

Creating Coös – building a network of creative communities



Focus on the Creative

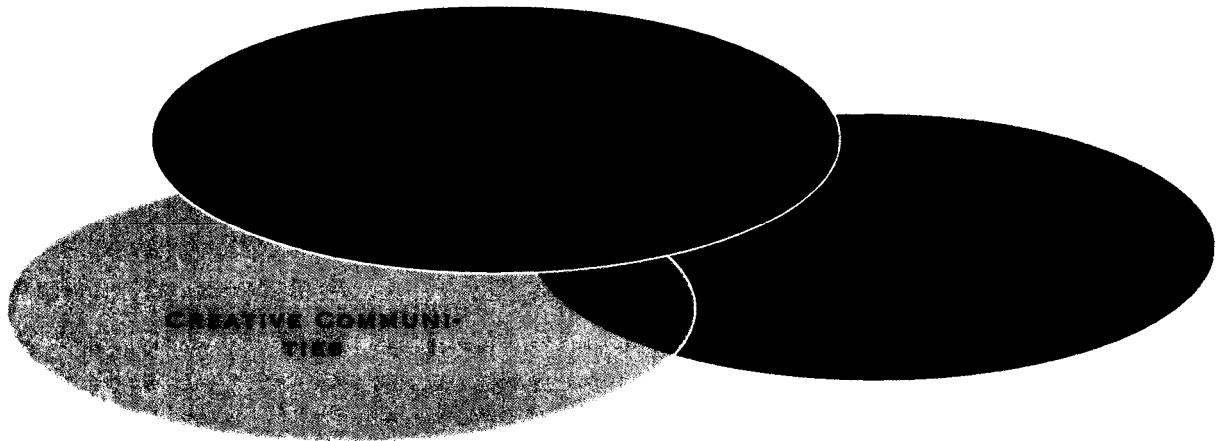
The Creative and Knowledge, Forest Products, Alternative Energy, Health Care, and Tourism Economy Technical Review Committees are part of a broader program to develop an Economic Action Plan for Coos County. The Creative and Knowledge Economy was designed to encompass Education and Creative individuals.

Working together

The Creative and Knowledge TRC began its journey by discussing the natural champions of the creative economy, creative components of Coos County economy, successful models of new job creation, the cultural inventory, town master plans fostering the creative economy, and citizens connection with the creative economy. There is abundant information available about other initiatives throughout the country to promote an economy fueled by artistic, intellectual, tech-savvy enterprises, to which the task force members were linked through our blog created by KDPaine and Partners.

Early in January, the TRC had its first marathon meeting to develop definitions of the Creative and Knowledge Economy and discuss existing successful programs. As a group, we adapted the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) definition: "The creative economy includes businesses and organizations that are from creative or cultural enterprises such as architecture firms, galleries, museums, organic farms, and individuals who work in creative occupations, like photographers, performing artists, crafts people or boat builders. There are at least two views of the creative economy:

- one emphasizes the production of cultural goods and services as a valuable contributor to society;
- the other emphasizes the role of intellectual innovation as an economic driver of particular value during periods of societal transition."



In March, the committee worked on crafting action plans during another marathon meeting that would not only add jobs, but it would also strengthen the existing entrepreneurial activity, creative communities, and attraction for new

business investment. We were realistic about what the communities could do in the five-year time frame and focused on building a network necessary to support fledgling programs currently operating in the vast county.

The Creative and Knowledge Economy TRC, in summary, felt the need to emerge from this process with a collaborative model. The relationship between the Tourism, Wood Products, and Alternative Energy TRC action plans as they have been drafted seem strongest when each TRC honors the importance of "green and sustainable development", authentic heritage spaces" and existing natural resources, and the need for more communication both within the county and with the outside world. We must recognize access for all to the internet is a major leveling factor. We must recognize access to both east/west and north/south highways will also immediately improve the economic outlook for all economies in Coos County. AANNH is establishing a more formal group that will carry this work forward including WREN, CEDC, AVER, NCC, NCIC, BEDCO, Colebrook Downtown Development, and many others already.

Creative Communities

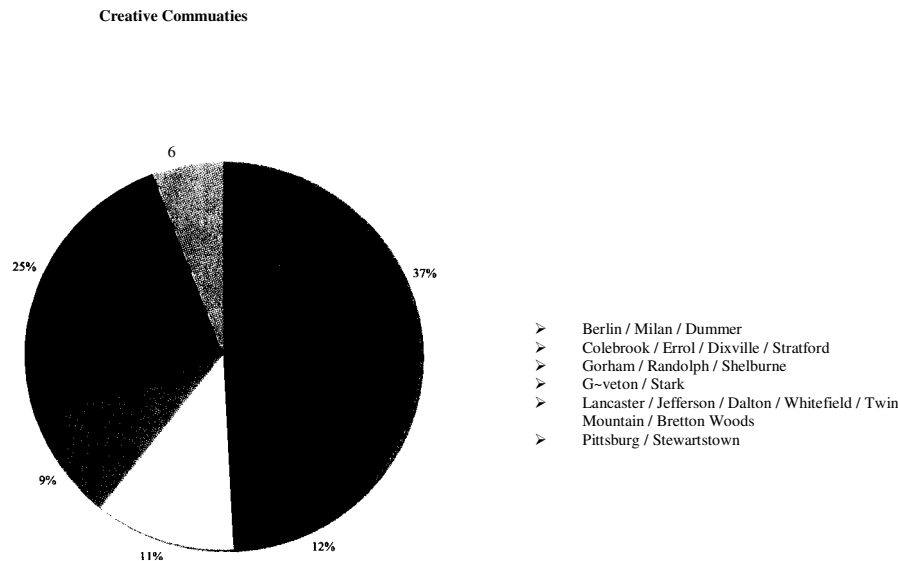
Then TRC members attended a day long Arts Alliance of Northern New Hampshire (AANNH) program with Dr. Ann Markusen to develop a better understanding of rural creative economy models and the economic impact of Artists' Centers. Dr. Markusen recommended that the first step is to complete an "inventory" of the creative economy today and to talk with local artists to fully understand their needs. She warned that, "beyond formal training, most artists create and work in relative isolation, so an inventory needs to evolve." Given similar and highly competitive interests in the other New England states as they pro-actively seek to champion a 21st century creative economy and to embed a "creative class" within all sectors of their economies, it is imperative that northern New Hampshire define its potential in this dynamic --especially in support of the long standing resident communities that are struggling with an irreversible economic change in employment opportunity and community identity. Today, a community's economic prospects depend on a flexible, well-trained workforce, access to technology and capital, cultural and natural amenities, and a strong civic infrastructure including relationships that facilitate problem-solving and collective action within the community and greater regions.



