

Lewis County 2013 Comprehensive Plan

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Lewis County 2013 Comprehensive Plan

Developed by the Lewis County Planning Commission.

Assisted by the WVU Extension Service.

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Introduction

Authority and Adoption

Chapter 8A of the *West Virginia Code* finds that a locality's subdivision, land development, and zoning ordinance should be consistent with a comprehensive plan. This is the first comprehensive plan prepared for Lewis County. As such, it is expected to serve as a benchmark against which future changes can be measured.

Related to this, §8A-1-1(b)(5) of the state code recommends governing bodies in West Virginia adopt a comprehensive plan. Then §8A-3-3 sets the responsibility of preparing the comprehensive plan with the planning commission. Furthermore, §8A-3-4(c) lists 13 mandatory components of a Comprehensive Plan:

- Land Use
- Housing
- Transportation
- Infrastructure
- Public Services
- Rural
- Recreation
- Economic Development
- Community Design
- Preferred Development Areas
- Renewal and/or Redevelopment
- Financing
- Historic Preservation

All of these elements except Financing are discussed in their own sections within the plan. Meanwhile, a discussion on Financing is found in each section.

Next, §8A-3-8 describes the process by which the governing body – the Lewis County Commission – must adopt the plan. The planning commission prepares and forwards the plan to the County Commission before it can be considered. As part of this process, §8A-3-6(c) requires that the planning commission receive input from various elements of the community during the preparation of a comprehensive plan. To that end, the Lewis County Planning Commission held five public meetings in March-April 2012 prior to developing this plan. The planning commission held the public hearing on the plan required by §8A-3-6(a) in **2013** and submitted it to the county commission. The county commission held its public hearing required by §8A-3-7(c) in **2013** and then approved it in accordance with §8A-3-8(a). Finally, the commission filed the plan in the office of the County Clerk, as required by §8A-3-9 on **2013**.

Background

Communities

There are many communities in the unincorporated portions of Lewis County. The Comprehensive Plan is designed to guide growth and development in planning in these communities over a period of ten years. The comprehensive plan will reflect the desire for a sustainable, rural environment and effective growth management. Comprehensive plans serve as documents that establish long-term goals and objectives that will assist the County in carrying out the visions of its citizens. Citizens were engaged throughout the planning process in a variety of ways. Input was provided through town hall meetings and surveys. Themes for the Plan were developed based on community input on what is considered most important for their community's future (Table 1). The themes were further translated into specific goals and strategies. The county will use the policy statements within this document to guide day-to-day decisions relative to funding opportunities and development/redevelopment issues. Comprehensive plans are not static documents; they are guides that must be reviewed and revised in light of changing conditions.

Table 1: Community Conversation Themes

Community meeting	Date	Theme
Jane Lew Park Building	March 21, 2012	Better infrastructure; Bicycle trails – on old RR bed (rail trails); Cleaner properties; Recreation complex; Place making; Historic preservation; Improved entries and gateways
Ireland Community Center	March 27, 2012	Infrastructure connectivity; Growth; Diverse employment base; workforce training; Housing improvements; Economic development
Horner School Building	March 29, 2012	Retirement community; Safety; Land-use regulations
St. Boniface Church (Alum Bridge)	April 3, 2012	Better infrastructure; Place making, Renewal of urban areas; Preserve rural character; Preservation
Lewis County Senior Center (Weston)	April 5, 2012	Preserve rural character; Economic development; More youth activities Place making; Cleaner properties; Zoning ordinance; Mining activities.



County Vision

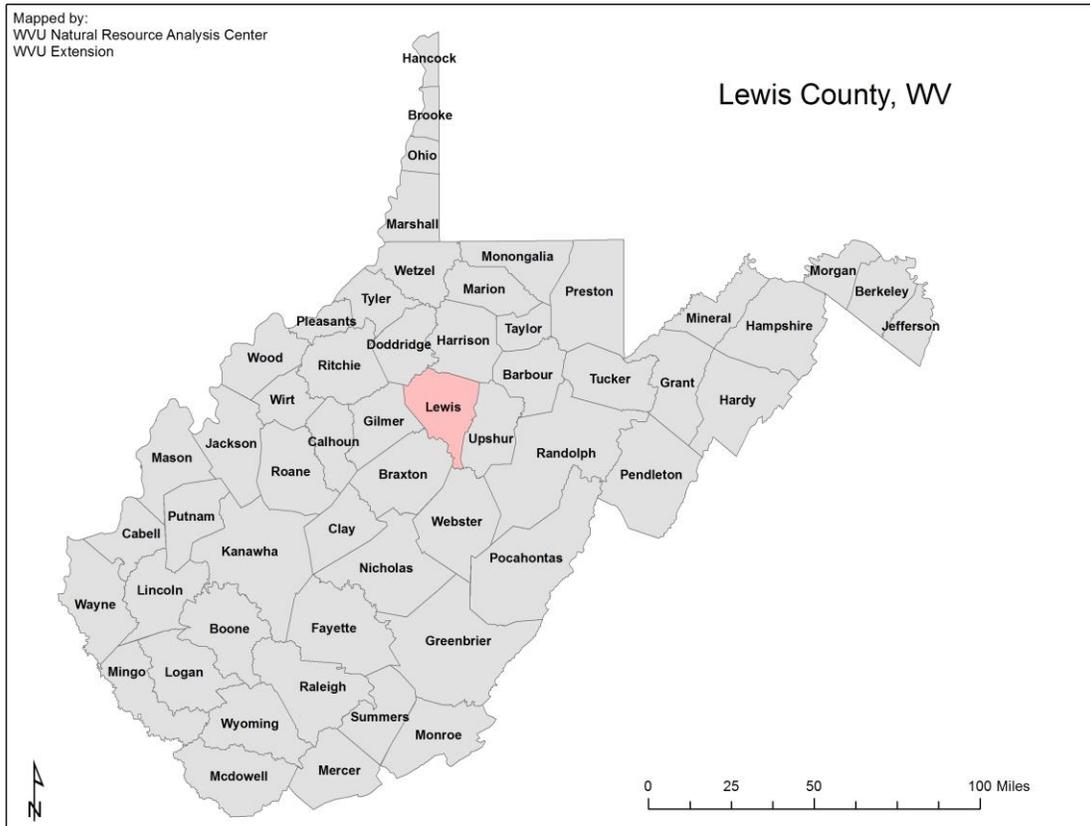
Lewis County is a rural county with thriving small-town communities within it. People want to live, learn, work, visit, shop, and play in Lewis County because the economy and neighborhoods support a comfortable lifestyle for residents from all walks of life. Key goals provide a framework for decision-making. Taken as a whole the specific objectives and actions defined in this plan support the principles below. As decision-makers face questions that were not answered through this planning process, keeping these key goals in mind can keep Lewis County moving on track toward a common vision.

1. ***Local character builds regional economies*** – Keeping investments circulating at home and attracting new resources grows the economy. Jane Lew, Weston and the whole of Lewis County function as one economic unit.
2. ***A thriving community makes the strongest foundation*** – While the plan assures choices for living, working, shopping and playing in a variety of contexts, it also recognizes that local neighborhoods comprise the community’s vital center. Economic and civic life thrives where a critical mass of citizens can comfortably walk to a variety of destinations.
3. ***There is a place for everything, and everything has its place*** – There are time-tested models for appropriate development approaches in a range of environments, from the most rural lands, through suburban neighborhoods, to the center of the community. So planning strategies should acknowledge those separate environments and maximize choices compatible with connectivity and sustainability.
4. ***Affordable living includes housing, transportation, energy, recreation, and shopping*** – True community affordability depends upon leveraging value across the full array of housing, transportation, energy, recreation, and retail sectors. Infrastructure investments and development policies should employ strategies that balance affordable options for a variety of family sizes, incomes and life cycle stages.
5. ***Working together creates bigger opportunities*** – Lewis County and the surrounding area are connected economically, environmentally and historically within a larger community. They form the core of a broader area which has a linked highway transportation system, shared services, joint economic development and even some regional-level planning. Similarly, the county and its municipalities can accomplish more together than on their own.



County Profile

Map 1: Location of Lewis County



County Background

Lewis County West Virginia is located in north central West Virginia. It is bordered by Harrison County to the north, Upshur County to the east, Webster County to the south, Braxton County to the south and southwest, Gilmer County to the west, and Doddridge County to the northwest (Map 1).

The county has two municipalities: the City of Weston is the county seat and is located near the center of the county while the Town of Jane Lew is located in the northern edge of the county. There are also many unincorporated communities located within the county, including Aberdeen, Alkires Mills, Alum Bridge, Arnold, Aspinall, Bablin, Bealls Mills, BenDale, Bennett, Berlin, Brownsville, Butchersville, Camden, Churchville, Copley, Cox Town, Crawford, Deanville, Duffy, Emmart, Fink, Finster, Freemansburg, Gaston, Georgetown, Gillooly, Homeland, Homewood,



Horner, Hurst, Ireland, Jackson Heights, Jacksons Mill, Jacksonville, Jewell, Kitsonville, Lightburn, McGuire Park, Orlando, Peterson, Pickle Street, Roanoke, Rohrbough, Shady Brook, South Park, Sunset Acres, Turnertown, Valley Chapel, Vadis, Vandalia, Waldeck, Walkersville, Westfield, Wildcat, and Wymer (Map 2).

The county was formed in 1816 when it was split from Harrison County in what was then Virginia. It was named for Col. James Lewis, a leader of the Virginia Pioneers, who was killed in 1774 in the Battle of Point Pleasant during Lord Dunmore’s War (a conflict between colonists and Native American Indians).

Lewis County gave up parts of its territory to form Braxton County in 1836, Barbour County in 1843, Doddridge County in 1845, Gilmer County in 1845, and Upshur County in 1851. The county became part of the new state of West Virginia in 1863 when the western counties broke away from Virginia.

Lewis County experienced fairly consistent population growth from the time the current boundaries for Lewis County were established until about World War II (Table 2). The county has experienced a steady decrease in population from 22,271 in 1940 to 16,372 in the 2010 Census. If nothing changes, this trend of slow but steady population decline is expected to continue with the county having a population of 15,104 in 2035.

Table 2: Historic Census Population

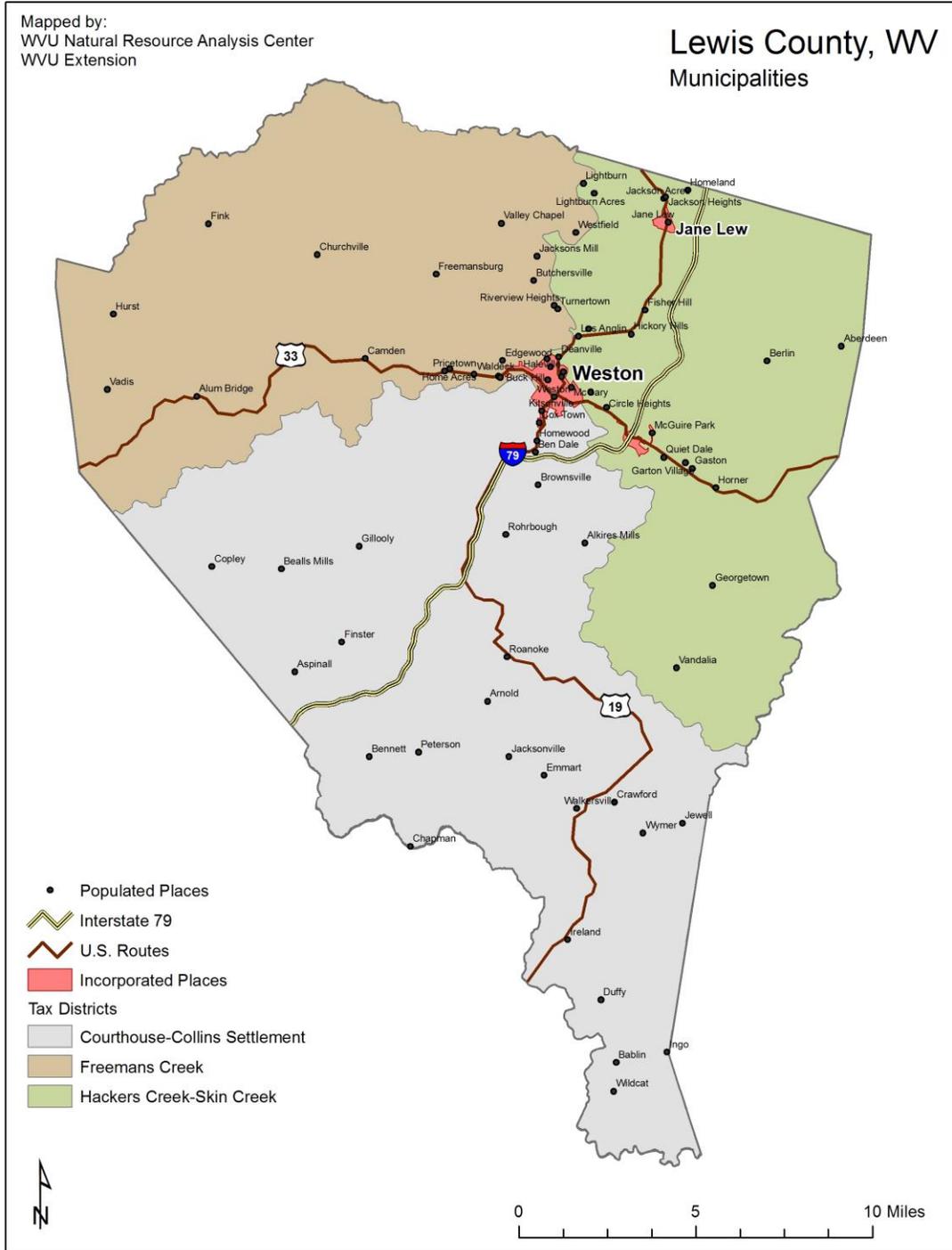
Census	Population	Change	Census	Population	Change
1820	4,247		1920	20,455	8.7%
1830	6,241	47.0%	1930	21,794	6.5%
1840	8,151	30.6%	1940	22,271	2.2%
1850	10,031	23.1%	1950	21,074	-5.4%
1860	7,999	-20.3%	1960	19,711	-6.5%
1870	10,175	27.2%	1970	17,847	-9.5%
1880	13,269	30.4%	1980	18,813	5.4%
1890	15,895	19.8%	1990	17,223	-8.5%
1900	16,980	6.8%	2000	16,919	-1.8%
1910	18,821	10.8%	2010	16,372	-3.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Note: Lewis County was part of Harrison County before 1816. Lewis County ceded territory for the creation of other counties five times between 1836 and 1851.



Map 2: Lewis County Communities



General Demographics

The population of Lewis County has a median age of 43.4 years, according to the 2010 Census (Table 3). This makes it slightly older than the state (41.3 years) and substantially older than the nation as a whole (37.2 years).

Conversely, over half of the Lewis County population (54.1%) is in the “prime working years” between age 25 and 64. That is higher than the proportion of the state (54.0%) or national (53.0%) in this key demographic range.

Table 3: County Demographics

Subject	Number	Percent
SEX AND AGE		
Total population	16,372	100.0%
Under 5 years	941	5.7%
5 to 9 years	912	5.6%
10 to 14 years	900	5.5%
15 to 19 years	1,001	6.1%
20 to 24 years	808	4.9%
25 to 29 years	875	5.3%
30 to 34 years	949	5.8%
35 to 39 years	1,037	6.3%
40 to 44 years	1,113	6.8%
45 to 49 years	1,231	7.5%
50 to 54 years	1,264	7.7%
55 to 59 years	1,243	7.6%
60 to 64 years	1,170	7.1%
65 to 69 years	912	5.6%
70 to 74 years	732	4.5%
75 to 79 years	518	3.2%
80 to 84 years	409	2.5%
85 years and over	357	2.2%
Median age	43.4 years	
Male population	8,068	49.3%
Female population	8,304	50.7%
RACE (Alone or in combination with one or more other races)		
White	16,188	98.9%
Black or African American	121	0.7%
American Indian/Alaska Native	117	0.7%
Asian	79	0.5%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2	0.0%
Some Other Race	33	0.2%

Source: US Census 2010



Household Information

The average family household size in Lewis County is 2.84 persons and the average size of all households is 2.35 persons, according to the 2010 Census (Table 4). These are smaller than what is found in the state (2.88 persons per family and 2.36 per household). It is also smaller than what is found nationally (3.14 persons per family and 2.58 persons per household).

This is part of an on-going trend of smaller household sizes in the county. Family household size has dropped from 3.04 in 1990 and 2.88 in 2000. Similarly, overall household size has fallen from 2.54 in 1990 and 2.40 in 2000. The result is that more households are needed to support the same level of population (or a small population decline might actually have a small increase in the number of households).

Table 4: Households by Type

	Number	Percent
Total households	6,863	100.0%
Family households (families)	4,570	66.6%
With own children under 18 years	1,692	24.7%
Households with one or more people under 18 years	1,930	28.1%
Households with one or more people 65 years and over	2,179	31.7%
Average household size		2.35 persons
Average family size		2.84 persons

Source: US Census 2010

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment is a very important part of countywide development and economic well-being. A more highly educated population proves to make more money over their lifetime. Lewis County has overall lower levels of education attainment compared to the state or nation. Just under four-fifths (79.4%) of county residents age 25 and over have high school diplomas, based on 2010 American Community Survey estimates (Table 5). This is below the proportion of the population who were high school graduates statewide (81.9%) or nationally (85.0%). Likewise, just under one-eighth of county adults have at least four-year college degrees (12.0%). This is below the college degree attainment levels seen across the state (17.3%) or nation as a whole (27.9%).



