

# ***Albemarle County Community Profile 2003***



***A scan of our community from a variety of perspectives that helps us understand who we are, how we are changing, and where our strategic efforts should be directed.***

*Coordinated by the Albemarle County County Executive's Office  
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# Introduction

Welcome to the Albemarle County Community Profile 2003, a compilation of information about the county from a variety of perspectives and sources, gathered to help guide and inform discussions and decisions related to the county's strategic planning effort.

The data presented in the Community Profile has been collected from a variety of external sources, including the U. S. Census Bureau, the Weldon Cooper Center and the Virginia Employment Commission, as well as from a wide range of internal county government sources.

The purpose of the Community Profile is to begin the critical process of establishing baseline measures and data sources to help us understand where we are today as a community and to identify patterns and trends that tell us where we might be going and what is changing in our county.

Information in the Profile is organized by the four strategic directions identified in the County Strategic Plan's FY 03 Plan of Action as follows:

- Provide high quality educational opportunities for Albemarle County citizens of all ages
- Protect the County's natural scenic and historical resources
- Enhance the quality of life for all citizens
- Serve the public efficiently and effectively

Many of the key points are summarized in the following pages. Please note that the Community Profile contains maps and other information that has not necessarily been reflected in the summary.

Our picture is not yet complete – this publication is the beginning step in identifying and gathering the types of information that will help us in our strategic planning work. An important part of this process will be establishing what data may be missing and determining the best way to gather the additional information we will need.

In closing, we are pleased to present this first Community Profile as a tool to better help us understand the needs and issues facing our county. This profile is an important step in our quest to become a high performance organization that uses data to assess our community needs and to measure our progress towards achieving the strategic objectives we have established.

We would like to express sincere appreciation to those who helped create this Profile, including Albemarle County staff and interns for their extraordinary efforts, Julia Martin of the Weldon Cooper Center for her advice along the way, and William Mezger and Jackie Hudson of the Virginia Employment Center for their technical knowledge. Our special thanks go to Bryan Eckstein, summer research intern, who saw this project through from initial concept to final production.

# Community Profile Summary

## Educational Opportunities:

- Albemarle County Public Schools Data
  - **School Demographics**

Total school enrollment grew by roughly 2% per year during the 1990s but has leveled off in the last several years, with an actual decline of 62 students in 2002-03. Special education students continue to make up roughly 16% of the entire student population, which is slightly higher than the state average of 14%. Albemarle County Schools have a smaller percentage of ethnic students than the statewide average. In Albemarle, 20% of the students are non-white compared with 39% for all public schools in Virginia. However, the percentage of county students receiving Limited English Proficient (LEP) services is higher than the state average.
  - **High Achieving Students**

Albemarle County students perform at a higher level than both state and national averages on many academic measures. Our students consistently perform well on standardized tests, such as the SAT, Advanced Placement exams, and Virginia Standards of Learning. Albemarle graduates also earn advanced diplomas at a higher rate than students statewide. Second-graders are meeting the County goal of 85% reading at or above grade level, with 87.5% of second-graders meeting the criterion.
  - **Well-Prepared Students**

Albemarle County students are given the tools needed to be successful beyond high school. Compared to other Virginia localities, Albemarle County students are more likely to continue with their education after graduation. Albemarle County students stay in school. With a dropout rate of only 0.83% in 2001-02, Albemarle County boasts one of the lowest drop-out rates in the state and is well below the state average of 2.02%. In addition, students have access to technology, averaging 4.9 students to every computer countywide. Students are also prepared by identifying potential problems early on. The PALS Kindergarten Reading Readiness Program identifies children who will require reading intervention services.
- Other Educational Opportunities
  - **Life-long Learners**

In Albemarle County, learning is not confined to K-12. Many opportunities exist for preschool children (Head Start), adults who left school before graduating (the GED program), and for adults wishing to further their studies or learn new skills (Piedmont Virginia Community College and Open Doors, an adult and continuing education program).
- Regional Library
  - **A Literate Community**

Last year the library circulated over 1.9 million items, or about 10.5 items per capita. This is higher than the national average for libraries of a comparable size, suggesting that Albemarle citizens use the libraries more. Library use has increased by 31% since 1997.

