

FAMILY RESOURCE AGENCY OF NORTH GEORGIA
Grant #04CH0529
COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT UPDATE 2015

Section 1: Executive Summary – Overview

Based upon our surveys, statistical data and collaborations with our community partners, we have determined the following issues to be of the greatest need or have found them to be an on-going concern and have developed plans to address each point:

1. Data shows that there is a continuous need for affordable, quality infant care. This was also supported by the high rate of teen pregnancies and high school drop-outs in the counties we serve. We are preparing to convert Head Start slots to EHS slots based on the community data. These classes will be located in Catoosa and Walker County. We are also implementing collaborations with Daycare centers in our counties to provide EHS services through the EHS–CCP (Early Head Start- Child Care Partnership) grant.
2. Our families have many needs that we will continue to address. Those needs are education and training on employment skills, financial obstacles, language barriers, Mental Health, and Medical/Dental. The program Family Service Specialists (FSS) work closely with the families through parent meetings to insure appropriate training and education are provided to help families achieve their goals. If the families need additional information, our FSS will make appropriate referrals and/or partner with other agencies to provide the skill development and/or classes. Some of the trainings that we provide, but not limited to are:
 - Money Smart
 - Personal Growth
 - Mental Health
 - Medical/Dental
 - Parenting
3. We have also looked at how we are supporting HS/EHS National Goals and Objectives for the following areas:

School Readiness:

The Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, Parent Family Community Engagement Framework, State early learning guidelines (GELDS) and the requirements and expectations of the schools were used to guide our program in curriculum implementation, ongoing assessment of children’s progress and preparation for school success. We have adopted the following as our definition for school readiness: School Readiness means that each child will enter school ready to learn based on early learning experiences received in Head Start/EHS/Pre-K that best promotes each child’s success in all areas of development as identified in the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework.

Parent Family Community Engagement:

Family goals are categorized into seven family outcomes: (1) Family Well Being; (2) Positive Parent Child Relationships; (3) Families As Lifelong Educators; (4) Families As Learners; (5) Family Engagement In Transitions; (6) Family Connections To Peers And Community; and (7) Families As Advocates And Leaders. Successful family outcomes support each child's school readiness, and Family Service Specialists engage parents in ways that assist them in achieving their goals and outcomes. The program reviews the achievement of goals and outcomes at the end of each school year, and focuses attention on those that need additional support.

Teaching Staff Education Mandates:

Supporting teaching staff in completing their degrees by the dates of the mandate will insure that the program meets all education mandates.

Section 2: Service Area

Family Resource Agency of North Georgia is funded to provide Head Start and Early Head Start services to 942 children and families in the six northwest counties of Georgia. Currently, the program operates 72 classrooms in 21 centers located in 6 counties. The current 942 total funded enrollment slots are divided between two separate programs: Head Start (HS) with 662 slots and Early Head Start (EHS) with 280 slots. Additionally, the slots are divided into the 6 counties by program as follows:

County	HS	EHS		County	HS	EHS
Catoosa	122	32		Murray	54	24
Chattooga	91	48		Walker	162	48
Dade	37	32		Whitfield	196	96

Additionally we will serve 64 slots in five of the counties through Child Care Partnerships and 32 as EHS expansion. 100% of these slots are paid through the EHS-CCP grant.

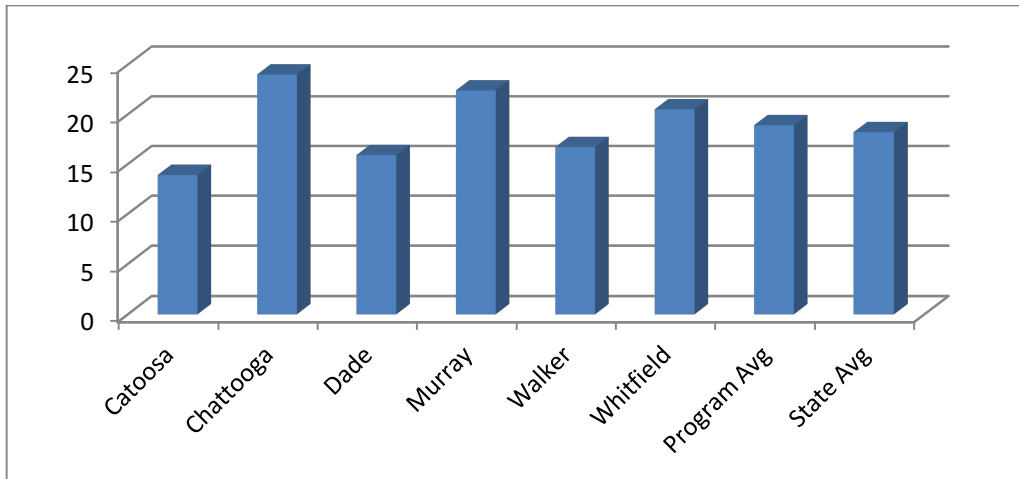
Section 3: Service Area General Demographic Data

