

THE  
STACKPOLE-HALL  
FOUNDATION

COMMUNITY  
PLANNING  
PROCESS

2006

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## PAGE

3	OVERVIEW
5	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS
9	EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT
20	EDUCATION FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY
21	ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT
24	ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY
25	HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT
29	HUMAN SERVICES FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY
31	HUMAN SERVICES YOUTH SURVEY
44	HEALTH COMMITTEE REPORT
50	HEALTH FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY
51	HEALTH COMMITTEE ATTACHMENTS
55	CULTURE COMMITTEE REPORT
57	CULTURE FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY
58	ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT
60	ENVIRONMENT FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY
61	APPENDIX A – COMMITTEE MEMBERS
63	APPENDIX B – FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS
67	APPENDIX C – ENVIRONMENT/HEALTH ATTACHMENT

**THE STACKPOLE-HALL FOUNDATION**  
**Community Planning Process**  
**Final Report**  
**August 17, 2006**

In 2005, the Trustees decided that it was again time to embark upon community planning. This time we decided that the planning process should focus on a comprehensive needs assessment of Elk County based upon our six areas of grantmaking – Education, Community Development, Human Services, Health, Environment and Culture.

First, chairpersons were recruited in each of the six fields of interest. Each chairperson was an individual with extensive background in each of the fields of interest. The chairs were given an action plan and asked to recruit a committees consisting of individuals who had experience or knowledge of the specific field. The following is the charge given to the six committees.

**The Mission:**

Examine the six areas in which the Foundation makes grants:

- Education
- Community Development
- Human Services
- Health
- Culture
- Environment

Identify the key issues defining each area.

Identify critical needs in each area.

Identify strengths of each area.

Identify who is being served and who is not being served in each area.

Identify how each area affects the overall quality of life in the County.

Identify who the players are that provide service in the area.

Identify who the client base is in the service area.

In support of the work of the Committees, the Foundation engaged consultant Kate Dewey, President of Dewey and Kaye, to conduct a focus group survey of other individuals in the County who are connected to the six fields of interest but not on the respective six Committees. Additional individuals invited to participate in the Focus Groups included other providers, clients, funders, and regulators. The participants in the Focus Groups were selected by the respective committees. The focus group survey was intended as a tool for the Committees providing additional insight from an expanded sector of the community.

By yearend the Committees were in place and Ms. Dewey submitted her plan for the focus group interviews. On January 26, 2006, the Foundation hosted a kick-off dinner initiating the Community Planning Process. All Committee members, the media and local Trustees were invited. (See appendix A - List of Participants) Ms. Dewey was the keynote speaker at the event describing the importance of a community needs assessment and defining the process.

Following the Kick-Off Event, the Committees began meeting and on May 15, 16 and 17 Ms. Dewey and her associate Marilyn Coleman came to St. Marys and conducted 18 focus group sessions with 143 people. (See appendix B – Focus Group participants) The Focus Groups were broken down first by Committee identification and then by specific areas of interest within the Committees. (See Background and Highlights of Focus Group meetings contained in the final report of the Committees.)

In June of 2006, Ms. Dewey's Focus Group report was submitted to the Committees and the Foundation. In addition Ms. Dewey worked with the Committees developing an outline for the Committees' final report. (See appendix C).

On July 31, 2006, all the final reports by the six Committees were delivered to the Foundation.

## Summary of the Findings

What stands out was the commonality of themes that emerged among committees and focus groups. This commonality provides a good basis upon which to implement actions and could represent a starting point for future Foundation funding. However, many recommendations dealt with unique areas identified by only one committee and many of these unique recommendations are critical to our consideration when we attempt to meet the challenges ahead in communities that are in a state of dramatic flux as is the case with Elk County's communities. (See Matrix of issues identified by multiple Committees on following page.)

Each Committee report identified the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats relevant to their field of interest and made recommendations for future actions. An analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified several threads common in the report of multiple Committees.

Common **strengths** as identified by multiple Committees included the existence of a strong school system, and a strong health care system.

Common **weaknesses** as seen by multiple Committees included lack of funding and a lack of cooperation.

Common **opportunities** identified by multiple committees included the potential to improve communication and collaboration. This is interesting because it is a direct response to what was seen as a lack of cooperation suggesting that this might be an issue with potential for resolution.

Common **threats** identified by multiple Committees included a lack of funding, the breakdown of the family, the need for wellness programs aimed at creating healthier life styles and economic threats of globalization.

<b>Matrix of Issues identified by Multiple Committees</b>				
	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<b>Schools</b>	H, Ed, CD,			
<b>Health Care</b>	Ed, CD			
<b>Funding</b>		HS, Ed, H, Env.		HS, Env
<b>Cooperation/Collaboration</b>		Ed, H, Env	H	
<b>Communications</b>		HS	HS, Ed, Env	
<b>Wellness/Healthy Life Styles</b>			H	H
<b>Breakdown of Families</b>		Ed		Ed, H
<b>Globalization</b>				Ed, CD
<b>Key</b>				
<b>H = Health</b>				
<b>Ed = Education</b>				
<b>CD = Community Develop.</b>				
<b>Env. = Environment</b>				
<b>C = Culture</b>				
<b>HS = Human Services</b>				

## Focus Group Interviews

The outcome from the focus group's interviews conducted by Kate Dewey and intended to provide expanded information also identified areas of common concern among fields of interests. (See Focus Matrix of Common Issues).

### Focus Group Common Issues Matrix Focus Group Study - Dewey & Kaye

	community dev.	culture	education	environment	health	human services
Education - local schools	x	x		x	x	
networks/communications	x	x			x	x
planning	x			x		
infrastructure/facilities		x				
drugs/alcohol			x			x
family breakdown			x		x	x
accessibility/transportation					x	x
wellness			x	x	x	x
jobs				x		x
media relations				x		
operating funds				x		
air/water quality				x		

As was the case with the Committees, schools, communications, wellness and family breakdown were identified as areas of common interest among Focus Groups.

Finally a letter written by Paulette Schreiber, CRNP is included as Appendix C. Once again this letter makes a powerful connection between multiple fields of interest, in this case Health and Environment. Ms Schreiber is a Registered Nurse Practitioner; she is a member of the Health Committee and was a participant on an environmental focus group.

# **THE STACKPOLE-HALL FOUNDATION**

## **Committee Final Reports**

The following pages contain the final report of each of the Committees and the background and highlights portion of the Focus Group interviews. The real substance in this report is contained in the recommendation section of each Committee Report.

Beginning immediately after the submission of this report to the Trustees, it is incumbent upon us to begin work on an Action Plan designed to implement in stages, as many outcomes as can be accomplished. Because some of the recommendations deal with systemic issues that exist on a nationwide scale, such as the breakdown of the family and globalization our ability is limited in what we can do about such issues. However these larger issues can be used by us to more effectively understand those issues where we can have an impact.

Finally the Foundation thanks everyone who participated in the Community Planning Process. We are very happy with the results and it is indeed gratifying to know that we can count on so many talented individuals to work so hard on identifying such an array of critical issues.

## **Stackpole-Hall Foundation Education Committee Report**

### **Situational Analysis:**

#### **Strengths:**

- ❖ There is a unique situation with the educational opportunities that are afforded the children in Elk County. There are three public school districts (Johnsonburg, Ridgway and St. Marys) and a private school system (Catholic Schools) that provides a variety of educational opportunities.
- ❖ Collaboration is high among all the districts and the willingness to work together. The districts periodically meet to share ideas and concerns and come to the assistance of each other if the need arises.
- ❖ There are also various pre-school programs provided through Dickinson Mental Health, Head Start, the Guidance Center and pre-schools.
- ❖ At the other end of the spectrum the Community Education Council of Elk and Cameron Counties has been in existence for 14 years to assist with post-secondary educational opportunities for the adult population in Elk County.

#### **Weaknesses:**

- ❖ The number one concern of all entities in our county is the lack of funding. Whether it is state funding or the tax base, this is a major concern of all districts. As the population decreases in some communities the burden falls on fewer and fewer people and without the level of funding needed to provide the necessary programs and equipment the quality of the educational opportunities will erode in Elk County.
- ❖ Parental support is considered a major concern to the educational process in Elk County as well as the region. With the rise of dysfunctional families, the need for two parents to work, lack of interest in their children's education and the lack of discipline the job at the schools has gotten much more complex.
- ❖ There is a great deal of overlap in community programs. In some instances many of the entities are not aware of the different programs that are being offered in the various communities that could possibly be shared. If a more county wide approach was taken more of the youth oriented activities could be a joint effort

#### **Opportunities:**

- ❖ With the new broadband project that I.U. 9 is involved with the public school districts may be able to increase their technology based programs via video conferencing, high speed internet connections and sharing courses among the schools.
  - St. Marys is looking into getting an additional ITV unit to include the Catholic High School. Superintendent Murray Neeper realizes that St. Marys is in a unique situation with having two school systems in St. Marys and is asking for additional assistance from the I.U. to assist the Catholic Schools.

- ❖ The Family Resource Network is a county wide board that is very involved with offering various early intervention programs. Early intervention programs can be key to reaching a child at a young age and providing services that are necessary for the child to be successful when entering school. This board also provides the opportunity for agencies to network at monthly meeting and to be aware of various programs that are available in our county.
- ❖ The opportunity to collaborate among all the districts is becoming much more prevalent and will continue to increase in the future with the cooperation of the districts on various common projects.

**Threats:**

- ❖ The population of Elk County on the whole has been decreasing, which can adversely affect the school districts
- ❖ The deterioration of the family
- ❖ The academic diversity of the students makes it difficult for the schools to serve the many academic requirements
- ❖ There are so many outside demands put on the schools involving testing and programming that are totally out of their control and can adversely affect the schools and their funding
- ❖ Elk County has a unique economy and we need to maintain our industries. Globalization is becoming a way of life in the United States and Elk County must be a part of this change. If our industries are negatively affected by globalization all of the educational systems will suffer

**Assumptions:**

- ❖ In the foreseeable future no major changes in Elk County are predicted so things should remain status quo. Unfortunately a major layoff, economic or physical disaster could change things in a heartbeat and adversely affect the county and therefore the educational outlook of the county.
- ❖ If the family unit does not become stronger and stabilize the children of our region will continue to pay the price. What some of the children are experiencing now adults have never been exposed to. The baggage they carry adversely affects them educationally and socially.

*Priority #1 Educational Wellness*  
*(Level of difficulty: Difficult)*

When the Education Committee met for the first time the Educational Wellness of our children in Elk County was immediately identified as the first priority. Educational Wellness takes into account a variety of topics and the areas discussed were:

- ❖ Emotional wellness
  - Stress on students
- ❖ Mental wellness
- ❖ Student substance abuse
  - Parental substance abuse
- ❖ Schools becoming parents
- ❖ Parental attitudes
  - Dysfunctional families
- ❖ Schools are becoming the social centers of communities
- ❖ Physical wellness (obesity and lack of exercise)
- ❖ Early intervention programs
- ❖ Academic wellness

This topic was also identified by 49% of the focus group participants as the most significant issue facing education in Elk County today. This is an area that has been identified as a more significant issue today than it was just 10 years ago. The schools actually view the family issues that the students experience as more of a crisis than even substance abuse at this time.

Unfortunately the dysfunctional family is becoming the norm instead of the exception, which is directly affecting the children entering school. The schools are seeing students coming into school with more and more baggage and the only place that some children have to express themselves or to talk to a responsible adult is in the school setting. The frightening outcome of our discussions led to the fact that academic wellness which should be the main focus of the schools is dropping to the bottom of the list, as there are so many other areas the schools have to address in order to get to the academics.

Many parents need parenting programs and when the schools or community organizations try to address areas of concern they are attracting the wrong parents. Though it is unrealistic the schools would like to require parents to attend programs that would provide the parental skills that are so desperately needed by some. One suggestion was to take the programs directly into the factories and workplace, but that too could be a very difficult process. There is no easy fix to this problem, but one that needs to be addressed to allow the schools to get back to what their main function is and that is to educate our children.

The stress levels placed on students today far exceeds what it was like years ago. Starting at the kindergarten level the requirements now for those students is what was expected when the children started the primary grades. At the other end of the spectrum students at age 14 or 15 are being asked to decide what they want to do after high school so their high school curriculum can be decided. Many times a student is too immature to make an informed choice at such a young age. Unfortunately if a student should change their mind part way through high school it may be too difficult to switch to a different curriculum to accommodate the change; therefore the student must live what they decided at age 14.

The No Child Left Behind legislation and the PSSA tests that the schools are required to adhere to have put additional stress on the children and the schools. The schools many times feel that they are teaching to the test and not providing a solid educational background for the children. Unfortunately many of these decisions are out of the hands of the local school districts.

The dysfunctional family has lead to many more problems with disruptive behavior in the classroom. One student can create a learning atmosphere that is negative for an entire classroom, but again the schools hands are tied on how this student can be disciplined. At times the school culture that the children are experiencing now is very scary for many children, especially when students bully other students. A variety of reasons for these problems stem from:

- ❖ Parental attitude
- ❖ Lack of parental involvement in their children's education
- ❖ Insurance liability
- ❖ Union issues
- ❖ Both parents working
- ❖ Exposure to the Internet

Some people feel that the abuse of drugs and alcohol in our region is the root of many of the problems plaguing our region, but many see it as a symptom or result of what is happening. There are a number of programs that are being offered in the region that if are successful will address these problems. Again as these problems increase the funding to address these issues is decreasing or in some cases disappearing. The social service agencies are being asked to handle more and more with less funding. Though the schools are seen as the center of a child's life in fact by the time a student reaches age 18 a student has only spent 1.7 years in school. The rest of their lives are either sleeping (6 years) or 10 years out of the 18 not in school and not sleeping. Therefore a school can only do so much.

The participants felt that activities that were not directly sponsored by the schools would be more beneficial. The activities being offered need to be driven by the students themselves. If they have a part in organizing an activity it is much more likely to be successful.

Suggestions:

- ❖ Support the programs in the county that have proven themselves (ex. Student Assistance Program and LIFE Treatment Programs, Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Children's Center, Parent Support Network)
- ❖ Provide stress and time management programs
- ❖ Support such programs as the Reality Tour dealing with drug abuse
- ❖ An ideal situation would be to have a person on staff for each school to handle mental health issues of the students, including grief counseling, crisis counseling and everyday anxiety student's exhibit
- ❖ Have the student leaders get together from each school (student councils)
  - to exchange ideas and thoughts
  - plan group activities
  - do co-dances together after events
  - to discuss what's on their minds

Another area under Educational Wellness was the physical wellness of our children and for that fact the adults in our region. The schools are now facing more restrictions with food size portions and what they are able to feed the school children. This unfortunately is not satisfying the students or the parents, but these are the state guidelines. The obesity problem facing many children and adults are from the poor eating habits and the lack of physical activities. Too many children and adults are too geared to sitting in front of a computer or TV and eating fast food. This issue has therefore been added to the plates of the schools to address.