- University of Virginia
  - Though the University of Virginia is primarily located within the limits of the City of Charlottesville, it provides many cultural and educational opportunities for citizens of Albemarle County.

## **Protection of Resources:**

- Natural and Historic Resources
  - Development Areas: Between 1997– 2002, 93% of non-residential development occurred in the County’s Development Areas.
  - Development Areas: Due to a surge in multi-family development in 2002, 70% of residential development occurred in the County’s Development Areas between 1997 and 2002. Prior to 2002, the percentage of residential units developed in the Development areas was 64%.
  - Rural Areas: The rate of subdivision in the Rural Areas is fairly constant. Despite the County’s goals of limiting residential development in the Rural Areas, the number of new lots of size appropriate for residential development created each year and the number of dwelling units constructed are not decreasing.
  - Historic Resources: More than 2,000 buildings and structures and 400 archaeological sites have been identified as potential historic resources in the County.
  - Not including school areas, nine percent of the County’s acreage is permanently protected as conservation easements, parks, and recreation areas. The County has 4,629 parcels in land use taxation. Forty percent of these parcels (1,841) are for properties less than 20 acres.
  - Development related reviews are increasing, with total reviews up 29% in the last four years. Rezonings and special use permit reviews have become more complex, with more time, costs and staff effort required for both the County and customers.

## **Quality of Life:**

- Demographics
  - According to projections, our County’s population could reach 97,200 by 2010.
  - Aging Population: According to the Census, the County’s population is aging, with the percentage of the population older than 65 increasing from 8 to 12 percent and the population ages 45 – 64 increasing from 18 to 23 percent between 1990 and 2000. Twenty-nine percent of the population is between the ages of 25 and 44. This is the largest portion of the population by age category.
  - Sixteen percent of the County’s population is non-white, with the largest percentage growth between 1990 and 2000 in the Hispanic population. In 2000, the Asian and Hispanic populations each make up 3% of the total population. Ten percent of the population is African American.

- Consistently since 1993, net migration is contributing more to Albemarle County's population growth than natural increase. In 2001, 67% of the population growth is attributed to migration and 33% is attributed to natural increase.
- Median Income Levels: Albemarle County's median household income for a family of four was \$50,362 in 1999. In 2000, the median family income was \$66,175 and the per capita income was \$34,143.
- Female Headed households: Fourteen percent of Albemarle County's families are female headed households. While this percentage is lower than the state's level, Albemarle County's female headed households with children under the age of 18 have more than doubled from 1990 to 2000, going from 4.7% of the population to 8.6% of the population.
- Educational attainment: Albemarle County has a high level of educational attainment, with 53% of the population having an associates degree or higher. Twenty-three percent of County residents have graduate degrees and 25% have Bachelor's degrees.
- Economic/Business Profile
  - Taxable sales have nearly doubled since 1992.
  - Albemarle County has experienced steady net job growth during the years 1993 through 1997, and witnessed a jump in net job growth in 1998 and 1999. After 2000, the net growth tapered off. The total number of net jobs declined slightly in 2001 and recovered somewhat in 2002 (with a net increase of 761 jobs).
  - From 1993 through 2002, Albemarle's annual unemployment rate was typically lower than selected peer Virginia counties, the state of Virginia and the United States. Over the period the County averaged 1.9%, while the state of Virginia averaged 3.8% and the United States averaged 5.2%. Albemarle County's annual unemployment rate in 2002 was 2.3%.
  - The total *nominal* (not adjusted for inflation) value and the per-capita nominal value of real estate in Albemarle County is increasing, with the sharpest recent rise taking place in 2001.
  - The per-capita constant (adjusted for inflation) dollar value of real estate has fluctuated between 1992 and 2001.
  - Total nominal and constant dollar retail sales generally have been increasing, with a slight decrease in 2001.
- Workforce
  - Educational Attainment: The educational attainment level of the workforce is high and increasing. Since 1990, there has been a 9% increase in the percent of the population over age 25 who have obtained a Bachelor's degree or higher.
  - Working Mothers with Children: Seventy-eight percent of working mothers have children between the ages of 6 and 17.
  - The participation of males in the workforce (72%) is greater than that of females (61%). Labor participation among both males and females has increased over the last three decades.

