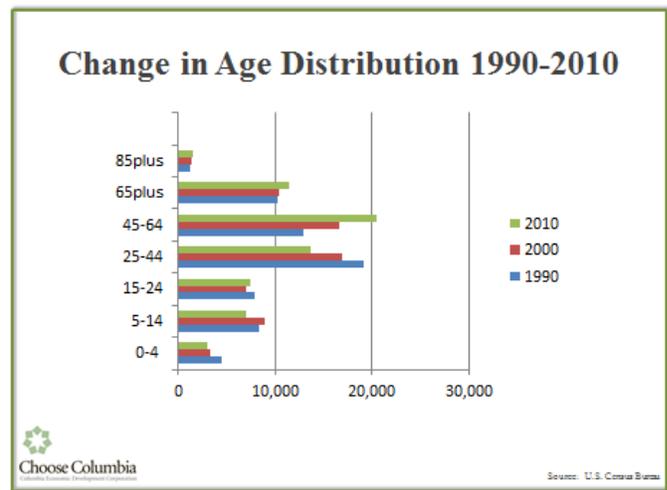
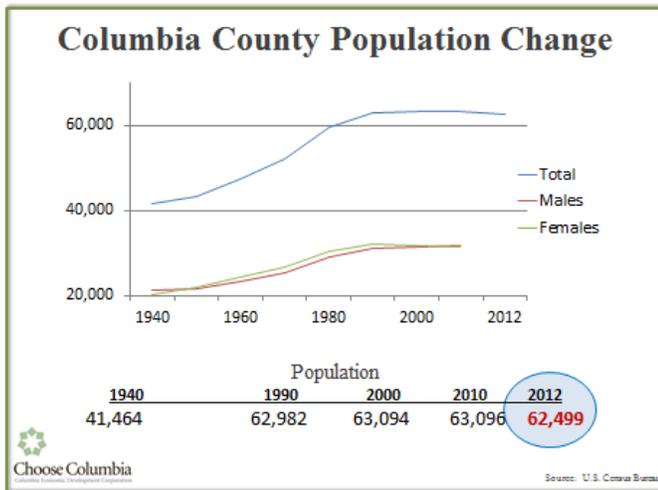




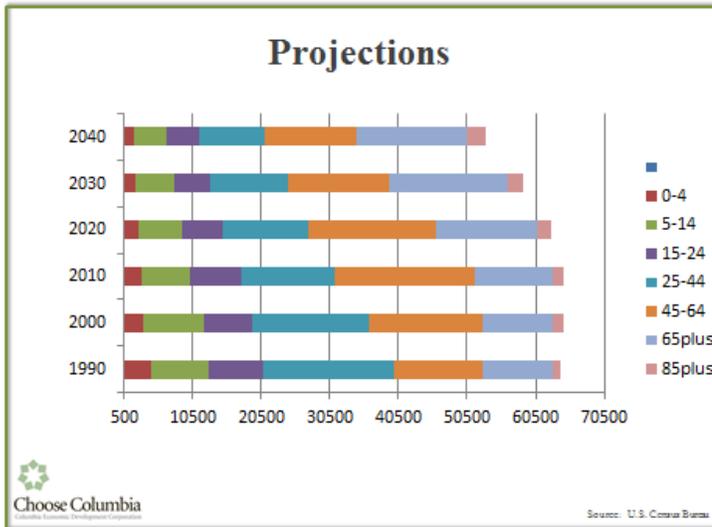
**Welcome!**

The Columbia Economic Development Corporation Annual Meeting has been an opportunity for me to provide an annual report on the year’s corporate activities. I would normally report on what businesses were helped, how many jobs were created, and what projects we are currently working on. This year I am going to stray from this tradition.

Columbia County has reached a critical point in its economic path and today I am going to talk about why and how we got here and what CEDC plans to do to meet the needs of its residents. I will show trends in demographics and the economy and then describe the path CEDC has drawn.



I think we all know that we have an aging population in the County which when compared with the rest of NYS is not out of the norm although the degree is a little worse in our County.



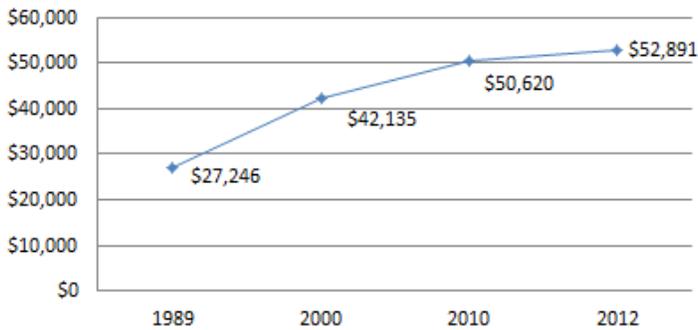
Projections through 2040 show the percentage of residents older than 65 is growing. This also means the labor force is getting smaller. The projections also show a total population of almost 10,000 less people. As a result CEDC believes that approximately scaled economic development projects is a key ingredient to attracting businesses and jobs which means growing small service and manufacturing businesses where the principal is attracted to our county due to the lifestyle afforded. We have already had great success in providing seed capital and training for small local businesses.



An important data point is the continued rise in home values as it relates to income. The data on this slide demonstrates the impact of price on affordability. The increase in home prices is somewhat due to the growing second home market. This is evident in Columbia County as well as Greene County when compared to Rensselaer County.

## Income 1990-2012

### Median Household Income



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Program

Income for Columbia County residents has obviously not been able to keep up with home values but if the population decreases as projected, it will be interesting to track housing demand as well price.

