

**realize**  
 **Rutherford**

**A STRATEGIC PLAN**

**Written by and for  
the Citizens of  
Rutherford County**

**2002 - 2022**

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## HOW WE GOT STARTED ...

- A. Henry Luke was hired in April 2002 to facilitate the Visioning Process for Rutherford County. Funding was provided by seven Founding Partners including: Stonecutter Foundation, Building Community, Inc., Committee of 100, Economic Development Commission, Rutherford Hospital, Chamber of Commerce, and Isothermal Community College.
- B. A diverse 35-person Steering Committee representative of the community was selected to guide the process in May 2002
- B. Henry Luke interviewed 140 individuals on May 22-24, 2002.
- C. Over 400 people attended the Community Meeting July 11, 2002. Thirteen groups identified 357 unique issues for consideration by the Vision Task Force. The issues were summarized and ranked by the groups, then combined to produce the top ten priority issues. The top ten issues were in order: economic development, education, quality of life, infrastructure, government, growth management, health and medical services, housing, youth issues, and land use planning. The participants also selected 21 additional members for the Vision Task Force.
- D. The Steering Committee selected a diverse Vision Task Force from all sectors and geographic areas of Rutherford County from persons nominated by the Steering Committee, Focus Group Interviewees, and the 21 individuals selected at the Community Meeting.
- E. The 165-member Vision Task Force met during July and August 2002 and distilled the 357 Focus Groups and Community Meeting issues into 117 strategies contained in the *Draft Strategic Plan*. They reached a consensus on the *Draft Strategic Plan* document and it was distributed on August 26, 2002.
- F. Over eighty organizations and 2900 individuals throughout the community were presented with the *Draft* document for review and comment during September and October 2002. "The Daily Courier" distributed 16,000 copies of the draft, and 11,000 copies of an overview sheet were sent home with all elementary student and 7,000 were distributed through utility bills.
- G. On October 28, 2002, a second Community Meeting was held and 200 residents came and provided their final input and comments for the Draft document.
- H. The Steering Committee approved the final Vision document and print copies were distributed in November 2002.

### OUR VISION: Before 2022, Rutherford County will have:

- supportive growth and development of our existing businesses and will have competitive economic development programs that attract quality businesses, improve productivity, and provide opportunities for all residents.
- stimulating education and training for all county residents integrated with economic opportunities and cultural values.
- a coordinated countywide system of activities and services to enhance the physical, mental, emotional, creative and spiritual quality of life of all residents.
- comprehensive infrastructure that will improve transportation, water, sewer, housing, telecommunications and the environment in a way that is supported by the people of Rutherford County.
- governments that will be unified while serving the best interests and needs of its citizens.
- creative and committed private sector leadership that achieves **Realize Rutherford**.

### OUR CORE VALUES - Core values are character traits that guide in individual daily decisions

Integrity  
Embrace Diversity

Faith in God  
Family Values

Responsibility  
Innovation

Excellence  
Sustainability



## CRITICAL BENCHMARKS

*Realize Rutherford* identifies the future desired by Rutherford County residents. The Critical Benchmarks will be used to measure the progress of the Strategic Plan each year. Each of these Critical Benchmarks is cross-cutting and will require success in strategies for all six Foundations.

### 1. Improve Education

**Birth-K:** Each year, an increasing % of children will enter kindergarten ready to learn. The annual increase will be determined by the first Annual Meeting.

**K-12:** Grade 9-12 retention rate will be increased each year and reach 75% before 2012.

**Higher Education, Skills Training, & Lifelong Learning:** Each year potential and current employees will receive the training required to increase productivity enough to meet the Job Growth and Earnings Per Job Critical Benchmarks.

### 2. Create Net New Jobs

**Create new jobs at an average net rate of 3.8% per year for the first ten years, and reduce the unemployment rate to below the North Carolina rate. This includes full time and part time jobs.**

This rate of job creation must provide jobs for our young people who want to stay in Rutherford County; reduce the unemployment rate; provide opportunities for our citizens previously forced to leave, new residents, and people now commuting outside the county for jobs.

*History: From 1980-1994, new jobs<sup>6</sup> were created at an average rate of 2.3% per year. There have not been any net new jobs created since 1994.*

### 3. Increase Earnings Per Job

**Increase the percentage change in the average earnings per job<sup>6</sup> in Rutherford County, each year, above the US rate.**

<i>History:</i>	<u>2000</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1995</u>
US% Change in Earnings per Job	5.3%	4.2%	<b>4.6%</b>	3.7%	3.2%	2.1%
Rutherford% Change in Earnings per Job	3.7%	4.1%	<b>4.7%</b>	3.6%	1.0%	1.1%

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Critical Benchmarks will be set for the areas of Quality of Life and Infrastructure by the first Annual Meeting. These Benchmarks will tell us each year if we are successful and can celebrate. The Vision Partners will “review, revise, and refocus” their Action Steps to accomplish the strategies, if necessary.

