

**CHAPTER 2**  
**HISTORY, PHYSICAL CONDITIONS, DEMOGRAPHICS,**  
**AND ECONOMY**  
**(DATA, TRENDS, AND IMPLICATIONS)**

**History**

Charlotte County was formed in 1764 from Lunenburg County and was named for Queen Charlotte, wife of George III of England. Settlement of this new frontier began forty or fifty years before the county was formed. Cub Creek Church, the oldest Presbyterian church south of the James River, was organized here in 1735 by James Cardwell (Caldwell), grandfather of John Caldwell Calhoun of South Carolina.

The early 18th century brought permanent settlers to the easternmost section, the Roanoke Creek and Staunton River floodplains. These people were of English descent moving from the settlements along the James. Many families who were influential in the colonial government patented large acreage along these fertile floodplains of the Staunton River and the creeks leading into that river from the north, comprising some forty thousand acres.

The Roanoke Creek basin, consisting of approximately twelve thousand acres, was then considered to be the most fertile, flat, productive soil along the East Coast. As these families obtained land grants, they moved to this fertile frontier and began raising grains which were shipped along the waterways to England and western Europe. These people flourished, and built stately mansions for themselves and their descendants.

The western area of Charlotte County was settled by Scotch Irish and French Huguenots, planters who were active in the struggle for religious freedom.

As the American revolutionary spirit unfolded, the people of Charlotte County played important roles in the formation of the government. Charlotte County was the second governing body in the thirteen colonies to declare its independence from England. Its militia units helped to halt the advance of Cornwallis in 1781 and to hasten the end of the American Revolution. Tarleton's raiders passed through here. Lafayette's units camped near Charlotte Court House, and George Washington stopped here on returning from his southern tour after the Revolution. Patrick Henry and John Randolph lived here.

Later, as the highlands of Charlotte County came into agriculture by the smaller tobacco farmers, the soils from the high areas began to wash down and fill the creek beds along the fertile floodplains. The production of grains there became too costly. The larger landowners with slave labor built dikes along the creeks, but the land was soon abandoned. The flood of 1870 caused severe damage and the flood of 1940 practically ended all low ground farming in Charlotte County. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the county built watershed dams and encouraged the implementation of good land management practices to control erosion and improve water quality throughout the county.

The rich heritage of old homes is architecturally significant as they reflect the styles from the Colonial and Georgian to the Federal and Greek Revival periods. Many of these

stately mansions have been restored; time has merely enhanced the superior craftsmanship of the builders.

People of national importance have lived in Charlotte County. It was briefly the home of the signer of the Declaration of Independence, George Walton, later of Georgia. Patrick Henry, born in Hanover County, came to Charlotte County in 1795 and is buried here at Red Hill. In 1959, the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation was dedicated as a national shrine, a replica of the last home of this Virginia patriot. John Randolph, who represented Virginia in both houses of the United States Congress between 1799 and 1825, lived and was buried at his home, Roanoke Plantation. Charlotte Court House was the scene of Patrick Henry's last public speech and John Randolph's first.

In later years Ambassador David K. E. Bruce, the only man to be ambassador to three great European powers--Britain, France, and Germany--and then to be emissary to a great Eastern power, China, lived at Staunton Hill, a Virginia and a National Historic Landmark. He served as a delegate from this county to the Virginia Assembly just prior to World War II. The town of Charlotte Court House, the county seat, has been likened to Williamsburg on a smaller scale. Mr. Bruce gave to Charlotte County many of its stately buildings in Charlotte Court House--agricultural (Extension Service) building, Red Cross building, Treasurer's office, Health Department building, and public library and gardens, besides contributing to the construction of Randolph Henry and Central High Schools. Charlotte Court House has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places as an Historic Courthouse Village District.

In 1992, the historic Charlotte County Courthouse was the location for filming portions of the motion picture *Sommersby*. In 1996, the historic Brick Tavern at Courthouse Square was purchased by the County of Charlotte. The Brick Tavern was subsequently renovated to serve as the offices for the Clerk of the Circuit Court and the Commonwealth's Attorney.

## **Physical Conditions**

### **1. Geography and Topography**

Charlotte County is located in the Central-Southside Region of Virginia, approximately 80 miles southwest of the state capitol, Richmond (Figure 2-1). The county is 475 square miles in area; the greatest east to west distance is approximately 24 miles, and the greatest north to south distance is approximately 38 miles. There are four incorporated towns in the county – Charlotte Court House (the county seat), Drakes Branch, Keysville, and Phenix (Figure 2-2). The terrain ranges from gently rolling to hilly, steep, and broken. General elevations are 350 to 450 feet, and no elevation is greater than 750 feet above sea level (Figure 2-3).

### **2. Climate**

Charlotte County has warm summers, relatively mild winters, and normally adequate rainfall (Table 2-1). The growing season is approximately 190 days, long enough to allow maturity of a wide variety of crops. The pasture season is slightly longer, but winter months are cold enough to require feed and shelter for livestock. Monthly average precipitation amounts vary greatly from year to year for any given month. Although

Charlotte County is more than 150 miles from the Atlantic Ocean, remnants of hurricanes or tropical storms may pass over the county from the east or south, occasionally causing flooding and wind damage.

**Table 2-1**

**Climate**

Criteria	Data
Average Annual Rainfall	40.4 inches
Average Annual Snowfall	14.6 inches
Average Annual Temperature	56.5 °F
January Average Temperature	36 °F
Avg. # Days Min. Temp. Lower Than 32°F	98
July Average Temperature	76 °F
Avg. # Days Max. Temp Higher Than 90°F	43
Prevailing Winds	Southwest
USDA Cold Hardiness Zone*	7A
*Average Annual Minimum Temperature = 0°-5° F	

Source: Charlotte County Administrator’s Office, Virginia Tech, USDA Soil Conservation Service

**3. Existing Land Use**

Charlotte County is overwhelmingly rural. It has large areas of valuable farmland and forest cover. The land cover type (Table 2-2) is 68.7% forest and 19.7% pasture/field. Overall population density is 26.3 persons per square mile, but density is only 22.6 persons per square miles in the areas outside the towns (Table 2-3). As shown is Figure 2-4, Charlotte County’s population density is low compared with most Virginia counties, and the density has not changed noticeably between 1990 and 2000 (Figure 2-5).

**Table 2-2**

**Land Cover Type**

Land Cover Type	Percent
Pasture/Hay	19.7
Row Crops	2.6
Woody Wetlands	5.0
Open Water	0.8
Transitional	2.2
Deciduous Forest	38.1
Evergreen Forest	12.8
Mixed Forest	17.8
Herbaceous Wetlands	0.5

Source: National Land Cover Dataset, UVA Geostat Center

**Table 2-3**

**Population Density**

Total County Area	475 square miles
Total 2000 County Population	12472
Overall Persons per Square Mile	26.3
Total Area of 4 Towns	10.4 square miles
Total 2000 Population of 4 Towns	1984
Persons per Square Mile in Towns	190.8
Area of County Outside Towns	464.6 square miles
2000 Population Outside Towns	10488
Persons per Square Mile Outside Towns	22.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Commonwealth Regional Council

Figure 2-6 is the current zoning district map. As shown on the zoning map, the county is almost completely an agriculture zone outside the towns, with very small industrial zones north and south of Keysville, adjacent to the southern border of Drakes Branch, and in the Wylliesburg area.

Worthy of particular note is land owned or controlled by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps of Engineers land borders the Roanoke (Staunton) River and the John H. Kerr Reservoir from the southern tip of the county continuously to the Route 746 bridge (Figure 2-7). Although very small in total area compared with the rest of the county, this land is significant. It preserves the wetlands along the river and reservoir, protects wildlife, and acts as a flood control buffer. The Corps of Engineers also requires an extensive permitting process for construction on this land.