Table 5: Educational Attainment

	Number	Percent
Population 25 years and over	11,833	100.0%
Less than 9th grade	975	8.2%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	1,465	12.4%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	5,672	47.9%
Some college, no degree	1,614	13.6%
Associate's degree	682	5.8%
Bachelor's degree	1,007	8.5%
Graduate or professional degree	418	3.5%

Source: American Community Survey 2010.

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Land Use

Planning Context

Land use is generally considered to be the main focus of the comprehensive plan. The plan section on land use serves to coordinate public and private decisions that affect the physical development of the county. By establishing a system for the future, the plan strives to create a desirable pattern of future development toward which present activities can be directed.

Background

Lewis County, located in the heart of the West Virginia, is rich in natural resources and beauty. It occupies a land area of 384.9 square miles and also contains about 4.8 square miles of water that makes the county a prime destination for outdoor recreation and tourist activities.

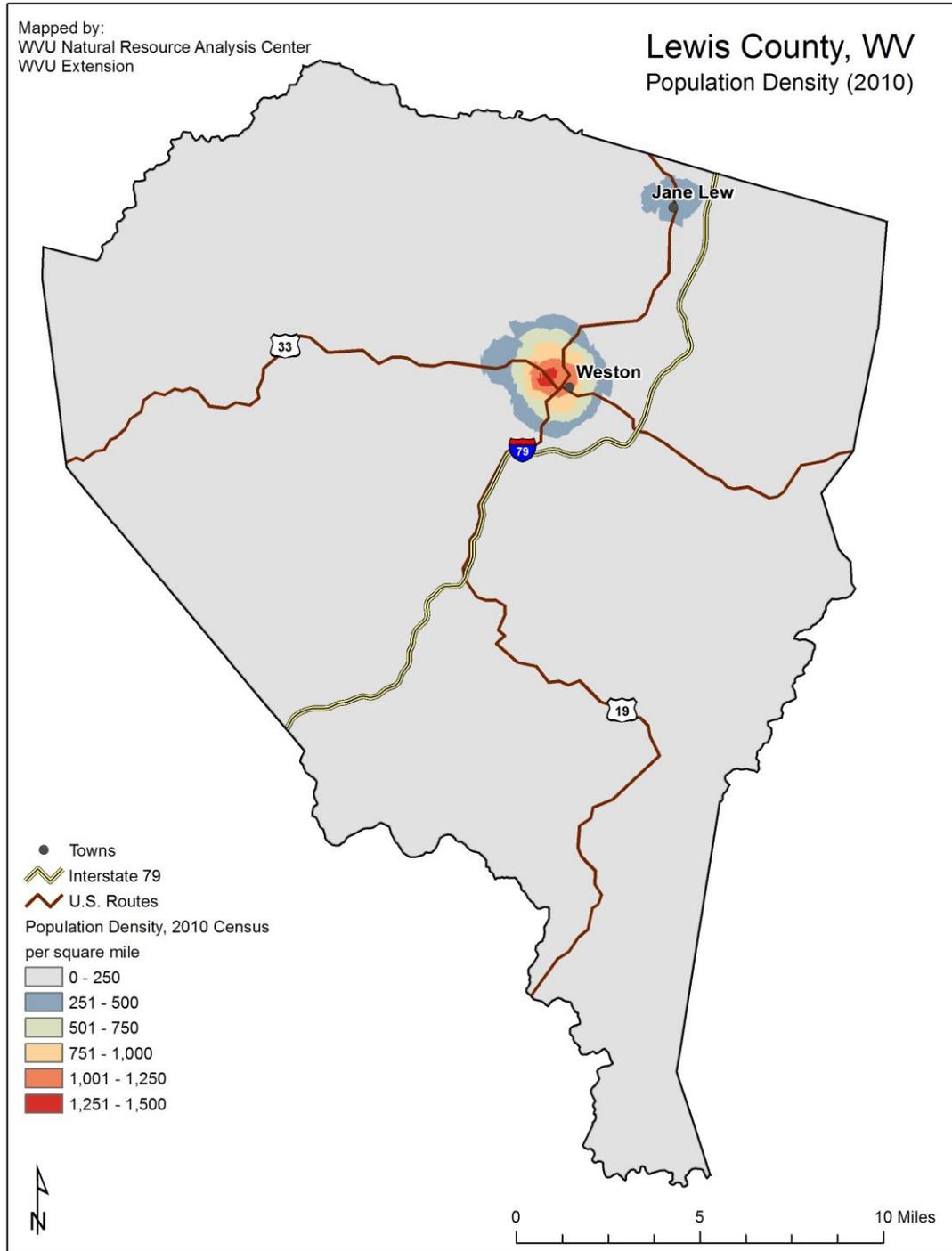
There were an estimated 16,416 people living in the county in 2011. The county is sparsely populated with a population density of about 42.7 persons per square mile. This is much less densely populated than the state (77.2 persons per square mile) or the nation (88.2 persons per square mile). However, the potential exists for continued steady development with the increase of resource extraction activities in the county and the anticipated development along corridor H (Map 3).

Most of the county's population is centered along the Interstate 79 corridor, starting in the northern end of the county, running through Jane Lew and then southward to Weston. Meanwhile, growth potential exists along the western terminus of Corridor H, running from Weston to the Upshur County line.

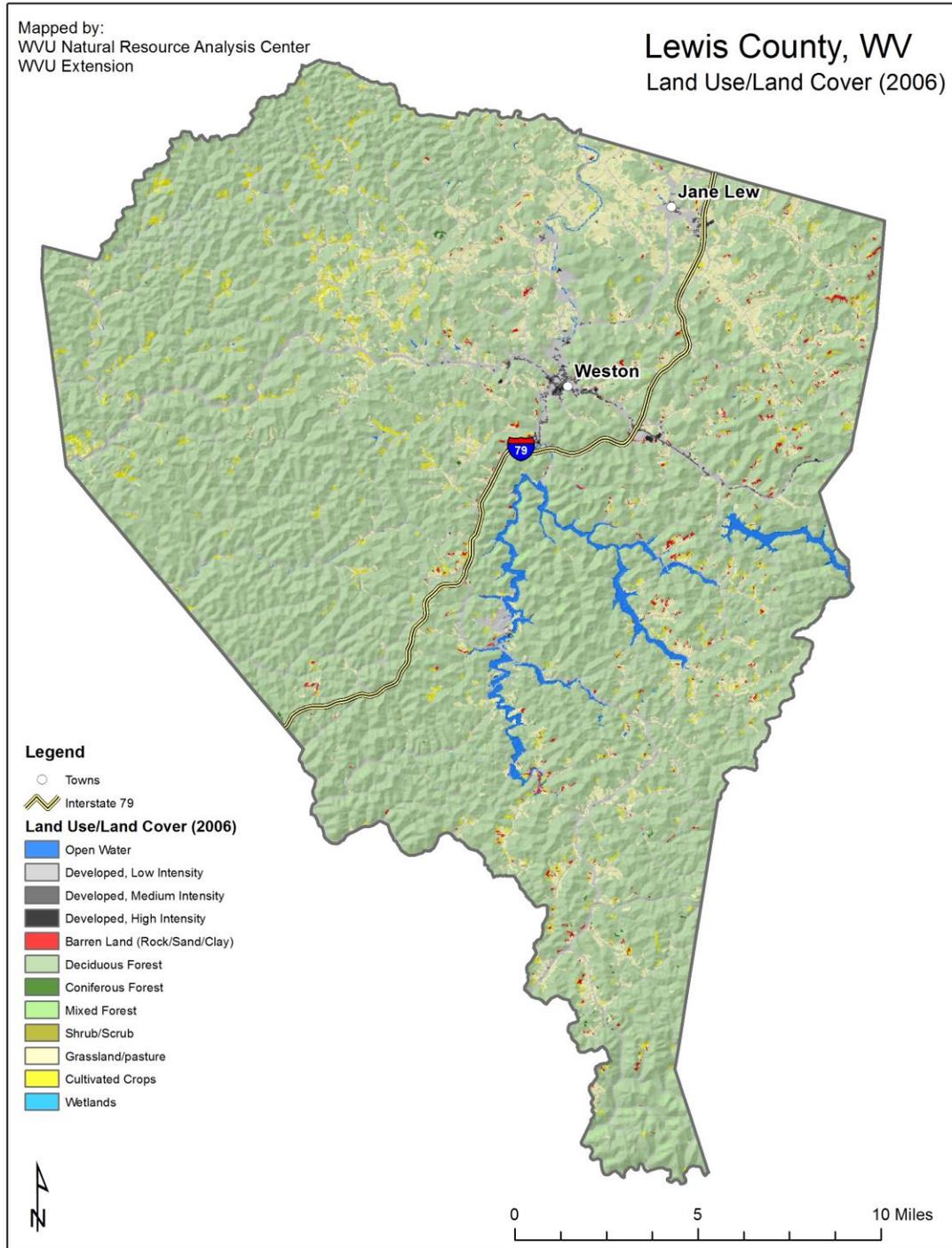
The rest of the county is sparsely populated with pockets of agricultural production and tourism destinations (Map 4). The county boasts an abundance of outdoor and recreational facilities including two state protected places, the WVU Jackson's Mill State 4-H Center, and Stonewall Resort (formerly known as Stonewall Jackson Resort State Park), a four-star resort with an Arnold Palmer Signature Golf Course. The charm of the county is its natural beauty and citizens were unified in their desire for preserving and maintaining the county's rural character.



Map 3: Population Density



Map 4: Land Use/Land Cover



Energy Resources

Lewis County is rich in natural beauty and natural resources (Map 5 and Map 6). It has seen some Marcellus shale drilling, particularly in the northern and eastern ends of the county. It has also become a base of operations location from which oil and gas companies support neighboring counties extraction activities (Doddridge, Harrison, and Upshur). Additionally Lewis County has experienced a spike in the more traditional resource extraction activity of mining in the last five years.

Floodplains

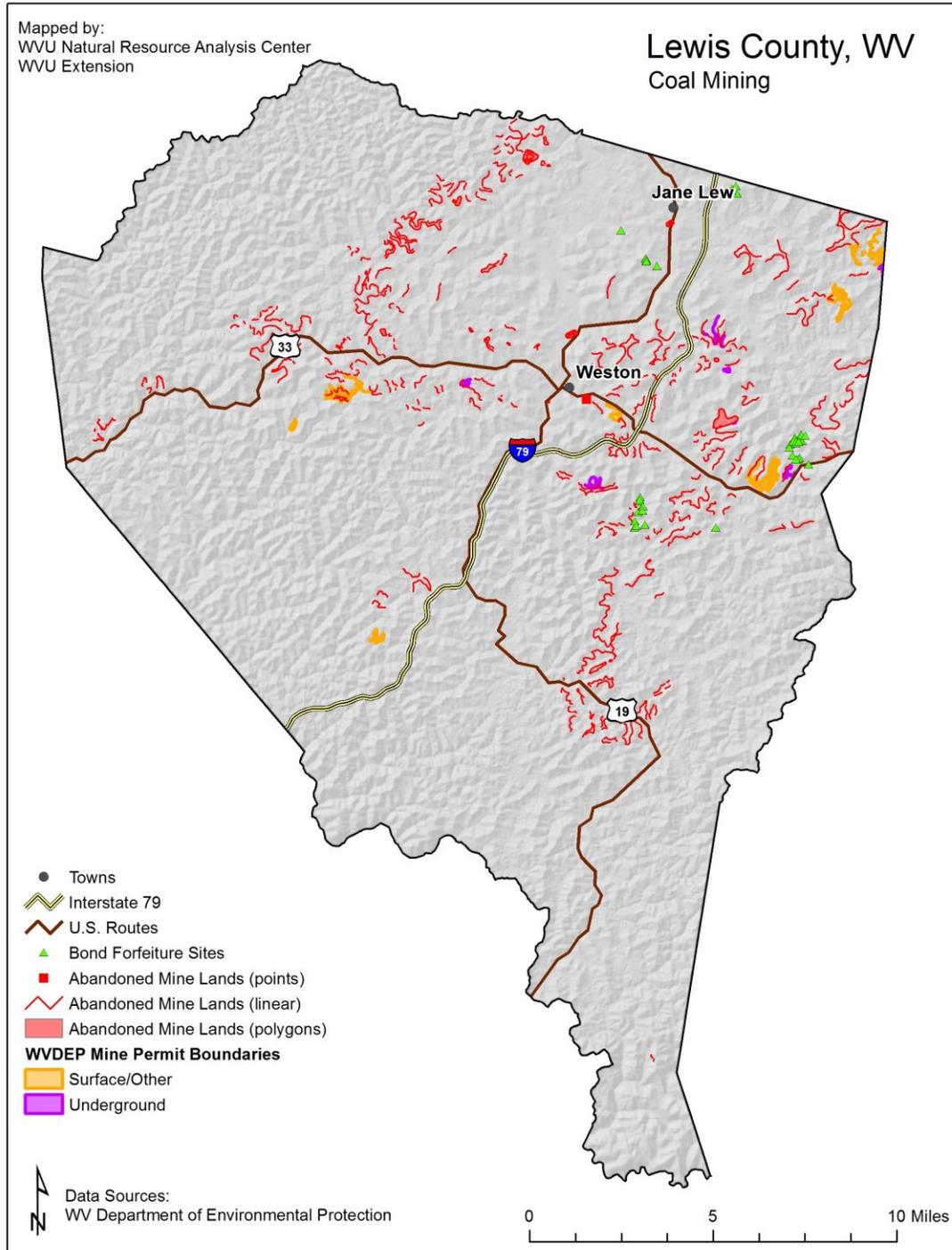
The floodplain map for Lewis County shows that some of the areas that fall within the 100-year flood plain include many areas along larger streams and waterways in the county, especially (but not limited to) the northern and eastern parts of the county (Map 7). Among the largest areas which could potentially be impacted are the eastern half of Weston, and almost all of Jane Lew. Smaller unincorporated places such as Alum Bridge, Horner, Ireland, and Walkersville also could be flooded during a 100-year flood event.

Helping protect the county from waterway systems and low lying areas are 17 dams along streams, creeks, and rivers in Lewis County (according to National Inventory of Dams 2010 data from the Army Corps of Engineers). A total of 10 dam structures are primarily used for flood control, including two on Stonewall Jackson Lake and eight on Polk Creek. Of the other dams, four have water supply as their primary purpose while three are dams that are recreational in nature. Ownership of the other dams varies from local conservation districts to the state and federal government to public utilities to a private individual.

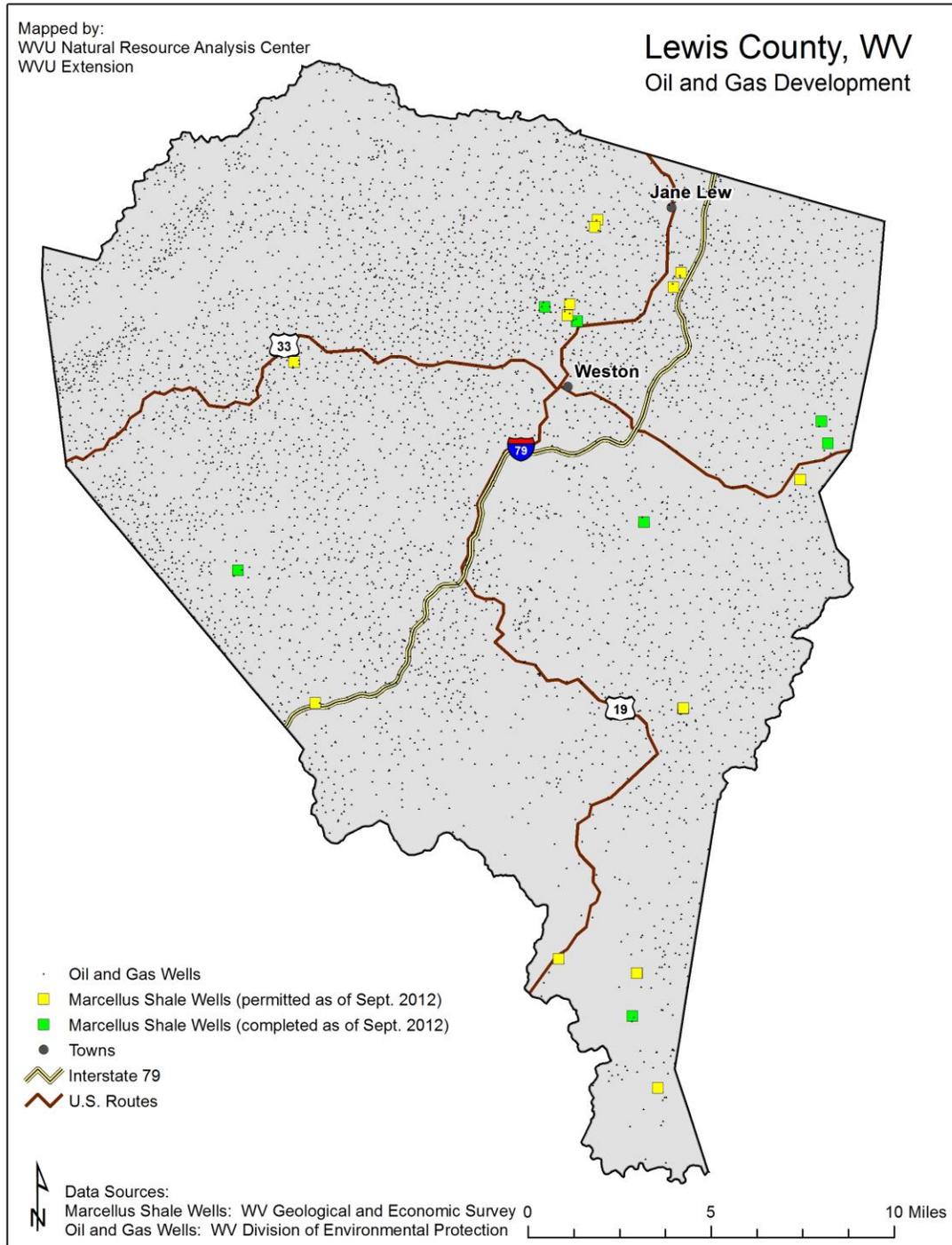
Protected Areas

There are three main protected areas in Lewis County: Smoke Camp, Stonecoal Lake, and Stonewall Jackson Lake. All three include wildlife management areas (WMAs) that are managed by the Wildlife Resources Section of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WV DNR). They are part of the Statewide Wildlife Management Program which is designed to conserve and manage high quality habitats for a variety of wildlife species and to improve public access to these resources.