<sup>6</sup> Jobs and earnings data is from US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis- May 2002 REIS data series. Employment and earnings data are for all jobs including 2nd or 3rd jobs, and military, and is located by place of work. This employment definition is broad and includes wage and salary workers, farm workers, proprietors, private household employees and miscellaneous workers. Because of the broad definition and place of work counting, the number of jobs is frequently larger than other employment data series. Population data is for July 1 of each year. Employment and income data are averages for the year. <http://www.bea.doc.gov/bea/regional/reis/>

# I. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**VISION:** Rutherford County will have supportive growth and development of our existing businesses and will have competitive economic development programs that attract quality businesses, improve productivity, and provide opportunities for all residents.

## STRATEGIES:

- A. Create<sup>8</sup> and fund an aggressive marketing and promotion program that creates jobs through expansion and retention of current businesses, through creation of new enterprises, and relocation of jobs to Rutherford County. Our targeted industries will be:
- Automotive parts and assembly
  - Composite and thermoplastics
  - Call centers and communications
  - Distribution centers
  - Technology (including but not limited to manufacturing, services, headquarters and support operations)
  - Entrepreneurial start-ups
  - Expanded tourism
  - High-income retirees
  - Healthcare and its products
  - Lone Eagles (consultants or suppliers who provide their products nationally/ internationally but can live anywhere they want to)
- Produce a balance of new jobs that help meet our Critical Benchmarks. This marketing program can include:
- High quality county website that includes information on healthcare, education, government, agriculture, tourism, recreation, economic development, and businesses.
  - Annual survey of young people to ensure job creation is matching the desired vocations of most of these individuals.
  - Expand the funds designated to the Economic Development Commission for marketing.
  - Aggressively inform Rutherford County residents and organizations of the assets available.
  - Maintain a continuous comparative analysis of Rutherford's competing counties so that we can enhance our competitive advantage.
- B. Create a business-friendly climate in the County that makes existing and future businesses feel wanted and welcomed.
- Ensure the County has a competitive incentives package for businesses that produce value-added jobs<sup>9</sup>.
  - Partner with other counties within North Carolina to lobby for an increase in statewide incentives.
  - Strive to ensure that an adequate amount of business park space, spec buildings, and existing buildings are available for job creation needs.
  - Strong government support for qualified economic development.
- C. Develop an aggressive program to support small businesses and entrepreneurial start-ups.
- Develop a Small Business Council to provide support services.
  - Develop a low-cost small loan program and maintain the micro-enterprise loan program.
  - Develop an angel investor network for early stage investment in new companies.
  - Convert empty textile mills and other existing buildings into Business Incubators and business locations.

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<sup>8</sup> The highest priority strategies within each foundation are indicated by bold type.

<sup>9</sup> A Value-Added Job brings direct cash to the County from outside the County.  
*Realize Rutherford Strategic Plan*

- D. Expand Rutherford County's retail sales by:
- Merchants associations that advertise and develop standards countywide such as operating hours and curb appeal.
  - Recognize that Rutherford County has quality service and products and promote buying and shopping within the County. Encourage residents to participate in a "Buy Rutherford" campaign.
  - Develop a marketing and advertising campaign that attracts visitors to the County for retail shopping and captures those visitors already here.
  - Provide residents with additional retail, restaurant and entertainment opportunities for the convenience of shopping in county.
- E. Expand tourism's impact on Rutherford County:
- Expand the season to year-round.
  - Promote conference learning and training centers.
  - Expand recreational opportunities.
  - Market our destination resorts, recreation, retail, heritage and cultural assets.
  - Continue to enhance the rehabilitation of our downtowns.
  - Create a water-based recreation facility and new destination resort in the eastern part of the county.
  - Create a Rutherford County entrance to South Mountain State Park.
  - Expand countywide festivals to attract large numbers of out-of-county visitors. Accomplish this through regional advertising and marketing.
  - Establish communications network for events, activities and programs.
  - Develop local "ambassador, bring-your-meeting-home" program to recruit groups and meetings to the county.
  - Network educational venues to form "educational itineraries" for school groups.
  - Keep local and state officials abreast of importance of tourism and its impact.
  - Educate citizens of tourism's economic impact for the County.
- F. Encourage every resident and every organization, both public and private, to be a part of the sales team for job creation in Rutherford County.
- G. Consider privatizing the Economic Development Commission.
- H. Develop a database of highly successful former residents of Rutherford County. Market this database for investments, grants and other assistance for our county.
- I. Support and expand Agri-Business, including organic farming.
- J. Encourage development of businesses that produce "green" products – products that are environmentally friendly.
- K. Encourage Rutherford County businesses to sell their products and services on a global basis.

## II. EDUCATION

**VISION:** Rutherford County will have stimulating education and training for all county residents integrated with economic opportunities and cultural values.

### STRATEGIES:

#### A. Birth to Kindergarten

Expect all children to enter kindergarten ready and eager to learn. This will require a community and parent commitment to early childhood education countywide in order to create equal opportunity for children entering the school system.

