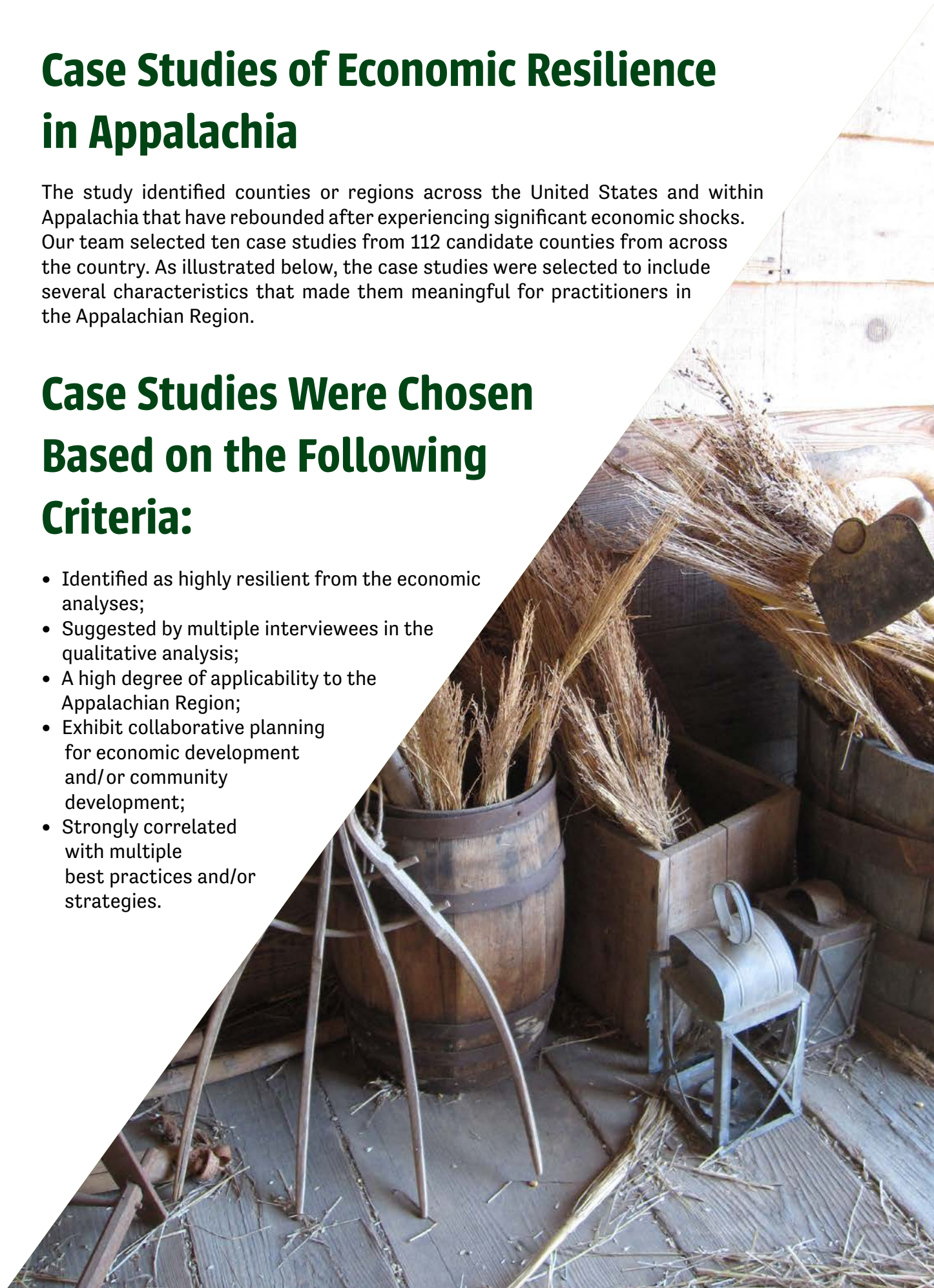


Case Studies of Economic Resilience in Appalachia

The study identified counties or regions across the United States and within Appalachia that have rebounded after experiencing significant economic shocks. Our team selected ten case studies from 112 candidate counties from across the country. As illustrated below, the case studies were selected to include several characteristics that made them meaningful for practitioners in the Appalachian Region.

Case Studies Were Chosen Based on the Following Criteria:

- Identified as highly resilient from the economic analyses;
- Suggested by multiple interviewees in the qualitative analysis;
- A high degree of applicability to the Appalachian Region;
- Exhibit collaborative planning for economic development and/or community development;
- Strongly correlated with multiple best practices and/or strategies.