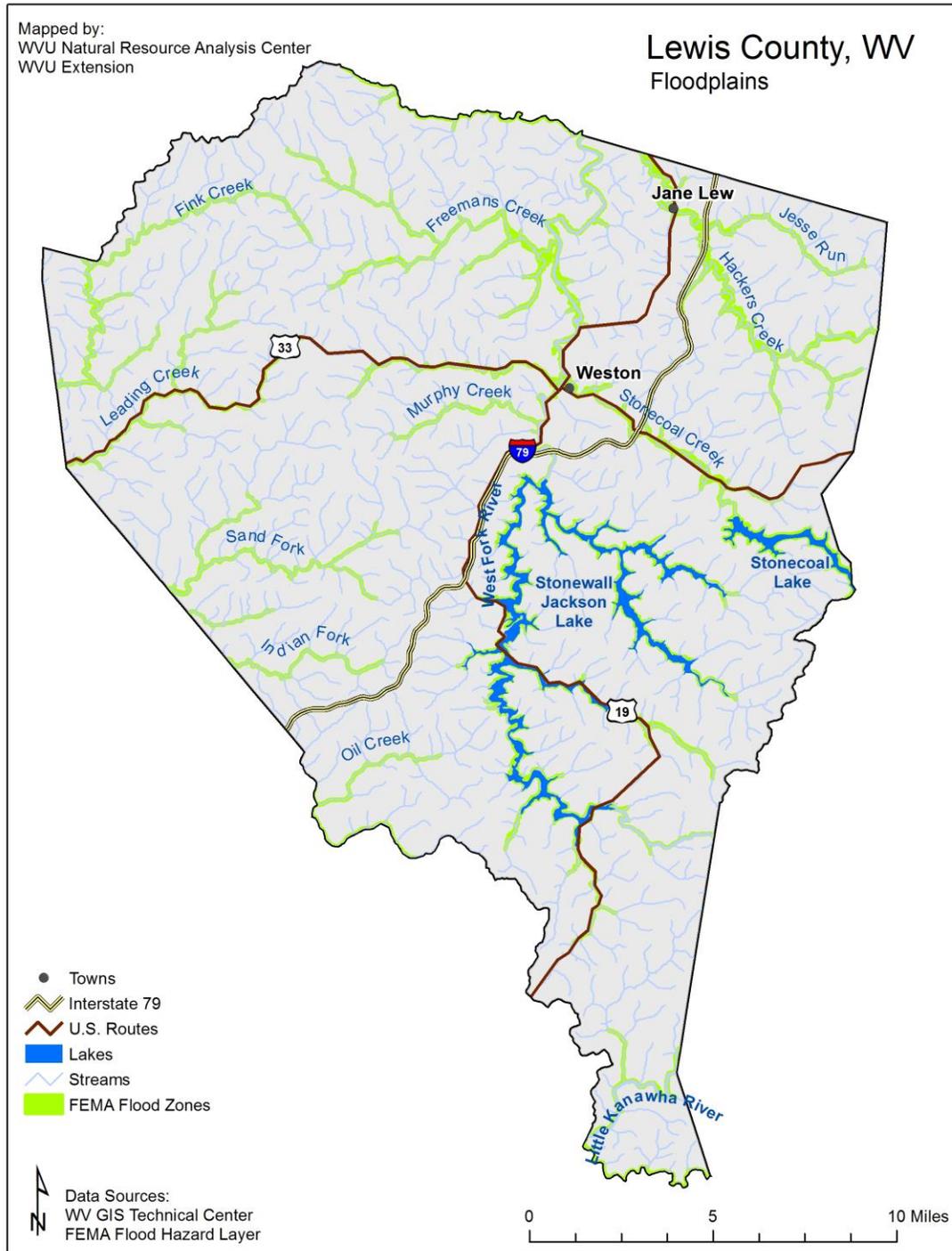
Map 5: Coal Reserves



Map 6: Oil and Gas Reserves



Map 7: Floodplains



The Smoke Camp WMA is 252 acres located in the rural, northwest edge of the county. It was donated to the WV DNR by the West Virginia Wildlife Endowment Fund. The Stonecoal Lake WMA is 2,985 acres located east of Horner and Georgetown. It is owned by First Energy Corporation. (It was owned by Alleghany Energy prior to the 2011 merger of the two companies.)

The Stonewall Jackson WMA is 18,289 acres located south of Weston. It is near Roanoke, although much of the original community was flooded when Stonewall Jackson Lake was created. The area is owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and is adjacent to the four-star Stonewall Resort.

Key Players

- Local Developers
- Land Owners
- Business and Industry (particularly mineral exploration, agriculture)
- City of Weston
- Town of Jane Lew
- WV Division of Natural Resources
- US Army Corps of Engineers

Themes

Three main themes related to land use in Lewis County were identified through research, community input and citizen surveys: lack of development regulations, land preservation/ preserve rural character, and corridor H development. Each theme was used to develop goals and strategies for development in the County. They are illustrated as specific recommendations in the plan and in the goals and strategies (Table 6).

Development Regulations focus on a variety of land use regulations, such as subdivision regulations, development standards, buffer and landscaping requirements, planned unit development, sign rules, etc. These regulations will protect the public health, safety, or welfare and have substantial relationship to promotion of public well-being in Lewis County. It will be crucial not only to implement the appropriate rules for the county, but to properly enforce those rules once they are in place.

Preservation efforts ensure that the unique rural character of the community is preserved through maintaining open space in new residential developments, providing natural views along scenic roadways, conserving forest and agricultural



land, and ensuring that commercial development is of the size and type appropriate to the community.

Corridor H Development refers to the need for the County to be prepared for the inevitable growth that will come with the completion of Corridor H. This includes adopting development regulations to ensure growth is orderly and that the county can provide services to those growth areas.

Table: Land Use Concepts and Actions

Land Use Concepts	Actions
Ensure that Lewis County prepares for growth, especially areas surrounding Corridor H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Carry out the plan goals and policies. ● Identify financial and other resources for plan implementation. ● Circulate and promote the Comprehensive Plan for Lewis County. ● Adopt development regulations in the comprehensive plan
Maintain the rural character of Lewis County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintain the rural residential atmosphere. ● Ensure conformity of new economic development with the area’s rural character. ● Adopt subdivision regulations.
Rebuild the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide for a variety of housing options (modular, affordable, high end). ● Identify options for homeowners rebuilding their homes. ● Educate homeowners about flood plain requirements. ● Pursue alternative funding options.
Protect and preserve the environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintain preserved and protected areas. ● Promote the benefits of preserving the environment. ● Work with municipalities to plant trees on public properties. (WV urban forestry) ● Participate in Floodplain Management Program

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Based on background research and community input, the planning team generated scenarios to offer planning guidance for the future of several specific areas in Lewis County. The guidance includes recommendations for preservation areas, adopting a “planned unit development” (PUD) ordinance, and adopting a subdivision ordinance.

Development regulations bring together all aspects of comprehensive planning. The purpose of development regulations provides for development in an orderly manner in a way that allows local governments to efficiently and effectively provide



services commensurate with development needs. This involves issues addressed elsewhere in the plan, including natural resources, public facilities, transportation, cultural and historic resources as well as land uses.

Goal 1: Guide the future development in the county to areas that are efficiently served by public facilities by preserving the rural features and the quality of life and encouraging development to locate in areas with existing or planned public facilities.

- **Strategy 1** – Establish standards for acceptable levels of service for public facilities and ensure those levels of service are maintained (12-24 Months).
- **Strategy 2** – Designate corridor H as a growth area with different regulations for development (PUD) (12 -24 Months).
- **Strategy 3** –Promote and utilize existing business resources and promote new infill development in places with existing infrastructure (12-36 months).
- **Strategy 4** – Promote phased development in conjunction with the availability of public facilities and utilities (24-36 Months).

Goal 2: Encourage a thoughtful process in how land is subdivided and developed that considers the importance of preserving the rural character in the county and the interrelationship between adjacent developments.

- **Strategy 1** – Encourage communities with Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances to amend them to incorporate conservation-related techniques and related principles (Continuous).
- **Strategy 2** – Develop strategies to create appropriate land use regulations throughout the county which consider compatibility with agricultural preservation and “Smart Growth” principles (Continuous).
- **Strategy 3** - Create and adopt a new county Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) that incorporates conservation-related techniques and the connectivity of infrastructure between subdivisions (24-36 Months).

Goal 3: Preserve the character and function of rural areas by supporting the preservation of agriculture and conserving natural resources.

- **Strategy 1** – Encourage the collaboration of agricultural agencies and interested parties to develop effective means to improve agri-business profitability (Continuous).
- **Strategy 2** – Enact policies that promote effective land use and appropriate land conservation. (12-24 months).
- **Strategy 3** – Work in conjunction with state and conservation groups to establish a County Agricultural Land Preservation Program (12-24 Months).
- **Strategy 4** – Identify and support needs of farmers through the “Future of Agriculture in Our Community” planning process (24-36 Months).
- **Strategy 5** – Investigate the establishment of a land trust for the purpose of preserving key tracts of open space through acquisition, easements or land donation (24-48 Months).



Fiscal Considerations

- Use existing revenues streams
- Seek financial assistance from state and federal governments
- Apply for Community Development Block Grants
- Seek other applicable grants.
- Charge appropriate service/user fees
- Charge appropriate permit/application fees

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Housing

Planning Context

Lewis County strives to work in cooperation with the private sector on a broad choice of decent, safe and sanitary housing types at affordable prices for current and projected future residents. Quality housing and safe neighborhoods are essential for the county's social and economic growth. The housing situation in Lewis County is similar to most counties in West Virginia. It is driven by economics, politics, and the practices of private businesses, public agencies, and the residents themselves. Housing affects the social fabric of neighborhoods and the strong emotions that people maintain with respect to their immediate environment have an impact on the larger community.

The provision and maintenance of housing is traditionally a function of the private market with the exception of housing opportunities provided to citizens of very modest means. In the last few decades the role of local government in the housing arena has been to:

- Serve as a conduit for federal and state public housing assistance programs;
- Implement, monitor and enforce appropriate and accepted building codes promoting health, safety and energy conservation standards;
- Encourage conformity and homogeneity in the development of residential subdivisions (types, sizes, setbacks) and the segregation of housing from other types of land uses;
- Offer certain aesthetic controls in existing districts and neighborhoods that possess unique or unusual environmental, landscape and/or historical characteristics.

Three non-traditional functions of local government in the housing area are suggested by the goal statement above and the subsequent objectives listed in the Housing Element. These functions imply that local government should take an activist role in the following:

- Promote the construction of a diversity of housing choices (types, locations and prices);
- Provide land area to accommodate projected population growth;
- Encourage the private sector to provide housing for persons with special needs (group homes) and accommodate the increasing number of seniors in the county.



Background

Housing Occupancy and Ownership

A community’s housing stock and the owner-to-renter ratio are strong indicators of stability. Typically, a homeowner is more attentive to property maintenance than a renter or absentee landlord (either local or out-of-town). A homeowner also tends to remain in his or her home for a longer period of time than a renter, reducing the amount of turnover within a neighborhood. These and other factors contribute to the level of investment in a neighborhood and ultimately contribute to the value and character as well. Lewis County (72.4%) has a slightly lower proportion of owner-occupied houses to all occupied houses than the state (73.4%). However, the county’s share of owner-occupied homes is greater than the nation’s as a whole (65.1%). All this is not surprising as West Virginia typically has one of the highest rates (if not the highest rate) of home ownership in the nation. Lewis County essentially resembles the state in this regard (Table 7)

Table 7: Housing Units

	Number	Percent
Total Units	7,958	100.0%
-- Occupied	6,863	86.2%
-- Vacant	1,095	13.8%
Occupied Units	6,863	100.0%
-- Owner-Occupied	4,972	72.4%
-- Renter Occupied	1,891	27.6%

Source: U.S. Census 2010.

Vacant Property Issues

Many counties in West Virginia are experiencing problems with vacancies in their housing stock. Vacancies can be the result of new housing construction awaiting its initial occupancy, units being placed on the market for sale, expiration of a lease agreement, and the condition of the property. Property vacancy does not imply deteriorated conditions. As shown in the table, vacant housing represented almost 14% of all housing units in Lewis County, according to the 2010 Census. This is higher than the state or national vacancy rates (Table 8).

However, a different picture appears if the vacancy rate is evaluated in more detail. Looking at it in terms of owner-occupied and rental units presents a clearer understanding. The county has the same percentage of its homeowner inventory



that is vacant and “for sale” (1.8%) as the state and a lower rate than the nation. It also has a lower percentage of its rental inventory that is vacant and “for rent” (8.4%) than both the state (8.7%) and nation (9.2%). Conversely, the county has a much higher seasonal housing vacancy rate (5.1%) than the state (4.3%) or nation (3.5%). Finally, the “other” vacancy rate (4.8%) is slightly lower than the state (5.1%) but higher than the nation (2.8%).

Overall, almost 37% of all vacancies in Lewis County are from seasonal and vacation homes. Another 35% of vacancies in the county are classified as “other.” This paints a different picture of the vacancy issue in the county. Some housing units are vacant because they are designed to be used part-time. However, it does appear that others may be vacant because they may be sub-standard or abandoned structures (Table 9).

Table 8: Housing Vacancy Rates

	Lewis Co.	WV	US
Total Vacancy Rate	13.8%	13.4%	11.4%
-- Homeowner Vacancy Rate	1.8%	1.8%	2.4%
-- Rental Vacancy Rate	8.4%	8.7%	9.2%
-- Seasonal Vacancy Rate	5.1%	4.3%	3.5%
-- Other Vacancy Rate	4.8%	5.1%	2.8%

Source: U.S. Census 2010.

Table 9: Housing Vacancy Details

	Number	Percent /Vacant	Percent /Overall
Total	1,095	100.0%	13.8%
-- For Rent	175	16.0%	2.2%
-- Rented, Not Occupied	10	0.9%	0.1%
-- For Sale	91	8.3%	1.1%
-- Sold, Not Occupied	33	3.0%	0.4%
-- For Seasonal Use	403	36.8%	5.1%
-- Other Vacant	382	34.9%	4.8%

Source: U.S. Census 2010.

Housing Age and Quality

Housing age is often used as an indicator of local housing quality. Data from the *American Community Survey* indicates that just over half the housing stock was built prior to 1969. This means that in 2006 (the first year covered by the five-year survey), about half of the housing stock in Lewis County was more than 35 years old.



This was higher than the state (47.9%) or nation (42.6%) Conversely, less than 5% of stock was relatively new (built since 2000). This was lower than the state (7.8%) or nation (12.8%). This information provides some indication of the quality and age of housing stock, such as a lack of updated housing (Table 10).

While the housing stock was old, the occupied housing appeared to be fully functional. The median size of occupied household units was almost six rooms (5.9), larger than the housing units in the state (5.6 rooms) or nation (5.5 rooms).

Also, less than 1% lack complete plumbing or kitchen facilities and none reported using no heating fuel. These generally compared favorably to the indicators at the state and national levels. The county had a smaller proportion of occupied housing units with incomplete plumbing than the state (0.7%) but a slightly higher proportion than the nation (0.5%). It had a lower proportion than both the state (0.6%) and nation (0.8%) lacking complete kitchen facilities. And there were occupied housing units at the state level (0.2%) and national level (0.9%) that reported using no heating fuel.

Table 10: Selected Housing Characteristics

Characteristic	Detail
Total Housing Units	7,985
-- Built 2000 or Later	4.4%
-- Built 1969 or Earlier	50.9%
Total Occupied Units	6,863
-- Lacking Complete Plumbing Facilities	0.6%
-- Lacking Complete Kitchen Facilities	0.2%
-- No Heating Fuel Use Reported	0.0%
-- Median Rooms	5.9 rooms

Source: American Community Survey, 2006-2010.

Housing Demand

The influx of workers in the resource extraction sector will have the potential to create a continuing demand for new housing in Lewis County, especially for rental units, which often include multi-family homes and apartments. According to the *American Community Survey*, over three-quarters (75.8%) of all housing units in the County are single unit detached structures (Table 11). This is higher than what is found in the state (71.3%) and much higher than what is found nationally (61.6%). Additionally, one out of seven housing units is a mobile home, about the same as the state (14.9%) but twice as high as the national figure (6.7%).



Conversely, less than 10% of all housing structures in the county are multi-unit. Combined with the low supply of land with adequate infrastructure for new housing, the opportunity for meeting housing demands in the future rests primarily with infill development and redevelopment of older structures.

The demand for senior housing is for single floor, handicap accessible units that allow the seniors to live independently yet in close proximity to medical and retail facilities and accessible to transportation. The topography of the county caused housing to be built with barriers such as numerous steps for entry to the structures.

Table 11: Housing Size and Type

Type of Units	Percent
-- 1-Unit Detached	75.8%
-- 1-Unit Attached	0.8%
- 2-Unit	0.7%
-- 3 or 4 Units	1.1%
-- 5 or More Units	7.2%
-- Mobile Home	14.3%
-- Other (Boat, RV, etc.)	0.2%

Source: American Community Survey, 2006-2010.

