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## Community and Economic Development in North Carolina and Beyond Blog: Fostering Resilient Places: Sources of Economic Strength in Nonmetropolitan North Carolina – Project Update

By CED Guest Author

Article: <https://ced.sog.unc.edu/fostering-resilient-places-sources-of-economic-strength-in-nonmetropolitan-north-carolina-project-update/>

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“Fostering Resilient Places: Sources of Economic Strength in Nonmetropolitan North Carolina” is a CCP small-grant funded project that aims to identify community assets and policies contributing to the success of companies in traditional industries in the state, despite a struggling economy and shrinking markets. Over the past several months, I have been trying to identify companies that meet the following criteria: located in a Tier 1 county and part of a traditional industry with emphasis on food, textiles/apparel, and furniture. To date, I have identified 4-5 companies worth contacting, and I hope to identify at least 20 more this month.

In addition to this work, I have contacted the directors of the regional partnership directors, the Rural Center and the SBTDC as well as individuals who may have knowledge of prospective companies. I have been struck by how difficult it has been to find prospects. I believe this reflects the depth of the recent recession as well as long-term secular decline in these sectors.

I expect to accomplish the following tasks by the end of the month:

- Follow up the directors of the regional partnerships either to identify specific companies or get contact information on local economic developers worth contacting for this purpose.
- Follow up with SBTDC to request a listing of prospective companies from the database of about 1,200 NC companies. Find SBTDC staff able to provide additional information on some of these companies.
- Continue reviewing websites of identified companies.
- Contact local economic developers to identify additional companies.
- Begin contacting local economic developers to contact the company and find the person I would interview via telephone (the CEO, CFO or COO).
- Conduct 1-2 interviews. My strategy is to limit the telephone time to 20 minutes or less and focus only on the key questions. I will subsequently send the entire survey as an email attachment or via snail mail and request that the survey be completed and returned.