Case Studies for Strengthening Economic Resilience in Appalachia

1 **Chenango County, New York**

2 **Dickinson County, Iowa**

3 **Flathead County, Montana**

4 **Fannin County, Georgia**

5 **Harrison County, West Virginia**

6 **Holmes County, Ohio**

7 **Lee & Itawamba Counties, Mississippi**

8 **St. Clair County, Alabama**

9 **McKean County, Pennsylvania**

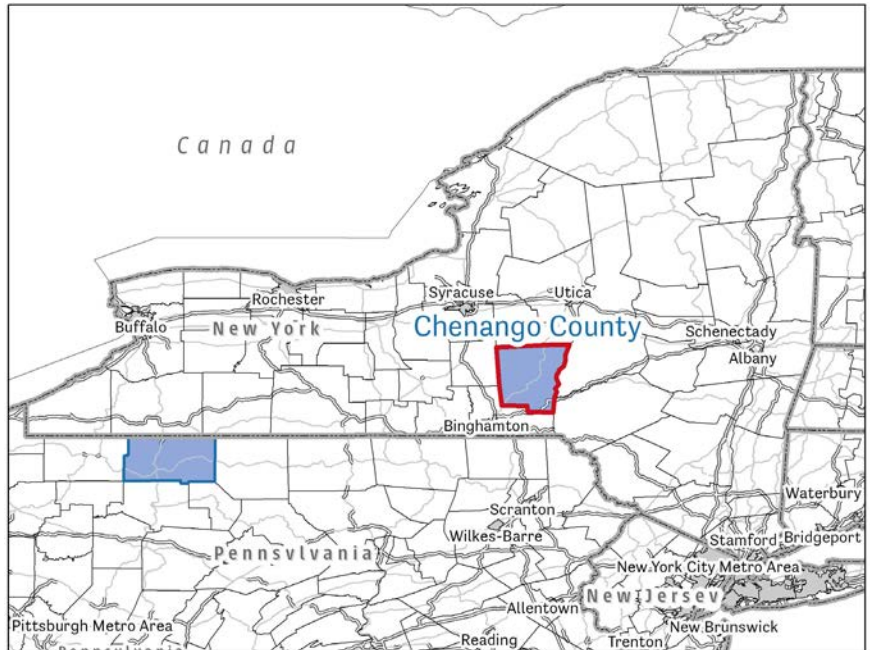
10 **McCracken County, Kentucky**

Case Study 1:

Chenango County, New York

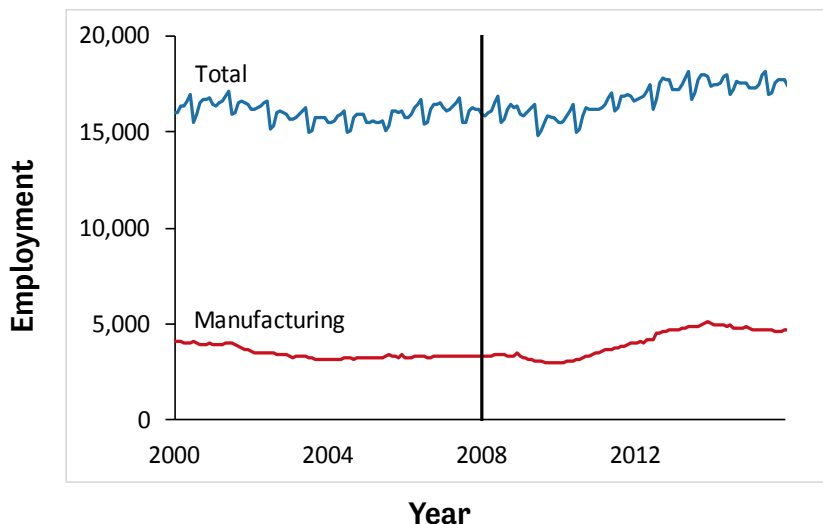
Introduction

Chenango County is in south-central New York, approximately 40 miles northeast of Binghamton. It is intersected in the southeast by Interstate 88 but is otherwise served by state and local roads. Chenango County is a relatively sparsely populated county, falling into the bottom third of New York counties in terms of both total population and population density. The county boasts nearly 80,000 acres of public land, including 22 state forests.



Chenango County was found to be the 289th most resilient county (91st percentile) in the United States according to our quantitative models of resilience. The county's largest economic sectors are agriculture, food processing, financial services, and advanced manufacturing. Chenango County has experienced numerous economic disruptions over the years, but the economy has consistently weathered those storms, making it an ideal candidate for further study on economic resilience.

Employment Trends



Chenango County experienced very little employment loss during the 2008 economic crisis, and has grown since then thanks to growth in the manufacturing sector.

Resilient Features

Chenango County’s resilience, in light of the economic downturn, appears to be built upon a well-established foundation of small manufacturers. Manufacturing has a long history in the county; the core of the sector was born in the 1880s when numerous products were invented and subsequently manufactured there. Manufacturing’s overall share of local employment has decreased since its heyday, but the stability of that sector, as well as a growth spurt around 2010 (as visible in the jobs chart), were the bedrock of the county’s resilience following the 2008 economic crisis. Much of the growth in 2010 is directly attributable to two entities: Chobani, which experienced significant growth at that time, and Raymond Corporation, which opted to relocate international capacity to the county.



Strategies for Resilience

Today, county officials and business organizations have begun to recognize the need for careful planning to preserve the steady economy of the area. Chenango County’s primary economic development entity, Commerce Chenango, led a large stakeholder group of elected officials and business leaders to develop a strategic plan for economic development in 2011, which was then updated in 2014. The plan outlines a set of six goals and accompanying strategies, all of which are aimed at improving Chenango’s business climate as well as improving quality of life for residents, a best practice identified in this study. The plan relied heavily on an analysis of existing conditions in the county. Avoiding “one size fits all” solutions, it identified assets in place that can be supported and moved forward, which is another best practice identified by the study. The plan also recognizes that while the two most historically important sectors—manufacturing and agriculture—within the county have declined, they remain important. Adapting to changes in the global economy for these (and other) sectors will require flexible, responsive strategies. Those strategies are most clearly embodied in this plan’s commitment to workforce development, a vital strategy identified by the research team, within the county. Commerce Chenango and partners have made workforce development a priority, and in order to maximize access to these programs for residents, they have included support services such as daycare, transportation, and counseling as components of workforce development offerings.

Applications in Appalachia

Chenango County is within Appalachia, and like much of that region, its economic history is dominated by two large, legacy sectors (agriculture and manufacturing) with uncertain futures. The county’s planners recognize both the cultural and economic values of these sectors, and they have engaged in a plan to support them while also expanding the capability of the county’s workforce to support diverse growth.

For more information, visit: <http://www.co.chenango.ny.us/>