**4. Soil, Farmland, and Forest**

Charlotte County contains a wide variety of soils, with agricultural productivity ratings ranging from *very good* to *very poor*. A county-wide soil survey and analysis is found in the publication *Soil Survey – Charlotte County Virginia*, United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, July 1974. The Soil Conservation Service has also produced a map of important farmlands in Charlotte County (Figure 2-8). This map shows that 81,777 acres (26.9%) are classified as *prime farmland*, and 78,466 (25.8%) acres are classified as *additional farmland of statewide importance*. Thus, 52.7% of the county’s total land area is classified as significant farmland. Figure 2-8 also shows that the significant farmland is distributed uniformly throughout the county. Figure 2-9 shows the county’s extensive forest cover.

**5. Water Resources**

Most of Charlotte County is in the Roanoke River watershed. A very small area on the eastern boundary is in the Chowan River watershed. The major surface water features are the Roanoke (Staunton) River on the western and southwestern boundary, creeks and small dams located throughout the county, and the John H. Kerr Reservoir at the southern

end of the county (Figure 2-10). Table 2-4 lists flow rates at the three stream gauging stations located on the Roanoke (Staunton) River and Cub Creek.

**Table 2-4**

**River and Stream Flow Rates 1990 - 2003**

Body of Water	Annual Mean Streamflow (ft <sup>3</sup> /sec.)		
	High	Low	Average
Staunton River at Brookneal	4523	988	2533
Cub Creek	203	51	106.9
Staunton River at Randolph	5601	1206	3100

Source: U.S.G.S. stream gauge records

There are a total of 19 state-licensed dams in Charlotte County. Seventeen dams are categorized as *low hazard* dams, and two are categorized as *significant hazard* dams (Table 2-5). Fourteen dams were constructed in the 1960 decade as flood control dams. Together, these 14 contain a total of approximately 2229 acre-feet of water; their watersheds encompass an area of 77.4 square miles, which is approximately 16% of the entire area of the county. The watershed areas of the two largest lakes impounded by these dams – Keysville Town Lake and Drakes Lake – are particularly large and are situated in the vicinity of the towns of Drakes Branch and Keysville (Figure 2-11). Keysville Town Lake (containing approximately 91.6 million gallons) is the municipal water supply for the town of Keysville. Drakes Lake (containing approximately 148.3 million gallons) is included as the water source in the preliminary design of a water treatment plant to supply the Drakes Branch area if future demand increases significantly.

**Table 2-5**

**Charlotte County State-Licensed Dams**

Name	Approximate Contained Water (acre feet)	Watershed Area (acres)	Hazard Classification
Devin Lower Dam	not available	not available	Low
Devin Upper Dam	not available	not available	Low
Eastern Pines Dam	not available	not available	Low
Four Locusts Dam	not available	not available	Significant
Roanoke Creek Dam #4A	46	1070	Low
Roanoke Creek Dam #5B	112	3335	Low
Roanoke Creek Dam #6A	164	3520	Low
Roanoke Creek Dam #31B	143	3002	Low
Roanoke Creek Dam #35A	74	1460	Low
Roanoke Creek Dam #43A	129	3046	Low

Roanoke Creek Dam #49A	131	3735	Low
Roanoke Creek Dam #54	203	4704	Low
Roanoke Creek Dam #61A	59	1700	Low
Roanoke Creek Dam #62	173	7090	Low
Roanoke Creek Dam #67	119	2518	Low
Roanoke Creek Dam #68	140	2660	Low
Roanoke Creek Dam #70A (Keysville Town Lake)	281	1754	Low
Roanoke Creek Dam #72A (Drakes Lake)	455	9926	Significant
Willies Dam	not available	not available	Low

Hazard Classification: Low—no deaths or significant damage in the event of a breach.

Significant—no deaths but economic, environmental, or lifeline damage in the event of a breach

Source: Southside Soil and Water Conservation District, Commonwealth Regional Council

Groundwater is available from shallow bored or deeper drilled wells in almost all areas of the county. According to Charlotte County Health Department well permit records, bedrock is usually encountered between 40 and 100 feet, but may be found as shallow as 20 feet. Well depths vary widely from 30 to nearly 400 feet. Well production varies similarly, from one to 70 gallons per minute. Most private wells yield 10 or fewer gallons per minute. Figure 2-11A is a map of some typical well types, locations, and yields throughout the county. Table 2-6 summarizes residential well information.

**Table 2-6**

**Estimated Residential Well Consumption**

Number of Well Records Reviewed	215
Usage from Drilled Wells	712,000 gallons per day
Usage from Bored Wells	342,000 gallons per day
Total County-wide Usage	1,054,000 gallons per day
County-wide Groundwater Recharge Potential	30.6 million gallons per day

Source: Draper Aden Associates, *Charlotte County Water Supply Plan, July 2006*

See Section 10 (Public Facilities) for a description of municipal water systems and current water production in Charlotte County.

## 6. Mineral Resources

Figure 2-12 shows mineral resources in Charlotte County. The following information was provided by the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy, Division of Mineral Resources, May 23, 2006.

In 2005, more than 15,000 tons of sand was produced in Charlotte County from two operations along the Roanoke River in the southwestern part of the county. A granite quarry in the central part of the county opened in 2005, and has produced more than 19,000 tons of granite in the first months of operations.

In the past, copper minerals were developed southwest of Keysville and near Laconia. Mica has been mined in the vicinity of Charlotte Court House and Cullen. Granite rocks have been quarried near Saxe and Drakes Branch and along the Roanoke River. Clay materials have been produced near Drakes Branch. Kyanite-bearing quartzite occurs in the vicinity of Madisonville. Syenite that is found near Drakes Branch and Charlotte Court House is a possible source of decorative and construction stone. Vermiculite occurs in an area from the vicinity of Phenix southwestward. Graphite has been found in the vicinity of Drakes Branch and Saxe, and amethyst has been collected at a site west of Charlotte Court House.

## 7. Wetlands

Wetlands are a unique and valuable asset to any community, particularly to a rural area with significant agriculture and forest lands. Detailed maps of wetlands in Charlotte County were produced by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a part of the *1990 National Wetlands Inventory*. These maps are based on analysis of aerial photography, and may be viewed in the office of the Southside Soil and Water Conservation District in Charlotte Court House. The wetlands in Charlotte County generally follow existing watercourses, primarily the Staunton River, Roanoke Creek, and the Kerr Reservoir. There are some very small isolated areas in the county's higher elevation areas.

## 8. Flood Zones

Figure 2-13 shows flood zones in Charlotte County, which are based on U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development maps dated July 7, 1978. These zones are classified as Federal Emergency Management Agency Zone A. Land in a FEMA Zone A is subject to an annual probability of flooding of one percent or greater, based on a 100-year flood, with the base flood elevation undetermined. All of the flood zones are along rivers, creeks, and other watercourses.

## 9. Historic and Scenic Resources

### a. Historic

Charlotte County is rich in history and historic buildings. Sixteen Charlotte County sites are listed in the National Register of Historic Places – the Charlotte Court House Historic District, 13 buildings, the Clarkton Bridge, and one archaeological site (Figure 2-14). In 1996 Charlotte County and the Charlotte County Chapter of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia's Antiquities commissioned a survey of architectural resources 50 years old or older. The result is a comprehensive study of 220 properties in the county, which was published as *Historic Architectural Survey of Charlotte County, Virginia*, June

1998. This document is available at the Charlotte County Public Library and on-line on the Charlotte County web site.

There are several other unique historic sites and trails in Charlotte County (Figure 2-14). Three sites on the *Civil Rights in Education Heritage Trail* are located in the county, as are sections of the *Wilson-Kautz Raid Driving Trail*, part of *Lee's Retreat (Virginia Civil War Trail)*.

