

Part 1: Profile

HISTORY OF PULASKI COUNTY

Pulaski County is situated in the Appalachian Mountain Range between the Allegheny and the Blue Ridge Mountains in the Southwest portion of Virginia. In Pulaski County the land along the New River is rolling valley, broken only by the 3,000-foot height of Draper's Mountain. The northern border of the county reaches a height of 3,600 feet at Big Walker Mountain.

The first white men to see the land that would become Pulaski County are believed to be part of an expedition in 1654 from Fort Henry, which is present-day Petersburg. Another Fort Henry expedition in 1691 discovered the New River while in search of the Pacific Ocean.

Pulaski County evolved from Augusta County (1736) to Orange County (1770) then to Botetourt County which was formed from Augusta County. Fincastle County was formed from Botetourt County in 1773. The Fincastle Resolutions were written there in early 1775, over eighteen months before the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Fincastle County was abolished in 1777 and three counties (Montgomery, Washington and Kentucky) were formed from the area. An act of the Virginia General Assembly created what is now Pulaski County in 1839 from portions of Montgomery and Wythe Counties.

Pulaski is named for the Polish Patriot, Count Casimir Pulaski. Count Pulaski joined the forces fighting for American freedom in 1777. He was mortally wounded in 1779 at the Battle of Savannah. Germans, Scotch-Irish, and the English were the first to settle the land that was to become Pulaski County.

The town of Dublin arose on its present site during the late 1700's. With the arrival of the railroad in 1856, Dublin became the hub for trade.

The small community of Newbern lies south of Dublin. In 1772 it was a fort known as "Glade Spring" on an Indian trail. When Pulaski County was formed in the 1830's, Newbern was selected as the county seat. After the courthouse was destroyed by fire in 1893, popular vote moved the county seat to what is now the town of Pulaski.

COMMUNITY

Pulaski County at one time was a predominately agricultural community with several large farming operations. With the decline of farming, much of the labor force is now employed in manufacturing. The community has a mix of service industry, manufacturing and retail businesses. The largest single employer is the Volvo/Mack truck plant which employs just over 1500 persons. The unemployment figures 4.4% as of August, 2005.

The religious orientation of the community is varied, including the following houses of worship: Baptist, Catholic, Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Church of God, and Church of the Nazarene. At the present time, Pulaski County is in partnership with several surrounding localities to develop a commerce park within Pulaski County.

Pulaski County covers 327 square miles. The governing body for Pulaski County is the Board of Supervisors. The board is composed of one representative from each of the five magisterial districts: Cloyd, Draper, Ingles, Massie, and Robinson. The Pulaski County Board of Supervisors elects its own chairman and appoints a county administrator, who carries out the policies of the board.

There are two towns in the County of Pulaski: Pulaski and Dublin. Pulaski has a town manager form of government. Voters elect the town mayor and eight council members, who appoint the town manager. Dublin is governed by a mayor and six council members elected by the qualified voters of the town.

Pulaski County is composed of rural and urban communities, with neighborhoods ranging from residential areas within the corporate limits of the towns of Dublin and Pulaski, to both urban and rural subdivisions. Private farms and private homes on one-half to several acre tracts serve as homes for many residents, while others live in apartment complexes and mobile home villages.

As of 2000, the per capita income for the county was \$11,074. The median value of a home in 2005 was \$80,000. The Population of the county as of August, 2005 was 35,127, with 23% under the age of 20.

Of the population over age 25: 25.8% have no high school diploma, 33.9% have a high school diploma or GED, 7.9% have an Associate Degree and 12.5% have a Bachelor Degree or higher.

The high school serves as the hub for many activities, which take place in the county, from cultural performances, political meetings, and industrial seminars to adult classes, military activities, and police driving schools. The fitness center, driver education range, tennis courts, and ball fields are used regularly and are open throughout the year to the general public.

Cultural interests are varied among the county's residents. Many seek cultural events such as play, concerts, and lectures. These can be found at events sponsored by the Fine Arts Center of the New River Valley, New River Community College, Radford University, and Virginia Tech. Others take advantage of cultural events in Roanoke, which is within an hour's drive from most points within the county. Many residents take part in annual events such as the Pulaski County Horse Show, New River Valley Fair, Count Pulaski Fest, Newbern Fall Festival, and Appalachian Awareness Week.