Key Players

- Local Developers
- Lewis County Housing Authority (to be created after plan is approved)
- Weston Housing Authority
- West Virginia Housing Development Fund
- Lewis County Economic Development Authority
- Non-Profit Organizations
- Neighborhood Associations
- Civic Groups

Themes

The planning team recognized four themes related to housing from key issues which were determined through background research and input from citizens and surveys. These issues include rebuilding neighborhoods; cleaner, safer housing stock; preserving and place making; and diversity of housing types. The themes are used to develop specific goals and strategies for development in the county.

Rebuilding responds to the community’s strong desire to rebuild and focuses on restoring the community following the loss of major industries and transitioning



into a more diverse economy. This includes the basic components of rebuilding - restoring homes, businesses, and infrastructure. It also considers the importance of rebuilding connections, including road, bicycle, and pedestrian connections between parts of the community, as well as connections to the waterways and natural features.

Preserving focuses on keeping and maintaining what has been unique and special to the Lewis County residents. This includes the historic places and rustic nature of the county enjoyed by so many residents.

Cleaner, safer housing stock is very important to residents and businesses in Lewis County. Communities with vibrant, desirable neighborhoods attract people and businesses. High quality, attractive and affordable residential areas are the foundation for social vitality and economic success. There must be enough desirable homes for workers and entrepreneurs - the people who will drive community revitalization and development as they are the ones who will live, work, shop and recreate in the county.

Place making deals with creating a sense of place in the community. This includes expanding recreational opportunities and creating neighborhoods and shopping opportunities in the "L" in the eastern part of Lewis County - the existing corridor between Jane Lew and Weston and the section of Corridor H from Weston eastward to the Upshur County line.

Diversity of housing types deals with creating a wide range of housing choices for people of all ages and family types. A diverse housing stock involves factors such as housing options, affordability of housing, employment opportunities, services and amenities, and accessibility.

Goals, Objectives and Strategies

The goals and actions pertaining to housing recognize that the housing stock of the community must be safe, attractive and affordable. It must offer an array of housing choices in both type and price. Practices such as rehab, adaptive reuse and infill are vital to the strengthening of the existing housing stock as well as the future of new housing in Lewis County.

Goal 1: Ensure that the housing stock of the community is safe, healthy, and diverse.

- **Strategy 1** - Consider creation of appropriate county ordinances to encourage new construction and repairs be done to standard building codes. (Continuous)
- **Strategy 2** - Coordinate with incorporated jurisdictions to maintain housing stock in a safe and habitable condition (Continuous).



- **Strategy 3** – Encourage the consideration of resource management and related issues when planning for residential areas (Continuous).
- **Strategy 4**– Enact and enforce a building code to protect the general health, safety and welfare of the population, particularly with respect to residential development (12-24 months).
- **Strategy 5** – Promote rehabilitation of substandard housing. (12-24 months).

Goal 2: Preserve neighborhood character.

- **Strategy 1** – Promote neighborhood character at the citizen level through promotion of Neighborhood Associations (Continuous).
- **Strategy 2** – Encourage sensitivity to neighborhood character through infill and development based on the local design context (12-24 months).

Goal 3: Rebuilding neighborhoods throughout the county.

- **Strategy 1** – Implement a landlord registry program (6-12 Months).
- **Strategy 2** – Create code enforcement measures to address substandard property and the absentee responsible property owner (12-24 months).
- **Strategy 3** – Develop general landscaping standards encouraging native plants and those requiring little maintenance (12-36 months).
- **Strategy 4** – Identify, locate, and remove abandoned houses and businesses (12-36 months).
- **Strategy 5** – Partner with non-profits and other organizations applying for grant funding to construct new housing and or demolish substandard housing (12-36 months).
- **Strategy 6** – Work to create a county housing code and enforcement mechanism so costly repairs and visual blight may be minimized (24-48 months).

Goal 4: Diversify of the county housing stock.

- **Strategy 1** – Evaluate current policies to ensure they accommodate a wide array of housing types, including those for seniors and persons with special needs. Make sure these policies are consistent with changing development trends (Continuous).

Fiscal Considerations

- Use existing revenues streams
- Seek dedicated housing funds
- Apply for Community Development Block Grants and other applicable grants



Infrastructure

Planning Context

The importance of infrastructure to Lewis County should never be understated, because infrastructure makes up the necessities on which a place is built. Water is essential to all human activities and necessary for industrial processes. Sewerage systems provide for the protection of the public health safety and general welfare in a neighborhood or community setting. The extension of these services to underserved areas or the expansion of existing treatment facilities to accommodate additional development is an important consideration of any comprehensive development plan for two reasons: the availability of water and sewer lines influences future development patterns and the cost of providing water and sewers impacts government finances and tax levels.

Based on this principle, the location and capacity of infrastructure will play a large role in the rate of growth, direction and size of development in Lewis County. The condition of a county's infrastructure and the level of service it provides is a quality of life issue that indicates livability, and appeal for development and economic growth. Unlike its more urbanized counterparts, Lewis County lacks contiguous networks of water and sanitary sewer services primarily due to a small, sporadic population coupled with topographic limitations. Lewis County's low population densities require extensive infrastructure investments to service customers throughout the county.

Additionally, development activity will be dependent upon adequate, expanded, and reliable electrical and communication systems. The county has large rural areas which are served by a system that has issues related to the capacity and quality of service.

Background

Water Supply

There are three water utilities in Lewis County. The largest is West Virginia American Water, which operates in and around Weston. It has a maximum daily capacity of 2 million gallons per day, according to data from the Lewis County Economic Development Authority.

The northern part of the county is served by a pair of public service districts. The Jane Lew Public Service District purchases water from West Virginia American



Water. The PSD has a maximum capacity of about 250,000 gallons per day. The Greater Harrison Public Service District in West Milford provides water to some locations in the county's northern edge.

Other locations, particularly in the southern and western parts of Lewis County rely on private systems and own-sources (wells) for water.

Waste Water Treatment

Two basic types of wastewater treatment alternatives are available in Lewis County: community-wide sewage collection and treatment systems; and private on-site sewage treatment systems.

Municipally-owned and operated systems are provided in the more urbanized and densely settled portions of the County. These are the Weston Sanitary Board and the Jane Lew Public Service District.

Electrical Power

Electrical power runs almost everything one way or another – and virtually every other utility service is dependent upon a consistent supply of electricity. Mon Power, a First Energy company, is the major electricity provider for the county. It uses overhead transmission lines, ranging from standard poles to large-line towers. This system can be susceptible to unusual weather events, however, potentially resulting in damages requiring substantial time for complete power restoration.

Natural Gas Service

Several companies provide natural gas service in Lewis County. However, this does not mean natural gas is universally available. The northern part of the county is generally served well. However, communities south of Stonewall Jackson Lake are underserved or not served at all, even though in some cases they are just a couple of miles from gas transmission or service lines.

Telephone (Land Lines)

Frontier is the provider of land line telephone service in Lewis County. This includes areas served by the former Verizon (Weston and Jane Lew exchanges) as well as the original Citizens Telecommunications Company of West Virginia (Walkersville exchanges).

The land lines in the southern part of the county are particularly vulnerable to service disruption because of the topography and sparseness of population in the



rural service area. Also, the exchange in this area has limited generator capacity, making it susceptible to service interruptions during power outages.

Broadband.com, Level 3 Communications and Shentel Converged Services also have land line exchanges in the northern part of the county. Broadband has numbers in Weston and Jane Lew, Level 3 in Weston only; and Shentel in Jane Lew only. In each case, these are shared exchanges with other companies.

Cellular Telephone

Cellular telephone coverage is good in the northern part of Lewis County. Service is intermittent at best throughout the rest of the county, particularly south of Stonewall Jackson Lake. Improving and in some cases establishing service coverage is important for the county moving forward towards the future.

Television Services

While cable is not a necessity it is important because it can provide a variety of communications services to current and future residents. Shentel cable television service is available in much of the northern part of Lewis County, especially along the US Route 19 and US Route 33 corridors. Areas served include Weston, Jane Lew, Alum Bridge, Camden, and Horner. Time Warner Cable and Suddenlink serve small portions of the county near Harrison County and Upshur County. Other county residents must rely on satellite television services or receive television signals from over-the-air broadcasters or commercial satellite television providers such as Direct TV and Dish Network.

High Speed Internet (Broadband)

Availability of broadband internet is important for future growth within the county. Accessibility is important not only for current residents, but also for retaining and attracting business and industry in the county. Additionally there has been discussion of marketing the county as a back office operations location and emergency second business center. To market the county in such a way access to reliable telecommunications and broadband services will be vital. Current providers include the land line telephone and cable television companies – Frontier and ShenTel, respectively.

Solid Waste Handling

Lewis County is part of the Lewis/Gilmer Solid Waste Authority. Licensed haulers take over 1,000 tons per month from the two-county area to a pair of private, municipal solid waste landfills in Harrison County. Drop-off recycling is available in Weston and Jane Lew.



Also, there is a special type of landfill operational in Lewis County. The Tire and Rubber Inc., a tire monofill, is just east of Weston. It is one of just two such facilities in the state. The Class D landfill also handles construction/demolition debris and regular solid waste.

Key Players

- Lewis County Commission
- Lewis County Economic Development Authority
- WV American Water
- Jane Lew Water Commission
- Weston Sanitary Board
- Natural gas providers: Dominion Hope, Equitable, Standard, Mountaineer
- Cellular telephone companies: Verizon, AT&T, Sprint, US Cellular
- Frontier Communications
- Shentel Cable TV
- Satellite television providers
- Lewis/Gilmer Solid Waste Authority
- Mon Power
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- County Residents

Themes

The Planning Team recognized two main themes related to Infrastructure from key issues which were determined through background research and input from citizens and surveys. The themes are increases in county-wide infrastructure and connectivity. Each theme was used to develop goals and strategies for infrastructure development in Lewis County.

Connectivity focuses on improving infrastructure connections and mobility both within the more rural areas of the County.

Increasing infrastructure capacity includes providing basic infrastructure services and ensuring reliability to underserved areas within the county.

Goals, Objectives and Strategies

The goals and actions pertaining to infrastructure recognize that Lewis County must allow access and availability to safe drinking water and sanitation through system improvements for all county residents. Establish accessibility to high speed internet



to all residents of the county. Increase access to cell phone coverage outside of the urban areas of the County.

Goal 1: Improve and expand existing water resources and sewage system.

- Strategy 1 – Secure and raise funds from the federal, state and local level to pay for water and sewage expansion (Continuous).
- Strategy 2 – Support the expansion of sewerage systems where warranted by high population densities or to correct malfunctioning systems. Where such expansions are not feasible, alternative sewage disposal systems should be promoted (Continuous).
- Strategy 3 – Determine the specific water and sewage needs within the county (12-24 months).
- Strategy 4 – Develop and actively pursue a water and sewage plan to better serve and support current residents as well as future businesses and industry (12-24 months).
- Strategy 5 – Determine/assess the impact of development on water resources as part of the development process (24-36 months).
- Strategy 6 – Extend public services to areas planned/scheduled for development as needed (36-60 months).

Goal 2: Expand communications coverage outside of major population centers.

- Strategy 1 – Work with providers to extend broadband access throughout the county (6-12 months).
- Strategy 2 – Facilitate combined towers among current cell phone carriers to expand service (12-24 months).
- Strategy 3 – Support efforts to change the market designation used for the county by satellite television providers, which would lead to the inclusion of Clarksburg-based local television stations rather than Charleston-area stations (12-24 months).

Goal 3: Work with providers to facilitate improved reliability of services.

- Strategy 1 – Inventory potential problem areas in the electrical transmission and delivery network throughout the county (6-12 months).
- Strategy 2 – Examine land line communications system for weaknesses and potential problem areas (12-24 months).

Fiscal Considerations

- Use existing revenue streams
- Seek grant funds, including Community Development Block Grant, Small Cities Grants, and USDA Rural Development infrastructure grants
- Enact excise surcharges



Transportation

Planning Context

Transportation is a key aspect to a comprehensive land-use plan. Transportation for Lewis County is a necessity because it effectively moves people and goods from one place to another. The Lewis County transportation network consists of roads, bridges, interstate interchanges and railroad tracks. The primary mode of transportation within this county is motor vehicles.

Lewis County has a land area of 384.90 square miles. Thus, transportation systems play an integral part in the future of county development and expansion. Not only must we consider transportation for future development but we also must consider transportation in expansion and upkeep.

Background

The primary source of transportation for Lewis County residents is the automobile. For example, more than nine workers out of 10 either drove themselves to work or rode in a car pool.

This reliance on the highway system is even more crucial when work commuting patterns are examined. On a daily basis, 3,795 persons enter the county from elsewhere for work in the county; 3,655 persons leave the county for work elsewhere; and 2,840 persons drive from one location to another in the county for work.

Additionally, the road network is the main means by which students are transported to public schools, first responders reach emergencies, and goods are shipped to stores for sale.

Most inter-county transportation occurs between the two largest neighboring counties – Harrison County to the north and Upshur County to the east (Table 12).



Table 12: Worker Inflow-Outflow

Home Location County Workers	Number (Inflow)	Share	Work Location County Residents	Number (Outflow)	Share
Lewis	2,840	42.8%	Lewis	2,840	43.7%
Harrison	853	12.9%	Harrison	980	15.1%
Upshur	610	9.2%	Upshur	541	8.3%
Wood	223	3.4%	Monongalia	243	3.7%
Marion	177	2.7%	Kanawha	235	3.6%
Gilmer	162	2.4%	Marion	173	2.7%
Braxton	134	2.0%	Randolph	137	2.1%
Kanawha	129	1.9%	Gilmer	117	1.8%
Greenbrier	102	1.5%	Braxton	111	1.7%
Randolph	94	1.4%	Raleigh	71	1.1%
All Other	1,311	19.8%	All Others	1,047	16.1%
TOTAL	6,635	100.0%	TOTAL	6,495	100.0%

Source: Census Bureau, "On the Map," 2010 Data.

Highways

Lewis County is home to one of the major highway crossroads in the state (Map 8). The interchange is between Interstate 79 and Corridor H (currently US 33 in Lewis County, eventually to be re-designated US 48) and Interstate 79. Interstate 79 connects Erie, Pa., and Charleston, W.Va. It also passes through the Pittsburgh and Morgantown areas. It has interchanges with east-west interstates I-90, I-80, I-76, I-70, I-68 and I-64; north-south interstate I-77, and three-digit interstates I-279 and I-376 that serve Pittsburgh.

Corridor H is the Appalachian Development Highway System designation for the linkage between Interstate 79 in Weston and Interstate 81 in Strasburg, Va. About half of the 133-mile section in West Virginia is open to traffic. This includes the highway from Weston to Elkins which has been open for more than two decades. Other open sections include Elkins-to-Kerens, from Patterson Creek in Grant County to Wardensville in Hardy County. The highway is under construction between Davis and Patterson Creek, design is underway between Kerens and the Cheat River in Tucker County, and studies continue for the sections between the Cheat River and Davis, between Wardensville and the Virginia state line, and between the Virginia state line and Strasburg. The corridor section in the county is complete and is currently signed as US Routes 33 and 119 in the county, though eventually the entire length of the highway is expected to be signed as US Route 48 (some sections to the east already display that designation).

The other main routes in the county are older two-lane highways. The western portion of US Routes 33 and 119 goes to Glenville and Spencer, where the two routes separate. Meanwhile, US Route 19 traverses the county in a north-south direction. It roughly parallels Interstate 79 (which essentially replaced it) from Jane



Lew to Stonewall Jackson Lake, before looping to the east to serve communities there. It eventually reconnects to the interstate in Flatwoods.

Due to the development of this major highway connection, the interchange at Weston will eventually become a major crossroads for travel from cities such as Pittsburgh and Washington D.C. Also, when corridor H highway is completed, it will connect Lewis County directly to the east coast.

Corridor H will provide another highway connection to bridge the large gap between major highway systems in West Virginia. Currently Interstate 68 and Interstate 64 are the only major highways that connect Interstate 79 to Interstate 81 that serve the state. This would not be a major concern if the highways were relatively close together - I-68 and I-64 are separated by about 150 miles. Corridor H will break that distance into a more manageable drive, especially for those in the more populated northern counties as well as provide a new connection to the East Coast.

