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## GENERAL OVERVIEW

Hunterdon County, although still a relatively rural area, is traversed by one of the most rapidly growing corridors in the State of New Jersey. It's agricultural and blue collar industrial base is giving way to a white-collar office and professional economy, following the national trend from blue to white collar employment. The impact of this growth and change has been substantial over the last two decades and should continue for at least the next 20 years.

The County is situated halfway between New York and Philadelphia. It is bisected east to west by Interstate 78, which cuts the drive time to Newark Airport from the Clinton area to under 45 minutes, and north to south by State Route 31, the major link between the State Capital of Trenton and the northwestern areas of the State. Connections with other major roadways put most of the northeastern New Jersey, New York and Philadelphia metropolitan areas within a 90 minute drive. Growing employment areas in Mercer, Somerset, Middlesex and Morris Counties are all within a reasonable commuting distance.

Hunterdon County's population has increased from 69,718 in 1970 to an estimated 122,842 in 1998, **(See Population Estimates)**. While still one of the least densely populated counties in the State of New Jersey, the rate of growth by which the County has been growing has been faster than nearly every other New Jersey County. During the 1980s and 1990s, a number of corporate centers (e.g. Merck & Co., Exxon and Foster Wheeler) were built in the County. Many of the employees of these corporations moved to Hunterdon, not only to be close to their jobs, but also to enjoy the County's many recreational facilities, its rural atmosphere and its relatively low living costs. This influx of new residents has spurred residential development, creating a continual upward spiral of growth. During the last decade, Hunterdon County had the second largest percentage of increase in population of all New Jersey Counties.

Hunterdon County is fortunate to have numerous State, County and Municipal owned lands which have been set aside for open space purposes. These lands are important in helping to retain much of which makes Hunterdon County unique. The open space concept of the County is a broad one encompassing rural ambiance, water resource protection, wildlife habitat, and passive and active recreation. Numerous historical structures and areas are also found in the County. These open spaces and the historical assistance of the County not only contribute to our uniqueness, but they also make the County a desirable place to live and to work.

Hunterdon County has long been identified as a leading agricultural County in New Jersey. Significant progress have been made over the past several years in identifying the nature of agriculture in the County in the 1990's and in developing programs to help retain this vital component of our County's heritage. The **Hunterdon County Agricultural Development Board's** "Farmland Preservation Program" is one of the many programs to help make this possible and much remains to be done. The future of agriculture will be influenced in great extent by forces beyond the control of the Municipal, County or State governments. In all likelihood, the dairy and large field operations that have traditionally created the agricultural landscape of the County will, in the future, be replaced by more intensive forms of agriculture. A strong commitment by the CADB to do all within their power to assure the survival of agriculture as available agriculture pursuit is not only a statement of significance we attach to our past heritage, but it is also a major statement concerning the type of environment and quality of life that we would like to pass on to our heirs.

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## GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE

The property, finances and affairs of the County are vested in the Board of Chosen Freeholders, together with all legislative and executive functions, except such executive functions as have been delegated by the Board to the County Administrator from time to time by resolution. The Freeholders created the Office of the County Administrator by resolution pursuant to NJSA 40A:9-42 and have delegated to the Administrator various administrative powers, including acting as the executive officer of the Board of Chosen Freeholders, and attending all meetings of the Board, administering the affairs of the County, supervising County personnel, including Department Heads who must report to the Administrator periodically, making recommendations concerning the appointment, promotion, removal and suspension, discipline, supervision and control of Department Heads, as well as other officials, subordinates and their employees, and assisting in making recommendations in all administrative hearings required to be conducted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders. The County Administrator serves a term of office of 3 years.

The County is comprised of various offices, boards, departments and divisions, and agencies (for a list of such departments, offices etc. see [Departmental Listing](#)). All heads of these various offices, boards, departments and divisions are appointed by the Board of Freeholders, except for Adult Education; the Rutgers Cooperative Extension; and Superintendent of Schools. In addition to the departments, there are County constitutional officers which include the Sheriff, Surrogate and Clerk. The County Clerk, Surrogate, and Sheriff are elected by the voters of the County at general election, for a term of office of 5 years for the Clerk and the Surrogate and a term of office for 3 years for the County Sheriff. The staffs and expenditures of these County constitutional officers are the responsibility of the County. The County Prosecutor is nominated and appointed by the Governor with the advise and consent of the Senate for a term of office of 5 years.