#### b. Scenic

In addition to recognized historic sites, there are several additional valuable scenic features in Charlotte County (Figure 2-14). Clarkton Bridge is a preserved road bridge over the Roanoke River that has been converted to a pedestrian facility and linked to other trail and recreational facilities. Several sections of the *Staunton River Loop* and the *Roanoke-Meherrin Summit Loop* of the *Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail* are located in the county. Routes 15, 40, and 727 are designated as bicycle routes in the *Piedmont Planning District Regional Bicycle Plan*.

### 10. Public Facilities

#### a. Transportation

- The predominate transportation service in Charlotte County is provided by state roads. There are 113.14 miles of primary and 477.38 miles of secondary roads in the county. All of the primary roads and 362.68 miles of the secondary roads are hard surface roads. Four segments of roads in the central, western, and southwestern sections of the county (approximately 64 miles) have been designated by the Commonwealth Transportation Board as Virginia Byways. Figure 2-15 shows the U.S. routes, Virginia primary and major secondary roads, and Virginia Byways in Charlotte County.
- A Norfolk Southern rail line traverses the county from Prince Edward and Lunenburg Counties on the east to Campbell County on the west, passing through the town of Phenix. A second Norfolk Southern rail line crosses the northeastern section of the county. Both of these lines are used for through freight service. A Virginia Southern Railway line passes through Keysville and Ontario, and continues south into Lunenburg County at Fort Mitchell. This line provides local freight service to the Keysville-Ontario-Fort Mitchell corridor. See Figure 2-15.
- The nearest airport with scheduled commercial air passenger service is in Lynchburg, Virginia (48 miles). The closest major regional air hubs are located at Richmond Virginia (90 miles), and Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina (105 miles). There are four airports with paved runways in the regional planning district – Farmville, Crewe, Blackstone (Fort Pickett), and Lunenburg County. Crewe Airport is classified as a *local service* facility; all other airports are *basic utility* facilities.
- Designated bicycle routes are listed in Section 9.b of this chapter, and are shown on Figure 2-14.

#### b. Education

- The Charlotte County Public School system consists of one high school, one middle school, four elementary schools, and an early learning center. Tables 2-7 and 2-8 show total school enrollment and enrollment by school. The total number of students

has increased by 4.3% from 1995 to 2006, an overall rate of growth of less than 0.4% annually. Year-to-year totals have fluctuated slightly, with no consistent trend evident. The number of students in each grade has averaged from 162 to 172, again with no consistent trend (Table 2-7). The age of the school buildings varies widely – the high school was built in 1938; the early learning center in 1942; the elementary schools in 1952, 1959, and 1982; and the middle school in 1992 (Table 2-8). Facilities maintenance is problematic; therefore, the Superintendent has formed a committee to study all the facilities and make recommendations regarding their future.

**Table 2-7**

**Charlotte County School Enrollment**

Grade	1995	1999	2000	2004	2006 (Spring)	2006 (Fall)
Pre-K				87	84	80
K	186	174	161	152	163	141
1	188	190	180	161	163	161
2	165	208	196	148	139	151
3	154	175	185	172	155	131
4	164	171	167	162	166	154
5	155	176	176	171	169	157
6	160	177	189	183	180	169
7	152	178	168	173	188	176
8	169	153	162	178	170	182
9	170	191	171	226	192	190
10	159	160	184	166	205	182
11	138	139	141	161	136	189
12	145	144	134	131	169	132
Total	2105	2236	2214	2271	2281	2195
Average (K-12)	162	172	170	168	169	163

Source: Charlotte County Public Schools Division

**Table 2-8**

**Charlotte County Public School Enrollment by School**

School	Grades	Location	Year Built	1996 Students	Spring 2006 Students	Fall 2006 Students
Early Learning Center	PreK	Charlotte C.H.	1942	60	84	80
Bacon E.S.	PreK-5	Wylliesburg	1959	212	195	182
Eureka E.S.	K-5	Keysville	1982	538	471	448
J.M. Jeffress E.S.	3-5	Phenix	1952	164	149	132
Phenix E.S.	K-2	Phenix	1959	185	140	133
Central M.S.	6-8	Charlotte C.H.	1992	506	538	527
Randolph Henry H.S.	9-12	Charlotte C.H.	1938	658	704	693

Source: Charlotte County Public Schools Division

- Southside Virginia Community College, established in 1970, is one of the 23 colleges in the Virginia Community College System. The Christanna Campus near Alberta and the John H. Daniel Campus near Keysville serve ten counties and one city. The college also operates the Robert C. Wrenn Center in Emporia. A total of 7825 students were enrolled in the 2005-2006 school year. The average student age was 27, and most worked and attended the college part time. Besides basic undergraduate courses, the college also provides an occupational-technical program for workforce training, a distance learning center linked with Old Dominion University in Norfolk, and a dual enrollment program with Charlotte County Public Schools.
- Higher education. Longwood University and Hampden-Sydney College are located in neighboring Prince Edward County. Both are accredited institutions that offer undergraduate degrees.

c. General County Facilities

- Figures 2-16, 2-16A, and 2-16B show the locations of the county's public facilities. With the exception of schools, libraries, and trash collection/recycling centers, almost all the public facilities are located in the town of Charlotte Court House.
- The Charlotte County Industrial Park and the Virginia's Heartland Business Park are located east of Keysville adjacent to U.S. Route 360. See Economy, Section 4 Commercial and Industrial (below) for more information on these two facilities.

d. Law Enforcement

- Law enforcement at the county level is provided by the Charlotte County Sheriff's Department, headed by an elected Sheriff. The department has a total of 31 sworn

and 3 non-sworn employees. Of these, 16 perform road (patrol) duties, and 18 perform jail and court duties.

- The County Law Enforcement Building, located in the town of Charlotte Court House and completed in 1988, houses the Sheriff's Department, Jail, Magistrates's Office, and communication/911 center. The Jail section is certified to house 29 inmates. Additions constructed in 1996 and 2006 contain offices and investigation facilities.
- Circuit Court and General District Court sessions are held in the Charlotte County Courthouse, located on the historic Courthouse Square in the town of Charlotte Court House. Offices of the Commonwealth's Attorney, the Clerk of the Circuit Court, and the Clerk of the General District Court are also located in buildings on the Courthouse Square.
- The Virginia State Police has primary responsibility for enforcement of traffic laws within the county.
- The town of Drakes Branch employs one part-time police officer. The town of Charlotte Court House employs one part-time police officer.

e. Emergency Services

- Fire protection is provided by seven volunteer fire departments, located in Wylliesburg (Bacon District), Charlotte Court House, Cullen, Drakes Branch, Keysville, Phenix, and Red House (Figure 2-16B). All departments utilize volunteer firefighters, and rely primarily on donations and fund-raising activities. The county provides 911 and dispatching services, and some direct funding.
- Emergency Medical Service is provided by the Charlotte County Rescue Squad, located on Route 40 just west of Keysville (Figure 2-16B). This organization relies primarily on volunteer personnel and donations. However, because of the decreasing number of volunteers available during daytime hours, it has recently hired several paid personnel to provide service during that time. The county provides 911 and dispatching services, and some direct funding. The former Wylliesburg Cannery building is being remodeled to house an ambulance to serve the southern area of the county.

f. Utilities

- Municipal water systems are operated by the four towns (Table 2-9) to supply treated water to structures within the town limits, and some areas immediately outside the town limits. Except for Keysville, which obtains its water from a lake, the towns rely on wells for water supply. These wells are generally limited in capacity and vary in consistency throughout the year. The former Westpoint Stevens manufacturing site in Drakes Branch has an individual system capable of supplying approximately 70,000 gallons per day. The Cardinal Homes manufacturing site in Wylliesburg has a private well supplying approximately 12,000 gallons per day. Structures outside the town limits rely on individual wells, usually of low capacity (1 to 10 gallons per minute). Table 2-10 summarizes estimated current water use in Charlotte County.

