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How Rural Counties Can Generate Jobs

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ABSTRACT

The findings are presented from a study of the job generating activities of fifteen rural counties in southern Maryland and the Delaware Peninsula. Nine specified informants, who were knowledgeable about economic developments, were interviewed in each county to learn what actions their counties are taking to develop economically and how much each activity contributes to jobs. The activities that impacted the most on jobs were industrial parks, economic developments units, and tourism promotion. Other major job generators were a county group for recruiting businesses, special capital arrangements, development bonds, location in county of state or federal government activities, and commercial sites. An analysis of county characteristics and activities related to job generating success is provided.

In relation to sociological practice, community development as defined by Napier and Carter (1986:26, 27) is “. . . planned change for collective problem solving” involving “local groups in the determination of change priorities” (1986:26). (See also Chekki, 1979; Christenson and Robinson, 1980; Voth, 1979; and for an alternative point of view, though not necessarily an incompatible one, see Hobbs, 1980.) One of the major problems in rural America today is economic decline, high unemployment, and out migration of young people to seek greater opportunities elsewhere. Rural areas, through municipal and county governments and business associations, are taking collective actions to address these problems, and these actions are the focus of this paper. We

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present findings from a study of what fifteen rural counties are doing to generate jobs and how successful these actions are judged to be. We also identify some of the factors that help explain why the activities succeed in some rural counties and fail in others.

Our study is guided by two literatures. First is the community literature which equates community development with capacity building (Lackey, Burke, and Peterson, 1987; Wilkinson, 1988). The policy implication of this perspective is that communities should be more self-reliant and self-directed. Current trends, however, are moving in the opposite direction. Wilkinson, for one, states that ". . . local well-being depends to a great extent on systems and actions in a much larger arena—in state, regional national and world systems" (1988:81). Nevertheless, he does argue that community action can make a difference in economic development despite constraints by larger forces. Although the self-reliant thesis has been challenged by Scott, Cochran, and Voth (1988), it is the basic premise guiding our study.

Second is the rural economic development literature from which we derive a list of workable actions that communities can take to develop economically. Our list builds on those of Pulver (1979) and Malizia (1985) (see also Tweeten, 1974). Their lists include recruiting industries and other businesses, aiding the expansion (or preventing the decline) of existing firms, and aiding the development of new enterprises. Pulver also discusses capturing consumer expenditures and increasing aid from broader governments. Both Pulver and Malizia identify many specific actions for each of these categories that communities can adopt. Because of their inclusiveness we used a compilation of their lists to guide our inquiries about job generating activities in the fifteen study counties. Another advantage of their lists is that they incorporate factors from both the leading community economic development policy which is the business recruitment strategy and from its principal challenger which is the self-development strategy (Reid, 1987; Fitzgerald and Meyer, 1986).

In summary, the objectives of our study are threefold: to determine if both extra-local and community actions are necessary for rural development; to identify the specific actions communities can implement for successful development; and to identify the factors which explain why various development activities succeed in some counties but not in others. To achieve these objectives, the following methodology was used.

Methodology

The project team interviewed face-to-face the occupants of nine key positions in each of 15 rural counties (11 in Maryland, 2 in Virginia, and 2 in Delaware). The informants were selected for their knowledge of the economic activities in the county. Three high-ranking county officials (county

administrator, director of planning, and the economic development director) were interviewed using the long format of the questionnaire. The six other informants were interviewed by a shorter questionnaire. These informants were (1) the county director of the State Employment Office, (2) head of the main Chamber of Commerce, (3) a leading real estate broker, (4) the president or vice president of the largest bank in the county, (5) the editor of the major newspaper, and (6) a reporter on that paper. These nine informants not only discussed development issues but also registered their judgments about county characteristics. The study counties are all rural counties (as designated by the Census Bureau) in Southern Maryland and on the Delmarva Peninsula. These counties were not randomly selected but cluster in two areas because the research team is using the findings to help these counties in their efforts to generate jobs in ways that are compatible with local values.