The County Board of Chosen Freeholders is also required by law to appoint a County Treasurer to serve a term of office of 3 years; a Clerk of the Board of Chosen Freeholders to serve a term of office of 3 years a County Counsel to serve a term of office of 3 years; and a County Engineer to serve a term of office for 5 years. The Board of Chosen Freeholders also may appoint a County Purchasing Agent for a term of 3 years and a County Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds for a term of 5 years.

A Board of Taxation for Hunterdon County is required to be established pursuant to Title 54, Chapter 3 of the New Jersey Statutes. The 3 members of the Board of Taxation are appointed by the Governor by and with the advise and consent of the Senate, and serve for a term of 3 years. The Board is required by law to appoint a County Tax Administrator, who holds office for a term of 3 years. The County Board of Taxation functions within the County to review taxes on appeal and is charged with the review and equalization of tax assessments or tax lists. The County is required to fund the budget of the Hunterdon County Board of Taxation.

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## HUNTERDON COUNTY UTILITIES AUTHORITY

In 1985, there was established a county utilities authority for the County under the Municipal and County Utilities Authority Law (NJSA 40:14B-1 et seq.) and named the Hunterdon County Utilities Authority. The Hunterdon County Utilities Authority (HCUA) has as its governing body a five (5) member board consisting of the 3 County Freeholders, the County Administrator and the County Treasurer. HCUA contains a single division, the [Division of Solid Waste and Recycling Services](#).

HCUA through its operating division has been charged with the responsibility for operating the County's solid waste disposal system. This system consists of the operation of a solid waste transfer station and a solid waste recycling program.

The solid waste transfer station, constructed in 1985, is located in Clinton Township and is permitted by the NJDEP to process 500 tons of solid waste per day. The transfer station is owned by HCUA and is operated under contract with Geological Waste Reclamation Operations and Waste Systems, Inc. (GROWS), a Waste Management, Inc. subsidiary. Trucks operated primarily by private carters (haulers) bring solid waste to the transfer station where the waste is transferred to large tractor trailers. The trailers then remove the solid waste from the transfer station for incineration or landfilling.

Approximately 65,000 tons of solid waste per year were processed through the County transfer station in 1997. Of this total, approximately 30,000 tons of solid waste was sent to the incinerator maintained by the Warren County Pollution Control Financing Authority in Oxford, New Jersey (Warren County) with the balance being sent to either a facility operated in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania by the city or to GROWS landfill. The 1998 HCUA Budget anticipated 40,000 tons of solid waste being processed.

The HCUA operates solid waste recycling programs in 20 of the 26 municipalities located within the County. Among the materials recycled are glass, aluminum, steel cans, scrap metal, newspapers, junk mail and magazines, corrugated paper, PET and HDPE plastics and tires.

The HCUA has a staff of 8 persons. In 1998, its budget amounts to \$3,422,520. The HCUA has been able to finance its operations fully through the levy of tipping fees for the use of its transfer station and through the sale of recyclable materials, without any subsidizing appropriations from the County. The tipping fee for the use of the transfer station was reduced to \$65.00 per ton as a result of Warren County reducing their fee. The HCUA has sufficient retained earnings in order to maintain a stable tipping fee rate over a period of years. In 1996, the level of retained earnings was \$2,373,457.

