

Community Economic Recovery and Resiliency Initiative (CERRI) Quarterly Impact Report #2

2021 Quarter 2 (April - June) Activities

What is CERRI?

In January 2021, the Rural Planning Program (RPP), part of the N.C. Department of Commerce's Main Street & Rural Planning (MS&RP) Center, launched CERRI in response to the economic challenges small towns and rural communities have faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. CERRI provides participating communities with a planning process to develop local strategies for economic recovery and technical services for strategy implementation. Key steps include conducting a community assessment, developing an economic recovery plan of work, and delivering implementation services to help communities support small businesses and build local economic resiliency. Initially, the RPP engaged ten communities, across North Carolina's eight Prosperity Zones, in CERRI (as shown on the map below).

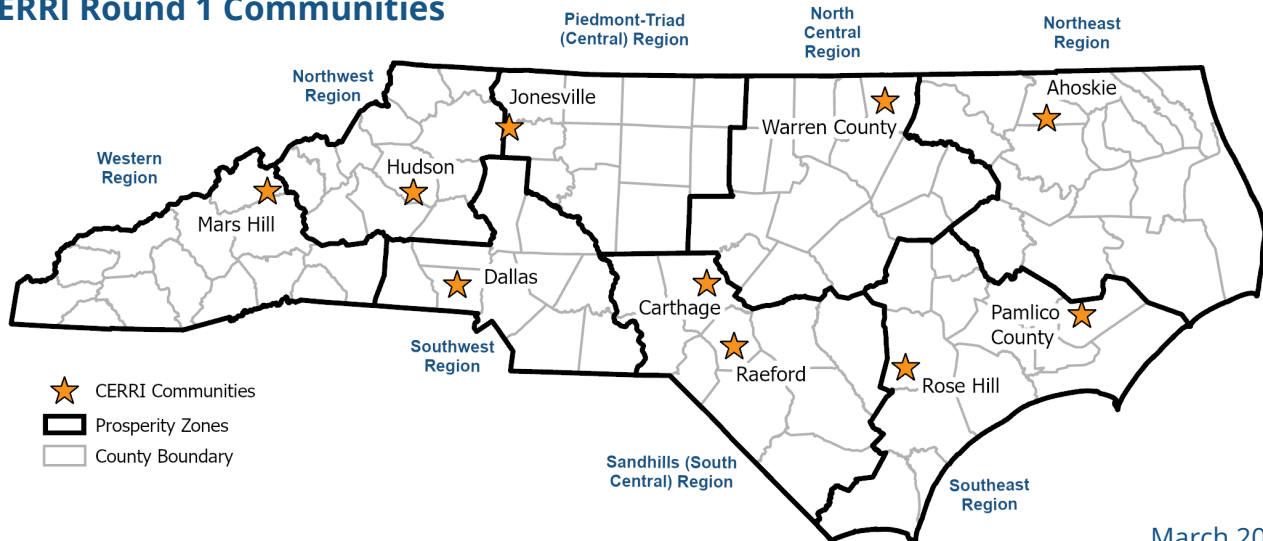


"The Tyson & Jones Buggy Co. 1850 - 1929"
One of several murals in Carthage depicting the history of the town and Moore County.

CERRI Partners

In addition to RPP services, CERRI communities receive project development, resource identification, and implementation assistance from other project partners, including regional councils of government, local and regional economic development organizations, the NC Appalachian Regional Commission program, NC Hometown Strong, and the U.S. Economic Development Administration. CERRI participants also benefit from training and tools provided through the NC MS&RP Center's affiliation with Leverage NC, the North Carolina Small Business and Technology Development Center, and other agencies and organizations.

CERRI Round 1 Communities



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CERRI Activities - Second Quarter Highlights

Local work groups in five CERRI communities (Hudson, Jonesville, Raeford, Rose Hill, and Warren County) met with RPP staff for the first time during the second quarter. Meanwhile, the Ahoskie and Carthage work groups continued the planning processes they started in the first quarter.

Jonesville

When RPP staff and CERRI partners met with Jonesville in May to plan its first local work group meeting and Hometown Strong Action Team visit, they learned about the proposed Uptown Jonesville project. The conceptual plan includes a pedestrian bridge and gateway commercial development to link Jonesville to downtown Elkin. Further developing the project and identifying potential funding sources will likely be part of the town's CERRI Economic Recovery Plan of Work. At the same meeting, the town manager expressed a need to market the community. Within a month, he was leading a tour of Jonesville for the Hello NC team (from the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources) that is creating a promotional video for the town.

Jonesville has already benefitted from CERRI by identifying opportunities for diversifying the local economy, partnering with Hometown Strong, and developing a marketing video.

Rose Hill

In June, Rose Hill held its first CERRI work group meeting, a working lunch at Rose Hill Restaurant. The Duplin County Economic Development Director and Hometown Strong staff, both project partners, also attended. The work group and partners spent an hour focused solely on discussing the community's assets, needs, and local economic development. According to Amy Suggs, Community Economic Development Planner for the Southeast Region and RPP staff member assisting Rose Hill, "CERRI provides a great opportunity for local leaders to have open discussions focused on their community as the Rural Planning Program helps them prepare an Economic Recovery Plan of Work."



North Carolina & Virginia Railroad Co., Inc.
Headquarters in Ahoskie



Uptown Jonesville Concept
Rendering provided by the Town of Jonesville

Hometown Strong Action Team

Five CERRI communities (Ahoskie, Jonesville, Raeford, Rose Hill, and Warren County) met individually with the Hometown Strong Action Team in the second quarter. Hometown Strong, a CERRI partner, connects community leaders with cabinet-level state agencies to address local needs and priority projects. The Action Team helps them leverage state and local resources and provides other support. For example, during Rose Hill's recent meeting with the Action Team, the town identified issues, needs, and projects that might benefit from state assistance, including road maintenance, parks and recreation facility improvements, a sewer project, grant writing, and comprehensive planning. The N.C. Department of Transportation has already contacted the town to schedule a meeting.

The Hometown Strong Action Team will meet with the other CERRI communities (Carthage, Dallas, Hudson, Mars Hill, and Pamlico County) over the next quarter.

CERRI Expanding to More Communities in August 2021

The RPP is opening CERRI to additional communities. On Tuesday, August 17, from 10:00-11:00 a.m., the RPP will hold an information session to provide an overview of CERRI and to review participation requirements and the application process. To join the session by video, click [here](#), or to join by telephone, dial 1-984-204-1487, then 312182270#. Communities will submit applications online. The RPP will share the application link during the information session, send it to community contacts, and post it on the [NC MS&RP Center website](#). The application period is August 17-September 17.

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