



Diamond in the Rough

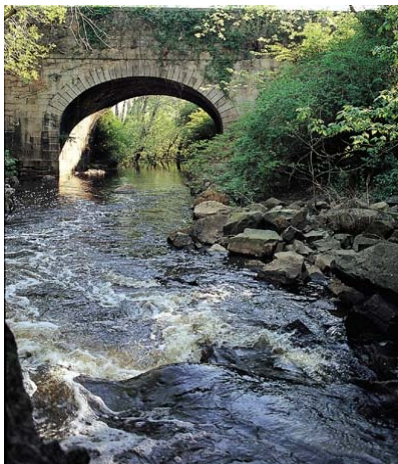
Historic Weldon is located in northeastern North Carolina along the mighty Roanoke River in Halifax County. With a population of only 1375, our small town has an abundance of history with hidden “gems” throughout our small town. Weldon is easily accessible to Interstate 95, US Highways 158 and 301, which is ideal for bringing tourists into town. The newly founded “Community of Neighbors Working on Weldon” team is seeking to attract these travelers into downtown and the beautiful Riverfront while encouraging revitalization to this once thriving community.

Bringing our History into our Future

Weldon is uniquely blessed with a rich history. Originally called Weldon's Orchard because of the orchard planted here by Daniel Weldon, who founded the town in 1745. Weldon was once a bustling town due to the early Railroad systems, Roanoke River and Roanoke Canal for transporting trade. These facets of our community are being restored as treasures of the past as we plan for the future.



The **Union Station of Weldon, North Carolina**, holds a unique position in Southeastern railroading history. Aside from being one of the first railroad “hubs” in the US, it was one of just a few facilities jointly owned and operated by both the Atlantic Coast Line and Seaboard Air Line Railroads. Although today the railroad does not play the significant role as it did in the past, on any given day you will find locals and tourists stopping for a moment to watch the train running through town. If you catch it just right, you can even see trains on the top and bottom rails simultaneously.



Many do not know about the magnificent **Chockoyotte Aqueduct** located on the Roanoke Canal Trail, which served as a bridge to carry the canal waters over the Chockoyotte Creek. According to William Troute of the American Canal Society, “Chockoyotte Aqueduct alone could make North Carolina a significant old canal state.” This treasure has been hidden away for decades. Recently, an observation deck has been added to the site along with picnic facilities to better view this fine example of 19th Century Canal architecture.



The **Roanoke River** is the lifeblood of this community, providing food, habitat, transportation, power generation and outdoor recreation via canoeing, kayaking and fishing. The Roanoke River is the only natural spawning ground for the North Carolina species of striped bass known locally as Rockfish, making Weldon the **Rockfish Capital of the World**. The Town of Weldon is currently promoting this “claim to fame” by hosting an annual Rockfish Fry in the spring and purchasing new streetlight banners depicting the Rockfish.



A Place to Live, Work and Play

Weldon’s National Registered Historic District was established in 1996. The residential neighborhoods are primarily frame constructions in the Italianate, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Neo-Classical Revival and Craftsman styles. There are a number of historic homes waiting for a new lease on life. Weldon’s Historic District also includes three churches. The oldest is the Gothic Revival styled **Grace Episcopal Church** ca. 1872-1899.



While Weldon is a historic town, it has a diverse assortment of homes and neighborhoods that would meet any family’s needs and budget. There is an abundance of rental homes with absentee landlords causing problems in regards to property upkeep. It is the consensus of the committee that the desire for clean, safe neighborhoods is a priority. They want to see more home ownership, thus encouraging property owners to abide by Town Ordinances and having a “vested interest” in their community.



Halifax Community College is a great asset not only to the Town of Weldon, but our entire area. This facility provides local citizens the opportunity to expand their horizons through technical training programs, nursing and a top-rated dental hygienist school. This facility offers a place for many community meetings and functions. A dual enrollment program coordinates with area high schools. While the Community College is seen as an asset, many citizens are concerned about the community's perception of Weldon's K-12 public school system. Much work is being done to make our education system highly competitive. We believe with concentrated effort and commitment, our schools can become a major draw for potential homebuyers again.



