

# **CHAPTER 5.**

## **HOW DO PEOPLE MAKE A LIVING**

### **IN FLOYD COUNTY?**

A local economy has many inter-related components such as businesses, employment, wages and income. These will all be analyzed here.

Historically, agriculture has given life and form to the Floyd County economy, despite the relatively small size of farms and their inherent struggles. During the mid part of the 1900's, textile plants located in Floyd, provided hundreds of jobs; but by 2001, most of these jobs had been shipped overseas. Also, in the 1970's, artisans and "back-to-the-landers" discovered Floyd County and added their skill sets and small businesses to the local economy. Indicative of national trends, there was also an increase in service jobs, such as health care and finance jobs.

#### **Employment**

Jobs have always been relatively limited in Floyd County. Historic out-migration accounts attest to the limited employment opportunities in Floyd County relative to other areas throughout the twentieth century (Cox, 2007). Moreover, the jobs that exist in Floyd County have tended toward low wages. The disparity has further widened in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, despite a growing number and variety of businesses. Recent local employment and business trends will be discussed below, followed by commuting patterns.

#### Major Employers

The top 50 employers within the County as of early 2010 are shown on the following page. Note that the public sector--School Board and the County--are two of the three largest employers, indicating that Floyd County has no single mega-employer, but numerous small-to medium-sized employers. Also prominent on the list are manufacturing, nursery farms, restaurants and retail, health care, construction, transportation and federal government, and various services including financial and telecommunications.

**Table 14: Top 50 Employers in Floyd County for 1st Quarter 2010**

1. Floyd County School Board	26. Clark Gas and Oil Company Inc.
2. Hollingsworth and Vose Company	27. Homes Plus Custom Building Inc
3. County of Floyd	28. Floyd County Country Store LLC
4. Alphastaff Inc	29. Reed Construction Inc
5. Strengthening Our System Inc	30. U.S. National Park Service
6. Bank of Floyd	31. Will's Ridge Supply
7. Chateau Morrisette	32. Primary Care Associates
8. Riverbend Nursery	33. The Harvest Moon Food Store
9. Citizens' Telephone Co-operative	34. Alum Ridge Auto Repair
10. Wall Residences	35. Carilion Healthcare
11. Slaughter's Supermarket	36. Phillips and Turman Tree Farm
12. Crenshaw Lighting Corporation	37. Copper Hill Child Care
13. Food Lion	38. Jim's Grill
14. Postal Service	39. Paul R Shively Inc
15. Sino American Trading Company	40. The Bread Basket
16. Hardee's	41. C H Harman & Son Inc
17. Blue Ridge Restaurant	42. County of Montgomery
18. Floyd Pharmacy	43. Healthcare Services Group
19. Willis Village Mart	44. King Concrete Company
20. Arrow Truck Sales Inc	45. Milestones Childcare LLC
21. Harvey Chrysler Dodge Jeep Inc	46. New River Community Action
22. Apple Ridge Farm	47. S & S Paving Company Inc.
23. Blue Mountain Organics LLC	48. Subway
24. Floyd Xpress Market	49. The Barter Clinic
25. R & S Stone Inc	50. The Pine Tavern

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), 1st Quarter (January, February, March) 2010.

As previously stated, most traditional manufacturing jobs, such as cut-and-sew textile plants have left the County for cheaper labor outside the United States (Table 7). Yet important manufacturing companies remain; they tend to be highly advanced and/or specialized:

- Hollingsworth & Vose is the largest private employer in Floyd County; it manufactures advanced composite materials for use in hundreds of products such as environmental filtering.
- Chateau Morrisette Winery combines agriculture, manufacturing and retail.
- Crenshaw Lighting makes hand-crafted lighting for fine and historic buildings around the United States.
- Arrow Truck Sales/Dex truck parts reconditions used Mack and Volvo truck parts for distribution through the Volvo/Arrow Truck dealer network.



- Blue Mountain Organics makes organic, raw “superfoods” for high-end retail stores around the United States.

Also of note in the Top 50 Employer list is the growth in private health/quality of life related services like Strengthening Our System, Wall Residences, and Apple Ridge Farm.

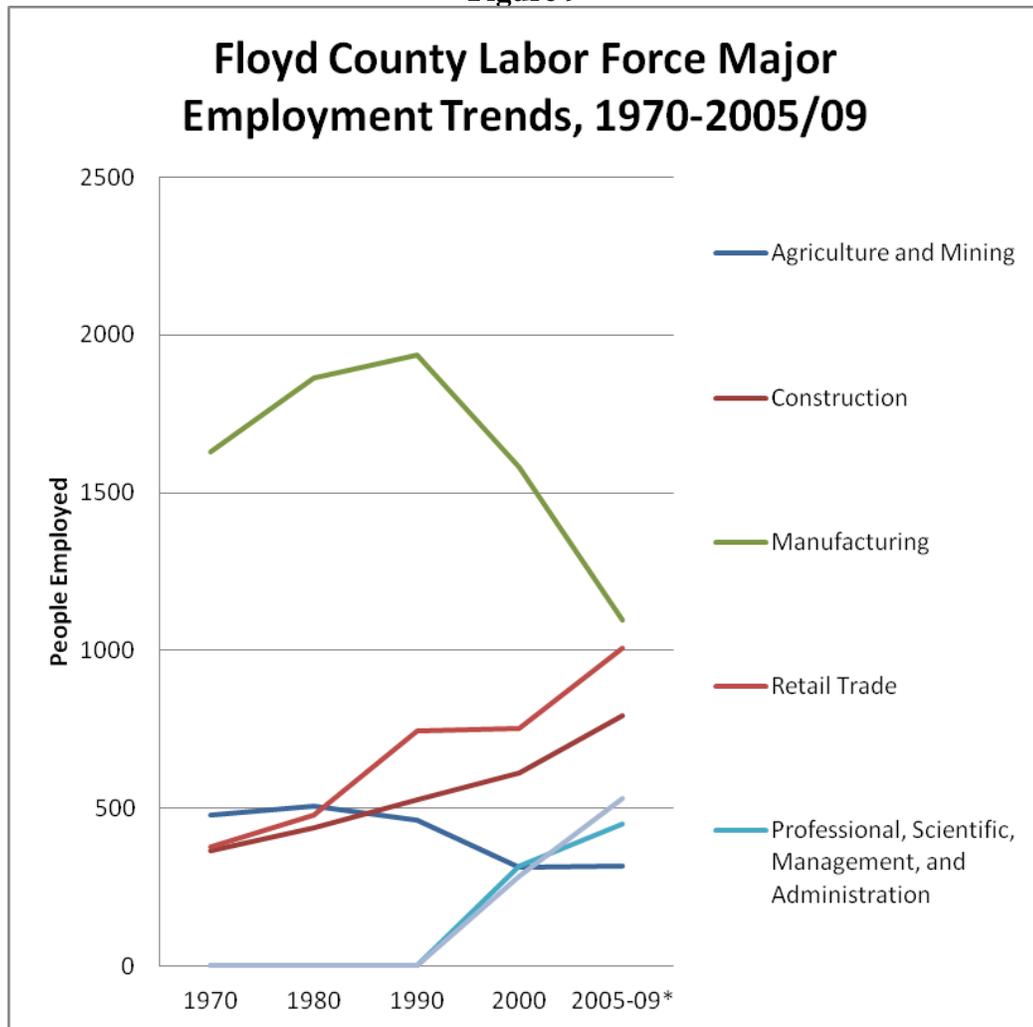
A broader look at the labor force in Floyd County reveals important sector trends. Please note that Table 15 and Figure 9 are about those employed both inside and outside the County. Table 15 shows a breakdown of the Floyd County labor force by industry over the past 5 decades. Figure 8 highlights significant reductions in manufacturing and agriculture, and increases in retail, construction, arts related and professional.

**Table 15**  
**Floyd County Employment by Industry 1970-2009**

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2005-09*
Agriculture and Mining	479	507	462	314	315
Construction	364	439	526	611	793
Manufacturing	1631	1863	1936	1580	1095
Transportation, Communication, and Pub. Utilities	158	218	322	N/A	N/A
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	N/A	N/A	N/A	341	249
Information	N/A	N/A	N/A	113	56
Wholesale Trade	33	103	122	288	121
Retail Trade	376	477	745	753	1006
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	39	183	215	230	324
Services (see Educational, etc. below)	189	898	1181	N/A	N/A
Professional, Scientific, Management, and Administration	N/A	N/A	N/A	316	451
Educational, Health, and Social Services	N/A	N/A	N/A	1249	1473
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Services	N/A	N/A	N/A	285	532
Other Services	N/A	N/A	N/A	339	345
Public Admin.	306**	137	104	193	273

Source: US Census Bureau including American Community Survey 2005-2009

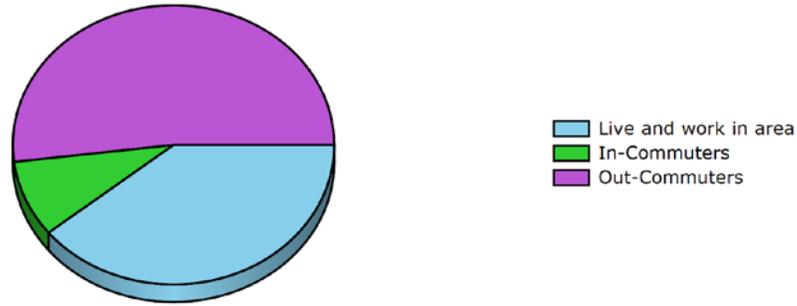
Figure 9



With limited local jobs, residents of Floyd County have become more dependent upon regional employers or creating their own work. This high percentage of out-commuters reflects the availability of jobs in the localities surrounding Floyd. Also, the 2000 Census recorded 411 persons as “worked at home.” 2000 census data shows that over 10% of the Floyd County labor force is self-employed (non-incorporated), vs. 5.5% in Virginia.

