

BALLARD STRATEGIC PLAN

An Economic Development Action Plan Prepared for The
Ballard County Chamber of Commerce and Fiscal Court

20/20 Xtreme

Acknowledgements

The Ballard County Strategic Plan was made possible by many civic leaders, business owners, and residents who have given generously of their time, passion and expertise to collaborate on this vision. This publication draws on the existing and contemporary research that has been collected and analyzed in the process of developing a conceptual framework of information for the Ballard County Chamber of Commerce.

Analysis

This community analysis was created from various resources including compiled community survey data, Emsi data, and community meetings. With these resources, 20/20 Xtreme was able to complete an analysis of the Ballard County's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Suggestions that were given by the Ballard County citizens that attended the community meetings can be found in the Appendix.

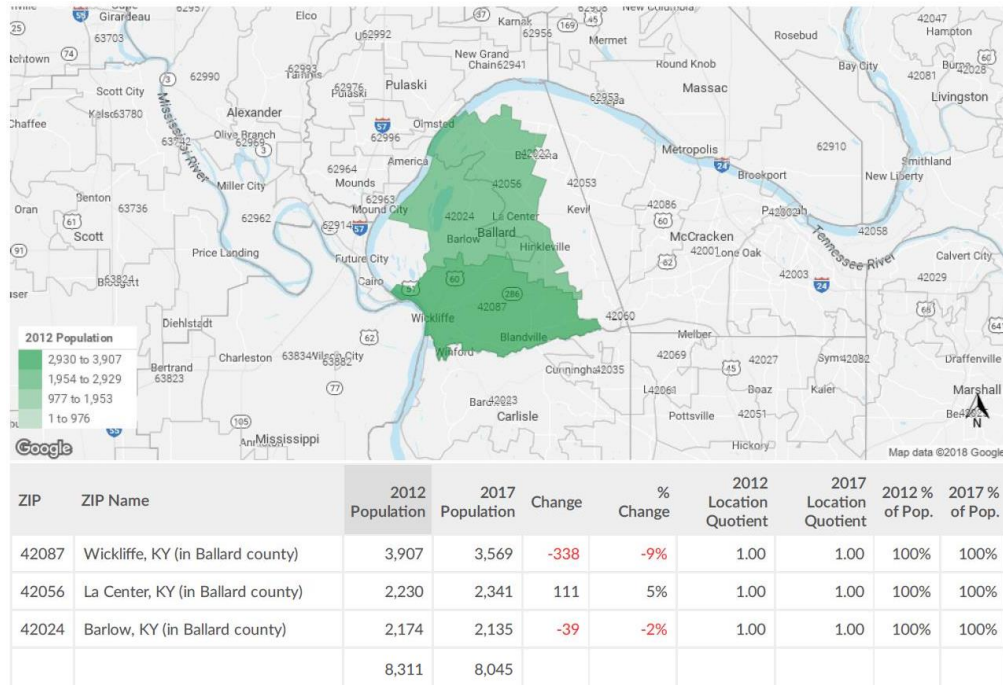
About Analysis

The purpose of this section is to show the existing state of affairs to enable informed decisions to government leaders, business owners, and other community stakeholders. Throughout this analysis, the primary focus is Ballard County. However, Paducah Micropolitan Statistical Area is also used for additional purpose.

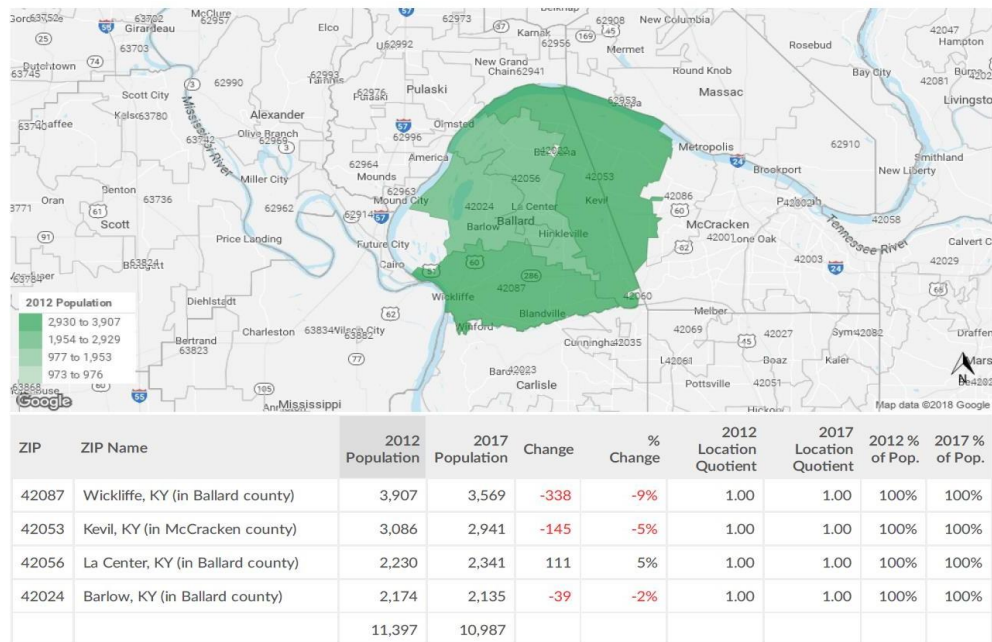
Population

The county's population is largely concentrated in the Wickliffe and Kevil areas. The two graphs show that a large concentration of Kevil's population is on the McCracken County side of the city. While Kevil's numbers do not contribute to the direct population of Ballard County in this dataset, it is important to note that this is an easily accessible population to target for Ballard County initiatives and campaigns.

On the first table on the following page shows that the population for the different areas are mostly decreasing, largely in Wickliffe. However, in Lacerter, there is a large increase in population between the years 2012 and 2017. On the second table on the following page shows similar figures, but with a slight change in Kevil, where there is a decrease in population.



Source: Emsi Demographics 2018.1



Source: Emsi Demographics 2018.1

Population Characteristics

Ballard County has an ageing population which is characteristic of rural areas. There is a high portion of people who will be leaving the workforce and retiring soon, and a small portion of millennials. This could lead to difficulties growing the population of the city as younger generations move out of the area.

There is extremely low property and violent crime in this area, which demonstrates that this is a safe, family friendly community for families that are looking to relocate, or businesses that are looking to set up in a wholesome clean town.



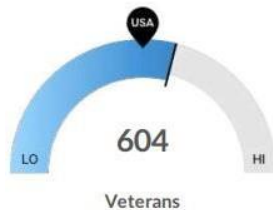
Ballard County, KY has 1,249 millennials (ages 20-34). The national average for an area this size is 1,671.



Retirement risk is high in Ballard County, KY. The national average for an area this size is 1,227 people 65 or older, while there are 1,604 here.



Racial diversity is low in Ballard County, KY. The national average for an area this size is 3,120 racially diverse people, while there are 578 here.



Ballard County, KY has 604 veterans. The national average for an area this size is 482.



Ballard County, KY has 0.49 violent crimes per 1,000 people. The national rate is 3.75 per 1,000 people.



Ballard County, KY has 6.94 property crimes per 1,000 people. The national rate is 24.22 per 1,000 people.

