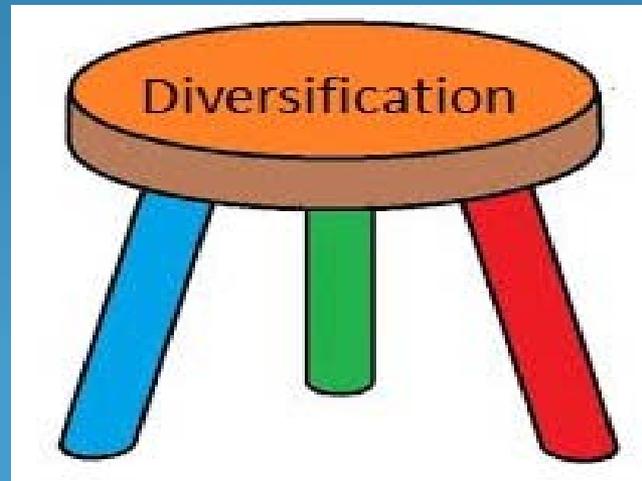
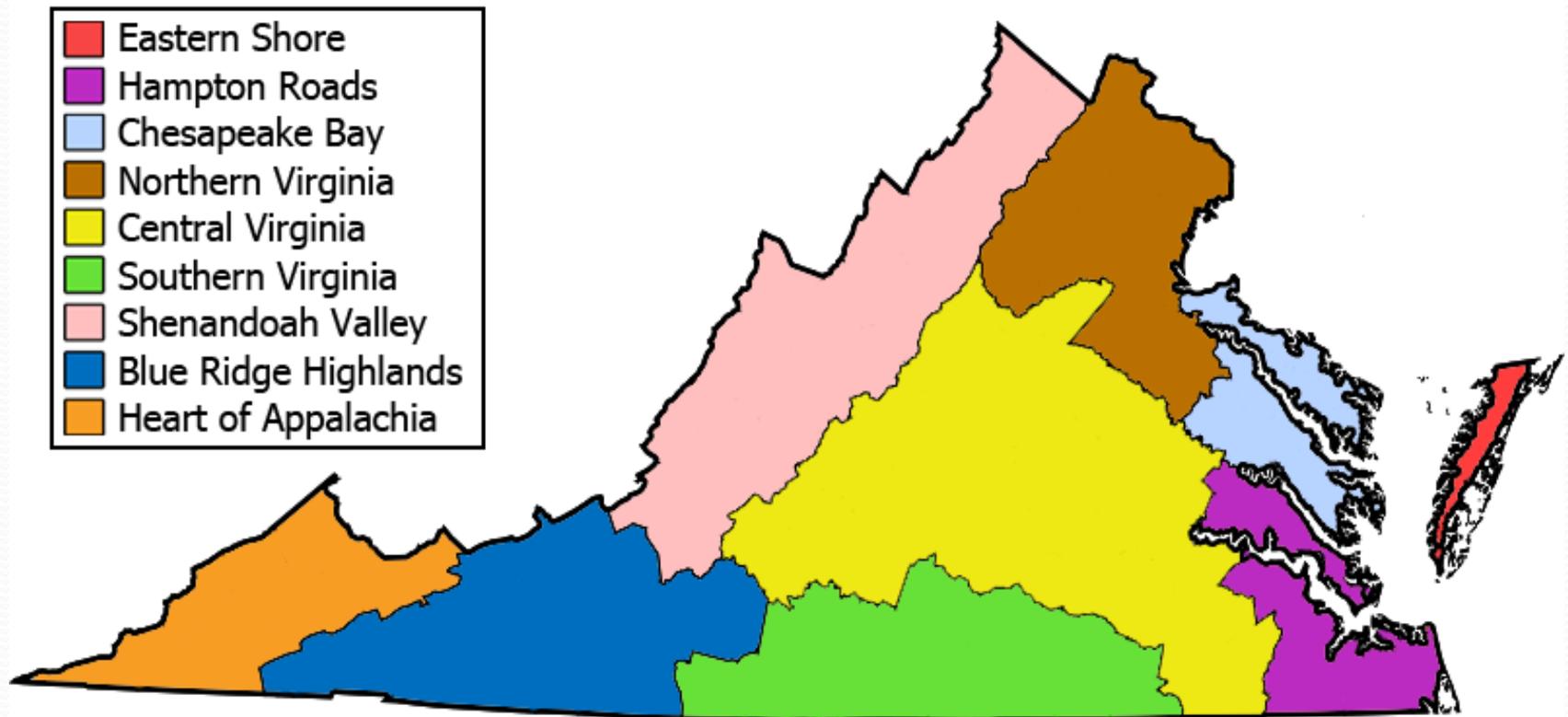