As Figure 10 and Table 16 show the majority of workers from Floyd County work outside of Floyd County. Of workers leaving the County, the largest portion goes to Montgomery County or the Roanoke Valley (see Table 17). Also, of relatively small number of people commuting into the County to work, the largest portion is from Montgomery County (see Figure 11). The Floyd County American Community Survey 2005-09 continue to show the out-commuting rate at over 50%. While it is not unusual for Virginians to live in a different locality than they work, it is unusual to have so many more going out than coming in.

**Figure 10: Commuting Patterns**



**Table 16  
Floyd County Commuting Patterns, 2000**

People who live and work in the County	2,824
In-Commuters	640
Out-Commuters	3,746
Net In-Commuters (In-Commuters minus Out-Commuters)	-3,106

Source: Virginia Employment Commission 2000 Census Data

**Table 17  
Floyd County Residents Place of Employment**

Place of Work	1980	1990	2000
Carroll County	103	190	169
Floyd County	2,565	2,973	2,824
Franklin County	46	23	47
Montgomery County	384	473	1,252
Patrick County	95	131	260
Pulaski County	24	122	237
Radford City	174	74	284
Roanoke City	398	439	646
Roanoke County	124	293	372
Salem City	203	112	241

Source: Virginia Employment Commission 2000 Census Data

**Figure 11  
Top 5 Jurisdictions Supplying Employees for Floyd County Employers**

- Montgomery County, VA 249 employees
- Carroll County, VA 85 employees
- Patrick County, VA 52 employees
- Roanoke County, VA 51 employees
- Radford city, VA 47 employees

Source: Virginia Employment Commission 2000 Census Data

Floyd Countians spend over 200,000 minutes driving to work daily. Males spend about 75%

more time commuting than females.

**Table 18**  
**Total Travel Time to Work, Floyd County 2005-2009**

	Floyd County, Virginia	
	Estimate	Margin of Error
Aggregate travel time to work (in minutes):	212,705	+/-16,797
Male	135,560	+/-13,282
Female	77,145	+/-11,322

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey

Carpooling rates in Floyd County are 16.4% compared to 11% in Virginia overall. Floyd County has the 8<sup>th</sup> highest carpooling rate of any county in Virginia. The table below shows that 79% of commuting time by Floyd Countians is spent by people driving alone.

**Table 19**  
**Total Travel Time to Work by Travel Type, Floyd County 2005-09**

	Floyd County, Virginia	
	Estimate	Margin of Error
Aggregate travel time to work (in minutes):	212,705	+/-16,797
Car, truck, or van - drove alone	168,220	+/-18,816
Car, truck, or van - carpoled	37,980	+/-10,356
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	3,055	+/-2,598
Taxicab, motorcycle, bicycle, walked, or other means	3,450	+/-4,528

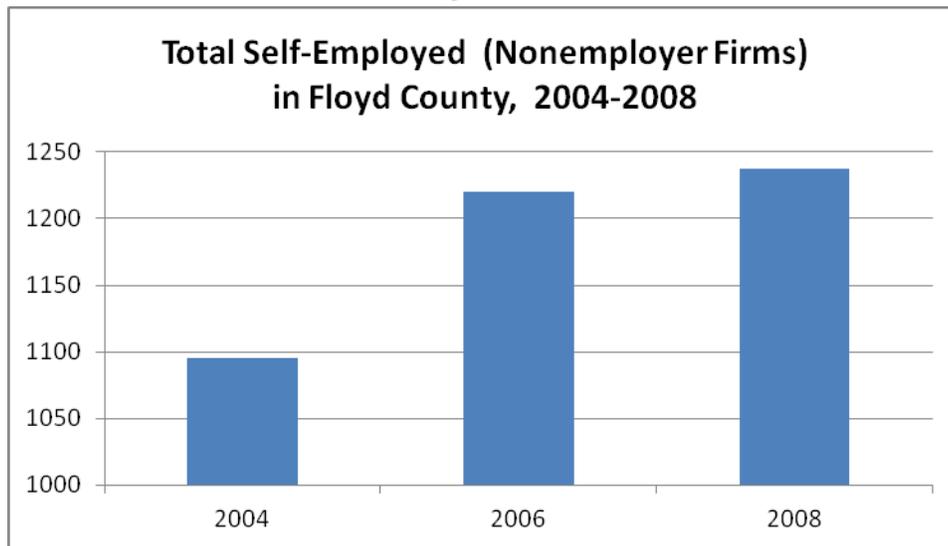
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey

As mentioned before, over half of Floyd County workers commute outside the County to work. As a final note on commuting, the following numbers are derived from the Floyd County Community Survey in 2005 completed by Blue Ridge Institute for Community (Ryan, 2005). Based on this, it seems likely that a somewhat higher percentage of people who work out of the county have insurance than those who work in the County. So in addition to lower wages in the County, benefits appear less, too.

<b>Table 20</b>			
<b>Employment Location and Health Insurance</b>			
	Have Health Insurance		
	Yes	No	Total
Employed in Floyd County	79%	21%	100%
Employed Out of County	87%	13%	100%
No Employed	84%	16%	100%

In addition to those employed by others in Floyd County and outside the County, there is a high (over 1,000 people) and increasing number of people who are self-employed (see Figure 12 below). These are referred to as “Nonemployer firms,” defined as firms “without paid employees that are subject to federal income tax. Most nonemployers are self-employed individuals operating very small unincorporated businesses, which may or may not be the owner's principal source of income. These firms are excluded from most other business statistics” (Source: US Census Bureau.) Based on the table below, the average annual receipts for the self-employed in 2008 was \$34,577. Also, based on the number of households reporting self-employment income, it appears that 200 or more households had more than one business (see Table 21),

**Figure 12**



**Table 21**  
**Households According to Self-Employment Income in Past 12 Months, 2005-2009**

	Floyd County, Virginia	
	Estimate	Margin of Error
Total:	6,009	+/-218
With self-employment income	842	+/-194
No self-employment income	5,167	+/-249

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey

**Table 22**  
**Self-Employed (Nonemployer Firms) and Receipts in Floyd County 2004 to 2008**

NAIC Code	Description	2004 Firms	2004 Receipts (\$1,000)	2006 Firms	2006 Receipts (\$1,000)	2008 Firms	2008 Receipts (\$1,000)
'11'	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	71	3,175	67	3,467	64	3,272
'21'	Mining	-	-	D	D	D	D
'22'	Utilities	D	D	D	D	D	D
'23'	Construction	244	8,967	263	12,274	246	14,271
'31-33'	Manufacturing	58	1,870	52	2,891	47	1,340
'42'	Wholesale trade	12	1,164	13	1,388	7	113
'44-45'	Retail trade	110	3,423	113	3,746	145	5,825
'48-49'	Transportation and warehousing	49	2,531	55	3,565	57	4,048
'51'	Information	16	1,509	15	1,155	15	602
'52'	Finance and insurance	24	492	34	647	28	473
'53'	Real estate and rental and leasing	61	2,911	96	4,474	86	2,492
'54'	Professional, scientific, and technical services	98	3,751	116	2,364	101	2,152
'56'	Administrative & support; waste mgmt & remediation	61	520	69	877	76	1,244
'61'	Educational services	15	196	24	277	22	425
'62'	Health care and social assistance	71	984	85	2,216	82	2,170
'71'	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	52	537	60	966	74	1,261
'72'	Accommodation and food services	D	D	12	177	18	473
'81'	Other services (except public administration)	141	3,080	143	3,273	166	2,552
'00'	Total for all sectors	1,095	35,240	1,220	43,795	1,237	42,772

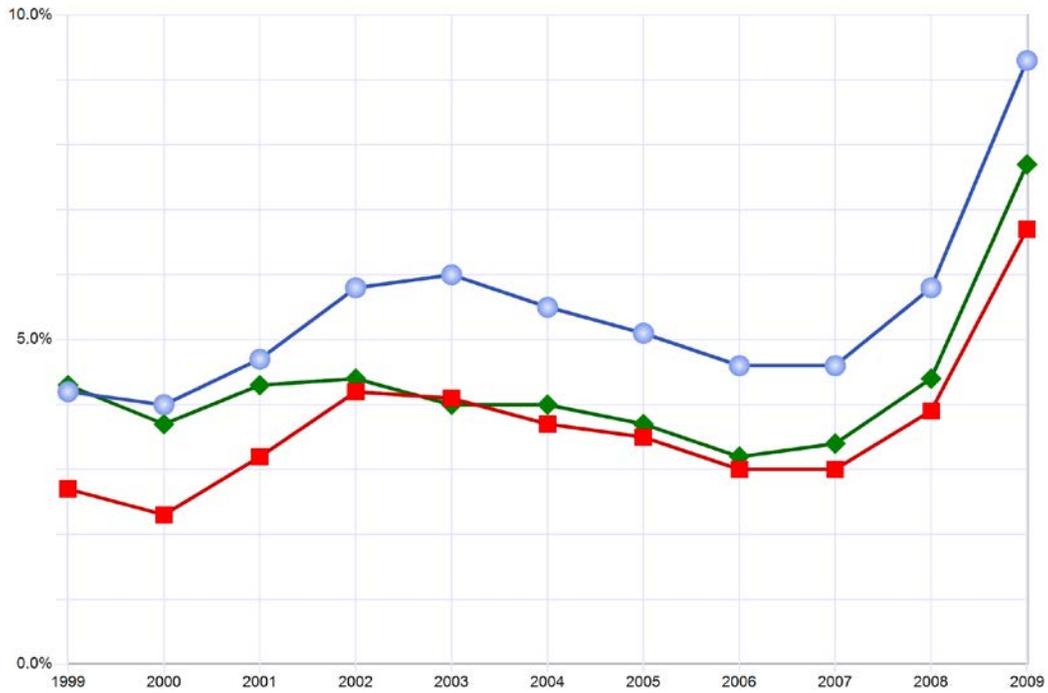
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Note: "D" indicates data suppressed to protect privacy given small number of firms.