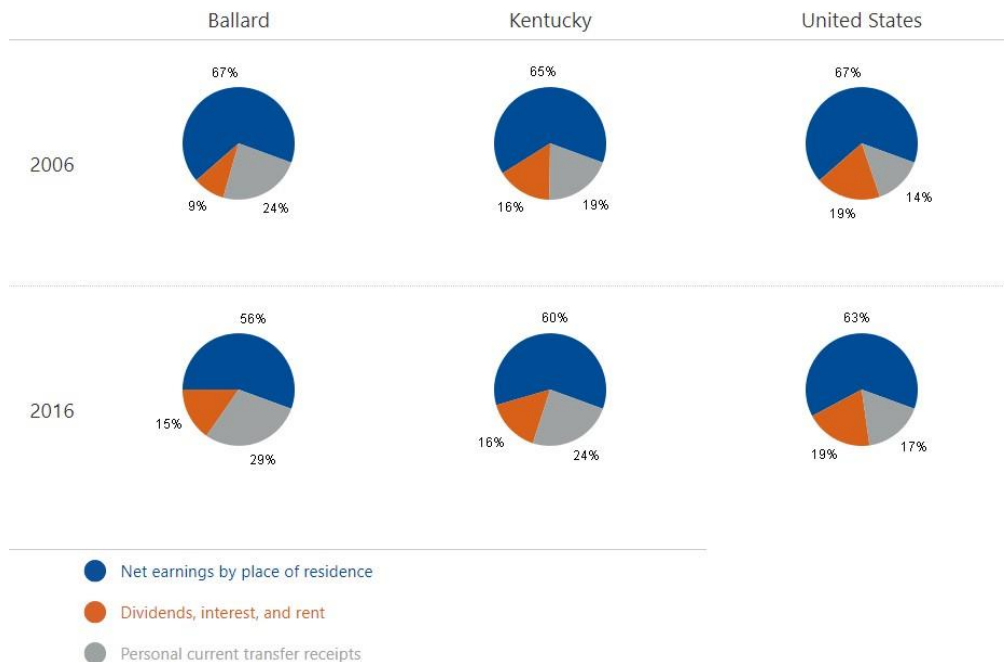
Source: Emsi Demographics 2018.1

Personal Income Breakdown

This section shows the makeup of an individual's earnings. The blue portion indicates how much of an individual is earning, through work and compensation. This is made up by income that they receive throughout the year. The orange area shows the share of total income that is earned through more or less indirect payments that is paid to the individual, such as dividends on stock or interest on loans. The grey area shows how much of a person's income is from transfer payments. These are generally paid to an individual by a government entity through either direct or indirect means. This can come in the form of Medicaid, food stamps, and unemployment insurance.

Ballard county has a large portion of transfer payments when compared to Kentucky and the U.S. Ballard County follows the national trend of an increase of transfer payments made from 2006 to 2016. This is problematic because it can be a strain on local entities to support an increasing number that rely on government assistance.

Percent Contribution to Personal Income



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

Economy Overview

8,045

Population (2017)

Population decreased by 266 over the last 5 years and is projected to decrease by 190 over the next 5 years.

1,891

Jobs (2017)

Jobs decreased by 777 over the last 5 years and are projected to decrease by 24 over the next 5 years.

\$43.9K

Median Household Income (2016)

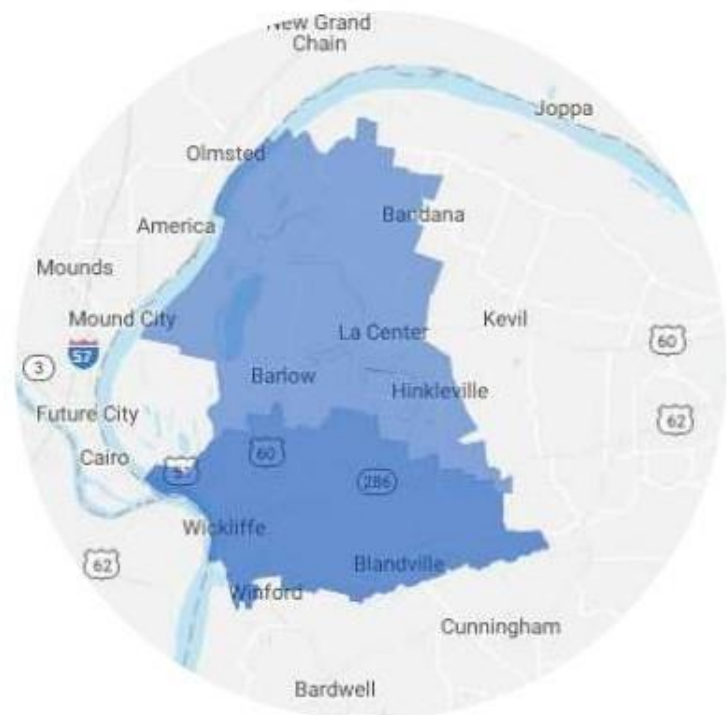
Median household income is **\$11.4K below** the national median household income of \$55.3K.

As of 2017 the region's population declined by 3.2% since 2012, falling by 266. Population is expected to decrease by 2.4% between 2017 and 2022, losing 190.

From 2012 to 2017, jobs declined by 29.1% in Ballard County, KY from 2,668 to 1,891. This change fell short of the national growth rate of 7.6% by 36.7%. As the number of jobs declined, the labor force participation rate decreased from 57.2% to 55.5% between 2012 and 2017.

Concerning educational attainment, 6.6% of Ballard County, KY residents possess a Bachelor's Degree (11.8% below the national average), and 8.6% hold an Associate's Degree (0.7% above the national average).

The top three industries in 2017 are Education and Hospitals (Local Government), Building Equipment Contractors, and Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals.



Source: Emsi Demographics 2018.1

Housing Breakdown







Housing is a significant factor in gauging how a healthy community is. Property and houses are a large purchase and most families take these decisions very seriously. Housing affordability is an appropriate measure for how well the area is doing. This ratio shows how affordable houses are by comparing the median house price to the median household income. With this ratio, the smaller the better, as that shows how quickly the house can be bought. As you can see in the table below, Ballard County is very affordable. Even though the median household income is significantly less than the U.S. the houses are still very affordable.

Location	Median House Prices	Median House Hold Income	Ratio
US	184,700	55,322	3.33
KY	126,100	44,811	2.81
Ballard Co	108,400	43,900	2.46

Source: Census Bureau

Regional Overview

This table compares the regions in the county side-by-side. In all areas except for Kevil there has been job loss. In all areas except Lacerter there has been population loss. The Cost of Living Index, also known as the COL Index, shows that this is a community where your money can go far. You will notice in some areas there are insufficient data due to the low population of these areas.

	Wickliffe, KY (in Ballard county)	Kevil, KY (in McCracken county)	La Center, KY (in Ballard county)	Barlow, KY (in Ballard county)	Lovelandville, KY (in Ballard county)	Bandana, KY (in Ballard county)
Regional Population (2012)						
Regional Overview						
Population (2012)	3,907	3,086	2,230	2,174	Insf. Data	Insf. Data
Population (2017)	3,569	2,941	2,341	2,135	Insf. Data	Insf. Data
Population Change %	-9%	-5%	+5%	-2%	Insf. Data	Insf. Data
Total Industry Jobs (2012)	1,335	962	825	457	11	40
Total Industry Jobs (2017)	690	1,269	723	444	<10	29
Total Industry Jobs Change %	-48%	+32%	-12%	-3%	Insf. Data	-28%
Current Average Earnings	\$63,485	\$74,507	\$54,786	\$44,684	Insf. Data	\$21,270
COL Index	91.5	95.6	91.5	91.5	91.5	91.5
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Insf. Data	Insf. Data	Insf. Data	Insf. Data	Insf. Data	Insf. Data
Bachelor's Degree or Higher %	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
GRP	\$77.76M	\$107.24M	\$50.35M	\$24.66M	\$137.75K	\$1.14M

Source: Emsi Demographics 2018.1

Labor Force Statistics

Ballard County is facing similar problems as the rest of Kentucky. There is an aging population, with fewer people participating in the workforce. The first graph shows that the population of workers is mostly those age 45 and older. As people move into retirement, there will be fewer people who are working who will fill this gap.

Additionally, nearly half of the people in Ballard County are not participating in the workforce. This may be because people are either retired, attending school, have a disability, or just do not wish to be employed.