The Arts Alliance of Northern New Hampshire has been working in collaboration with statewide, regional and local partners during the last seven years to help establish a foundation for much of the Creative Economy work described in this report. Partners include the North Country Council (with particular emphasis on the Creative Economy component of the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy), the Northern Forest Center (and the four-state Sustainable Economy Initiative), the New Hampshire Business Committee for the Arts, the NH State Council on the Arts, the New England Foundation for the Arts (a leader in defining and measuring the impact of the Creative Economy), the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance, and the Division of Travel and Tourism Department (in cultural tourism efforts). The Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire, the Center for Rural Partnerships at Plymouth State University, and

Creative and Knowledge Economy

cultural institutions including arts centers, arts councils and small creative businesses throughout the North Country are also engaged through this work.



Work to date includes a baseline study of the impact of the Creative Economy in the region (study conducted with NCC); a regional cultural plan; a regional cultural marketing plan; a history and heritage map and guide to the region; and, this spring, publication of a print and web guide to the visual arts in the region, tracing the historic connections between art and nature (from the time of the White Mountain artists) through contemporary North Country artists and galleries. The Alliance also offers a comprehensive online cultural calendar and e-bulletins; provides arts in education programs to schools, preschools, and after-school programs throughout the region; offers professional development for educators and nonprofit leaders; and partners with senior centers, and cultural and social-service nonprofits to develop community programs like the "Telling Our Stories" Androscoggin Valley residency with Rebecca Rule.

Currently Tillotson funds support a part-time Arts Alliance Creative Economy coordinator whose efforts include work with the "Creative Spaces" inventory and study described here as well as development of a report on best practices in rural creative economy initiatives and of an on-line communication system and web presence for all those working on Creative Economy projects in the region.

While each TRC member began to develop this inventory with the help of the AANNH, individual members of the TRC met with the chair to discuss their vision and understanding of Coos County's creative economy. Clearly evident from this inventory process, Coos County Creative Economy relies on both the natural beauty and features of the county as well as the heritage of each unique community. In addition, most TRC members believe that through the embrace of the creative economy, Coos County will make a successful transition from being a manufacturing industrial economy to a vibrant creative and knowledge-based economy.

The TRC members began to express a common theme "Heritage" as the umbrella that ties not only the creative centers but also the other economic development initiatives like Tourism and Wood Products and Alternative Energy together.

Significant progress has been made to date to designate the region from Lake Umbagog to Shelburne and from Pittsburg through Lancaster along the Connecticut River Valley as a National Heritage Area. According to studies done by NEFA, "Cultural enterprises and cultural workers play an important role in New England's economy, with a greater proportion of cultural workers and 12.8% higher cultural enterprise employment than the U.S as a whole. These firms and professionals compliment many of the region's other strengths: a strong tourism base and concentrations of high education, high technology, medical care, finance and insurance." Ross Gittel, from the UNH Carsey Institute, suggests that Coos County has competitive advantages within tourism, education, health care, and technology. Coos County has unique strengths and attributes that make it particularly appropriate for development of a creative and knowledge economy, specifically:

- a. Unparalleled scenery/views combined with unrivaled access to outdoor recreational opportunities. Examples include
- b. Health- aging and impoverished population will increase the number of jobs in the Health Care segment of this economy. Examples include
- c. Education- Increasingly citizens of all ages throughout New England are accessing local educational institutions to improve their economic outlook. Examples include
- d. Art - The very nature of the North Country attracts creativity, as evidenced by the numerous musicians, artists and craftspeople currently living in Coos County. Their work is on display at WREN, at performances at St. Kieran's, Northern Forest Heritage Park, Old Mill Studio, Colebrook Heritage Center, and in local galleries. While there is no central art market that brings them together, there is no doubt that there is a wealth of talent to draw on.
- e. Knowledge workers - The basic ingredients of a knowledge-worker economy are in place or almost there. Attractive, family-friendly lifestyle, less congested towns, high civic engagement, and growing yet still meager access to high-speed internet has already lured individuals and a few businesses to the area. Coos County is a community where "relationships count" and is perceived as a "playground" to second home owners and tourists. Citizens boast their pride in their heritage, close knit friends and family, fierce independence, and quality of life. Coos County's Location close to the New England Corridor of *creative* cities and Montreal and Quebec City, with a micropolitan of over 10,000 people, the City of Berlin, makes it attractive for both second home buyers, retirees, and the telecommuting work-force. Examples include

Carsey Institute surveys show that although surrounded by immense natural beauty, the people of Coos County, like other citizens of amenity rich, resource dependent, chronically poor communities, are concerned about: Violent or property crime, Manufacturing or sales of illegal drugs, Lack of safe affordable housing, Too-rapid development, growth or sprawl, Schools not as good as they should be, Lack of job opportunities particularly in forestry, Lack of recreational opportunities, Poverty or homelessness, Population declining as people move away, Not enough health and social services and High property tax burden. With the enormous job loss, one can understand the fear that paralyzes some citizens and some communities. Work must be done to help create a base from which these citizens can grow and prosper. The region has a very high percentage of citizens that are aligned with "faith based" and "values driven" organizations. These organizations should be connecting people to the non-profit and governmental services providing mental and physical health support, work force training, entrepreneurial training and other support services.

Creative Workforce

As the regional economy changes, it is important that people's skills and ways of thinking develop with it. While a good high school education is a critical first step in preparing for the modern workplace, it is often no longer enough. In some

cases, the most appropriate post secondary education may be technical or focused on the skills necessary to perform a specific job or to work in a specific industry, in other cases, it may be oriented toward new ideas and ways of thinking. Whichever the case, the skills and capacities gained through post secondary education contribute to people's ability to participate in the work force, to earn a good living, to think critically and creatively, and to contribute to their communities. Coos County has less than half the rate of 4-year college degree attainment than the other counties in the state. Access to college level course work has improved in recent years through the collaboration of Granite State College, Plymouth State University, and White Mountains Community College, but remains out of reach for most citizens due to lack of high



speed internet access, high cost transportation, and rising tuition costs.

