

# **RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT REPORT**

**for**

## **GARDINER, MONTANA**

**APRIL 17 – 18, 2005**

**In partnership with  
Montana Department of Commerce, Montana Economic Developers Association,  
USDA/Rural Development, Gallatin National Forest, Northern Rocky Mountain  
RC&D, Montana Community Foundation and the people of Gardiner.**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On behalf of the Gardiner Resource Team, thank you for welcoming us to your community. It soon became obvious that Gardiner is a unique and incredible community. The team heard about the many strengths of your community and enjoyed the beauty that surrounded us. Perhaps best of all, Gardiner is rich in good people who care deeply about the future of your community. Thank you for your hospitality, your time, and for sharing with the team the vision you have for Gardiner.

Before digging in to the report itself, I would like to give recognition to Montana Department of Commerce (MDOC), USDA/Rural Development and MEDA – Montana Economic Developers Association. MDOC sponsors Resource Team Assessments across the state, while USDA/Rural Development provides funding for training team members and follow-up costs. MEDA provides the contractual services that make Resource Teams possible. You can join MEDA and become a part of this economic development network at <http://www.medamembers.org>.

While a project of this magnitude takes many people to be successful, there are always a few key people that make it all possible. Special thanks are due the Gardiner Chamber of Commerce for making the assessment a reality, in particular: Destyne Erickson, Richard Parks and Chris Waters. These three individuals served as the champions behind the scene, making sure everything was organized and ready for the team. Thank you for your dedication and hard work.

More thanks are extended to the Comfort Inn (Jill McAllister), Merv and Joyce Olson, “Lady Nance” and Richard Parks, the Royal Teton Ranch and Gardiner Public Schools. The tour, meals, lodging and cooperation you provided were invaluable. Finally, many thanks to the individuals living in the Gardiner area that took the time to attend the Listening Sessions and the Town Meeting. Without you, the team could not have compiled this report and made recommendations.

In addition, I applaud each and every team member that dedicated hours of work and travel in order to participate on the team: Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development Coordinator for Montana Department of Commerce; Ken Britton, Gardiner District Ranger for the Gallatin National Forest; Cynthia Evans, Regional Coordinator for Northern Rocky Mountain RC&D; Michele Herrington, Program Director for Montana Community Foundation; Al Jones, South-central Regional Development Officer for Montana Department of Commerce and Richard Knatterud, Project Engineer for Montana Department of Commerce Montana Treasure State Endowment Program. Each team member’s contact information is provided in the following report. Please feel free to call on any of us for additional information or support. It would be our pleasure.

The stage is now set for Gardiner’s future. There are a number of short term and long term accomplishable recommendations that the resource team has provided in this report. Each of you individually must decide what it is that you want to do—what kind of project you want to tackle. It is also important for the entire community to be involved in finding ways to accomplish its goals. A few celebrations at the successful conclusion of an activity that has involved a large number of citizens will lead to a feeling of accomplishment that will carry over into other activities. Look through the suggestions, pick out one, and get started!

The team will help you get started at the Project and Priorities Town Meeting to be held May 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm at the Community Center.

Gloria O’Rourke, Montana Economic Developers Association

## **PROCESS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THIS REPORT**

Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) provided staff support for the coordination of a resource team to assist Gardiner, Montana, in evaluating the town's assets and liabilities and in developing suggestions for improving the environment, social and economic future of the area.

The Gardiner Chamber of Commerce (specifically, Destyne Erickson, Richard Parks and Chris Waters) served as the local contact and local team leaders for the project. Resource team members were selected to visit, interview citizens, business and community leaders and develop a plan of recommended action for the region. The team members were selected based on their fields of expertise that Gardiner officials indicated would be needed to respond to the problem areas identified.

The Resource Team interviewed over 60 people on April 17 – 18, 2005. The notes from the community input sessions are included in this report. The team was available for listening to the following groups: Community Leaders, Business Owners and Chamber Members, Government and Public Services, General Public and Non-Profits, Royal Teton Ranch and Corwin Springs residents, Gardiner Students, Gardiner Teachers and School Board.

Each participant was asked to respond to three questions designed to begin communications and discussion and to serve as a basis for developing the action plan. The three questions were:

- What do you think are the major problems and challenges in Gardiner?
- What do you think are the major strengths and assets in Gardiner?
- What projects would you like to see completed in two, five, ten and twenty years in Gardiner?