Occupation Age Breakdown



Age	2017 Jobs	2017 Percent	
14-18	24	1.2%	I
19-24	116	5.9%	■
25-34	325	16.6%	■
35-44	429	22.0%	■
45-54	491	25.2%	■
55-64	455	23.3%	■
65+	112	5.8%	■

Source: Emsi Demographics 2018.1

2017 Labor Force Breakdown



	Population
● Total Working Age Population	6,651
● Not in Labor Force (15+)	2,958
● Labor Force	3,693
● Employed	3,458
● Unemployed	235
● Under 15	1,394

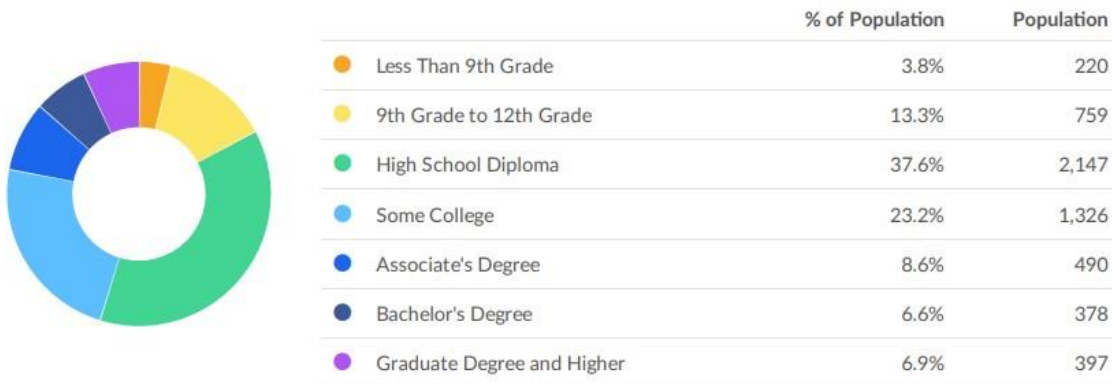
Source: Emsi Demographics 2018.1

Educational Attainment

Ballard County has a top-notch county school system. However, when it comes to higher education Ballard County is falling behind the national averages. This could be due to students leaving to get a degree, and not returning after college. Higher education degrees are important for developing a thriving community with new job creation and innovation.

Educational Attainment

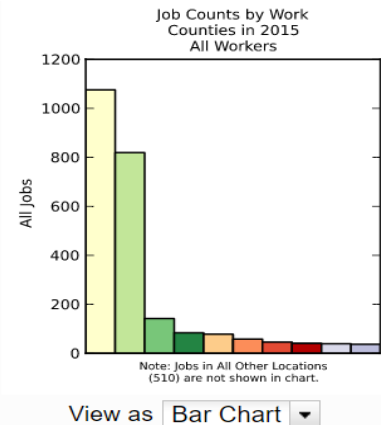
Concerning educational attainment, **6.6% of Ballard County, KY residents possess a Bachelor's Degree** (11.8% below the national average), and **8.6% hold an Associate's Degree** (0.7% above the national average).



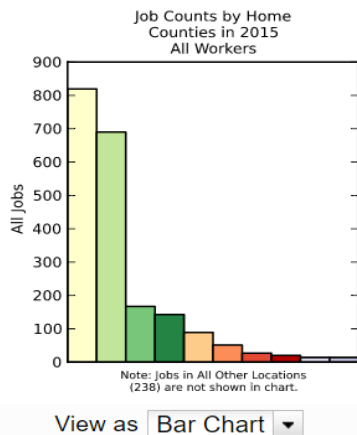
Source: Emsi Demographics 2018.1

Jobs by Work and by Home

The graph to the right shows where all the workers in Ballard County are employed. As you can see, nearly 60% are employed either in McCracken County or Ballard County. Most of them are employed in McCracken County, with the second highest going to Ballard County.



Many residents are looking elsewhere to find work in Ballard County, traveling as far as Christian County to go to work.



Jobs Counts by Counties Where Workers are Employed - All Jobs

	2015	
	Count	Share
All Counties	2,930	100.0%
McCracken County, KY	1,076	36.7%
Ballard County, KY	819	28.0%
Marshall County, KY	142	4.8%
Jefferson County, KY	84	2.9%
Graves County, KY	78	2.7%
Alexander County, IL	58	2.0%
Calloway County, KY	46	1.6%
Fayette County, KY	41	1.4%
Carlisle County, KY	39	1.3%
Christian County, KY	37	1.3%
All Other Locations	510	17.4%

Source: US Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies

Jobs Counts by Counties Where Workers Live - All Jobs

	2015	
	Count	Share
All Counties	2,272	100.0%
Ballard County, KY	819	36.0%
McCracken County, KY	690	30.4%
Graves County, KY	167	7.4%
Carlisle County, KY	143	6.3%
Marshall County, KY	89	3.9%
Massac County, IL	51	2.2%
Alexander County, IL	27	1.2%
Hickman County, KY	20	0.9%
Union County, IL	14	0.6%
Calloway County, KY	14	0.6%
All Other Locations	238	10.5%

Source: US Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies

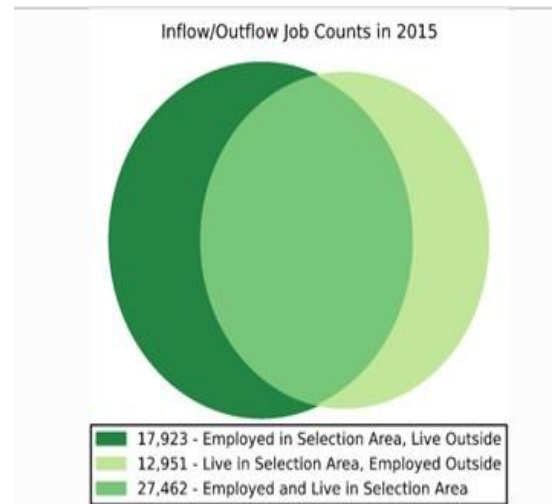
The graph to the left shows where the people who work in Ballard County live. Just like in the last graph, 819 people live and work in Ballard County. Most people who work in Ballard County live elsewhere. Over 30% of people who work in Ballard County live in McCracken County. This is a tremendous opportunity to incentivize people who live outside of the county but work in the county, to move here where they can be closer to their jobs.

Where workers live

In order to take a comprehensive look at the area, the data are expanded to include the Micropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

This area is significant because there is interdependence and connectedness of the economies in this area that feeds into the area, the center being the city of Paducah, Kentucky. The map following this section shows the area that is included in the MSA.

The graph to the right shows the breakdown of where people live and work in this area. As you can see, there are more people employed in this area than live here. The majority of people are living and employed in the MSA.



Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (All Jobs)		
	2015	
	Count	Share
Employed in the Selection Area	45,385	100.0%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	17,923	39.5%
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	27,462	60.5%
Living in the Selection Area	40,413	100.0%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	12,951	32.0%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	27,462	68.0%

Source: US Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies

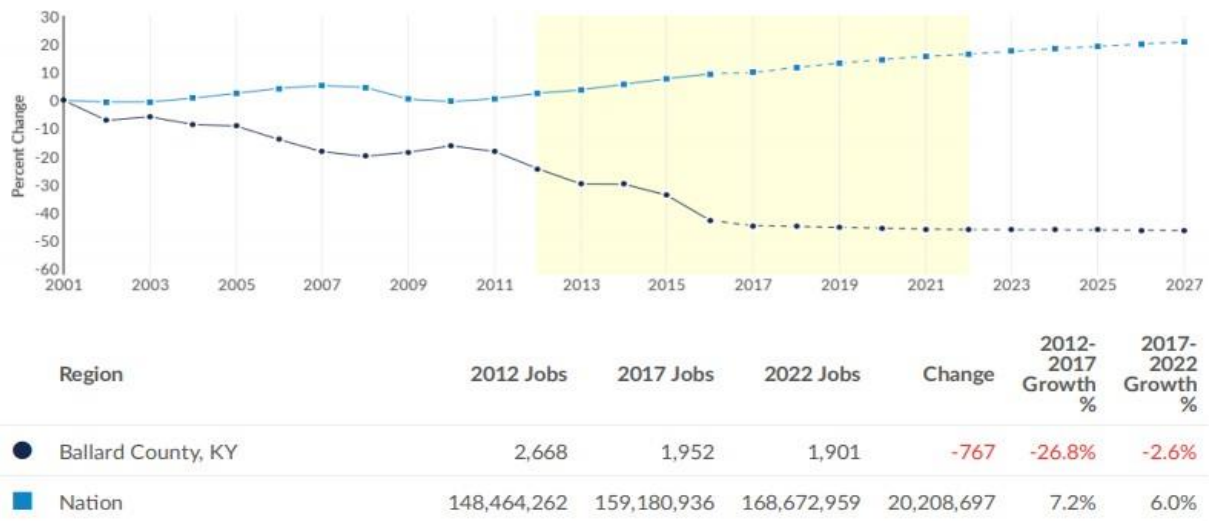


Source: US Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies

Industry and Job Trends

There has been a large drop in jobs in Ballard County in the past few years due to the paper mill closing.