Suggestions:

- ❖ More intramural programs that are not competitive and include activities that are life long activities (ex. swimming, racquetball, golf, bowling)
- ❖ Open up the schools and weight rooms after school hours for more physical activities
- ❖ Provide wellness activities that go between the school districts (ex. Walk-A-Thon to raise funds for a charity to provide a purpose to the activity, but is friendly competition, parent and children activities, 1,000 mile club, use of the Rails to Trails)
- ❖ Provide nutritional programs that are geared to parents and children
- ❖ Provide after school programs from 3:00-6:00 that incorporate physical activities, but are outside of the traditional school setting
  - Ex.: Boys and Girls Club in St. Marys; YMCA in Ridgway and the Community Center in Johnsonburg
- ❖ Bring in outside people to discuss health and nutrition issues

With the schools constantly struggling to make ends meet another area that is beginning to suffer are the cultural programs at the schools. Regrettably the art programs are usually one of the first to go due to the cost and in some instances lack of student involvement. Without the exposure to cultural programs on the local level some children are not fortunate enough to attend out of town programs that would broaden their horizons and possibly spur their interest to participate in musical or art activities. These are both areas that could be life long activities.

Suggestions:

- ❖ Provide more exposure to cultural programs
- ❖ Expand the Artists in residence programs

Though this sounds like a very negative report there are a number of very concerned parents and good students, but like in all situations the negative press gets most of the attention. Thus affecting and drawing the attention away from the conscientious students, the caring parents and the good that the schools districts are already doing. No solution is clear cut in handling the educational wellness in our region, but working together in a collaborative way could improve the Educational Wellness.

*Priority #2: Advancement of Technology*  
*(Level of difficulty: Medium)*

The Education Committee felt that technology and vocational education are directly tied together and one does not rank higher than the other. For this report technology will be addressed first, but not considered more important than vocational education.

It is felt that technology is becoming a basic skill and must continue to be addressed within the school setting. Technology is not going away and the students must have these skills to remain competitive in the outside world whether it is immediately going into the workplace after high school or going to college. With the advent of technology the globalization of the workforce is continuing to grow. In Elk County a number of people are working in careers for very large firms such as IBM and Dupont from their own homes. These professionals should be tapped to make our children aware of the advantages that are right here at their finger tips in Elk County.

Suggestions:

- ❖ Do career awareness news releases in the local papers
- ❖ Contact those individuals that have unique careers in our region to speak to the local students

Approximately 11 years ago the Stackpole Hall Foundation bought ITV (Interactive television) equipment for all of the school districts and the Community Education Council of Elk and Cameron Counties (CEC). In the beginning all of the equipment was used extensively, but as the equipment became outdated and the costs (line charges and maintenance contracts) began to rise many of the districts did not keep up with the change. At the present time the CEC, who purchased new equipment 2 years ago, and Ridgway School District, who is still using the original equipment the ITV equipment has been basically sitting idle in many of the schools. When the ITV equipment was originally purchased the only way to connect was by using ISDN lines, which is quite expensive. In addition to the monthly charge from the telephone company for the basic lines to provide the best quality call all 6 telephone lines should be used and at \$.19 a minute per line for long distance charges it can become a very expensive proposition in offering programming.

Recently though a broadband project with I.U. 9 will open up Internet II capabilities for all of the public schools in Elk County. This grant which involves Intermediate Units 8, 9 and 10 will provide the infrastructure that is needed to go to the next level with providing stable internet connectivity and the purchase of some ITV equipment. The St. Marys School District is also investigating the possibility of getting additional equipment for the Catholic High School located in the St. Marys school district borders. The lines for the new infrastructure will be provided to the high schools themselves, but then the schools are responsible for the wiring inside of the schools. This is where the concerns of the school districts take over. At this time this broadband project is only impacting one school in each district, therefore the other schools in the district are still using the older technology.

This broadband project can be a Catch 22 situation as the districts have to debate equipment vs. broadband vs. memberships. Though the broadband is definitely the next step where will the money come from for additional equipment, software and the required memberships? This project may also be beneficial to the Elk County communities in the future as the external lines will be laid for the advanced technology and possibly the private sector being able to take advantage of this service may come in time.

This capability also creates a problem for the connectivity level at home. Once the students get use to the advanced technology in the schools their homes may not be able to provide the same level of availability or affordability and there are still small pockets in our county that connectivity is not possible.

Some of the issues that need to be addressed with technology are:

- ❖ Software that is critical to be used with the computers is very costly
- ❖ On-line programming is available for student use, but again is very costly
  - Blendedschools.net ~ cost \$8,500 per year for 100 log-ons
  - Need the Blackboard platform to take advantage of some classes (not all computers have the necessary specifications )
    - Discussions have been held at some schools to require students to take one on-line course to graduate
  - Memberships that are needed to take advantage of various software programs are very expensive
- ❖ Hardware vs. memberships vs. software costs
  - All these components are costly and sometimes are impossible to do all at one time, definitely limiting the schools capabilities

With all the changes that have taken place over the past 8-10 years with computer technology many of the teachers are not prepared to handle the technology level that is now being required of them. Obviously some are embracing the changes, but many are not. Some of the obstacles to bringing the teachers up to par are:

- ❖ Lack of time to train teachers and keeping it simple
- ❖ Teachers prefer to rely on the simpler fail safe equipment
- ❖ Frustration levels with the failure of internet connections in the classrooms or computer labs
- ❖ The expense of training the faculty in the newest technology when it continues to change constantly

Suggestions to ease the technology burden on the individual schools:

- ❖ Pool the resources among the school districts to reduce expenses
- ❖ Share training for teachers among districts

The use of the Internet has created another whole set of concerns for the schools and parents. Even though the internet can prove to be an invaluable learning tool for students it can be dangerous. The schools block and filter internet sites as much as possible, but the technology staff at the schools can

only do so much. Many districts only have one person to handle all of the computers in their respective districts, which can be a major undertaking. On the home front most parents do not have the necessary knowledge to block offensive sites or know how to monitor their children's access to inappropriate contacts made on-line. This is an area that everyone felt strongly about and that it should be addressed. Teachers, parents and students need to be educated on the dangers of the internet. Though the children are probably much more adept on using a computer and the internet they are not always keeping themselves safe.

Suggestions to cover Internet safety are:

- ❖ Provide an in-service training for teachers on a county wide In-service Day
  - Potential programs:
    - InfraGard (this program is offered through the Department of Homeland Security)  
[www.infragrad.net](http://www.infragrad.net)
    - Larry Dombrowski  
Office of District Attorney (Erie County Courthouse)  
[ldombrowski@eriecountygov.org](mailto:ldombrowski@eriecountygov.org) or 814 451-6410
- ❖ Provide public programs on a county wide scale for parents and students

If the school districts wanted to start sharing classes among themselves using internet capabilities the costs could be substantially reduced and it would make the programs more affordable. Each district pays for the initial internet connection, but they would not be required to pay a per minute line charges. The main cost would be a bridge to allow multiple sites to connect at one time. Even though many of these technology suggestions seem to address the high school student only; once a good reliable system is in place in Elk County some areas could be adapted for the elementary and middle school students easily.

Technology is here to stay. The districts must work on including some of the expenses into their annual budgets without taking away the more traditional means of educating our students. Though technology is important it is felt that books are important and should not be overlooked.

*Priority #3: Vocational Education*  
*(Level of difficulty: Medium)*

There seems to be a major misconception of what vocational education is all about at this particular time. Not all students are meant to go to a 2 or 4 year colleges; vocational education is critical to our region. Many of the students that do not leave to go to college after high school are the students that remain in our area and need the necessary skills to become productive citizens. At this present time industry does not like to take a student coming directly out of high school due to the lack of a work ethic. This can have serious consequences if in the future the needs of vocational education are not addressed.

Vocational education is extremely important and many of the skilled areas are dying off due to the wrong perspective of the present students and parents. Vocational education is still a very viable field, but the quality of the students is not. Too many schools are using the vocational curriculum as a dumping ground for disruptive students. These students should be held to as high a standard as the students that are preparing to go to 2 or 4 year institutions.

Vocational education can be an expensive proposition for the school districts to offer, so collaboration among the three districts could be advantageous for all concerned. Though there are many logistical issues that must be addressed at some time they need to come to the forefront. As costs rise and our population decreases thinking outside of the box is going to become the norm.

Obstacles for vocational educational programs:

- ❖ The quality of the students enrolled in vocational education training needs to improve
- ❖ Students do not have realistic goals or models for a good work ethic
- ❖ Students are not getting the guidance and direction needed to educate themselves on what is available in our area
- ❖ There is a misconception of what vocational education is all about
- ❖ Too much emphasis is put on 2 or 4 year colleges
- ❖ Teachers lack awareness of the resources and workplaces in our region
- ❖ Students do not realize that there are good jobs in Elk County
- ❖ Certified teachers in the vocational programs are becoming difficult to recruit
- ❖ Vocational programs are perceived as not challenging when in fact they are very challenging and should be taken seriously
- ❖ Keeping equipment up-to-date is expensive
  - Resources are spread too thin and should be shared

Ways to enhance vocational education opportunities:

- ❖ Provide Teacher in the Workplace opportunities
- ❖ Develop Vocational Education Centers
- ❖ Industry needs to be more involved in vocational education
- ❖ Change the perception of what vocational education is all about
- ❖ Share resources among the school districts
- ❖ Discipline and a work ethic need to be stressed
- ❖ Eliminate disruptive students
- ❖ Family support
- ❖ Provide a co-op program with schools and industry
- ❖ Students need to work on interviewing, communication and speech skills
- ❖ Build values

Vocational education is not an area that can be ignored. Properly preparing a high school student for work will give students a jumpstart for the workforce or prepare them to succeed to go onto post secondary education if additional training is required. Plumbers, electricians, carpenters, truck drivers, welders, forestry careers, hospitality training, customer service jobs, tool and die makers, etc. are needed everywhere. If only the needs of a college bound student are addressed then our entire society will be changing and not for the better.

***Conclusion:***

The most obvious conclusion that came out of the meetings with the Education Committee and the focus groups are the benefits of collaboration among all of the county entities that are involved in the educational process in Elk County. Collaboration is key to everything being discussed and planned for the future of education in Elk County. All school districts realize that in order to reach their full potential working together with each other will make many areas attainable that in the past were not possible. The climate is right for such a venture from providing county wide programs for teachers, students and parents to dealing with the dangers of the internet and sharing resources, especially relating to technology. Things cannot remain status quo, as our county needs to think outside of the box and working on such areas will not be an easy accomplishment, but is something that will take a great deal of thought and teamwork.

***Process:***

The Education Committee for the Stackpole Hall Foundation met as a large group for the first time in February 2006. The group was a combination of public and private school personnel and parents from all of the school districts in Elk County, Dickinson Mental Health Center and the Community Education Council of Elk and Cameron Counties. These key groups of people were very influential in molding the focus of this report as they are the individuals directly involved in the educational process in our county.

During the initial meeting a brainstorming session was held with 22 items identified as areas of concern in the educational arena. The three key areas identified as the most critical were:

- Educational Wellness
- Advancement of Technology
- Vocational Education

Of the twenty two items identified seventeen were incorporated into the three key areas listed above. After these areas were identified the group of twenty was sub-divided into three committees. These groups were divided so that every school district had representation on each committee.

Every committee then met a couple of times to further dissect the area they were assigned and pulling from their expertise give further insight into each area. Kris Kronenwetter, Chairperson facilitated each meeting and took notes for every session. As shown in the report many of the areas overlapped with each other.

Before this final report was written a closing meeting was held with the committee members to evaluate the findings from the focus groups and review the findings from our original committee meetings.

# EDUCATION FOCUS GROUP BACKGROUND & HIGHLIGHTS

## BACKGROUND

Dewey & Kaye conducted three focus groups on May 15-17, 2006 for the purpose of eliciting community input on education issues, barriers and solutions in Elk County. Individuals who represented administrators of technology, vocational education and student wellness were invited. The groups were clustered so they would have a homogeneous make up. A total of 35 people attended. A listing of participants appears in the Appendix.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### I. What are the most critical issues in Education facing Elk County today?

► 49% of the participants felt wellness was the most significant issue facing education in Elk County. Wellness as it relates to the health of the family unit in which a child is living as well as the student's emotional, social, and physical wellness. Participants spoke about the impact of:

**Drug and alcohol use:** Addiction among parents and students.

**Emotional dysfunction** in the home.

**Emotional issues** displayed by students: There is a group of students in every school who disrupt learning for motivated students. Schools do not have the ability to hold a parent accountable for the student's actions.

**Stress on students** and family to manage competing demands and expectations.

**Both parents working to meet family needs:** It is difficult to get parental involvement in education because people work and do not have time.

The majority of the participants also felt that wellness is a more significant issue today than it was 10 years ago.

► The second most significant issue was technology (31%) as related to a basic competitive competency similar to math and spelling as well as having the resources to secure essential technology as a teaching and administrative tool.

THE STACKPOLE-HALL FOUNDATION  
STRATEGIC PLAN  
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
COMMITTEE REPORT

I. SITUATIONAL ANALYSES:

- STRENGTHS:
  1. Labor force (Work ethic; Availability of older, skilled workers)
  2. Tourism (Heritage; PA Outdoor activities; Hospitality of residents)
  3. Strong healthcare system (Employment opportunities; Patient care, ambulance service, long term care, etc.)
  4. School systems
- WEAKNESSES:
  1. Tourism (Lack of facilities, lodging, restaurants; Lack of continuous events)
  2. Parochial attitude
  3. Industrial diversification
  4. Labor force (Lack of future job opportunities)
- OPPORTUNITIES:
  1. Availability of incentive packages for manufacturing and commercial enterprises (State programs, NCPRPDC programs, local programs)
  2. Availability of land and buildings for development
- THREATS:
  1. Sale of land to the State of PA ( reduction of tax base)  
\* Note of clarification: The Game Commission has been purchasing land in the Jones Township area, which is reducing the tax base. This item is contradictory to the weaknesses; however, the reduction of the tax base is a real problem to the municipalities.
  2. Loss of business to off shore companies

II. ASSUMPTIONS DRIVING RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Majority of business and industrial growth comes from within the area
- Need to remain competitive in the global market
- Out-migration of youth
- Focus of community pride

### III. PRIORITIES BEING RECOMMENDED:

#### **NUMBER ONE PRIORITY:**

##### **Unified approach to Industrial Development**

- Communities and industrial/economic development agencies working together to bring industry to the county (i.e. if one community can not accommodate an industry refer them to another Elk County community)
- Update county information and brochures and put information on the county website
- Conduct a countywide inventory of vacant industrial buildings and available industrial park land

##### **Build upon the existing industrial base**

- Promote spin-off industry from present companies
- Provide information and education to public on a regular basis about starting your own business, where to find seed monies and the availability of monies
- Diversification of the industrial base, especially powdered metals
- Promote and support the upgrade to transportation systems

##### **Development of a volunteer group such as SCORE**

- Inform the individuals at the onset that the purpose is for them to utilize their life experiences to assist start-up businesses. There will be no fundraisers and very few meetings. Check with the APMI group for retired individuals.