A recent federal district court decision, Atlantic Coast Demolition & Recycling, Inc., et al v. Board of Chosen Freeholders of Atlantic County, et al, held that significant portions of the State's solid waste management regulatory program that regulates the market for solid waste processing and disposal violated the Commerce Clause of the United States Constitution. Specifically, the court held that solid waste flow directives (regulations directing that solid waste generated within a municipality must be disposed of at county-designated disposal facilities), imposed impermissible burdens on interstate commerce. The court invalidated those solid waste flow directives relative to construction and demolition waste ("C&D"). Consequently, generators of C&D waste, including municipalities and other local governments like Hunterdon County, are now free to dispose of that waste at any lawful disposal facility. In a subsequent companion ruling the court similarly invalidated all other solid waste flow directives. However, the court stayed the effect of this later ruling for a minimum of two years. This two year transition period may permit policy makers to develop an alternative solid waste management program that will not cause a default on outstanding indebtedness of regional utility authorities. The State is appealing the ruling. It is unclear when the court's stay will be lifted or when an alternative solid waste management program will be developed and implemented. Nonetheless, the County will benefit immediately from reduction in disposal expenses related to the disposal of C&D waste. Moreover, should an alternative solid waste management program be developed and implemented, the County will likely benefit significantly from reduction in the cost of disposing municipal solid waste.

**Additional information on the Utilities Authority and the Division of Solid Waste and Recycling.**

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## HOSPITALS AND HEALTH

The Hunterdon Medical Center located in Raritan Township, is a 200-bed non-profit community hospital providing comprehensive medical and health care. It also offers a broad spectrum of counseling, therapy and mental health services to the community. Also known as a teaching institution, it is affiliated with Rutgers Medical School, which is one of the leading colleges of medicine and dentistry in New Jersey. The County contains three family health centers (Phillips-Barber in Lambertville; Delaware Valley in Milford and Hickory Run in Califon) which offer comprehensive health services to the elderly and residents who live in the rural areas.

The State of New Jersey operates a mental health facility in Clinton Township, within the County, called the Hunterdon Developmental Center. This facility provides 647 beds which have been certified for use as an intermediate care facility by the mentally retarded by the State of New Jersey Department of Health (acting for the US Department of Human Services). This facility provides habilitative care and active treatment for the developmentally disabled.

The State of New Jersey also operates a mental health facility in Lebanon Township, within the County, called the Garret W. Hagedorn Gero-Psychiatric Hospital. This facility provides 181 beds which have been certified by the Health Care Finance Administration (Federal Medicare). This facility provides psychiatric care to geriatric populations.

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## EDUCATION

Education is a high priority in Hunterdon County. Our communities and their residents invest heavily in the twenty-three elementary school districts, one alternative school, one regional elementary district, one elementary sending district, four regional high school districts and one County Vocational School which constitute our public educational system.

Over the last decade, our educational system has achieved great strides in meeting the needs of communities and individual students through programs in career and vocational education, gifted and talented education remediating basic skills. A significant amount of educational planning for setting goals, selecting priorities, objectives and assessments and implementation of these plans has created an educational environment which consistently meets standards above the state minimums. The public schools located within the County continually evaluate their programs, methods and materials to offer the students of Hunterdon County the best possible education.

The **County Superintendent of Schools Office** is staffed by personnel from the New Jersey State Department of Education who provide education leadership for the thirty school districts. There are 44 school buildings, 1,600 full time instructional, supervisory and administrative personnel and approximately 19,000 students in grades kindergarten through grade 12.

**Hunterdon County Adult Education**, a unique and innovative program was established in 1969 by the cooperative efforts of the County high schools, Department of Education and Board of Chosen Freeholders to serve the people of Hunterdon County. Today, the highly successful Adult Education program is sponsored by the Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission and is governed by a Board of Directors from its 23 member school districts.

The curriculum offered includes courses in the following areas: Adult basic education, high school equivalency, English for the foreign born, general adult education, college/university credit and non-credit courses, a Career and Life Planning Center and day and weekend trips.

The program has grown from 500 students in the late 1960's to an enrollment in excess of 15,000.

Hunterdon County Adult Education is one of the finest and most comprehensive adult, continuing and community education programs in New Jersey and its presently used as a model for both programming and activities.

**Hunterdon County Polytech**, the County vocational school, offers both day and evening programs in a number of occupational areas. Courses are designed to provide individuals with entry level skills, upgrading existing skills or preparing for a licensing examination. Occupational areas include computer aided drafting, television broadcasting, agriculture, health and automotive maintenance and repair. Many courses are recognized by the County college, Raritan Valley Community College. Apprentice training is also available.

Hunterdon County jointly with Somerset County funds and sponsors the **Raritan Valley Community College**, a two-year college located in North Branch, New Jersey within Somerset County. The Raritan Valley Community College was established in 1968 by Somerset County and became a joint operation with Hunterdon County on November 19, 1986.