That is reflected in these numbers. The expected growth rate for jobs in Ballard County is 2.6%. These measures are well below the national average.

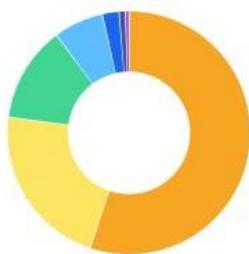


Source: Emsi Demographics 2018.1

Business Size

Ballard County is a place where small businesses can thrive. A significant portion of the employment in this area comes from small businesses. These businesses are very easily affected by economic downturns and economic booms alike. They are also sensitive to regional economic changes.

Business Size



	Percentage	Business Count
1 to 4 employees	55.1%	199
5 to 9 employees	21.9%	79
10 to 19 employees	12.7%	46
20 to 49 employees	6.6%	24
50 to 99 employees	2.2%	8
100 to 249 employees	0.8%	3
250 to 499 employees	0.6%	2

Source: Emsi Demographics 2018.1

As can be expected in small communities, the education and hospital industries make up the bulk of the jobs. The paper mill has such an impact on the area, that it is listed here as a large industry. As you can see, many of the workers made well above the median individual income for the area. This loss of additional income has been felt around the area.

Industry Characteristics

Largest Industries



Source: Emsi Demographics 2018.1

Top Growing Industries

There are few jobs in this area, so each additional job makes an enormous impact in Ballard County. The following graph shows the growing industries. These areas should be encouraged to grow so that the community can tap into its full potential.

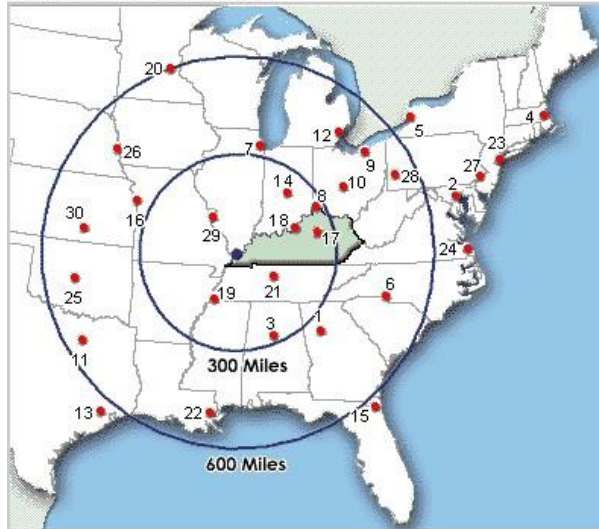


Source: Emsi Demographics 2018.1

Market Area

The following graph is the market area for Ballard County. As you can see, the community is within range of many prominent cities. Ballard County competes with many of these surrounding cities for jobs, investment, and tourists.

Selected Market Centers



Percent of U.S. Within 600 Miles of:
Ballard County

Population
43%

Personal Income
55%

Retail Sales
39%

Manufacturing Employment
52%

Highway Distance to Selected Market Centers

City	Miles	City	Miles	City	Miles
1. Atlanta, GA	395	11. Dallas, TX	622	21. Nashville, TN	152
2. Baltimore, MD	806	12. Detroit, MI	595	22. New Orleans, LA	581
3. Birmingham, AL	342	13. Houston, TX	743	23. New York, NY	974
4. Boston, MA	1,183	14. Indianapolis, IN	315	24. Norfolk, VA	847
5. Buffalo, NY	766	15. Jacksonville, FL	743	25. Oklahoma City, OK	564
6. Charlotte, NC	556	16. Kansas City, MO	403	26. Omaha, NE	594
7. Chicago, IL	381	17. Lexington, KY	272	27. Philadelphia, PA	901
8. Cincinnati, OH	333	18. Louisville, KY	230	28. Pittsburgh, PA	620
9. Cleveland, OH	580	19. Memphis, TN	192	29. St. Louis, MO	185
10. Columbus, OH	440	20. Minneapolis, MN	758	30. Wichita, KS	600

Population Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, 2008 population estimate

Personal Income Source: 2007 Regional Economic Accounts, Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), US Dept of Commerce

Retail Sales Source: 2002 Economic Census, US Census Bureau

Manufacturing Employment Source: 2007 County Business Patterns, US Census Bureau

Highway Distance Source: ESRI Arcview StreetMap, 2007

Taxes

State Property Tax Rates Per \$100 Valuation, 2016

Selected Class of Property	State Rate	Local Taxation Permitted
Real Estate	\$0.1220	Yes
Manufacturing Machinery	\$0.1500	No
Pollution Control Equipment	\$0.1500	No
Inventories:		
Raw Materials	\$0.0500	No
Goods in Process	\$0.0500	No
Finished Goods	\$0.0500	Yes
Goods-In-Transit	Exempt	Limited
Motor Vehicles	\$0.4500	Yes
Other Tangible Personal Property	\$0.4500	Yes

Source: Kentucky Department of Revenue.

Local Property Tax Rates Per \$100 Valuation, 2016

Taxing Jurisdiction	Property Taxes Per \$100 Valuation			Notes
	Real Estate	Tangibles	Motor Vehicles	
County				
Ballard	\$0.3593	\$0.3393	\$0.2800	
City				
Barlow	\$0.3420	\$0.3420	\$0.3420	
Kevil	\$0.3400	\$0.3400	\$0.3400	
La Center	\$0.4890	\$0.4890	\$0.4890	
Wickliffe	\$0.3740	\$0.3740	\$0.3740	
School District				
Ballard County Schools	\$0.5260	\$0.5260	\$0.4790	

Source: Kentucky Department of Revenue.

Local Occupational License Taxes, 2016

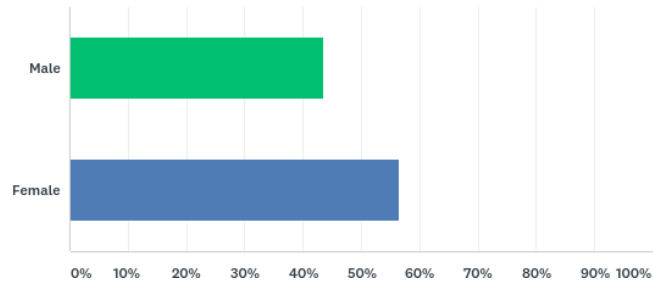
Cities, counties and school districts may levy an occupational license tax on the net profits of businesses and/or on the salaries and wages of employees earned in the jurisdiction. Rates can vary between the two types of occupational license taxes. Occupational license taxes may be levied on businesses as either a flat rate schedule or as a percentage of apportioned net profits or gross receipts. Where both the city and county levy an occupational license tax, a credit may be given, at the option of the local governments, for the amount paid to the city against the occupational license tax of the county. (Consult local jurisdictions for further details.)