Population Demographics -2014

Descriptor	Catoosa	Chattooga	Dade	Murray	Walker	Whitfield	Totals/Avg.
Persons	65,046	25,725	16,490	39,392	38,094	103,359	318,106
% Females	51.5% or 33,499	48.1% or 12,374	50.7% or 8,360	50.3% or 19,814	50.8% or 34,591	50% or 51,679	160,317
% Males	48.55%or 31,547	51.9% or 13,351	49.3% or 8,130	49.7% or 19,578	49.2% or 33,503	50% or 51,680	157,789
Households	23,808	9,344	6,463	14,302	26,251	34,473	114,641
Per Capita Income	\$22,077	\$15,727	\$21,602	\$16,821	\$20,528	\$20024	\$19,463
% One Parent families	24.8%	38.1%	32.1%	25.5%	26.1%	38.2%	29.13%
% Poverty Index	22%	31.4%	21.6%	29.1%	27.7%	28.3%	26.68%
Approx. # children 0-4 yr. old	3,836	1,534	848	2,694	3,919	7,797	20,628
Approx. # of children at ea. age band (4,3, etc.)	767	307	170	539	784	1,559	4,126
Approx. # GA Pre-K slots (4 yr. olds) Actual enrollment:	23 classes: 506 494	11 classes: 242 231	6 classes: 132 127	20 classes: 440 381	22 classes: 484 474	48 classes: 1,056 989	130 classes: Capacity: 2,860 2,696
Approx. # of "at risk" served by Pre-K	229 46.4%	28 55.4%	58 45.7%	279 72.4%	263 55.5%	575 58.1%	1,529 56.7%
Approx. # Early Head Start eligible age 1-3	676	384	148	628	868	1,764	4,468

Population Centers: The service counties are peppered with small towns and villages. Whitfield County has a 2012 population of 103,359 and the combined Rossville-Fort Oglethorpe areas of Catoosa and Walker counties have a 2012 estimated population of 13,497. The largest population centers in the remaining counties are: Trenton in Dade County with 2,279, Summerville in Chattooga County with 4,464 and Chatsworth in Murray County with a population of 4,288. The population statistics reported above are from the City-Data website 2012. We are aware that our area is also home to many undocumented children and families who may live in the more metropolitan areas. The counties boast a total population of 318,106 and the population appears to not be growing as rapidly as in the past. These figures are taken from US Census Quick Facts 2012.

Poverty Rates: The state average of children living in poverty based on information from the 2013 data from US Census Bureau is 18.2%, which is reflected in our program-wide average for the six counties we serve. Only Catoosa, Walker and Dade Counties are below this average. Catoosa is several percent below the state average. Chattooga, Murray and Whitfield are all above the state average. See the chart below.



Racial and Ethnic Composition:

	Racial Make-up of County-wide Population						Service Area Average	PIR Data 2013/2014	
Race	Catoosa	Chattooga	Dade	Murray	Walker	Whitfield		HS	EHS
Asian	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Bi-racial	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	6%	1%
Black	2%	11%	1%	1%	4%	4%	3%	8%	12%
Caucasian	92%	82%	94%	84%	92%	61%	84%	85%	83%
Hispanic/Latino*	2%	5%	2%	13%	2%	33%	10%	0.0%	0%
Other-including Native American	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0.0%	0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
*Head Start considers Hispanic or Latino as an Ethnicity rather than a race:								21%	20%