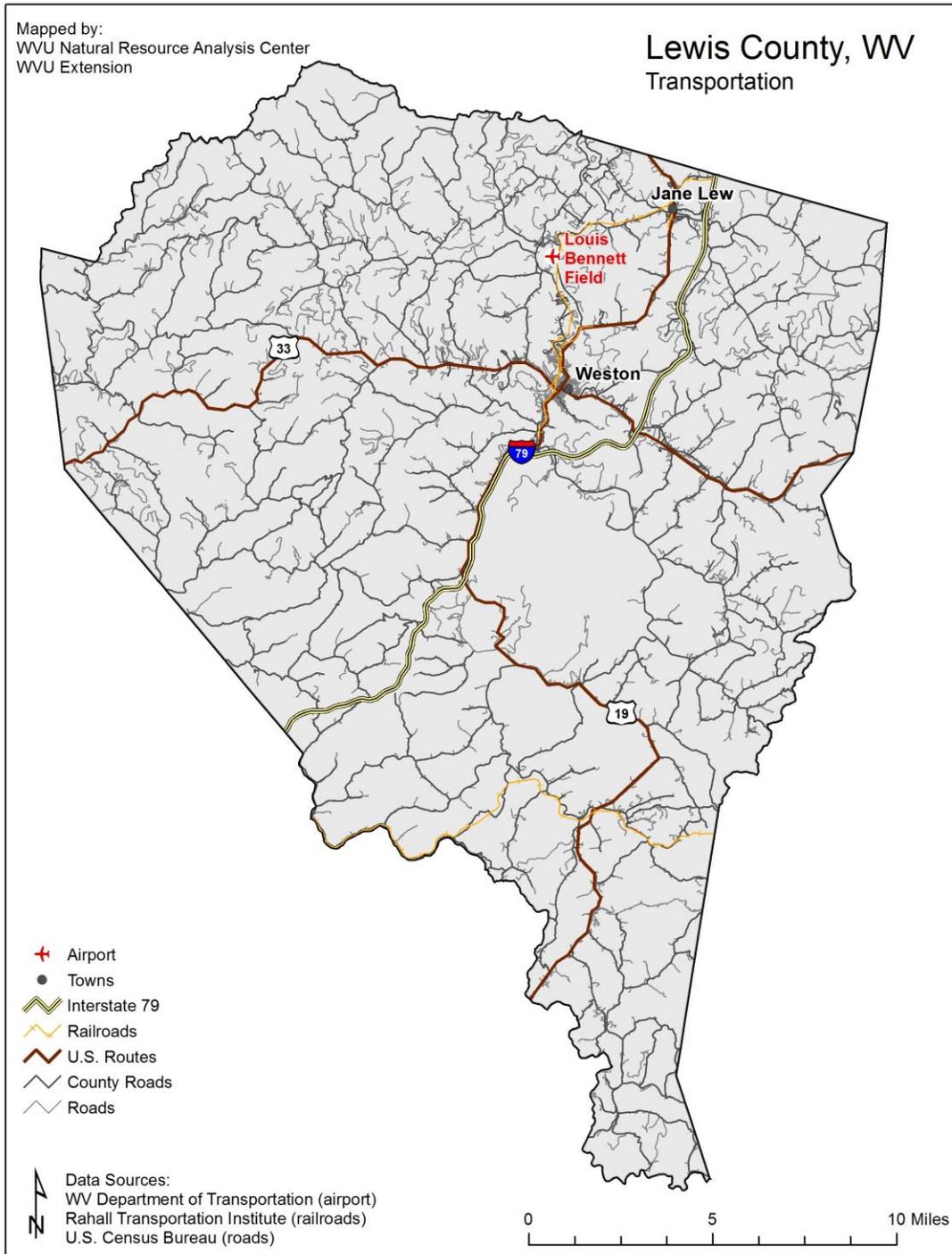
Due to the development, near Weston and east along Corridor H, there has been an increase in traffic on that stretch of highway. Traffic on the corridor near the shopping centers and just east of the interchange with Interstate 79 has grown by about 10 percent since 2003 to 23,200 vehicles per day. Similarly, traffic counts on US Route 33 in Weston and on the eastern edge of the county have also shown increases.

With this increase in traffic, many smaller concerns become larger. There are two aspects in this crossroads that have been brought to our attention. The first issue is the crossover lane on I-79 southbound for Exit 99 has a very short crossover lane. This weaving lane set-up has the potential to cause accidents and should be altered. The other issue is that the speed limit of 55 mph on US Route 33 in the immediate vicinity of the interchange is the standard speed for an open county highway according to the WV Department of Transportation. The current speed limit is the recommended speed for divided arterial highways in urban areas, according to the U.S. Federal Highway Administration. However, given the land use in the area, traffic volume, signaled intersections, and other roads and driveways entering the highway, that speed may not be appropriate. Additional study will be needed to determine if the speed limit needs to be adjusted.

Overall, at least some of the traffic growth can be attributed to the vehicle counts on I-79 in the northern part of the county (Table 13 and Table 14). Since 2006, at least 23,000 vehicles per day have traveled between Exit 105 (Jane Lew) and Exit 110 (Lost Creek) as well as between Exit 99 (Weston) and Exit 105 (Jane Lew). Also, more than 15,000 vehicles have used Exit 99 (Weston) in 2010 and 2011 (the only two years complete data was available) while at least 8,500 have used Exit 105 (Jane Lew) since 2008 (the first year for which exit data exists).



Map 8: Transportation Networks



US Routes 19/33 carries between 14,000 and 24,000 vehicles per day east of Weston (Table 15). However, it has less than 3,000 vehicles per day west of the county seat. Among other roads the county, the only other route traveled by more than 5,000 vehicles per day is County Route 7/7 – the road that links Exit 105 of I-79 with U.S. Route 19 at Jane Lew.

Table 13: Traffic Counts on Interstate Highways

I-79	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Between exit 105 & 110	25,000	25,900	31,000	26,500	26,500	24,500
Between exits 99 & 105	24,500	24,400	29,500	24,500	25,000	23,000
Between exits 96 & 99	20,000	20,700	21,500	17,000	18,000	20,000
Between exits 91 & 96	20,000	23,900	21,000	17,500	17,000	17,000
Between exit 79 & 91	19,000	18,000	21,000	16,500	16,500	16,500

Source: West Virginia Department of Transportation.

Table 14: Traffic Counts on Interstate Exit Ramps

	2008	2009	2010	2011
Exit 105 ramp (Jane Lew)	9,900	8,600	8,700	9,400
Exit 99 ramp (Weston)	11,400	10,400	15,000	15,700
Exit 96 ramp (S. Weston)	1,720	1,770	1,950	1,900
Exit 91 ramp (Roanoke)	1,230	1,530	1,700	1,450

Source: West Virginia Department of Transportation.

Table 15: Traffic Counts on General Highways

Route	Location	2003	2006	2009
US 33/119	East of Horner	13,000	12,600	14,000
US 33/119	East of Exit 99	21,500	20,600	23,200
US 33/119	Weston	13,000	12,600	15,200
US 33/119	Camden	2,200	2,200	2,300
US 33/119	Alum Bridge	1,700	1,800	1,500
CR 7/7	Jane Lew	6,000	6,400	8,400
US 19	Jane Lew	3,000	3,400	3,500
US 19	North of Weston	3,600	3,100	2,100
US 19	Stonewall Jackson Lake	2,080	2,400	2,300
CR 1	Jacksons Mill	1,700	1,500	1,500

Source: West Virginia Department of Transportation.



Emergency Response

Emergency response is an important consideration for any transportation network. With expanding development there needs to be consideration to the transportation network as it relates to emergencies. Residential and commercial developments should plan to be accessible not only for residents and customers, but for large vehicles, equipment, and personnel needed to respond in case of an emergency situation. Also, main roads should be well-maintained to support vehicles traveling at higher-than-normal rates of speed to permit a quick response in such situations.

Railroads

There is one railroad line that runs through Lewis County. The line runs across the southern portion of the county from Upshur County to Braxton County. The line is 58-mile Appalachian & Ohio (A&O) short line railroad that runs from Grafton to Cowen – the former Cowen to Pickens subdivision of CSX. It connects with CSX at Grafton as well as with three other short line railroads – Beech Mountain Railroad at Alexander, Elk River Railroad at Burnsville Junction, and West Virginia Central Railroad at Tygart Junction.

The railroad is headquartered in Buckhannon. It has been operated by P&L Transportation of Wilmington, Del., since 2006. It hauls coal, lumber, and chemicals. Crawford is the only location in the county on the system map. However, no current customer or train station/stop within Lewis County appears in the railroad's database.

Railroad transportation is an economical way to transport goods great distances in a relatively short amount of time. Lewis County would like to see the development of more railroad operations within the County to promote business development and transportation.

Other Transportation

There are two air transportation facilities in Lewis County. The West Virginia University Extension Service has Lewis Bennett Field at the Jackson's Mill State 4-H Conference Center. It has a single 3,195-foot long, 50-foot wide runway. The FAA lists the pavement as cracked and the markings faded. It is generally unattended and no services are available. Meanwhile, Stonewall Jackson Memorial Hospital in Weston operates a helipad for emergency medical flights.

There are no port facilities in or near Lewis County. The West Fork River is recreationally navigable for small craft but is not suitable for commercial traffic.



The river was dammed south of Weston for flood control, resulting in the creation of Stonewall Jackson Lake in 1988.

There is no intercity transportation service available in Lewis County. Likewise, there is no intra-county public transit service. There is taxi service available in and around the municipalities. The Lewis County Senior Center, Inc. operates specialized transportation to medical facilities. Central West Virginia Community Action located in Clarksburg operates a rural transportation program and provides transportation for the Head Start Program. Finally, the county school system operates a bus fleet for public school students.

Key Players

- Lewis County Commission
- City of Weston
- Town of Jane Lew
- Lewis County Chamber of Commerce
- Lewis County Economic Development Authority
- Lewis County Senior Center, Inc.
- Central West Virginia Community Action
- Lewis County Schools
- U.S. Federal Highway Administration
- West Virginia Department of Transportation
- Appalachian and Ohio Railroad

Themes

Lewis County will strive to have an efficient and effective transportation network. The highway system should be well-maintained and well-connected. It should serve travel through the county, to the county, from the county, and within the county. It will need to meet the needs of commuters, workers, school students, and businesses. Also, it will include modes of transportation other than highways where appropriate and feasible.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal 1: Identify roadways and highways that need immediate maintenance and upgrading.

- **Strategy 1** – Identify specific roads that are heavily used in design strategies to ease the flow of traffic (0-12 months).
- **Strategy 2** – Seek to have problem areas repaired or modified (6-24 months).



- **Strategy 3** – Study high traffic areas to determine if any changes in roadway systems (i.e., speed limits, traffic signals, entry points, etc.) (12-24 months).

Goal 2: Begin expansion and repair of the existing transportation network.

- **Strategy 1** – Locate bridges that may need reconstruction or upgrades (0-12 months).
- **Strategy 2** – Find hazardous areas that cause accidents or major delays (12-24 months).
- **Strategy 3** – Work with appropriate agencies to develop and implement redevelopment, repair, and replacement plans (24-60 months).

Goal 3: Expand multi-modal transportation system options.

- **Strategy 1**– Identify areas that could benefit from railroad access expansion (24-48 months).
- **Strategy 2** – Investigate options to create or connect into a public transportation system (48-60 months).

Fiscal Considerations

- Utilize federal and state transportation funds (for maintenance and upkeep)
 - Seek federal highway construction grants, federal public transportation grants, and state transportation grants
 - Encourage private expenditures and investment
 - Use existing revenue streams for studies and support



Public Services

Planning Context

The West Virginia “Local Powers Act” (*WV Code* §7-20-3) defines “county services” as following: (1) services provided by administration and administrative personnel, (2) law enforcement and its support personnel; (3) street light service; (4) fire-fighting service; (5) ambulance service; (6) fire hydrant service; (7) roadway maintenance and other services provided by roadway maintenance personnel; (8) public utility systems and services provided by public utility systems personnel, water; and (9) all other direct and indirect county services authorized by this code.

Meanwhile, among the duties listed for County Commissions in the state code (*WV Code* § 7-1-3) are that “they shall also, under the rules as now are or may be prescribed by law, have the superintendence and administration of the internal police and fiscal affairs of their counties, including the establishment and regulation of roads, ways, streets, avenues, drives and the like, and the naming or renaming thereof, in cooperation with local postal authorities, the division of highways and the directors of county emergency communications centers, to assure uniform, non-duplicative conversion of all rural routes to city-type addressing on a permanent basis, bridges, public landings, ferries and mills, with authority to lay and disburse the county levies.” The code also notes that “no provision in this section may be construed to limit the authority of a county to restrict the commercial use of real estate in designated areas through planning or zoning ordinances.”

While not all of these are appropriate to all places, it is apparent that counties provide a multitude of services for which appropriate planning must be undertaken.

Background

Lewis County provides extensive public services to its communities. These services are crucial for existing residents and for attracting new residents and businesses. When public services are managed efficiently and are easily accessible, the health, welfare and safety of the community are improved.

Schools

There are six public schools in Lewis County (Table 16). There are four elementary schools from kindergarten to fourth grade. There is one middle school for grades five through eight and one high school for grades 9 through 12th grade. Combined,



the public schools have 2,650 pupils, according to the West Virginia Department of Education.

Table 16: County Public Schools

School	Location	Grades	Enrollment	Staff
Alum Bridge Elementary	Alum Bridge	K-4	100	20
Jane Lew Elementary	Jane Lew	K-4	338	48
Peterson-Central Elementary	Weston	K-4	439	61
Roanoke Elementary	Roanoke	K-4	191	28
Robert L. Bland Middle	Weston	5-8	735	81
Lewis County High	Weston	9-12	847	82

Source: West Virginia Department of Education Website, 2012 Data.

There are also two private schools in the county, both in Weston. St. Patrick School ranges from pre-school to sixth grade. It is associated with the Catholic Parish of the same name. The school has 152 students which come from Lewis and surrounding counties according to its website. Meanwhile, Lewis County Christian School offers education from kindergarten to twelfth grade. It is associated with the Word of Life Church in Weston.

As the population in Lewis County continues to change, county and school officials should work together to address future needs and identify the best alternatives for any possible long-term school restructuring. For example, the consolidation of Alum Bridge Elementary with Troy Elementary in Gilmer County into a new facility (Leading Creek Elementary) is the first cross-county school in the state. Working with surrounding counties should be done in the best interest for current and future students in Lewis County.

Medical and Emergency Facilities

Lewis County has substantial medical facilities that service residents of the county and surrounding area. Stonewall Jackson Memorial Hospital is a 70-bed general medical and surgical facility centrally located off Route 33 in Weston. It is designated as a Level IV trauma center by the West Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services. Specialists associated with the hospital and who provide medical care to county residents are in the areas of cardiology, pulmonology, rheumatology, surgery, urology, family medicine, emergency medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics/gynecology, orthopedics, internal medicine, dermatology, neurology, podiatry and otolaryngology.

There are two medical clinics, Lively Healthcare Center and Family Medical Clinic, in Jane Lew in close proximity to Interstate 79. Finally, the William R. Sharp Jr. Hospital, an acute care psychiatric facility operated by the West Virginia Department of Health and Services, is located in Weston. It serves the northern part of the state.



The Lewis County Health Department provides a variety of functions at its Weston location. These services include education, immunization, testing, environmental health and sanitation evaluations, and community health activities.

First Responders

There are many different public safety agencies in the county. There are six fire departments in the county (Table 17). All use volunteers with Weston also having supplemental paid staff to ensure adequate coverage during the work day. The Lewis County Emergency Ambulance Service has five ambulance units in service and emergency medical technicians to provide emergent pre-hospital care. It has both paid and volunteer responders. It operates from a central station in Weston.

Table 17: Fire Department Coverage Areas and Ratings

Department	ISO	Area (Sq.Mi.)	Road Length	Calls (2009)	Structures (2003)	Population (2000)	Households (2000)
Jackson's Mill	4/9	33.1	109.4	159	1,754	1,737	712
Jane Lew	5/9	51.3	184.4	397	2,475	3,034	1,201
Midway	6/9	29.4	97.6	39	611	415	161
Pricetown	6/9	47.1	172.6	189	1,898	1,528	608
Walkersville	8/9	106.1	281.5	288	2,621	1,850	701
Weston	5/9	123.1	404.0	745	6,447	8,390	3,568

Source: West Virginia Department of Education Website.

Notes: In ISO Ratings, the first number is six road miles or less within 1,000 feet of hydrant/water supply. The second number is six road miles or less not within 1,000 feet of hydrant/water supply. Structures between five and six road miles out often are rated an 8. Structures more than six road miles out are automatically rated a 10.

The Lewis County Office of Emergency Management is responsible for disaster preparedness, response and recovery, and mitigation. During state emergencies Lewis County OEM is activated to respond to and coordinate materials and assistance needed by emergency services to protect lives and property. The office also coordinates the recovery efforts after the disaster with all responsible government agencies working with the WV Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and other agencies.

Law Enforcement

Law enforcement is handled by variety of agencies. Weston has a municipal police department. The Lewis County Sheriff's Department handles law enforcement in the unincorporated areas of the county as well as court security and administration of those in custody. The West Virginia State Police have a detachment in Weston



from the Elkins-based Troop 3. The state police help with law enforcement and highway patrol duties throughout the county. They also provide basic police services in Jane Lew on a contractual basis.

Senior Services

Lewis County is received its official status as a Designated Retirement Community in 2007. It is one of just _____ counties in the state, according to the RetireWV website. As the citizens of West Virginia continue to age, Lewis County stands to benefit from the attractive public services it offers to the aging community.

The Lewis County Senior Center aids senior citizens in various ways. Seniors can obtain transportation through the center as well as schedule in-home personal care appointments to help meet their everyday needs. Lunch is served on most weekdays for seniors at the facilities in Weston and Jane Lew. Additionally, the center operates a “meals on wheels” service for those who are homebound. The county should be proactive in expanding the services of the Senior Center and identifying new areas for senior development.

Social Services

There are numerous health and human service agencies operating in Lewis County. The Lewis County Family Resource Network is based in Weston. It offers family and education-oriented programs that emphasize values and well-being. Hope Inc. is the county’s task-force on domestic violence and sexual assault. It works with county government and is based in Weston. The Lewis County Senior Center provides services described above. The United Way of Lewis County serves as an umbrella funder for many of these non-profit agencies.

General Government

Lewis County has a commission form of government, as prescribed in the state constitution and state code. It has three members, each of whom represents a part of the county, who are elected county-wide on staggered, six-year terms. The Lewis County Commission also employs an administrator to oversee day-to-day operations.

The county has five constitutional officers who are in charge of operational offices. The County Clerk oversees county and property records. The Circuit Clerk oversees court records and scheduling. The Assessor oversees property valuations. The Prosecuting Attorney oversees criminal prosecution and court cases involving the county. The Sheriff oversees tax collection and law enforcement (described above).