##### **Conduct a business motivational seminar**

#### **NUMBER TWO PRIORITY:**

##### **Lack Of Unified Planning Strategy:**

- Development of a county-wide development strategy that would include education of the need for working together, communication between all entities and elimination of parochialism.
- Development of a program that would institute county-wide quarterly meetings for Chambers, IDA's, EDC's, TPA's, Historical Societies, ECCOTA, etc.
- Exploration of the formation of a county-wide chamber of commerce.
- Development of a centralized cultural center.

- Promote the development of a full time county Redevelopment Authority position
- Bring all industrial/economic development boards together to form a countywide board ( members of present boards would remain on the at-large committee, a smaller working board will be developed from the at-large board)
- Develop a countywide marketing plan, which would include industrial, cultural and quality of life. The plan would also include comparative information to other geographic areas such as crime rates, environment, etc.
- Promotion of the skilled workforce

**NUMBER THREE PRIORITY:**

- **Develop a unified approach to new housing opportunities**
  1. Develop townhouse style living for middle to upper income individuals
  2. Attract the baby boomer generation back to Elk County

**NUMBER FOUR PRIORITY:**

**Creation of a program that would utilize high school juniors and seniors to work on “community pride/beautification” projects in exchange for tuition assistance at an institution of higher education. This project would be similar to the PHEAA program ran by The Stackpole-Hall Foundation presently, however, the community would have to have specific projects to work on and the program would be directed towards those individuals who are looking more towards a craft or service sector job as opposed to a four year degree. The idea is to improve the Gateways of the communities and to fill the gap in craft/service workers, which has been recognized as a regional problem.**

**LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY:** It is our opinion that all of the above mentioned recommendations can be as easy or as difficult as those who would implement them would allow. They all would require coordination between numbers of entities.

**CONCURRENCE WITH FOCUS GROUP RESULTS:** The focus groups, although they did not specifically mention the committee’s assumptions, concurred with the committee’s findings. Education, planning and jobs were discussed in the focus groups, re-affirming the committee’s assumptions and priorities.

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOCUS GROUP BACKGROUND & HIGHLIGHTS

## BACKGROUND

Dewey & Kaye conducted three focus groups on May 15th and 16th for the purpose of eliciting community input on community and economic development issues, barriers and solutions in Elk County. The facilitator, Marilyn Coleman, used probing questions at her discretion and therefore these varied across groups. At the request of the Community & Economic Development Committee each group was centered on a separate topic, with the topics including:

- Industrial Development
- Community Pride
- County-wide Strategy

A total of 11 people attended. A listing of participants appears in the appendix.

## HIGHLIGHTS

**I. What are the most critical issues, related to economic and community development which need to be addressed in Elk County today? Even though the focus groups were organized around different subtopics, the following themes were common to all groups.**

► **Elk County education systems (school districts, vo-tech schools, the CEC) are a possible provider of solutions to core economic development problems.** Providing math and technology training, promoting an understanding of the benefits of civic engagement, and modeling cooperative programs were among the opportunities mentioned.

► **Solutions to community and economic development will require better cross-sector, and county-wide planning and communication.** All groups identified the need for industry, education, and government to work together to address issues related to workforce readiness, mentoring of students and entrepreneurs, and planning. Participants noted a lack of communication among education, government, industry that result in an inability to offer appropriate curriculum, utilize existing economic development resources and tap knowledge of successful business people. They also shared examples of collaborative projects that could catalyze future community and economic development.

► **Planning and decision-making need to be data driven.** During the discussions, there were many instances where statements made by one person or group were contradicted by the next. For example, some focus group participants believed that there were no good jobs in the area, while others cited data from surveys of businesses that indicated there were good jobs available but a lack of trained individuals to fill them. The need for reliable, timely data to drive strategies and decisions was emphasized.

# STACKPOLE-HALL FOUNDATION HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

## Human Services Committee Situational Analysis:

### STRENGTHS:

1. Faith-based programs/organizations support families/children.
2. School-based programs are available for children.
3. Home delivered services/Home care providers.
4. Numerous programs exist and serve varied populations.
5. There are directories of human service providers available for consumers (web based, printed manuals, brochures, community health fairs).
6. Certain “entitlement” services exist defined by state and federal mandates that meet specified needs.
7. The politics of certain population groups drive funding for those groups needs (examples: Senior Citizens, Faith Based groups).
8. Numerous groups exist and meet to focus on addressing a problem or issue within the service area.

### WEAKNESSES:

1. Human Service programs need to advertise and market programs better, consumers need to feel comfortable in accessing services.
2. Need awareness for consumers and among providers of each other’s services, single point of contact for information and referral is needed, avenues that exist for promoting service need to be kept up to date and advertised for consumers and providers.
3. Need stable base of funds to continue programs and services.
4. Certain “entitlement” services exist defined by state and federal mandates that may limit needed services.
5. The politics of certain population groups drive funding for those groups and may limit attention for the needs of other less vocal populations.
6. Limited/no local choice of providers of some services, yet duplication of some services occur.
7. Numerous groups exist and meet to focus on addressing a problem yet many members of the groups are the same individuals who are involved in other group meetings and sometimes the efforts of these groups become confused, disconnected, uncoordinated.

### OPPORTUNITIES:

1. A neutral agency (similar to a United Way) may provide a chance for the “Doers”, those who provide direct service, not necessarily administrators, to support and learn about community organizations and needs, and also serve to provide information and referral.
2. Facilitation of a web based information and referral site and promote the use of this.
3. Establish a local treatment facility for substance abuse that may meet the needs of consumers with drug and alcohol problems (for example a Methadone treatment facility).
4. Consolidation of three area United Way/Fund organizations into one Elk County group.
5. Establishment of a taxi service to answer the unmet transportation needs.

## **THREATS:**

1. Funding set/determined by state/federal politics not always relevant to rural local issues.
2. Politics.
3. Existing concept that “you can do more with less.”
4. “One size fits all” does not work. Can’t consistently adhere to the established rules for providing service or the rules for funding targeted to a specific population. These rules make providers tailor service to the needs of the funders and not the needs of the consumers.
5. The premise of working within a system that changes from “non-duplication of service” to “consumer choice” and then back again.
6. Dollars spent on substance use treatment is lost potential revenue to the local community because consumers must travel out of the area for service, while available funding to meet consumer needs is also decreasing.
7. Lack of “family supporting” jobs.
8. Sense of despondency, lack of motivation, lack of initiative, perception of lack of opportunity, all of which lead to the concept of Fatalism.
9. Low cost housing in Elk County communities that sometimes attracts health and human service dependent families.
10. At times some families know/learn how to manipulate the system.
11. Providers often do not focus on a strengths based approach and may not have the expectation that consumers will rise above and succeed.

## **ASSUMPTIONS DRIVING RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Some things within existing systems cannot be changed at a local level due to mandates and regulations imposed by higher levels of authority and given the expanse of the area and the needs of the population.
2. We have been meeting and talking about some of these same problems for years and we have not been able to address some of the issues to make improvements.
3. We’re not sure if substance use is a problem or if it is a symptom of a problem.
4. Measurable Outcomes indicating improvement over time from successful service, not just how many served and how often, have not been required by providers as a way to show accountability.
5. Issues relating to transportation seem chronic.
6. Insurance and liability concerns limit potential responses to some unmet needs.
7. Opportunities exist and room for improvement exist.
8. At times we “think we’re worse off than somewhere else” when in reality we would likely face similar or more difficult issues if we were somewhere else.
9. Laws, Regulations, Political Agendas, and Funding Constraints are too often beyond our control.
10. The scramble for funding is constant.
11. Human Service critical issues develop from instability of the family, and we assume that is a problem that will not go away over night.
12. Neutrality regarding a funding advocate, information and referral single point of contact does not exist.
13. Substance abuse treatment is better provided locally rather than further away from home and that resistance to a treatment facility within a local neighborhood will occur.
14. Length of time to get a psychiatric appointment is too long, transportation for the appointment is a problem for some consumers, and funding for family/child/ adolescent psychiatrist is not adequate.

**PRIORITIES BEING RECOMMENDED (CRITICAL ISSUES/NEEDS): listed in order of importance**

1. Family focused programs to include:
  - a. Parenting education, prevention information, budgeting, values and character building.
  - b. Mobile service delivery at sites within the communities of Elk County as well as home delivered services.
  - c. Family advocacy that leads to fostering independence.
  - d. Measurable program outcomes that show results other than just numbers served.
  - e. Quality child care and preschool programs.
  - f. Housing for individuals requiring personal care in a licensed facility.
2. Funding Advocate who is:
  - a. Aware of community needs.
  - b. Neutral.
  - c. Able to explore and disseminate information to the appropriate entities, opportunities about funding options to include foundation, grant, and fundraising possibilities.
  - d. Develop/determine/provide a stable source of local match dollars that are often needed in order to apply for more significant funding at the state or federal level.
  - e. Provide training and assistance for application submission for specific target groups, i.e., faith based.
3. Access to readily available, affordable, detox and long term treatment services to include methadone or other treatment modalities:
  - a. Need to determine the magnitude of heroin, meth, or other drug use to gain a better understanding of the needs/problems relating to treatment (transportation costs, MA reimbursement, unemployment costs, clinic costs).
  - b. Feasibility of locating a treatment clinic within the area (issues of locating a clinic within area and effects to the community).
  - c. Need to identify successful programs for long term treatment.
  - d. Need for changes in legislation or regulations regarding physician's ability to dispense medications for treatment.
4. Increased access to readily available, affordable, competent psychiatric/ psychological services.
5. Review and adjustment of transportation services for community residents that meet the needs of various individuals and groups that is affordable and convenient.

The Impact of these recommendations is targeted towards supporting and striving for successful, healthy, positive families across generations.

Committee members all agreed that the level of difficulty in meeting these Critical Needs/Priority Issues will be DIFFICULT and will be successful only when viewed over time.

## Synopsis of Human Services Committee Meetings

During the Stackpole Hall Foundation's Long Range Planning Kick Off Dinner, Committee members agreed to meet face to face to discuss the issues relating to Human Services. The process outlined by Dewey and Kaye was followed by the committee during meetings. Four committee meetings were held during the months of February and March 2006. Sheila Gross, clerical support for Luann Grieneisen (Committee Chair) from The Guidance Center, acted as the note taker and assisted in compiling the minutes for all the committee meetings. Previous meeting minutes were reviewed at each committee meeting and approved. Committee Meetings typically lasted 2 hours at a variety of locations throughout Elk County to accommodate travel for members.

Human Service Committee members met with Dewey and Kaye on April 13, 2006 to plan for the focus group discussions scheduled to be held during May 2006. It was determined that three groups consisting of Administrators, Direct Service Providers, and Consumers would be invited to participate in the Focus Group Discussions. Two members of the Human Services Committee attended each Focus Group discussion as observers only.

Upon receipt of Dewey and Kaye's Focus Group Report the Human Services Committee met and reviewed the report. On June 29, 2006 the committee drafted our Committee Report for the Stackpole Hall Foundation trustees. Email correspondence during early July served to facilitate suggested changes in the report from committee members and the final report completed with the accompanying supplemental attachments.

# HUMAN SERVICES FOCUS GROUP BACKGROUND & HIGHLIGHTS

## BACKGROUND

We conducted three focus groups on May 15-17, 2006 for the purpose of eliciting community input on human services issues, barriers and solutions in Elk County. Individuals who represented administrators of human services, direct service workers, or consumers were invited. The groups were kept homogeneous by those groups. A total of 41 people attended. A listing of participants appears in the Appendix.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### II. What are the most critical issues in Human Services facing Elk County today?

► **The destabilization of the family, neighborhood, and community.** 90% of the participants felt this issue was one of the most significant human service issues in Elk County. There are a number of aspects to this issue.

**Population loss:** The out-migration of young talent in pursuit of jobs put a structural flaw in the caretaker network within the family and the neighborhood. In addition, the population loss challenges agencies to recruit and retain essential talent to deliver services.

**Decline of decent paying jobs:** The loss of professional and/or manufacturing jobs causes both parents to work in order to care for their families. In single family homes economic realities create an even greater strain. Participants felt the result is:

- Parents have less time to be proactive in detecting and addressing mental health issues in the home.
- Parents are not able to care for their children and elders as they had in the past. Institutions, schools and substitute caretakers are raising other people's children.
- Societal stress is causing mental health issues such as depression, suicide, alcoholism, and drug usage that go untreated.

► **Funding cuts/limited funding.** The federal and state cutbacks have and will continue to place greater demands on staff to serve more people with fewer resources. Participants voiced the concern that stretching resources so thin has sacrificed quality. Additionally, administrators and direct service workers mentioned that precious time is being spent advocating in Harrisburg, taking away from resources that could go to direct services. Specific funding constraints were mentioned in the areas of mental health services, drug and alcohol, and Medicaid/Medicare.

► **Accessibility to Services.** Each group mentioned that they did not feel that services were being fully utilized. The reasons cited were accessibility, awareness, and the fact that "everybody knows everybody's business." Participants specifically mentioned various types of accessibility barriers that preclude the full utilization of existing services. These barriers include:

**Physical accessibility** in terms of location of services and structural access

**Community attitude** about individuals who access services

**Inadequate information and referral process** or vehicles make it difficult for people to find the service they need in an expedient manner and causes an extra demand on direct service workers and referral agencies to stay current on what is available.

**Poor public transportation** makes it challenging for individuals to economically and efficiently move across the county to receive services.

► **Drugs and Alcohol.** Every group mentioned drugs and alcohol as being both a root cause for the destabilization of the family and a result/symptom of the Elk County culture and/or mental health issues.

