It is estimated that over the five-year period of this CEDS (by December 2017), that 76,515 jobs will be retained in the region (2011 Average Annual number of jobs).

### *d. Amount of private sector investment in the region after implementation of the CEDS*

By December 2017, it is estimated that the private sector will invest greater than \$12,500,000 in the region after the implementation of this CEDS.

### *e. Changes in the economic environment of the region*

With the implementation of this CEDS it is anticipated that:

- The region's tourism and ecotourism economy will continue to grow.
- The number of alternative energy facilities will increase.
- The area will continue to attract retirees resulting in an increased need for health care and related services.
- Manufacturing will remain stable or grow slightly.
- Entrepreneurs will be attracted to the area due to its natural beauty.
- The number of small business start-ups will increase dramatically.
- The existing clusters will grow and new clusters will be added.

***10. Methodology for cooperating and integrating the CEDS with the State's economic development priorities.***

The sixteen North Carolina Councils of Government are collaborating to roll up their individual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies into one statewide CEDS. The coordinating committee has established basic goals and objectives that all sixteen Councils will address. The individual Councils then have the option to add additional goals and objectives specific to their needs.

# APPENDIX