The Roanoke River and Canal Trail play a huge part in Weldon's recreational opportunities. As mentioned before, Weldon is known as the "Rockfish Capital of the World" bringing thousands of fishermen to the town every Spring to try their hand at catching Striped Bass, locally known as Rockfish. On a warm sunny day, you can sit on the look out deck at the boat ramp and watch the kayakers maneuvering the rapids. Alongside the Roanoke River at the NC Wildlife Resource Commission Boat Landing lies **River Falls Park**. The park is the eastern terminus for the 7-1/2 mile Canal Trail that spans from Weldon to Roanoke Rapids Lake, linking the two communities together. The Canal Trail has become a popular natural trail for hiking, picnicking and viewing a variety of wildlife habitat. In addition to the local soccer field, the park received a facelift in 2003 adding a new playground, picnic shelters, walking trail and restrooms. The large picnic shelter may be reserved for birthday parties and small family gatherings. The Town of Weldon Recreation Advisory Board hosts an annual **Weldon Independence Day Celebration** the first Saturday in July showcasing music, food, amusements and of course fireworks. In September, the annual Ducky Derby sponsored by the Roanoke Valley Chamber of Commerce is also held in River Falls Park. Both events draw thousands of people to the park.



The Centre at Halifax Community College strives to serve the college community and the Roanoke Valley as a venue for educational and cultural programming; economic development and community activities. The Centre serves as a venue for entertainment, concerts & performances; a meeting place for the college, the surrounding school systems, local businesses, churches, social groups, civic, state and government officials as well as a venue for private functions to include dances, banquets, parties, weddings, receptions and the like.



Chockoyotte Country Club operates as a private non-profit corporation and is a full service Country Club featuring an 18-hole Donald Ross and Ellis Maples Golf Course, Junior Olympic Swimming Pool and cabana. The Club offers banquet and meeting facilities for breakfast, lunch, dinner and special events. In addition, the Club sponsors numerous Member social functions throughout the year.



Rebuilding the Community of Neighbors



Not too long ago Weldon was “the place” to shop, but with large new development in neighboring towns, Weldon’s downtown shopping district is struggling. There are not a lot of businesses to attract customers and in turn we do not have a lot of customers to attract new businesses. Weldon’s dedicated citizens keep moving forward by working to improve its downtown business district with historic streetlights and renovated buildings, hoping the improvements will attract new businesses here. What can we do to actively recruit new businesses to locate in Weldon?



Currently, there are several renovation projects in town. The **Old Grist Mill** is under renovation by a local businessman who plans to offer the facility for a possible retail and/or restaurant use. The **Riverside Mill**, a former water-driven cotton mill has been refurbished to house an auction company and antique and craft mall. It is anticipated that the old **Train depot**, which now serves as the town library, will be a Weldon history museum when a new library is constructed.



Rehabilitation of Weldon’s historic buildings paves the way to future economic revitalization of this old town. In 2005, two blocks of our downtown district were renovated with CDBG funds by a development firm for retail and residential use. We would like to see the continuation of this work into the 300 block of Washington Avenue to complete our main street renovation.



Like most small towns, Weldon is striving to keep its livelihood intact with the surrounding commercial growth. Although some progress has been made, Weldon is fortunate to have hidden treasures that can be developed to make our community better than ever. The Community of Neighbors W.O.W. committee is ready for this challenge by capitalizing on its historic and natural heritage to draw businesses and tourists to Weldon thus bringing economic prosperity. One key to this development is a scenic River Walk, linking Washington Avenue and Weldon’s beautiful riverfront. We envision unique shops, cafes and galleries lining the avenue, with an inviting, friendly atmosphere that appeals to locals and tourists alike. We also want safe, clean neighborhoods thus bringing Weldon back to a true **“Community of Neighbors.”**