## Inflow/Outflow Job Counts 2011

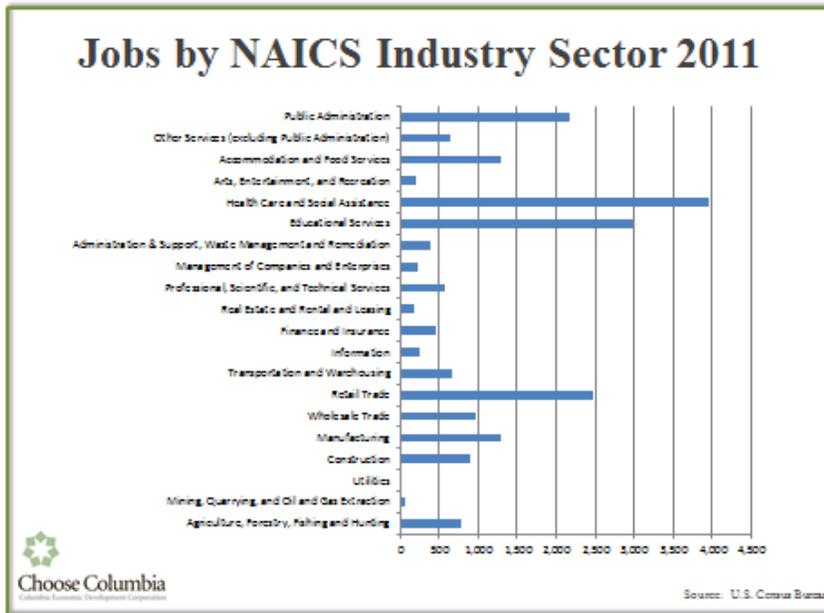
Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (All Jobs) 2011		
	Count	Share
<a href="#">Employed in the Selection Area</a>	20,464	100.0%
<a href="#">Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside</a>	10,565	51.6%
<a href="#">Employed and Living in the Selection Area</a>	9,899	48.4%
<a href="#">Living in the Selection Area</a>	28,943	100.0%
<a href="#">Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside</a>	19,044	65.8%
<a href="#">Living and Employed in the Selection Area</a>	9,899	34.2%

[Reset Highlighting](#)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Now, where do Columbia County residents work? The County has a labor force of about 28,000 people, with less than 10,000 residents working in Columbia County. Ranked in order, a total of 8,000 Columbia County residents work in Albany, Dutchess, Rensselaer and Ulster Counties. The remaining 10,000 residents work in other locations, such as Berkshire County.



Just like much of upstate NY our economy relies heavily on healthcare and the public sector for jobs. But Columbia County has a healthy retail and accommodation and food service sector which goes to the importance of the tourism industry and of course the work of our tourism office.

**So what should we do?** First we need to focus on existing business and entrepreneurs. We need to insure that the County residents are aware of the resources available to assist them and what opportunities are available in the County. And CEDC is doing just that.

In 2013 Columbia Economic Development Corporation (CEDC), having identified marketing and communications as being strategically important to support the organization’s economic development initiatives, appointed Carol Wilber as marketing director and with that, an organized marketing/communications program was launched. Many new marketing initiatives have been developed over the past twelve months, including the rebranding of the organization, a redesigned website, the launch of an e-newsletter, and the development of new collateral. The next step in creating a formal marketing program is the development and implementation of a strategic marketing plan – which is currently underway.

The marketing plan will further define and help guide CEDC’s economic development marketing efforts toward greater success in attracting new and expanding business, retaining existing business, supporting entrepreneurs, growing the County’s workforce, gaining greater understanding and support of CEDC’s programs and services, and telling the Columbia County story.

That's a good start, but it doesn't end there. A strategic marketing plan proposal which addresses the need for a county-wide branding/marketing/communications program will be developed and presented to the Columbia County Board of Supervisors in 3Q14.

**In terms of economic development, CEDC has identified the following opportunities:**

1. **Flex Space** - Develop flex office space with basic amenities to be offered to start-ups at a low rent to encourage a transition from home office to real business. Also offer space at market for established businesses that wish to relocate.
2. **Agra-Tourism** - Promote Agra-tourism with a possible branding of a food/beverage trail linking cheese, yogurt, distilleries, and so on.
3. **Service Industry** - Develop support businesses for weekenders' needs. This includes artisans who can renovate and/or maintain the second homes and property management companies that offer a comprehensive service. Support training sessions in establishing a property management business.
4. **Arts & Entertainment** - Support and strengthen the art and entertainment scene in Hudson, which especially, attracts individuals with an urban outlook. This will encourage the continued influx of twenty-something's from NYC and the metropolitan area.

So that is the long term strategy for CEDC. Of course we are working are working hard on our top priority which is helping existing businesses, but it is increasingly difficult -whether it is the more complex SEQR forms for projects or the expense of ever growing state oversight. I estimate that over 10% of CEDC's budget goes to increased state reporting and required compliance. Just an example, why would the Columbia County Capital Resource Corporation have to develop a salary and compensation policy when the corporation has no employees? There is no end in sight. That is why we must support Senator Marchione's work on the Senate's Administrative Regulations Review Commission.

But do not misunderstand me. I am optimistic about the future of Columbia County due to its geographic location, its current leadership, and the County's number one strength: the diversity of businesses that exist in the County – and that is what we must build on.

We look forward to continuing our service to Columbia County and sincerely thank you for your continued support.