- Weekly Wage Averages: Comparatively, the average weekly wage is high and increasing since 1990 for jobs in Albemarle County. There has been a 9% growth in weekly wages since 1990 in inflation adjusted dollars.
- Growth in Jobs: Between 1998 and 2002, Albemarle lost 1,699 manufacturing jobs, but other sectors have experienced high growth with a net total gain of 3,791 jobs in Albemarle during the period of 1998 to 2002. With 22% of the jobs, State government is the largest employment sector in the County.
- Commuting to Work: Commuting time to work demonstrated a 7% decrease in the number of commuters who are traveling under 25 minutes to work between 1990 and 2000. Seventy-nine percent of Albemarle County residents commute to work by driving alone, a 4% increase since 1990. At the same time, the number of persons carpooling, using public transportation or walking has decreased. Over 2,000, or five percent of Albemarle County workers, reported that they worked out of their homes in 2000, an increase of 839 since 1990.
- Fifty-one percent of jobs in Albemarle County are filled by non-residents.
- Public Safety Profile
  - After four years of increasing numbers, crimes against persons did not increase in 2002. The number of crimes against persons in 2002 was 1,006. Offenses against property have decreased for the second consecutive year. The number of crimes against property totaled 3,622 in 2002. There were 451 offenses against society in 2002, a slight increase of 20 offenses since 2001.
  - The County's crime rate per 100,000 residents has decreased since 1998. Alarm calls are at their lowest level since 1998.
  - Motor vehicle accident reports have increased for the past five years, with a 19.9% increase over 1998. Motor vehicle accident fatalities spiked in 2002 for a total of 22.
  - Two hundred twenty-four persons were arrested for driving under the influence in 2002, a decrease of 41 since 2001.
  - When compared to Charlottesville, Suffolk, Stafford, Roanoke County, James City County, Henrico, Chesterfield and Hanover, Albemarle has the second fewest number of officers per 1,000 population in 2001.
- Fire and Medical Services
  - Average response times in Development Area in 2002 is above Comprehensive Plan's five minute goal. However, these response times do not reflect the positive impact of Monticello Fire/Rescue station (which opened in 2003) and the future positive impact of the fire station planned for the Proffit Road/Hollymead development area.
  - The fire/rescue call volume for Albemarle County has been steadily increasing over the years. It is estimated that there will be over 8,000 fire calls per year by the year 2010.
  - The number of Fire Rescue training classes is increasing, as well as the number of students attending these training programs and the number of hours students are in training.