#### B. Kindergarten through Grade 12

1. Expect all students to earn a high school diploma and be ready to go to work, attend a technical school, community college or University. Ensure success by requiring all students to have the appropriate reading, writing, math and science skills before advancing to the next grade.
2. Expect the school system to make an absolute commitment to help every student earn a high school diploma. Identify at-risk students at an early age and provide remedial programs. Teach students to learn how to learn (deductive reasoning, etc.). Ensure equal opportunities for education for all students in their learning style.
3. Expect parents to take ownership and invest enough time in their young people's education to ensure earning a diploma. Assist parents so they can help their children learn and change their mindset to believe in the need for students to graduate from high school and go to college. Where the parents do not make this investment, community organizations like churches, civic clubs, business and senior groups will ensure that every young person has a mentor. Provide mentor training.
4. Insist the Rutherford County School Board and School Administration initiate a plan of educational reform consistent with the educational values of **Realize Rutherford**.
  - Begin with a nationwide search for a superintendent with the skills and determination to achieve the visions and strategies of **Realize Rutherford**.
5. Increase business involvement:
  - Maintain business advisory councils that keep the school system continuously updated on skill requirements for Rutherford County present and future jobs.
  - Educate students on availability of jobs and the skills they need for those jobs. Community will have a marketing plan to reach guidance counselors and students with information.
  - Increase business involvement in the classroom.
  - Increase shadowing programs and internships to help students choose a career path.
  - Provide opportunities for employees to be involved in the classroom without loss of pay.
6. Expect the community, businesses, parents, school board and administration to support the classroom teachers in enforcing discipline and provide resources that creates a positive learning environment.
7. Evaluate smaller class size and lower student/teacher ratios, block scheduling with 1½ hour classes, and year long vs. semester classes at high school.
8. Improve middle school education to reduce dropouts in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade and beyond. Ensure the success of every student's transition to high school in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
9. Recognize student testing is required for accountability, but at the same time provide a well-rounded and balanced education.
10. Keep kids turned on with accelerated classes, arts, special projects, diversity in class electives, specialized field trips, national academic competitions, and a variety of other activities.

11. Provide reading tutors at the elementary schools (2-4 grades).
12. Provide more skills education with professionals teaching the skills, while at the same time earning a high school diploma.
13. Provide for teacher accountability, professional development, and increase teacher pay based on superior performance reviews.
14. Conduct an annual survey of college students who graduated from our high schools to determine how we could better prepare them.
15. Ensure that county schools are available to the entire county without unreasonable bus transportation.
16. Provide email accounts and supervised computer access to all students.
17. Create a program where it is possible for every high school student to earn a laptop computer.
18. Develop programs that provide opportunities for teen parents to graduate from high school.
19. Involve homeschoolers in extracurricular activities and access to school libraries.
20. Provide a way for students to comment on the educational process.
21. Require strict enforcement of truancy laws with parental consequences.

**C. Higher Education, Skills Training, and Life-Long Education**

1. Provide and market competitive skill training through Isothermal Community College for:
  - Existing employees that continuously increases their productivity and meets employers' needs.
  - Employees of new businesses that meet the employer's requirements and support our job creation efforts.
  - Meeting continuing education credits like the Manufacturing Certification Program.
  - Helping to eliminate illiteracy.
  - Offer education and training opportunities through the County's community centers.
2. Encourage and assist our employees and unemployed to pursue skills by:
  - Encouraging business and industry to pay for employee's skills training.
  - Provide childcare and transportation for adult students.
  - Maintain a major focus on upgrading the skills of working mothers by providing opportunities like flexible schedules for training opportunities.
  - Lower the cost of adult education and skills training.
  - Encourage entrepreneurialships and apprenticeships
3. Prepare more students for transfer to four-year College or University.
4. Provide the opportunity locally to receive a 4-year, Masters, or PhD degree to support our employers' needs. Provide for delivery of this service at Isothermal Community College and Internet-based programs from the best Universities. Ensure availability of all educational programs with adequate capacity to meet the employers' needs within the County.
5. Encourage employers to require a high school diploma or GED and appropriate certification or skills training before beginning work.
6. Provide more technical skills education with professionals teaching the skills.
7. Provide adequate facilities for training.

**D. General**

1. Provide support to public libraries in their efforts to be 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning and public information centers with extended evening and weekend hours.
2. Increase minority recruitment in leadership and instruction positions.

### III. QUALITY OF LIFE

**VISION:** Rutherford County will have a coordinated countywide system of activities and services to enhance the physical, mental, emotional, creative and spiritual quality of life of all residents.

#### **STRATEGIES:**

##### **A. Youth Issues**

1. Help young people to understand that life choices have consequences and provide training that will help them make intelligent choices throughout life and equip them to achieve their highest potential.
2. Encourage commitment from churches, businesses and community organizations to sponsor youth programs in a coordinated community effort.
3. Establish a centralized and supervised "Teen Scene" center(s), where students aged 13-19 can come evenings and weekends to learn, socialize and play. This could include recreational opportunities like an ice skating rink and rock wall, a computer lab, a Board Game Room in a relaxed setting, tutoring, etc.
4. Provide opportunities to increase the self-esteem of our young people.
5. Provide opportunities before and after school, nights and weekends, and during school breaks for safe, fun, entertainment, shopping and educational activities.
6. Strive to eliminate teen pregnancy through education that emphasizes consequences and responsibilities.
7. Increase opportunity for involvement in the arts, in order to increase self-esteem, teamwork, and leadership development.
8. Decrease the number of children and teens going into foster care, through reducing child abuse. Decrease the time spent in foster care, but provide adequate foster care capacity.
9. Provide counseling opportunities for kids at the community centers and churches.
10. Bridge the gap between teens and law enforcement.
11. Increase opportunities for volunteer-summer youth internships and for summer jobs.