Economic Development in Northampton County

More than the Sum of Three Parts



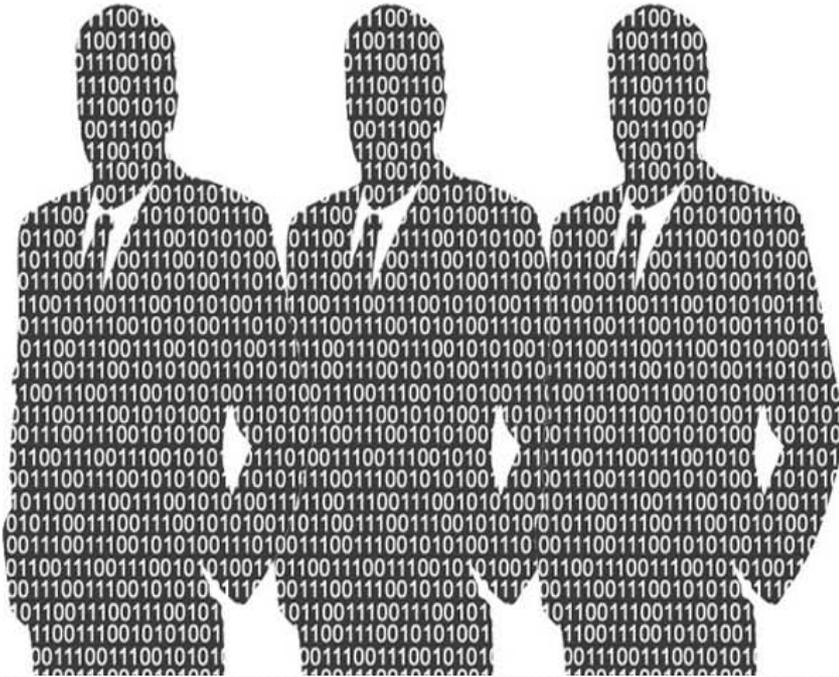
Traditional vs Modern E.D.