Stackpole-Hall Foundation  
Human Services Committee  
CTC Youth Survey Explanation

The Communities That Care Youth Survey (also referred to as the Pennsylvania Youth Survey) was administered in the three public and one parochial school in Elk County in 2001, 2003, and 2005. The survey is designed to be administered every two years with students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12. This allows for comparative data, over time, with the same cohort of students being surveyed throughout their high school years.

In 2001, the first year that the survey was available to local school districts, the population of students participating was smaller than when it was administered in 2005. The increase in the number of students surveyed is due to a better understanding of the process and how the data can be used by districts. One district uses active parent consent for student participation while the other districts in Elk County use passive consent.

Individual school districts receive their own report for their school. A county wide report with aggregate data from participating students, without individual schools identified, is available.

From 2000 through the present, this data and the Communities That Care process was used to identify needs, develop programs, and provide services for families in Elk County.

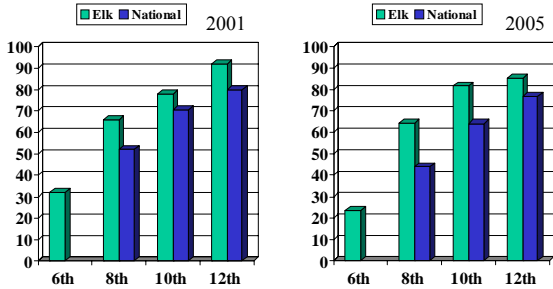
Attached is a summary comparison of the information available from the Youth Surveys over the period of time from 2001 through 2005. Complete county wide data is available upon request for each year the survey was conducted if further information is needed.

This summary comparison has been compiled by The Guidance Center as an addendum to the Human Services Committee report for Stackpole Hall Foundation. This information was not reviewed by the Committee prior to our meetings, nor was it directly referenced in any of our meeting discussions. Committee members did agree prior to submission of this report that the Youth Survey information should be included as an attachment.

Respectfully submitted,

Luann Grieneisen  
Program Director, The Guidance Center  
Human Services Committee Chairperson

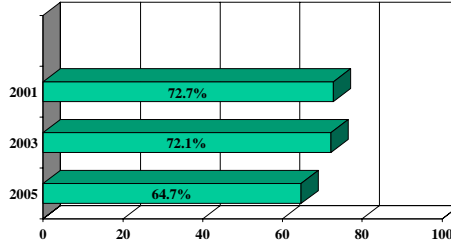
### Lifetime Alcohol Use



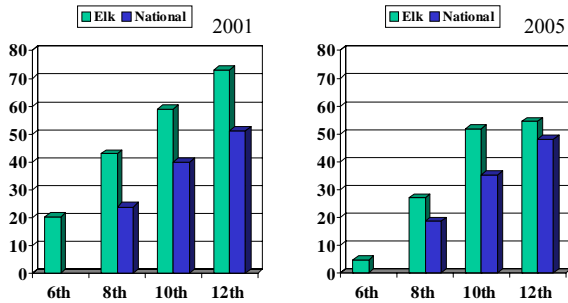
**72.7% of Elk Youth**

**64.7% of Elk Youth**

### Elk Lifetime Alcohol Use



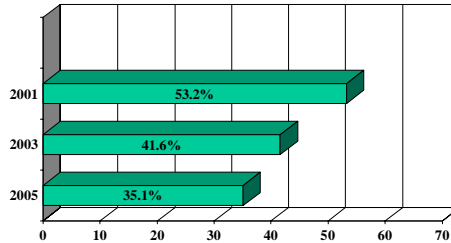
### 30 Day Alcohol Use



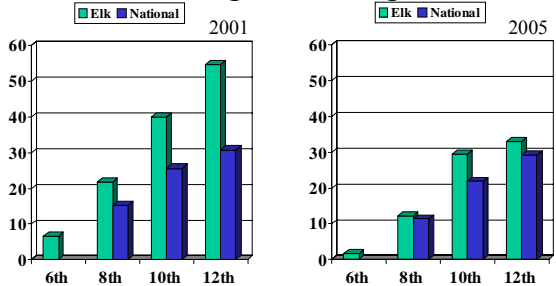
**53.2% of Elk Youth**

**35.1% of Elk Youth**

### Elk 30 Day Alcohol Use



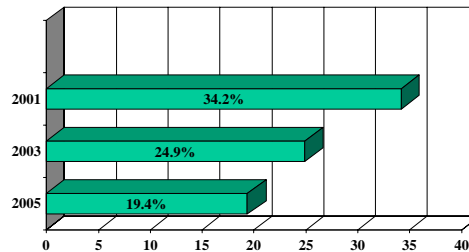
### Binge Drinking



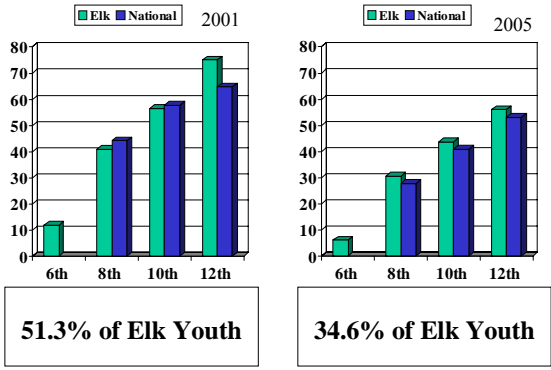
**34.2% of Elk Youth**

**19.4% of Elk Youth**

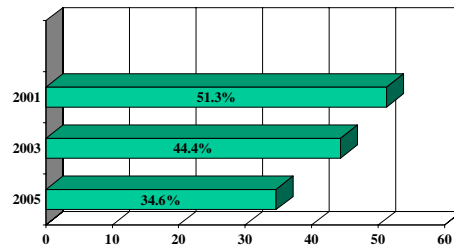
### Elk Binge Drinking



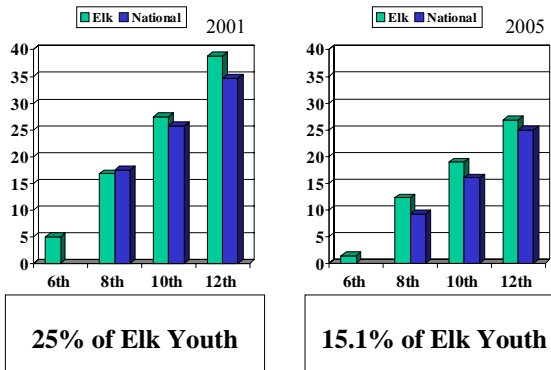
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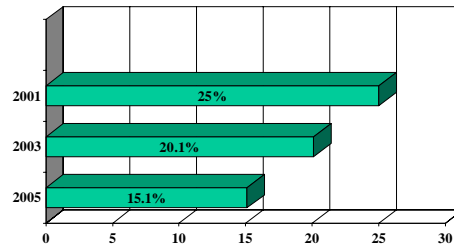
### Elk Lifetime Cigarette Use



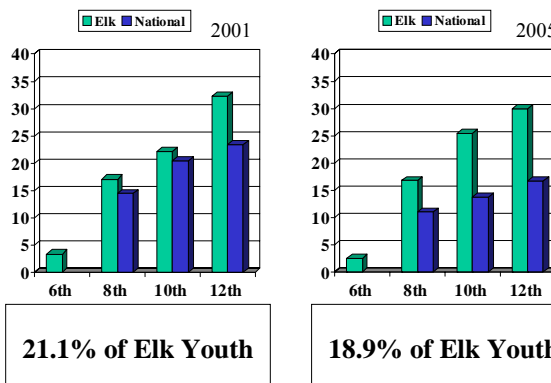
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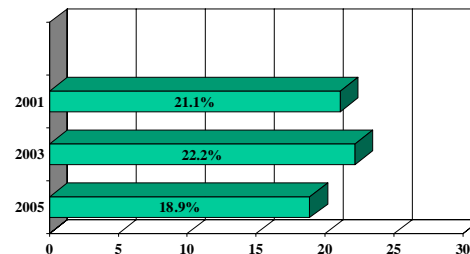
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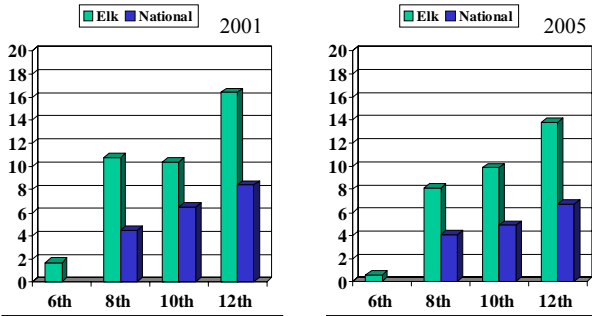
### Lifetime Smokeless Tobacco Use