Despite high out-commuting and high self-employment, due to the national downturn in the economy, numerous workers are currently unemployed. The unemployment rate in Floyd County as of September 2010 was 7.1%. This value is higher than the Virginia unemployment rate but less than the national average as shown in Figures 13 and 14 and Tables 23 and 24.

**Figure 13: Unemployment Trends by Year**

◆ Floyd County    ■ Virginia    ● United States



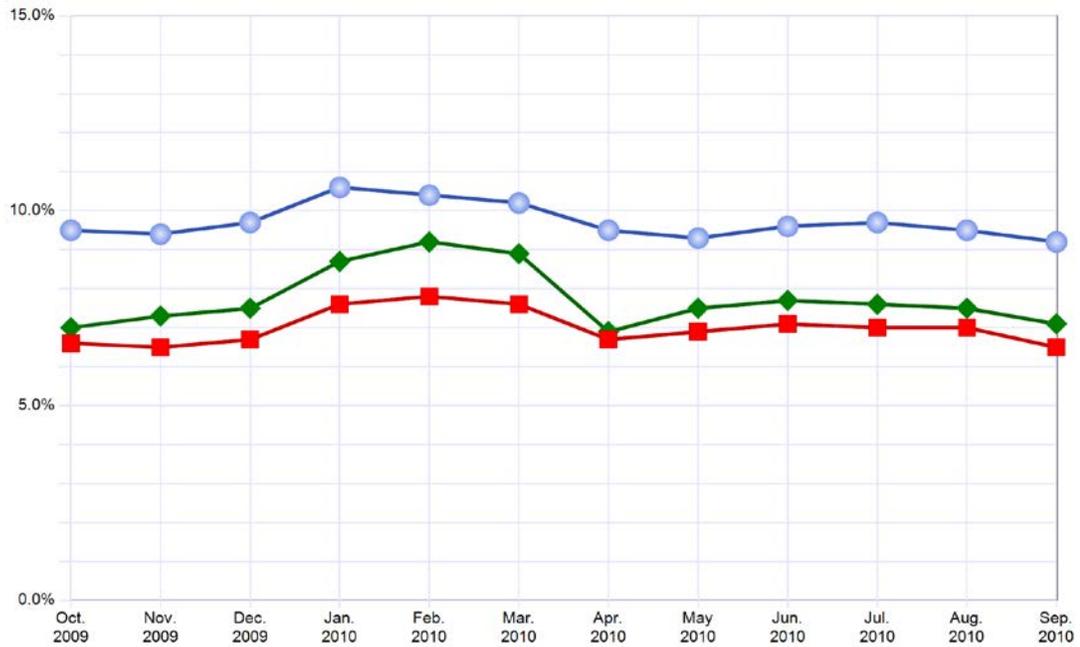
**Table 23  
Unemployment 2000-2009**

Year	Floyd County	Virginia	United States
2000	3.7%	2.3%	4.0%
2001	4.3%	3.2%	4.7%
2002	4.4%	4.2%	6.0%
2003	4.0%	3.7%	5.5%
2004	4.0%	3.5%	5.1%
2005	3.7%	3.5%	5.1%
2006	3.2%	3.0%	4.6%
2007	3.4%	3.0%	4.6%
2008	4.4%	3.9%	5.8%
2009	7.7%	6.7%	9.3%

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

**Figure 14: Unemployment Trends for October 2009 to September 2010**

◆ Floyd County    ■ Virginia    ● United States



**Table 24  
Recent Monthly Unemployment**

Month	Floyd County	Virginia	United States
Oct. 2009	7.00%	6.60%	9.50%
Nov. 2009	7.30%	6.50%	9.40%
Dec. 2009	7.50%	6.70%	9.70%
Jan. 2010	8.70%	7.60%	10.60%
Feb. 2010	9.20%	7.80%	10.40%
Mar. 2010	8.90%	7.60%	10.20%
Apr. 2010	6.90%	6.70%	9.50%
May 2010	7.50%	6.90%	9.30%
Jun. 2010	7.70%	7.10%	9.60%
Jul. 2010	7.60%	7.00%	9.70%
Aug. 2010	7.50%	7.00%	9.50%
Sep. 2010	7.10%	6.50%	9.20%

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

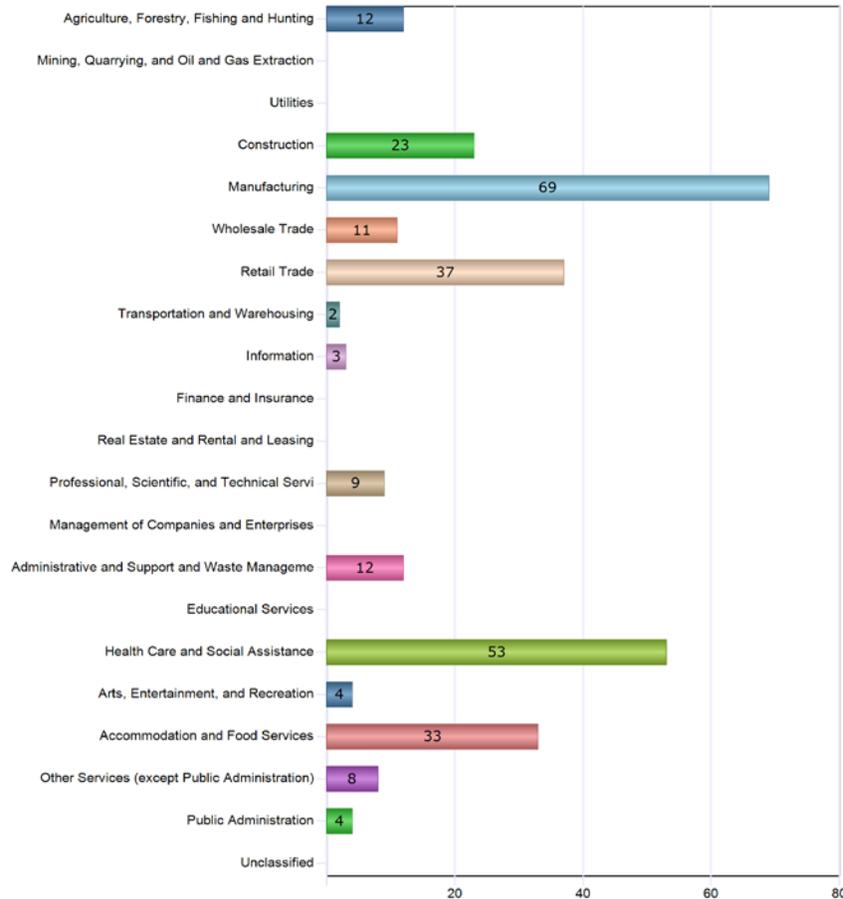
Moreover, the unemployment rate understates the County’s employment needs. It does not account for the significant number of people in the County who are underemployed (working one or more part-time jobs, often seasonal and without benefits.)

## New Jobs

Noticeably, the current jobs in the County are generally locally-based companies that are filling important global (environmental filtering, lighting, nursery goods, food, and software) and local/regional niches (finance, health care, food, tourism, and telecommunications) using local assets from agriculture (grapes and landscaping plants) to creative, hand-crafting, and technology skills. The continued development of local entrepreneurs and enterprises is extremely important in diversifying the local economy and job base.

It is interesting that amidst the dire economy in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2009, 69 manufacturing jobs were added, the most of any sector (see Figure 15 below.) It is not clear if this trend is sustainable.

**Figure 15: New Hires by Industry in Floyd County, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2009**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Local Employment Dynamics (LED) Program, 4th Quarter (October, November, December) 2009, all ownerships.

It is imperative that more jobs be created in the County to prevent decrease net out-commuting and/or the unemployment rate. Not only are out-commuters saddled with high transportation costs and a corresponding loss of disposable income, but they often do much of their shopping near work, meaning a loss of revenue for Floyd County and county merchants. Furthermore, commuting causes a significant loss of personal time which might otherwise be devoted to personal health, family and civic responsibilities. The addition of higher wage jobs in the County would have great ripple effects for the employees and community.

County staff and its Economic Development Authority (EDA) work to increase the quantity and quality of jobs in the County—by nurturing small businesses through workshops, a new low interest loan program and referrals to a network of free business planning and marketing assistance. The County also welcomes right-fit companies such as innovation, technology and light manufacturing firms who will add-to and not degrade the environment or community. One limitation for local businesses currently, including farms, is the limited financing available, even for those with good credit.

As Table 25 shows below, from 1998 to 2008, the number of businesses and jobs in Floyd County increased substantially, 37% and 15.8% respectively. However, the effective wage rate dropped 9% in that time period in Floyd County, unlike most of our neighbors. Again, this emphasizes the need for higher wage jobs in this community. Incomes will be discussed more next.