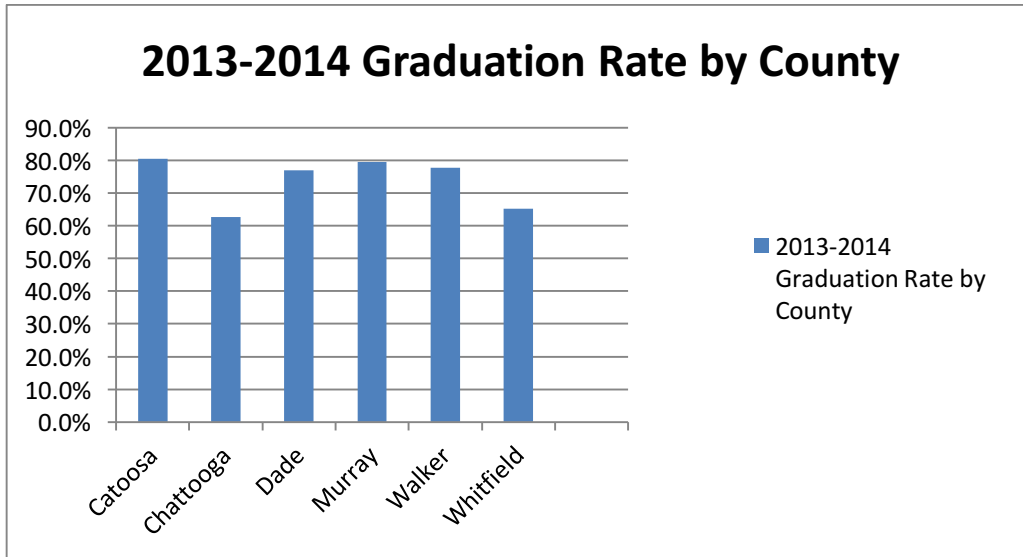
Languages: English is the dominant language for the majority of the service region with a high concentration of a Spanish-speaking population located in Whitfield County. The public schools in Whitfield indicate that as many as 47% of school age children are of Hispanic/Latino origin.

Education: Georgia’s 2014 public high school graduation rate increased for the third consecutive year, rising from 71.8 percent in 2013 to 72.5 percent in 2014, and rising a total of 5.1 percent since 2011.

“This is something to celebrate”, State School Superintendent Dr. John Barge said. “When we see the graduation rate consistently trending upward and when we see a greater percentage of our students graduating from our public high schools, we are talking about individual student and individual

dreams. We're talking about students whose options and futures expanded when they obtained a high-school diploma. So we are celebrating their victories, and turning toward the future and the work necessary to make those dreams a reality for an even higher percentage of students."

A graph below shows the 2013-2014 graduation rates by county and all state as follows: Catoosa 80.4%, Chattooga 62.7%, Dade 76.9%, Murray 79.5%, Walker 77.6%, and Whitfield 65.2%. All city-based high schools have been averaged into the overall county average. This average was obtained by combining total number of students enrolled divided into the total number of students graduating and not by averaging the percentages of the schools.



Data was obtained from the Governor's Office of Achievement, 2013 Graduation Rate Report by county and all state.

Our own Early Head Start programs are working with the local schools to prioritize enrollment opportunities for pregnant students which enable them to have quality child care and other services while they complete their education. This includes having centers located on high school campuses.

For educational services available, Dalton State College in Dalton (Whitfield County) provides educational opportunities for attaining an Associate's Degree and Bachelor's Degrees in limited fields as well as vocational/technical certificates. Georgia Northwestern Technical College, located in Rock Spring (Walker County), and Dalton (Whitfield and Murray Counties) provides vocational and technical certificate programs. Covenant College on Lookout Mountain, GA provides educational opportunities for attaining Associate and Bachelor Degrees in various fields.

Unemployment: : Current annual unemployment rates vary from 6.2% - 9.5% in the six county area we serve, with an average unemployment rate of 7.5%. The current unemployment rate for Georgia is 6.6%. The following unemployment rates by county: Catoosa (6.2%), Chattooga (7.9%), Dade (6.5%), Murray (9.5%), Walker (7.2%) and Whitfield (7.9%).