- Housing Profile
  - In 2000, 66% of the housing in Albemarle was owner occupied, similar to the statewide rate of 68%. Owner occupied housing has increased slightly from 60% in 1980.
  - Median sale prices for both new and resale single family homes are increasing. The median sale price of a home in Albemarle County in 2002 was \$223,000.
  - According to the 2000 Census, Albemarle County has a high median gross rent cost of \$712 per month, well above the state median gross rent of \$650. However, when rent is viewed as a percentage of household income, Albemarle's median rent burden is 26%, similar to the State's rent burden, and to the rent burdens of the comparison counties of Stafford, James City, Henrico, and Hanover.
  - In 2000, 19% of homeowners paid more than 30% of their monthly income towards housing costs. In 2000, 38% of renters paid more than 30% of their income for their rental unit. This is higher than the state-wide rate of 34%.
  - Fifty-six percent of the homes in Albemarle County were assessed over \$175,000 in 2002. Maximum affordability is calculated using 80% of the area median income published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Housing is affordable if a household pays 30% or less of household income for housing costs. In 2002, using this criteria and based on a 6% mortgage rate, the maximum "affordable" house in Albemarle County would be one that is assessed at \$175,000.
  - The number and percent of "affordable" new housing (below \$175,000) has decreased since 1998.
  - Households earning less than \$15,000 a year face the greatest shortage of affordable housing, with 87% of these households not living in affordable housing. Based on observations of the County's Housing Office staff, most of the affordable rental opportunities are in properties that are five years or older.
- Poverty Profile
  - Seven percent of Albemarle's population is living in poverty; this is below the statewide level of 10%. The percent of those in poverty in Albemarle has been decreasing for the last thirty years.
  - Hispanic persons had the highest percentage of persons living in poverty in 1999.
  - Twenty percent of Albemarle's population is considered the "working poor." This percentage of persons, whose earnings are below 200% of poverty level, decreased by 1.6% between the years of 1989 and 1999.
  - The percent of persons who live below poverty level income is decreasing. The percent of children below poverty has decreased and is below the state average.
  - The percent of elderly below poverty (4.7%) in Albemarle County is below the state percentage (9.5%).The number of elderly below poverty in Albemarle has declined since 1979.



- Families and Children
  - In 1999, 11% of Albemarle families were single parent families, consistent with the statewide 12% average.
  - The number of families on public assistance has remained fairly consistent between FY 1998-99 and FY 2001-02.
  - In FY 2001-02, fifty children entered foster care. Children in foster care requiring specialized placements remain fairly constant between FY 1997-98 and FY 2001-02.
  - Child Protective Services complaints increased significantly in FY 2002.
  - The teen pregnancy rate has been decreasing every year except 1999. In 1999, there was a slight increase.
  
- Parks & Recreation
  - **Partnerships**  
The Parks and Recreation Department is involved in many partnerships throughout the community. These partnerships contribute to the 2,000+ acres of facilities the County administers.
  - **Field Sport Program Participation**  
8,524 participants in field sport programs run by other organizations use County facilities, an 18% increase from 5 years ago. The largest sport is soccer, with 3,940 participants (46%) in 2002, followed by Little League with 1,740 participants (20%).
  - **Playing Fields**  
The most common comment for improvement is for more and better quality game and practice fields. Currently 90 fields are available for recreational use, of which current funding only allows the Department to keep 22 on high-level maintenance programs.
  - **Summer Park Attendance**  
In summer 2002, the County's parks received 43,309 visits. The three parks included in the count are: Chris Greene Lake, Mint Springs, and Walnut Creek Parks.

## Effective and Efficient Services:

- Financial Information
  - Albemarle County received a Aaa bond rating in February, 2003 based on "strong financial operations characterized by healthy reserve levels and ample operating flexibility. Moody's believes that the County's financial operations, characterized by ample reserve levels, will remain strong given conservative management practices and healthy revenue streams." According to Moody's, "the County's debt burden, 1.4% of assessed value, is modest, reflecting the county's policy of financing a significant portion of its capital needs with pay-as-you-go sources."
  - The County's debt service remains well within its debt policy guidelines of less than 2% of assessed value and less than 10% of general and school fund revenues.