In 2000, the State Department of Education proposed changing the funding formula of education based on ranking system that would identify education systems at risk. All of Coos County's school districts displayed high need for more support than is currently offered by the state prior to the mills closing. These paper and pulp mills provided the property tax revenue for the school systems. Even the only micropolitan town in Coos can be compared with other rural towns deemed best for business and it looks weak due among others the lack of educational attainment and access to education facilities.

Job loss is increasing as firms seek to lower their costs through automation and the use of cheaper labor outside the U.S. In rural America, workers in manufacturing were hardest hit--from 2001 to 2003, one in ten displaced workers were employed in manufacturing. In their innovative work for Britain, Clark and Oswald (1994, p. 655) summarize their results as follows: "Joblessness depresses well-being more than any other single characteristic including important negative ones such as divorce and separation. "High unemployment rates also have non-negligible effects on people who are not personally affected by unemployment. Based on survey data from population samples from European Union member countries between 1975 and 1992, Di Tella, MacCulloch, and Oswald (2003) show that aggregate unemployment decreases average reported life satisfaction even if personal unemployment is kept constant. The cumulative costs of unemployment are substantial. Communities experiencing shocks of high unemployment also are influenced by high crime rates, depressed workers salaries, reduced leisure time for citizens, lower life satisfaction, citizens with inequality aversion and/or more empathy for the poor, loss of social networks, and necessary adjustments in consumption habits.

Looking ahead, workers with only a high school education, regardless of the industry in which they work, are especially vulnerable. Job loss has devastating impacts on families and children. The lack of security that accompanies displacement creates severe stress on the previously employed individual. Loss of a long held job and limited prospects for immediate reemployment create economic insecurity for the family and can lead to a loss of self-esteem, declining health, increased marital discord, a reduction in the ability to parent, an increase in abuse of alcohol and other substances, and an increased likelihood of divorce (Jacobson, LaLonde, and Sullivan, 1993; Ruhm, 1991; Stevens, 1997). In families where an unexpected loss of a long held job occurs and reemployment is slow, children experience a decline in school performance, increased anxiety and emotional maladjustment (Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, and Klebanov, 1994; Duncan and Brooks-Gunn, 1997; Kalil and Zoil-Guest, 2005).

What do the country's best cities for business have that we don't?

	Casper, Wyoming	Lewiston-Auburn, ME	Berlin
Combined Tax Rate (Property, sales, income)	13.5%	14%	2.9%
Average house cost	\$127,300	\$89,900	\$70,500
Incentives	Foreign trade zone	Foreign Trade Zone	Low interest loans Job training Tax breaks
Median age	36	39	41.5
Availability of affordable office space	Moderate	Moderate	Abundant
Crime	Low	Growing	Low
Highways	5	2	0
Free from natural disaster	Floods	Yes	Yes
Quality of life	Good	Good	Good
Average commute	15.8	18.8	15.4
Cost of living	Medium	High	Low
Shopping	High	High	Low
Communications (broadband, cell)	High	High	Low
% High Scholl diploma	89.1%	72.3%	72.6%
% College +	29.4%	16.6%	8.8%
Education facilities	3	6	2

Educational attainment has been chronically low with only 8.8% of our population with a four-year college degree. The teachers in our school systems have noticed a major change in the readiness for school over the past two decades. Our school-aged children are requiring more educational intervention services. Of an estimated 6,000 school-aged children in Coös County in 2002:

- 95% attend Public Schools, of whom 98% are white.
- 500 attend kindergarten; 2400 are in grades 1-5; 1440 attend grades 6-8; 1830 attend public high school.
- More than 70% of Public School students quality free or reduced-price lunches – a measure of poverty.
- 1170 students about 20% are enrolled in special education. About 98 do not speak English as their first language
- 62% of our children are covered by children's health insurance offered through the state
- Of the 5% of school-aged children who do not attend the public schools, 99% are white. These include 140 in home-school programs, 200 in private and parochial schools; 30 in public charter schools; and 70 in private special education schools.

Creative Clusters

UNESCO describes creative clusters where the creative sector pools resources and bands together: into networks, clusters, quarters and other kinds of partnership. Silicon Valley is the classic example of a cluster region. The usual

definition of a business cluster (Michael Porter's, *The Competitive Advantage of Nations*): '...geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, service providers, firms in related industries, and associated institutions (for example, universities, standards agencies, and trade associations) in particular fields that compete but also cooperate'. "A creative cluster includes non-profit enterprises, cultural institutions, arts venues and individual artists alongside the science park and the media centre. Creative clusters are places to live as well as to work, places where cultural products are consumed as well as made. They are open round the clock, for work and play. They feed on diversity and change and so thrive in busy, multi-cultural urban settings that have their own local distinctiveness but are also connected to the world," says Simon Evans, a cultural entrepreneur and Director of Creative Clusters, an innovative UK company.

Berlin, Colebrook, Carroll, Lancaster, and Whitefield have the beginnings of creative clusters. Berlin has a walkable creative cluster including St. Kieran Center for the Arts, one block from the Junior High Auditorium, one block from the Moffet House Historic Museum, two blocks from St. Anne's Roman Catholic Church, and a few blocks from the Northern Forest Heritage Park. Within this area, there are sign makers, martial arts instructors, high tech enterprises, photography shops, florists, restaurants, and retail shops.

Colebrook has a new Heritage Cultural Center in close proximity with the Shrine and the Balsam Grand Hotel.

Whitefield has just renovated the local bandstand gazebo in the town green surrounded by the Woodburn House restaurant and the Old Mill Studios. Not far from the bandstand is the Weathervane Theater and the Mountain View Grand Hotel and Golf Course.

Carroll has the Mt. Washington Hotel, Bretton Woods ski resort, the Alpine Hut system of AMC, the town bandstand and an airport in close proximity to each other.

Lancaster Fair Grounds connects several crafts people as well as farmers, tree farmers, livestock managers and the County Extension Service in the town to markets. Weeks State Park, Readers Theater, Colonel Town Players, and Centennial Park bring people from around the county together to explore natural beauty, create theater, or share music.