**Table 25**  
**County Economic Trends in Southwest Virginia, 1998-2008**

County	Establi- hments	10-Year Percent change	Jobs	10-Year Percent change	Average Wage Per Job (*adj)	10-Year Percent change	Rank in U.S.	% of U.S. Avg Wage
Carroll	559	22.6%	6,438	-9.4%	\$26,364	6.1%	2,792	57.9%
Dickenson	326	-2.1%	3,711	14.7%	\$35,766	18.3%	834	78.5%
<b>Floyd</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>37.1%</b>	<b>2,814</b>	<b>15.8%</b>	<b>\$25,237</b>	<b>-9.0%</b>	<b>2,961</b>	<b>55.4%</b>
Giles	364	13.8%	4,802	-14.0%	\$33,571	-4.9%	1,166	73.7%
<b>Grayson</b>	304	45.5%	2,464	-4.2%	\$25,137	-8.9%	2,972	55.2%
Lee	454	10.5%	5,459	4.3%	\$29,963	3.9%	1,956	65.8%
Montgomery	2213	27.0%	40,007	25.1%	\$35,744	11.8%	839	78.5%
<b>Patrick</b>	371	9.1%	5,247	-4.5%	\$24,428	-7.7%	3,035	53.6%
Pulaski	734	6.2%	13,303	-13.0%	\$33,276	-2.3%	1,224	73.0%
Radford City	354	-10.8%	6,524	25.9%	\$37,902	5.7%	621	83.2%
Russell	572	2.3%	7,567	-7.8%	\$31,606	5.8%	1,592	69.4%

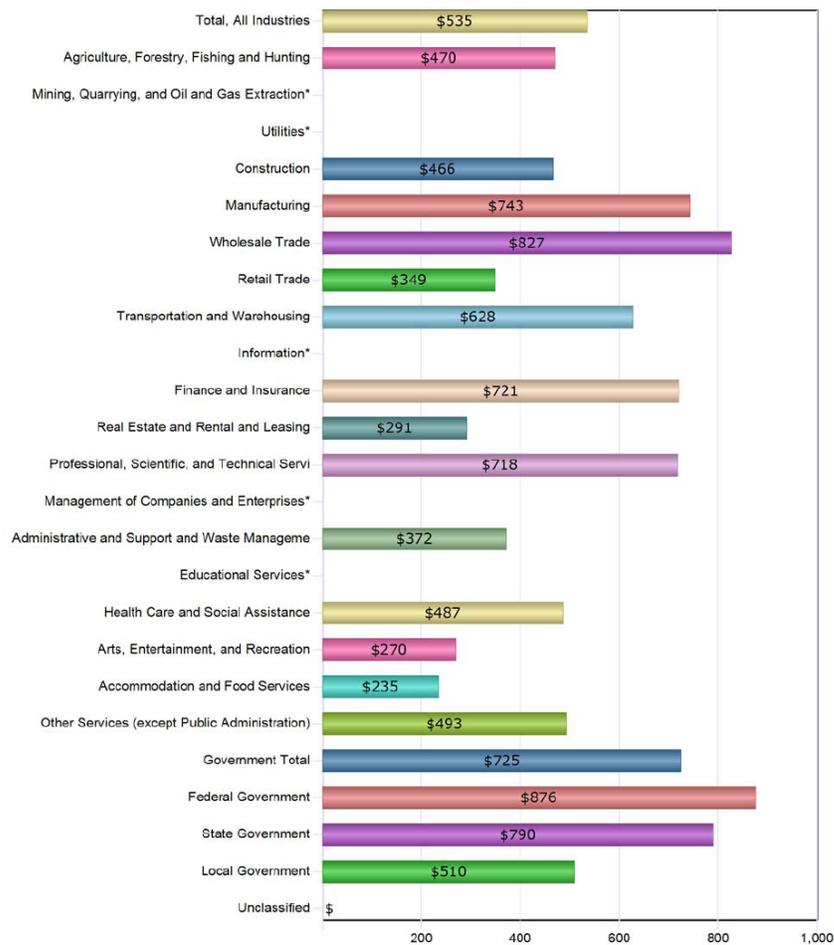
## Income

Given the seasonal and part-time nature of many Floyd County jobs and the previous loss of manufacturing jobs, it is not surprising that income levels are lower than the State and surrounding areas. The overall average weekly wage in Floyd County as of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter,

2009, was only \$495, compared to \$897 for the State of Virginia. In 1999 the Floyd County weekly wage was \$359 resulting in an increase of \$37 a week when accounting for inflation, however this does not compare well to Virginia which in 1999 had a weekly wage value of \$620 which results in an increase of \$107 a week when accounting for inflation. Figure 16 below lists job sectors and average weekly wages in Floyd County. Also see Map 15.

**Figure 16**  
**Floyd County**

**Average Weekly Wage by Industry**



Note: Asterisk (\*) indicates non-disclosable data.

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), 4th Quarter (October, November, December) 2009.

Median family income (MFI) and median household income (MHI) are also lower in Floyd County than in Virginia at large. MFI was \$50,474 on average in Floyd County from 2005-2009 compared to \$72,193. MHI was \$40,539 in Floyd County in that time period compared to \$60,316. All of those figures were inflation adjusted to 2009 dollars. Though family

income has grown in Floyd County, it has not grown as fast as in Virginia overall.

**Table 26: Floyd County Median Family Income, 1980-2005/09**

Jurisdiction	1980	1990	2000	2005-09*
Floyd County	\$14,585	\$27,439	\$38,128	\$50,474
NRV	\$16,444	\$30,163		
Virginia	\$20,018	\$38,213	\$54,169	\$72,193
Floyd Co % of VA	72.9%	71.8%	70.4%	69.9%

*\*estimate from American Community Survey*

**Table 27  
Floyd County Annual Household Income, 2005-2009  
(inflation adjusted to 2009 dollars)**

	Floyd County, Virginia	
	Estimate	Margin of Error
Total:	6,009	+/-218
Less than \$10,000	641	+/-182
\$10,000 to \$14,999	612	+/-148
\$15,000 to \$19,999	326	+/-125
\$20,000 to \$24,999	481	+/-146
\$25,000 to \$29,999	215	+/-85
\$30,000 to \$34,999	364	+/-116
\$35,000 to \$39,999	328	+/-109
\$40,000 to \$44,999	291	+/-96
\$45,000 to \$49,999	317	+/-100
\$50,000 to \$59,999	755	+/-200
\$60,000 to \$74,999	591	+/-178
\$75,000 to \$99,999	656	+/-161
\$100,000 to \$124,999	192	+/-112
\$125,000 to \$149,999	85	+/-55
\$150,000 to \$199,999	104	+/-62
\$200,000 or more	51	+/-44

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey

Also, according to the 2000 Census, Floyd County's per capita income was 68.2% of Virginia's average (\$16,345 vs. \$23,975). This ratio got even worse by the end of the decade. See Table 28 below for more detail.

**Table 28**  
**Floyd County per Capita Income, 1980-2005/09**

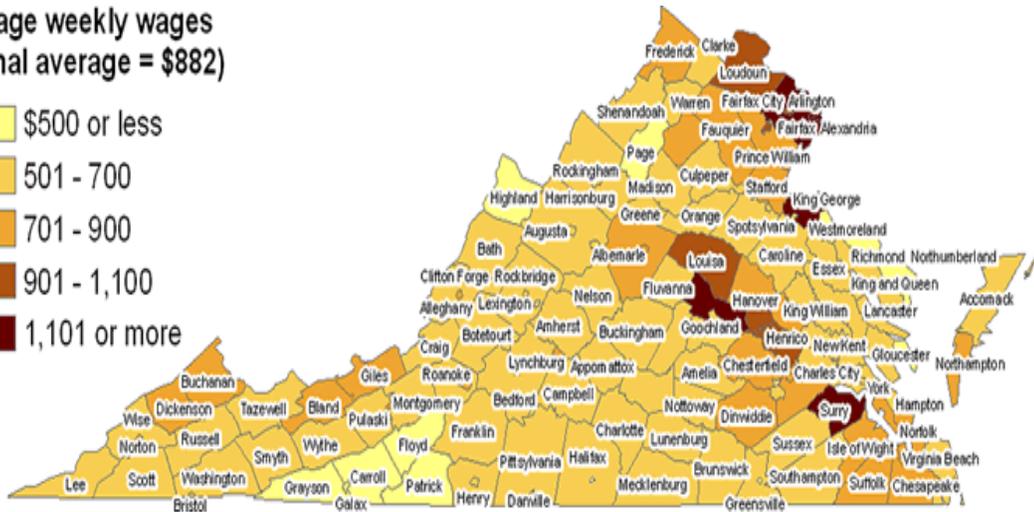
Jurisdiction	1980	1990	2000	2005-09
Floyd County	\$5,186	\$10,532	\$16,345	\$ 20,171
NRV	\$5,678	\$10,884		
Virginia	\$7,478	\$15,713	\$23,975	\$ 31,606
Floyd Co % of VA	69.4%	67.0%	68.2%	63.8%

\*estimate from American Community Survey

**Map 15: Average Weekly Wage by County**

Average weekly wages  
(National average = \$882)

- \$500 or less
- 501 - 700
- 701 - 900
- 901 - 1,100
- 1,101 or more



It should also be noted here that the poverty rate for individuals was 11.7% in Floyd County in 2000. According to 2005-09 data, the poverty rate for individuals in Floyd County is now 15.1%. This is a 29% increase in the poverty rate.