### Elk Lifetime Smokeless Tobacco Use



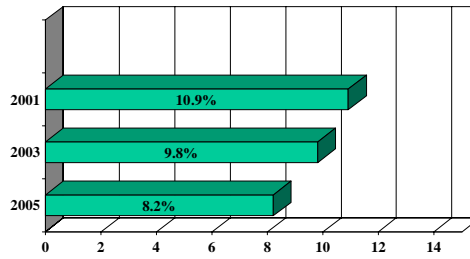
### 30 Day Smokeless Tobacco Use



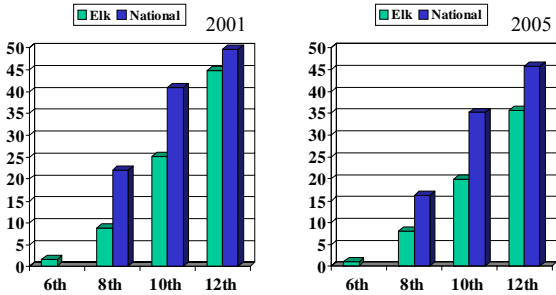
**10.9% of Elk Youth**

**8.2% of Elk Youth**

### Elk 30 Day Smokeless Tobacco Use



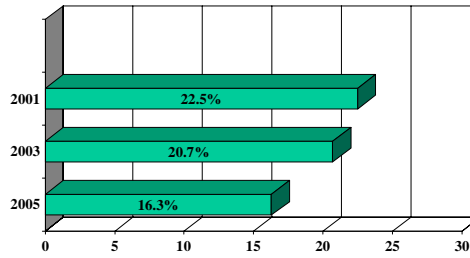
### Lifetime Marijuana Use



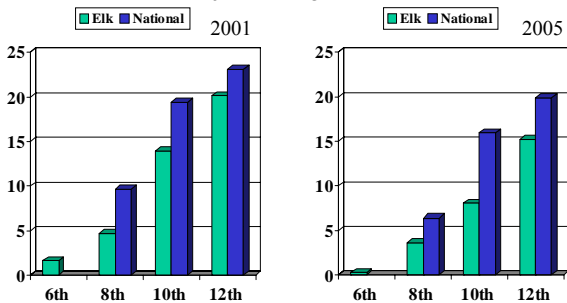
**22.5% of Elk Youth**

**16.3% of Elk Youth**

### Elk Lifetime Marijuana Use



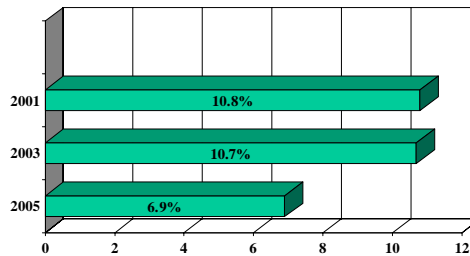
### 30 Day Marijuana Use



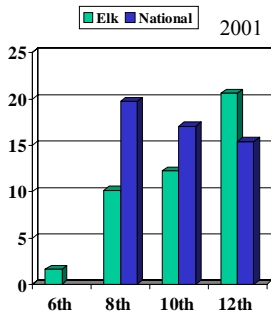
**10.8% of Elk Youth**

**6.9% of Elk Youth**

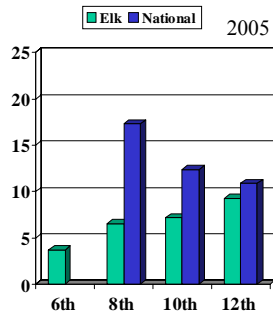
### Elk 30 Day Marijuana Use



## Lifetime Inhalant Use

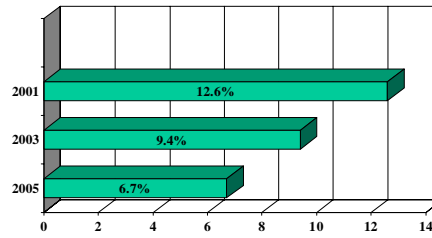


**12.6% of Elk Youth**

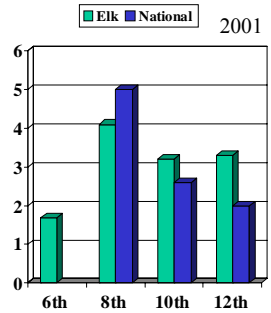


**6.7% of Elk Youth**

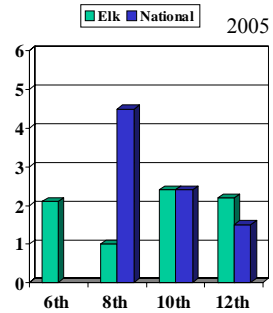
## Elk Lifetime Inhalant Use



## 30 Day Inhalant Use

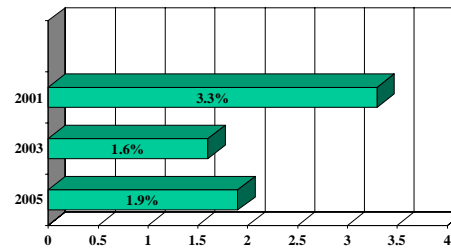


**3.3% of Elk Youth**

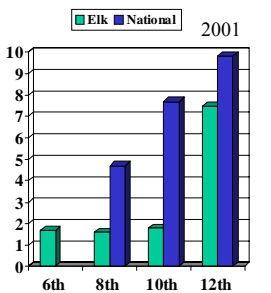


**1.9% of Elk Youth**

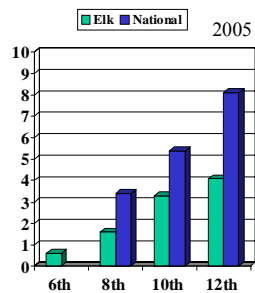
## Elk 30 Day Inhalant Use



## Lifetime Cocaine Use

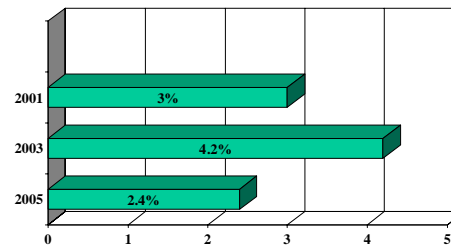


**3% of Elk Youth**

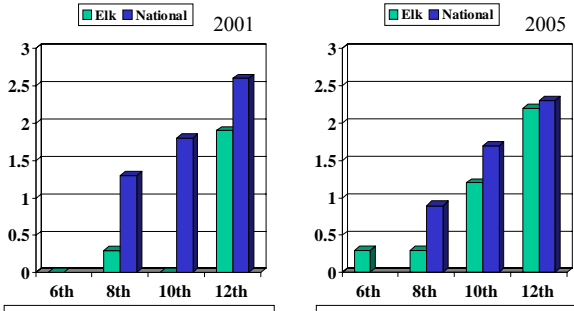


**2.4% of Elk Youth**

## Elk Lifetime Cocaine Use



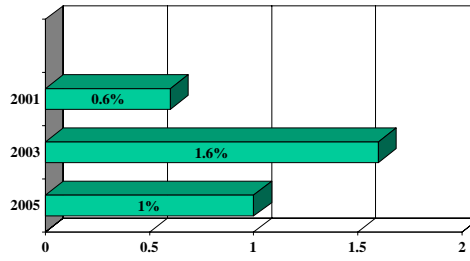
### 30 Day Cocaine Use



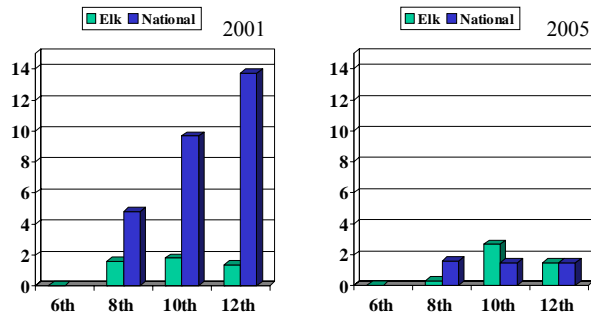
**0.6% of Elk Youth**

**1.0% of Elk Youth**

### Elk 30 Day Cocaine Use



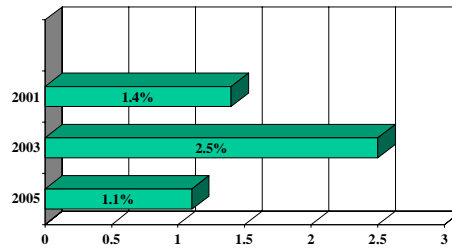
### Lifetime Heroin Use



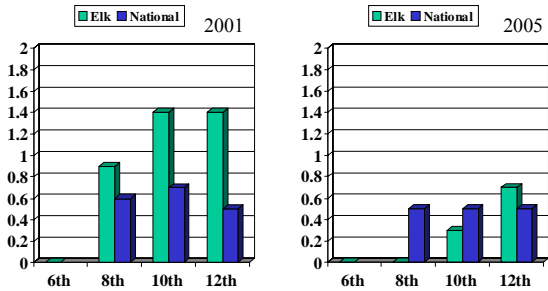
**1.4% of Elk Youth**

**1.1% of Elk Youth**

### Elk Lifetime Heroin Use



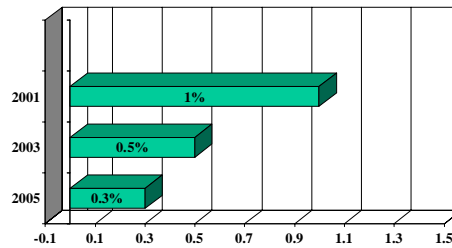
### 30 Day Heroin Use



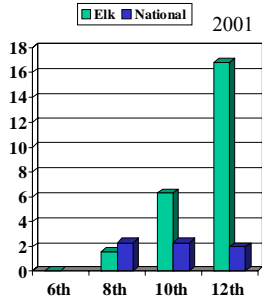
**1.0% of Elk Youth**

**0.3% of Elk Youth**

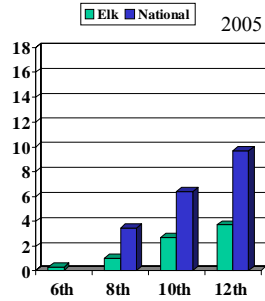
### Elk 30 Day Heroin Use



## Lifetime Hallucinogen Use

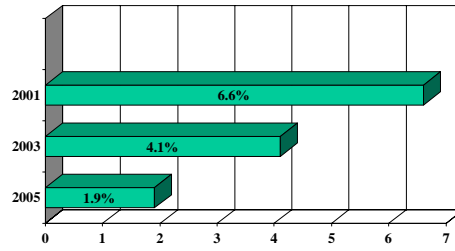


**6.6% of Elk Youth**

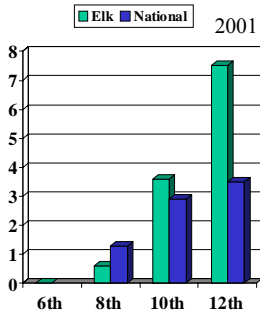


**1.9% of Elk Youth**

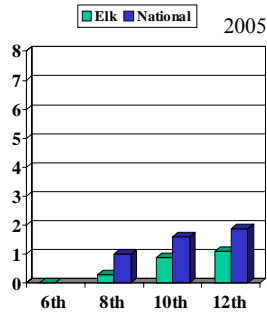
## Elk Lifetime Hallucinogen Use



## 30 Day Hallucinogen Use

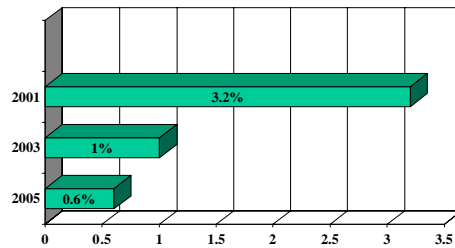


**3.2% of Elk Youth**



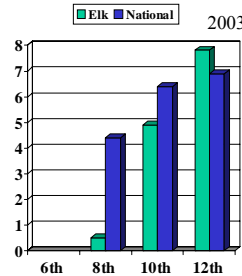
**0.6% of Elk Youth**

## Elk 30 Day Hallucinogen Use

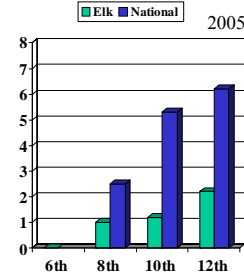


Drugs for Which we Only Have  
Two Years of Data

## Lifetime Methamphetamine Use

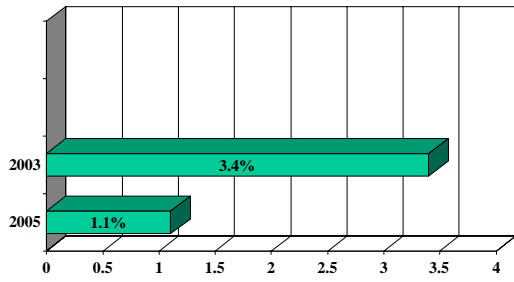


**3.4% of Elk Youth**

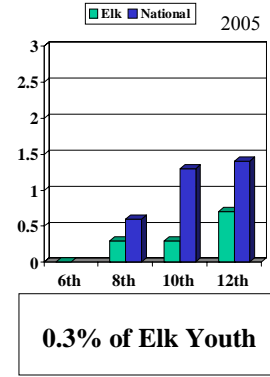
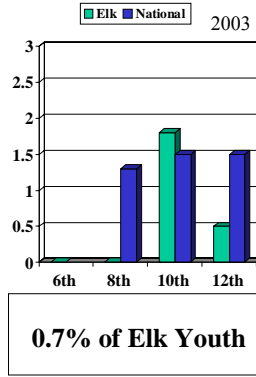


**1.1% of Elk Youth**

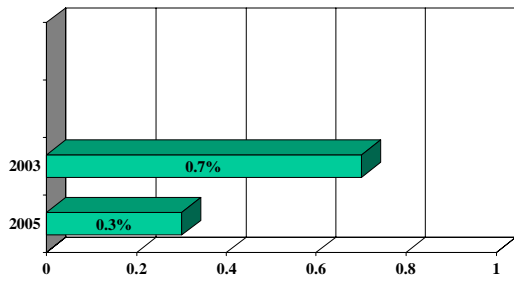
### Elk Lifetime Methamphetamine Use



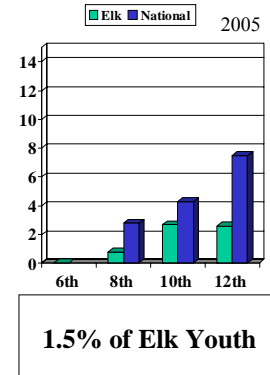
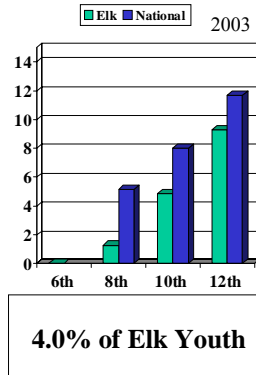
### 30 Day Methamphetamine Use



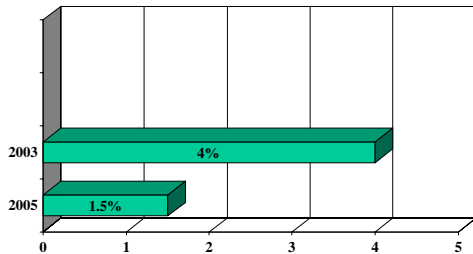
### Elk 30 Day Methamphetamine Use



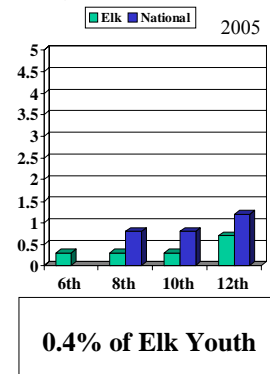
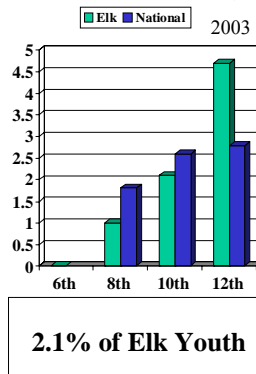
### Lifetime Ecstasy Use



