

Note – an asterisk (*) indicates that this was a turning point

Before 2000 ... Time of Innocence and Becoming United

State/National/Global

- Country was respected
- Growing tensions in Mideast
- Growth of internet *
- Less education accountability
- Robust economy ... stronger manufacturing sector (little out-sourcing) ... government surplus
- State was able to help small/rural areas with infrastructure needs

Community/County

- Completion of the Hwy 226 by-pass
- Creation of Spruce Pine Montessori school (elementary education)
- Ethan Allen built manufacturing plant in 1988
- Flood of 1998 in Bakersville *
- Good manufacturing jobs were available in the county
- Mitchell High School opened in 1978 (Bowman and Harris consolidated) *
- NC rivers assessment
- Renewal of town pride in Bakersville
- Strong and vibrant downtowns (with clothing stores, drug stores, malt shops, restaurants, bowling alley, movie theater, etc.)
- Strong youth sports (and Optimist Club support)
- WNC Alliance (regional and local)

Personal

- Became involved in Montessori school
- Enjoyed being close to Brown Mountain lights ... enjoyed the outdoors (kayaking and competitive running)

Changing Times Workshop Results

- Established a business
- Got married ... moved to Mitchell County
- Growing up in Mitchell County offered shelter from many negative aspects of the larger world
- Liked having music and crafts opportunities available in the county
- Loved the mountains and scenery
- Loved the rural setting ... reminded me of where I grew up ... bought some property in the county
- Moved from Cane Creek to Bakersville
- Moved from Durham to be closer to family
- Native of Mitchell County ... became more involved with Bakersville
- Needed to be close to the VA hospital (because of a dying family member)
- Raised a family
- Recognized that the people of Mitchell County are its biggest asset
- Visited Mitchell County for the first time (Florida native)
- We all knew (or knew of) everyone in the county

2000 – 2004 ... Time of World Change and Crisis

State/National/Global

- Great deal of criticism about leadership at the national level
- Increased outsourcing of jobs
- Lack of public support for the wars ... loss of lives on both sides
- Significant loss of jobs in the manufacturing sector of the US economy
- Terrorism ... 9/11 attacks and wars in Afghanistan and Iraq

Community/County

- Becky Anderson (Handmade In America) came to Bakersville
- Began work on the Creekwalk in Bakersville (a result of the 1998 flood)

Changing Times Workshop Results

- Commissioners began tax re-evaluations on 8-year cycle
- Purchase of about 1,400 acres by developers and county subdivision approval for the Villages of Penland *
- Drugs recognized as a serious problem
- Growing awareness of the need for new/fresh ideas to move forward
- Jail fire in 2002
- Opening of the Greenlee School
- Opening of Wal-Mart impacted small/local businesses *
- People worked together to improve Bakersville
- Plant closings began ... loss of large companies and the jobs they provided *
- Strong support from Bakersville Improvement Group (e.g., Christmas parade, Easter egg hunt, etc.) *
- Toe River Arts Council (TRAC) opened gallery and offices in downtown Spruce Pine

Personal

- Became chief of staff at clinic
- Bought a business in Mitchell County to be closer to family
- Had enough of the rat race ... moved to Mitchell County permanently
- Made the move to Bakersville ... for good
- Started a new business
- Started to *house-shop* in Mitchell County ... and moved from Florida
- Stressful times (death of family members, divorce, etc.)
- Used free time for travel and to get involved

2005 – Present ... Time of Transition

State/National/Global

- Corporations moved overseas, others closed shop ... loss of jobs in the US
- Economy worsened

Changing Times Workshop Results

- Global warming accelerated ... recognized as a serious problem
- Housing bubble burst
- Experienced difficulty in providing for mental health services in the state
- Increasing number of foreign students attended state supported colleges in the US
- Many questioned leadership of President Bush
- Mortgage crisis hit hard
- National debt continued to increase
- State agreed to make Hwy 19E a four-lane road (from Madison County line to I-77)
- War continued in the Mideast

Community/County

- Many felt that Mitchell County is being left behind
- Academic Boosters Club was active in the county
- Continued plant closings throughout the county ... heavy job losses (Henredon shut down its last plant and Ethan Allen closed)
- Crimson Laurel showcased the arts in Bakersville
- Establishment of the Toe River Valley Watch
- Expansion of the hospital
- Fire in Spruce Pine
- Freshman academy at Mitchell High School began to address the low graduation rate
- Growing criticism and dissatisfaction of local government officials
- Increase in number of planned subdivisions and gated communities
- Mitchell County became home of the perfect Christmas tree
- Population of Mitchell County slowed
- Proposed asphalt plant became a focal point of controversy
- The Roan Moan
- Water testing

Changing Times Workshop Results

Personal

- Appreciated that people in the county are very accepting of others
- Built a new house
- Construction improvement permit process was very easy
- Death of family members
- Found peace of mind
- Investigation of three UFO incidents
- Moved to Mitchell County
- Research allowed me to become a part of Brown Mountain light festival
- Retired (from Mitchell High School)
- Bakersville residents elected a woman to the town council



Trends

- Arts community has become more accepted ... and active
- County is no longer isolated
- Economic conditions results in tight budgets
- Graduation rate continues to drop
- Increase in educational opportunities (provided by Mayland Community College)

Changing Times Workshop Results

- Increase in land costs (and for many it is exceeding their cost of living)
- Increase in number of home-schooled children
- Increase in retirees moving to the area
- Increase in second home development
- Loss of manufacturing jobs ... restructuring of the local economy
- People are working together, becoming more proactive, and seeking directed-change that is positive
- Population is decreasing (both total population and the younger cohorts)
- Significant changes in agriculture
- These are stressful times and times of uncertainty

Implications for the Next 5-8 Years

- Greater dependence on regional systems (versus local)
- Increased stress on the natural environment and biodiversity systems
- Increasing need to provide more affordable housing
- Mitchell County is becoming an epicenter for the arts
- More acceptance of diversity
- More awareness of the need for planning
- Need for public facility improvements
- Need to seek/provide alternative career/job choices
- Obtaining (and offering) more education will be critical ... but education will continue to become more expensive
- Paying the bills will likely require tax increases
- There will be a greater awareness about changing times ... and greater involvement of citizens