The project also used some county statistics, obtained from state agency data bases. Most of the data were dated around 1980, thus describing the conditions of a decade ago. The study attempts to monitor the changes of the past decade and relate them to the initial conditions. With only fifteen cases, the analysis must be limited to frequencies, means, and zero-order correlations. Caution must be practiced, therefore, in generalizing the findings beyond these cases. The sample of rural counties has several special features that should be kept in mind. They are rich in water resources. Thirteen of the counties have many miles of shoreline on the ocean, Chesapeake Bay, or the wide parts of the Potomac or Delaware rivers. All are in states that are growing faster than the national average in population and employment. Finally, they are located fairly close to metropolitan regions. The borders of all but three are within 100 miles of Baltimore, Washington, or Wilmington, and the three closest are experiencing booms.

Employment of Economic Development Activities

The first concern of this study was to determine the actions counties are taking to generate jobs. Pulver (1979; 1986) suggests there are five strategies available to local leaders to generate jobs: (1) recruiting businesses; (2) helping existing businesses; (3) encouraging business formation; (4) increasing local expenditures; and (5) increasing income from broader governments. The discussion which follows is a brief overview of the specific activities which were employed by county leaders to implement these strategies.

According to Pulver (1979:109) business recruitment is the most frequently employed strategy for generating jobs, and this study supports his claim. County officials were asked to elaborate the actions they had used to recruit businesses over the past ten years. The major actions taken involved having sites available for recruited businesses to occupy quickly. Fourteen counties were recruiting

businesses by developing industrial sites while twelve counties had built new office sites. Finally, new commercial sites were being constructed in all fifteen counties as another means for recruiting businesses and a means for retaining more consumer dollars in county.

The next line of business recruitment activities was directed at making capital more available to businesses. Ten counties have made special capital arrangements for starting new business and twelve have floated bonds for development projects. These activities were frequently mentioned as being extremely important for successful business recruitment as well as for developing local businesses.

Another type of recruitment activity is to lobby for governments to locate their programs, projects, offices, facilities, and services in the county. During the past decade, seven of the counties have formed a county group to lobby for government activity to locate there, and some type of state or federal government activity has moved to nine of the study counties. For one county, this has been its major development activity as leaders were able to successfully lobby for a state prison to be located there. It has subsequently become the largest employer in the county and pays the highest wages for entry level jobs.

In addition, Pulver (1979) states that facilitating the start-up process through upgrading the infrastructure and conducting labor force surveys to obtain information on the county's available labor force are two other activities that can be used to recruit businesses. Infrastructure in twelve counties has been upgraded while nine counties have conducted labor force surveys.

Two other ways in which counties can attract businesses are to improve local services and to "form organizations such as industrial development corporations" (Pulver, 1986:14). Pulver suggests a variety of ways to improve local services, two of which we included in our study: improving schools to attract businesses and upgrading community services. Twelve counties stated that they have taken actions to improve their schools while nine counties have upgraded their community services. Only six counties have formed industrial development corporations to date, but these were generally perceived as being fairly successful in generating jobs.

For business recruitment activities that were not on Pulver's list, we found that eleven counties have formed a county information office for potential businesses; twelve have county officials who were involved in actively seeking businesses to locate there; eleven have formed a group (such as municipal leaders, a business association, or a regional economic development unit) that searched for businesses to locate in the county; eight have given tax advantages to attract businesses; and nine have changed zoning requirements to accommodate businesses or tourists. In summary, many of the fifteen study counties acted in a variety of ways to recruit businesses.

A second strategy, as suggested by Pulver (1979) for local leaders to improve the job outlook is to aid existing businesses. The success or failure of an existing

business can have major impacts on the economic health of a rural county. For example, two counties cited the expansion of a prominent business as the major source of new jobs over the past decade, while several other counties stated that they had been economically devastated by the failure or exodus of a major business.