**Table 2-9**

**Charlotte County Public Water Systems**

Town	Source	Storage (gallons)	Max. Effective Capacity(gal/day)	Average 2005 Production(gal/day)
Charlotte Ct. House	4 wells, 1 spring	130,000	112,800	64,000
DrakesBranch	5 wells	100,000	185,760	53,000
Keysville	1 lake	1,100,000	1,000,000	154,000
Phenix	2 wells	125,000	57,600	17,000

Source: Town Offices; Draper Aden Associates, *Charlotte County Water Supply Plan, July 2006*

**Table 2-10**

**Summary of Estimated Current Water Use**

Type of System	Use (gallons per day)
Towns and Individual Industrial Sites	308,000
Residential Wells	1,054,000
Total	1,362,000

Source: Draper Aden Associates, *Charlotte County Water Supply Plan, July 2006*

- Wastewater collection and treatment is provided by municipal systems operated by the towns of Keysville and Drakes Branch, and by private systems at Southside Virginia Community College and the former Westpoint Stevens manufacturing plant. The county government also operates a central drainfield in the town of Charlotte Court House to dispose of wastewater from some buildings located in the Courthouse Square area. The Keysville system collects and treats wastewater from some county areas immediately adjacent to the town limits, and from the Charlotte County Industrial Park and the Virginia’s Heartland Business Park. Keysville completed a major upgrade to their system in October 2005 that increased its capacity from 250,000 to 500,000 gallons per day. See Table 2-11 for the systems’ locations and capacities. All structures not served by the town systems rely on individual septic tanks and drainfields. The feasibility and capacity of the individual systems depends on the drainage rate (“percolation”) of the soil on each site, which varies widely throughout the county. Therefore, allowable building density will also vary throughout the county, since areas with low drainage rates (poor percolation) will require larger areas for each drainfield, and thus larger lot sizes.

**Table 2-11**

**Charlotte County Wastewater Systems**

Location	Design Capacity (gal/day)	Average Flow (gal/day)	Receiving Stream
Drakes Branch	80,000	31,000	Twitty's Creek
Keysville	500,000	140,000	Ash Camp Creek
Westpoint Stevens	20,000	not in use	Twitty's Creek
SVCC	25,000	not available	Gill's Creek
Charlotte Court House	4,200	not available	Drainfield

Source: Charlotte County Administrator's Office (August 2006)

- Electricity is provided by Dominion Virginia Power, Southside Electric Cooperative, and Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative.
- Telecommunications service is generally consistent with commercial standards for light-populated rural areas. Telephone land-line service is available in all areas. Cellular telephone coverage is widespread, but more consistent near the towns and major roads, while only sporadic in the isolated areas. Cable television service is available in and immediately adjacent to the towns; satellite television service is available and widely used throughout the county. Internet access in rural areas is generally limited to slow-speed dial-up service. Broadband connectivity is available in the county government complex in Charlotte Court House, in the public schools, and recently, in some areas by tower-to-building point-to-point wireless service. See Economy, Section 4, Commercial and Industrial (below) for a discussion of future expanded broadband service to Charlotte County.
- Solid Waste from county houses, businesses, and institutions is deposited at six trash collection and recycling sites (called "convenience centers") located throughout the county. These centers accept household waste, except yard waste and hazardous material, and recycle newsprint, aluminum, other metal, cardboard, glass, and tires. The solid waste is trucked to regional landfills for final disposal. Recyclable material is trucked to commercial recycling locations. The former county landfill was completely closed by 1993, and is monitored for leakage in accordance with the Code of Virginia and Virginia Department of Environmental Quality regulations.

g. Health Services

- Group medical practices are located in Keysville and Charlotte Court House. There are also individual physicians' practices in Charlotte Court House and Keysville.
- Hospitals and specialty practices in Farmville, Lynchburg, and South Boston serve the populace of Charlotte County.
- The Charlotte County Health Department office is located in Charlotte Court House.
- There is one general dentistry and one orthodontia practice in Keysville.

## 11. Other valuable resources

Charlotte County has many intangible resources that are just as valuable as some of the specific ones. Historic sites, walking and driving trails, and access to the Roanoke River and Buggs Island Lake combine to create a desirable destination for visitors.

The *Tobacco Heritage Trail* is a proposed network of recreational, non-motorized trails throughout Southside Virginia (Figure 2-17). This network will provide recreational opportunities, historic and environmental preservation, and economic stimulus for the area. The existing trail between Randolph Station and the Staunton River Battlefield State Park has been incorporated into the network. An on-road segment connecting the Clarkton Bridge with Red Hill was opened in 2005 (Figure 2-14), and several others are envisioned. One will be an on-road segment from Keysville through Drakes Branch and Saxe to Randolph Station. Another will be an on-road route connecting the abandoned railroad depots at Keysville and Fort Mitchell (Lunenburg County) with Chase City (Mecklenburg County). As part of this effort, a state-chartered organization, *Friends of the Keysville and Fort Mitchell Depots*, has taken ownership of the two depots and plans to rehabilitate them.

These resources, if protected and properly utilized, will offer significant recreational opportunities to local residents, and can aid the county's economic development effort.

## **Demographics and Housing**

(See Appendix for regional data and comparisons.)

### 1. Population

Charlotte County's population measured by the 2000 census is 12,472 (Table 2-12). The population increased by 6.7% from the 1990 population of 11,688, which was a 5.5% decrease from 1970. The county ranked fifth of the seven counties in Planning District 14 in total population, and sixth of seven in percent increase. The population is projected to have increased to 12,700 by 2005 (a 1.8% increase), and will increase a further 5.5% by 2020.

**Table 2-12**

### **Population**

Location	1970	1980	1990	2000	2005*	2010*	2020*
Charlotte County	12366	12266	11688	12472	12700	13000	13400
Charlotte Court House	539	568	531	463**	--	--	--
Drakes Branch	702	617	565	504	--	--	--
Keysville	--	704	671**	817	--	--	--
Phenix	260	250	260	200	--	--	--

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

\*Projections from the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service

\*\*Corrected

Between 1990 and 2000 the percentage of white persons increased very slightly; the percentage of African American persons decreased slightly; and the percentages of persons listed as Asian or Pacific Islander, Other, and Hispanic increased noticeably (Table 2-13).

**Table 2-13**

**Population by Gender and Race**

Category	1990 Census	Percent	2000 Census	Percent
Total	11688	--	12472	--
Male	5713	48.9	5977	47.9
Female	5975	51.1	6495	52.1
White	7392	63.2	8171	65.5
African American	4262	36.5	4102	32.9
American Indian Or Alaskan Native	18	0.15	18	0.14
Asian or Pacific Islander	4	0.03	20	0.16
Other Race	11	0.09	95	0.76
Hispanic (any race)	33	0.28	206	1.65

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 2-14 lists population by age with projections to 2020, and Table 2-15 shows population percentage by age group and percentage, also with projections to 2020. The most dramatic projected change by age group is in the 85 and over group. Table 2-15 also illustrates the gradual population aging between 2000 and 2020. The percentage of each of the three age groups in Table 2-15 from ages 0-54 years is projected to decrease, while the percentage of the two age groups 55 and older is each projected to increase. The median age of county residents in 2000 was between 39.0 and 40.4 years, an increase from 32 years in 1990 (Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service).