When looking at importing "High Tech/High Per Capita" income economy, towns with unique quality and character of life including natural beauty, strong sense of place, and authentic historic buildings are much more attractive. According to a World Bank Study, cities "aspiring to become the creative hubs...tend to be heavily biased towards infrastructure provision. Although this is necessary, the heavy emphasis on hardware has can lead to underinvestment in developing the talents and skills needed for the emergence of creative industries in these cities. The burden carried by these rural communities is to support the growth of these cultural clusters through access to broad band, street signage, tax incentives, live/work spaces, lighting, bicycling trails, and off street parking access. Most Coos Towns have lost manufacturing plants that in the past carried the majority burden of property tax funding for schools and road repairs. They are trying to replace these lost manufacturing jobs with high tech jobs, Berlin and Colebrook now have such companies.

Action Plan #1

Action Step Statement: Expand the number of "Creative Spaces" in the region that will serve to incubate innovation and creativity and also offer opportunities for community use and involvement.

Justification of Recommendation: In light of rapid de-industrialization and consequent job loss throughout the county, there is a pressing need to build a new kind of broad-based economic engine around certain precise and discrete core elements. The seeding or nurturing of an active, growing artistic and Creative Class population and its allied businesses and entrepreneurial efforts is one such element. The first step in this process is identifying sites suitable for the development of creative industry spaces (including live/work space) as an incubator for the designed expansion of a permanent working artist and related small business population. Such spaces would significantly incorporate capacity for common public arts involvement and applications, including performance, rehearsal, exhibition, education and service spaces. This work is based on findings throughout the country that attracting and retaining qualified workers is enhanced by the presence of a recognized and supported creative sector, including a dedicated population of cultural workers.

In her February discussion, Dr. Ann Markusen affirmed that the first step in development of a successful regional Creative Economy is to complete an inventory of current activity and to pair a complete inventory of existing and available space with a full space needs assessment. She warned that, "beyond formal training, most artists create and work in relative isolation, so an inventory needs to evolve/ Given similar and highly competitive interests in the other New England states as they pro-actively seek to champion a 21 st century creative economy and to embed a "creative class" within all sectors of their economies, it is imperative that northern New Hampshire define its potential in this dynamic --especially in support of the long-standing resident communities that are struggling with an irreversible economic change in employment opportunity and community identity. Today, a community's economic prospects depend on a flexible, well-trained workforce, access to technology and capital, cultural and natural amenities, and a strong civic infrastructure, including relationships that facilitate problem-solving and collective action within the community and the region.

Who: Organization(s) identified to play lead role: Arts Alliance of Northern New Hampshire

Timeline for Implementation: During the next three months the Arts Alliance will be developing an inventory of current and potential Creative Spaces sites throughout the region, identifying existing buildings available for development as well as other adaptable facilities. The inventory will also include a listing of current creative enterprises, a In addition, AANNH will survey local artists and creative businesses to articulate their space and technical assistance needs, in order to pair up the existing spaces to those needs and to plan for future development. This survey information will allow facilitators of established creative spaces to have greater awareness of artists' needs and artists to be more aware of existing resources. Data from the survey will also aid in planning for future creative spaces, resources and facilities.

The Creative Spaces steering committee will develop a draft plan with specific recommendations and recommended actions and present their findings to both local and state government leaders, economic development directors, main street development directors, and the public. The conversation will revolve around where there is creative incubator space (inexpensive, technology connected, available for use, close to parking, offering incentives for entrepreneurs to succeed), and where new spaces can be developed. The process will urge leaders to embrace dynamic cultural communities while honoring heritage-based sense of place in these communities and allowing entrepreneurs to develop their work using new technologies. Property tax incentives and zoning for live/work spaces will be researched and discussed.

By October 2008, AANNH will have identified those communities and individuals in the county that are most ready to take the next step and invest in space, and available spaces for this work. Within five years each of our creative communities will have successful incubator space with artists and entrepreneurs, men and women, young and old, tech savvy and not so savvy working side by side.

In 2010, begin to market to artists and entrepreneurs to bring them into these newly renewed spaces.

Major Measures of Success:

- Increase in Saturday Traffic in Creative Communities
- 12% increase in visits to events and attractions
- Increase in building reinvestment, renovation and rehabilitation
- Increase in number of creative workers in labor force
- Matches of regional artists' needs with available spaces
- Increased use of creative spaces by local artists and community members
- Increased number of creative spaces developed through local partnerships
- Use of Creative Spaces inventory by economic development organizations to attract new businesses to the region
- Increased visibility of Creative Spaces locally, regionally and nationally through the development of geo-mapping tours

Resource: AANNH has an EDA grant funding the inventory development and initial Creative Spaces planning process, and a grant from the Tillotson Fund supporting a part-time Creative Economy coordinator who will work on this initiative through the fall. Next October, new resources will be needed to support implementation of the Creative Spaces plan and to expand the outreach necessary to help individual communities develop identified spaces. It is estimated that \$70,000 per year from 2009 through 2013 would be needed to continue and expand the valuable inventory work and community modeling, to develop the technology and communication systems that will link and support local efforts, and to offer technical assistance to communities in their work on identified projects and spaces.

Action Plan #2

Action Step Statement:

Justification of Recommendation: There are currently more than 2,000 individuals registered on Classmates.com who graduated from a high school in the county between 1965 and 1995. These local graduates are of an age where they might be thinking of starting their own business, or if they already own a business might be thinking of expansion or moving to an area where they can work, live and play within one community. Additionally, they have parents or relatives in the area and may be at an age where the need to be in closer contact. Many of these people are not aware of the fact that with the closing of the mills, the air no longer smells, the river is clean, and the availability of recreational options are even greater than when they were young.

Women owned business are among the fastest growing sectors of the economy. Women owned business grow at double the rate of all companies in America. As of 2006, women owned two out in five companies in America, generating a total of \$1.9 trillion in annual sales and employing 12.8 million people. Annual sales of women owned companies grew at an average rate of 4.4 percent. Because Coos County is a safe place to live and a good place to raise children, it has a unique appeal to women business owners. The vast majority (69%) of women-owned businesses are in the service sector, an area that is particularly well-suited for Coos County. Service businesses are typically labor-intensive, but do not place a heavy burden on the environment or infrastructure.