Teen Pregnancy: The combined teen pregnancy rate for our service area is higher than the state average. According to Georgia Kids Count the most recent teen pregnancy data is based on 2012 figures. In 2012 Georgia's National Ranking was 38 in Teen Pregnancy Rate. Georgia is making a state wide effort to address this concern through County Collaborative Councils and other local level planning groups wherein all stake-holders work together to design programs to help reduce teen pregnancies.

The chart below includes data from Georgia Kids Count Fact Sheet 2012. As shown below, the number of teen pregnancies is above the state average in four of our six counties:

Profile Criteria	STATE RATE	CATOOSA	CHATTOOGA	DADE	MURRAY	WALKER	WHITFIELD
Teen Pregnancies, ages 15-17 (rate per 1,000) 2012	21.3%	17.8%	23.3%	15.5%	24.0%	29.3%	27.0%
Teen mothers giving birth to another child before age 20 (ages 15-19) 2012	20.2%	18.8%	39.5%	33.3%	21.7%	14.6%	16.8%

According to Georgia Kids Count, the Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Power and Potential has launched a statewide **15 by 15** goal, to achieve a 15% reduction in the adolescent pregnancy rate for girls ages 15 to 19 in Georgia by year 2015. As of 2012, the state of Georgia has more than doubled this goal. The adolescent pregnancy rate has declined 35%.

Section 4: Head Start Eligible Families and Children Demographic Data

Head Start 2014-2015 PIR Data:

Percent of Children by Parents' Work Status	# Families 391	Average
2 Parent Families in which both parents work	113	29%
2 Parent Families in which only one (1) parent works	239	61%
2 Parent Families in which neither parent works (unemployed, retired, disabled)	39	10%
Percent of Children by Parent's Work Status	# Families 384	Average
1 Parent Families in which the parent works	203	53%
1 Parent Families in which the parent does not work	181	47%
TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES ENROLLED IN HEAD START	775	100.00%

Early Head Start 2014-2015 PIR Data:

Percent of Children by Parents' Work Status	# Families 111	Average
2 Parent Families in which both parents work	32	29%
2 Parent Families in which only one (1) parent works	61	55%
2 Parent Families in which neither parent is working (unemployed, retired, disabled)	18	16%
Percent of Children by Parent's Work Status	# Families 119	Average
1 Parent Families in which the parent is employed	47	39%
1 Parent Families in which the parent is not working	72	61%
TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES ENROLLED IN EARLY HEAD START	230	100%

Employment/Unemployment: The recovering economy has had moderate impact on the percentage of adults working in this service region. From our 2014-2015 PIR data, the table on the following page indicates that in two-parent Head Start families, 29% report both parents are working, while an additional 61% report one parent is working. For the Early Head Start families, of the two-parent families, 29% report both parents working, with an additional 55% with one parent working. This report also indicates that in HS in 10% of the two-parent families, neither parent is working. For the EHS population, 16% show neither parent working. In these cases, the parents/guardians are unemployed, retired or disabled.

For single-parent families, the 2014-2015 PIR report indicates that 53% of the Head Start single-parents are employed and 39% of the EHS single-parents are employed. For the EHS population, many parents are single teens who may still be attending high school. Our data indicates 38% of the single-parents in EHS are in job training or attending school. Since our last Community Assessment in 2013, unemployment has decreased by 4% in both one- and two-parent families in both Head Start and Early Head Start.

Family Living Situations: As seen on the previous chart, the majority of our Head Start children live in a one-parent family. The same trend follows with Early Head Start also showing that the majority of our children live in one-parent families.

Section 5: Early Childhood Education Resources versus Early Childhood Education Needs

ESTIMATE OF ELIGIBLE CHILDREN	CATOOSA	CHATTOOGA	DADE	MURRAY	WALKER	WHITFIELD
# of 0-4 year olds	3724	1431	842	2515	3826	7525
Times poverty rate	13.9	24	15.9	22.4	16.7	20.5
# in poverty	518	343	134	563	639	1543
Divided by # age groups	5	5	5	5	5	5
# eligible by age group	104	69	27	113	128	309
X # of age groups served	2	2	2	2	2	2
# 3 & 4 yr olds eligible for HS	207	138	54	225	256	617
Times # of age groups served	3	3	3	3	3	3
# 0-3yr olds eligible for EHS	312	207	81	339	384	927

Using the most current figures for the approximate number of eligible children by age group, we served 60% of the three and four year olds, and only 12% of the eligible infants and toddlers in the service region. This shows the extreme need for more infant/toddler slots. By requesting to convert four Head Start classes to two Early Head Start classes and receiving the Early Head Start Child Care Partnership (EHSCCP) grant, we will be able to serve an additional 112 infant/toddlers in the 2015-2016 school year.