Taxing Jurisdiction	Tax Rate on Salaries/Wages	Tax Rate on Net Profits/Receipts
County		
Ballard	1.00%	No tax
City		
Barlow	No tax	No tax
Kevil	No tax	No tax
La Center	No tax	No tax
Wickliffe	No tax	No tax
School District		
Ballard County Schools	No tax	No tax

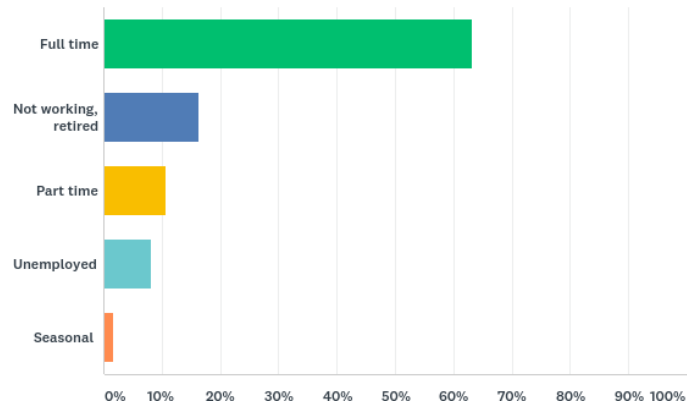
Source: Occupational Taxes Spreadsheet - Kentucky Secretary of State, Local Tax Listing - Kentucky Personnel Cabinet

Community Survey Results

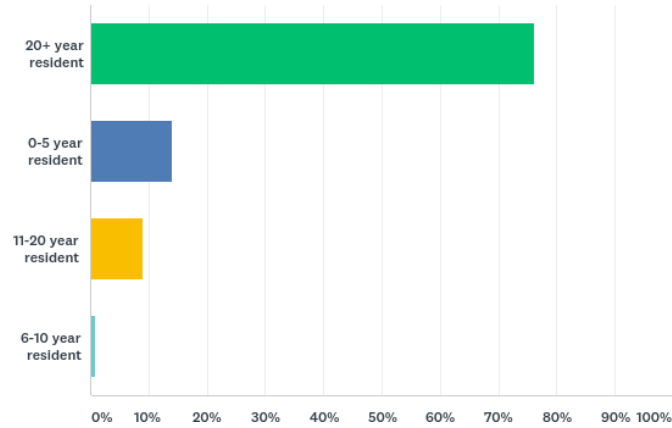
Q1 What is your gender?



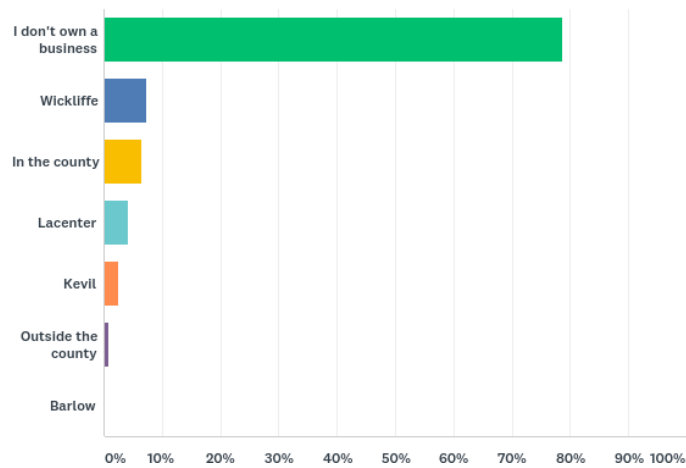
Q2 What is your employment status?



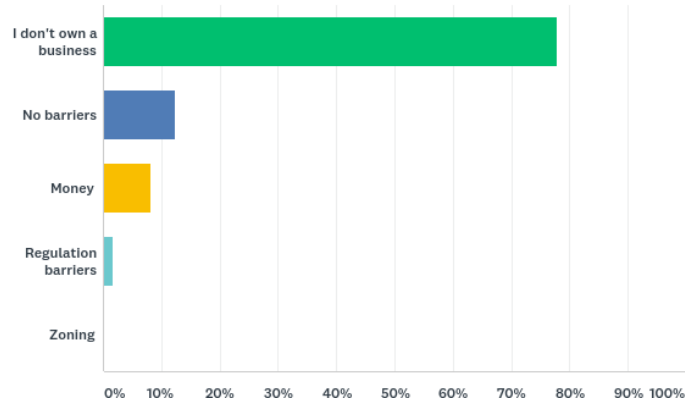
Q3 Which of the following best explains your history at Ballard County?



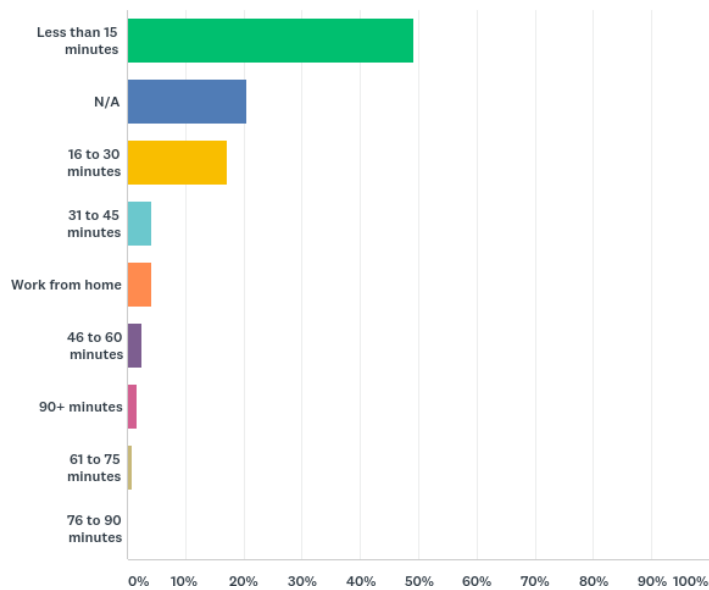
Q4 If you own a business, where is it located?



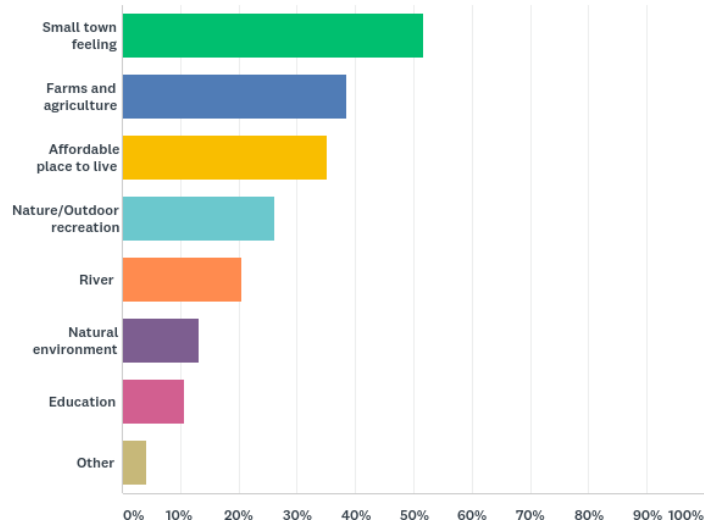
Q5 If you own a business, are there any barriers or obstacles to expanding your business?