Pulver (1986:11-12) recommends five aid activities. First, education programs can be organized to strengthen management to assist existing business capabilities. These types of programs have been utilized by ten counties. The second aid activity is a regular visitation program in which county leaders visit business executives to discover and solve problems. Only six counties had such a program but they were seen as very valuable. A third way to assist existing business is to encourage growth by identifying available capital sources for business. Twelve counties cited this as an action they have put into practice. A final method of assisting existing businesses as proposed by Pulver is to provide vocational and technical education programs aimed at improving the quality of the work force. Fourteen counties have these programs available for workers.

A third way local leaders can improve the job outlook is to encourage the formation of businesses. Pulver recommends three types of actions to accomplish this. First, local leaders should form "capital groups to invest private funds locally . . . such as a community development corporation" (Pulver, 1986:14). Four counties have formed these types of corporations. Second, counties can provide counseling and education programs for individuals interested in starting new businesses. These programs were available for citizens in nine counties, but were generally limited to informal advice. Finally, Pulver (1986:14-15) suggests studying the "market potential for new retail, wholesale, service and industrial input-providing businesses." Ten counties have conducted such studies.

The fourth strategy for generating jobs is to capture a greater percentage of consumer expenditures locally. Pulver (1986:12-13) recommends six practices to increase local purchases and four were tried by a majority of the study counties. Ten counties have surveyed consumer needs and buying habits to identify the market potential of retail and service outlets. Twelve counties have renewed their downtown areas. All fifteen counties have generated more purchases by nonlocal people (tourists, citizens of neighboring communities) through appropriate promotion and advertising. Ten counties have formed chambers of commerce, business clubs, and downtown associations to revitalize the business communities. Only five counties, however, have encouraged local citizens and businesses to buy locally through information programs, and only seven have provided free entertainments and other attractions to bring retailing centers alive. In addition to this list, we found that nine counties had beautification programs to attract businesses or tourists. We also found that tourism promotion is the only activity on this list that was rated, on average, by informants as having a substantial impact on the number of jobs.

The final way to generate jobs, according to Pulver, is to obtain aid from state and federal governments and foundations. All fifteen counties actively

pursued grant money from these sources. Pulver recommends two other actions to obtain more government money but very few counties pursued them. Only two counties have had programs or campaigns to retain or gain elderly residents and the government payments they receive, and only three counties have created community action associations.

In summary, Table 1 presents the "most frequently cited development activities" by informants from a list of 38 researched activities and identifies their level of importance for job generation in the counties that use them. These activities have been grouped into three levels of contribution to job generation for counties that employ them: major, secondary, and minor. The six major and the eight secondary development activities were (a) major: a county group for recruiting businesses, special capital arrangements, development bonds, industrial parks, in county location of state or federal government activities, and commercial sites; and (b) secondary: office sites, industrial development corporations, infrastructure upgrading, business visitation programs, lobbying for in-county location of government activities, upgrading schools, upgrading other services, and tourism promotion. All other development activities that we inquired about generally were perceived as having only minor impacts on jobs on average.

Table 1
MOST FREQUENTLY CITED DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES
AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO JOBS IN THE COUNTIES
THAT EMPLOYED THEM

Development Activities	Number of Counties Implementing	Average Contribution to Jobs When Employed
1 Commercial sites	15	Major
2 Tourism promotion	15	Secondary
3 Application for grants	15	Minor
4 Industrial park	14	Major
5 Vocational/technical educational program	14	Minor
6 Office sites	12	Secondary
7 County officials or group that recruits businesses	12	Major
8 Downtown renewal	12	Minor
9 Infrastructure upgrade	12	Secondary
10 Schools improved	12	Secondary
11 Development bonds	12	Major

Key Economic Development Activities

In this section, the activities or events that were selected as the key actions for generating jobs and for pursuing the five strategies proposed by Pulver are discussed. While a few activities emerge as dominant, it is also clear that a wide range of actions are important to successful economic development.

