

Flood Recovery Task Force, Inc. Quarterly report to
Economic Development Administration, 1974 June⁸

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FLOOD RECOVERY TASK FORCE, INC.

HOTEL STERLING
WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA 18701
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WILKES COLLEGE

JUN 6 1974

President's Office

TO: FRTF Executive Committee and Steering Committee
FROM: Andrew Shaw, Jr.
DATE: June 5, 1974

The attached is the Task Force's quarterly report to the
Economic Development Administration. It is an accurate
summary of recent Task Force activities.

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R E P O R T T O E D A

January 1, 1974 - May 30, 1974

During this report period, the Flood Recovery Task Force concentrated most of its attention on the three work programs it had contracted for with professional consultants during the previous report period. Task Force members and staff worked closely on the development of each of these programs with the consulting firm concerned. A progress report on each follows.

1. Housing

The overall objective of this program is to encourage the speedy construction of enough new housing units to satisfy the unusually insistant demand for new housing created as a result of the disastrous 1972 Hurricane Agnes flood.

To this end, the consulting firm of Direction Associates has thus far prepared and delivered to the Task Force the following reports:

1). Financing for New Housing Construction in Wyoming Valley

summary of financing sources available to private housing developers, housing and redevelopment authorities, and other governmental and quasi-governmental agencies.

2). Geographical Analysis of the Need for Housing in Wyoming Valley

statistical information and extrapolations on which housing developers can base business decisions about the Wyoming Valley region.

3). Code and Ordinance Revision Program

summary analysis of regional land use and comprehensive plans, zoning and subdivision ordinances, and building codes and procedures. Recommendations for updating of these where deemed necessary, and for creation of coordinating agencies.

Still to be delivered by the Consultant are:

- a). Case studies of solutions other areas have found to housing problems similar to Wyoming Valley's.
- b). An analysis of the cause and effect relationship between the region's economy and its housing situation.
- c). A summary action program.

2. Local Government Capability

This program aims to help provide community leaders and officials with information on which to base realistic assessments of the performance of local governments. With the specific objective of ascertaining the public's attitudes towards their local governments, the Task Force commissioned Wilbur Smith and Associates to conduct a scientific sampling of opinion on the subject throughout the Wyoming Valley region. The Consultant conducted the sampling early in the report period, and its results were made public in March of this year.

The results of the survey did not support a widely held belief that residents of the region want consolidation of governments. The survey results did, however, reveal evidence of areawide eagerness to see local governments combine in specific service programs in order to provide better public services.

Information developed by this survey has already proven useful to members of a number of Charter Study Commissions at work in the region and to local officials who have been looking for ways to be more responsive to their constituents' needs and desires. It is very likely that this information will continue to be of use to community leaders throughout the region in a wide variety of ways.

3. Area Appearance and Image

This program sets its sights on helping to eliminate the heavy disadvantage to the region contained in the distinctly unprepossessing appearance of its populated areas, and in the "coal-town" image it continues to project, not only to persons outside the Valley, but also to its own residents. To make a start on a badly needed comprehensive area improvement campaign, the Task Force contracted with Wilbur Smith and Associates for a work program which would:

- 1). identify and make recommendations for change of those area-wide appearance and image factors which impede economic growth and development in Wyoming Valley.

- 2). design a workable pilot appearance and image improvement project for a specific Valley area.

Although extensive research work has been done on the first of these program elements, and considerable background material has been gathered for the second, the Consultant has not yet delivered a final report on either.

In addition to supervising the development of the three work programs described above, the Task Force has:

- 1). continued to support and cooperate with the Susquehanna River Basin Association.
- 2). taken an active part in the U. S. Corps of Engineers and Susquehanna River Basin Association sponsored discussions of flood control in Wyoming Valley.
- 3). given the administration of tornado stricken Wilberforce University in Xenia, Ohio and officials of the nearby tornado devastated Xenia assistance in the form of advice based on Wilkes College's and Wyoming Valley's disaster recovery experience.

In accordance with the terms of its EDA grant, the Task Force plans to suspend operations on June 23rd, the second anniversary of the flood that brought it into being. It's Executive Committee, however, has decided that the Task Force will remain in existence as a corporation in case a further need for its services should arise.

Task Force work that has not been completed by June 23rd will be handed over to appropriate ongoing community organizations for completion.