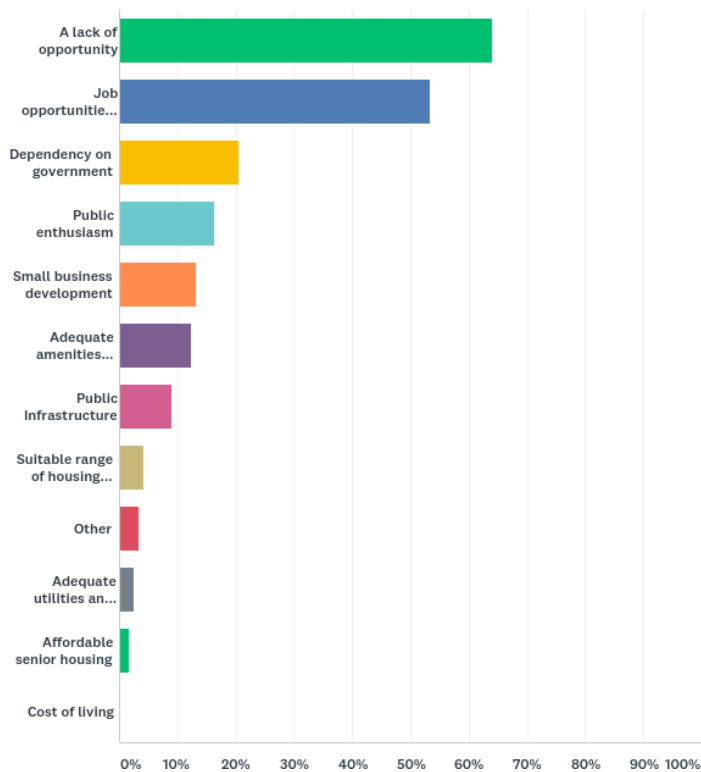
Q6 What is your commute time to work?



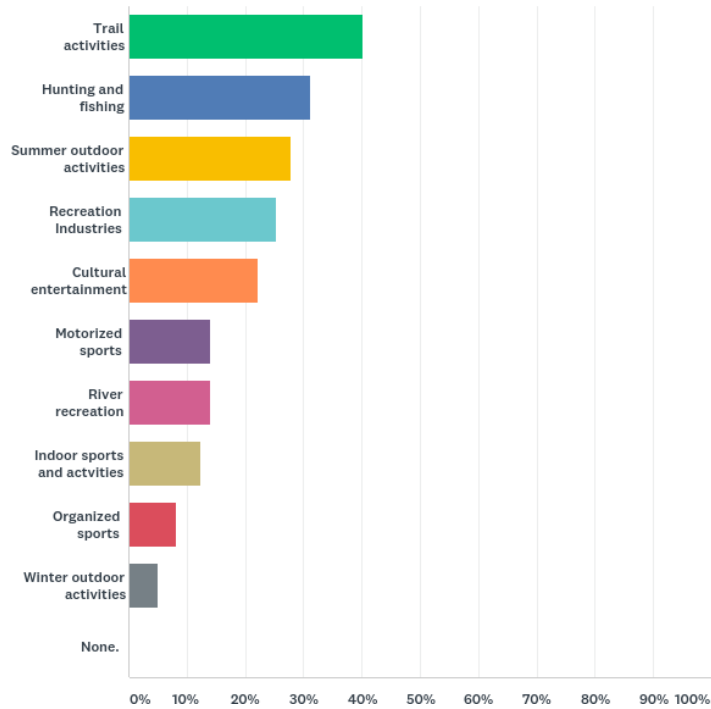
Q7 In your opinion, what is Ballard County's greatest strength? Please select two answers.



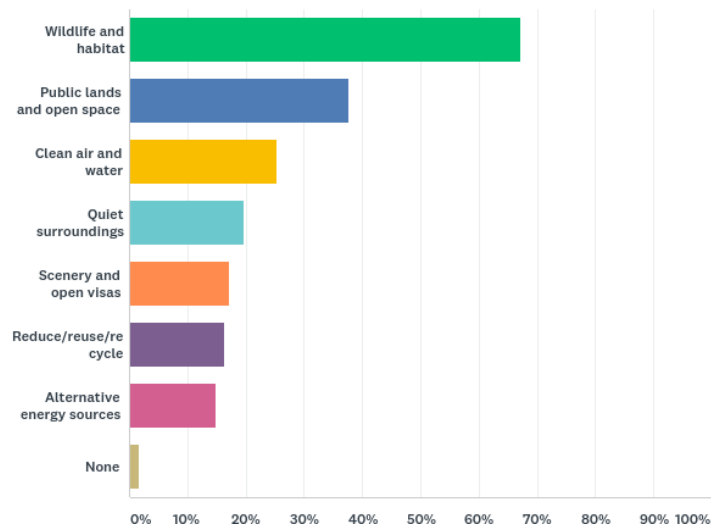
Q8 What are Ballard County's challenges? Please select two answers.



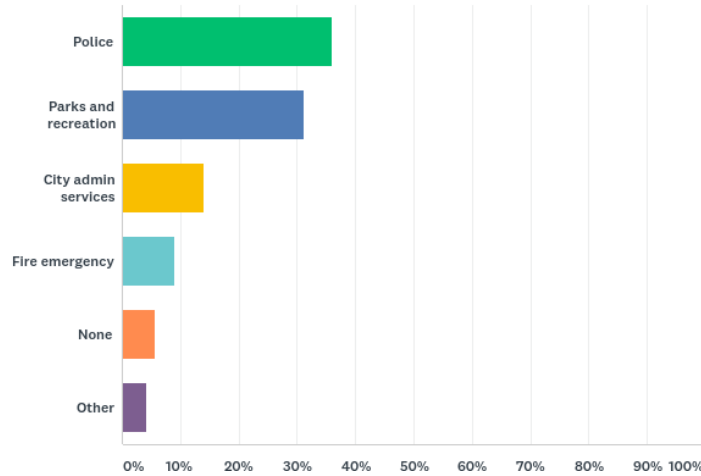
Q9 Which of the following recreation opportunities do you support enhancing? Please select two answers.



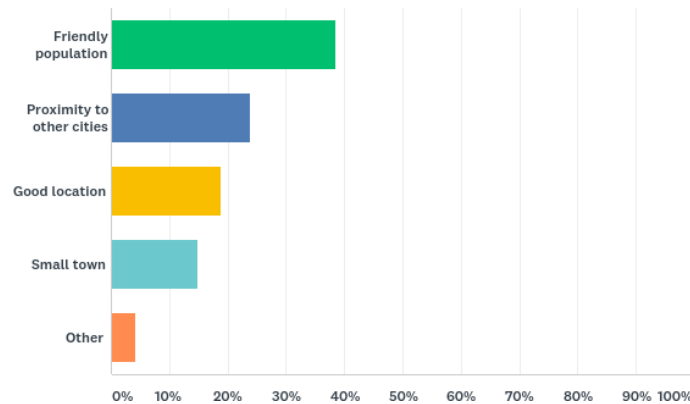
Q10 Which aspects of natural resources and sustainability should the community promote? Please select two answers.



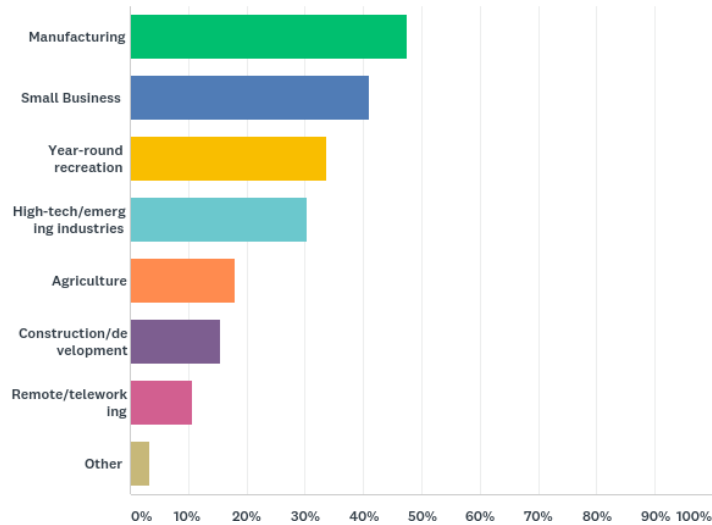
Q11 Which community services could be improved in Ballard County?