##### **B. Recreation**

1. Create a countywide recreation department or Commission that maintains and coordinates a recreation master plan for Rutherford County. The master plan may include an inventory of all venues, components for all types of traditional recreation and arts, an indoor pool for swim teams, equestrian center, river programs, rock climbing programs, camping, South Mountain access, completion of "Rails to Trails", and recreation that provides mental stimulation. The master plan will provide for services distributed throughout the county within community centers. An appropriate level of full-time and volunteer staff will be provided.
2. Increase recreation activities and programs using the natural resources of our county: mountains, lakes, rivers, woods and encourage private and public programs.
3. Promote the establishment of a YMCA in Rutherford County.

##### **C. Health and Medical Services**

1. Provide affordable health care that includes prescription drugs, mental health care, drug rehabilitation and disease prevention components. Ensure that the delivery system is accessible, compassionate, quality-driven and informed.
2. Make a concerted effort to promote disease prevention, health education, wellness and healthy living for all ages.

3. Promote the availability of affordable health insurance plans to small businesses.

**D. Community Services**

1. Develop and implement a county-wide master plan for community centers that will deliver a combination of recreation, arts and culture, social services, emergency, library, education, mentoring/ tutoring, express parcel pick-up, and Internet accessibility. The community centers will be distributed throughout the county. These centers may be based at churches, volunteer fire departments, old schoolhouses, current schools and community clubs. The emphasis will be on maximizing the use of existing facilities and resources. These community centers will serve as the focal point for the many neighborhoods within our county.
2. Maintain and constantly update a centralized, countywide information system for all events and recreational activities.
3. Bring qualified family therapists/mental health specialists into schools, community centers and churches to teach youth and adults: a). How to recognize and avoid codependent thinking/behavior. b). Develop critical thinking skills. c). Role development with families. d). Family dynamics.
4. Maintain humane treatment of animals.

**E. Sense of Community**

1. Coordinate a countywide volunteer program that determines needs, placement, and duration of volunteers by organizations; as well as, recruitment and motivation of volunteers for specific projects. Eliminate duplication of efforts by using the **Realize Rutherford** Strategic Plan to coordinate the actions of our community organizations.
2. Create a “Council of Clubs” to coordinate club activities, support each other, inform each other, and utilize resources.
3. Create a statue or art symbol that represents the unifying vision of **Realize Rutherford**. The public art piece could be placed in a centralized location or at each significant entry point into the County and should represent all core values and be used on County communications, events, etc.

**F. Public Safety**

1. Ensure countywide safety and security for our residents. Use neighborhood and community based policing, neighborhood watch programs, comprehensive drug enforcement, affordable drug rehab programs, drug hazard education, adequate emergency response time for rural areas, emergency preparedness system, coordination between emergency medical services, law enforcement and fire departments.
2. Provide for fast response through the Juvenile Justice System and harsh penalties for repeat offenders.

**G. Race Relations, Cultural Change and Diversity**

1. Maintain a continual forum open to the public to address race relations and diversity, in order to eliminate racism. Involve growing Hispanic community in county programs and activities.
2. Admit that there are minority groups in our county that are being ignored, excluded and neglected. Include, invite, encourage and support their participation in Rutherford County activities. Seek out leaders.

**H. Family Issues**

Create a family-friendly community where churches, organizations, businesses, schools and all governments focus on strengthening the family.

**I. Senior Issues**

1. Recruit our talented pool of retirees for volunteerism.
2. Expect people to prepare for retirement and their elderly years through savings, investments, and insurance. Provide an opportunity for training to adequately prepare for the retirement years.
3. Strive to provide a safety net of services for those who are unable to care for themselves or do not have a family support system. These services may include assistance with medication costs, dental care, and transportation.

4. Establish a center designed to help retirees to develop, retrain, and refocus their talents to give back to their community as mentors, volunteers and leaders. They are an untapped wealth of experience and expertise.
5. Strive to support grandparents who are raising grandchildren.

**J. Arts and Culture**

1. Develop a cultural arts center with participatory arts for all ages.
2. Offer and market cultural events such as an annual bluegrass festival, annual heritage festival, weekly music festivals, and other activities. Expand music opportunities in training, performance, and events. Advertise these events outside of the County in order to bring in large numbers of visitors.
3. Market the cultural/arts programs as a total package through a calendar of events, cooperation, and mutual support of cultural organizations.

## IV. INFRASTRUCTURE

**VISION:** Rutherford County will have comprehensive infrastructure that will improve transportation, water, sewer, housing, telecommunications and the environment in a way that is supported by the people of Rutherford County.