A growing number of educational institutions in New England and Eastern Canada (Babson, SNHU, UNH, and McGill) have highly regarded entrepreneurship programs. Many of the graduates of such programs have already made a decision to stay in New England. Several of these institutions have programs specifically geared towards professionals who specifically want to leave "corporate life" to start their own businesses. Typically these entrepreneurs are making lifestyle choices, wanting more balance and/or time with family than corporate life allows. Coos County offers a number of unique advantages to this demographic, including some of the most affordable housing in New England, a workforce with a very high work ethic, the highest mountains and best views available in New England - in short the perfect work/ lifestyle balance.

Leveraging the natural beauty and geography of Coos County, another major target audience should be recreation-related businesses. Examples include: training companies who need rugged terrain such as search and rescue and smoke jumping; manufacturers of canoes, kayaks, skis etc that need to be able to easily test products in the field, and touring companies. Such businesses have minimal environmental impact and are complementary both to the nature of the county and the desires expressed in the "Voice of Coos County" survey.

Coos County needs to tailor its message around its beautiful natural resources and the proximity to a wide variety of recreational activities. Such proximity is particularly appealing to younger entrepreneurs and those looking for more work-life balance and better quality of life. Additionally, there is a variety of high-growth complementary business sectors such as extreme sports, outdoor training, running, biking and paddling that should be encouraged to locate in the county to be close to their consumers.

The service sector of the American economy is far and away the fastest growing. For the past decade, American corporations have increasingly "outsourced" their call centers, research and customer support functions. However, a growing backlash among consumers against the poor and/or incomprehensible customer service is causing American corporations to rethink these decisions. "Northsourcing" is the obvious alternative to the infamous South East Asian alternative. Between the strong workforce and plentiful space, this is an obvious segment of the market to target.

The "any business is good business" adage is no longer true. We should only target those businesses that will complement our natural amenities and play to our strengths. To do otherwise wastes resources and undermines our advantages. Residents have defined safety and the small close-knit communities as a key advantage of the county. When combined with the tax incentives, workforce, and availability of space, this message makes a compelling appeal to many low-impact, high-growth industries.

Who: Connecting Technology, Tourism, AANNH, Economic Development

Timeline for Implementation: Communication plan that links arts, tourism and education is being created currently through the planning process at AANNH. The goal also is to create a web presence that connects multiple generations. Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development organizations like CEDC will leverage the "many voices" marketing plan into one consistent, coherent message which is: "We're several notches above the rest." The proof points are:

- Best place in New England for work/life balance
- Unparalleled views and natural beauty + clean air/water
- Great work force
- Availability of affordable space
- A great/safe place to raise a family

We recommend conducting a contest for the best video that illustrates why Coos County is "several notches above the rest." Similar to the consumer-generated advertising programs popularized by this year's SuperBowl, we would encourage local residents to create their own videos to help us market the county. The winners would be posted on YouTube and could be used in any PSAs on NHPTV or other opportunities for TV ads. The contest itself would be heavily promoted via media outreach as well as outreach to the blogging community.

CoosConversations will be a key component of the marketing program. The blog be a repository for data about the county, with links to all the various business and entrepreneurial resources available including available space, workforce demographics etc. The blog will serve as a place that local entrepreneurs can share their success stories. Other key web sites such as DREds, the SBA, CEDC, will also need to be updated with the most recent information. The idea is have the information readily available in a variety of place so no matter how a potential employer looks for information, it will be there.

To respond to inquiries about relocation and business expansion, Coos County needs a single consistent message. We recommend creating a series of printed materials tailored to the specific types of entrepreneurs we want to attract. Each packet would contain a pitch letters tailored to the specific needs of each audience, a listing of all the advantages to Northsourcing, a listing of available space with lots of pretty pictures. Specific targeted packages would be created as follows:

- **Ex-pats and New England Entrepreneurs**
 - Major message: It's better than you remember
 - Case Study: Barry Normandeau
- **Women:**
 - Major message: it's a great place to raise kids
 - Case Study: Carol Miller,
- **Gen X & Gen Y and recreational entrepreneurs:**
 - Major message: we're extreme
 - Case Study: Brian Emerson
- **Service businesses and call centers**
 - Major message: talented workforce
 - Case study: KDPaine & Partners

Coos County needs to begin an aggressive media relations campaign to place success stories and letters to the editor about "Northsourcing" in key media outlets. Key media include blogs, websites, magazines and newsletters that discuss the best places for entrepreneurs and the best places to start businesses. A complete media list will need to be developed but should include such general business web sites and magazines as *Inc.*, *Entrepreneur*, *Money*, *Forbes* and *FSB* as well as specific vertical media such as those addressing women entrepreneurs, service and call center facilities managers, and New England business owners.

Coos County needs to make sure that when people are looking for places to start, grow or expand a business, it appears on the first page of the search. This can be accomplished by an active Search Engine Optimization Program including sending out search optimized press releases every few weeks in addition to frequent blogging and updates to the web site.

The most influential people attend the most meetings, so ensuring that Coos County has a solid team of "ambassadors" that can tell its story is imperative. In addition to being an effective speaker, the ambassadors need to be on-message to ensure one story, many voices.

Every professor teaching entrepreneurship in New England should understand the advantages of Northsourcing and needs to be aware of the Coos County Advantages. Additionally we should prepare a packet of information to ensure that o Venture Capital and Angel Investors are aware of the "NorthSourcing" advantage.

Just as Ireland and Canada conduct regular junkets for entrepreneurs and businesses to foster trade, we need to create similar events for entrepreneurs, specifically those with ties to the area. A defined "site tour" that highlights the county's biggest success stories should be created and promoted in conjunction with a high-school reunion, presidential visit, or other festivals

Economic development organizations should support local events such as high-school reunions and festivals that bring back Coos County "ex-pats" to the area. Classmates.com members should be solicited to attend local events.

Attendance at entrepreneurial events throughout New England is another way to achieve a presence in the minds of entrepreneurs. Coos County should have a presence at local targeted events such as WomenBiz, Business and Business Leader of the Year Awards, New England Women Business Owner meetings, NH High Tech Council, Mass High Tech etc.

Major Measures of Success:

Resource: Through a 2006-07 collaboration of NH Business Finance Authority, White Mountain Community College, USDA Rural Development, and NCIC, KDPaine and Partners created a business marketing plan for consideration of the economic development organizations in Coos to utilize. Funding through USDA and other federal sources should provide the resource to actually implement the plan.