Upon completion of the interviews, the team met in a work session to compare notes and share comments. The team then agreed that each team member would analyze the things said, synthesize what they heard with their knowledge of programs and resources, prepare their notes and suggestions, and forward these items to be combined into this final report to Gardiner.

A preliminary oral report and a summary of group recommendations were presented to the people of Gardiner the evening of April 18th.

Following the oral report, this formal written report was prepared and is presented to Gardiner. Copies will be made available in print and electronically. The report is available on the MEDA website at <http://www.medamembers.org>.

A meeting is planned for May 9<sup>th</sup>, 7:00pm at the Community Center to review the report with the people of Gardiner and to set priorities and initiate action plans.

**GARDINER RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT  
GARDINER, MONTANA**

**APRIL 17 - 18, 2005**

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**GARDINER RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT  
GARDINER, MONTANA  
APRIL 17 - 18, 2005**

An open invitation is extended to everyone living in the Gardiner area to attend a series of community meetings to discuss the future of Gardiner. A series of listening sessions will be facilitated by Resource Team Assessment members for the purpose of hearing from citizens of the Gardiner area what they would like to see happen in our community. Team members will then compose a report of ideas and resources for the community, which will be turned into projects and prioritized by community members. Listening sessions are topic related for focus purposes but anyone in the community is welcome to attend any (or all) sessions. This is your chance to help shape the future of Gardiner. Please join us!

## **SUNDAY APRIL 17TH**

### **3:30 PM**

Team arrives and gathers at the Comfort Inn (thanks to Jill McAllister for donating lodging); meet Destyne and Richard with 15-passenger van for a tour. (One of the first hotels on the left - big rock wall foundation.)

### **4:00-5:00 PM**

Tour of Gardiner area

**5:00 – 6:30 PM** Assessment team regroups, settles in at hotel

### **6:30-7:30 PM**

Dinner or potluck, introduce the team to community leaders. This may be a working dinner with an organized listening session.

## **MONDAY APRIL 18**

Location for most Listening Sessions: Community Center (located on second street next to the K Bar)

**7:00 AM** Breakfast (Parks' House #112 - across street from K Bar)

**8:00 AM** Listening Session - Businesses, all chamber members

**9:00 AM** Government and Public services (largest group)

**10:30 AM** General public, non-profits

**12:00 – 2:00** Working lunch (complimentary to assessment team) with RTR and local Corwin Springs residents

**2:00PM** School children, Junior High and High School

**3:00 PM** Teachers and School Board

**4:00-6:00** Team works on their report at the Comfort Inn, working dinner while preparing for evening meeting

**7:00 - 8:30** Town Hall Meeting at the Community Center and next steps

## **GARDINER RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT MAIN TOPICS AND ISSUES**

**These are the main issues the people of Gardiner shared with the team. These issues are to be covered in the Resource Team report.**

### **MAIN TOPIC: Public Facilities**

- **Ambulance housing**
- **Sheriff Deputy station**
- **Chamber Office**
- **Visitor Information Center**
- **Search and Rescue staging site**
- **Public Restrooms**
- **Water and sewer**

### **MAIN TOPIC: Economic Opportunities**

- **Plow road Cooke City to Sunlight Basin**
- **Newspaper**
- **Cybercafe**
- **Wireless Internet**
- **Energy Independence (wind, solar, etc.)**
- **Artist Opportunities**
- **Historical archives**
  - **Utilize as destination attraction**
- **Promote wildlife viewing (guided)**
- **Resort Tax**

### **MAIN TOPIC: Recreation and Entertainment**

- **Walking Trail (Historic/Geologic, etc.)**
- **Rails to Trails**
- **Movie Theater**
- **Swimming pool**
- **Bowling alley (Paradise Alley)**
- **Adult sport leagues/activities**
- **Soccer and baseball field**

### **MAIN TOPIC: Park Service**

- **Park Street (Front street)**
- **North entrance station improvements**
  - **Traffic bottleneck**
- **Community relations between Mammoth, Gardiner and Xanterra (bridge the gaps)**
- **Resource management**
- **Partner with Gardiner in long term planning**

## **MAIN TOPIC: HOUSING**

- **Affordable housing**
- **Seasonal housing**
- **Permanent residents**
- **Park personnel**
- **Build-able footprint – (lack of build-able land)**
- **Repair and renovation**

## **MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM**

- **Marketing Montana entrances to Yellowstone Park**
- **Evening experiences for adults and kids**
- **Increase educational opportunities**
- **Montana gateway visitor center**
- **History dating back 10,000+ years**
- **Marketing Gardiner as a destination instead of a pass-through (especially during shoulder seasons)**
- **Need a variety of dining opportunities**