### STRATEGIES:

#### A. Growth Management and Land Use Planning

Develop and implement a zoning ordinance and map in alignment with the existing Rutherford County Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

- In generating the zoning map, meetings will be held on a community basis to determine and respond to the different needs of each community. This will recognize that Golden Valley is different than Bill's Creek and Rutherfordton.
- Develop a map showing the location of all existing utilities including water, sewer, gas, electric, communications, etc. This utility map can be used immediately for Economic Development marketing. As available, add the future utility expansion plans to the same map.
- Recognize that the majority of the county will be zoned as "rural agriculture". This zoning classification has a wide breadth of uses that are allowed such as all agricultural activities, gas stations, churches, etc.
- All existing land uses will be "grandfathered" in the zoning map as long as the current user occupies the property.
- For new retail centers, require that as a condition of zoning or issuing a building permit, if the property is ever vacated, it will be made available for reuse.

#### B. Housing

1. Strive for every resident in the County to have acceptable housing, affordable at his or her income level.
  - Spread housing of different types all over the county so that jobs may be available without long commutes. Carefully consider the locational relationship between housing and jobs.
  - Provide transitional housing to assist people in moving from unsatisfactory housing.
  - Provide educational services, such as credit counseling, so that people can move into homeownership.
  - Provide assistance in rehabbing existing rental and ownership properties.
2. Enhance housing for seniors at all levels of transition in the aging process. Encourage the following for existing county residents:
  - Apartments and condominiums attractive for seniors
  - Housing for seniors who live independently, but would like some transportation services, social activities, etc.
  - Assisted living facilities
  - Nursing homes
3. Develop a minimum housing code for ownership and rental property that describes minimum requirements for livable housing.

#### C. Environment

1. Protect and manage our natural resources and assets including rivers, mountains, scenic views, air quality, water quality and forests.
2. Strive to educate young people and adults on the importance of maintaining a clean environment.
3. Extend the life of the landfills by increasing recycling programs countywide.
4. Strive to attract environmentally friendly businesses and industries.
5. Inform residents of their option to reject chemical spraying on their property.

**D. Appearance and Image**

1. Clean up trash, litter, abandoned cars, etc.
2. Develop a “mindset” among our residents and businesses that results in increased curb appeal throughout the county.
3. Use county and city prisoners for maintenance and beautification activities.
4. Strive to fill all empty buildings. Think out of the box for new and different uses.
5. Provide sidewalks and other amenities throughout the county and neighborhoods to encourage beautification and communication between neighbors.
6. Encourage all governmental authorities to vigorously enforce all environment related laws.

**E. Transportation**

1. Accelerate the construction of highway 221 from Chesnee to Rutherfordton as one of the most important economic development initiatives. Resolve the issue of the route’s location around Rutherfordton, existing business and historical preservation areas on an expedited basis, so that disagreement does not hold up the continuation of Hwy. 221 to Interstate 40.
2. Improve Hwy. 64 from the Burke County line through Rutherford County. Evaluate expansion based on the creation of an entrance to South Mountain State Park.
3. Support the Rutherford County Transportation Committee’s recommendations for County road improvements, which support the implementation of **Realize Rutherford’s** vision and strategies through the Rutherford County Urban Area Thoroughfare Plan.
4. Increase public transportation including service to all parts of the county.
5. Increase lobbying effort at the state level for transportation funds.
6. Strive to remove the debris left by utility companies in the county.
7. Support the creation of the East/West connector between Rutherfordton and Bostic.

**F. Utilities**

1. Ensure that residents and businesses in every part of the County have access to a water system.
2. Provide countywide high-speed communication access at affordable prices for residents, small businesses, large businesses and industries.
3. Provide sewer service to support job creation in the business corridors and where there is a concentration of housing.
4. Build a new lake for water supply and recreation. Create capacity through conservation.
5. Encourage underground utilities.
6. Expand the master plan for convenience centers and solid waste disposal, based on growth.
7. Provide countywide cell phone coverage.

**G. Historic Preservation**

Strive to preserve and enhance our historical and cultural assets. Continue to redevelop our downtowns and market them as tourist attractions, and use all economic incentives for historical restoration. Establish a countywide Historic Preservation Commission in accordance with state law.

## V. GOVERNMENT

**VISION:** Rutherford County will have governments that will be unified while serving the best interests and needs of its citizens.

### STRATEGIES:

- A. Encourage consolidation of services between municipalities and county while providing services that are consistent, high quality and more productive. Develop mechanisms to provide faster and better county and municipal decision-making. Use common sense in spending dollars to maximize efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability.
- B. Encourage all levels of government in Rutherford County to endorse the **Realize Rutherford** Strategic Plan and provide the leadership and resources to implement the Strategies, Visions and Critical Benchmarks and use the Core Values in guiding decision-making. Hold a minimum of two Summit Meeting annually of all governmental bodies within the County to increase harmony and coordinate progress on Strategies the government is implementing.
- C. Increase citizen involvement in the government decision-making process.
  - Provide a well designed website that includes all county and municipality meeting notices and communications, forms, permits, and general information.
  - Increase the percentage of residents that are registered voters and vote.
  - Reduce “Good Ol’ Boy” politics.
  - Provide greater diversity among government leadership.
  - Train young people in the political process. Have candidate forums at each high school with required attendance by students and open to the public for all residents. Provide student internships with local elected officials.
- D. Expect our elected officials to show the political and ethical courage to take the steps necessary to achieve a bright future even though they may be unpopular decisions.
- E. Seek the transfer of more control from Raleigh to Rutherford County and its municipalities in regards to decision-making, finance, and infrastructure.
- F. Consider reform in the election process for county commissioners.
- G. Encourage appropriate government services to be delivered through the countywide system of community centers.
- H. Develop public/private partnerships to create infrastructure and deliver services.
- I. Encourage all candidates to make their qualifications and platform available on the county website and through the media.