All nine informants were asked to identify and rank the top five events or activities for generating jobs in the county in the past decade. Their scores were summed to create a list of the top five activities for each county, and then the rankings (scored 5 for first rank down to 1 for fifth rank) were summed for the fifteen counties. The resulting ranking is dominated by three activities: industrial park (score: 56), economic development unit (26), and tourism promotion (25). Four other activities had ten or more points: a large firm locating in county or significantly growing (16), siting of state/federal facility/park (14), grants, loans or development bonds (12), and school improvement (11).

From these results, we conclude that economic development in the selected counties is dominated by two distinct approaches: the combination of industrial parks and economic development units on the one hand, and tourism promotions on the other. While the focus of these activities differs, both have been met with success. Other activities of importance include the location or growth of a large company as well as that of a major state or federal facility in the county. While these events do not occur frequently, when present, they tend to dominate the economy of the county. While capital arrangements were not ranked first or second by informants, they were almost always viewed as contributing a great deal to development. Finally, improving schools was perceived by informants as a major factor in economic development in that schools, depending on their condition, were either an asset or a liability in business recruitment and/or the retention of enterprising citizens.

The key activity for each of the five strategies, posited by Pulver, was also examined. Due to their direct involvement in county development issues, the three major informants (county administrator, director of planning, and economic development director) were asked to identify the major development activity for each strategy. These activities are listed in Table 2 along with the number of counties selecting each activity as their first choice.

Only eight different activities are cited in Table 2. All other activities in each strategy were chosen as the major activity by two or less counties. Economic development units and arranging financing lead the list with eleven citations, followed by grant applications with eight, and industrial parks with six.

Table 2
 MAJOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES
 FOR THE FIVE STRATEGIES

Strategy and Major Activities	Number of Counties Implementing
1. Recruit Businesses:	
industrial park	6
economic development unit	5
advertising the county	3
2. Help Existing Businesses:	
arrange financing:	7
3. Encourage the Start of New Businesses:	
economic development unit	6
arrange financing	4
gift package such as tax abatement	4
4. Encourage Consumption in County:	
new shopping centers	4
buy-local campaigns	4
5. Acquire State and Federal Dollars	8
apply for grants	

Factors Contributing to the Success of Job Generating Activities

Little research concerning the characteristics of counties that lead to successful economic development is available. As a working hypothesis we posit that the factors which are favorable to economic development will facilitate the successful implementation of development activities. The major factors that affect relocation decisions by management are proximity to markets and inputs, available quality workers, low wage scales, sufficient infrastructure, good living conditions and quality of life, low taxes, and a positive government attitude toward business (Tweeten and Brinkmen, 1976; Tweeten, 1974; Grant Thorton International, 1988; Corporation for Enterprise Development, 1988). Most of these factors also benefit or hinder current businesses and the start of new businesses. They play a smaller role in capturing consumer dollars for which important conditioning factors are: wealth, population size, population growth, and attractive environments (for

tourists, recreational communities and retirees). Finally, the level of effort by the county to generate jobs and the quality of county leadership should have an effect (Lloyd and Wilkinson, 1985; McGranahan, 1984). In sum, we hypothesize that job generating activities will be more successful in counties that have locations close to metropolitan areas, large populations, high incomes, high prior unemployment (available labor), high prior population growth, large economic development (ED) units, successful ED units, pro-growth government and citizen attitudes, quality labor, quality government and community leadership, high quality of life, and quality schools.

Table 3 begins to test our hypotheses. Indicators for the above variables are correlated with the ratings by our principal informants on how much impact various job generating activities had on jobs in each county. We include in Table 3 only the job generating activities that were practiced in eight or more counties and were considered, on average, to be relatively important job generators as indicated in the previous two sections. It goes without saying that correlations based on such small numbers must be interpreted with extreme caution, and that all conclusions must be tested further before general conclusions are made.