**Table 2-14**

**Population by Age**

Age Group	Census 1990	Census 2000	Projected 2010	Projected 2020
Under 5 years	801	689	776	792
5 to 9 years	709	894	839	835
10 to 14 years	823	913	797	877
15 to 19 years	914	830	903	877
20 to 24 years	773	605	712	655
25 to 29 years	795	641	595	687
30 to 34 years	794	768	584	676
35 to 39 years	766	897	839	740
40 to 44 years	706	963	882	687
45 to 49 years	661	867	861	835
50 to 54 years	606	795	1094	1004

55 to 59 years	699	773	1009	961
60 to 64 years	625	654	807	1088
65 to 69 years	699	634	733	940
70 to 74 years	530	524	552	666
75 to 79 years	392	488	397	464
80 to 84 years	224	307	303	295
85 and over	171	230	316	323
Total	11688	12472	12999	13402

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

**Table 2-15**

**Population by Age Groups (Percent)**

Age Group	Census 2000	Projected 2020
0 to 19 years "School Age"	26.7%	25.2%
20 to 39 years "Young Families"	23.3%	20.6%
40 to 54 years "Mature Families"	21.0%	18.8%
55 to 64 years "Transition/Young Retired"	11.4%	15.3%
65 years and over (total) "Retired/Mature"	17.5%	20.1%
75 years and over "Elderly"	8.2%	8.1%

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

Figures 2-18 through 2-25 provide a more detailed insight into Charlotte County demographics, mapped by 2000 census block groups. These figures illustrate the county's population distribution by density, age, race, and education.

**2. Persons With Disabilities**

Table 2-16 summarizes the disabled segment of Charlotte County's population. According to the Piedmont Regional Disability Services Board (PRDSB) *2006 Needs Assessment*, the largest number of disabled persons have physical disabilities, and the group with the highest percentage of disabled persons is the 64 years and older group. The PRDSB has made several overall observations from their study of the region's disabled population: educating the public is a key component in furthering the needs of persons with disabilities; there is a need for accessible housing to prevent disabled persons from having to move to a more costly care facility; and there is also a need for daytime support.

**Table 2-16**

**Persons With Disabilities in Charlotte County**

Age Group	Number	Percentage of Total Population	Regional Percentage
All (5 years & older)	2917	25.0%	24.3%
5 to 15 years	136	6.7%	6.5%
16 to 64 years	1695	22.6%	23.4%
64 years and older	1086	50.7% *	46.6%

\*Highest in the region (Planning District #14)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The *2006 Needs Assessment* lists the following specific needs of disabled persons in the district:

- Accessible Housing – Many disabled persons are now forced into nursing homes because they do not have the funds to make their homes accessible.
- Family Support Services – Many family caregivers are exhausted from the constant care requirements of a disabled family member.
- Brain-injury Support – Support services and housing for brain-injured patients are very limited.
- Independent Living Services – The waiting lists for these facilities are very long, if a facility even exists in a community.
- Public Accessibility- Many public buildings are not accessible.
- Transportation – Many disabled persons are unable to drive, and need transportation to medical services, shopping, and social activities.
- Employment Services – Many disabled persons are willing and able to work, but need assistance in finding suitable employment.

The Piedmont Regional Disability Services Board has identified the following priority needs for persons with disabilities in the region:

- Accessible Housing
- Independent Living services
- Transportation
- Family Support Services
- Employment Services
- Training
- Public Accessibility

**3. Households and Housing**

Safe, decent, and affordable housing is a basic need for Charlotte County. Sufficient housing in good condition is important because it tends to provide more desirable living conditions. It also tends to have a high value and thus, provide larger tax revenues for the localities in which the homes are located. Providing affordable housing opens up opportunities to sustain communities by retaining people and creating new jobs.

Adequate housing can also be a factor in attracting new industries. When industries relocate, they often bring new workers who will reside in the community. If sufficient and appealing housing exists, it facilitates the relocation of new personnel.

The number of occupied housing units in Charlotte County increased from 4312 in 1990 to 4951 in 2000 (Table 2-17), an increase of 14.8 percent. The predominate occupied housing structure according to the 2000 Census was the single-family home. The percentage of vacant units increased very slightly (12.8 to 13.7 percent), while the percentage of owner occupied units remained essentially unchanged. Several other measures, however, have changed. The percentage of nonfamily households increased from 24.8 to 30.6 percent; the number of householders living alone increased from 23 to 27.4 percent; and the average household size and persons per occupied unit decreased between 5 and 17 percent (Table 2-17). Another noteworthy factor is the number of households with individuals 65 years of age and older (32.2 percent in 2000).

**Table 2-17**

**Households**

Category	1990 (Number)	1990 (Percent)	2000 (Number)	2000 (Percent)
Total Households	4312	100	4951	100
Family Households	3243	75.2	3437	69.4
Nonfamily Households	1069	24.8	1514	30.6
Householder Living Alone	992	23.0	1358	27.4
Living Alone 65 and Older	531	12.3	658	13.3
Households with Individuals 18 and Younger	not available	--	1652	33.4
Households with Individuals 65 and Older	not available	--	1593	32.2
Average Household Size	2.68	--	2.47	--
Total Housing Units	4947	100	5734	100
Occupied Housing Units	4312	87.2	4951	86.3
Owner Occupied Units	3357	77.9	3840	77.6
Renter Occupied Units	955	22.1	1111	22.4
Total Vacant Units	635	12.8	783	13.7
Vacant, for Seasonal or Recreational Use	103	2.1	164	2.9
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	--	1.2	--	2.7
Rental Vacancy Rate	--	4.0	--	6.6
Persons per Owner-Occupied Unit	2.62	--	2.50	--
Persons per Renter-Occupied Unit	2.88	--	2.39	--

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Housing units lacking either hot or cold piped water or a private toilet, shower or bath are considered to be in need of physical improvements. In 1980, 19.0 percent of occupied dwellings in Charlotte County lacked some or complete plumbing facilities. By 1990, this figure has decreased to 9.0 percent, and by 2000, to only 3.6 percent (Table 2-18). However, according to data provided by the Commonwealth Regional Council, Charlotte County had the greatest number of occupied housing units lacking complete plumbing of the seven counties in Planning District 14.

**Table 2-18**

**Occupied Housing Units Lacking Complete Plumbing**

Year	Number of Housing Units	Percent of Housing Units
1980	774	19.0
1990	390	9.0
2000	179	3.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figures 2-26 through 2-31 provide a more detailed insight into Charlotte County’s housing situation, mapped by 2000 census block groups. These figures illustrate average household size and the distribution of units that are vacant, owner-occupied, renter-occupied, mobile homes, and lacking complete plumbing facilities.

**Economy**

(See Appendix for regional data and comparisons.)

**1. Employment and Income**

Charlotte County’s economy during most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was dominated by the three traditional rural Southside Virginia sectors – tobacco, timber, and textiles. However, changes in the national and global economies during the most recent 10 years have resulted in significant shifts in economic activity. These shifts, in turn, have created significant challenges for citizens, employers, and the government of Charlotte County.

The county’s unemployment rate is a leading indicator of these challenges, particularly compared to the rates of the other six counties of the regional planning district. In 2000 and 2001 Charlotte County’s unemployment rate was close to the middle of other counties’ rates (Table 2-19). However, in 2003, Charlotte County’s rate jumped to the highest in the region, and has stayed as either highest or second highest since. In April 2006 Charlotte County’s unemployment rate (6.5%) was half again as high as the next highest rates in the region (Table 2-20), and more than twice the state’s overall rate (3.1%). This trend was exacerbated by the closure of the Westpoint Stevens textile manufacturing plant in Drakes Branch in early 2005, which resulted in the loss of more than 450 full-time jobs.