## **MAIN TOPIC: OTHER ISSUES**

- **Health care and emergency access**
- **Beautification**
- **To incorporate or not to incorporate?**
- **Lower night speed limit from rest area to Gardiner**
- **Students**
  - **School-to-work**
  - **Student volunteer opportunities to continue**

## **MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

- **Who speaks for Gardiner? Who represents Gardiner? No advocacy group.**
  - **Relations and communications between Gardiner, Mammoth, Church Universal and Triumphant, Paradise Valley, Seasonal and Permanent Residents**
  - **Company Town syndrome**

# **Gardiner**

Resource Team Assessment Report

April, 2005

**REPORT BY: Al Jones, Regional Development Officer**  
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**MAIN TOPIC: PUBLIC FACILITIES**

**ISSUE: AMBULANCE HOUSING**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

If this is thought about as the starting point of a health care facility instead of a garage, that might open up some opportunities for a joint facility with the National Park Service and Forest Service, perhaps even on the undeveloped land on Park Street (which obviously has room for a helicopter ambulance landing pad as well.) By emphasizing this as a 24/7/365 site, as opposed to the 8am-5pm access at Mammoth, but with the space, beds, and facilities to at least provide some stabilizing care prior to either an ambulance or flight out would be a probable life-saver.

I'm thinking of the "Golden 45" *minutes* that a heavily injured person can quite often survive if they reach a well-equipped Emergency Room within 45 minutes of the injuries; otherwise many die. The distance to that sort of medical facility in Livingston or Bozeman certainly exceeds that by road, hence the helicopter access, but also the need for the facility.

Centering the sheriff's deputy, some communications equipment, and the search & rescue equipment/staging facility would make great sense there as well since the likelihood is that all would be in use at the same time for some crises.

While such a facility of say a 1,000 sq. ft. building would be challenging for the community to afford, it would seem like a reasonable investment in visitor, staff, and guest worker safety by NPS for 2 reasons: Statistically it's predictable that out of the 500,000-1,000,000 annual visitors, some will have heart attacks or strokes, some will have serious accidents, and some will have serious problems pop up ranging from appendicitis to severe allergic reactions. As long as there's enough people, let alone densely crowded in unfamiliar places, this stuff happens.

The NPS's wildlife and range management practices are greatly exacerbating the frequency that car crash injuries (from striking bison and elk), gorings of pedestrians by bison and elk, and other injuries (luckily wolves are completely safe and foraging mountain lions only hunt pet dogs and cats in California.) Severe trauma with lots of blood loss, deep tissue wounds, broken bones, shock, etc. are pretty predictable in this location...several hundred people are killed annually in the U.S. and thousands

injured just from driving into much smaller deer, let alone 2,000+ lb. Bison and elks' long legs would make them more likely to end up on the hood/windshield.

If it just made sense, this could take a hundred years to fund given the Park's backlog, but the unfavorable media coverage for each accident, death, etc. while such a proposed facility was postponed would be a strong motivator. It'd still likely take a special appropriation as a rider on a federal appropriation but I'm guessing Montana's Congressional Delegation would see the need for a joint med-evac & search & rescue staging facility.

### **RESOURCES:**

Sources of matching funds could be direct investment and management of the facility by either the Livingston Memorial Hospital or the considerably larger Bozeman Deaconess (bigger trauma capacity, bigger financial resources.) Even talking to one will make the other more interested. I'd probably approach it through their senior staff directly running the Emergency Room, probably the most senior nurses would take the most time to discuss it and think it through at which point it could then percolate up the chain of command. Realistically this is a significant revenue opportunity for the participating hospital since people with these sort of injuries will generate \$10-200,000+ in medical charges but not have to be transferred to a specialty facility like a burn center.

U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security emergency preparedness grants that flow through each county's "Disaster & Emergency Services" Director, the Sheriff Clark Carpenter 222-4172 will know who that is for Park County. They will have already hurriedly written a county plan that was to take into account every conceivable threat and problem and address it (getting several weeks to research and write it) so this would likely need to be incorporated into the County's plan to make it eligible for current and future funding (unpredictable, significant, and much demanded, but Gardiner can make a good case on obvious and actual danger here.)