## Agriculture

Agriculture is still the backbone of the Floyd County economy, and it also maintains the rural lifestyle cherished by County residents and enhances the scenic beauty. In fact, its aesthetic qualities amidst these mountains have been deemed a national treasure, worthy of preservation as part of the Blue Ridge Parkway.



*Mabry Mill originally used water power to grind corn and buckwheat for local farmers. This type of local food production with renewable energy may be not just the way of the past but the way of the future for Floyd County.*

There were over \$43 million in farm products sold from Floyd County, a 32% increase over 2002 (Census of Agriculture 2007). Beef and dairy cattle farms have been the mainstay of Floyd County agriculture for generations; in 2007, Floyd County ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in Virginia for cattle-calf production and 18<sup>th</sup> for dairy production. Note that many of the farmers represented below have separate full-time jobs.

**Table 29**  
**Change in Farms 2002-2007 in Floyd County**

	2007	2002	% change
<b>Number of Farms</b>	864	829	+ 4
<b>Land in Farms</b>	128,872 acres	135,311 acres	- 5
<b>Average Size of Farm</b>	149 acres	163 acres	- 9
<b>Market Value of Products Sold</b>	\$43,361,000	\$32,801,000	+ 32
Crop Sales \$18,727,000 (43 percent)			
Livestock Sales \$24,634,000 (57 percent)			
Average Per Farm	\$50,186	\$39,567	+ 27

**Table 30**  
**Economic Characteristics of Farms in Floyd County, 2007**

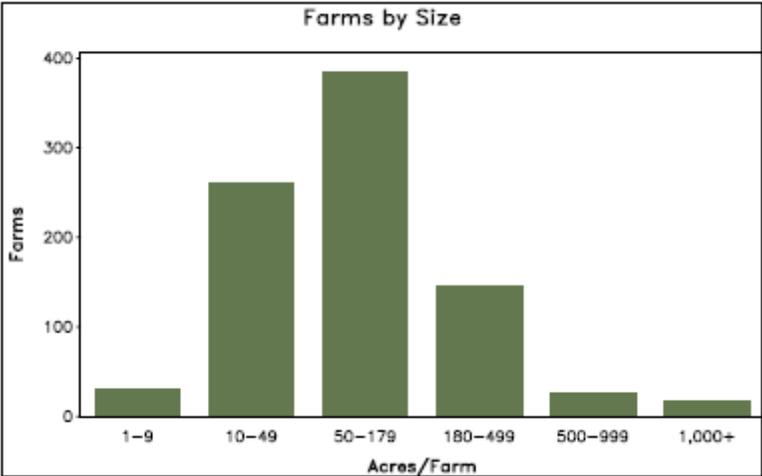
Economic Characteristics	Quantity
Farms by value of sales:	
Less than \$1,000	199
\$1,000 to \$2,499	87
\$2,500 to \$4,999	120
\$5,000 to \$9,999	135
\$10,000 to \$19,999	118
\$20,000 to \$24,999	18
\$25,000 to \$39,999	68
\$40,000 to \$49,999	26
\$50,000 to \$99,999	48
\$100,000 to \$249,999	22
\$250,000 to \$499,999	12
\$500,000 or more	11
Total farm production expenses (\$1,000)	40,539
Average per farm (\$)	46,920
Net cash farm income of operation (\$1,000)	3,897
Average per farm (\$)	4,510



*Photo on right: Mark Sowers (along with brother Curtis Sowers of Huckleberry Ridge Farm in Floyd) was named Virginia Dairyman of the Year in 2009. He also serves as Floyd County Planning Commission Chairman and is shown here welcoming people to the Community Input meeting in Willis.*

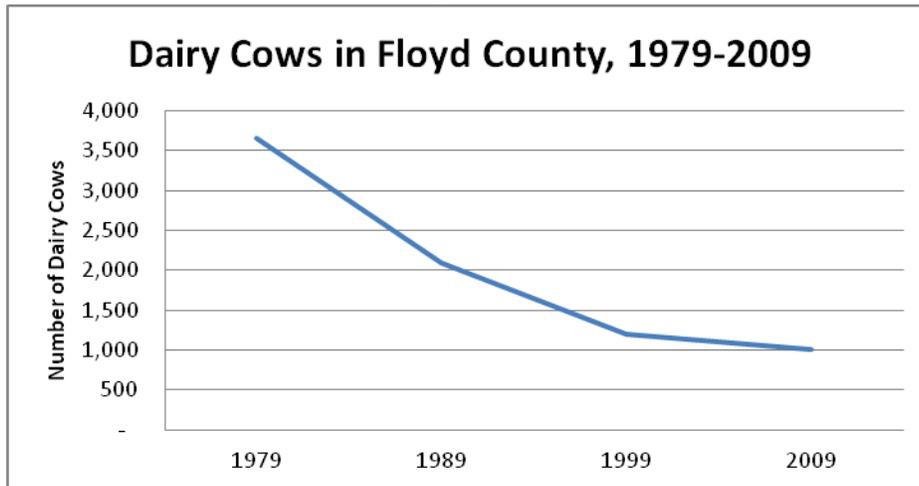
While the number of farms increased to 864 (up 4% in 5 years), the amount of land in farms and the size of farms decreased 5% and 9%, respectively. The size of Floyd County farms in 2007 is shown in Figure 17.

**Figure 17  
Floyd County**



This decrease in farm size is a reflection, in part, of the dramatic decrease in the number of dairy farms and dairy cows in the County in the past 3 decades (see Figure 18.) Only about a dozen dairies remain in Floyd County, and they are at risk if trends and opportunities do not change.

**Figure 18**



Tables 31 and 32 reflect more details of the farms in Floyd County. Note that the average net income of farms in Floyd County (in 2007) was about \$4,500 (Table 18); this would be significantly higher if excluded those for whom it's just part-time income. This is not a primary income for most farm families.

**Table 31 Agricultural Census Summary, 2007**

**Floyd County – Virginia**

Ranked items among the 98 state counties and 3,079 U.S. counties, 2007

Item	Quantity	State Rank	Universe <sup>1</sup>	U.S. Rank	Universe <sup>1</sup>
<b>MARKET VALUE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS SOLD (\$1,000)</b>					
Total value of agricultural products sold	43,361	15	98	1,689	3,076
Value of crops including nursery and greenhouse	18,727	15	98	1,498	3,072
Value of livestock, poultry, and their products	24,634	18	98	1,359	3,069
<b>VALUE OF SALES BY COMMODITY GROUP (\$1,000)</b>					
Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas	209	72	97	2,339	2,933
Tobacco	(D)	(D)	34	(D)	437
Cotton and cottonseed	-	-	15	-	826
Vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes	(D)	24	95	(D)	2,796
Fruits, tree nuts, and berries	812	17	96	523	2,659
Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, and sod	15,815	5	94	206	2,703
Cut Christmas trees and short rotation woody crops	974	2	64	46	1,710
Other crops and hay	821	47	98	1,985	3,054
Poultry and eggs	151	35	96	1,320	3,020
Cattle and calves	20,574	6	96	656	3,054
Milk and other dairy products from cows	3,707	18	78	822	2,493
Hogs and pigs	12	51	86	2,201	2,922
Sheep, goats, and their products	88	30	95	1,419	2,998
Horses, ponies, mules, burros, and donkeys	106	38	94	1,647	3,024
Aquaculture	(D)	42	44	(D)	1,498
Other animals and other animal products	(D)	(D)	94	(D)	2,875
<b>TOP CROP ITEMS (acres)</b>					
Forage - land used for all hay and haylage, grass silage, and greenchop	27,590	15	98	759	3,060
Nursery stock	1,994	1	71	41	2,130
Corn for silage	1,875	16	81	679	2,263
Rye for grain	800	1	51	83	977
Cut Christmas trees	718	2	67	73	1,756
<b>TOP LIVESTOCK INVENTORY ITEMS (number)</b>					
Cattle and calves	38,353	12	97	820	3,060
Layers	2,442	24	97	1,032	3,024
Horses and ponies	1,189	27	97	1,188	3,066
Sheep and lambs	879	24	94	1,007	2,891
Goats, all	446	50	97	1,582	3,023

*\*(D)\* means withheld to avoid disclosing data on individual farms.*

*"Universe" means total number of localities reporting.*

**Table 32**  
**Floyd County Farms, 1982-2007**

	1982	1987	1992	1997	2002	2007	% change '82-'07	% change '02-'07
Farms #	920	772	761	731	829	864	-6.1%	4.2
Land in Farms (Acres)	131,727	118,115	116,509	122,613	135,311	128,872	-2.2%	-4.8
Average size of Farms (Acres)	143	153	153	168	163	149	4.2%	-8.6
Average farm in (\$)	116,329	116,078	166,058	226,640	308,517	619,915	432.9%	100.9
Average per acre (\$)	759	837	1,068	1,523	2,113	4,156	447.6%	96.7
Est Market Value of mach and equip (avg/farm in \$)	18,523	25,442	28,190	41,444	32,136	58,108	213.7%	80.8
Farm by Size								
1-9 acres	30	29	28	27	29	30	0.0%	3.4
10-49 acres	181	149	174	159	180	260	43.6%	44.4
50-179 acres	505	408	361	338	421	384	-24.0%	-8.7
180-499 acres	174	149	162	166	153	146	-16.1%	-4.6
500-999 acres	25	33	29	31	34	26	4.0%	-23.5
1,000 acres +	5	4	7	10	12	18	260.0%	50
Total cropland (farms)	873	722	709	681	744	720	-17.5%	-3.2
Total cropland (acres)	61,472	54,303	58,120	60,660	57,500	45,010	-26.8%	-21.7
Harvested cropland (farms)	795	662	649	615	657	644	-19.0%	-2
Harvested cropland (acres)	25,201	23,328	25,619	27,962	30,688	33,971	34.8%	10.7
Irrigated land (farms)	7	11	18	20	48	40	471.4%	-16.7
Irrigated land (acres)	9	58	161	415	779	108	1100.0%	-86.1