Action Plan #3

Action Step Statement: Support Existing Creative Enterprises

Justification of Recommendation: UNESCO describes creative clusters where the creative sector pools resources and bands together: into networks, clusters, quarters and other kinds of partnership. Silicon Valley is the classic example of a cluster region. The usual definition of a business cluster (Michael Porter's, The Competitive Advantage of Nations): "...geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, service providers, firms in related industries, and associated institutions (for example, universities, standards agencies, and trade associations) in particular fields that compete but also cooperate". "A creative cluster includes non-profit enterprises, cultural institutions, arts venues and individual artists alongside the science park and the media centre. Creative clusters are places to live as well as to work, places where cultural products are consumed as well as made. They are open round the clock, for work and play. They feed on diversity and change and so thrive in busy, multi-cultural urban settings that have their own local distinctiveness but are also connected to the world," says Simon Evans, a cultural entrepreneur and Director of Creative Clusters, an innovative UK company.

When looking at importing "High Tech/High Per Capita" income economy, towns with unique quality and character of life including natural beauty, strong sense of place, and authentic historic buildings are much more attractive. According to a World Bank Study, cities "aspiring to become the creative hubs...tend to be heavily biased towards infrastructure provision. Although this is necessary, the heavy emphasis on hardware has can lead to under investment in developing the talents and skills needed for the emergence of creative industries in these cities. The burden carried by these rural communities is to support the growth of these cultural clusters through access to broad band, street signage, tax incentives, live/work spaces, lighting, bicycling trails, and off street parking access. Most Coos Towns have lost manufacturing plants that in the past carried the majority burden of property tax funding for schools and road repairs. Both Colebrook and Berlin have been able to attract high tech jobs into their communities.

Who: AANNH, WREN, MicroCredit-NH, SBA, NCES, WMCC, JobPro, Granite State College, Legislators, BEDCO, NCIC, CEDC and other Local Economic Development organizations

Timeline for Implementation: Expand broadband access to all in the county by the end of 2009. During 2009 and 2010 provide free workshops on using the internet to connect locally as well as internationally. Expand the number of technology trained professionals in the region to handle the burgeoning demand that having broad band will create through programs at both the local career and technical centers in High Schools, NCES, WREN, WMCC and Granite State College. Explore ways to improve the student exposure of creative problem solving and critical thinking skills in elementary and high schools, for instance by expanding the funding for Destination ImagiNation.

Major Measures of Success:

- 2% increase in families with adults 28-35
- Increase in average weekly wage
- 5% increase in retail sales
- Increase in Saturday Pedestrian Traffic in Creative Communities
- 12% increase in visits to events and attractions
- Increase occupancy rate of village center space
- 10% increase in occupancy rate
- Increase in building reinvestment, renovation and rehabilitation
- Increase in number of people in labor force
- Increase number of knowledge workers
- Increase in personal income
- Increase in Food and Hospitality sales

Resource: Currently the career and technical centers can apply for Federal Perkins Grants to provide Information Technology training. Each site needs over \$100,000 per year for three years to fund the new program equipment, materials and staffing requirements. NCES currently offers grant funded professional development training for public school teachers in information technology. WREN also provides partially grant funded programs throughout the county on technology deployment in small businesses. WMCC and Granite State College provides specialized training and college credit

Creative and Knowledge Economy

courses in information systems and technology. JobPro teaches employer requested technology training to the emerging work force.

Action Plan #4

Action Step Statement: Foster a community-wide focus on the hope and transformative vision and celebration of the strengths of Coos County people.

Justification of Recommendation: Joblessness depresses well-being more than any other single characteristic including important negative ones such as divorce and separation. "High unemployment rates also have non-negligible effects on people who are not personally affected by unemployment. Based on survey data from population samples from European Union member countries between 1975 and 1992, Di Tella, MacCulloch, and Oswald (2003) show that aggregate unemployment decreases average reported life satisfaction even if personal unemployment is kept constant. The cumulative costs of unemployment are substantial. According to their estimation, the average individual in the working population would have to be compensated with approximately \$200 to offset the loss in life satisfaction caused by a typical U.S.-size recession (that is, a recession that entails a 1.5 percentage point increase in the unemployment rate). Communities experiencing shocks of high unemployment also are influenced by high crime rates, depressed workers salaries, reduced leisure time for citizens, lower life satisfaction, citizens with inequality aversion and/or more empathy for the poor, loss of social networks, and necessary adjustments in consumption habits.

Surveys show that although surrounded by immense natural beauty, the people of Coos County are concerned about: Violent or property crime, Manufacturing or sales of illegal drugs, Lack of affordable housing, Too-rapid development, growth or sprawl, Schools not as good as they should be, Lack of job opportunities, Lack of recreational opportunities, Poverty or homelessness, Population declining as people move away, Not enough health and social services, High property tax burden, Loss of forestry jobs.

It is widely assumed, reported through anecdotal evidence and cultural memory, Coos County people attending worship or actively participating in religious organizations or local neighbors clubs find their resilience, courage, way forward, and reason for living abundantly. From the Humanitarian Club at the High School to the fraternal organizations, North Country folks "lift up their eyes unto the Hills, from whence cometh out help."

In light of the nation wide economic crisis, and the local judgments that "things will get worse before they get better" ... we need a focused, community-wide effort to remind people of our "present help in trouble" ---a community wide "potage" of reassurances in a variety of forms which are morale-building, vision sustaining, hope inspiring, action organizing towards community celebration and compassionate reaching out in aid to neighbor and stranger in our midst.

People who have low life satisfaction will convey those doubtful thoughts to people exploring our region as a possible site for their family. People who are fearing for their next meal, or heat for their homes, or gas to get to work, are not going to take risks or think creatively. By nature many Coos County people are risk adverse.

Who: Committee with representatives from "faith-based" and "values -oriented" organizations convened by the Episcopal and Catholic Churches of Coos County.

Timeline for Implementation: The committee will convene Fall 2008 through a day long visioning program facilitated by _____group experienced in transformative outreach. This committee will connect members to resources in the county, such as work force development, drug and alcohol abuse services, and family support programs. They will work toward integrating "new comers" into the community fabric.

Major Measures of Success:

- increase in report of life satisfaction
- increase in report of satisfaction with living in Coos County

Resource: Initial funding for the visioning program will be secured through support of primary faith based organizations in the county. Funding for events and additional outreach programs will be through grant programs.