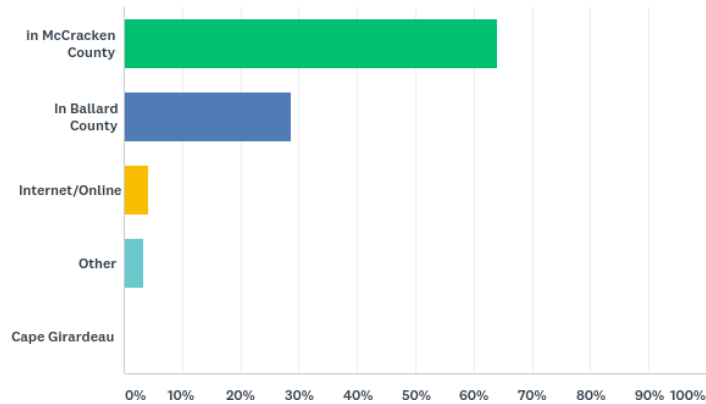
Q12 What makes Ballard County a good place to do business?



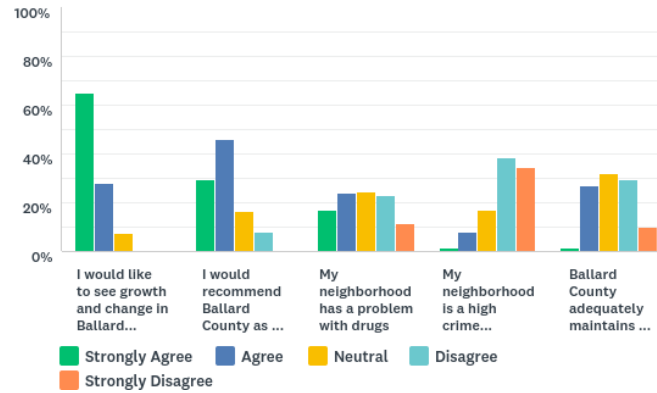
Q13 What should be the top economic development priorities for Ballard County? Please select two answers.



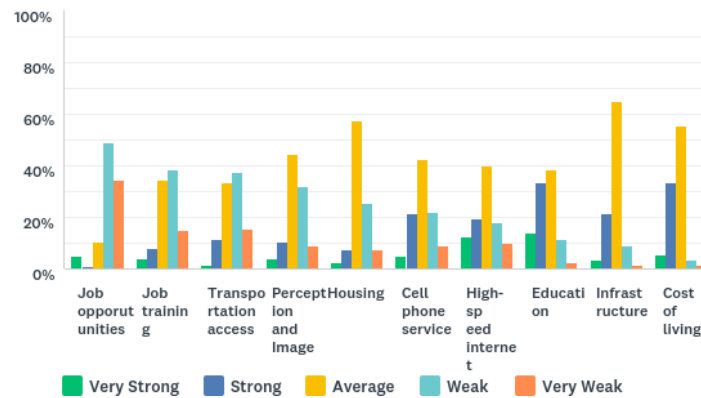
Q14 Where do you shop most or get most of your services?



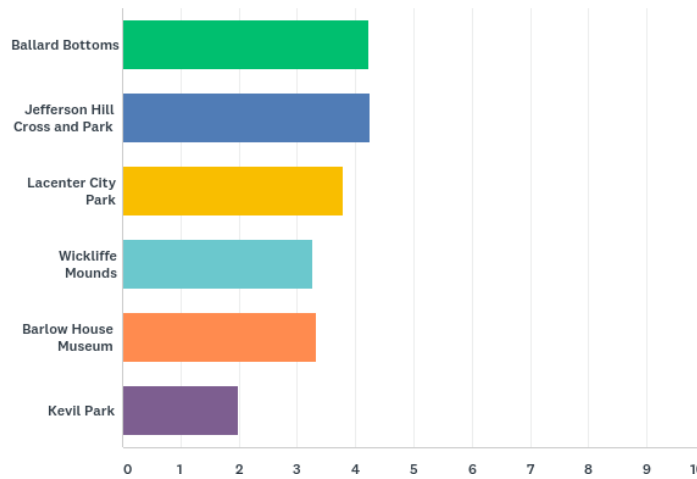
Q15 To what extent do you agree with these statements?



Q16 To what extent are the following general characteristics strengths or weaknesses.



Q17 Please rank the places you and your family visit most frequently from 1 to 6 (1 being the most, 6 being the least).



Q18 What word would you use to describe Ballard County



Priority Recommendations

The main goals for this report are to provide community insight through data and offer solutions through marketing techniques, create strategies to innovate, target, and develop the economy, and bring cohesion among all entities and communities within the county.

- Eco tourism
 - Ballard County has thriving wildlife and agricultural areas in the county. Ballard County should promote this with EcoTourism.
 - Action: Develop marketing tools and distribute them in Paducah to entice travelers from I-24.
- Agriculture Manufacturing
 - Agriculture is one of many resources in Ballard County. Focusing on recruiting agriculture food processing and food manufacturing companies.
 - Action: Create Agri-incubator, promote Native to Ballard at cost sticker program.
- IT Investment
 - IT and emerging technology are expanding sectors and Ballard County should focus on increasing these companies and jobs in the area.
 - Action: Create incentives to new businesses to locate in the community. These could include property tax breaks, micro loans, and discounted fees and permits.
- Logistics operation and distribution centers
 - Ballard County is in a prime geographic location for investment from logistical operations and distributional centers. There are multiple infrastructural resources in the area, such as the convergence of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, a Class 1 railway spans the county, and multiple highways and state roads.
 - Action
 - Improving infrastructure including creating a port system that supplies the quad state area.
 - Improve roads and extend 4-way highway throughout the county from Kevil to Wickliffe.
 - Identify likely matches within these key industries to market existing real estate to prospective businesses for investment.

Additional Findings

- A collaborative (board) should be created that includes all cities and key entities involved in tourism and economic development within Ballard County that meets on a monthly or quarterly basis.
- Communities should incorporate how to use some of the small assets, such as Kentucky's smallest jail, and develop initiatives around that. This could include:
 - Action:
 - Manage curb appeal of assets and creatively post signage to get cars passing by to stop or make small detours.
 - Encouraging visitors to stop, take pictures, and post to social media, possibly with a hashtag campaign.
- Develop a thriving senior living facility and/or campus.
- Developing wildlife management area and infrastructure
 - Action:
 - Develop Roads and pathways and accompanying wayfinding signage to these areas.
 - Develop up supporting businesses for recreation and hunting and fishing such as tackle and bait shops and canoe
 - Facilities within the areas such as bathrooms and camping areas.
 - Recreation areas including horse stables, trails for biking, horses and walkable trails.

City Specific Recommendations

Wickliffe:

- Developing tourism is important for this community. This city has many unique characteristic and is full of culture, history, and inspiration, and it should be proudly displayed. However, certain aspects of tourism draw is lacking.
 - Action:
 - Develop a more complete experience around tourism draw
 - The Ft. Jefferson Cross overlooks the convergence and is a structure that needs to draw sightseers from other religious tourist destinations. This strategy should include making flyers to go in all local rest stops and hotels. Sending out press releases to tour buses going to the Kentucky Ark replica. Contact the Ark and strategize to cross promote with this site and other religious tourism sites

- Add hill slides to this park to create a full family experience and other Native to Ballard experiences.
 - Create a regular event series at the river grain pad and Wickliffe City Park.
- Create a strategy to improve quality of life aspects for community members and developing Wickliffe into a more tourist friendly city
 - Action
 - Create more sidewalks, specifically linking the Wickliffe Mounds, Ft. Jefferson Cross, and the Wickliffe City Park. Include signage in the area so people can find their way easily.
 - Improve and promote parks
 - Beautification
- Wickliffe Mounds has rich history. In order to showcase that, create a community experience surrounding this multi-cultural, history-rich State Park.
 - Action:
 - Create more interactive activities outside of the park that tie into this area.
 - Incentivize businesses which provide a native American element.
 - Connecting a trail to Barlow Bottoms
 - Use state park specific grants to connect the Wickliffe Mounds to the Barlow Bottoms
 - Add horse stable and bike racks
- Develop river industry
 - Action:
 - Recruit businesses tailored to the river industry identified through economic development consultation.
 - Use JMI as a resource to promote barge industry in the area
 - Develop supportive industries that could capitalize on the barge industry such as timber, chemicals, gravel, and more.
- Develop a strategy for stopping semi traffic to capture spending.
 - Action:
 - This could include parking lots and restaurants.
 - Diesel Travel Fuel/Food Center
 - Burma Shave Sign campaign
- Beautification
 - Action
 - Put a statue or Explore incorporating façade grant to improve store fronts
 - Incorporate art throughout all city design
 - Outdated mobile home ordinance
 - A large piece of art before you go over bridge to get people to stop

