

October 5 – 7, 2006:

Thirteen residents of South Wood County took the **Community Progress Initiative Rural Study Tour** to small towns in the mountains of western North Carolina. They met with NC town leaders to learn how each community is revitalizing its economy with local resources such as innovative technologies and home-grown arts.

Here are a few examples of Study Tour stops:



Sparta, NC: Martin Marietta Composites, Inc.



Sparta, NC: Anderson Huber Cyber Campus



Spruce Pine, NC: home of the Perfect Christmas Tree Store - niche branding and marketing



Burnsville, NC: landfill gas provides power for pottery and glass-blowing studios and a greenhouse for producing flowering shrubs www.energyxchange.org



Mars Hill, NC: downtown revitalization



Black Mountain, NC: the arts and HandMade in America



Marion, NC: revitalizing historical old buildings



Valdese, NC: keeping its Waldensian heritage alive



*Pictured left and right: **Cranberry** thank you gifts to our Study Tour guides: NC Rural Center economic development specialists **Art Jackson** and **Elaine Matthews**.*

A complete report on the NC Study Tour Findings will be available soon. www.progressinitiative.com