Note: A thousand square foot building for these types of uses would cost \$65-150/sq. ft. if built by a business and under \$193/sq.ft. if built by government (using Craftsman's 2004 National Building Cost Manual.) So it would be less than the average house in Gardiner, maybe \$250,000 if building the helipad got carried away (a 4-H Club in the Eastern part of the state built one for a few thousand dollars worth of donated materials.) To put it in hospital economics, that's a total of 2-3 heart attacks, 4-10 major accidents, or even just 10-50 broken limbs.

### **Case in Point: Buffalo vs. Hog: Motorcyclist Flies**

Deer are the big problem for motorcyclists, but this is a reminder for motorcycle riders to be careful of all wildlife this summer. This rider found that the only bad thing about buffalo isn't their smell. By [Art Friedman](#).

A motorcyclist on a Harley Low Rider was flying high after an encounter with a bison in South Dakota's [Custer State Park](#). The incident highlights the danger that wild and domestic animals can pose to motorcyclists. The rider was part of a line of traffic that encountered and tried to pass through a herd of buffalo that was crossing the road in the park. Reports differ in the details, but some say the motorcyclist *and his Harley* were thrown 15 feet or more into the air by the buffalo, which can weigh a ton or more. The rider was also gored in the leg and hospitalized. The injury was characterized as not life-threatening.

Asked how high a bison could throw a motorcycle into the air, the Park's buffalo expert replied, "How high would you want him to toss it?" according to [this report](#) on the [Aberdeen News \(SD\) site](#). He also said that the buffalo aren't really aggressive yet; that happens in another three weeks during rutting season.

The incident serves as a reminder to motorcyclists to consider the threats that wildlife pose and to never take the actions of animals for granted. Though buffalo are an obvious threat because of their mass, all kinds of wildlife can be dangerous to motorcyclists riding in rural areas. [This article](#) tells of a rider who crashed after hitting a groundhog. [A couple in Maine](#) collided with a moose, killing the rider and critically injuring his wife. Our own staffers have had collisions or close calls with everything from badgers to vultures, and collisions with deer kill dozens of motorcyclists (as well as some people in cars) in North America every year and injure many more. Motorcyclists and officials in some states are concerned that there are [more deer on the roads than ever](#) and are advising riders to slow down and wear helmets and other protective gear when riding in deer country, especially near dawn and in the evening when deer are likely to be moving.

Dogs and livestock are also involved in motorcycle accidents. We have even read a report of a motorcyclist who was killed by a dog that fell off a railroad overpass. In most of those cases, the animal is also killed, but if this rider wants revenge on the bison, he'll have to pay \$4000 and apply for the park's annual winter [Bull Buffalo Hunt](#).

### **For Immediate Release March 3, 2003**

#### **BISON CAPTURE OPERATION IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK**

Yellowstone National Park Superintendent Suzanne Lewis announced today that bison have continued to migrate near Stephens Creek along the northern boundary of the park and capture operations have begun. Under the final state and federal Records of Decision (ROD) for the Interagency Bison Management Plan (IBMP) that were signed in December 2000 and the December 2002 IBMP Operating Procedures, when the bison population in late winter, early spring is over 3,000 animals, and they are moving onto lands where cattle are being grazed, they will be captured in the Stephens Creek facility and sent to slaughter facilities. The November population estimate was approximately 3,800. Only about 25 bison have died this year either by management actions west of the park, natural mortality, or **motor vehicle accidents**.

*July, 2000 Yellowstone Net:* **DRIVE CAUTIOUSLY IN YELLOWSTONE!**

News Brief

**YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK** -- The summer season is in full force now and the roads are teeming with motorists. There have been numerous animal-related accidents this summer, and a higher than usual number of bison has been killed on the roads. Many of the bison accidents have taken place at night, when the dark-colored animals are hard to spot. Motorists are urged to obey all speed limits and to drive cautiously throughout the park, especially during night hours. In addition, Yellowstone officials have reported that two motorcyclists were killed Wednesday when they swerved to avoid a mule deer on the road. Vernon and Carol Solomon were from Palmyra, Illinois, and were on their way to attend the Wing Ding Convention in Billings this week.