**Table 32 Floyd County Farms, 1982-2007 (cont)**

	1982	1987	1992	1997	2002	2007	% change '82-07	% change '02-'07
Land in Orchards (farms)	41	19	23	14			NA	
Land in Orchards (acres)	164	137	213	97			NA	
Farms by Value of sales								
Less than \$2,500	389	242	168	178	290	286	-26.5%	-1.4
\$2,500 - \$4,999	186	151	173	117	93	120	-35.5%	29
\$5,000-\$9,999	141	153	136	161	166	135	-4.3%	-18.7
\$10,000-\$24,999	111	114	158	152	136	136	22.5%	0
\$25,000-\$49,999	46	54	67	61	67	94	104.3%	40.3
\$50,000-\$99,999	25	28	20	26	43	48	92.0%	11.6
\$100,000 +	22	30	39	36	34	45	104.5%	32.4
Total Farm Production Expenses (\$1,000)	Na	44,509	17,063	22,605	27,724	40,539	NA	46.2
Average Per Farm (\$1)	Na	14,927	22,422	30,839	33,402	46,920	NA	40.5
Operators by Principal Occupations							NA	
Farming	326	312	339	317	504	405	24.2%	-19.6
Other	594	460	422	414	325	459	-22.7%	41.2
Operators by days worked off Farm								
Any			441	416	409	563	NA	37.7
200+			323	282	300	330	NA	10



Three segments of agriculture which have grown in the County in recent years are the production of Christmas trees, the operation of nurseries, and the growth of sustainable produce farming. The nurseries mainly produce ornamental trees, such as white pine. Both the nurseries and the Christmas tree farms are primarily wholesale operations, with the stock being distributed to retailers throughout the eastern United States. Floyd County is currently ranked 1<sup>st</sup> for acres of nursery stock and 2<sup>nd</sup> for acres

*At left, the Freemans present the Virginia First Lady with the State Champion Christmas tree in 2010 from Mistletoe Meadows farm in Willis. Photo via family.*

of cut Christmas trees in Virginia (see Table 31 above).

Vegetable production is increasing in the County (see Table 33 below). There are now 34 operations with a total of 224 acres harvested. Total sales (including seeds and transplants) were \$272,000 in 2002, but that data is not available for the other years. Produce operations are generally small with some farms operating on plots less than 5 acres. Irrigation generally results in higher productivity. Note that all of these vegetables are sold fresh (none are processed.) Often these vegetables are sold to families through community-support-agriculture (CSA's) or farmers' markets or directly to chefs in the region. Table 34 lists the main vegetables grown in Floyd County by acreage. Lastly, in 2007, there were reported to be 9 certified organic farms in the County with crop sales of \$195,000.

**Table 33**  
**Vegetables Grown in Floyd County and Sold Fresh**

	1997	2002	2007
ACRES HARVESTED	73	140	224
ACRES IRRIGATED	12	23	46
OPERATIONS WITH HARVEST	18	21	34
<i>Note all are "in the open" not in hothouses.</i>			

*Source: Census of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service*

*At right, Tenley Weaver, a grower, wholesaler and retailer of local foods, helps a customer at the Floyd Community Market.*



**Table 34**  
**Main Vegetables Grown in Floyd County by Acreage, 2007**

	Acres in Production in 2007
Beans, Snap	9
Broccoli	6
Cabbage, Head	14
Cucumbers	8
Melons, Cantaloupe	2
Melons, Watermelon	1
Peas, Green	1
Peppers, Bell	5
Potatoes	61
Pumpkins	11
Squash, Summer	6
Squash, Winter	2
Sweet Corn	36
Tomatoes	9
Other	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>224</b>

These increases in vegetable production are in line with a major new national tendency toward locally-grown foods. With the current national and regional interest in local foods, food security, reducing the carbon footprint of food, and favoring small farms over conglomerates, Floyd County is poised to be a leader in this market in our region. The County seems to have great opportunities to expand and diversify local agriculture and food-related jobs.

A local non-profit group, SustainFloyd, is operating a new farmers market in Floyd and leading an effort to evaluate the feasibility of value-added processing of local foods in Floyd. SustainFloyd has also worked with the school system in creating a pilot Farm to School project in an effort to get local farm products into the school lunch program.

Beyond their value as economic and cultural assets, agricultural lands further benefit the County by providing open space and wildlife habitat and by protecting watersheds. The perpetuation of viable farms and the promotion of sound farming techniques are therefore important to the entire community.

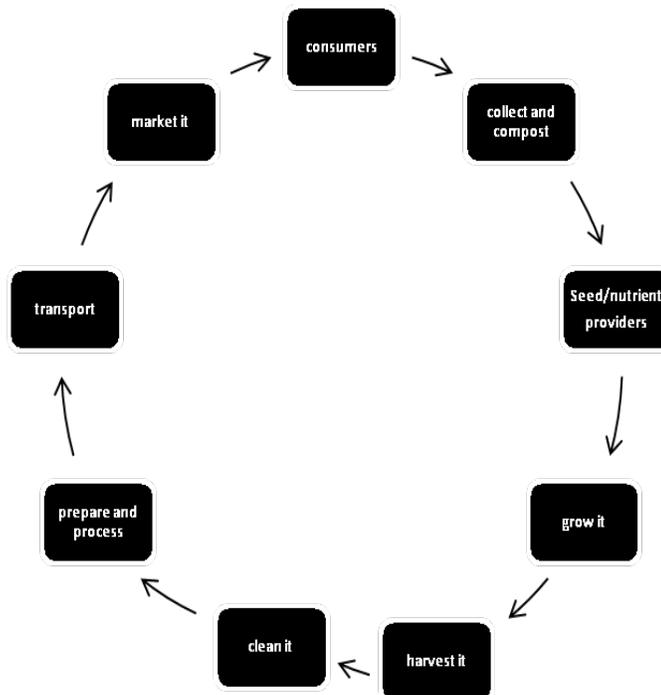
Currently working farms benefit from Land Use Valuation, a method of taxing local real estate based on use value rather than market value. Farms are also assisted by the local

forester and Cooperative Extension agent. Farms may also pursue voluntary conservation easements, as long as their land is not identified as a growth area in the Comprehensive Plan. All of these are helpful but apparently not sufficient to curb the loss of large farms.

In conclusion, while land planning and protection is essential for maintaining and growing farms into the future, land alone does not make a farm--farmers are essential. To begin or continue farming, farmers must be able to make a reasonable living. There needs to be new market opportunities, training in new crop varieties, aggregating entities to help enter new markets, value-added facilities, agri-tourism, and perhaps a “Product of Floyd” brand could be developed. Furthermore, many are not encouraging their children or grandchildren to continue the farm business because of the economic challenges.

An agricultural strategic plan is needed to assess, prioritize and promote opportunities, including further engaging youth in new farming opportunities. Part of that should be a food system plan, to determine how we can reduce the “leakage” of food dollars from our region and capture those dollars with products from Floyd County. This could ultimately result in more jobs in Floyd County and greater incomes for farmers. It should be noted that business and job opportunities go beyond just the production and processing of local foods, but a whole cycle related to food (see Figure 19).

**Figure 19**  
**Cycle of Producing and Processing Foods**

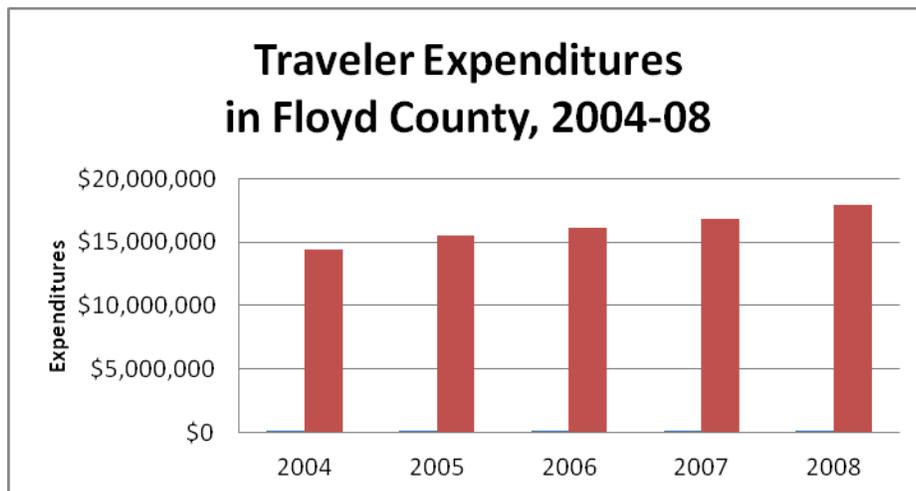


One final note, many households in Floyd County have a small garden or some farm animals that provides a portion of the family food. This is an important thing economically, culturally and nutritionally. Additionally there are non-profit efforts like Plenty! that are working to distribute food to those who do not have enough—such as needy children, seniors and shut-ins. These efforts are supported by donations, fundraisers, and volunteers. This year they also established a community garden. Likewise, SustainFloyd is working to make sure that families receiving federal food assistance dollars can use them at the farmers’ market. In addition, the Floyd County Multi-Disciplinary Team (a group of non-profits and civic organizations), was grant funded to hire a Childhood Obesity Prevention Specialist (COPS) located in and dedicated to work in Floyd County. The COPS will work with the school system, the farmers’ market, the Farm-to-School program, and community and school gardens to help combat childhood obesity and see that these programs are self-sustaining and effective. Efforts like these are important to make sure residents have access to healthy foods, preferably local.