There are several other county agencies. The Office of Emergency Management and the Emergency Management Service(EMS) are described above. The Floodplain Administration Office evaluates new developments for flood damage potential and maintains resources on flood event history and development best practices. The Lewis-Gilmer E-911 Center dispatches calls for over 40 agencies to handle emergency situations and oversees the addressing system for the county. The Lewis/Upshur/Braxton Community Corrections provides an alternative sentencing option for non-violent adult offenders. All of these units have offices in Weston.

There is also the court system featuring Family Court, Magistrates, and Circuit Court. These are state officials for the county elected on a county basis. Likewise, there is a WVU Extension Service county office and the County Health Department.

Many of the county governmental units benefited from the completion of the new courthouse annex which provides updated facilities and allows more offices to be housed in a central location.

Additionally, the City of Weston and the Town of Jane Lew provide additional services – and have rules – for the property and people within their municipal boundaries. The Town of Jane Lew has a municipal court with its own judge to handle traffic and ordinance violations.

Key Players

- Lewis County Board of Education
- Lewis County Office of Emergency Management
- Lewis County Emergency Management Service
- Lewis County Senior Center
- Lewis County Sheriff's Department
- Jackson's Mill Volunteer Fire Department
- Jane Lew Volunteer Fire Department
- Midway Volunteer Fire Department
- Pricetown Volunteer Fire Department
- Walkersville Volunteer Fire Department
- Weston Volunteer Fire Departments
- Weston Police Department
- West Virginia State Police
- Lewis County Commission
- City of Weston
- Town of Jane Lew



Themes

Public services in Lewis County focus on the three Ps: **preparation, protection, and prevention**. Given the rural nature and the resources available of the county, this will be the probable focus of public services for the foreseeable future.

Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Lewis County will maintain and improve a high level of public services available throughout the county. The county will work to expand existing services and identify new services to improve community function.

Goal 1: Lewis County schools will meet or exceed state standards for West Virginia Schools.

- **Strategy 1** – Support the School Board’s efforts to maintain and improve public education (12-24 months).
- **Strategy 2** – Promote more activities for school age children in all grade levels (24-48 months).

Goal 2: Ensure adequate fire and emergency services are available in all areas of the county.

- **Strategy 1** – Provide community outreach and education for disaster preparedness and mitigation (Continuous).
- **Strategy 2** – Ensure proper address markings on houses and accurate maps for emergency dispatch (12-24 months).
- **Strategy 3** – Update interagency, mutual aid agreements to ensure county residents are protected (12-24 months).
- **Strategy 4** – Educate residents about fire safety and emergency response by the fire departments and ambulance service (24-48 months).
- **Strategy 5** – Provide appropriate up-to-date equipment to first responders (police, fire, EMS, etc.) (36-60 months).

Goal 3: Continue excellent senior service

- **Strategy 1** – Support and encourage new housing development for seniors (couples and singles) living within Lewis County. (12-36 months).
- **Strategy 2** – Expand senior-related services (24-48 months).
- **Strategy 3** – Market the county as a retirement community and publicize success in that area (48-60 months).



Goal 4: Ensure sufficient services for residents

- **Strategy 1** – Inventory county government services to identify any unmet critical needs. (18-36 months).
- **Strategy 2**– Create list of social services (non-governmental and governmental) available to county residents. (24-48 months).

Fiscal Considerations

- Use existing revenue streams
- Seek grant funding
- Develop user charges and fees
- Maintain present funding formulas for specific activities (e.g., senior center)



Recreation

Planning Context

Recreation is important for creating and maintaining a high quality of life for residents of Lewis County. Recreation encompasses several facilities and areas in the county and is not just for local residents but for visitors to the area as well. Recreation is increasingly looking at the benefits provided to users as well as the community at large. This represents progress from the more traditional recreational tasks of serving as property custodians and promoting activities.

Background

Much of Lewis County is covered by public use lands which include state parks and wildlife management areas (WMA). There are also local parks, country clubs, and recreational venues. Lewis County has also taken on development projects to increase countywide recreation (Map 9). Lewis County has public land areas which can be used for recreational purposes located throughout the county.

Stonewall Jackson Lake and Stonewall Resort

The largest of these is the Stonewall Jackson Lake WMA (18,289 acres including 2,650-acre lake) located in the southern half of the county. Part of the wildlife management area is the former Horner State Game Refuge. Adjacent to area is the Stonewall Resort State Park, a privately-operated lakeside resort and conference center. The 1,900-acre park features an 18-hole Arnold Palmer golf course as well as outdoor and lake recreation such as boating, canoeing, kayaking, mountain biking, hiking and fishing. The main building is modeled after an Adirondack Lodge from the 1920s.

Stonewall Lake

The Stonewall Lake WMA (2,985 acres including 550-acre lake) is located near the Lewis County-Upshur County border. The wildlife management area is known for its hunting, fishing, and camping.

Jackson's Mill

The WVU Jackson's Mill is a rustic-style conference and event facility in an historic, heritage-based setting that is also home to West Virginia 4-H camping. It is located between Jane Lew and Weston. Events are scheduled throughout the year at the Mill, the largest being the Jacksons Mill Jubilee during Labor Day weekend. It is also



home to the State Fire Training Academy where emergency first responders are trained, and Lewis Bennett Field, a small, single-runway airport.

Parks

The Lewis County Park is on the eastern edge of Weston. The 18.5 acre facility includes a new aquatics center, playgrounds, “putting golf” and picnic area. The state-of-the-art swimming pool opened in 2012 and features 25-meter swimming lanes, two diving boards into a 12-foot pool, and separate play swimming areas. The park also has four picnic pavilions, camper sites, walking trails, and tennis courts. There are two municipal parks in the county – the Weston City Park and Jane Lew Town Park. The Weston City Park is almost 12 acres. It features a variety of athletic fields for baseball, softball, football, soccer, and track. The Jane Lew Park is over 10 acres and features baseball and softball diamonds, playground equipment, two walking trails, basketball court, picnic pavilions and a building for meetings and social events.

Destinations

There are several destinations around the county.

The largest is the Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum. The former Weston State Hospital was the state psychiatric hospital from 1864 to 1994. It is one of the largest stone cut buildings in the world. The facility is now privately-owned but open for tours and other activities.

The West Virginia Museum of American Glass in Weston showcases the rich glass-making history of the region and the nation. The Mountaineer Military Museum in Weston features exhibits telling the story of locals who served the nation in various wars and conflicts. The Hackers Creek Descendants Library near Horner provides genealogy resources. The Deerfield County club between Jane Lew and Weston features a nine-hole golf course.

Senior Center

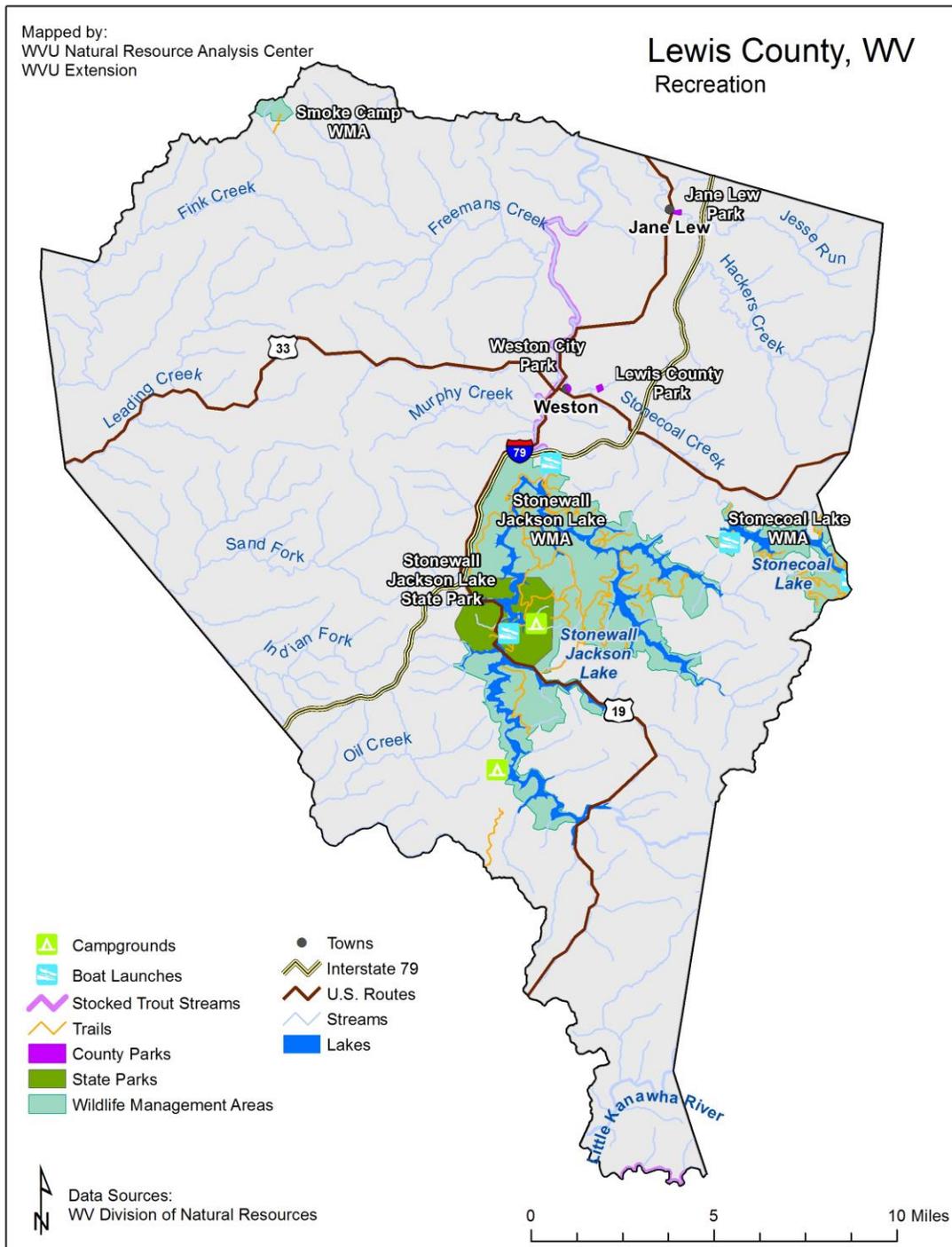
The Lewis County Senior Center is located in Weston with satellite locations in Jane Lew and Ireland. The center strives to improve the quality of life for all senior citizens in the county by promoting independence and community involvement. The senior center also provides a place for gathering, holding events for senior citizens such as playing various types of games as well as engaging in activities such as exercise classes and theater.

Jackson Memorial Community Center

The community center locally called the Jane Lew Community Center houses the senior nutrition site and provides a place for gathering and holding events.



Map 9: Recreation Locations



Key Players

- Lewis County Commission
- City of Weston
- Town of Jane Lew
- Lewis County Senior Center
- Stonewall Resort
- West Virginia State Park System
- West Virginia Division of Natural Resources
- West Virginia University Extension Service
- Local country clubs, community center and related establishments
- Museum owners/operators
- Convention and Visitors' Bureaus

Themes

Lewis County will work to maintain and improve the quality of life it offers residents. The presence of recreational amenities and opportunities serve to both attract people to a place as well as to keep them there once they are present. To that end, the county will strive to make the county a place where people want to live, work, and play. This will mean working with a variety of public and private entities to ensure that the recreational needs of county residents are being met.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal 1: Identify ways to improve recreation.

- **Strategy 1** – Identify maintenance, repairs, and upgrades that are needed at facilities (0-6 months).
- **Strategy 2** – Promote countywide recreation activities and opportunities (0-12 months).

Goal 2: Expand current recreation parks and facilities.

- **Strategy 1** – Identify possible programs that can be implemented for public enjoyment at parks (e.g., a guided nature walk) (12-24 months).
- **Strategy 2** – Consider the development of biking, running, and hiking trails (24-48 months).



Goal 3: Attract people to Lewis County through recreation opportunities.

- **Strategy 1** – Coordinate promotional efforts with the West Virginia Division of Tourism and other state agencies (36-48 months).
- **Strategy 2** – Work to have unified and combined efforts from Convention and Visitors Bureaus serving the county (48-60 months).

Fiscal Considerations

- Seek private donations and foundation funding
- Apply for state grants
- Foundation funding
- Utilize user fees and charges (particularly for private enterprises)
- Increase revenues from recreational facilities
- Use monies from county hotel/motel tax for appropriate projects and purposes
- Maintain present funding formulas for specific activities (e.g., senior center)



Economic Development

Planning Context

For a community to prosper, it must ensure that it has a strong local economy. Thus for any plan to succeed, it must include a guide for the maintenance and improvement of the local economic well-being and capabilities.

To maintain economic well-being and development in the years to come it is necessary to have a full-featured economic development plan. Such a plan would be the responsibility of the county economic development authority. In that context, the development discussion in this plan should help provide a general framework for more detailed considerations of those and related issues.

Background

What is now Lewis County started as a frontier region within the late 18th century Harrison County, Virginia. It was a rural, agrarian area. The county was formed in 1818 and soon thereafter Weston was established as the county seat. It was the center of commerce for the area with stores, mills, and banks serving residents. Construction of roads for wagons enhanced trade before the Civil War. Final construction of the state mental hospital (which was started by Virginia in 1858) concluded in the 1870s giving the county an economic activity other than agriculture. Around the same time railroads reached the county making it possible for the county to become an industrial center. Firms manufactured household goods, farm equipment, and wagons. The early 1900s brought two prominent industries to the county which would help shape it for the next century – glass making and oil and gas exploration.

For much of the 20th century, the combination of industry, health care, and commerce gave Lewis County a robust and diverse economy. Eventually changes in circumstances altered the county. International competition and new technologies transformed glass manufacturing into a niche industry. More accessible and more plentiful oil and natural gas reserves led to a decline in drilling in the county – until new approaches such as long wells and fracking reinvigorated energy exploration efforts. The main street shops and small, local stores have been supplanted by malls and other centers, many of which are outside the county.

More recently, the Weston State Hospital was replaced by the William R. Sharpe, Jr. Hospital, a much smaller facility reflecting the changes in attitude and approaches to mental health treatment. Also, larger firms have moved into the Jane Lew Industrial Park through the efforts of the Lewis County Economic Development Authority.



Workforce

Lewis County has become a net importer of workers as 140 more persons travel into the county versus leave the county each day for their primary employment (Table 18).

Table 18: Inflow/Outflow Table

Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (Primary Jobs)	Count	Share
Employed in the Selection Area	6,635	100.0%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	3,795	57.2%
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	2,840	42.8%
Living in the Selection Area	6,495	100.0%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	3,655	56.3%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	2,840	43.7%
Employed & Live in Selection Area	2,840	Circular
Employed in Area, Live Outside	3,795	Inflow
Live in Area, Employed Outside	3,655	Outflow

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "On the Map," 2010 Data.

The growth of the oil and gas industry has led to a surge of job opportunities in Lewis County (Table 19). Jobs in the extractive industries – NAICS 21: Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction – grew by 21.4% between 2010 and 2011. In 2011, these jobs made up 19.0% of the total county employment and 24.1% of its private sector employment. The jobs are found in oil and gas extraction (304 jobs in NAICS 211) or support activities (1,028 jobs in NAICS 213).

Not surprisingly, the oil and gas extraction industry (NAICS 21) is a large part of the economic base in Lewis County (Table 20). However, it is not the only industrial sector where the proportion of employment in the county is greater than the proportion of employment found in the state or national economy. Transportation and warehousing (NAICS 48-49), real estate and leasing (NAICS 53), and accommodation and food services (NAICS 72) are also part of the economic base.

This should not be surprising since the location of the county along Interstate 79 and Corridor H makes it a prime location for trucking activities. The influx of new employment can cause an increased demand for housing. Also, the presence of the state resort park serves as an impetus for tourism-related facilities, such as hotels and restaurants.

The county also has a higher proportion of its employment in government overall. State government and local public education jobs in particular make up a greater share of employment than found at the state or national levels. This could be caused by the presence of the state resort park (even though it is privately-managed) and the need for more schools to serve dispersed rural communities, respectively.



Table 19: Employment by Industry

Industry	EE 2011	% of EE	EE 2010	Change
TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES	7,006	100.0%	6,604	6.1%
TOTAL, PRIVATE SECTOR	5,533	79.0%	5,109	8.3%
NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINING	1,369	19.5%	1,131	21.0%
11 Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	37	0.5%	34	8.8%
21 Mining	1,332	19.0%	1,097	21.4%
CONSTRUCTION	229	3.3%	183	25.1%
23 Construction	229	3.3%	183	25.1%
MANUFACTURING	179	2.6%	162	10.5%
31-33 Manufacturing	179	2.6%	162	10.5%
TRADE, TRANSPORTATION, AND UTILITIES	1,280	18.3%	1,227	4.3%
22 Utilities*	54	0.8%	55	-1.8%
42 Wholesale trade	88	1.3%	82	7.3%
44-45 Retail trade	864	12.3%	829	4.2%
48-49 Transportation and warehousing	274	3.9%	261	5.0%
INFORMATION	25	0.4%	25	0.0%
51 Information	25	0.4%	25	0.0%
FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	214	3.1%	197	8.6%
52 Finance and insurance	98	1.4%	103	-4.9%
53 Real estate and rental and leasing	116	1.7%	94	23.4%
PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES	492	7.0%	510	-3.5%
54 Professional and technical services*	46	0.7%	40	15.0%
55 Management of companies and enterprises	54	0.8%	47	14.9%
56 Administrative and waste services	392	5.6%	423	-7.3%
EDUCATION AND HEALTH SERVICES	874	12.5%	835	4.7%
61 Educational services	2	0.0%	2	0.0%
62 Health care and social assistance	872	12.4%	833	4.7%
LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY	697	9.9%	674	3.4%
71 Arts, entertainment, and recreation*	21	0.3%	16	31.3%
72 Accommodation and food services	676	9.6%	659	2.6%
OTHER SERVICES	175	2.5%	164	6.7%
81 Other services, except public administration	175	2.5%	164	6.7%
UNCLASSIFIED	NA		NA	
GOVERNMENT	1,473	21.0%	1,495	-1.5%
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT	59	0.8%	62	-4.8%
STATE GOVERNMENT	809	11.5%	813	-0.5%
LOCAL GOVERNMENT	605	8.6%	620	-2.4%
61 Educational services	436	6.2%	452	-3.5%

Source: Workforce WV.