## VI. PRIVATE SECTOR LEADERSHIP

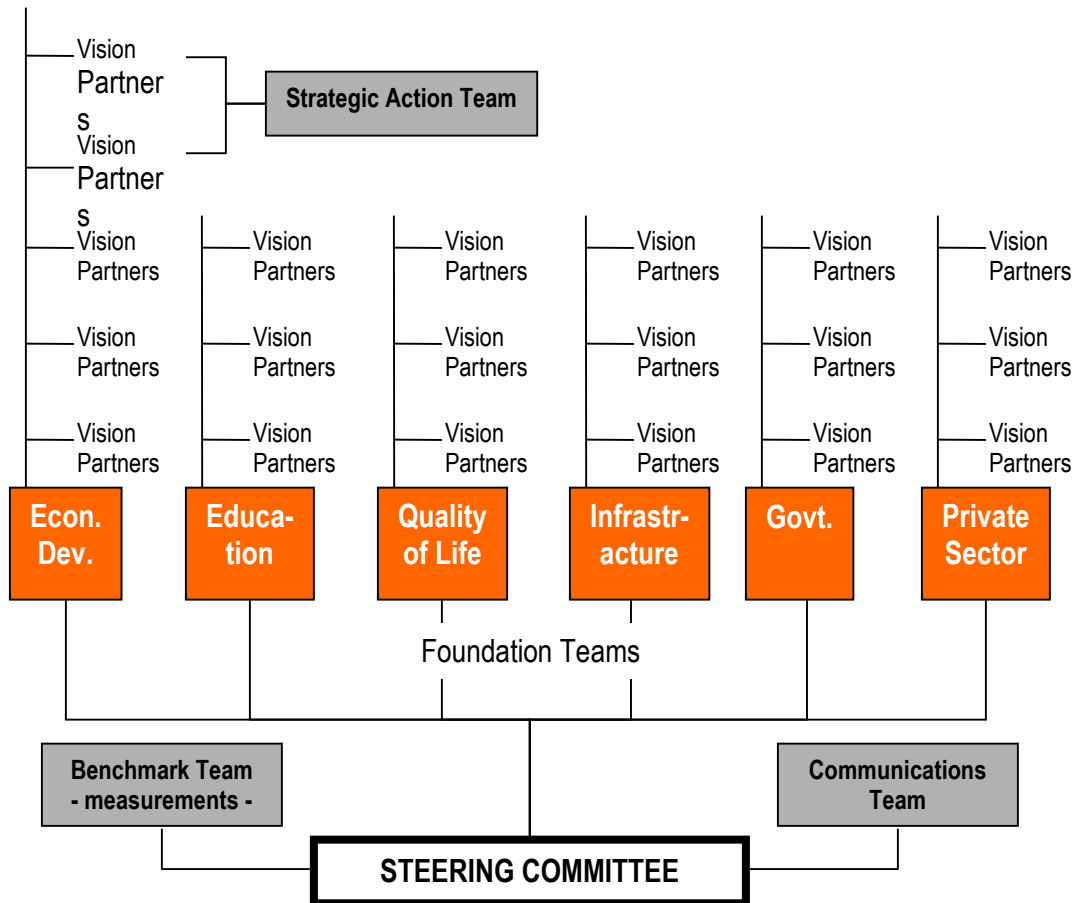
**VISION:** Rutherford County will have creative and committed private sector leadership that achieves *Realize Rutherford*.

### STRATEGIES:

- A. Encourage all not-for-profit and for-profit organizations in Rutherford County to endorse the *Realize Rutherford* Strategic Plan and provide the leadership and resources to implement the Strategies, Visions and Critical Benchmarks and use the Core Values in guiding decision-making.
- B. Expand the leadership development process in Rutherford County. Think out of the box. Some ideas may include:
  - Personal development training for every student including time management, character development and personal finance
  - Over the next 2 years, train over 300 new, adult leaders to help implement *Realize Rutherford*.
  - Parenting leadership training course.
  - Encourage businesses to implement internal professional development programs.
- C. Encourage businesses to provide opportunities that will help to strengthen and build the family. Provide incentives and recognition for businesses that promote and support family-friendly activities and educational opportunities.
- D. Develop a strong *Realize Rutherford* communications system at the grassroots level that continually keeps our citizens informed.
- E. Encourage not-for-profit organizations to deliver services throughout the network of countywide community centers, and for-profit organizations to develop partnerships with community centers.
- F. Support consolidation and coordination of not-for-profit organizations to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.
- G. Maintain a “Free Enterprise Week” each year in the school system. This would provide a focused opportunity for businesses to deliver a positive business model without recruiting students. Develop shadowing programs with industry to help young people determine their career paths.
- H. Encourage all businesses and government leadership to creatively support and actively plan initiatives with faith-based and other not-for-profit organizations that will build the good of the community.
- I. Encourage our leaders to take their turn in providing government leadership by accepting board appointments and running for elected office. Support these leaders during their term in office as they inevitably experience the conflicts and challenges of making difficult decisions in the best interest of the county at large.
- J. Increase representation of minorities in leadership positions.
- K. Develop public/private partnerships to create infrastructure and deliver services.
- L. Develop a youth “Civics Award” to recognize students who have demonstrated involvement in local government, community service, committee membership, and mentoring. Private sector could provide scholarship monies to be tied in with this award.
- M. Maintain a grantsmanship-training center for Vision Partners with *Realize Rutherford*.
- N. Expect for-profit organizations to recognize the skill training offered at not-for-profit camps and youth organizations.
- O. Encourage private sector leadership to exemplify high ethical standards.