“The Big Get” vs BRE Program



Surveys/Data vs Personal Touch

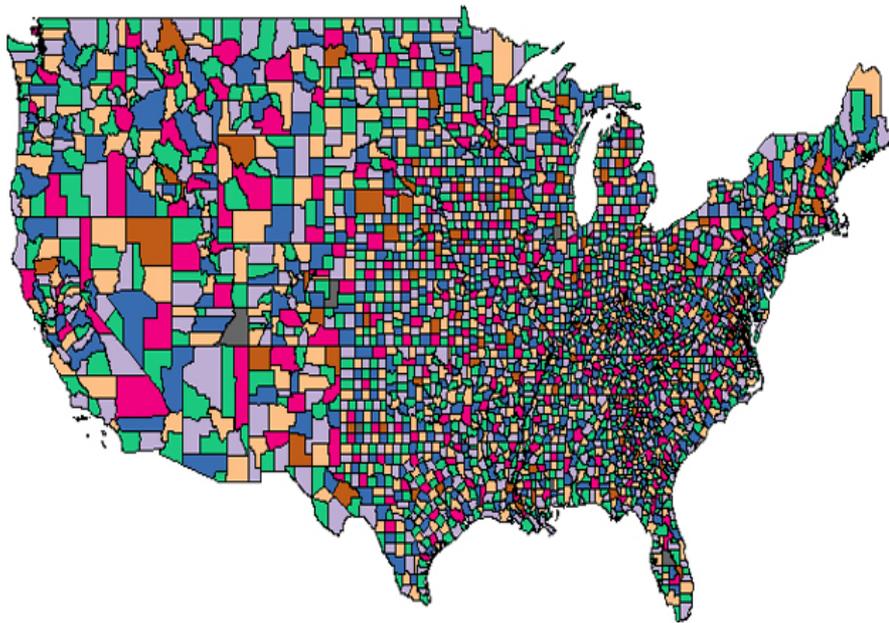


One Size Fits All vs Community Appropriate

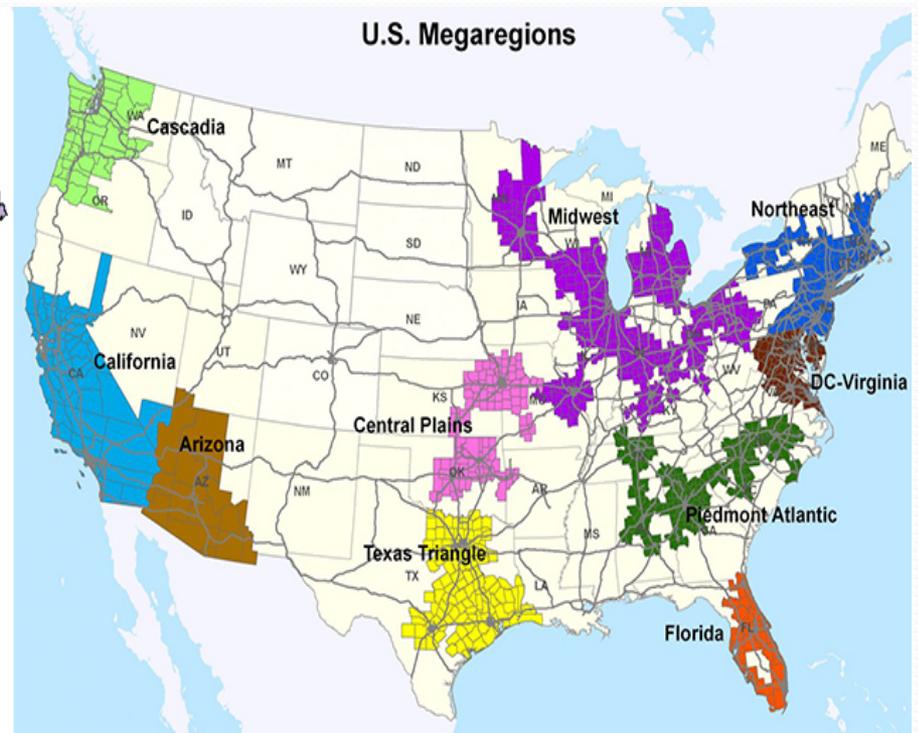


Everyone for Themselves vs Regionalization

U.S. Counties



U.S. Megaregions



State of the County

- The Big Three Challenges (as I see it)
 - 1) Workforce Development Issues
 - 2) Lack of Opportunities (especially for Millennials)
 - 3) Changing Demographics
- All three issues synergistically compound each other

Workforce Challenges

- Lack of “soft-skills” in much of the local labor force
- Career paths are often presented to students too late to change poor study habits or properly plan a path forward
- Lack of continuity between different levels of education- dual enrollment is helping to address this issue
- Lack of role models for success or support structures
- Programming offered should be focused around upcoming job market demands- needs constant assessment
- Perception that our school system is failing; we need to better promote both efforts and victories

Lack of Opportunities

- Geographic isolation and cost barriers (toll) may keep out sprawl...but also development, ideas and opportunity
- Low-skilled workforce limits business attraction potential
- Lack of existing infrastructure limits the growth of existing businesses and also harms business attraction-which often happens below our radar (outside research)
- Lack of willingness to fully use existing resources causes insufficient market capture of potential tourism dollars
- Failure to think/operate regionally limits the share of federal/state money given to Northampton County

Changing Demographics

- Population is in steady decline (though there are signs of a modest, sustained economic recovery in some sectors)
- Mean age of population continues to rise; thus service needs increase, even as the county loses vital services
- Very few millennials are returning after college- this is due to lack of opportunities, but also a lack of *culture*

What keeps me up at night?