Furthermore, there are a few problems with the data set. First, the job generating activities were for the past decade so the county characteristics should be for 1980. While five variables are for 1980, nine are for 1988. All measures that are based on informants' judgments were obtained in 1988. The subjective indicators, therefore, post-date the activities with which they are correlated. These current judgments, however, are based on the past record so the ordering of observations may be less a problem than it seems at first, but a problem, nevertheless. Secondly, another problem is the use of the size of the ED unit as a measure of its level of effort. One ED unit with a part-time person was far more active than some ED units with one or more full-time persons. A final problem is concerned with the fact that the small number of cases does not allow for multivariate analysis, thus the effects of each variable, independent of the other variables, can not be determined. While zero order correlations might be largely spurious, the correlations presented in Table 3 do provide an initial estimation of the relative influence of a number of county characteristics on the success or failure of important job generating activities.

As indicated previously, industrial parks were selected as the most important job generating activity. They were the most successful in generating jobs in counties with high quality labor, low unemployment, high incomes, quality county and community leadership, and proximity to Washington, Baltimore, or Wilmington. These findings generally conform to our hypotheses with the exception of unemployment which is negatively related to the success of industrial parks. Since unemployment is strongly associated with low incomes, poor housing and other negative social indicators, it is an indicator of adverse social conditions. We assume that the adversity aspect of unemployment was more salient than the surplus

Table 3
**PEARSON CORRELATIONS OF COUNTY CHARACTERISTICS
 WITH THE DEGREE OF IMPACT OF SELECTED ACTIVITIES ON JOBS
 FOR FIFTEEN RURAL COUNTIES IN THE DELMARVA PENINSULA AND SOUTHERN MARYLAND**

		County Characteristics													
		Dependent Variables:					Pro-growth Attitudes			Quality of Leadership					
n	Degree of success in generating jobs of the listed activity	Miles to Metro	Pop. 1980	Income/hhd. 1980	% Unempl. 1980	Pop. change 1970-80	Size ED Unit 1988	Contrib. of ED Unit	County Govt.	Public	Quality of Labor	County	Community	Quality of Life	Quality of School
14	Industrial park	-.58	.20	.62	-.63	.23	.04	.25	-.33	-.19	.71	.58	.60	.01	.26
12	Office site	-.80	.39	.64	-.47	.40	.22	.34	.34	.06	.73	.02	.19	.43	-.16
15	Commercial site	-.65	.65	.54	-.42	.26	.29	.32	.35	.36	.77	.14	.30	.36	-.11
9	S/F gov. activity	-.10	.17	.13	.30	.08	.30	.43	.72	.54	.19	-.42	.07	.55	-.40
12	County recruiter	-.55	.42	.36	-.59	.10	.38	.84	.07	-.11	.74	.58	.31	-.16	-.04
11	Group recruiter	-.72	.46	.53	-.59	.37	.32	.78	.56	.23	.73	.06	.27	.10	-.37
10	Capital arrange.	-.06	.14	.23	-.41	.21	-.11	-.04	-.25	.25	.10	.06	.20	.07	.19
12	Development bonds	-.69	.43	.74	-.56	.46	.76	.57	.39	.04	.71	.39	.41	.35	.16
8	Tax breaks	-.33	-.01	.18	-.59	-.05	.24	.36	.28	-.18	.43	.21	.18	.13	.52
12	Infrastructure	-.37	.41	.31	-.30	.40	.09	.66	.43	.47	.51	.24	.29	.07	-.01
12	School improvement	-.28	.40	.21	-.16	.12	-.31	.46	.24	-.05	.29	.25	.14	.21	.45
14	Technical ed.	-.22	.08	.19	-.16	-.04	.30	.28	.13	-.03	.45	.48	.38	.15	.53
15	Tourist promotion	.41	-.20	-.13	.05	-.06	-.31	-.38	-.28	.00	-.48	-.15	.06	.27	.39
15	Grant applications	-.46	.40	.21	-.27	.09	.08	.26	.17	-.19	.36	.05	-.06	.10	-.31

labor aspect when associated with the success of industrial parks. Furthermore, the quality of labor is viewed as more important than a surplus of labor to the success of industrial parks.