**Table 2-19**

**Regional Unemployment Rates**

<b>Unemployment Rates Annual Averages 2000 – 2004</b>					
<b>Area</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
<b>Amelia</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>Buckingham</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>4.4</b>
<b>Charlotte</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>5.9</b>
<b>Cumberland</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.9</b>
<b>Lunenburg</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>4.9</b>
<b>Nottoway</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Prince Edward</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>4.9</b>
<b>Planning District #14</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>4.6</b>
<b>Virginia</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>3.7</b>

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

**Table 2-20**

**Regional Employment and Unemployment, April 2006**

<b>County</b>	<b>Civilian Labor Force</b>	<b>Employed</b>	<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>
Amelia	6416	6223	193	3.0%
Buckingham	6930	6677	253	3.7%
Charlotte	5744	5370	374	6.5%
Cumberland	4542	4396	146	3.2%
Lunenburg	5610	5364	246	4.4%
Nottoway	6490	6206	284	4.4%
Prince Edward	8610	8230	380	4.4%

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

The type of employment is also indicative of the shift away from the traditional sectors. Table 2-21 shows employment by industry group in third quarter 2005. The top six groups (those with more than 200 listed employees) are now education (21% of

employment), manufacturing (20%), transportation and warehousing (10%), retail trade, health care and social assistance, and public administration. Table 2-22 lists the county's 50 largest employers in 2005. The top three are now either government or education organizations; there is only one employer (public schools) with more than 249 employees.

**Table 2-21**

**Charlotte County Employment by Industry Group, Fourth Quarter 2005**

<u>Industry Group</u>	<u>Establishments</u>	<u>Employees</u>
Education Services	6	598
Manufacturing	16	568
Transportation and Warehousing	24	252
Retail Trade	36	272
Health Care and Social Assistance	15	230
Public Administration	15	224
Construction	32	171
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	26	120
Accommodation and Food Services	8	91
Wholesale Trade	8	51
Finance and Insurance	9	49
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	13	42
Other Services (except Public Admin.)	20	43
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	3	19
Admin, Support, Waste Mgmt, Remediation	4	22
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	8	13
Management of Companies and Enterprises	Confidential	Confidential
Utilities	Confidential	Confidential
Information	Confidential	6

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

Table 2-22

**Charlotte County's 50 Largest Employers, Fourth Quarter 2005**

<b>RANK</b>	<b>Company Name</b>	<b><u>NAICS Code</u></b>	<b><u>OC</u> *</b>	<b><u>Size Code</u>**</b>
1	Charlotte County School Board	611	30	07
2	Southside Virginia Community College	611	20	06
3	County of Charlotte	921	30	06
4	Cardinal Homes	321	50	06
5	Appomattox River Manufacturing	337	50	05
6	Britthaven of Keysville	623	50	05
7	Tate Lumber Company	321	50	05
8	United Parcel Service, Inc.	492	50	05
9	Curtis Tharpe Trucking	484	50	05
10	Morgan Lumber Company Inc.	321	50	05
11	Food Lion	445	50	04
12	Ontario Hardwood Company	321	50	04
13	Tucker Timber Products	321	50	04
14	Home Recovery	621	50	04
15	Central Virginia Health Service	621	50	04
16	The Bank of Charlotte County	551	50	04
17	Sheldon's Motel and Restaurant	721	50	04
18	Crossroads Services Board	624	50	04
19	McGuire Lumber and Supply	484	50	04
20	Shearin Construction Inc	238	50	04

21	Red Oak Excavating	237	50	04
22	Burger King	722	50	04
23	Heidi Ho	315	50	04
24	Stanley Land and Lumber Corporation	321	50	04
25	Tri County Ford Mercury Inc	441	50	04
26	Browns Forest Products	321	50	04
27	Crop Production Services	493	50	04
28	Sav U Time	447	50	03
29	United States Postal Service	491	10	03
30	Spaulding Equipment South	423	50	03
31	W & L Mail Service	484	50	03
32	Southside Virginia Regional Governor's School	611	30	03
33	International Carbide and Engineering	332	50	03
34	Marston's Market	445	50	03
35	Newcomb Trucking	484	50	03
36	Rite Aid	446	50	03
37	Keysville Exxon	447	50	03
38	Saxe Lumber Inc	321	50	03
39	DLT Trucking	484	50	03
40	Charlotte Drug Co	446	50	03
41	Ridgeway Farm	111	50	03
42	White's Building Center	444	50	03
43	Richard S. Brown	113	50	03

44	Tucker Sawmill Company	321	50	03
45	Southside Utility Maintenance	541	50	03
46	Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation	712	50	03
47	T.E. Garnett, Inc.	484	50	03
48	Shores Modular	236	50	03
49	Palmer Grocery & Ontario Farm	447	50	03
50	American Dream Homes LLC	453	50	03

Ownership Code (OC)*	Ownership Type
10	Federal Government
20	State Government
30	Local Government
50	Private

Size Code**	Number of Employees
09	1000 and over employees
08	500 to 999 employees
07	250 to 499 employees
06	100 to 249 employees
05	50 to 99 employees
04	20 to 49 employees
03	10 to 19 employees
02	5 to 9 employees
01	1 to 4 employees

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

The income of county residents is a third indicator of economic conditions. Median adjusted gross income for married couples in 2002 was the lowest of all seven counties in the regional planning district, and the rate of increase was the fifth lowest. The overall percentage of county residents below poverty level in 2000 was 18.1%, the third lowest of the seven counties in the region. Figure 2-32 shows the 2000 poverty level by census block group. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), 46.8 percent of all county residents are classified as low-to-moderate income, ranging from 43 to more than 52 percent of the residents of each county district (Figure 2-33). HUD defines moderate income as 80 percent or less of the area median income (AMI) for like-sized households, and low income as 50 percent or less of the AMI. According to HUD, in 2006 80 percent of AMI for Charlotte County ranged from \$27,450 for a single person household to \$51,750 for a household of eight. The average low-to-moderate income percentage for all seven counties of the regional planning district is 44.6 percent.

The three major sectors of Charlotte County’s economy – agriculture, forestry, and commercial/industrial – are discussed in the following sections.

2. Agriculture

Virginia agriculture generates approximately \$36 billion annually in total sales for the state. Together, agriculture and forestry are the state’s number one industry, contributing more than \$47 billion to the state economy and representing more than 15% of total state employment (from Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services).

As is most rural counties, agriculture is the foundation of Charlotte County’s economy, both in culture and land use. Farm receipts in 2002 were nearly \$16 million, ranking 41<sup>st</sup> of all jurisdictions in Virginia. Charlotte County ranked first in the state in fire-cured tobacco production, 6<sup>th</sup> in flue-cured tobacco, 14<sup>th</sup> in the number of milk cows, and 34<sup>th</sup> in the total number of cattle and calves (USDA 2002 Census of Agriculture). The number of horses and ponies, although small compared to some other counties, increased from 287 in 1997 to 534 in 2002 (86% increase); the number of farms raising horses increased from 58 to 97 (67% increase) (USDA 2002 and 1997 Census of Agriculture). Nearly one fourth of Charlotte County’s land area is pasture, hay, or crops (Table 2-2), and the vast majority of the county is zoned General Agriculture District (Figure 2-6). Table 2-23 summarizes agriculture activity in Charlotte County. Table 2-24 lists farmland use.

**Table 2-23**

**Charlotte County Agriculture Summary**

Category	1992	1997	2002
Number of Farms	451	578	535
Farm Land (acres)	112,944	141,578	133,719
Average Size per Farm (acres)	250	244	250
Harvested Cropland (acres)	19,138	20,211	19,827
Farm Receipts	\$14,561,000	\$16,640,000	\$15,805,000
Receipts–Crops	\$8,697,000	\$9,479,000	\$6,585,000
Receipts–Livestock	\$5,864,000	\$7,039,000	\$9,220,000

Source: 2004 Situation Analysis Charlotte County, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Jones et. al.

**Table 2-24**

**Charlotte County Farmland Use**

Type of Use	Percent
Woodland	43.5
Cropland	39.0
Pasture	12.3
Other Uses	5.2

Source: 2004 Situation Analysis Charlotte County, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Jones et. al.