- Business, professional, and occupational license (BPOL) nominal tax revenue increased steadily from 1997 through 2001, suggesting healthy growth in business activity during these years. Per capita nominal BPOL tax revenue increased by \$30 between 1994 and 2001, with substantial increases taking place from 1998 onward. Albemarle's constant dollar BPOL tax revenue has grown substantially, with greatest growth taking place from 1997 onward. Per capita constant dollar BPOL tax revenue declined between 1994 and 1997 but has since recovered, with the biggest increase coming in 2001.
- Customer Service Data
  - County website usage is increasing. For a typical day in July 2003, visits averaged 1,817, compared to the 2002 average of 580.
  - The Visitors Assistance Desk assisted a total of 11,848 visitors for calendar year 2002.
- Citizen Survey 2002
  - The County contracted with the University of Virginia's Center for Survey Research to conduct an extensive survey of county residents in April, 2001. The Center for Survey Research conducted a similar study in 1994.
  - A Summary of Findings:
    - In the area of "goals for the strategic plan":
      - 90% said that providing quality education was very important, rating it first among all the goals in importance.
      - Providing fire service, protecting water quality, and providing police service were also rated very important by well over 75% of the respondents.
      - Items pertaining to environmental protection were ranked relatively high by citizens. In the top half of the goals list are preserving natural resources and open space and preserving farmland and forested land.
      - Promoting economic growth and supporting cultural opportunities were the two least important goals. This survey shows that promoting economic growth has decreased in its level of importance since the 1994 Citizen Survey.
    - In the area of "satisfaction with services":
      - Overall, 92.7% of respondents said they were satisfied with County programs and services. This represents a significant increase from 84.3% in 1994.
      - Public safety items showed a very high level of satisfaction, with levels over 90%.
      - The satisfaction rating for quality of County schools was 83.7%
      - 64% of respondents reported they are satisfied with the County's efforts to manage growth.
    - In the area of "quality of life" in Albemarle County:
      - Citizens rated life in Albemarle County as 8.10 on a ten point scale, higher than the mean of 7.92 in the 1994 survey.
      - Seventy-three percent rated the County's quality of life an "8" or better.
      - In general the longer the length of residence in Albemarle, the higher the rating of quality of life.

- In the area of “attitudes toward government”:
  - Overall, citizens of Albemarle County display a positive attitude toward their government, with 68% saying they trust the County government to do what is right always or most of the time. This is much higher than the national average of 49%.
  - 85% were satisfied with the value they received from the County for their tax dollar.
  - To increase the convenience of interacting with the County, respondents favored expanding the County website, creating branch offices, and extending the hours of availability of services.
- County workforce
  - The County has a fairly low, single-digit turnover rate: 7.4%, including retirements.
  - Retirements, however, will begin to impact the County in the near future, as nearly one-half of the workforce is over 41 years old, and 20% are over 51 years old.
  - Albemarle County is committed to increasing the female and minority representation in its workforce to more closely reflect the community at large. Currently, there are areas of “underutilization”, meaning the County is not utilizing women (whites and minorities) in proportion to their availability in the community.

# Strategic Plan Framework FY 03 – 05 Plan of Action

## VISION

*To maintain Albemarle County's stature as a quality community by promoting the values of education and lifelong learning, historic and scenic preservation, safety, affordability, cultural diversity, citizen participation and economic opportunity that make the County a desirable place in which to grow up, raise a family and grow old while preserving our natural resources, rural character and visual beauty for future generations.*

## MISSION

To Enhance the well-being and quality of life for all citizens through the provision of the highest level of public service consistent with the prudent use of public funds

### Strategic Directions

*1. Provide High Quality Educational Opportunities for Albemarle County Citizens of all ages*

#### GOALS

(Goals to be developed beginning fall 2003.)

*2. Protect the County's Natural, Scenic and Historic Resources*

#### GOALS

2.1 Protect and/or preserve the County's rural character

2.2 Protect and/or preserve the County's natural resources

2.3 Provide for environmentally sensitive government operations at the local and regional level

*3. Enhance the Quality of Life for all Citizens*

#### GOALS

3.1 Make the County a safe and healthy community in which citizens feel secure to live, work and play

3.2 Promote a variety of safe, sanitary & affordable housing types

*4. Serve the Public Efficiently and Effectively*

#### GOALS

4.1 Provide effective, responsive and courteous service to our customers

4.2 Fund County services in a fair, efficient manner and provide needed public facilities and infrastructure