It is important to note that the success of industrial parks, contrary to expectations, does not appear to be heavily dependent on the size and effectiveness of the ED unit or on pro-growth attitudes. Nevertheless, ED units were perceived as important contributors to job generation, while many of our informants discussed how anti-development attitudes have hindered development, and pro-development attitudes have helped business recruitment. Furthermore, the findings of our study indicate that the two major activities of ED units are recruiting businesses and helping establish industrial parks (Finsterbusch et al., 1989). We explain these seemingly inconsistent findings in two ways. First, other factors overshadow the effect of the ED units and pro-growth attitudes. Humphrey, Erickson and Ottensmeyer's (1988:1) conclusion for their study of industrial development groups may explain our findings:

While growth promotion groups are judged to be effective in terms of the number of jobs that are created or preserved relative to their direct expenditures of resources, neither their presence nor the levels of their organizational resources are significantly related to service area net employment change. The effort of growth promotion groups are simply overwhelmed in importance by factors such as population size, metropolitan accessibility, location in a growth region, and manufacturing wage rates that characterize the respective service areas.

The second explanation relates to the fact that some of the counties where industrial parks are succeeding can be described as boom counties. This has led to many of the problems associated with rapid growth which has, in turn, resulted in the development of anti-growth attitudes by county residents. Therefore, county leaders have not seen any need to actively encourage growth efforts in these counties.

Another lesson about industrial parks as illustrated in Table 3 is that they may not be successful in remote, disadvantaged counties. In fact, all industrial parks that have been empty, or nearly empty, for a number of years are located in these depressed counties. As suggested by many commentators, the rate of business relocation to rural areas has begun to decline. Therefore, with competition intensifying and the potential for success decreasing (Ford Foundation, 1986), disadvantaged counties have an even more difficult time attracting tenants to industrial parks.

The second most important job generating activity to consider is the ED unit which is represented in Table 3 by two activities: county recruiter and group

recruiters. The success of the two recruiter variables has a pattern of correlations that is very similar to that of industrial parks.

A third activity to consider is tourism promotion which has correlation patterns quite different from those of industrial parks and ED units. Tourism promotion is more successful in counties located farther away from the metropolitan centers and is not significantly influenced by variables in Table 3. It should be noted that some of the most remote counties did not attract many tourists, so the distance factor has only a moderate correlation with success in tourism promotion. In addition, tourism promotion by the counties has greatly increased in the past decade. In 1980 many counties had left this function up to the state. Now more counties believe a county tourism office more than pays for itself.

Of the remaining ten activities listed in Table 3, three (degree of success of office sites, commercial sites, and development bonds) have patterns of correlations with explanatory factors that are similar to the patterns for industrial parks and recruiters. This suggests that they may be sustained by many of the same forces. It should be noted, however, that the success of office sites in generating jobs is benefitted more by location near urban areas than is the success of industrial parks. Five additional activities (tax breaks, infrastructure development, school improvement, special capital arrangements, and technical education programs) have patterns of correlation that are similar to, but weaker than, industrial parks.

The success of grant applications has very weak correlations with most county characteristics suggesting favorable results can be obtained under a variety of conditions. Thus, it can be argued that disadvantaged counties should consider this as a development activity in the future.

The last activity to be discussed is the location of state or federal facilities or activities in the county. This activity is correlated only with pro-growth attitudes and quality of life. It is important to note that a federal or state facility was present in only nine counties and their degree of impact on jobs is not associated with the factors which lead to a successful industrial park. This suggests that counties that are disadvantaged in regard to industrial development might consider this as an avenue for development.

The above discussion has examined Table 3 row by row. In this section it will be examined column by column. Location is clearly a dominant explanatory factor for successful job generation in relation to most activities, in particular, for the industrial park and recruiter cluster of variables. As stated earlier, only one activity, tourism promotion, was significantly more successful farther away from metropolitan centers. Three other activities have insignificant correlations, but the remaining fifteen activities were more successful closer to metropolitan centers.