# WHERE WE ARE GOING ... IMPLEMENTATION

- A. The **Realize Rutherford** Steering Committee will continue to be diverse and community-based to provide leadership during the implementation process.
- B. Private and public sector organizations of all kinds and individuals will be asked to endorse the Vision document and become Vision Partners. (November 2002-October 2007)
- C. Vision Partners who endorse the Vision will be asked to identify those Strategies they can incorporate and effectively implement within their normal mission, purpose and scope of operations or in Strategic Action Teams with other organizations. Each Vision Partner or Strategic Action Team will establish Strategy Benchmarks to facilitate annual measurement of progress and develop Action Steps for the specific Strategies they adopt. The Steering Committee and Benchmark Team will approve all Strategy Benchmarks before their adoption as official **Realize Rutherford** Benchmarks. (November 2002-October 2007)
- D. Strategy identification and acceptance by Vision Partners will be reviewed by the Steering Committee to ensure that the Priority Strategies have been covered within the time frames for effective implementation. Progress on every Strategy cannot begin immediately, but will be phased in over a 5 to 10 year period as applicable.
- E. Progress on Strategies will be communicated on a regular basis.
- F. There will be an annual Community Meeting to update the Critical Benchmarks and the Strategy Benchmarks measuring progress for each strategy adopted by Vision Partners and Strategic Action Teams.
- G. The leadership of the Implementation Process will continue to be diverse and community-based with management support and coordination provided by the staff for at least a five-year period.



## GLOSSARY:

**Action Steps** - What the Vision Partner is going to do. A series of projects or events developed to meet the Strategy Benchmark for a specific Strategy.

**Benchmark Team** – A team that works along side Vision Partners, in developing Strategy Benchmarks for key strategies and updating them and the Critical Benchmarks annually.

**Community Meeting** – An annual meeting to review the benchmarks and progress on strategies. The Vision Partners and public are invited.

**Core Values** - Character traits that guide daily decision-making.

**Critical Benchmarks** - Crosscutting annual measurements of the community's progress towards achieving its long-term Vision. This will require positive results from the six *interdependent* Foundations and provide accountability for the process.

**Foundations** - Interdependent areas that will provide a comprehensive Strategic Plan for the community: Education, Economic Development, Infrastructure, Quality of Life, Government, and Private Sector Leadership.

**Foundation Team** - Each Foundation has a team that is responsible for helping develop Strategic Action Teams and recruiting new Vision Partners as needed for implementation.

**Retention Rate** - The high school retention rate is the number of 9<sup>th</sup> grader students enrolled on the first day of school, divided by the number of students who graduate four years later.

**Steering Committee** – A diverse 35-member team of community members appointed to lead and provide final policy direction for the Vision Process during the planning and implementation phases.

**Strategic Action Team** - A group of Vision Partners who work together to implement a specific Strategy. The Vision Partners in the Action Team will elect a chair to be responsible for providing leadership. Action Team Benchmarks and Action Steps will be developed for the Strategic Action Team. The Vision Partners will then assume responsibility for the Action Steps that fall within their own scope of operations.

**Strategy** - A verbal picture of the future in a specific part of a particular Foundation. Twenty to thirty Strategies in each Foundation will provide a more detailed definition of each Foundation Vision. *An example of a Strategy is "Increase the high school retention rate."*

**Strategy Benchmark** - Annual measurement of the progress of a specific strategy that provides accountability for the process on an annual basis for 3 to 10 years. Example: Increase the high school retention rate 2% per year for 10 years. The Strategy Benchmark should be developed before the Action Steps.

**Vision** - A Vision defines what the community wants to be in the future in each of the six Foundation areas. The long-term Vision includes the six Visions, Core Values, and Critical Benchmarks.

**Vision Partner** - Any organization, business, civic group, government entity, church, etc. that has volunteered to collaborate with other community members to make the Vision and Strategic Plan reality. Vision Partners are the organizations who are responsible for making individual strategies reality.

**Vision Task Force** – A diverse group of 165 people responsible for the developing of the draft Vision document and making presentations on the draft document to community organizations.