The main campus of the college contains 287,407 square feet of instructional space, which includes 4 principal buildings, a library, a theater, a planetarium, an arts building, an olympic sized swimming pool and a Center for Advanced Teaching and Technology.

In the 1995-96 academic year, the Raritan Valley Community College served 12,781 students. RVCC has 300 full time employees (faculty, administration and staff), 200 adjunct teachers and 159 hourly and student workers.

The College is governed by a Board of Trustees, consisting of 14 voting members and 1 non-voting member (who is a recent graduate functioning as a student liaison). The Chairman of the Board of Trustees is Raymond H. Bateman. The Chief Executive Officer of the College is President Cary A. Israel.

The budget for Raritan Valley Community College in 1998-1999 amounts to \$26,400,884. The college derived revenues to satisfy budgeted expenditures as follows: Hunterdon County, 10.46% (\$3,500,000), Somerset County, 25.9%; State of New Jersey, 15.22%, tuition, 26.51%; non-instructional auxiliary services, 11.51%; fund balance 8.26%; and miscellaneous sources, 2.12%.

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## JUSTICE STRUCTURE

The Superior Court of New Jersey is located in the new three-story Hunterdon County Justice Complex, which opened in July, 1996, where the Superior Court judges and judicial staff (including probation officers) are consolidated. The new Justice Complex contains 5 court rooms. The existing historic Hunterdon County Court House will be retained to provide space for one additional court room.

The New Jersey Superior Court operations in Hunterdon County consists of 4 judges on site (including 1 judge on call) and 80 judicial employees, including probation officers. The New Jersey Superior Court operations in Hunterdon County are included within Vicinage No. 13 (which includes Hunterdon, Somerset and Warren Counties). Certain administration functions common to the Vicinage have been located in Somerville, New Jersey, within Somerset County.

As of January 1, 1995, the State has assumed most of the costs and financial responsibility for the personnel and ongoing operations of the court system in Hunterdon County, pursuant to NJSA 2B:10-1 et. seq., resulting in potential substantial cost savings to the County. The State's funding level was phased in as an increasing percentage over the next three years of the 1993 base year amount of \$2,728,859. By 1998, the State has assumed 100% of the base year amount. The County is still responsible for all costs for court building maintenance and facilities and for the cost of security and services provided by the Hunterdon County Sheriff's Office.

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## COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

The Hunterdon County Library Commission, whose members are appointed by the Board of Chosen Freeholders, operates the county-wide library system which houses over 300,000 books and serves residents in all but three (Flemington, Milford and Lambertville) of the twenty-six constituent municipalities. Its headquarters branch is located on Route 12 in Raritan Township. The Commission also operates a 10,000 square foot North County branch (in Annandale) a South County branch (in East Amwell Township) and three station libraries (in Lebanon and Readington Township) and supports various member and municipally-run libraries within the County.

The County library system employes approximately 55 full time part-time employees, various volunteers.

The Library Commission has purchased a site in Clinton Township and is presently in the process of beginning construction of a 24,000 foot facility to where the North County branch will be moved and permanently located.

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## MASS TRANSPORTATION

### GROUND TRANSPORTATION:

The nature of land development in the County currently precludes an intensive mass transportation system. Mass transit is limited to long distance services, local operation in the population centers, and specialized, para-transit services for the elderly and

handicapped.

New Jersey Transit runs passenger rail service to Newark and New York City from commuter rail stations at White House Station (Readington Township) Lebanon Borough, High Bridge Borough and Clinton Township. Also, in neighboring Mercer County, Trenton is a major hub used by Hunterdon County residents living in the southern portion of the County. Limited bus service is provided by NJ Transit between Lambertville and Trenton.

Buses to the Port Authority in New York, and to Newark Airport and JFK Airport are available for travelers from Clinton and Flemington. Limousine and taxicab services are available in most areas.

The **LINK, Hunterdon County's Consolidated Transportation System**, provides the County's senior citizens, disabled residents, as well as the general public with nominal cost transportation to medical appointments, nutrition sites, senior centers, places of employment as well as food shopping and other miscellaneous destinations. In most cases, riders schedule their rides 24 hours in advance for their trip. Curb to curb transportation is available Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. There are 18 routes including a trolley-like run called the **Flemington Shuffle**.