The following overview of agriculture in Charlotte County is taken from the report *2004 Situation Analysis, Charlotte County*, Virginia Cooperative Extension – Charlotte Unit; Robert Jones, Tracey Smith, Theresa Long, Jean Elliott, Claudia Koch:

“Charlotte County has a diverse agricultural economy with tobacco comprising the largest segment. Other principal enterprises include beef, dairy, forages, wine grapes, soybeans, small grains, timber, feeder pigs, ornamentals, vegetables, and equine. When looking at agriculture data, we will only look at the past five years due to the overall dynamics that tobacco contributes to the agriculture economy in Charlotte County. Land in farms has been lost to a small amount of housing development and farm subdividing, as well as a 5% increase in forestry (new tree plantings) and a 5% decrease in acres in farms. There has also been a 7% decrease in the number of farms, but the size of existing farms has increased by 2% with the average farm consisting of 250 acres.”

“Gross agriculture receipts have decreased by 5%, mainly due to the loss of tobacco quota, but the agricultural receipts per farm rose by 3%. The county’s number one agriculture industry, tobacco, has taken major hits in the last five years in loss of quota and rising labor and production costs, and with the recent elimination of the tobacco program, its future is uncertain. The second largest industry, beef cattle, has seen positive growth every year during the period and wine grape acreage has increased by 75% in the past two years. Following the same trend as wine grapes, the horticulture crop industry has seen a significant increase in the number of small nurseries and the increase in acreage in shade and ornamental trees. Dairy, sheep, and row crop industries have all decreased in size.”

As can be seen from this summary, Charlotte County’s farmers are facing changes and challenges. Foremost is the change facing growers of the county’s most profitable crop – tobacco. The 2005 Tobacco Transition Payment Program (the “Tobacco Buyout”) resulted in dramatic shifts in tobacco acreage (Table 2-25).

**Table 2-25**

**Charlotte County Tobacco Acreage**

Type	Acres 2004	Acres 2005	Acres 2006	Change 04-06
Flue	1,112.69	748.27	764.10	-31.3%
Fire	216.43	127.60	144.70	-33.1%
Burley	18.08	72.50	69.40	384%
Sun	9.32	0	0	-100%

Source: USDA Farm Service Agency, Charlotte County Office

As income from tobacco decreases, farmers must search for alternative crops. However, Dr. James L. Jones, former Director of the Southern Piedmont Agriculture Research and Extension Center in Blackstone, stated that there is no one single “silver bullet” replacement crop. Many crops will grow in Charlotte County, but the economics of

production vary widely. Dr. Jones advised Charlotte County farmers to focus on crops that grow well in the county, require less care, and have a good local or regional market (“niche markets”). Emphasizing this situation, the top ten issues of concern identified by Charlotte County farmers, local commodity groups, local government, and partner agencies as ranked in *2004 Situation Analysis, Charlotte County* are:

1. Replacing lost tobacco income
2. Maintaining or increasing farm profitability
3. Developing alternative enterprises
4. Developing niche markets
5. Initiating value-added marketing
6. Maintaining farm labor availability
7. Expanding the beef industry
8. Increasing public education on agricultural issues
9. Starting agriculture tourism (“agritourism”)
10. Expanding the wine grape and small fruit industry

“The...results...centered around lost farm income due to the tobacco situation and developing new ways and markets to keep agriculture a viable industry in an agriculture dependent county. Agritourism was also a major issue identified as a way to generate more county income without changing the rural environment we now have.”

Thus, the overall focus of Charlotte County’s agriculture industry appears to be on three areas for the future:

- Finding new income-producing crops
- Expanding the beef cattle industry
- Starting farm-based enterprises and agritourism

The future of agriculture in any area is almost always linked in people’s minds with the term “farmland protection.” This term is also almost always linked in turn with land use issues. Professor Jesse J. Richardson, Jr., of Virginia Tech, writing in the Spring 2006 *Citizens Planning Education Association of Virginia Newsletter*, addresses the issue of farmland protection. “...if one truly wishes to protect farmland, the industry of agriculture must be maintained.” “The best way to protect farmland is to make the industry of agriculture profitable.” “If a local government truly wishes to protect farmland, for example, the governing body should use market incentives to direct development away from farmland and towards areas appropriate for growth.” “To protect farmland, local governments should extend water and sewer to areas around towns, villages and other populated centers to encourage dense development in these areas.” The Future Land Use Plan for Charlotte County (Chapter 4) adopts this approach to supporting agriculture and preserving the county’s rural areas.

### 3. Forestry

Forestry and wood products is the second major element of Charlotte County’s economy. Figure 2-34 illustrates timber harvest revenues in Charlotte County. Revenue

was more than \$8 million in years 1997, 1998, and 2000. Although revenue declined in 2001, it was still more than \$5 million. Table 2-26 summarizes the forestry industry's overall economic contribution to Charlotte County in 1999, as estimated by the Virginia Department of Forestry.

**Table 2-26**

**Forestry Industry's Economic Contribution to Charlotte County (1999)**

Category	Economic Impact
Total Employed Persons	5407
Employees Dependent on Forest Industry	1755 (32.5%)
Direct Economic Impact (Manufacturing and Production)	\$128,130,285
Indirect Economic Impact (Services Purchased by Forestry Industry)	\$53,885,368
Induced Economic Impact (Employee Spending)	\$21,374,061
Total Economic Contribution	\$203,389,714

Source: Virginia Department of Forestry

Charlotte County's land area is approximately 68.7% forest (Table 2-2, Figure 2-9), and the county realizes significant economic impact from the products of that land. The Virginia Department of Forestry estimates that every dollar that landowners receive for their timber generates more than \$35.00 for the state's overall economy. Charlotte County relies heavily on its rural land to support its population. Loss of forest land will result in loss of both economic vitality and environmental stability in the county. Therefore, Charlotte County's leaders need to seek a balance between growth and development, and forest land retention.

**4. Commercial and Industrial**

The third major element of Charlotte County's economy is the commercial and industrial sector. In Southside Virginia, this sector has traditionally been viewed as textile manufacturing. In 1996 textile-related establishments accounted for 64% of all manufacturing jobs in the county. According to the 2002 Economic Census, manufacturing brought \$138,832,000 in sales and a \$26,478,000 payroll to Charlotte County. However, the shift of textile-related manufacturing jobs overseas resulted in the closure of the county's largest industrial employer, Westpoint Stevens Drakes Branch Plant, and the loss of nearly 450 jobs. This closure obviously affected employees and retail establishments by the loss of payroll and direct spending. The closure also affected county tax revenue. The Charlotte County machinery and tools tax revenue declined from \$437,745 in fiscal year 2001 to an estimated \$171,000 in fiscal year 2007 (Charlotte County Commissioner of the Revenue). All aspects of Charlotte County therefore are impacted by the changes in this sector.

As shown in Table 2-21, manufacturing is still very significant, with 16 establishments, ranking second (to education) in the number of employees. Prominent in the

list of the largest 50 employers in the county (Table 2-22) are companies making modular homes, furniture, and wood products. As a result of the decline of textile manufacturing establishments, however, other segments have increased in importance. Transportation and warehousing (trucking companies and United Parcel Service) is the next highest category, followed by retail trade. As shown in Table 2-27, the number of retail establishments, taxable retail sales, and taxable retail sales per capita have all increased through 2004.