Action Plan #5

Action Step Statement: Subsidize the continued development of the Job Opportunity Basics Program (JOBPro) to provide industry-specific occupational skills training to unemployed or underemployed individuals in Coos County, and to give new and established businesses in Coos somewhere to turn for the training of their entry-level employees.

Justification of Recommendation: Job loss is increasing as firms seek to lower their costs through automation and the use of cheaper labor outside the U.S. In rural America, workers in manufacturing were hardest hit--from 2001 to 2003, one in ten displaced workers were employed in manufacturing. In their innovative work for Britain, Clark and Oswald (1994, p. 655) summarize their results as follows: "Joblessness depresses well-being more than any other single characteristic including important negative ones such as divorce and separation. "High unemployment rates also have non-negligible effects on people who are not personally affected by unemployment. Based on survey data from population samples from European Union member countries between 1975 and 1992, Di Tella, MacCulloch, and Oswald (2003) show that aggregate unemployment decreases average reported life satisfaction even if personal unemployment is kept constant. The cumulative costs of unemployment are substantial. According to their estimation, the average individual in the working population would have to be compensated with approximately \$200 to offset the loss in life satisfaction caused by a typical U.S.-size recession (that is, a recession that entails a 1.5 percentage point increase in the unemployment rate) (Di Tella and MacCulloch 2005). Communities experiencing shocks of high unemployment also are influenced by high crime rates, depressed workers salaries, reduced leisure time for citizens, lower life satisfaction, citizens with inequality aversion and/or more empathy for the poor, loss of social networks, and necessary adjustments in consumption habits.

The pulp, paper, and wood products industries have lost over 1000 good-paying jobs since 2001 in northern New Hampshire. The economy in the North Country is shifting away from paper and wood products and toward industries such as tourism/hospitality, healthcare (particularly eldercare), green power, and light manufacturing. Most of the individuals affected by the mill closings, however, are ill-prepared to make the transition into these industries, and almost none of the businesses in these areas are prepared to provide the kind of job-skills training that could help. Additionally, studies suggest a gap exists in general training and education that leaves North Country non-college bound youth unprepared to join the entry-level workforce in many of the county's businesses.

Looking ahead, workers with only a high school education, regardless of the industry in which they work, are especially vulnerable. Job loss has devastating impacts on families and children. The lack of security that accompanies displacement creates severe stress on the previously employed individual. Loss of a long held job and limited prospects for immediate reemployment create economic insecurity for the family and can lead to a loss of self-esteem, declining health, increased marital discord, a reduction in the ability to parent, an increase in abuse of alcohol and other substances, and an increased likelihood of divorce (Jacobson, LaLonde, and Sullivan, 1993; Ruhm, 1991; Stevens, 1997). In families where an unexpected loss of a long held job occurs and reemployment is slow, children experience a decline in school performance, increased anxiety and emotional maladjustment (Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, and Klebanov, 1994; Duncan and Brooks-Gunn, 1997; Kalil and Zoil-Guest, 2005).

Three years ago the Family Resource Center at Gorham (FRC) received a grant from Jane's Trust to create a training and support program for unskilled workers. The FRC worked with area employers to develop and design JOBPro. The curriculum, designed from feedback from local employers, includes Basic Math, Computer Literacy, Communication Skills, Resume Writing & Interviewing, Financial Management, and OSHA Workplace Safety. JOBPro also offers industry-specific training in class modules developed for the Tourism/Hospitality, Light Manufacturing, or Healthcare industries. This portion of JOBPro can be easily modified to meet the entry-level hiring needs of virtually any employer.

Who: JOBPro partners with the White Mountains Community College, the NH Works offices in Berlin and Littleton, local social service providers including the NH Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and Care NH. Over two dozen businesses in Coos are current JOBPro partners, including Isaacson Structural Steel, PJ Noyes, Steel Elements, The Mount Washington Hotel & Resort, Androscoggin Valley Home Care, the Morrison Nursing Home, Emerson Outdoor Outfitters, and the Town & Country Motor Inn.

Major Measures of Success:

- # of participants
- placements in jobs in Coos County.
- graduates secure a new and better job upon completing the program,

Resource: JOBPro is currently being funded through a grant from Jane's Trust. This grant will expire in June of 2008. Additional funding has been provided by Citizen's Bank and the Tillotson Foundation, and grant proposals for supplemental funding are being considered by PSNH and the Workforce Opportunity Council,

Appendix: The Hooks

TRC Link	Actions
Tourism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Green and Sustainable Development (local foods, local products, local performances, local markets) 2. Use Creative Centers, places, products, people, and activities to attract tourists 3. Focus on not just historic but also cultural in brand development 4. Provide cultural tours
Wood Products	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Furniture Craftsmen use local woods, use county brand 2. Kiosks and information centers feature wood brand 3. Encourage enterprises that use wood to come to county
Alternative Energy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Green Sustainable Development 2. Tie Village Center to Creative Cluster (may not be one and the same) 3. Promote / Educate community through arts: theater, painting, music
Health are	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Main reason give for not being an entrepreneur is lack / cost of health care 2. Improve health and wellness through the arts 3. Primary challenge to existing small business growth is cost of health care

Appendix: [Action plans discussed but not yet developed](#)

- ★ **Creative Economy should be a factor in the Roger Brook Tourism Branding efforts. Base Tourism Development and Branding project on both the Cultural Heritage and Natural Beauty of the county**
- ★ Implement a strategic communications plan to raise awareness and appreciation of the regions arts, culture, ad heritage resources.
- ★ **Expand Local TV**
- ★ **Build bridges between the outside market and within the local market**
- ★ **Better linkage to website, print material, events**
- ★ **Access To Markets for entrepreneurs** - WREN, Microcredit-NH, SBA Program expansion
- ★ **Innovative Local Development Funding** - Toll booths on an upgraded Rt.#16, Rt.#93, Rt#2, Fish and Game licensing fee for Coos County. Downtown Development Bond Fund. Heritage Renovation Bond Fund.
- ★ **Local Cultural Attractions must market first to the inside** tourist so that it is organic and natural.
- ★ **Religious Organizations will embrace their role** in the fostering hope and trust. They will connect members to resources in the community, such as work force development, drug and alcohol abuse services, and family support programs. They will work toward integrating "new comers" into the community fabric.
- ★ **Provide Dormitories for WMCC**
- ★ **Look at more Family Camps and summer activities for the 35-44 adults with families**
- ★ **Provide more Senior Hostel or Adult Education opportunities.**
- ★ **Support My Town, My Job, My Future youth outreach campaign by Department of Employment Security**
- ★ **Expand access Running Start Program, providing relatively inexpensive dual credit for both high school and college course work.**