Population size of a county is not related to the success of most activities. The counties with the largest populations were those with the largest cities, a suburban fringe boom, or a resort boom. Each of these counties features

retailing with commercial sites significantly impacting the number of jobs. For most other activities, population size has only slight or moderate correlation with success in generating jobs.

Income per household is indicative of the prosperity of a county. It is negatively related to distance to metropolitan center and unemployment, and positively related to quality of the labor force and quality of community leadership. These five explanatory factors tend to work in tandem and are strongly related to the success of the industrial park/recruiters activity syndrome.

It was expected that the quality of schools would have the same pattern of correlations as does per household income and the above four associated explanatory factors. However, this does not appear to be the case. The quality of the schools has a low correlation with income per household ($r = .28$). A possible explanation for this unusually low correlation is that some counties have high average incomes because they have many wealthy retirees and resort-related residents who are not concerned about good schools and many wealthy farmers who are often interested in keeping school budgets low. As a result, the normal dependence of the quality of schools on income levels is greatly reduced. In general, quality schools are not an important explanatory factor for the activity list though it is strongly related to job generating Chambers of Commerce and successful tax break policies. This is most likely due to the fact that these last two activities and good schools depend upon the same type of county make up.

The unemployment rate can be used as an indicator of where job generating activities are most needed. Unfortunately, high unemployment counties are not the ones which engage in the most job generating activities. These counties are also relatively unsuccessful in attempts at job generating activities, especially the industrial park/recruiters syndrome of activities. High unemployment counties, however, have fair success with in-county location of state/federal facilities or activities and counselling programs for new businesses.

The impact of population growth on the success of subsequent job generating activities is unclear, because it is highly correlated with other explanatory factors. It is correlated with average income at $r = .77$ and with distance to metropolitan centers at $r = -.63$. Population growth is less important than income and location to the effectiveness of the industrial park/recruiters syndrome of activities and does not clearly make a unique contribution to the success of any activity except infrastructure upgrading.

Conclusion

From our analysis, it can be concluded that in order for the fifteen rural counties of the Delmarva Peninsula and Southern Maryland to generate jobs, leaders should be involved in creating industrial parks and economic development

units for recruiting businesses and in promoting tourism. These activities were judged by informants as contributing the most new jobs. While many commentators state that industrial parks and industrial recruitment are overemphasized as rural economic development strategies, our results suggest otherwise. In addition, after completing our field work in 1988, we have found that the rate of leasing sites in industrial parks has increased, not declined. Thus, current trends in these counties support rather than contradict our findings for the past decade.

Four other factors emerge as important to improving the state of rural economies. First, available financing was cited over and over again as being very important, as state and federal financial programs have made major contributions to rural economic development. Second, quality schools were identified as being very important to business recruiting and, in general, to economic development. Third, quality of life factors also were viewed as significant factors to economic development and especially to business recruitment. Finally, the location of a state or federal activity, facility or park in the county has major impacts on the local economy where they occur.

The factors that were strongly associated with the success of these activities for generating jobs were: favorable location, high incomes, quality labor, quality leadership, and low unemployment. These factors were highly or moderately correlated with the success of industrial parks, recruiters, office sites, commercial sites, and development bonds. In sum, most development activities were more successful in favorably located and advantaged counties.

Three activities, however, were exceptions to this pattern: the success of tourism promotion, location of state and federal activities or facilities in the county, and grant applications. Tourism promotion was the only factor which was more successful farther away from the metropolitan areas. The success of a state or federal facility was not correlated with most county characteristics but was highly associated with pro-growth attitudes. The success of grant applications has very low correlations with most county characteristics suggesting grantsmanship can succeed almost anywhere. In sum, industrial parks and many associated activities are most successful in favorably located and advantaged counties, but tourism promotion, location of state/federal activities/facilities in the county and grantsmanship seem to succeed equally well in disadvantaged counties.

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