Regional Data and Trends

A Presentation to Northwest Prosperity Zone Leaders

February 19th, 2020

Jason Gray
What this presentation covers

• **From information to wisdom**: understanding and using diverse data sources for problem solving and project design

• **Data indicators for the Northwest region**, with a special emphasis and discussion on:
  • Occupation projections
  • Housing
  • Health
  • Income and asset poverty
From Information to Wisdom

• All data has limitations but remains useful if we understand it’s limitations

• Data combined with “ground-truthed” local knowledge gives us a more complete local and regional portrait

• We are buried in data and information. Our challenge as local leaders and policy makers is to distill the information to practical wisdom we can act on.
T. S. Elliot – noted poet
rural development expert

Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?

Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?
Data Alone is a “Paint By Numbers” Image
Anecdotal Stories Alone Sometimes Give A Distorted Picture
A Balanced Mix of Data and Community Narrative Can be Accurate and Compelling
Rural Center’s Definition of Rural

- **Rural Counties**: 80 counties with an average population density of 250 people per square mile or less.
- **Regional City and Suburban Counties**: 14 counties with an average population density between 250 and 750 people per square mile.
- **Urban Counties**: 6 counties with an average population density that exceeds 750 people per square mile.

Densities calculated by the Rural Center based on 2014 U.S. Census population estimates.
2010 Population Density by Census Tract

Legend

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People Per Square Miles</th>
<th>0 - 250</th>
<th>1,001 - 5,000</th>
<th>251 - 750</th>
<th>5,001 - 10,000</th>
<th>751 - 1,000</th>
<th>10,001 - 13,553</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Tracts Population Density</th>
<th>Total Land Area in Square Miles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>250 people per square mile &amp; below, RURAL</td>
<td>41,008 square miles (84%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250 – 750 people per square mile, SUBURBAN</td>
<td>5,132 square miles (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 750 people per square mile, URBAN</td>
<td>2,475 square miles (5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census

NC RURAL CENTER
2010 Population Density by Census Tract for Northwest Counties

Population Density
People Per Square Mile
- 0 - 250 [Rural Census Tracts]
- 251 - 750 [Suburban Census Tracts]
- 751 - 4,813 [Urban Census Tracts]

Data Source: United States Census Bureau, 2010 Population Decennial Census
A Data Portrait of Northwest North Carolina
The Northwest Region has grown by an estimated 14,802 people from 2010 to 2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Numeric Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watauga</td>
<td>6,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catawba</td>
<td>3,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDowell</td>
<td>1,377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander</td>
<td>1,118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yancey</td>
<td>637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilkes</td>
<td>603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burke</td>
<td>570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashe</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alleghany</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avery</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caldwell</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell</td>
<td>(353)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: NC Office of State Budget & Management
Projected Population Change: 2010 - 2039

Source: North Carolina Office of State Budget & Management
Region’s population is projected to grow by **95,181** people.
Percentage Population Under 20 -2000 and 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avery</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashe</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yancey</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alleghany</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watauga</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDowell</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilkes</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caldwell</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burke</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catawba</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Percentage Population 65 years & Older -2000 and 2018

Data Source: NC Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM)
Racial and Ethnic Composition of the Region – 2018

**NORTHWEST REGION**

- White Non-hispanic, 83%
- African American, 5%
- Asian, 2%
- Native American, 1%
- Other, 2%

**80 RURAL COUNTIES**

- White Non-hispanic, 66%
- African American, 19%
- Hispanic, 9%
- Asian, 1%
- Native American, 3%
- Other, 2%

Source: North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management, 2018
Percentage Change in Average Employment, Private Firms
2nd Quarter 2007 – 2nd Quarter 2019

Source: US Department of Labor, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages
Accessed from NC Department of Commerce, D4 Data Site
Change in Total Taxable Wages, Private Industries
2nd Quarter 2007 – 2nd Quarter 2019

Source: NC Department of Commerce D4 Data, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages,
Dollar adjusted to 2019 value
One Year Percentage Change in Number Employed
November 2018 – November 2019

Source: NC Department of Commerce
Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), Unadjusted
1,735 more people employed – but not evenly distributed
November 2018 – November 2019

Region’s Total Employment Growth = \(+0.6\%\)

Source: NC Department of Commerce
Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), Unadjusted
Source: NC LEAD, North Carolina Department of Commerce
Note: This chart represents occupations reported for the Hickory sub-region in the Northwest Prosperity Zone. The area is made up of McDowell, Burke, Caldwell, Alexander and Catawba Counties.
Bubbles are sized based on an occupation's 2018 Median Wage.
2017 – 2026 OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS – TOP 25 OCCUPATIONS
NORTHWEST PROSPERITY ZONE, HICKORY SUBREGION

Note: This chart represents occupations reported for the Hickory sub-region in the Northwest Prosperity Zone. The area is made up of McDowell, Burke, Caldwell, Alexander and Catawba Counties. Bubbles are sized based on an occupation’s 2018 Median Wage.