Table 20: Economic Base

		Co %	WV %	US %
TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
TOTAL, PRIVATE SECTOR		79.0%	79.7%	83.6%
NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINING		19.5%	4.9%	1.5%
	11 Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	0.5%	0.2%	0.9%
	21 Mining	19.0%	4.7%	0.6%
CONSTRUCTION		3.3%	4.7%	4.2%
	23 Construction	3.3%	4.7%	4.2%
MANUFACTURING		2.6%	7.0%	9.0%
	31-33 Manufacturing	2.6%	7.0%	9.0%
TRADE, TRANSPORTATION, AND UTILITIES		18.3%	18.9%	19.2%
	22 Utilities*	0.8%	0.8%	0.4%
	42 Wholesale trade	1.3%	3.3%	4.3%
	44-45 Retail trade	12.3%	12.4%	11.3%
	48-49 Transportation and warehousing	3.9%	2.4%	3.1%
INFORMATION		0.4%	1.5%	2.1%
	51 Information	0.4%	1.5%	2.1%
FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES		3.1%	3.7%	5.7%
	52 Finance and insurance	1.4%	2.7%	4.3%
	53 Real estate and rental and leasing	1.7%	1.0%	1.5%
PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES		7.0%	8.9%	13.4%
	54 Professional and technical services*	0.7%	3.6%	5.9%
	55 Management of companies and enterprise*	0.8%	0.8%	1.5%
	56 Administrative and waste services	5.6%	4.5%	6.0%
EDUCATION AND HEALTH SERVICES		12.5%	16.7%	14.7%
	61 Educational services*	0.0%	0.8%	2.0%
	62 Health care and social assistance	12.4%	15.9%	12.7%
LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY		9.9%	10.4%	10.3%
	71 Arts, entertainment, and recreation	0.3%	1.0%	1.5%
	72 Accommodation and food services	9.6%	9.3%	8.8%
OTHER SERVICES		2.5%	3.0%	3.4%
	81 Other services, except public administration	2.5%	3.0%	3.4%
	99 Unclassified establishments*	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
GOVERNMENT		21.0%	20.3%	16.4%
	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT	0.8%	3.3%	2.2%
	STATE GOVERNMENT	11.5%	6.1%	3.5%
	LOCAL GOVERNMENT	7.4%	10.9%	10.7%
	61 Educational services*	8.6%	6.5%	5.9%

Sources: Workforce WV. US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Table 21: Establishments by Industry

Industry		Units 2011	% of Units	Units 2010	Change
NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINING		45	9.2%	44	2.3%
	11 Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	8	1.6%	8	0.0%
	21 Mining	37	7.5%	36	2.8%
CONSTRUCTION		50	10.2%	53	-5.7%
	23 Construction	50	10.2%	53	-5.7%
MANUFACTURING		13	2.6%	15	-13.3%
	31-33 Manufacturing	13	2.6%	15	-13.3%
TRADE, TRANSPORTATION, AND UTILITIES		126	25.7%	122	3.3%
	22 Utilities*	4	0.8%	4	0.0%
	42 Wholesale trade	16	3.3%	15	6.7%
	44-45 Retail trade	76	15.5%	75	1.3%
	48-49 Transportation and warehousing	30	6.1%	29	3.4%
INFORMATION		6	1.2%	5	20.0%
	51 Information	6	1.2%	5	20.0%
FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES		26	5.3%	25	4.00%
	52 Finance and insurance	15	3.1%	15	0.00%
	53 Real estate and rental and leasing	11	2.2%	10	10.0%
PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES		35	7.1%	34	2.9%
	54 Professional and technical services*	15	3.1%	15	0.0%
	55 Management of companies and enterprises	4	0.8%	3	33.3%
	56 Administrative and waste services	16	3.3%	16	0.0%
EDUCATION AND HEALTH SERVICES		50	10.2%	48	4.2%
	61 Educational services	2	0.4%	2	0.0%
	62 Health care and social assistance	48	9.8%	46	4.3%
LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY		47	9.6%	46	2.2%
	71 Arts, entertainment, and recreation*	5	1.0%	4	25.0%
	72 Accommodation and food services	41	8.4%	42	-2.4%
OTHER SERVICES		50	10.2%	44	13.6%
	81 Other services, except public administration	50	10.2%	44	13.6%
UNCLASSIFIED		NA		NA	
GOVERNMENT		45	9.2%	45	0.0%
	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT	15	3.1%	15	0.0%
	STATE GOVERNMENT	13	2.6%	13	0.0%
	LOCAL GOVERNMENT	17	3.5%	17	0.0%
	61 Educational services	7	1.4%	7	0.0%

Source: Workforce WV.



Looking at employment establishments in Lewis County tells a different story (Table 21). Four industrial sectors combine for close to half of all employers: retail trade (NAICS 44-45 at 15.5%), construction (NAICS 23 at 10.2%), and other services (NAICS 10.2%), and health and social assistance (NAICS 62 at 9.8%). Interestingly, only about one employer in eleven is a government (public sector, all industries, at 9.2%) while only one employer in thirteen is involved in mining (NAICS 21 at 7.5%).

Labor Force

Employment in Lewis County is entirely made up of a civilian labor force. Of the population 16 years and older in Lewis County, just over half (50.5%) are active within the workforce (Table 22). Only 6.2% of the entire workforce population is currently unemployed which is considerably lower than the unemployment rate of the surrounding counties.

Table 22: Labor Force

Employment Status	Estimate	Percent
Population 16 years and over	13,471	----
In labor force	6,799	50.5%
Civilian labor force	6,799	6,799
Percent Unemployed		6.2%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010.

Lewis County's workforce is equally dispersed among five major occupation classifications (Table 23). 24.6% of workers are employed in management, business, science, and art; 21% of the workforce works in a service occupation; 23.3% of the workforce works in sales and office; 15.7% are employed through natural resources, construction, and maintenance; and 14.7% of workers are occupied in production, transportation, and material moving.

Table 23: Occupations

Occupation	Estimate	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	6,380	
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	1,567	24.6%
Service occupations	1,387	21.7%
Sales and office occupations	1,486	23.3%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	999	15.7%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	941	14.7%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010.



Commuting to Work

Almost all Lewis County workers face a daily commute to their jobs. The average travel time for workday commute is 26.9 minutes (Table 24). The most common method used to get to work is someone driving by themselves. A total of 5,063 people use this form of transportation to get to work which accounts for 81.3% of the total working population. Carpooling is the next prevalent form of transportation as 663 people (10.7%) use this form of transportation. Additionally, 330 people (5.3%) use other means to get to work while 168 individuals (2.7%) worked at home.

Table 24: Commuting to Work

Method of Commuting	Estimate	Percent
Workers 16 years and over	6,224	6,224
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	5,063	81.3%
Car, truck, or van -- carpoled	663	10.7%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	47	0.8%
Walked	218	3.5%
Other means	65	1.0%
Worked at home	168	2.7%
Mean travel time to work	26.9 minutes	

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010

Income Levels

The mean household income for the 2010 Census was \$33,293 (Table 25). Overall the income dispersion was very diverse covering pretty equally from \$10,000 to \$75,000 per household annually. The high-end of household incomes, \$75,000 or more is made by 15% of households. Lastly this chart covers supplemental and retirement earnings. 64.4% of the total population of Lewis County has a supplemental income stemming from retirement, Social Security, supplemental security income, with cash public assistance income, and food stamps.



Table 25: Income Levels

INCOME AND BENEFITS (IN 2010 DOLLARS)	Estimate	Percent
Total households	6,527	
Less than \$10,000	743	11.4%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	732	11.2%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	1,110	17.0%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	869	13.3%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	989	15.2%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	1,097	16.8%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	448	6.9%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	387	5.9%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	77	1.2%
\$200,000 or more	75	1.1%
Median household income (dollars)	\$33,293	
Mean household income (dollars)	\$44,425	
Households with earnings	4,202	64.4%
Mean earnings (dollars)	\$50,597	
With Social Security	2,463	37.7%
Mean Social Security income (dollars)	\$14,333	
With retirement income	1,585	24.3%
Mean retirement income (dollars)	\$13,781	
With Supplemental Security Income	409	6.3%
Mean Supplemental Security Income (dollars)	\$7,048	
With cash public assistance income	200	3.1%
Mean cash public assistance income (dollars)	\$2,304	
With Food Stamp/SNAP benefits in the past 12 months	766	11.7%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010.

Key Players

- Lewis County Economic Development Authority
- Developers
- Key Industries (such as Energy and Tourism)
- Lewis County Chamber of Commerce
- City of Weston
- Town of Jane Lew
- Lewis County Commission
- Region VII Planning and Development Council
- West Virginia Development Office



Themes

Lewis County will work to have a local economy that meets the employment needs of residents. It will seek to expand its economic base in sectors where it has a competitive advantage. It will seek to fill gaps that exist in the availability of wanted products and desired services in the county. It will strive to handle development in an orderly and common-sense manner for new enterprises and existing firms – as well as the residents of Lewis County.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal 1: Support and promote business development.

- **Strategy 1** – Work to strengthen existing entities that work in the area of economic development and business promotion (e.g., the Lewis County EDA, the Chamber of Commerce) (Continuous).
- **Strategy 2** – Conduct a county-wide business retention and expansion study (0-6 months).
- **Strategy 3** – Encourage residents to support locally-owned and operated businesses (6-12 months).
- **Strategy 4** – Continue to seek and recruit new businesses to move into Lewis County (12-24 months).

Goal 2: Identify and expand new economic development projects.

- **Strategy 1** – Undertake an economic base study to determine the primary elements and the missing pieces of the local economic base (24-36 months).
- **Strategy 2** – Support economic expansion around tourism such as shops, restaurants, and entertainment venues, where appropriate throughout the county (Continuous).
- **Strategy 3** – Encourage developers to create new retail centers within Lewis County (Continuous).
- **Strategy 4** – Work to diversify the local economy by establishing a larger service based industry within the county (24-48 months).

Goal 3: Expand local infrastructure to support new business development including industrialized and commercialized applications.

- **Strategy 1** – Support efforts to finish Corridor H (Continuous).
- **Strategy 2** – Work to extend water and sewer networks throughout areas of potential development (Continuous).
- **Strategy 3** – Encourage providers to expand cellular telephone and broadband coverage (Continuous).
- **Strategy 4** – Seek solution to land-line telephone reliability issues in rural parts of the county (especially south of Stonewall Jackson Lake) (36-60 months).



- **Strategy 5** – Work with electricity providers to expand the three-phase power network (48-60 months).

Fiscal Considerations

- Seek federal and state grants for economic development, redevelopment and infrastructure improvement
- Explore tax increment financing to support new opportunities
- Investigate low interest loans
- Use existing revenue streams

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Preferred Development

Planning Context

Establishing preferred development areas allows Lewis County's decision-makers to address the problems arising from poorly planned and negative growth patterns. Preferred development areas are where incentives may be used to encourage more efficient well-designed development either through infill or redevelopment. Establishing more suitable growth areas that are proximal to existing infrastructure and community facilities prevents sprawl. The preferred development areas are able to tie into existing roads, water and sewer infrastructure and are located near schools, churches and governmental services.

Background

Municipalities

The smartest location for future growth is in and around existing municipalities. This is due in large part to the availability of existing public services and infrastructure that can sustain growth. It is also the primary location for social organizations, and other public amenities. There are two incorporated towns within Lewis County that should be promoted as preferred areas for future development to occur.

The larger of the two incorporated towns in the county is the City of Weston. Weston is the county seat and is located slightly north and east of the county's center. It covers approximately 1.7 square miles of land area (2.0 square miles of total area) and is home to 4,110 people, 1,811 households, and 1,082 families according to the 2010 Census. The city has a population density of 2,107.1 persons per square mile. The median age is 41.4 years. According to the 2010 American Community Survey, the median household income is \$27,066 while the median value of an owner-occupied home is \$80,000.

The city is home to the Trans-Alleghany Lunatic Asylum. The former state psychiatric hospital is a National Historic Landmark. The William R. Sharpe, Jr., Hospital, the replacement facility for the former hospital, and Stonewall Jackson Hospital, a general medical facility are both in Weston.

Meanwhile, the Town of Jane Lew is the other municipality in the county. It is located on the northeast corner of the county and encompasses 0.24 square miles of



land area (0.25 square miles of total area). There are approximately 409 residents, 195 households, and 111 families in the town according to the 2010 census. The population density was 1713.8 persons per square mile. The median age is 41.8 years. And the median household income is \$29,130 while the median value of an owner-occupied home is \$71,700 according to the 2010 American Community Survey. Located within one half mile of the town limits are two medical clinics, a fully developed Industrial Park with numerous businesses and a large truck stop.

Beyond the incorporated limits of each municipality is spillover development of both a residential and commercial nature. As a result, each place “feels” much larger than the numbers would otherwise indicate. In other words, what residents often consider to be part of Weston or Jane Lew may in fact be outside of the legally-defined city or town, respectively. More than half of county’s population (over 57 percent) at the time of the 2010 Census lived in the northeastern part of the county. Specifically, 9,408 county residents resided in three of the county’s five Census Tracts (9673, 9674, and 9675) that cover only about one-fifth of the county’s land area (Map 10).

These census tracts include most of Weston and its urban cluster. [The Weston Urban Cluster includes 4,110 residents of the city and 967 county residents living in close proximity to the city. Overall, 4,954 of the cluster’s 5,077 lived in the three northeastern tracts while 323 were in the other two tracts.] They also include Jane Lew and most of the development along Corridor H between Interstate 79 and the Upshur County line. This is important because most of the people in these three Census tracts – along with much of the potential for new development – are found in the unincorporated areas outside the municipalities in areas overseen by the county.

Other Communities

Although there are only two municipalities in Lewis County, there are numerous other small communities which have been in the past or currently are defined by some centrally located area. These areas typically evolve from the location of some group of services or past industrial center, which in turn creates some concentration of residents who develop additional types of public services over time, and thus become somewhat self-supporting communities.

Many of these small communities in Lewis County appear to have located around local road networks and small enterprises. However, over time, these networks and firms have been replaced by larger highways such as Interstate 79 and Corridor H and larger businesses. And because the population and commercial centers of these smaller communities generally failed to expand significantly beyond its original size, many of these places have seen limited to no growth and in some cases have experienced substantial decline.



Seasonal Home Clusters

Lewis County is known for its beautiful vistas and abundance of outdoor activities. The tourism industry has brought an influx of seasonal home clusters around Stonewall Jackson Lake and Stonecoal Lake. Many of these are on smaller seasonally maintained roads and poorly planned. Though these developments are welcomed by the county, they are usually out of reach of the County infrastructure and services

Corridor H

When completed, Corridor H will connect central West Virginia with Virginia and provide easy access to locations near eastern cities (via connecting Interstate highways). It is predicted to bring numerous changes to Lewis County. The county must consider infrastructure development and related matters in response to the future growth that is expected.

Key Players

- Lewis County Economic Development Authority
- Developers
- Key Industries (such as Energy and Tourism)
- Lewis County Chamber of Commerce
- City of Weston
- Town of Jane Lew
- Lewis County Commission
- Region VII Planning and Development Council
- West Virginia Development Office

Themes

Most of Lewis County's early development was based on a walkable neighborhood structure while recent development has followed very different patterns that reinforce a suburban auto-reliant community. A central goal of this Comprehensive Plan, especially the preferred development element, is to restore and reinforce a neighborhood-based town structure to Lewis County. This goal not only supports the community vision, but also sets the stage for how the County intends to grow.

Related to this, the National Association of Realtors 2011 Community Preference Survey of American priorities in housing concluded that most Americans would like to live in walkable communities where shops, restaurants, and local businesses are within an easy stroll from their homes and their jobs are a short commute away; as long as those communities can also provide privacy from neighbors and detached, single-family homes. While this does not appear to be a realistic option for Lewis



County due to its rural nature, it does speak of the possible need for the county to focus on growth centers rather than unrestrained, low-density development.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

It is important for government to guide growth in a way that makes the most efficient use of public services and infrastructure and considers trends in the energy and tourism industries. In this way, market demand, the primary factor influencing development, can be harnessed most effectively.

Goal 1: Support the direction of development toward appropriate locations and where there are existing available resources, infrastructure and public services.

- **Strategy 1** – Use existing and new incentives and disincentives to direct development to locations where public services and infrastructure are already available or may be readily provided (0-12 months).
- **Strategy 2** – Use regulations to encourage new development within the general service areas surrounding the incorporated municipalities in the county (12-24 months).

Fiscal Considerations

- Seek federal and state grants for economic development and infrastructure improvement
- Explore tax increment financing to support new opportunities
- Investigate low interest loans
- Use existing revenue streams



Renewal/Redevelopment

Planning Context

When managed effectively, renewal results in increased property values, economic development and improvements to quality of life.

In West Virginia, planning has always encompassed redevelopment activities. Currently, state code states that such actions must be consistent with the land use component of the plan, identify slums and other blighted areas and set goals, plans and programs for the elimination of such areas as well as for community renewal, revitalization and/or redevelopment. This is a much more broad view than the previous emphasis that was solely placed on slums and blighted areas. It is also a recognition that takes both “cleaning up” and “fixing up” a place to return it to viability.