Also, two **Cross County LOOPS** provide county residents with same day, all day service along the route 31/179 corridor and an East/West highway corridor. Riders can travel all or part way from Hampton to Lambertville and back, with drop off points in Glen Gardner, High Bridge, Clinton, Flemington, Ringoes, Lambertville and any other point along the route, or Califon to Milford, again through Flemington and with drop offs all along the route. There are four LOOP buses that run between 7:00 am and 6:30 pm. Turn around time is an hour and 10 minutes.

In addition, the LINK connects county residents with New York City bound buses and New Jersey Transit buses. Visitors to the County via these bus lines can be transported to the Hunterdon Medical Center, local county nursing homes to visit their loved ones or to many outlet stores located in Flemington for Shopping.

#### **AIR TRANSPORTATION:**

Hunterdon County hosts three (3) privately owned, public use airports with fixed base operations, which provide a variety of 'General Aviation' services to the public: Alexandria Field (908-730-9223); Sky Manor Airport and Restaurant (908-996-4200); and Solberg Airport (908-534-4000).

Alexandria Field located in Alexandria Township, offers flight school, ballooning, parachuting, and helicopter operations. Alexandria offers the only "Airpark" development in New Jersey, where homeowners have private hangars and access to the airport via taxiway. Sky Manor Airport and Restaurant, also in Alexandria Township, provides charter service, flight lessons, tour rides, hot air balloons and aircraft maintenance. Solberg Airport, in Readington Township, provides flying lessons, traffic reporting, hot-air ballooning, blimp parking, and aircraft maintenance. Solberg also supports an Aviation Education program in conjunction with Raritan Valley Community College to train commercial pilots and hosts the annual Quick Check New Jersey Festival of Ballooning.

Besides recreational and business use, all three airports provide support for emergency services including medical transport, fire fighting, disaster relief and law enforcement. These airports represent a significant amount of privately held open space, being 110, 130, and 720 acres respectively for a total of 960 acres. These airports also represent a critical transportation asset, which allows individuals and local commerce access to the national air transportation system.

Both commercial and international travel facilities are located 45 miles away at Philadelphia International airport. Air travel facilities are also located at Newark International Airport, Lehigh Valley International Airport and Mercer Airport, all of which are located within reasonable driving distances.



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## COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS

According to records of the Hunterdon County Planning Board, in 1996, Foster Wheeler Corporation completed a second 300,000

square foot office building at its Perryville Corporate Center in Union Township. A majority of the space in these two buildings is occupied by Foster Wheeler as its corporate headquarters.

The Bellemead Corporation anticipates beginning construction in 1998 on a 426540 sq. ft. office building in Readington Township. This is the first of four large office buildings which Bellemead has approval for at Exit 24 of I-78.

Kings Supermarket opened in Spring, 1997 replacing the former A&P Supermarket in Readington Township.

Edwards Supermarket opened in 1997 in Raritan Township

BJ's Wholesale Club opened a 69,200 sq. ft. facility in Raritan Township opposite the Hunterdon Medical Center on Route 31, in Flemington.

Historic Lambertville House reopened in Spring, 1997 after having been vacant for many years. This historic inn has twenty-eight guest rooms with conference facilities.

Lambert Square opened in Lambertville in 1996 on the site of the Trenton Oyster Cracker factory which was destroyed by fire several years ago. This project contains offices, a health club and New Jersey's first microbrewery.

Plans have been submitted for a new shopping center opposite Heritage Place in Flemington (58,966 sq. ft.)

Construction began in 1998 on a 124 room Hampton Inn at Exit 15 of I-78 in Franklin Township.

A 100 room hotel has been approved and has begun construction in Raritan Township. The hotel will also contain a 210 seat Perkins Pancake House. A TGI Fridays was approved in Flemington, Raritan Township and opened its doors in early 1999. the spring of 1998, Garden Homes submitted a site plan for a 165,000 sq. ft. retail center in Flemington. A Home Depot is in the works for the Township as well.



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