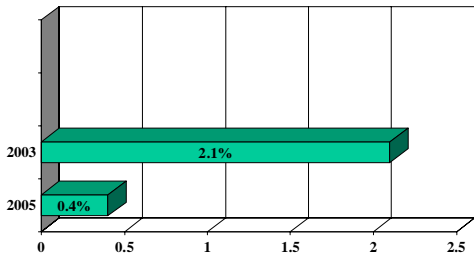
### Elk Lifetime Ecstasy Use



### 30 Day Ecstasy Use

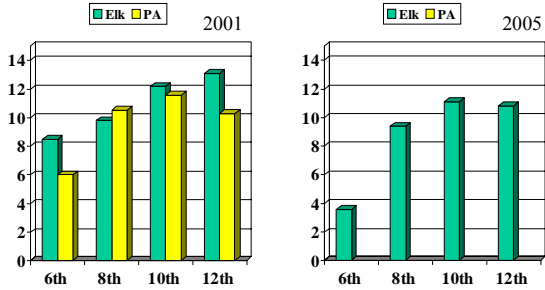


### Elk 30 Day Ecstasy Use



2001 Data Compared to PA  
Because National Data is  
Unavailable  
PA Data for 2005 Not Yet Available

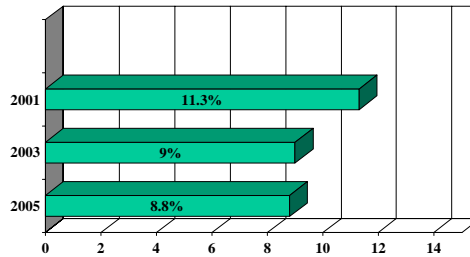
### Attack With Intent to Harm



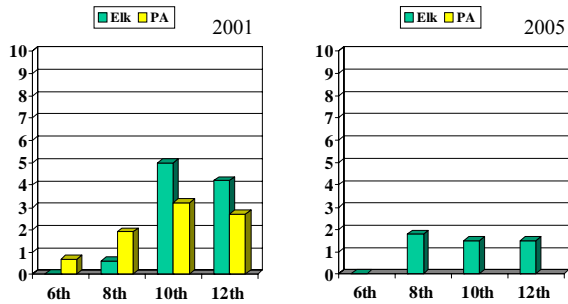
11.3% of Elk Youth

8.8% of Elk Youth

### Elk Attack With Intent to Harm



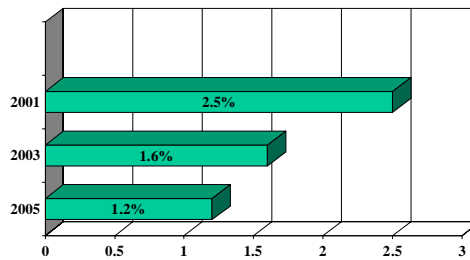
### Attempt to Steal a Vehicle



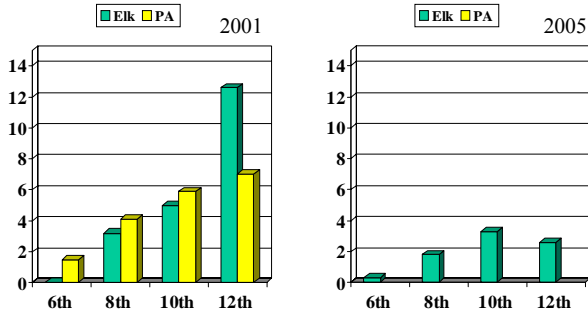
2.5% of Elk Youth

1.2% of Elk Youth

### Elk Attempt to Steal a Vehicle



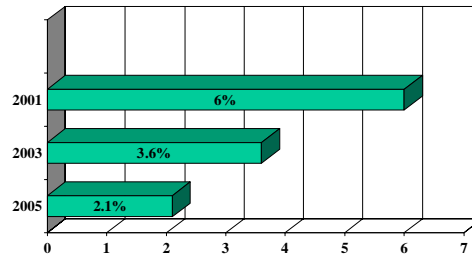
## Been Arrested



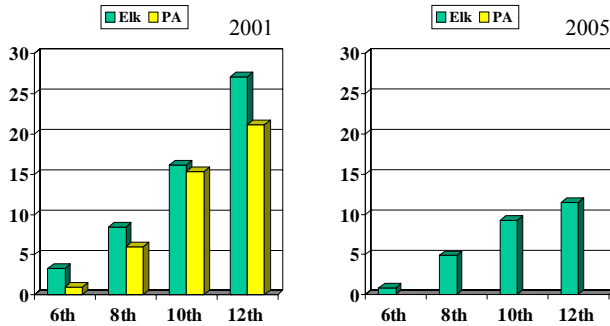
**6% of Elk Youth**

**2% of Elk Youth**

## Elk Been Arrested



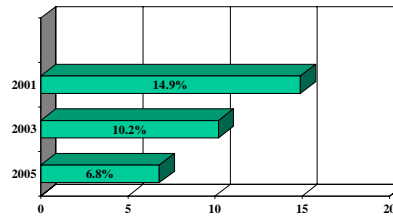
## Drunk or High at School



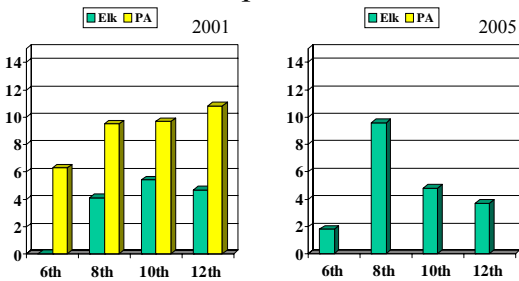
**14.9% of Elk Youth**

**6.8% of Elk Youth**

## Elk Drunk or High at School



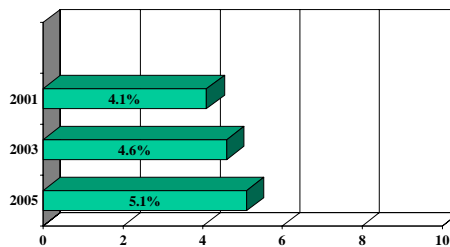
## Suspended



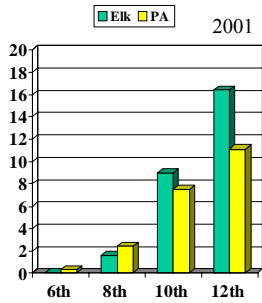
**4.1% of Elk Youth**

**5.1% of Elk Youth**

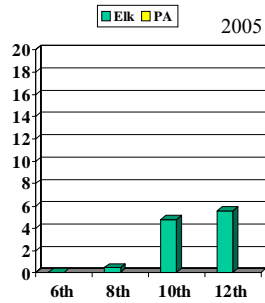
## Elk Suspended



## Sold Drugs

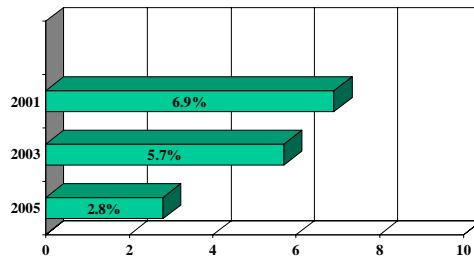


**6.9% of Elk Youth**



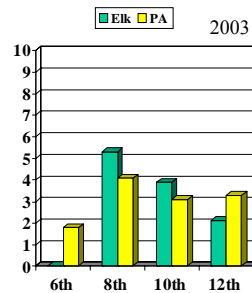
**2.8% of Elk Youth**

## Elk Sold Drugs

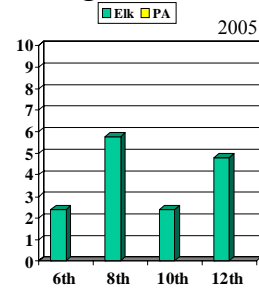


Antisocial Behaviors for Which  
we Only Have Two Years of  
Data

## Carried a Handgun

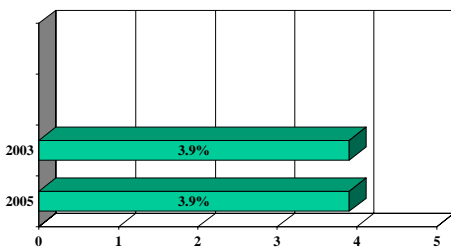


**3.9% of Elk Youth**



**3.9% of Elk Youth**

## Elk Carried a Handgun



## Elk Protective Factor Scores

50 = Average

Higher Scores Are Better for Protective  
Factors

## Elk Protective Factor Scores

Community Domain	2001	2005
Community Opportunities for Pro-social Involvement	Not Measured	66
Community Rewards for Pro-social Involvement	49	57

## Elk Protective Factor Scores

Family Domain	2001	2005
Family Attachment	47	57
Family Opportunities for Pro-social Involvement	45	56
Family Rewards for Pro-social Involvement	46	57

## Elk Protective Factor Scores

School Domain	2001	2005
School Opportunities for Pro-social Involvement	51	52
School Rewards for Pro-Social Involvement	46	53

## Elk Protective Factor Scores

Individual/Peer Domain	2001	2005
Religiosity	56	60
Social Skills	44	54
Belief in Moral Order	48	65

## Elk Risk Factor Scores

50 = Average

Lower Scores Are Better for Risk Factors

## Elk Risk Factor Scores

Community Domain	2001	2005
Low Neighborhood Attachment	56	43
Community Disorganization	53	53
Transitions and Mobility	32	43

### Elk Risk Factor Scores

Community Domain	2001	2005
Laws and Norms Favorable to Drug Use	Not Measured Same	55
Perceived Availability of Drugs		47
Laws and Norms Favorable to Handguns		51
Perceived Availability of Handguns		57

### Elk Risk Factor Scores

Family Domain	2001	2005
Poor Family Management	56	42
Family Conflict	Not Measured	51
Family History of Anti-social Behavior	52	44
Parental Attitudes Favorable Toward Anti-social Behavior	54	46
Parental Attitudes Favorable Toward ATOD Use	59	54

### Elk Risk Factor Scores

School Domain	2001	2005
Poor Academic Performance	54	42
Low School Commitment	60	49

### Elk Risk Factor Scores

Individual/Peer Domain	2001	2005
Rebelliousness	48	46
Friends' Delinquent Behavior	47	38
Friends' Use of Drugs	58	46
Peer Rewards for Anti-social Behavior	52	48

### Elk Risk Factor Scores

Individual/Peer Domain	2001	2005
Favorable Attitudes Towards Anti-social Behavior	46	41
Favorable Attitudes Towards ATOD Use	59	41
Low Perceived Risks of Drug Use	44	42
Early Initiation of Drug Use	52	46
Sensation Seeking	60	44

# HEALTH COMMITTEE REPORT

## I. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

### A. STRENGTHS

1. Strong, established, rural-based health care delivery system including in-patient care facility, long-term care facilities, home health and hospice agencies, and community-based agencies and services
2. Diverse Intervention Programs ( Drug & Alcohol Services, Dickinson Mental Health, CE MH/MR, AA, Healthy Beginnings Plus, WIC, etc.)
3. Involved Elk County Schools Systems (Keystone Healthy Zone)
4. Available local parks, programs and facilities
5. Caring communities, which are prime for family/child rearing

### B. WEAKNESSES

1. Lack of coordination/collaboration among service providers
2. Under-utilization of available services
3. Funding constraints impacting service delivery
4. Community acceptance of alcohol use
5. Lack of consumer knowledge re importance of a healthy lifestyle, including good nutrition and exercise
6. Lack of promotion and guidance locally regarding health careers and opportunities
7. Lack of adequate transportation services to access available services

### C. OPPORTUNITIES

1. Improve utilization of local schools re health education programs and health careers
2. Improve communication to the public re available resources
3. Increase collaboration and communication among service providers
4. Expand and promote wellness, exercise, and healthy-lifestyle activities, for both children and adults
5. More comprehensive collaboration among existing coalitions such as, Elk County Family Resource Network, North Central Health Care Consortium, PA Dept. of Health, SHIP, etc.

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HEALTH COMMITTEE REPORT

D. THREATS

1. Breakdown of the family unit
2. Declining pool of health professionals, especially nurses, mental health workers, and personal care aides
3. Increased incidence of chronic diseases (obesity, diabetes, etc.) and drug & alcohol abuse, both in children and adults
4. Funding cuts to service providers
5. Uninsured and under-insured individuals and families

II. ASSUMPTIONS

1. The development of integrated programs that promote a healthy lifestyle would lessen the burden of health care problems in children and adults, including: poor nutrition/obesity; prevention and management of chronic diseases; depression and suicide
2. Recruitment, retention and training of health care professionals and paraprofessionals are crucial to our continued ability to provide essential health care services successfully.
3. Alcohol and drug abuse have become priority issues facing our communities.

**III. PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS**

**A. Develop integrated programs that promote healthy lifestyles for both children and adults**

1. Description: Comprehensive, collaborative, county-wide programs and activities are needed that promote good nutrition, exercise, physical and mental health
2. Impact: Healthier lifestyles would: quell the alarming trend in childhood and adult obesity; prevent the early onset of chronic diseases, such as diabetes; improve self-esteem and mental health which would likely reduce the incidence of drug and alcohol abuse and suicide. The achievement of these goals would result in the reduction of health care costs.
3. Who: County and community leaders, health care providers, schools and employers are all vital to successfully implement this recommendation.
4. Level of Difficulty: The specific program/service targeted would determine the level of difficulty.

**B. Give priority to health programs/services that focus on prevention, early intervention and health maintenance**

1. Description: Programs that target disease prevention or early detection would derive the best long-term outcomes and would be the most cost-effective
2. Impact: Consumers would be motivated to take better care of themselves and seek medical intervention when health concerns arise.
3. Who: Health care agencies and providers, insurance carriers, employers would have to play a role in achieving this goal.

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HEALTH COMMITTEE REPORT

- 4. Level of Difficulty: While local health care providers and industry leaders recognize the importance of health prevention and maintenance programs, and have the willingness and ability to offer them, the difficulty is that little funding/reimbursement is available to support their efforts.

**C. Study the feasibility and/or implementation of establishing an Elk County comprehensive health planning organization**

- 1. Description: While Elk County enjoys the benefits of many good health care services, programs, agencies and resources, the delivery of care is often fragmented and un-coordinated. A county-wide planning organization would result in better coordination and utilization of services.
- 2. Impact: Providers and consumers would be more aware of all county resources available. Additionally, gaps in services could more easily be discerned and efforts directed collaboratively to resolve them.
- 3. Who: Health care organizations and community leaders would need to be involved.
- 4. Level of Difficulty: Organization and community parochialism and provincialism could make this recommendation difficult to address.

**D. Increase consumer education and access through the development of a Health Resource Advocate**

- 1. Description: A centralized source for health care information and resources will facilitate access. The Advocate could create a database of all health-related resources available to Elk County residents, perhaps establishing a county website, and/or a county Hotline. The Advocate could also play a role in researching funding opportunities to assist the County in developing or expanding health care services.

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HEALTH COMMITTEE REPORT

2. Impact: Consumers will be better directed to appropriate resources.
3. Who: Health care and community organizations would need to interact on this issue.
4. Level of Difficulty: Funding the Health Resource Advocate position could be problematic.

**E. Expand programs County-wide that promote health careers to students, both traditional and non-traditional.**

1. Description: a unified, county-wide effort is needed to focus on recruitment of individuals into health care fields. Increased education directed to middle-school and high-school students, as well as to adults, is needed to inform them of the staff needs and career opportunities of local health care providers. The success of HOSA and School-to-Work programs is a good model upon which to expand.
2. Impact: Students will be directed to a viable, life-long career. Providers will have adequate health care manpower
3. Who: Academic institutions would need to take the lead on accomplishing this recommendation.
4. Level of Difficulty: Expanding present programs is a workable starting point. Innovative ideas would take longer to develop. For the nursing profession, an additional impediment is insufficient education programs to satisfy the demand for those interested in nursing because of a lack of qualified educators.

STACKPOLE HALL – STRATEGIC PLAN  
HEALTH COMMITTEE REPORT

**IV. SUPPLEMENT**

**A. PROCESS**

The Health Committee researched and reviewed demographic and statistical reports and data on the county, state and national levels relating to:

1. Obesity
2. Chronic diseases
3. Fitness
4. Alcohol and drug abuse
5. Depression and suicide
6. Teen pregnancy
7. HIV/AIDS
8. Hepatitis C
9. Environmental impact on health
10. Recruitment and retention of health professionals

From this research, the Health Committee identified Three Key Issues and the Committee then defined the strengths and weaknesses relating to each Key Issue.

Three Focus Groups meetings were conducted by the consultants on May 16 and 17, 2006 to discuss the Health Committee's findings and validate and/or refute the Committee's assumptions. The conclusions of the Focus Groups confirmed the Health Committee's convictions on every aspect.

The Health Committee's final meeting concentrated on drafting its priority recommendations to the Stackpole Hall Trustees.

# HEALTH FOCUS GROUP BACKGROUND & HIGHLIGHTS

## BACKGROUND

We conducted three focus groups on May 16th and 17th for the purpose of eliciting community input on health issues, barriers and solutions in Elk County. At the request of the Health Committee each group was centered on a separate topic, with the topics including:

- Healthy Lifestyles and the Prevention of Chronic Disease
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse and Treatment
- Recruitment and Retention of Healthcare Professionals

A total of 31 people attended.

## HIGHLIGHTS

**I. What are the most critical issues surrounding healthy lifestyles facing Elk County today?** Because of the diversity of topics among the three groups, we did not expect to see many themes. We were surprised to find the following issues common to all groups:

► **Poor public transportation.** The lack of public transportation makes it difficult to get to playgrounds, exercise facilities and recreation activities. It is also difficult to transport to and from drug and alcohol facilities and providers. Finally, the lack of public transportation to and from healthcare facilities not directly located in your community is a concern in attracting and retaining healthcare professionals.

► **Deterioration of traditional families.** Changing family structures, combined with increasingly fast paced lifestyles, were cited as a factor in chronic obesity of children and adults as well as in drug and alcohol abuse. Changes in the size of families may also contribute to a declining population that affects recruiting and retention.

► **Use education systems as a source for a solution.** Having the schools teach more about diet and nutrition, increase the emphasis on exercise, teach about the effects of drugs and alcohol abuse, and spend more time talking about healthcare fields as a career choice were all cited by the groups as potential solutions. However, all groups acknowledged that the already over-crowded agenda of the schools does not allow for more time spent on any one subject. Groups recognized that individuals need to take personal responsibility for themselves and their children. Motivating people to take this accountability remains an issue.

