



THE "THIRD TIER CITIES" PROJECT HOLYOKE: KNOWN CHALLENGES, HIDDEN ASSETS

A recent study from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) looked at how America's smaller cities were faring in the New Economy. It found that, whereas the challenge in many bigger cities is how to extend the economic prosperity into all neighborhoods, in the smaller cities the economic issues are not confined to a single neighborhood or group of neighborhoods. Additionally, small cities tend to have many fewer resources at their disposal to address their problems. As a result of this report, the U.S. Department of Labor contracted with the Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern University to study several such small cities in Massachusetts.

In the fall of 2000, the Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce entered into a partnership with Northeastern University to conduct a "community audit" as part of the development of a comprehensive report detailing the current economy in Holyoke. Chamber staff conducted a number of interviews, focus groups and surveys with government, business, education and community leaders. This information, when added to local economic data, yields a fascinating look at the City. The final report, Holyoke: Known Challenges, Hidden Assets, was published in the fall of 2002. This report looks in detail at the population, demographic trends and economy of Holyoke. It examines some of the specific issues facing the City and identifies the 'hidden' assets on which the community can build.

The information contained in this report would be of value to individuals or organizations engaged in research or in the development of programs and grant proposals. Since its publication, the data contained in the report has been successfully used to secure several grants for new and expanded programs in the community. If you are interested in more information, please call the Chamber at (413) 534-3376, or e-mail klimoski@holycham.com.