Children with Disabilities:

The program has made a strong commitment to children with special needs. We have far exceeded the requirement to have at least 10% of our enrollment with a diagnosis at some point during the year, by having this number the first day and every day. During the 2013-2014 year, we had a yearly total of 885 enrolled and 134 or 15% with a diagnosis in Head Start. In Early Head Start, we had a yearly total of 310 and 34 or 11% with a diagnosis. Our recruitment efforts and inclusive classrooms are outstanding for welcoming and providing services for children.

The state of Georgia also develops a plan for services to undiagnosed children aged 3 years old and older potentially needing a diagnosis. This is labeled “Response to Intervention” and they determine if a child is actually disabled or just needing enrichment through those interventions, evaluations and services.

Section 6: Other Needs

Needs Expressed by the families and Head Start Staff:

Participating Families:

This past year we used Survey Monkey to gather information from families about our program. We have 848 families and received 475 responses. The families are given the opportunity to express opinions in a variety of areas that help to improve the services we provide. In the 2014-2015 school year, the majority of the surveys indicated the services we provide are excellent and, in many areas were satisfactory. The highest score for an area needing improvement was “How would you rate the quality of other staff, besides the classroom staff, that you have dealt with this year?” Even though it was the highest, only 4.38% indicated this was an issue.

The main results were:

- Our goal is to provide a safe and learning filled classroom environment with staff who are concerned about each child. Tell us how well you think we did on accomplishing that goal – 98% scored this as excellent or satisfactory.
- In regard to the process for enrolling your child in this program, how would you rate your experience – 99% scored this as excellent or satisfactory
- How satisfied are you with your overall experience with this program – 98% scored this as excellent or satisfactory

- Additional comments: need more slots, longer hours, and parent activities/meetings.

Program Staff: Our Family Service Specialists (FSS) work with our families throughout the year. As they develop Family Partnership Agreements and assist parents in meeting their personal and family goals, and make referrals for other needed services, they are able to gain a good overview of the needs of our families and communities. In addition, the Center Managers (CMs) and Center Supervisors (CSs) often build strong relationships as well. Therefore, we requested information from the FSS, Center Managers, and Center Supervisors in a variety of areas.

The main results were:

- Transportation
- Early Head Start Services
- Full Day services

Section 7: Analysis

The information gathered from this assessment has been used for several purposes:

- To focus on and make decisions regarding services that Head Start and Early Head Start can and should deliver.
- Determine whether and where services for Head Start or Early Head Start should be located and the model options that would best serve the needs of our families.
- Define gaps in services for the communities, helping us to hone in on issues that can be addressed in other groups such as the County Collaborative Councils.

The process has allowed us to step back and re-examine our purpose and goals to insure they are in the best interest of the children and families we are designed to serve. Our conclusions are as follows:

1. Head Start families have many needs that the program will continue to address. Those needs are education, employment skills, setting and achieving goals and quality childcare so the parents/guardians can attend school or work.

The program will continue to work closely with families to make appropriate referrals and to partner with other agencies either to provide employment skills and education or to determine appropriate referral sources for skill development and classes. The program will continue to work diligently with families to assist them in assessment of their family strengths to facilitate attainment of the goals they have set. In order to be available to assist families appropriately, the program will continue to employ sufficient Family Service staff to work closely with families.

Additionally, in order to provide services to our Spanish-speaking families, we will continue to give priority in our hiring practices for bilingual staff. Hiring bilingual staff insures that children's developmental screenings and assessments are completed in their native language. Families also have assistance as necessary in their dealings with other agencies and service providers in the counties. Bilingual classroom staff aid the children in their transition to English-speaking environments without eliminating the children's native language.