When the Boomers Bail

A Community Economic Survival Guide

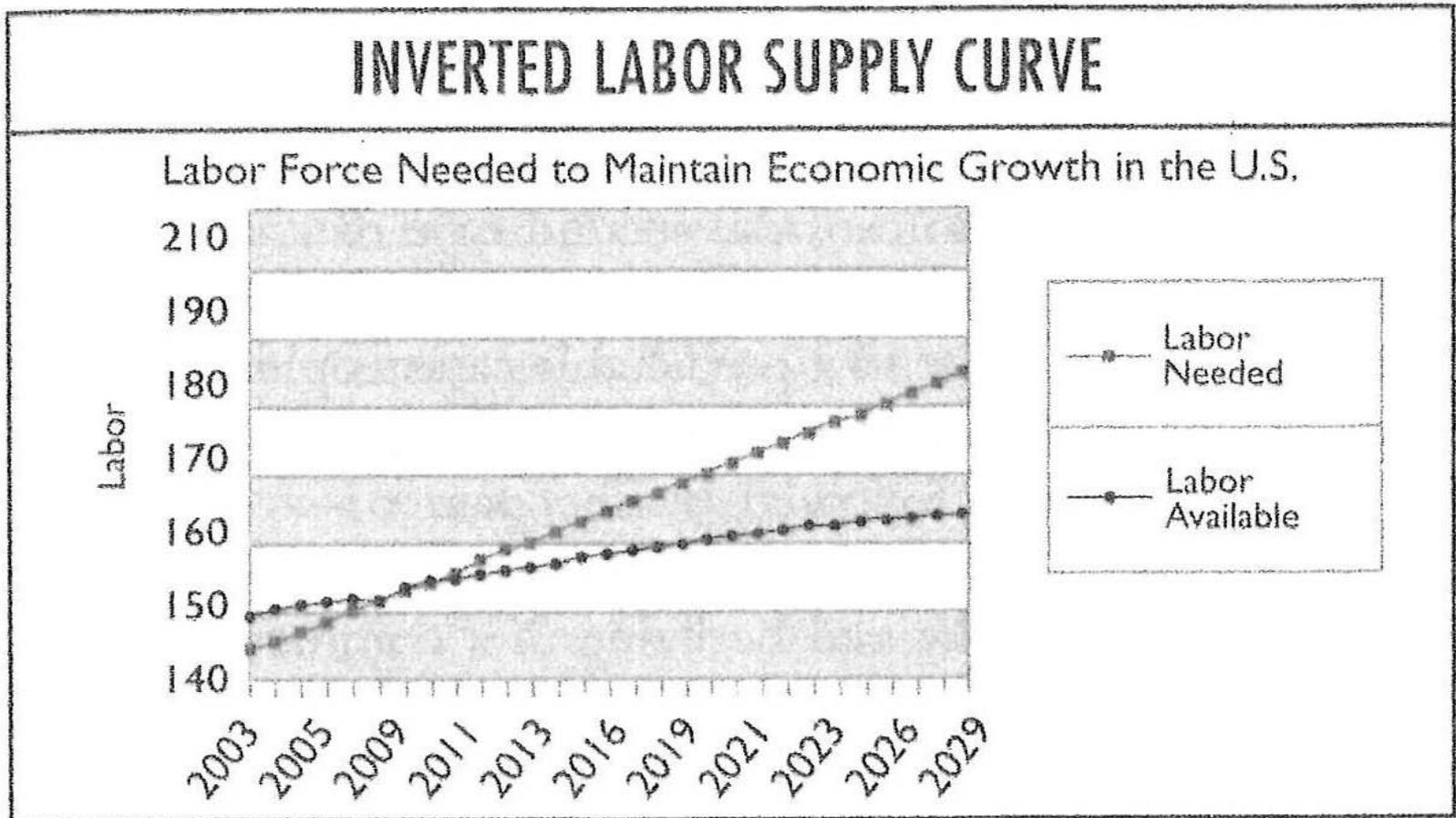
When the Boomers Bail

How Demographics will Sort
Communities into Winners and Losers



Mark Lautman

Future demographic trends will not be kind to small, rural communities



What we can do to mitigate labor shortfall and keep a viable economy

- Form strong regional connections
- Train to the positions of the future
- Train labor force with a focus on customer relations and soft skills, to cross-promote local businesses
- Diversify our base economy (the same as you would your own personal investment portfolio)
- Welcome immigration and focus on training efforts
- Cost, idea and equipment sharing efforts (local farmers)
- Keep students in school, and plan for return after college



Advice vs Personal Philosophy

- Well meaning advice from professionals in my field

- Personal Philosophy/Plan of Action

- Audacity of scope (broad ED definition)
- Professional Risk vs comfort zone
- Stretch thin and enlist help
- Tackle the big problems
- Fail... get back up and try again
- Solicit (and expect) board and citizen support
- Focus on attitude of optimism and possibilities