Source: NC LEAD, North Carolina Department of Commerce
2017 – 2026 OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS – TOP 25 OCCUPATIONS
NORTHWEST PROSPERITY ZONE, HICKORY SUBREGION

Source: NC LEAD, North Carolina Department of Commerce
Note: This chart represents occupations reported for the Hickory sub-region in the Northwest Prosperity Zone. The area is made up of McDowell, Burke, Caldwell, Alexander and Catawba Counties. Bubbles are sized based on an occupation’s 2018 Median Wage.
2017 – 2026 OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS – TOP 25 OCCUPATIONS
NORTHWEST PROSPERITY ZONE, BOONE - WILKESBORO SUBREGION

Source: NC LEAD, North Carolina Department of Commerce
Note: This chart represents occupations reported for the Boone-Wilkesboro sub-region in the Northwest Prosperity Zone.
The area is made up of Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Watauga, Yancey, Wilkes and Mitchell Counties.
Bubbles are sized by an occupation’s 2018 Median Wage.
2017 – 2026 OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS – TOP 25 OCCUPATIONS
NORTHWEST PROSPERITY ZONE, BOONE - WILKESBORO SUBREGION

Source: NC LEAD, North Carolina Department of Commerce
Note: This chart represents occupations reported for the Boone-Wilkesboro sub region in the Northwest Prosperity Zone.
The area is made up of Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Watauga, Yancey, Wilkes and Mitchell Counties.
Bubbles are sized by an occupation’s 2018 Median Wage.
Population 25 Years and Over with Post Secondary Education - 2018

Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 2014 – 2018 5-Year Estimate
Change in Number of Farms, 2012 - 2017

Source: US Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Census 2012-2017

Ashe: -276
Avery: -132
Alleghany Watauga: -119
Yancey: -89
Catawba: -60
Alexander: -81
Wilkes: -59
Mitchell: -40
McDowell: -36
Caldwell: 0
Burke: 22
Change in Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold, 2012-2017

Source: US Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Census 2012-2017
Note: All Values were adjusted to 2018 current dollars
Percentage Homeowners with Income less than $50,000 who spend 30% or more on Housing Cost

Data Source: US Census Bureau; 2014-2018 ACS 5-Yr Estimates
Percentage Renters with Income less than $50,000 who spend 30% or more on Housing Cost

Data Source: US Census Bureau; 2014-2018 ACS 5-Yr Estimates
Percentage Households without Internet Subscription

Data Source: US Census Bureau; 2014-2018 ACS 5-Yr Estimates; File S2801
Estimated 64,304 households in the region are without an internet subscription.

Data Source: US Census Bureau; 2014-2018 ACS 5-Yr Estimates; File S2801
2019 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health Ranking

Note: Higher numbers indicate lower health outcomes

Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
2018 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Ranking

Note: Higher numbers indicate lower health outcomes
Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Disconnected Youth, 2018

Percentage of youth 16-19 years who are not enrolled in school, or who are unemployed

Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey ACS 5-year Estimates [B14005]
Trends in Unintentional Opioid-Related Deaths

No. of Opioid-Related Deaths

Data Source: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS)
## 2018 Opioid-Related Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of unintentional opioid-related deaths to NC Residents, 2018</th>
<th>Number of ED visits that received an opioid overdose diagnosis (all intents), 2018</th>
<th>Number of certified peer support specialists, 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alleghany</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Suppressed: 1-4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avery</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Suppressed: 1-4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashe</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6+</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12+</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burke</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caldwell</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catawba</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDowell</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13+</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Suppressed: 1-4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watauga</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Suppressed: 1-4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilkes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yancey</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Suppressed: 1-4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northwest Region Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>78</strong></td>
<td><strong>360+</strong></td>
<td><strong>626</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS)
Percentage Population Below Poverty Level – Northwest Region

Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2009 - 2018
173,589 Residents with Incomes Below 150% of Poverty Income

Source: US Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey
69,743 Residents with Incomes Between 100% - 150% of Poverty

Source: US Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey
12% of Northwest’s population have Incomes Between 100% - 150% of Poverty

Source: US Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey
Poverty and Near Poverty

• In North Carolina’s Northwest Region, **17.3 percent** of residents have incomes below the poverty line – a total of **103,846**.

• An additional **69,743** people have incomes between 100 and 150 percent of poverty income. These are “near-poor” residents, most of whom work, but who have difficulty keeping their financial heads above water.

• Together, this is **28.9 percent** of the region’s population. For the 80 counties that make up rural North Carolina, the percentage is **29.6 percent**.

• **What are the strategies that increase income AND savings?**

Source: US Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey
Contact Information

Jason Gray
Senior Fellow for Research and Policy
jgray@ncruralcenter.org
(919) 250-4314

or

Alfred Garshong
Associate for Research/GIS
agarshong@ncruralcenter.org
(919) 250-4314