► **Communication and collaboration.** All groups cited a need for more communication, especially to the public, about what services are available. There is a need for more collaboration between service providers and organizations in order to address the problems from a county wide perspective.

**Healthy People 2010**

A project managed by the Office of disease Prevention and Health Promotion and the US Dept. of Health and Human Services

Is a set of health objectives for the Nation to achieve over the first decade of the new century. It provides a framework for prevention for the nation. It's a statement of national health objectives designed to identify the most significant preventable threats to health.

In each area that they look at they set a goal to achieve.

Ex. Cancer death rate- goal is 159.9 per 100,000

County	2010	99-03	98-02	97-01	96-00	95-99
Elk	Goal					
<u>Diabetes</u>	45	70.9	70.5	53.8	89.0	94.8
<u>Cor. Heart Disease death rate</u>	166	168.0	167.7	170.8	184.2	199.1
		(levels had been decreasing, slight increase again in 99-03)				
<u>Stroke death rate</u>	48	59.6	61.1	56.9	59.6	66.1
<u>Cancer death rate</u>	159.9	192.4	199.5	203.7	316.4	220.8
<u>Lung ca death Rate</u>	44.9	56.1	56.0	58.5	60.0	61.4
		-when you look at only females, they have met the 2010 goal but the numbers of deaths from lung cancer are rising.				
<u>Breast ca death Rate</u>	22.3	25.0	27.3	28.5	33.6	40.3
		-strikes 1 in 7 females nationwide. According to tumor registry, it it's the most frequently diagnosed cancer at ERHC				
<u>Colorectal ca Death rate</u>	13.9	16.5	18.4	19.4	19.7	22.1
<u>Prostate ca Death rate</u>	28.8	28.9	27.6	32.1	40.2	39.5
<u>Motor vehicle Death rate</u>	0.8	3.1	1.0	1.2	3.4	DSU
		(Per 100 million)				

Miles traveled)

-Elk co. has the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest rate in the state

<u>Motor vehicle</u>	9.2	24.5	26.7	28.1	32.6	27.5
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Death rate

(age adjusted to  
2000

Std pop)

(per 100,000)

-Elk co. is 8<sup>th</sup> highest in the state

<u>Death rate for Alcohol Related MVA</u>	4	9.2	11.5	14.4	16.7	14.4
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-only 11 counties have rates higher than Elk (67 in all)

<u>Cirrhosis</u>	3.0	11.0	9.5	DSU	DSU	DSU
------------------	-----	------	-----	-----	-----	-----

Death rate

-we are tied with 4<sup>th</sup> highest county in the state

<u>Suicide</u>	5.0	11.9	14.0	13.3	12.9	14.9
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Fetal death Rate(20wk+)	4.1	6.2	8.0	6.7	5.6	6.9
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Perinatal Death rate (up to 6 Days of age)	4.5	7.3	9.6	8.2	8.1	8.9
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<u>Neonatal</u> Death rate (0-27 days Of age)	DSU	DSU	DSU	DSU	DSU	6.0
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<u>Infant death</u> Rate (under 1 yr)	4.5	5.6	5.9	DSU	6.1	7.5
---------------------------------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Postneonatal death rate(28-364 days) and ages 1-4, 5-9, 10-14 all DSU

<u>Adolescent</u> Death rate (15-19)	39.8	DSU	138.3	155.1	154.8	146.7
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? highest rates in state and then DSU?

Adolescent death rate (20-24) -highest in the state	49.0	213.1	171.7	174.2	154.0	126.2
%low risk mothers c-section	15	28.3	22.8	24.1	18.1	25.0
%infants low Birth rate (<2500gm)	5.0	7.2	5.7	6.4	6.5	6.5
%infants VLBWt. (<1500gm)	0.9	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.7	1.7
%preterm Live births (<37wks)	7.6	8.8	8.3	8.8	8.4	8.4
%live births (32-36eks)	6.4	7.4	6.7	7.3	6.5	6.7
%live births (<32wks)	1.1	1.4	1.6	1.5	1.9	1.7
%live births To nonsmoking Women -6 <sup>th</sup> lowest in state	99	70.2	74.2	74.6	76.1	76.5
Pregnancy rate (ages 15-17) -3 <sup>rd</sup> lowest in state -we are well below 2010 goal	43	10.8	11.6	13.4	15.7	17.7.

In none of these areas except teen pregnancy has Elk co. met it's goal

US Census Bureau  
Uninsured in Elk Co 2000 2,147 (insured-32,615)  
(all ages)



THE HOSPITAL & HEALTHSYSTEM ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA

**ELK REGIONAL HEALTH CENTER  
Summary of Estimated  
Economic Benefit to Region's Economy**

Variables	Hospital Only <sup>1</sup>	Ripple Benefit in Region's Economy <sup>2</sup>	Total Benefit
Total Spending (Output)	\$47,447,702	\$32,999,877	\$80,447,579
Salaries	\$20,992,171	\$9,268,043	\$30,260,214
Employees (FTEs)	601.15	339.95	941.10
Average Salary	\$34,920	\$27,263	\$32,154

1) Hospital data from Medicare Cost Report for fiscal year ending 06/30/04.

2) Based on regional economic multipliers from Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce, RIMS II Multipliers for hospital industry.

**Summary of Estimated NORTHWEST Region  
Economic Benefit of the Hospital Sector**

Variables	Hospital Only	Regional Multiplier <sup>1</sup>	Ripple Benefit in Region's Economy	Total Benefit
Total Spending <sup>2</sup>	\$1,653,798,898	1.6955	\$1,150,217,134	\$2,804,016,032
Salaries <sup>3</sup>	\$720,489,364	1.4415	\$318,096,054	\$1,038,585,418
Employees <sup>3</sup>	19,335.00	1.5655	10,933.94	30,268.94
Average Salary	\$37,263		\$29,093	\$34,312

Total Region Employee (All Industries)<sup>3</sup> \$385,140

1) Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce, RIMS II Multipliers for hospital industry.

2) U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Hospital Cost Report Information System, data used from most current Medicare Cost Report available or Fiscal Year 2005 Hospital Cost Report and Health System spending reported to HAP.

3) Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry, Center for Workforce Information and Analysis, based on Second Quarter 2005 preliminary data, as of February 2006.

Prepared by The Hospital & Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania as a supplement to, and in conjunction with "Pennsylvania Hospitals: Partners for Economic Prosperity," Spring 2006.

May 2006  
HAP ID: 499

## Culture Committee Report for the Stackpole-Hall Foundation

The cultural situation in Elk County is mixed at best. Perhaps first a definition of culture as the committee used the term would be helpful. We discussed not only the fine arts and music, the usual disciplines that come to mind when discussing culture but also crafts, heritage, history, and ethnicity. There are a goodly number of organizations and individuals active in all these areas. This is the great strength of culture in Elk County. The great weakness is that only a very small fraction of the population avail themselves of the many opportunities available. For example, a free concert in an easily accessible location is well attended if it draws 40 people. An historical presentation with 60 people is considered successful. The insularity of the small communities that make up Elk County means that no one from St. Marys attends an event in Johnsonburg and no one from Bennetts Valley goes to Ridgway, for all practical purposes.

Thus, the great opportunity lies in that it is not necessary to do more, it is only necessary to get more people to attend these events, whatever kind. And this begs the critical question: how do we get more people to attend cultural events in Elk County? We are well aware of some of the reasons people have for not attending. In no particular order we would list them thusly:

1. Community insularity – that is, not going to other communities despite the short distances involved.
2. A social status misperception – many people think cultural events are only for other groups, wealthy folks, educated people, out of towners, anyone but themselves.
3. A general lack of appreciation of culture – there are several sources for this, the area's emphasis on sports, both athletic and field sports, the technical or practical education that predominates, lack of exposure to the arts in the schools, the intrusiveness of television as the entertainment medium of choice.
4. And finally, the one area we feel that something can be done – despite having 2 regional, 2 daily, and 3 weekly newspapers, 4 local radio stations, and 3 cable TV providers, it is still difficult to publicize an event. The organization doing the event is left to do the publicity and that is often an afterthought to the business of actually putting on the event. All groups seem to work without connection to each other and thus cannot take advantage of each group's network of interested people.

The major threat to attendance at local culture events is probably television. Another is that many folks choose to do their recreating in family groups. Parents and grandparents are more likely to use their discretionary recreational time to watch their children or grandchildren do something than to attend any kind of cultural event with strangers. This is reflected in the higher attendance for a school band concert than a professional music concert. Watching children do something has become the away from home recreation choice for many people. The Internet may also be a factor that keeps people at home rather than out attending events with other folks. That is difficult to measure however.

Our assumptions that drive our recommendations are these. We assume more people would enjoy cultural events if we could get them to attend. We assume more of them would attend if we could inform them better. We assume that if we can get one person to an event and they enjoy it, they will bring along another the next time. And perhaps the great assumption underlying all of this is that the people of Elk County actually are interested in culture in its many forms and would enjoy the opportunities presently provided. Of course, if any or all of these basic assumptions are wrong, then very little can be done to change the way things are now.

We identified three priorities that could further cultural participation in Elk County. The first is getting the word out to more people. By fostering cooperation between groups and by providing aid in publicizing events, we believe attendance and involvement can be increased for the present variety of cultural events provided in Elk County. Some of these things can be done relatively easily. One example might be a list available to all groups with the fax numbers of the media, the names and numbers and email addresses of contact persons in all kinds of groups, a listing of places willing to place posters, and so on. This could well be a part time job for someone to develop and implement such a list. And it would be very easy to accomplish if it was someone's job to do so. All the information exists, it only needs to be gathered in one place and then broadcast to anyone who could use it.

A second priority would be to introduce children to the various kinds of culture. We know this would be more difficult in an area where one football team has more funding than the entire arts program in four school systems. Is it better to have a child's limited art class devoted to cutting, pasting, coloring, and drawing or is the child's development better served by seeing and hearing and participating? Should a child graduate from high school without ever having seen and learned about the Mona Lisa, the statue of David, and Guernica? Should a child ever graduate from high school without having heard and learned about Mozart, Gershwin, and yes, even the Beatles. We think it is important that such things be taught. It would go a long way to change the perception that art is not for everyday folks. Of course, art and music curriculums are always strapped for time and resources. And the decisions about such are made by administrators who serve constituencies who may feel strongly about a different allocation of resources. So this priority will likely be very difficult to implement.

And finally a third priority would be to use modern technology to facilitate exposure to culture. The Internet is a powerful medium for passing along culture. One can see the great art of the world with a few mouse clicks. We think it is possible to make local culture as easily available. This goes back to the first priority, letting people know what is out there. More locally oriented content on the World Wide Web could be a more cost effective way to expose people to culture. The impact of this would be hard to measure in the short run but it is relatively easy to do. Support for organizations wishing to avail themselves of this new technology would be a first step. And as above, things get done when it is somebody's job to do them.

## CULTURE FOCUS GROUP BACKGROUND & HIGHLIGHTS

### BACKGROUND

Dewey & Kaye conducted three focus groups on May 16th and 17th for the purpose of eliciting community input on issues related to culture and the arts, and the barriers that need to be addressed to improve the quality of the cultural life in Elk County. A total of 13 people attended. A listing of participants appears in the Appendix.

Two individuals brought documents that shared their ideas about issues related to culture and the arts. Copies of these documents are included in the Appendix.

### HIGHLIGHTS

**I. What are the most critical culture and arts issues that need to be addressed to improve the quality of life in Elk County?** The many specific ideas and projects identified by these three focus groups fall into several broad categories:

**Infrastructure and technical assistance for the arts and culture are underdeveloped.** The resources necessary for producing, presenting, and promoting cultural activities (trained personnel, appropriate spaces, equipment/supplies, information channels) are not sufficient for cultural activities to thrive throughout the County.

**While the participants in the focus groups were largely individuals directly involved in the arts (e.g. artists, art teachers), many did not seem to know each other, or were unfamiliar with each others' work and accomplishments.** Cultural communities thrive when those in the field have opportunities for networking and sharing knowledge. Artists are natural entrepreneurs, but need collaborators to help organize events, exhibitions, and public arts projects. Opportunities for networking and sharing of information need to be fostered.

**The community lacks spaces that are identified as cultural centers.** Focus group participants expressed a considerable interest in renovating existing spaces (the local movie theater) or building a new multi-purpose cultural facility. They noted that there are not appropriately equipped spaces for cultural activities; the spaces that are used are frequently not available when needed, and are not known by the community as places where cultural activities occur. They felt that the existence of a cultural center would build awareness and participation in culture and the arts. Marketing experts concur that “the four p’s” — price, product, promotion, and *place* – must be appropriate and of a quality that would attract potential attendees.

**Education is identified as a key element to removing barriers to arts attendance and participation.** Individuals develop an appetite for cultural activities early in life. Studies by Americans for the Arts and others have linked the decline of arts education in the schools to lack of participation in the arts and culture later in life. Focus group participants suggested a variety of formal and informal culture and arts education ideas that they believed might begin to address this issue. They also noted that other leisure activities and events that draw participation by local residents (e.g. outdoor and sports activities) might be teamed with an arts offering to provide exposure to arts and a point of entry for those who might otherwise not seek out cultural events.

Stackpole-Hall Foundation  
Committee on the Environment  
Final Report

I. Situational Analysis

Strengths

- knowledgeable leaders in local government and industry who work directly with environmental issues
- infrastructure (water and sewer)
- public lands
- area seen as “pristine” (perception)
- ongoing sponsorship/facilitation of projects by environmental/conservation groups and clubs

Weaknesses

- education
- lack of cooperation/understanding at local government level
- funding shortfalls (unfunded mandates)

Opportunities

- new and renewed dialogue between public and private sectors
- eco-tourism
- new sources of grant money for watershed projects
- sustainable development
- bettering quality of life

Threats

- sins of the past
- competition for dollars
- change in state priorities
- unregulated growth (industrial, commercial, residential)

II. Assumptions driving recommendations

III. Priorities being recommended

1. Education

- a. raise awareness of environmental issues
- b. modify people’s everyday behavior
- c. this subject touches all members of the community and was listed as the top environmental issue by our three focus groups.
- d. level of difficulty varies. Public education campaigns will be easier to facilitate than educating, for instance, the development sector about green building practices.