INTERNATIONAL
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL



Present and Future Goals

- Workforce Development
 - Work closely with local and regional schools on meeting future workforce challenges- identify needs and strategy
 - Involve businesses; engage parents- provide framework
 - Internships, shadowing, mentors, career outreach
 - Work with all educational levels/institutions to provide consistent and relevant career training for all students
 - Continue to provide diverse afterschool options
 - Targeted investment in proven programs- build upon success, but also stay agile and adaptive to future needs

- Best/Highest Use of Existing Infrastructure

- Current inventory and condition of county infrastructure
- Identify unmet (present or future) needs
- Determine viability of adaptive reuse, based on the results of needs and economic assessments



- Gather citizen input on potential projects and/or needs
- Determine if funding or incentives exist for project(s)
- Use existing studies (e.g. BoH) and conduct new studies to establish goals, parameters and scope of project(s)
- Use comps, when available (don't reinvent the wheel)



- Business Retention and Expansion Program

- At least 70% of tax base growth comes from existing businesses; the figure is likely much higher in this county
- A BRE program needs to be formalized and systematic
- Rather than spending inordinate resources courting large firms, efforts are far better spent making sure existing businesses have the tools/support they need to thrive
- Business attraction is still important, but needs to be in line with the character and capacity of the community
- As part of a Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction program, a comprehensive list of all federal, state and local incentives must be collected and organized into an easy to read and reference brochure- work in progress

• Regionalization

- This is not the old economy. Governments, companies and communities are now focused on economies of scale
- The Shore must increase its efforts to cooperate and act as a single economic region- as that's how we are viewed (e.g. SET program, Joint EDA/IDA meetings, ANPDC)
- Many state and federal funding initiatives are only given to economic regions (e.g. Building Collaborative Communities, GoVirginia, etc.); and agencies have already designated Accomack and Northampton as a single region
- Failure to plan together will result in our share of grant monies being handed out to other, functioning regions- those are our tax dollars, and we want them back!

- Continued Support for Tourism, Aquaculture and Agriculture
 - Clearly, these sectors are the bedrock of our local economy, and will remain integral to any future planning
 - Efforts must be made to both cross-promote sectors and to better advertise our assets regionally and abroad (Oyster and Artisan Trails are excellent examples)
 - However, as much as the concept of a three legged stool is ingrained into our local psyche, a robust and healthy economy, able to weather times of economic strife, must be more diverse than three somewhat related sectors
 - We must focus on small business development, support our local entrepreneurs and assist other growing sectors



- Outreach (internal and external)

- Though we are a county body, we must work to better support our towns, and the businesses located within them
- Economic Development and the economic health of the community cannot be viewed in a vacuum; vibrant schools, functioning chambers, an integrated business community, outside agencies and neighboring communities are all part of the bigger picture- view as positive feedback loops
- Our county, including my department, must do a better job at highlighting just what it is we do for the community, and the many daily successes we achieve
- We need to foster the mindset that we are partners to the community, guiding them through this -sometimes convoluted- state and federal process, rather than continue the perception that we are here as an obstacle

• Development Focus (Diversity of Locations)

- Route 13 is an essential asset, and must be treated as such, if we are going to compete for limited tourism resources
- While development in our towns is crucial, both for maintaining the existing economy and keeping said towns vibrant, many “destination travelers” *will not* go out of their way to explore- and yet we need their money
- A solution must include a balance of RT 13 development and continued support for our towns- ideally, a work-force with well trained soft-skills, working at RT 13 businesses, will be directing motorists into the towns to explore
- We are clearly not capturing nearly enough market share with the path we are on; development will happen, either way, why not take an active role in shaping and guiding it, so we have some control of the outcome?

Working Projects/Ideas

- HS internship program- including student in department
- Adult business support network
- BRE program; incentive brochure; business outreach
- Infrastructure assessment (ongoing)
- Blight removal (starting on RT 13); litter upkeep program
- Continued agency/organization involvement + training
- Aggressive grant writing efforts (mostly regional)
- Continued solicitation of public involvement
- Ask BoS for a Strategic Action Plan for the county

Success as a Future Model

- Sunset Beach- use relationships with state agencies to help overcome time-table bottlenecks
- Hecate Energy- strategize with businesses during complex permitting process to navigate obstacles
- Bayshore- partner with struggling businesses to prevent closure and build in continued resilience (>270 jobs)
- New Ravenna- work with companies to find and utilize incentive programs to maintain and expand operations
- Bay Creek/Southport/Cape Charles- serve as a conduit for diverse stakeholders to accomplish complex projects