2. In some of the counties, data indicates close to 100% of the eligible preschool children and families are being served. There is no need to expand Head Start services in these areas. However, additional services are needed for to pregnant women, infants, and toddlers.

In addition, childcare costs for services for very young children are astronomical and out of financial reach of many of our families. We must continue to work with the public schools, collaborative councils and other community partners to determine available funding sources and programs designed to assist the very young. As mentioned, we are pursuing converting HS slots to EHS slots. We will continue to work collaboratively with the Pre-K providers to insure services first to the four-year-old population and have the priority of Head Start to be serving three year olds and those fours who cannot get services elsewhere.

3. We continue to have issues with enrolling children who already have a diagnosed disability before enrollment. Head Start requires programs to have 10% of children with disabilities. However the State of Georgia now requires the Response to Intervention (RTI) process be completed before an IEP can be written (or a diagnosis made). This process takes approximately a year. With this challenge, we will continue to work with community partners to locate and serve as many children with disabilities as possible. This includes continuing to maintain and develop strong relationships with the LEAs to collaboratively serve children within their Special Needs program. We have several successful partnerships already and will continue to be open and responsive to additional classes like these as well.
4. With the high school drop-out rates still being higher than the state average in our area and the lower higher education rates, it makes it difficult to find new teaching staff who can meet the educational mandates for Head Start and Early Head Start. Therefore, we will continue to work closely with the local colleges to advertise openings through the ECE departments as well as participate in job fairs and other similar events as possible. In addition, we will continue to support current staff in obtaining required credentials.

In conclusion, Head Start and Early Head Start continues to provide needed services in the communities. We will continue to secure funding and make programmatic changes as necessary to keep abreast of community needs. We will also continue to work diligently with other community resources in our efforts to provide high quality services to children and families.

Supporting HS/EHS National Goals and Objectives:

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The Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, Parent Family Community Engagement Framework, State early learning guidelines (GELDS) and the requirements and expectations of the schools were used to guide our program in curriculum implementation, ongoing assessment of children's progress and preparation for school success. We have adopted the following as our definition for school readiness: School Readiness means that each child will enter school ready to learn based on early learning experiences received in Head Star/EHS/Pre-K that best promotes each child's success in all areas of development as identified in the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework.

Parent Family Community Engagement:

Family goals are categorized into seven family outcomes: (1) Family Well Being; (2) Positive Parent Child Relationships; (3) Families As Lifelong Educators; (4) Families As Learners; (5) Family Engagement In Transitions; (6) Family Connections To Peers And Community; and (7) Families As Advocates And Leaders. Successful family outcomes support each child's school readiness, and Family Service Specialists engage parents in ways that assist them in achieving their goals and outcomes. The program reviews the achievement of goals and outcomes at the end of each school year, and focuses attention on those that need additional support.

Teaching Staff Education Mandates:

Supporting teaching staff in completing their degrees by the dates of the mandate will insure that the program meets the education mandates.

Issues for next year:

1. We received funding to provide EHS services through an EHS-CCP (Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership) grant in five of our six counties. We will be working to implement the grant in collaboration with local Daycare centers, a School system, and on a College campus.
2. We have a successful partnership with Battlewood Housing Authority in Catoosa County where we serve the families that live in the apartments. We are going to duplicate this project with Lafayette Housing Authority in Walker County to serve the neediest families in the apartments who do not pay rent, utilities, or have transportation.
3. Our families have many needs that we will continue to address. Those needs are education and training in employment skills, financial obstacles, language barriers, Mental Health, and Medical/Dental. The program Family Service Specialists (FSS) work closely with the families through parent meetings to insure appropriate training and education are provided to help families achieve their goals. If the families need additional information, our FSS will make appropriate referrals and/or partner with other agencies to provide the skill development and/or classes. Some of the trainings that we provide, but not limited to are:

- Money Smart

- Personal Growth
- Mental Health
- Medical/Dental
- Parenting

4. There is a continued need for infant/toddler care in our area. In order to meet these needs we will continue to evaluate the need for Head Start slots where Pre-K is prominent can convert slots to EHS as we are able.

ISSUES FOR NEXT 2-5 YEARS:

All of the issues listed above have the potential for continuing into the next 2-5 years. We will continue to look for ways to improve these areas based upon success and/or failure of plans we have in place.