2. Managed use of natural resources

- a. best utilization with least/minimal impact resource recovery/resource renewal

- b. Impact is on all watersheds in county
  - c. Managed use would directly affect timber and mining industries as well as oil and gas industry
  - d. Level of difficulty: difficult
3. Non-point source pollution
- a. Run-off from Farming and highways, leaking aging infrastructure
  - b. Impact is on watersheds, public health
  - c. Minimize sources of fugitive contamination/public and private sector involvement necessary
  - d. Level of difficulty: difficult
4. Other issues impacting watersheds/water quality
- a. Acid mine drainage, acid rain, wildcat sewers, industrial discharges
  - b. Impact is on health, recreation, economic development; this subject was also one of the focus groups' top environmental concerns
  - c. Involvement by federal/state/local governments, citizen groups, private sector
  - d. Level of difficulty: varies depending upon issue

# ENVIRONMENT FOCUS GROUP BACKGROUND & HIGHLIGHTS

## BACKGROUND

We conducted three focus groups on May 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> for the purpose of eliciting community input on environment issues, barriers and solutions in Elk County. A total of 22 people attended. A listing of participants appears in the Appendix.

One of the group members came prepared with a power point presentation that she wanted to show the group and when informed that the time allotted did not permit this, requested that we provide her comments and views as an attachment to this document. This letter to the committee can be found in the appendix.

## HIGHLIGHTS

Consensus among the three groups about the environmental issues in Elk County included the following:

### **I. What do you perceive as the top environmental issues in Elk County?**

- ▶ Environmental education and awareness
- ▶ Acid mine drainage
- ▶ Acid rain
- ▶ Dumping
- ▶ Ground and surface water
- ▶ Impact of tourism, urban sprawl, and other development

### **II. Some common solutions suggested by all groups to address these issues:**

- ▶ Increase in better environmental education at an early age within schools
- ▶ Better media coverage and communications to raise public awareness about environmental issues
- ▶ Funds for maintenance of solutions – it is easy to get a grant to solve a problem, but it is the on-going maintenance of that solution that is usually under-funded.
- ▶ Understand and expand on current best practices

### **III. Some unique solutions suggested:**

- ▶ Find a way to motivate change. Use behavioral examples to prompt community citizens to take personal responsibility.
- ▶ More “green” jobs that focus on cleaning up the environment
- ▶ Comprehensive, improved planning for the entire county instead of for individual communities
- ▶ Environmental awareness programs in workplace (some participants felt that reaching employees where they worked would have a bigger impact)
- ▶ Share best practices through a pollution prevention industry roundtable.

### **IV. Suggestions cited regarding current best practices and successes that could be expanded across the county:**

- ▶ Specific watershed projects
- ▶ Specific programs in schools including the windmill project and Greenhouse
- ▶ Recycling programs
- ▶ Paper mill clean-up

**THE STACKPOLE HALL FOUNDATION**  
**COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS 2006**

**HEALTH COMMITTEE**

Betsy Roberts, Chairperson  
Greg Bauer  
Dr. Rosemaria Cienciva  
Elizabeth Fitch  
Andy Lehman  
Carol Longhi  
Mary Jane Oknefski  
Barb Paul  
Dr. Robert Schmidt  
Paulette Schreiber  
Bert Sorg  
Dr. Maurus Sorg  
Frank Straub  
John Yates  
Cindy Zembryki

**CULTURE COMMITTEE**

Jamie Phipps  
Ray Beimel  
Bill Bauer  
Chris Gankosky

**ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

Becky Titchner, Chairperson  
Bob Bauer  
Thad Sorg  
Tina Gradizzi-Gnan  
Jeff Adams  
Kim Lanich

## **HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Luann Grieneisen, Chairperson  
Debbie Dubler  
Deb Fehrenbach  
Ron FinGado  
Major Karen Garrett  
Leona Garris  
Andy Hathorn  
Pastor Luke Nelson  
Bill Orzechowski  
Ken Straub

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

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Dave Greene  
Jim Abbey  
Ron Holmberg  
Matt Quesenberry  
Dan Freeburg  
Warren Stewart  
Hud Caldwell

## **EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Kris Kronenwetter, Chairperson  
John Kowach  
Sandy Florig  
Mary Agnes Marshall  
Sue Bon  
Gary Elder  
Bill Connelly  
Linda vonHacht  
Rita Buhite  
Diane Buehler  
Walt Fitch  
Dennis Crotzer  
Charles Charney  
Murrey Neeper  
Ann Kearney  
Pam O'Leary  
Jane Crowe  
Gwen Hoffman  
Jen Dippold  
Patti Vollmer  
Heidi Eshbach

## Appendix B- Focus Group Participants

### Education Focus Group Attendees

Jeff W. Adams  
Dave J. Allegretto  
Christine L. Bressler  
Butch J. Casilio  
John M. Cerroni  
Shaun L. Charles  
Charles M. Charney  
Chuck D. Cleaver  
Robin J. Dagher  
Brian F. Donahue  
Don E. Frank  
Ted J. Hanes  
Derek W. Hansen  
Andy Hathorn  
Kris Hauber  
Jim W. Hoffman  
Dave J. Imbrogno  
Jack R. Kelly  
Brock F. Leitzel  
Steve M. Luckenbill  
Karen L. Moyer  
Lee A. Neureiter  
Jason Nussbaum  
Deborah D. Pontzer  
Alice Ann C. Robinson  
Jim A. Smith  
Char Snelick  
June H. Sorg  
Jill H. Struble

### Community and Economic Development Focus Group Attendees

Scott A. Berlucchi  
Charlie Constable  
Michael F. DePanfilis  
Mike Faulk  
Donna Kilhoff  
Donald J. Masisak  
Kathy Mosier  
Jamie D. Phipps  
Rick Viglione  
Ken R. Wolfe

## Environmental Focus Group Attendees

Bonita Auman  
Russ Braun  
Ed Burkett  
Robert Coppolo  
Sarah Dickinson  
John Dzemyan  
Randy Gradizzi  
Bob Imhof  
Lad Kornacki  
J. Barry Mayes  
Dennis Murray  
Murray Neeper  
Priscilla Phillips  
Rudy Pollino  
William Sabatose  
Paulette Schreiber  
Dave Stubber  
Kurt Thomas  
Ann Vollmer  
David Zilkofski  
Heather Zuraski

## Culture Focus Group Attendees

Karen R. Brown  
Jeffrey L. Buchheit  
Jim P. Burke  
Sally Geyer  
Susan P. Goetz  
Suzanne M. Herr  
Mark J. Hoffman  
Michael E. Lecker  
Lisa Lepovetsky  
Paula M. Micale  
Mary E. Polaski  
Lynda M. Pontzer  
Carla A. Wehler

## Health Focus Group Attendees

Bill Allenbaugh  
Marlene Bauer  
Charlotte Beimel  
Jill Casilio  
Yvonne Challingsworth  
Carey Colgan  
Leah Dippold  
Stephanie Eckstrom  
Tena Emmert  
Lisa Fiorentino  
Christine Gavazzi  
Lindie Gnan  
Andy Hathorn  
Libby Herbstritt  
Mark Hoffman  
Ray Jablonski  
Crystal Karenchak  
Donna Kilhoffer  
Robin Kuleck  
Randy Louden  
John Lovett  
Mary Marshall  
Laura McCartney  
Paula McMackin  
Jay Patankar  
Paul Snyder  
Michele Spence  
Jill Struble  
Chris Sweeney  
Ellen Taylor  
Don Wilhelm

## Human Services Focus Group Attendees

Mary L. Bellotti  
Racquel R. Brechtel  
Dusty Byham  
Todd Caltagarone  
Cindy M. Carnessali  
Ann E. Caskey  
Cindy A. Cortinovic  
Pamela J. Cousins  
Mary A. Detwiler  
Billie Diehl  
Jennifer M. Dippold  
Crystal L. Etaliano-Garthwaite  
Jennifer M. Fannin  
Brenda Gaffey  
Lindie Gnan  
Joe W. Goetz  
Lynne D. Grimm  
Yolanda R. Jeselnick  
Crystal M. Karenchak  
Ron N. King  
Mary B. Kucenski  
Andy C. Lehman  
Karen A. Lewis  
Jack T. McDonough  
Robert A. Mecca  
Mary S. Meyer  
Rhonda M. Mosier  
Clark F. Pearson  
Martha J. Poague  
Julia K. Reitz  
Amelia A. Smith  
Dave L. Steele  
Joanne G. Straub  
Catherine A. Straub  
Julie A. Uberti  
Rick Viglione  
Georgia W. Wagner  
Billie Jo Weyant  
Cynthia N. Zembryki

## Appendix C - Handout

### Letter from Paulette Schreiber to the committee

One of the most important and challenging problems facing the environmental committee is the lack of understanding of the public regarding the connection between their health and the environment. This connection is not just the link between some well known conditions such as the link between asbestos or smoking and lung cancer. The effects of the environment stand to affect our health in *ways that we could never imagine*. We all know that there is some linkage between cancer and the environment. Almost every day we hear that someone new that we know has cancer. It's so prevalent that many think that we are a "hot spot" for cancer here in Elk County. If that is so, the statistics don't show it. Our incidents are somewhat higher in some cancers than other areas of the state: and we have yet to meet the 2010 goals as set by the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion and the US Dept. of Health and Human Services for many types of cancer, but *we are not alone*. One in 2 men and one in 3 females will face a cancer diagnosis sometime in their lives. Due to it's prevalence in general, however, cancer is a concern to the citizens of Elk county. Take breast cancer for example. In 1940 1 in 22 women were afflicted with breast cancer. Today that number is 1 in 7. What happened? Is it genetics? Actually less than 1 out of every 10 cases of breast cancer occur in women with a genetic disposition for the disease. So why are so many women getting breast cancer? But the problem isn't just breast cancer. Rates of prostate cancer have risen almost 75% from 1973 to 1999. Rates of Hypospadias, a birth defect of the penis, testicular cancer, and cases of un-descended testes have increased. Neurological problems including ADHD and autism have risen significantly in the past 3 decades. Two thirds of the population are overweight. Children who are overweight have tripled among school-age children, doubled among teens, and now affects 1 in 10 infants and toddlers. Once established, obesity is difficult to treat. Using breast cancer as the example again, there are many established risk factors breast cancer including early menses, late menopause, alcohol, lack of exercise, late or no pregnancy, history, and radiation. Because these risk factors cannot account for the devastating increase in breast cancer prevalence over the last few decades, scientists have been looking elsewhere. Since breast cancer rates are highest in the industrialized nations of North America and northern Europe, while the lowest are in Asia and Central Africa, the proliferation of synthetic chemicals since WWII has become suspect. An estimated 85,000 chemicals are registered for use today and another 2000 are added each year. More than 90% of these have never been tested for their effects on human health. Suspected risk factors for breast cancer include passive smoking, pesticides, metals, paints, electromagnets, solvents, and plastics. Evidence from experimental, animal and human studies show evidence implicating the environment as a cause. Human data is best, but often difficult to obtain. Studies of women's chemical body burden, however, show that all of us carry pollutants in our body, many of which have been linked to mammary tumors in animals. Two decades of research has shown the inadequacy of the belief that "the dose makes the poison". We now know that the timing, duration, and pattern of exposure are at least as important as the dose. Low dose exposure at a critical time in development can cause permanent damage to organs and systems.

Increased exposure to estrogen is a well known risk, linking the start of menses at an early age, late menopause, and obesity (our fat cells make estrogen) with breast cancer. Just as scientists have known that estrogen increases risk of breast cancer, scientists have known for some time that estrogen is involved in insulin regulation and insulin resistance.

Some chemicals in the environment actually change the way that estrogen is metabolized by the body and increase the amount of estrogen that is synthesized. These chemicals that mimic the actions of estrogen are called endocrine disruptors. There are many estrogen disruptors and they are everywhere including make-up, hairsprays, detergents, to name a few. One endocrine disruptor, namely bisphenol A, has been shown to cause changes in behavior (hyperactivity, aggressiveness, impaired learning, altered sexual behavior, decreased maternal behavior,

increased susceptibility to addiction to drugs like amphetamine), changes in brain chemistry, changes in sexual dimorphism, changes in formation of synapses in the brain, early puberty, reduced sperm count, prostate cancer, impaired immune function, decreased anti-oxidant enzyme levels, increased embryo mortality, spontaneous miscarriage, and Downs syndrome. More recent evidence has shown that they actually increased insulin resistance which may lead to weight gain and diabetes. Although most of these studies have been done on animals and we must act on facts, this does not mean we must wait for certainty.

In 2003 San Francisco passed the Precautionary Principle stating that the public has the right to know about safe purchasing, and government has a duty to evaluate policies regularly based on developing science.

The environment's effect on health stands to affect a number of the problems we face as a county. We have touched upon its link to cancers in the area. The Health Committee for the Stackpole Hall committee identified 3 main problems facing our area. These include the (1) management of chronic disease as it relates to the obesity epidemic, (2) addiction problems in the area, and (3) the retention and recruitment of professionals. The environment stands to affect all three of these areas. Although the sedentary American lifestyle and the typical American diet are two major contributors to the dramatic rise in obesity, there very well may be other factors at work which may help us to understand much more about obesity. Because they may increase insulin resistance, endocrine disruptors for example, may help to explain why even so many toddlers (who are always on the go and only eat until they are full), are now obese. Since they also have been also linked to behavioral changes and increased susceptibility to drugs addiction, perhaps they are contributing to our high rates of addiction both to drugs and alcohol. Although the environment does not deter the retention and recruitment of professionals, our area is well known for its outdoor activities such as fishing and hunting. If we expanded upon that and created an island of "green living", we may attract a certain number of health conscious individuals.

To improve the environment in Elk County a number of items have been brought to the table by the environmental group. Air quality has been listed as one such area, and this must include indoor air quality, which is often worse than outdoor. Making Elk County smoke free would be a good start. Hospitality workers working an 8 hour shift in a smoky bar or restaurant get the same exposure to smoke as if they had smoked a pack of cigarettes. Brownfield redevelopment has taken place in areas of the county as a means of improving the local environment, but we must expand upon that and create more "green" buildings. Since the hospital is the largest employer in the area, and is, for many local residents, their connection with health, this would be a good place to start.

Education of the public regarding the link between health and the environment is key.

We must make it personal, so that *each resident understands the potential impact on them as well as their families*. The schools may be able to provide some education, but the schools are already overburdened, being asked to do more and more for our children with less and less. We must educate our adults as well, especially our expectant mothers, as to the dangers that lurk around

83

them. But education is not enough. We must arm them with alternative ways of living and enable them to make healthier choices in their lives.

The environmental focus group felt that our past actions in the county are catching up with us.

We must consider this saying:

"With every deliberation we should take into account the effects on the next seven generations" the great law of the Iroquois Confederacy.