Lacenter

- Lacenter has many shops and storefronts, but the appeal is lacking in some areas.
 - Action:
 - Start beautification projects and
 - Explore incorporating façade grant to improve store fronts
- Lacenter possesses a geographical advantage by having a shorter approximate drive to a large portion of the county's population which creates a natural hub for retail within Ballard County.
 - Action
 - Develop retail ventures
 - Showcase available properties inside and outside the region.
- Ballard Telephone Company is located in Lacenter making for a logical community to thrive with fiber optics.
 - Action: Focus specifically on high-tech and service industry businesses
- Develop Agri-incubator in this area. There are many prospective locations. This is closest to the Eagles Rest Plantation and will be easily accessible to nearby agricultural resources, such as the farmers market.
 - Action:
 - Use grants to launch this up.
 - This incubator could include a certified kitchen, label makers, communal office spaces
- Create lodging areas. Lacenter is the heart of the county, has more food and restaurants than anywhere in the county easily accessible to other parts of the area.
 - Action:
 - Contact economy hotel chains.
 - Develop and encourage Air BNBs

Kevil:

- Kevil has the largest functioning industrial park in Ballard County. A plan needs to be created to take advantage of industrial park.
 - Action:
 - Focus on key sectors laid out in this plan or strategy to target businesses for investment.
 - Reassess assets and create plan for future growth
- Showcase short distance to Paducah 4-lane highway/I-24 in order to pull residents from McCracken county.
 - Action:
 - Start a marketing campaign to entice consumers and new businesses into this area.
 - Start a marketing campaign in Paducah to show that Ballard County has attractive qualities and cheaper homes.
 - Use provided infographics

- Improve unique quality of life experiences
 - Action:
 - Develop niche themed park in Kevil specific to train, industrial, or farming
 - Incorporate the arts
- Develop more affordable family housing

Barlow:

- There are existing useful structures in Barlow. Utilize existing structures to promote tourism across the area.
 - Action:
 - Connect trail partially by using old rail lines connecting Barlow to Wickliffe and to Carlisle County ending in Berkley, approximately 30 miles.
 - Promote investment in the smallest jail in Kentucky as a destination.
 - Improve curb appeal of area, and target a downtown creative feel.
- Barlow is located in a great area for families to enjoy. Promote recreation in the area.
 - Action:
 - Develop more supporting businesses to support recreation such as canoeing fish and bait shops, bike rental location.
 - Attract a destination restaurant
- Improve unique quality of life experiences
 - Action: Action:
 - Develop Senior Center Area
 - More community supporting businesses in community; convenience stores, pharmacy.
 - Developing a night scene should be applied to throughout the count but specifically in Barlow because it is a great place to capitalize on such an investment.

County Wide

- Beautification. Improve curb appeal. Clean up old and unused lots.
- Quality of life. Promote more of the arts and culture from food to music to photography.
- Develop tiny home subdivision and incentivize. Develop a trade in program for old trailers and moving in tiny homes.
- Trailer ordinance
- Develop lodging
 - Air BNB, Economy Hotel Inn, Red roof Inn, Comfort Inn.
 - Look for destination lodge centered around eco-tourism.
- Initiative for County
 - Burma shave sign campaign leading in between Wickliffe and Cairo

- More support for prospective small businesses. Provide packet for prospective business owners.
- Easier access to all resources and information, small business, residents, tourists.
- Attract a county based realtor broker.
- Public hunting club.
- Showcase all recreation and leisure activities including golf course and hunting.
- Focus on regional based artists to encourage photography/art competition of areas in the county to replicate and represent Ballard County.
- Create film focused initiative.
- Create young professionals program.
- Focus on multi-cultural tourism providing good opportunities to the state to promote the county.

Community Meeting Notes

September 7, 2017

Ballard County Notes

Strengths/ Assets

- School System
- Work Ready Community
- Natural Resources
- Bottoms
- Outdoor recreation
- River
- Central Location to U.S. population
- Family friendly
- Good location for retirees
- Low cost of living and property
- Traffic flow
- Harvest Festival
- Foundation for regional involvement

Challenges/ Weaknesses

- Abandoned Properties
- Declining property values
- Lost tax revenue
- Lost jobs
- Lost high paying jobs
- Lodging
- Public Relations
- Apathy
- People's negativity due to economic losses

Big Impact Initiatives

- Community Center
- Indoor Pool
- Buyer for Mill
- Telecommuter jobs
- Tech industry
- Outlet Mall

September 22, 2017

Ballard County Notes

Strengths / Assets

- School Systems
- Family friendly community
- Great place to retire
- Waterfowl
- Wildlife management area
- River
- Location
- Entrepreneurs
- Regionalism

Challenges/ Weaknesses

- Cell service
- Public Transportation
- Commercial rental property
- diverse employment opportunities
- proximity to Paducah
- Lodging

Big Impact Initiatives

- Positive attitude
- 4 lane extensions
- convenience store near senior center
- Give truckers a reason to stop
- Community to Community Support

September 26, 2017
Ballard County

Strengths / Assets

- Talent in community
- Good School System
- Desire/willingness to live here
- Strong sense of family
- Great place to raise kids
- Affordable Cost of living
- Relaxed regulation

Challenges/ Weaknesses

- Apathy
- Unemployment
- Diverse Jobs
- Daycare opportunities
- Adult education
- Communication
- School Sports Funding
- Entertainment
- Transportation (and for - special needs)

Big Impact Initiatives

- Community Center/ Sports Plex
- River port
- Taking negative assets and turning them into initiatives

September 28, 2017

Ballard County Notes

Strengths /Assets

- Wildlife area
- Close proximity to Paducah
- Centrally located in US
- Rivers, interstates
- Low cost of living
- Strong sense of community
- School system
- Work ready community
- Great river road
- Lots of Potential for growth
- People
- Desire for growth
- Country Club
- Each community has distinct quality
- Chamber and EDC already here
- Walking trail and sand volleyball @ Grace UMC
- Community to community support
- Community pride/business clean and welcoming

Challenges/ Weaknesses

- Loss of Jobs
- Apathy
- negativity
- Run down properties
- Inability to support business
- Uncertainty of 4 lane extensions
- Lack of knowledge of own community's assets
- No understanding of business marketing

Big Impact Initiatives

- Manufacturing facility
- Marketing infrastructure
- Signage to promote areas
- Maintain roads and bottoms
- Lodging and campsite
- Talent Incubator

SWOT Analysis

<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources available for economic development and tourism • Low cost of living • Outdoor recreation destinations • Limited zoning and regulations • Plenty of available sites for investment and redevelopment. • River confluence • High number of visitors to regional destinations • Pride in county school district • Murray State Ag campus • Monuments • Railway 	<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of employment opportunities • Low labor force participation rates • Limited cell phone coverage • Walkability, biking, public transportation • Cairo bridge • Division within areas of the county • Continued reliance on a few major employers • Limited places for tourists to spend money while visiting the area • Underdeveloped downtown areas • Limited lodging
<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murray State Ag campus • Development of new destinations (restaurants, trails, lodging) • Workforce training • Emerging technology • Innovative farming techniques • Re-opening of mill site • Continued investment in marketing • Downtown beautification • Logistics (e.g. highway, rail, river) • 	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technological advancements • Government funding cuts across all levels • Population decrease and stagnation • Global economic decline or recession • Increasing amount of employers leaving the area