**Table 2-27**

**Retail Activity in Charlotte County**

Category	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total Change	Average Annual Change
# of Retail Establishments	240	235	258	248	3.3%	1.1%
Taxable Retail Sales	not available	\$39,196,000	\$44,584,000	\$44,629,000	13.8%	6.9%
Taxable Retail Sales/Capita	not available	\$3,143	\$3,575	\$3,578	13.8%	6.9%

Source: Commonwealth Regional Council and Charlotte County Administrator's Office

Part of the retail segment, but counted separately, is the accommodation and food services category, also known as "hospitality" or "tourism". Although ninth in the number of employees, this category is significant and growing (Table 2-28). Tourism's future is also potentially linked to the agriculture industry, as the agriculture industry considers developing the concept of agritourism in Charlotte County (see 2. Agriculture above). Other local physical features such as historic sites, scenic locations, and recreational and outdoor activities, all of which are present in Charlotte County, contribute to the growth of tourism.

**Table 2-28**

**Hospitality Industry Activity in Charlotte County**

Category	2003	2004	Change
Lodging Taxable Sales	not available	not available	--
Restaurant Taxable Sales	\$2,386,000	\$2,640,000	10.6%
Total Customer Expenditures	\$9,762,000	\$10,396,000	6.5%
Employment	150	150	--
Payroll	\$2,391,000	\$2,437,000	1.9%
State Tax Receipts	\$470,518	\$500,557	6.4%
Local Tax Receipts	\$277,863	\$295,656	6.4%

Source: Virginia Tourism Corporation

The commercial and industrial sector's most significant contribution to Charlotte County's economy is the creation of jobs (payroll) and its local tax payments. Long before the Westpoint Stevens plant closed, 43% of Charlotte County's employed residents worked outside the county (*Virginia's Heartland Labor Market Assessment*, May 2001). Local estimates put that figure at nearly 50% in 2006. Therefore, in order to create new jobs in the county, attracting new businesses and expansion of existing ones is a major focus of Charlotte County government efforts. A Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce was organized in 2005 to promote existing businesses and attract new ones.

Charlotte County has two business/industrial parks, both located adjacent to U.S. Route 360 near Keysville. The Charlotte County Industrial Park has 19 acres, with water and sewer service provided by the town of Keysville. The Virginia's Heartland Business Park has approximately 400 acres, also with water and sewer service, and an area designated for future retail and hospitality activities. Both of these parks are in a Virginia Enterprise Zone. The Heartland Business Park has many unique and innovative features to assist new tenants – a virtual building ready for construction, graded sites, a technology and training center, temporary office space, and a partnership with Southside Virginia Community College's heavy equipment operators' school for further site improvements.

There are two other industrial sites in Charlotte County with potential to house major new manufacturing operations. The former Westpoint Stevens building is a 396,000 square foot facility on a 71-acre tract within the Drakes Branch town limits. A large undeveloped site, zoned General Industrial District, is located on the southern side of Drakes Branch, partially within the town limits and partially in the county.

All aspects of modern business, commerce, and industry are now dependent on information technology, which requires high-speed ("broadband") access to the internet. Lack of broadband service has been a huge obstacle to economic growth in rural areas. Currently, broadband access in Charlotte County is limited to government buildings and schools, and some areas near wireless connection sites. However, broadband service to Charlotte County will soon be provided by the Mid-Atlantic Broadband Cooperative (MBC). This organization is a non-profit cooperative established to provide technology infrastructure to assist economic revitalizations efforts in Southside Virginia. MBC will build and operate a network that will provide access to a state-of-the-art telecommunications transport network for the rural, underserved communities in this area. Figure 2-35 is the MBC Route Map. Availability of broadband access will provide a major boost to Charlotte County's economic development efforts.

Economic development, especially establishing new business sites, is firmly linked with land use planning. To use land efficiently, and to benefit both commercial/industrial and rural activities, commercial growth should be encouraged in areas with access to transportation, water and sewer service, and support services. The Future Land Use Plan for Charlotte County (Chapter 4) adopts this approach to planning for future growth and development.

## **Trends**

- Population – Very slow growth overall; median age increasing and distribution by age group shifting to the 55 year and older groups.
- Agriculture – A significant part of the county’s economy and way of life, but under stress as a result of the tobacco buyout program and general decline in farm income. Increase in number and economic significance of rural enterprises and farm-based businesses.
- Forestry – Another significant part of the county’s economy; harvest income decreasing but forest products manufacturing sector remains strong.
- General economy – Unemployment rate increasing and local job opportunities stagnating; number of employed county residents working outside the county is high and increasing. Number of jobs and income lagging compared to region and state.
- Manufacturing – Declined significantly with the closure of one large plant; emphasis on growing existing businesses and attracting a number of smaller, diversified companies in industrial/business parks.
- Retail – A small segment, but growing steadily, particularly in the hospitality category.
- Education – Public schools are experiencing a very slow overall increase in student numbers, with inconsistent short-term changes; all buildings have limitations, all are aging, most need upgrades to handle current and projected requirements. The public school division is currently the county’s largest employer, and school costs consume a large and increasing portion of local tax revenue.
- Public facilities and services – Generally adequate, but limited and aging. Unanticipated rapid or major changes in future requirements will result in significant stress. The increasing number of elderly residents will result in a gradual shift in focus and requirements to serve this segment of the population.
- Water – Current municipal supplies and systems are generally adequate to meet current requirements, but are aging and limited. Projected future demand will grow slowly with population, but new economic activity or increased crop irrigation could dramatically increase demand in a short period of time. Ground water production will remain very limited.
- Housing – adequate overall, but availability of units serving families of low-to-moderate income is limited. Some housing units for lower income families are in poor shape. New construction is scattered and few in numbers. The number of building permits issued declined by 40% between 2000 and 2003.
- Historic, scenic, and outdoor recreational sites – Increasing in number, use, and economic significance.

## **Implications**

- Charlotte County will remain a lightly-populated rural jurisdiction. Most of the land will continue to be farms, forests, and other open spaces. The four small towns will grow slowly, if at all. Economic development and new construction will be concentrated in the Keysville area and along the Route 360 corridor. A

county-wide approach to land use planning, including joint county-town efforts, will be necessary to support economic development while maintaining the quality of life in all areas of the county.

- Maintaining farm income in the face of crop changes will be a major challenge. Farm production will shift away from tobacco into more diversified areas such as beef cattle, wine grapes, horticulture crops, and equine activity. Farmers will increasingly rely on farm-based businesses and rural enterprises to replace lost income from crops.
- Charlotte County's economy will remain predominately farm and forestry-based, with relatively small retail and manufacturing segments. Manufacturing and commercial growth and development will be primarily in small-to-medium-size companies located in the industrial/business parks near Keysville; however, the potential exists for a few larger companies to move into the county. Water supply, sewer service, and good transportation are all necessary for job creation. The demand for these must be anticipated and planned for. The economic development process must include not only efforts to attract new firms, but also assistance for local entrepreneurs to start and/or expand local businesses.
- Most professional and service workers will continue to commute to jobs outside the county. Schools and other government agencies will be the largest, or nearly largest, employment sector.
- Tax revenue will lag the demands of the public service sector, particularly for replacing and upgrading public facilities. Careful choices, efficient multiple-use facilities, and innovative planning will be necessary to meet requirements with limited funding. Supporting even the relatively small school population will strain the county budget as aging facilities must be upgraded or replaced. More facilities and services for elderly residents will be required.
- Availability and price of housing will continue to be a challenge; particularly for residents of low-to-moderate income.
- The hospitality (tourism) sector will be small, but increasingly significant in terms of jobs, income, and local tax revenue. The economic viability of this sector will be linked to local historic, scenic, and recreational attractions and activities. Therefore, preservation of these assets will be essential to the future of hospitality/tourism income.
- Water supply will be key to all segments of Charlotte County – residential, business and industry, and agriculture. Eventually, ground water sources will be inadequate to meet demand, so utilization of surface water will become necessary. The watersheds of the two lakes most able to meet this demand, Keysville and Drakes Branch, must be protected to ensure an adequate supply of useable water where it will be needed.

