

## **HCBI Analysis Offers Look At Three Clusters.**

**By Josh Funk  
Daily News Staff Writer  
June 2010**

Adults age 55 and older leave Huntingdon County one to two times per month for goods and services. Seventy-five percent of tourists visiting Huntingdon County usually spend up to \$500 per visit, bringing up to \$276,000 to the county.

Those are just two of the many statistics mentioned during a presentation by Susanne House, Huntingdon County Business and Industry's director of business outreach, during Monday's monthly business meeting at the Huntingdon Country Club.

The presentation highlighted data analysis of three clusters – active adults, tourism and wood products. Surveys for the three clusters were conducted during summer 2009. The analysis of all of the data was completed in May.

The surveys helped provide hard data and information showing what products and services people leave Huntingdon County to purchase and what tourists are looking for when they come to visit the area on vacation.

Beginning with the active adults cluster of the presentation, the majority of the 944 adults surveyed fell between the ages of 55 to 70 years, and 71 percent of those individuals were either retired or unemployed.

House said the surveys showed the top five items most adults are leaving Huntingdon County to receive in terms of medical care: cardiologists, general surgeons, family doctors or general care, dentists and dermatologists. House noted the surveys left out orthopedic services. Eighty-seven percent of adults are spending up to \$200 per month for medical care outside of the county – up to a maximum of \$188,800 per month, House said.

Adults are also likely to leave Huntingdon County for shopping or an evening out. Fifty-four percent of adults surveyed said they left the county to shop for clothing and nearly 52 percent eat out at locations outside of the county.

“The top two reasons why most adults leave Huntingdon County for these products and services are availability and variety and selection,” House said.

The number one destination for adults outside of Huntingdon County is Altoona, followed by State College, Lewistown, Chambersburg and Belleville. Adults surveyed said they left the county once or twice per month on average, meaning nearly 1,900 trips are being made for products and services offered outside of the county per month.

The tourism cluster analysis surveyed a total of 973 tourists.

“We focused in on the campgrounds and (Raystown Lake) area,” House said. “We didn’t go down to the East Broad Top Railroad or the coal miners museum.”

Survey results showed a geographic distribution of tourists arranged in a broad line stretching from eastern Ohio to Trenton, N.J., as well as tourists coming from Maryland, Virginia and the Washington, D.C., area.

Thirty-six percent of tourists spend between three to seven days at the lake, House said. Thirty percent spend less than one full day and 23 percent spend between one to three days. Seventy-five percent of the tourists spent up to \$500 during their visit, while 17.4 percent spent between \$501 to \$1,000 during their stay.

“Add it all up and the total amount surveyed could bring up to \$490,000 to Huntingdon County,” House said. “And remember, that’s just from 973 people.”

There are some other notable tourism statistics – 90.2 percent of tourists visited the Raystown region before; 93.5 percent are likely to return to the region; and 93.2 percent are likely to recommend to their friends that they visit the region.

In terms of the wood products cluster, while 70 percent of Huntingdon County is forested land, 70 percent of that total is privately owned, House said.

Also, there is concern in the wood products market due to the free fall of timber prices as a result of the nation’s real estate and foreclosure crisis.

“The price of wood is really falling,” House said, citing the example of black cherry, which sold on the market for \$4 per board foot before the real estate crisis. Now, black cherry sells for \$1 per board foot.

Businesses dealing in wood products were surveyed and concerns were expressed, like the need for more cost effective shipping and the need for creating a consortium of businesses and individuals related to the wood products industry, House said.

The Businesses surveyed also included recommendations to utilize more local wood resources as local facilities and vacation homes are built or upgraded, House said.

Full reports for all three cluster areas examined in the data analysis are available online at <http://hcbi.com/opportunities/focus.html>.