### Tourism

Tourism is a vital part of Floyd County’s economy, with visitors’ expenditures estimated by the Virginia Tourism Corporation at over \$17 million in 2008 (see Figure 20).The County has an abundance of tourism assets, including Buffalo Mountain, the Blue Ridge Parkway, downtown Floyd, the arts, music, wineries, historical sites like Mabry Mill, and local foods. Through support of the Crooked Road, Rocky Knob/Blue Ridge Heritage project, the Jacksonville Center for the Arts, Chamber of Commerce, Floyd Merchants, and ‘Round the Mountain’, as well as other marketing efforts, the County promotes the many tourism-related entrepreneurs and artisans in the Town and County.

Figure 20



Source: Virginia Tourism Corporation

Planning directly with tourism stakeholders occurred in 2010, resulting in the first ever draft Floyd County Tourism Strategic Plan. The document identifies goals and objectives of tourism stakeholders to allow Floyd County to continue efforts in tourism while maintaining its rural and unique character. Priorities include:

- Establishing a tourism committee to make recommendations to local government
- Developing a recognizable emblem to represent Floyd
- Developing a tourism marketing plan
- Creating a comprehensive “official” Floyd visitor website
- Developing public and private support for a full-time tourism director
- Providing customer service training to businesses
- Establish a centralized, official visitor center
- Develop a visitor walking accessibility and signage plan and parking analysis.
- Encourage protection of agriculture and cultural assets.



*Photo Courtesy of the Floyd Country Store*

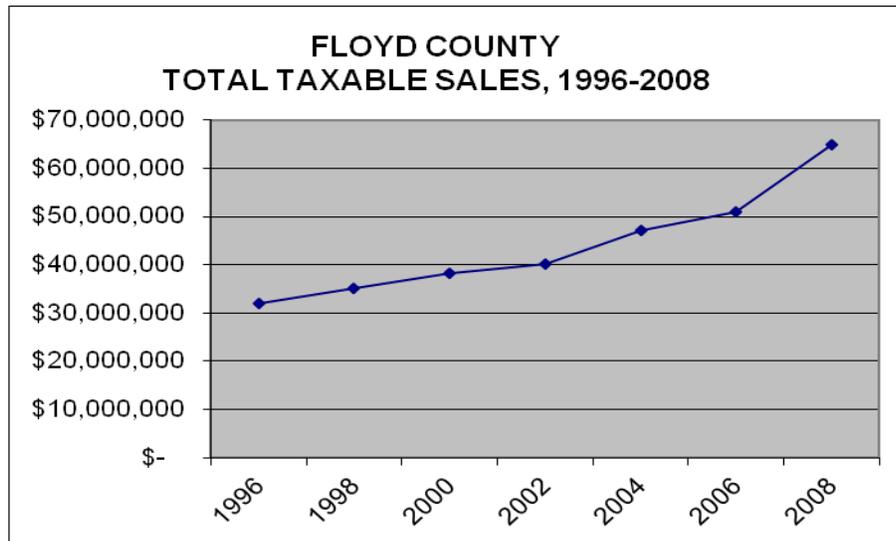
The plan is currently pending with Town Council and the Board of Supervisors.

## Retail Sales

There has been a general increase in retail sales over the past decade (see Figure 21), likely caused by population and visitor growth, though this increase halted with the recession in 2009.

The Virginia Department of Taxation, which supplies this information, changed from the SIC coding system to the NAICS coding system around 2005, making specific long-term comparisons difficult. See Tables 35 and 36 for trend information before and after those changes, respectively. Despite the recession in 2009, it is apparent that some sectors—including accommodations, arts and many services continued to experience growth. Please note that many businesses fall into more than one class. For example, grocery stores sell many non-food items, while department stores, hotels, and other establishments sell food. Therefore, the classifications reflect the principal business activity as reported by dealers.

**Figure 21**



*Source: Virginia Department of Taxation and Weldon Cooper Center*

**Table 35**  
**Retail Sales by Category in Floyd County, 1996-2004**

<b>Retail Numbers</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2004</b>
Apparel Group	\$ 241,865	\$ 314,627	\$ 185,769	\$ 263,014	\$ 290,271
Automotive Group	\$ 3,786,184	\$ 3,700,221	\$ 4,296,946	\$ 4,377,920	\$ 5,491,079
Food Group	\$ 16,306,576	\$ 16,640,299	\$ 17,625,349	\$ 17,432,545	\$ 17,770,347
Furniture, Home Furnishing & Equipment Group	\$ 1,199,750	\$ 1,282,282	\$ 1,313,480	\$ 1,023,108	\$ 1,006,650
General Merchandise Group	\$ 1,233,864	\$ 632,110	\$ 1,132,516	\$ 1,092,514	\$ 852,128
Lumber, building materials and supply Group	\$ 1,799,468	\$ 2,321,130	\$ 2,860,645	\$ 3,231,859	\$ 5,161,195
Fuel Group	withheld				
Machinery, equipment and supplies Group	\$ 495,605	\$ 407,099	\$ 462,417	\$ 425,108	\$ 323,833
Miscellaneous Group					
unclassified	\$ 1,996	\$ 1,998	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,002	\$ 2,004
books, stationery, printing, office supplies	\$ 127,759	\$ 126,180	\$ 160,420	\$ 87,498	\$ 159,828
florists, nurseries, garden, fertilizer, tree dealers	\$ 444,311	\$ 704,422	\$ 595,056	\$ 498,999	\$ 430,182
gifts, novelties, ceramics, art shops,	\$ 338,788	\$ 400,131	\$ 340,586	\$ 1,316,149	\$ 1,334,039
jewelry, luggage, leather goods	\$ 325,442	\$ 369,151	\$ 348,384	\$ 398,070	\$ 391,710
salvage, surplus, flea markets	\$ 151,861	\$ 36,730	\$ 33,074	\$ 21,197	\$ 19,971
sporting goods, hobby supply, fire arms, golf, etc.	\$ 100,047	\$ 70,706	\$ 98,146	\$ 134,893	\$ 109,322
vending machine sales	\$ 49,526	\$ 31,141	\$ 30,312	\$ 38,749	\$ 36,916
retail shoe repair, beauty shops, optical, auction, manufacturers, banks, hearing aids	\$ 3,454,529	\$ 4,005,082	\$ 5,331,575	\$ 5,785,848	\$ 6,371,497
	\$ 4,992,263	\$ 5,743,543	\$ 6,937,553	\$ 8,281,403	\$ 8,853,465
Hotels, Motels, Tourist Camps, etc.	\$ 310,446	\$ 568,998	\$ 636,051	\$ 533,224	\$ 440,358
Alcoholic Beverage	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other miscellaneous and unidentifiable	\$ 1,621,033	\$ 3,465,362	\$ 2,828,615	\$ 3,556,873	\$ 7,010,926
	\$ 1,996	\$ 1,998	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,002	\$ 2,004
<b>TOTAL TAXABLE SALES</b>	<b>\$ 31,987,054</b>	<b>\$ 35,075,671</b>	<b>\$ 38,279,341</b>	<b>\$ 40,217,568</b>	<b>\$ 47,200,252</b>

*Source: Virginia Department of Taxation and Weldon Cooper Center*

The number of business establishments increased 7.5% from 2008 to 2009, though total retail sales fell by about 8%. Table 23 shows the trend toward increasing local sales tax revenue in the County, though this is but a small fraction of the County's overall budget.

**Table 36**  
**Number of Establishments and Retail Sales by Category, 2008-2009**

	2008		2009	
	establishments	taxable sales	establishments	taxable sales
No NAICS Information	16	\$ 143,740	16	\$ 212,667
Crop Production	6	\$ 228,671	11	\$ 278,251
Animal Production			7	\$ 260,159
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	5	\$ 254,672		
Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing			6	\$ 1,196,646
Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	11	\$ 1,496,440	11	\$ 185,744
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	11	\$ 858,255	12	\$ 1,004,365
Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores	8	\$ 839,735	9	\$ 441,192
Electronics and Appliance Stores			5	\$ 49,704
Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Stores	8	\$ 6,756,078	6	\$ 6,447,062
Food and Beverage Stores	16	\$ 21,806,734	16	\$ 21,617,105
Gasoline Stations	11	\$ 2,439,080	11	\$ 2,158,817
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	10	\$ 480,779	8	\$ 316,462
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, and Music Stores	15	\$ 304,409	15	\$ 243,433
General Merchandise Stores	7	\$ 3,222,974	7	\$ 3,289,329
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	56	\$ 1,757,555	54	\$ 1,509,644
Nonstore Retailers	23	\$ 580,429	30	\$ 870,663
Publishing Industries			5	\$ 4,661
Real Estate			5	\$ 437,159
Rental and Leasing Services	30	\$ 402,970	25	\$ 337,118
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	5	\$ 66,818	6	\$ 70,723
Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Related Activities	7	\$ 90,543	12	\$ 109,360
Accommodation	16	\$ 724,471	16	\$ 875,788
Food Services and Drinking Places	21	\$ 6,229,265	25	\$ 6,277,195
Repair and Maintenance	17	\$ 2,553,379	20	\$ 2,890,531
Personal and Laundry Services	7	\$ 585,844	6	\$ 700,780
Floyd Total:	306	\$ 51,822,841	344	\$ 51,784,558
Miscellaneous and Unidentifiable Total:	76	\$ 13,082,149	67	\$ 7,561,020
Total:	382	\$ 64,904,990	411	\$ 59,345,578