Background

Like many rural areas in West Virginia, Lewis County has faced the challenge of decreased population and changes in industry. This has left the county with housing and commercial and industrial properties that no longer suit the needs of the residents. Although, much of the vacancy in the county is maintained absentee ownership the lack of enforcement has allowed some structures to become dilapidated. Additionally, in some places in the county occupied residential housing has fallen to disrepair.

Key Players

- City of Weston
- Town of Jane Lew
- Lewis County Economic Development Authority
- Weston Economic Development Authority
- Jane Lew Development Authority
- Lewis County Commission
- Central West Virginia Community Action

Themes

Occupied Housing improvements involving both occupied residential and rental properties are essential to promoting economic development and protecting



property value. Additionally, the health and welfare of Lewis County residents is tied to safe housing and neighborhoods.

It is important to consider the economic hardships residents and owners of substandard housing might be facing. In this case, it may be best in the long run for the county and other agencies to assist these residents rather than impose fines or redevelopment proceeding.

Vacant Buildings and Structures, meanwhile, can convey the appearance or the perception of being blighted. In the instances when vacant buildings are truly in disrepair and become a liability to the health and welfare of residents, action must be taken.

Infill Development is the process of developing vacant or remnant lands passed over by previous development in urban areas or created by demolition of existing structures. The past economic conditions and subsequent loss of population have left Lewis County with several underused or vacant commercial, industrial and residential properties. Such properties commonly feature blighted structures slated for demolition or vacant spaces. When these properties are redeveloped, it is important that they are done so based on the character of their surroundings. The county should work to identify areas for infill development before expanding services outside of developed areas.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

When appropriate, Lewis County will use renewal and redevelopment strategies to improve the quality of life of its residents.

Goal 1: Initiate process of improvements to be made to residential properties.

- **Strategy 1**– Identify areas of blight and their respective owners or developers (12-24 months).
- **Strategy 2**– Give property owners sufficient notice and opportunity to bring property up to code (36-60 months).

Goal 2: Support efforts to aid individuals who can no longer maintain their property.

- **Strategy 1** – Contact existing service agencies that provide property assistance (12-18 months).
- **Strategy 2** – Coordinate the development of an association of individuals, groups, and agencies willing to assist in the maintenance of properties in instances of economic or health crisis (18-36 months).



Goal 3: Support infill development efforts.

- **Strategy 1**– Identify areas for potential infill development (12-24 months).
- **Strategy 2** – Offer incentives for infill development in the targeted areas (18-36 months).

Goal 4: Investigate creation of special development districts.

- **Strategy 1** – Seek special designation (such as enterprise zones) for places being redeveloped to aid in the process (24-48 months).
- **Strategy 2** – Create tax increment financing districts where development could enhance but necessary infrastructure is not present (36-60 months).

Fiscal Considerations

- Use existing revenue streams
- Seek grant funding for capital improvements
- Work with municipalities for combined funding of joint projects.
- Enact appropriate fees and fines for inspections and violations related to any adopted codes/standards
- Utilize TIFs (Tax Increment Financing) where appropriate and permissible
- Seek tax credits for private contributions for property upkeep and rehabilitation



Community Design

Planning Context

Implementation of community design components can improve vitality and help stimulate growth. Community Design is done for the benefit and enjoyment of current residents and the future of the community. In the West Virginia context, state code states that community design should be consistent with the land use component and set goals, plans and programs to promote a sense of community, character and identity.

Background

Lewis County has a rich blend of natural, historic, cultural and service attractions unlike any other county in West Virginia. With the proper planning, steps can be taken by county officials and the community to enhance these assets while still preserving the rural characteristics that make Lewis County a wonderful place to live and visit.

Visitors come from near and far to enjoy all the different aspects of Lewis County. Stonewall Resort (formerly Stonewall Jackson Resort State Park), Lambert Winery, The Trans-Allegheny Asylum, and West Virginia University Jackson's Mill as well as cultural, community, and heritage festivals are attractions that bring visitors to Lewis County for a specific reason. While in Lewis County visitors should also be enjoying secondary attractions such as dining, museums and shopping to entertain them beyond the original scope of their visit.

Despite having an array of attractions available in Lewis County, only a small percentage of the labor force work in the support industry. Leisure and hospitality account for just 10 percent of the county's work force population (Workforce WV, 2010).

The Stonewall Jackson Memorial Hospital and the William R. Sharpe, Jr. Hospital are among the largest employers in Lewis County and also provide services to people from outside the county (Workforce WV, 2010). The presence of these hospitals makes Lewis County a destination for individuals and families requiring health services. Jackson's Mill serves as a conference center and campground, bringing in visitors to the county. The West Virginia State Fire Academy is a training center that serves a statewide audience and has a national reputation. Thus, there is growth potential for the service industry to house, feed and entertain workers and clientele of these institutions.



The county should continue to draw attention to the existing support industry of local restaurants, antique stores and historical attractions while looking for ways to improve and expand the range of attractions. Supporting secondary growth in the county can lead to a diverse and resilient economy for Lewis County.

Key Players

- Lewis County Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Mountain Lakes Convention and Visitors Bureau
- City of Weston
- Town of Jane Lew
- Lewis County Commission
- Lewis County Sheriff Office
- Lewis County Economic Development Authority
- Lewis-Gilmer Solid Waste Authority

Themes

Appearance establishes the character and identity of a community. Pleasant community appearance adds to home values, attracts investment and improves neighborhood reputation. Simple changes and code enforcement in Lewis County can beautify the county and enhance its assets.

Making a pleasant connection with residents and visitors of Lewis County is as easy as adorning prominent entry points into the county with a "Welcome to Lewis County" sign. Even modest signage would establish identity and sense of character.

Although Lewis County is home to scenic views, historical attractions and a premier resort, there is an aesthetic separation from some of the county's notable businesses and attractions and the immediate areas surrounding them. This separation keeps visitors and potential residents from seeing the full potential of living, working or visiting Lewis County.

Revitalizing the areas surrounding the focal points in Lewis County is an opportunity to take advantage of secondary growth these attractions and businesses could provide.

Another point of emphasis should be the enactment and enforcement of building codes and ordinances to reduce illegal garbage dumping. These actions can improve the visuals of the entire county. Identifying ways to develop these areas should be a priority of the county. They would also need to be coordinated with the municipalities to ensure an appropriate response and a uniform effort in all places.



Finally, the communities and municipalities within Lewis County each have their own distinct character. The county should support the endeavors of communities to maintain their culture while adopting policies that benefit the county as a whole.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Lewis County will take steps to ensure the protection of scenic, historic and cultural assets that make the county unique and develop in a way that enhances the character and improves the vitality of the county.

Goal 1: Support for secondary growth.

- **Strategy 1** – Use social networking to give Lewis County event publicity (Continuous).
- **Strategy 2** – Appropriate agencies and entities should work together to formulate strategies that bring attention to Lewis County’s support industry (12-24 months).
- **Strategy 3** – Determine the best organizational arrangement for promoting Lewis County as a visitor destination (12-24 months).
- **Strategy 4** – Make appropriate changes in the current organizational arrangement for promoting Lewis County as a visitor destination (24-48 months).

Goal 2: Improve appearance of the county.

- **Strategy 1** – Install "Welcome to Lewis County" signage in high traffic areas (12-24 months).
- **Strategy 2** – Continue efforts to end illegal dumping of garbage. Make public aware of special garbage pick-up days for oversized items and appliances (24-48 months).

Goal 3: Revitalize the residential and business areas around points of interest in the county.

- **Strategy 1** – Enact and enforce a building code to protect the general health, safety and welfare of the population, including the safety, security, and aesthetics of all types of development (12-24 months).
- **Strategy 2** – Enforce beautification ordinances, building codes, property maintenance codes, and related rules in a coordinated manner with incorporated jurisdictions (24-36 months).

Goal 4: Promote culture and character in communities within Lewis County.

- **Strategy 1** – Seek input and public comment from all areas in the county (12-24 months).
- **Strategy 2** – Enact well-thoughtout out polices and guidelines that stress community desires and allow for appropriate variations (36-60 months).



Fiscal Considerations

- Use existing revenue streams
- Seek grant funding for capital improvements
- Work with municipalities for combined funding of joint projects
- Enact appropriate fees and fines for inspections and violations related to any adopted codes/standards

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Historic Preservation

Planning Context

Traditionally the preservation of historic landmarks was done intrinsically and for the sake of future generations. Increasingly, local officials are seeing the economic and redevelopment benefits of historic and landmark preservation. The *West Virginia Code* recognizes the importance of historic preservation in the requirements of comprehensive planning as well as in the responsibilities of the Division of Culture and History. Both deal in some way with the identification of historical, scenic, archaeological, architectural or similar significant lands or buildings, and specify preservation plans and the development of programs so as not to unnecessarily destroy the past development. Planning goes a step beyond this, including a desire to have such development make a viable and affordable contribution in the future.

Background

The National Register of Historic Places recognizes the Nation's historic places deemed worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archaeological resources.

The former Weston Hospital, now known as the Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum, is one of only 16 West Virginia landmarks recognized on the register (Table 26). The Trans Allegheny Asylum was inducted in 1990 for its status as the largest hand-cut stone masonry building in the United States according to the application for landmark status.

Additionally, Lewis County is home to thirteen historic sites. Once these sites are recognized, there are no obligations or restrictions placed on the private owners. However, state and federal grants are available for planning and rehabilitation.



Table 26: National Register of Historic Places Listings

Historic Place	Location
“Annamede” (Davisson-Blair House)	Walkersville area
Jackson's Mill	Jacksons Mill area
Jackson's Mill State 4-H Camp Historic District	Jacksons Mill area
Jonathan M. Bennett House (Louis Benefit Public Library)	Weston
May-Kraus Farm	Alum Bridge area
St. Bernard Church and Cemetery	Camden area
Upper Glady School	Crawford area
Walkersville Covered Bridge	Walkersville area
Weston and Gauley Bridge Turnpike	Southward from lake area
Weston Colored School	Weston
Weston Downtown Historic District	Weston
Weston Downtown Residential Historic District	Weston
Weston State Hospital	Weston
Weston State Hospital (Landmark)	Weston

Source: National Register of Historic Places, 2012;
West Virginia Division of Culture and History, 2012.

There are also other historic locations and communities throughout the county. These places may qualify for preservation or inclusion on registers as well. For example, the area that was the community of Roanoke before the construction of Stonewall Jackson Lake and the Pioneer Cemetery in Jane Lew.

Key Players

- National Park Service
- State Historic Preservation Office
- Lewis County Commission
- Weston Historic Landmarks Commission
- City of Weston
- Town of Jane Lew
- Lewis County Chamber of Commerce
- West Virginia Genealogical and Historical Library
- Hackers Creek Decedents

Themes

A Historic Landmarks Commission is a board that could be created by the County Commission to oversee historic preservation in the county. Lewis County should consider the establishment of a historic landmark commission to preserve its landmarks.

The *West Virginia Code* gives counties and municipalities the authority to establish a historic landmark commission (Article 8, Chapter 26A “Municipal and County Historic Landmark



Commissions). Powers and duties of a historic landmark commission include surveying property, inventorying prospective sites, and applying for historical status.

The Certified Local Government Program is another preservation opportunity. The program is a partnership between local, state and national governments focused on promoting historic preservation at the grass roots level. The program is jointly administered by the National Park Service and the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office. The program offers technical advice, training, and access to special funding for historic preservation activities. For example, in West Virginia 10 percent of federal grant funding for historic preservation goes to Certified Local Governments.

Often local planning officials are involved and local land-use policies begin to reflect the importance of preserving the indispensable and significant aspects of their communities. To that end, the Certified Local Government Program fosters a unifying link between local, state and federal preservation organizations creating not only a viable network but a genuine partnership. In West Virginia, the state partner is the Division of Culture and History of the State Historic Preservation Office.

Goals and Strategies

Lewis County is a place that values history and should continue to engage in historic preservation. Protecting and enhancing sites recognized on the National Register of Historic Places should be done for posterity and enjoyment of residents and visitors of the county.

Goal 1: Identify best practice for preserving historic landmarks and sites within the county.

- **Strategy 1** – Identify the population's interest in historical preservation (0-6 months).
- **Strategy 2** – Identify possible economic incentives of historic preservation (0-12 months).
- **Strategy 3**– Identify specific projects in the area (6-12 months).

Goal 2: Establish Historic Landmark Commission.

- **Strategy 1**– Create and maintain survey and inventory of historic properties in jurisdiction (0-12 months).
- **Strategy 2**– Nominate additional properties to National Register of Historic Places (12-24 months).
- **Strategy 3** – Create a Historic Landmark Commission as outlined in *West Virginia Code §8-26A-4* (24-48 months).

Goal 3: Become a Certified Local Government Program community.



- **Strategy 1**– Apply to the Certified Local Government Program (48-60 months).

Fiscal Considerations

- Use existing revenue streams
- Federal and state grants for projects
- Seek tax credits for private contributions for property upkeep and rehabilitation

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Rural Preservation

Planning Context

Rural preservation is focused on the progressive development of rural and agricultural areas. It involves activities intended to promote and preserve rural life.

Background

The rural lifestyle of West Virginia is an integral part of the culture within the state. The majority of Lewis County is considered rural area. The county has a low population density of 42.5 people per square mile – and the county’s population density is substantially lower outside of the northeast corner (the area bounded by Interstate 79 and Corridor H). This compares to a population density of 77.1 for the state and 87.4 for the nation. Furthermore, approximately 69 percent of the county’s population lives in rural areas and over 99 percent of the county’s land area is considered rural.

Agriculture

Agriculture remains an important industry within the county (Table 27). Agriculture is a vital industry in Lewis County. It plays a larger role than its share of private-sector employment (0.67 percent) would indicate. There were 729 farm operators in 2007, up about 180 from five years earlier. The number of farms and land area of farms also increased over the same period.

One way to ensure the protection of farm land is through voluntary farmland protection programs. Under such a system, the county farmland protection board purchases an easement on land to preserve it as farmland. The owners are paid for the “sale” of the value lost in the limitation of future development. Farmers can also elect to enter into the program without compensation and can donate the easement on their land if the owner so chooses.

Similarly, this could be done through the establishment of a non-profit organization or through existing national-level foundations and organization. In such cases, donations of the development rights would more likely be sought rather than the direct purchase of easements,



Table 27: Farm Information

	2007	2002
Number of farms:	507	372
Land in farms:	92,160 acres	78,712 acres
Average size of farms:	182 acres	212 acres
Average value of products sold per farm	\$14,248	\$ 7,175
Market value of products sold (\$000)	\$7,224	\$2,669
■ Crop sales (\$000)	\$ 375	\$ 359
■ Livestock sales: (\$000)	\$6,849	\$2,310
Type of land in farms: Cropland	23.99%	32.75%
Type of land in farms: Pasture	34.95%	20.77%
Type of land in farms: Woodland	36.65%	41.38%
Type of land in farms: Other	4.41%	5.10%
Crop items: Forage acreage	14,514 acres	11,571 acres
Livestock inventory: Cattle & calves	9,041 head	7,611 head
Total farm production expenses (\$000)	\$7,720	\$3,127
■ Average per farm (\$)	\$15,226	\$ 8,384
Net cash farm income of operators (\$000)	(\$- 279)	\$ 278
■ Average per farm (\$)	(\$-549)	\$ 747
Average age of operator	58.2 years	57.1 years
Race of operator: White	99.7%	98.6%
Primary operator occupation: Farming	34.5%	50.8%

Source: Census of Agriculture, USDA, 2002, 2007.

Weston Livestock Market

The Weston Livestock Market is a place to buy and sell livestock animals. Weekly auctions are held Saturdays at 1:30 p. m. The majority of sales are cattle along with other animals such as sheep, goats, and pigs.

Lambert's Winery

Lambert's Winery is a winery located just north of Weston. The winery features a rustic atmosphere for visitors to enjoy a vineyard experience. The winery was founded in 1992 and features a banquet hall and a scenic backdrop for weddings and special occasions. It has become a very successful agricultural business in the county.



Key Players

- Lewis County Commission
- West Virginia State Park System
- West Virginia Division of Natural Resources
- West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection
- West Virginia Department of Agriculture
- West Virginia University Extension Service
- West Virginia Farm Bureau
- State and county farmland protection boards
- County-based agri-businesses

Themes

Lewis County will work to preserve and protect the rustic and rural atmosphere which can be found throughout much of the county. This is done through supporting agriculture, maintaining open views and vistas, and promoting businesses and related efforts which endeavor to profit from the county's beautiful setting and bucolic atmosphere.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal 1: Identify rural aspects to be preserved.

- **Strategy 1** – Identify areas that are to remain rural and/or agricultural (0-6 months).
- **Strategy 2** – Find vistas that need to be maintained (0-6 months)
- **Strategy 3** – Locate rural places in need of rehabilitation and restoration (0-12 months).

Goal 2: Expand agriculture in the area.

- **Strategy 1** – Promote the expansion and development of more farms (Continuous).
- **Strategy 2** – Promote agricultural production and agri-businesses operating in the county (12-24 months).
- **Strategy 3** – Market agricultural products for local farmers through expanded facilities and use of technology to reach a broader audience (24-48 months).

Goal 3: Develop a County Farmland Protection Board.

- **Strategy 1** – Work with local farmers (farm operators, producers) to determine appropriate criteria for “protecting” a farm (36-48 months).
- **Strategy 2** – Enact local ordinances to establish and fund a farmland preservation effort (48-60 months).



Fiscal Considerations

- Private donations
- State matching grants
- USDA grants
- Foundation funding
- Real estate transfer tax (for farmland preservation easement purchases)

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