Appendix: NCIC Asset Inventory

1. What are the fastest growing recreational activities in the US?
(See attached NSRE 2000 Survey)

2. What are the fastest growing recreational activities in New England?
Walking, swimming is the most popular. Growing interest in biking, running.
<http://www.epa.gov/region1/sce97/rereat.pdf>

3. What are the fastest growing recreational activities for Men?

The top ten for men are golf, basketball, walking, jogging, biking, lifting weights, football, hiking, fishing and hunting.
www.leisuretrends.com

4. What are the fastest growing recreational activities for Women?

The top ten recreational activities for women are walking, aerobics, exercise, biking, jogging, basketball, lifting weights, golf, swimming and tennis, www.leisuretrends.com

5. What are the fastest growing businesses in the US?
Technology companies were the top 8 out of a list of the top 10 fastest growing companies according to Business Week 2.0 in 2006

6. What are the fastest growing businesses in Coos County?
Health Care, Education, Logging and Hospitality

7. What percent of business are women owned in the US?
US Census 2002 (Survey of Business Owners): 33%

8. What percent of business are women owned in NH?
US Census 2002 (Survey of Business Owners): 29%

9. What percent of business are women owned in New England?
US Census 2002 (Survey of Business Owners): 31%

10. What percent of business is service vs. manufacturing in the US?
70% Service, 21% Manufacturing

11. What percent of business is service vs. manufacturing in Coos County?
See attached documents (Coos County Statistics and NH Employment super sector)

12. Inventory of abandoned properties-tax liens- from County, City and Towns:

13. What is the inventory of available hotel rooms?

14. What is the inventory of available business space?

15. What is the inventory of rental property?

16. What is the inventory of housing?

17. How many people graduate from NCHCT in Coos County each year?
NHCTC: 85 (Based on 2006 graduation records sorted by town)

Appendix: Coös County Demographics:

As of the [census](#)² of 2000, there were 33,111 people, 13,961 households, and 9,158 families residing in the county. The [population density](#) was 7/km² (18/mi²). There were 19,623 housing units at an average density of 4/km² (11/mi²). The racial makeup of the county was 98.05% [White](#), 0.12% [Black](#) or [African American](#), 0.28% [Native American](#), 0.37% [Asian](#), 0.02% [Pacific Islander](#), 0.16% from [other races](#), and 1.00% from two or more races. 0.61% of the population were [Hispanic](#) or [Latino](#) of any race. 16.17% of the population speak [French](#) at home.[1]

There were 13,961 households out of which 28.10% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 52.30% were [married couples](#) living together, 8.80% had a female householder with no husband present, and 34.40% were non-families. 28.80% of all households were made up of individuals and 14.10% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.33 and the average family size was 2.82.

In the county the population was spread out with 22.80% under the age of 18, 6.30% from 18 to 24, 26.70% from 25 to 44, 25.70% from 45 to 64, and 18.50% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 42 years. For every 100 females there were 95.60 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 92.60 males.

The median income for a household in the county was \$33,593, and the median income for a family was \$40,654. Males had a median income of \$32,152 versus \$21,088 for females. The [per capita income](#) for the county was \$17,218. About 6.80% of families and 10.00% of the population were below the [poverty line](#), including 10.70% of those under age 18 and 12.50% of those age 65 or over.

Appendix: History

Coos County, named for the Indian word for pines, cohos, encompasses the entire northern section of the state, covering 1,804 square miles, 20% of the land area of the state of New Hampshire. The Abnaki word, also spelled cowass, cohoss, and coo-ash, was used to identify inhabitants of the region. Those living in the area were customarily know as "Coo-ashe-akes", or "dwellers in the pine tree place."

The first reference to the area is found in the 1704 records of New Hampshire, which names the area "Cohoss - a large and valuable tract of land along the Connecticut River." Over 90% of the land is forested, 24% of which is either State or National Forest. The area is well known as an outstanding area for recreational ski areas, campsites, picnic grounds, snowmobiling, fishing, and hunting. More than half of the moose population (2,600 out of 5,000) and the bear population (13,500 out of 25,000) are in Coos County. The twenty towns and one city are chiefly located along the Connecticut and Androscoggin Rivers Valleys.

The first white settlers of the area arrived in 1763. Once a pathless wilderness claimed only by wild animals and the Indians of the Abnaki tribes, the population had swelled to 3,000 when the county was established in 1803. Growth in the North Country during the 19th century was quite rapid, at least 3 times that of the state as a whole. Although the population reached 39,000 by 1930, it has since diminished to less than 35,000.

Coos County is the northern-most of the ten New Hampshire counties, isolated from the rest of the state by a mountainous terrain. The average number of days without killing frost averages from 100 to 120 days in the northern tip, limiting agricultural development. Seventy-five percent of the county is characterized by steep to very steep slopes. Mt. Washington is one of the major attractions of the county, as the highest peak in the northeast at 6,288 feet above sea level with the most severe weather conditions ever recorded.

Coos County is unique in many ways. It is bordered by Canada to the north, Vermont to the west, Maine to the east, and Grafton and Carroll counties to the south. In addition to being the largest of the state's ten counties and the one with the smallest population, it also has 23 unincorporated places, geographic entities with no formal government. The County, serving as the local governing board, prepares individual budgets for the 17 unincorporated places which are outside of the White Mountain National Forest. Since 1988, as the result of state legislation, it has become responsible for the transportation and education of the students, and entering into contracts with abutting towns for police, fire, solid waste, and other municipal services. A voluntary planning board developed and administers the zoning, site plan review, and subdivision regulations.

Coos County's economy is tied to two principal activities, manufacturing and tourism. Lumber and wood products and paper are traditionally strong industries in the North Country. Three of the four pulp and paper mills in New Hampshire are located in the county. A large number of residents are employed in construction, banking, trucking, retail trade, education, and health services. The county is home to hospitals in each of the three major population centers, Colebrook, Lancaster, and Berlin.

Coos County natives hold tremendous pride in being from the North Country. Those residents who are "from away" take special delight in being mistaken for real natives. It's a wonderful place to call home.