*Source: Virginia Department of Taxation and Weldon Cooper Center*

**Table 37**  
**Sales Tax Revenue Data (collected from revenue not source) 2000-2008**

Year	Floyd County	Virginia
2000	\$420,165	\$777,850,960
2001	\$445,698	\$777,241,737
2002	\$443,558	\$789,905,170
2003	\$470,220	\$838,275,059
2004	\$543,189	\$914,499,686
2005	\$537,780	\$976,923,577
2006	\$600,974	\$1,208,544,074
2007	\$662,580	\$1,056,766,678
2008	\$735,912	\$1,032,845,078

*Source: Virginia Department of Taxation and Weldon Cooper Center*

## Business Survey

As part of the input for this plan, an online survey was conducted of local businesses to measure concerns, markets and satisfaction levels. The responses were from a variety of business, with diverse markets. The survey provided positive news: nearly 80% rated the County above average for business climate and, despite the recession, a majority of the businesses expected to grow in the near term (see details below). This underlines encouraging the great potential of supporting local businesses.

**Figure 22**  
**Floyd County Business Survey**

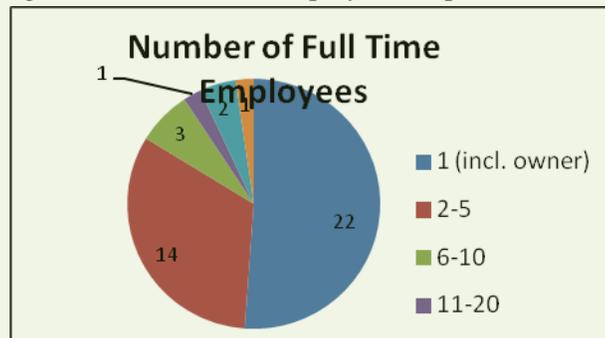
In the spring of 2010, an online, volunteer survey was conducted of Floyd County businesses (collaborative effort between David St. Jean, a Virginia Tech graduate student; the New River Valley/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Board; and Floyd County.) There were 43 responses. The 4 business categories with the largest numbers of respondents were:

1. Arts and Crafts with 11 respondents (25%).
2. Hospitality (food and lodging) with 8 respondents (19%).
3. Health Care with 7 respondents (16%).
4. Agriculture with 4 respondents (10%).

These 4 categories represented over 70% of the responses.

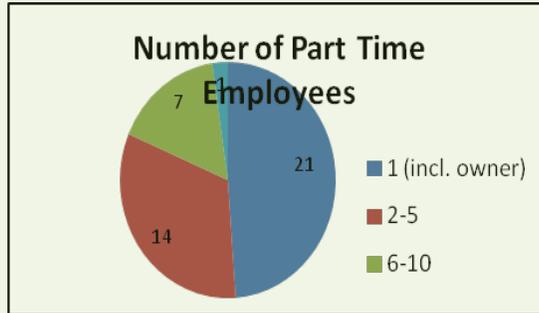
The following summarize key findings of the survey:

- **How many years have you been operating in Floyd County?**  
The majority of respondents (17) to this survey have been in business for over 10 years. Nearly 56% have been in operation in the county since at least 2004.
- **On average, how many full time employees do you have? (If you are a seasonal employer, please enter the number for your busy season.)**  
Over half of the respondents are one employee companies (counting the owner as an employee), although several of the one employee companies are not sole proprietorships.



**On average, how many part time employees do you have?**

Seasonal businesses were asked to submit a response for their busy season.



- **On average, how far away are your customers and suppliers based?**

Not surprisingly, since Floyd County is well removed from large population centers, the average distance to each is very similar. When these distances are taken into consideration, transportation infrastructure and services take on larger roles in the county’s economic viability and future growth.



- **Are you having recruiting/retention problems?**

Overall, 77% of the respondents answered “not a problem” or “occasionally” for these employee issues.

- **What strengths does Floyd County offer to small businesses (check all that apply):**

Nearly every respondent chose “creative atmosphere”, “lifestyle”, and “rural character” as their top strengths of the county.

- **Sometimes having one type of business nearby can help other businesses to grow. Keeping that in mind, which of the following industries do you think are underrepresented in Floyd?**  
This question aims to get at what type of business growth would help existing businesses be more successful. Respondents were allowed to choose from multiple industries from the list. Expected answers could be for business services such as accounting and shipping. Whereas this was true for this survey, the greatest number of respondents stated a desire for growth in manufacturing businesses.
- **Using a 1 to 10 scale, can you please rate the following government services in terms of their ability to meet the needs of the business community (1 is poor, 10 is excellent):**  
Respondents were given nine services provided by the county to choose from. K through 12 education is rated highly by most of the respondents. Recycling services are rated the lowest.
- **Do you plan to expand your business facilities within the next 1-5 years?**  
When asked whether they expected to expand their businesses in the near future, 56% responded positively.
- **On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 poor, 10 excellent), how would you characterize the overall business climate in the county (ie: taxes, regulation, government support, community support, etc.):**  
Perhaps mirroring the respondents' positive outlook for business expansion, 79% indicated the business climate in the County as being above average.

## **Chapter 5.** **How Do People Make a Living in Floyd County?**

### Summary and Conclusion

#### **EMPLOYMENT and MAJOR EMPLOYERS**

- Nearly six-times more people drive out of Floyd County to work than drive in. This has negative consequences for workers for businesses in Floyd County, as commuters tend to spend retail and service dollars outside the community.
- Major employers inside the County include the School Board, Hollingsworth and Vose, the Bank of Floyd, Chateau Morrisette, Riverbend Nursery, Citizens' Telephone Cooperative, and Wall Residences.
- The number of people employed from Floyd County (both inside and outside the County) has decreased significantly in manufacturing and agriculture, indicative of global pressures. In-County employment has increased in retail, construction, arts related and professional occupations over the past decade, likely related to population increases and Floyd's heightened status among arts and travelers. Unfortunately, the tourism-related jobs are among the lowest paying of all jobs in the County.
- Floyd County's unemployment rate topped 9% in February 2010, the highest point in at least 10 years; the state number was 7.8% and the national number was 10.4%.
- Because of robust telecommunications infrastructure throughout the County, residents have growing tele-commuting opportunities in various service sectors.

#### **INCOME**

- Average weekly wages in Floyd County (\$535) are among the lowest in Virginia. Coupled with increased demand for land from population increases, this has resulted in people employed locally struggling to afford land and housing. It is important to support development of higher wage jobs, such as in light industry, technology and innovations fields, which are consistent with community and regional assets (e.g. Virginia Tech).
- While median family income and per capita income have increased in Floyd County, they have not kept pace with the growth of income in the rest of Virginia.
- The poverty rate for individuals has increased from 11.7% in 2000 to 15.1% in 2005-09, likely because of the major economic recession.

#### **SMALL BUSINESSES**

- Floyd County has a very high rate of self-employed people and small business establishments. This likely reflects the independent and/or creative nature of many, the lack of other opportunities and the great opportunities available for home-based businesses because of the robust telecommunications infrastructure in the County.
- There are over 400 small businesses with employees ("establishments") in the County (2009). There are also over 1,200 self-employed people/firms in the County, the largest numbers of which are construction (246), retail trade (145), professional, scientific and technical services (101), and other services (166.)

## **Chapter 5.** **How Do People Make a Living in Floyd County? (cont'd)**

### Summary and Conclusion

#### **AGRICULTURE**

- Agriculture is still a major part of the economy in Floyd County. The County ranks 1st in the state for acres in nursery stock and 2<sup>nd</sup> for acres in Christmas trees. Furthermore, the County ranks 6<sup>th</sup> for beef cattle sales and 18<sup>th</sup> in dairy sales.
- The County has also seen growth in vegetable production and is poised to be a leader in the region. Value-added processing of local foods could help farmers as well as provide additional manufacturing and distribution jobs.
- While keeping interest alive in being a farmer is an essential thing, it does not guarantee the continuation of farming in the County. Good agricultural lands must be available, affordable and desirable to future generations. Land Use Valuation is helpful but not sufficient to sustain farms.

#### **TOURISM**

- Tourism continues to grow in Floyd County because of major natural and cultural assets and the work of organizations like The Crooked Road and Round the Mountain. A separate tourism strategic plan has been drafted to encourage greater collaboration, coordination and focus. The draft plan captures the wishes of tourism stakeholders and includes their desire for an official tourism committee to make recommendations to local governments, a comprehensive marketing plan, a full-time tourism director, and an official visitor website.

#### **RETAIL SALES**

- Taxable sales have generally increased in Floyd County, until 2009 when the recession affected sales (as it did in Virginia and the nation.)
- In general, Floyd County can benefit from reducing the “leakage” of retail dollars to other communities. Encouraging buying local is important, as is developing more local choices and brands, including potentially locally-processed foods.

#### **BUSINESS SURVEY**

- In a survey, nearly 80% of businesses found the business climate in Floyd County to be above average.
- Continuing to support the growth of these local businesses is an important opportunity.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY BLANK