# **REALIZE RUTHERFORD VISION TASK FORCE AND STEERING COMMITTEE**

**CHAIR:** Al Joyner

**VICE CHAIRMAN:** Daemon Moss

**PROJECT MANAGER:** Kerry Giles

**FACILITATOR:** Henry Luke – Jacksonville, Florida



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<b>Ann Almond</b>	Jeff Ferguson	Paula Jordan	Malanie Price
Homer Arnold	Charlotte Fish	Kenneth Jordan	<b>Mike Price</b>
Marsha Baker	Otho Fish	<b>Al Joyner</b>	Stencil Quarles
Robert Balfour	Chuck Flack	Kimberly Keel	Mary Ann Ransom
Sandra Balfour	Cooper Flack	<b>Amanda King</b>	Randy Reavis
Terri Barringer	Larry Ford	Brian King	<b>Matt Rees</b>
Tim Barth	Skippy Forney	Ann Kozma	<b>Bill Robertson</b>
Fred Bayley	Anita Frykberg	John Kozma	Gale Roller
Debbie Bedford	Bill Frykberg	John Kurtz	George Ronan
Todd Bennett	Rick Furse	<b>Jim Lancaster</b>	<b>Roy Routh</b>
Rhonda Bird	Lou Gadol	Susan Lane	James Sanders
Sally Blanton	Leah Gadol	Ann Lattimore	<b>Patti Sappenfield</b>
Hope Bleecker	LA Gillikin	Teresa Lederer	Steve Saucier
Chivous Bradley	Jackie Godlock	Sally Leshner	Mike Saunders
Van Bridges	Barry Gold	<b>Bill Lewis</b>	Raymond Schafer
Jim Bross	<b>Steve Govus</b>	Marcy Lewis	<b>Gordon Scott</b>
<b>Jim Brown</b>	James Green	Susan Los Calzo	<b>Ernell Simpson</b>
Chris Burley	Linda Greene	Helyn Lowery	Darrell Skinner
Barbara Buttram	<b>Doug Grondahl</b>	Joe Maimone	Teresa Spires
C. Philip Byers	Fredia Hamrick	Karen McCall	Harold Stallcup
<b>Theresa Calhoun</b>	<b>Ken Hankinson</b>	Alice McCluney	Jack Stanier
Clarence Campbell	Billy Hardin	<b>Wilfred McDowell</b>	Vernon Stutzman
Denise Clemmer	Betty Harrill	<b>Donna McElrath</b>	Mike Tanner
Andy Cobb	<b>Thad Harrill</b>	Matthew McEnnerney	David ter Kuile
John Condon	Burton Harris	Stanley McEntire	Troy Tevis
John Condrey	Pat Harris	Paul McIntosh	Toby Tomblin
Crystal Cook	<b>Bob Harrison</b>	Paula McIntosh	Judy Toney
Ellyn Cooley	Mary Ann Head	<b>Karen Moore</b>	Tim Toney
Deborah Corley	Dan Hegeman	<b>Bob Morgan</b>	Betty Turner
Myra Cowan	Sherry Henderson	Dillard Morrow	George Turner
<b>Jim Cowan</b>	David Herndon	<b>Daemon Moss</b>	Curtis Vance
Sallie Cowan	<b>Jon Hollifield</b>	Abby Nance	Bruce Waddingham
<b>Blaine Cox</b>	Vernon Hoyle	R.E. Newton	Brent Washburn
April Crain	<b>Buster Huggins, Jr.</b>	<b>Fred Noble</b>	Beth Wheeler
Doris Crute	Louise Huggins	Karen Noel	Russell Wicker
Lucille Dalton	Gene Hyatt	Bud Oates	John Wilkerson
Jimmy Dancy	Noel Isham	Donna Ohmstead	Sharon Willets
<b>Chris DeCamp</b>	Faye Johnson	<b>Ron Paris</b>	Patsy Wilson
Mary Doane	Joannie Jolley	David Philbeck	Guy Winker
Jim Edwards	Maxie Jolley	Laura Pocock	<b>Rebecca Winker</b>
Lynne Faltraco	<b>Bob Jones</b>	Kitty Price	<b>Danielle Withrow</b>

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Steering Committee members are shown in bold type



## Invitation to become a VISION PARTNER

### What is a VISION PARTNER?

Any organization, business, civic group, government entity, church, etc. that has volunteered to collaborate with other community members to make the Vision and Strategic Plan reality.

**Vision Partners are the organizations committed to making an individual strategy reality.**

### What are the Vision Partners' responsibilities?

Become a supporter of the Vision process by endorsing the Strategic Plan. A Vision Partner will:

- Form Strategic Action Teams where appropriate
- Adopt Strategies
- Create Strategy Benchmarks
- Develop Action Steps to accomplish the strategy and meet the Benchmarks with realistic deadlines
- Provide funding and resources to implement Action Steps
- Generate progress reports
- Include affiliation with **Realize Rutherford** in printed and advertising material and create links to the Vision website
- Review, revise and refocus Action Steps when progress reports are negative

*(Foundation Teams and a Benchmark Team will be available for assistance.)*

Yes, please include us as a **Realize Rutherford** Vision Partner!

Organization/ Business/Agency/ Club/ Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Area or Strategy of Interest: \_\_\_\_\_

**102 West Main Street – Forest City, NC 29043  
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