Pulaski County Library System, with headquarters in the town of Pulaski, and Free Memorial Library as a branch in Dublin, supplements the resources of the school's Instructional Materials Center. Pulaski County students also have access to, and use of, the libraries at New River Community College, Radford University, and Virginia Tech, as well as the Radford Public Library.

The Town of Pulaski's Department of Parks and Recreation provides a wide variety of athletic and recreational activities for the residents of the county. It also oversees the operation of several community recreation programs, including Snowville, Hiwassee, Newbern, Dublin, Draper, and Fairlawn. Pulaski County High School students participate in

tennis, volleyball, basketball, softball, baseball, soccer, and other activities under the supervision of the department.

A variety of other recreation activities are found in Pulaski County. Claytor Lake State Park is one of the largest lakes in the state. It covers 4,500 acres featuring a long shoreline studded with rolling meadows, wooded hillsides, and mysterious caves. Among its many facilities are a nature center, nature trails, amphitheatre, cabins, a large marina, spacious picnic area, beach, concession stands, and a camping area. Horseback riding, fishing, swimming, boating, water skiing, and camping are offered at Claytor Lake State Park.

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Pulaski County High School is located between Interstate 81 and Route 11, one and one-half miles from Dublin and three and one-half miles from Pulaski. The grounds and buildings envelop an area of 97.8 acres and have facilities for 2,500 students. The facilities outside the academic and Career and Technical Education buildings include the Southwest Virginia Governor's School; a driver education range; parking areas expanded to accommodate 636 vehicles; four tennis courts; athletic fields for football, track and field, baseball/softball, and field hockey; a drill field for band practice; a football stadium with expanded seating for 8,000; a field house for the football team, a second field house, with a shower and dressing facilities for visiting football teams; and a fitness center.

It is the only high school in the county, and consists of grades nine through twelve. Opened in the fall of 1974, it is the result of the consolidation of Pulaski and Dublin High Schools. The programs and the buildings are designed to provide a balance between academic and Career and Technical Education offerings on the same campus.

The student population (fall membership) at Pulaski County High School for 2005-2006 was 1528 students. 49.1% of the school is male and 50.9% is female. The ethnic composition of Pulaski County High School mirrors that of Pulaski County as a whole. The student body is 90.8% white, 7.7% are black and 1.3% are either Asian or Hispanic. The enrollment is classified as 66% rural and 33% from small to medium-sized communities. The number of students needing free or reduced lunch has consistently been from 19 to 20%.

Pulaski County has eight elementary schools and two middle schools, which serve, as feeder schools for Pulaski County High School.

Enrollment projections for the next five years indicate that the number of students at Pulaski County High School will remain relatively stable with an expected enrollment of between 1,400 and 1,500 high school students. The school reached a peak enrollment in 1985-1986 with an end membership of 2,256 students.

The faculty is not involved in the preparation of an annual school budget. Each department chairperson presents a needs list to the principal annually.

There are booster organizations that raise funds through various projects to aid their specific sport or club. It has become necessary the last several years that the athletic boosters become more involved. Each athletic sport is supported by its own booster club.

Various civic clubs, organizations, and individuals provide scholarship endowment funds, the proceeds from which aid worthy and needy graduates with their pursuit of higher education.

The vision statement for the high school was modified from that of the county to read “Reach Each Student.” Refer to Appendix A for Mission and Belief statements.

Passing the state initiated SOL tests has become the central focus of localities throughout the Commonwealth. Hence, the goals of school systems and schools should reflect strategies for ensuring successful outcomes. The two primary school improvement goals of Pulaski County High School are as follows:

Goal #1 – Continue improving student performance on SOL tests.

Goal #2 –Develop all students into productive, responsible citizens and life-long learners.

Pulaski County High School employs 140 licensed teachers, principals, and guidance counselors. Of these 140 employees, almost fifty percent hold master’s degrees and two percent hold doctorate degrees. The majority of the faculty has less than ten years of experience. The staff consists of 44% male and 56% female.

The faculty at PCHS has consistently through the years earned recognition at the local, state, and national levels

Motivated by the philosophy that programs should be in place to stimulate each student; PCHS offers a variety of instruction programs. Programs specifically designed for 9th graders needing to make the transition to high school as well as advanced computer and technology related courses are available.

The Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO) has been in existence for approximately twelve years. A staff member at the school has directed the functioning of the PTO. John Freeman is currently overseeing the PTO. A slate of officers is provided by current officers and then elected in the spring. The average number of members has been 200-300 members, which represents about 12-15 percent of the PCHS families. Teacher membership has reached a high of 102 members or about 73 percent of the teaching staff. The major activities include the sponsoring of the annual “Back-to School Night”, the organizing of the adopt-a-teacher program and the continued fund raising for the PTO Scholarship and Endowment fund. Typical meetings usually provide a forum for members to receive feedback from school officials or staff concerning the operation of the school and programs. There are no plans for a volunteer program beyond the scope of the current adopt-a-teacher program.

The use of technology has been incorporated in every aspect of administration and instruction at PCHS.

STUDENT BODY

Since Pulaski County High School plays an important role in the lives of its student body, the school must recognize its characteristics and respond to the needs of its students. Several means such as standardized tests, surveys, counseling and faculty observations are used to assess the needs of the student body.

The Virginia Department of Education releases the Virginia School Performance Report Card yearly. This report card contains SOL scores, graduate information, advanced academic program information, attendance data, and safety information

From its inception in the fall of 1974, Pulaski County High School has recognized its dual role of preparing students for further education or for employment. Students who wish to pursue a vocational/technical curriculum may do so in the tech center on the school campus. Career and Technical Education students receive instruction in four areas: trade and industrial, business, agriculture, and technology

Pulaski County High School has fully implemented the option of the twenty-six unit standard diploma for its student body. Academically qualified students may also take advanced placement classes in several areas. A twenty-eight credit advanced studies is also an option. The guidance staff provides counseling to help each student select the course of study most suited to his or her abilities and intentions. In addition to a guidance counselor for each grade level, Pulaski County High School also has a Career and Technical Education and job placement counselor, who assists Career and Technical Education students with career decisions.

A listing of clubs can be found in Appendix L.

Pulaski County High School supports several activities, which encourage enrichment in the arts. The PCHS Players, several choirs, the marching and concert bands develop student talent and provide presentations for the school and the community. The PCHS players present several major productions each year. The Drama Department was also honored with an invitation to Edinburgh, Scotland. The Golden Cougar Marching Band has received many outstanding awards in various marching and field competitions. Each year Pulaski County High School is well represented at the All-Regional Band and All-Regional Chorus festivals. Annual forensic competition and art contests provide recognition of student talent and achievement in other areas. Student publications such as the literary magazine, *Inklings*; the school yearbook, *The Cougar Pinnacle*; and the student newspaper, *The Cougar Prowler*, provide students with an outlet for their literary talents.

Pulaski County High School joined the Mountain Academic Competition Conference in 1988. The MACC provides for quiz bowl-type competitions in areas of English, math, science, social studies and all-around knowledge. MACC now has eighteen high schools from nine counties and 2 cities competing for honors.

Career and Technical Education students at Pulaski County have an outstanding record in regional, state, and national competitions. Skills USA, Future Farmers of America (FFA), Marketing Education (DECA), Health Occupations Student Association (HOSA), Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), and the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) continually win impressive honors.

An exit survey of the class of 2005 concerning their educational intentions indicated that 29% of the class members planned to attend a four-year college, 37% planned to attend a two-year, 30% had other continuing education plans, while only 4% had no continuing education plans. Since New River Community College, Radford University, Virginia Tech, and Wytheville

Community College are within commuting distance, Pulaski County residents may easily pursue higher education. There are a number of scholarship and endowment programs by local civic organizations and interested individuals, which make the pursuit of higher education more accessible to deserving Pulaski County High School graduates. The class of 1998 graduated 39 students with honors, 14 with high honors and 16 with highest honors. The class received \$32,400 in local scholarships, with 39 graduates receiving over \$350,000 in tuition assistance and scholarships from colleges and universities.

Pulaski County High School is devoted to the best education possible to its students in a rural setting through both academic and Career and Technical Education programs.