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1570980217/qid/103-4784680-4740613> takes you to the Amazon site for the book "Death in Yellowstone" by the official park archivist...that's the kind of

material that a grant writer would find very helpful in making the case for greater emergency facilities in Gardiner. I'm pretty sure I saw it for sale in one of the shops there this past week too. Excerpt from the web: As of 1993, only two human deaths from bison incidents, compared with five for bears, have occurred in Yellowstone Park, but probably the current potential for injuries and deaths from bison in the park is much greater than it is for bears. Dr. Mary Meagher, Yellowstone's bison expert says that bison numbers have continued to increase since 1978 and as the numbers increase (and visitors to Yellowstone increase) so does the potential for human injury. There are now some 4000 bison in the park compared to perhaps 750 bears, and visitors are much more likely to see and thus approach bison. Considering the numbers of human injuries involving bison in recent years, it is probably only lucky that more deaths have not occurred. Bison can weigh 2000 pounds or more, and they are unpredictable, often belligerent animals which must never be closely approached.

Two deaths (in the late 1800s and early 1900s) have occurred but injuries from bison (gorings, trappings, or strikings) usually number 1-10 per year in the park, and almost always happen because a visitor approaches the animal too closely. In recent years, park bison injuries include at least eleven in 1983, six in 1984, ten in 1985, four in 1986, two in 1987, two in 1988, none in 1989-1990, four in 1991, two in 1992, two in 1993, and at least three in 1994.

In the spring of 1992, a 70-year old man from Pittstown, New Jersey, was tossed fifteen feet into the air by a bison at West Thumb Geyser Basin. His leg was ripped open by the animal's horn when he got too close to it. Leslie Quinn, a fourteen-year Yellowstone tour guide, present at the time, just shakes his head whenever these incidents occur and comments, "Get a clue, people! These animals are not tame!" An Excerpt from *"Death in Yellowstone: Accidents and Foolhardiness in the First National Park"*, Author, Lee H. Whittlesey

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**MAIN TOPIC: PUBLIC FACILITIES**

**ISSUE: CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OFFICE**

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Moving it from its nearly ideal location for intercepting tourists as they leave the park as well as shop on foot seems like a solution without a problem. If the Chamber becomes less about tourist information and more about "office work" on community, business, and economic development functions, then it is in too valuable of a retail space.

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**MAIN TOPIC: PUBLIC FACILITIES**

**ISSUE: PUBLIC RESTROOMS**

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES:**

We Montanans must have more "internal storage capacity" than humans in most other places since we offer so few and rare public restrooms. A large public restroom complex funded by NPS, placed

outside the entrance on the NPS land at Park Street, perhaps with local match coming from the Montana Dept. of Transportation's Community Transportation Enhancement Program; Mike Wherley or Ross Tervo at 406-444-4221 (that would go through the Park County staff assigned to handle the CTEP dollars for Park County. That means contacting probably the County Planner and bringing the County Sanitarian Randy in on this would be a good idea too. The County Commissioners generally have the final say as to what the dollars are spent on (these dollars are used for many roadside purposes so they're sought after by many projects, on the other hand their source is a portion of the gasoline sales taxes collected in Park County so Gardiner would have an excellent claim on a good share of this.)

Here's the link to the CTEP Guidelines:

[http://www.mdt.state.mt.us/ctep/docs/ctep\\_manual.pdf#xml=http://search2.discoveringmontana.com/cgi-bin/texis.cgi/webinator/search/xml.txt?query=CTEP&pr=Search2&prox=page&rorder=500&rprox=500&rdfreq=500&rwfreq=500&rlead=500&sufs=0&order=r&cq=&id=42630b885d](http://www.mdt.state.mt.us/ctep/docs/ctep_manual.pdf#xml=http://search2.discoveringmontana.com/cgi-bin/texis.cgi/webinator/search/xml.txt?query=CTEP&pr=Search2&prox=page&rorder=500&rprox=500&rdfreq=500&rwfreq=500&rlead=500&sufs=0&order=r&cq=&id=42630b885d) or if you type as fast and accurately as I do, just go to [www.discoveringmontana.com](http://www.discoveringmontana.com) instead, the state's official website, type in "CTEP" in the box for Searches, and it'll take you right to these. Start here: [http://www.mdt.state.mt.us/ctep/ctep\\_activities.shtml](http://www.mdt.state.mt.us/ctep/ctep_activities.shtml) which lists the eligible activities, which oddly are fairly silent about public lavatories. Incorporating visitor information, i.e. painting roadmaps on the interior and exterior walls perhaps? might be necessary to qualify.

Ideally a public restroom complex (I mean 10-20 stalls for each sex, baby changing station, ADA accessible stalls and ramps, kid friendly, bison-proof) would also have considerable trash containers for tourists to empty their cars, RV's, etc. accumulated trash in a concentrated, easy to haul away series of dumpsters to help reduce litter in the rest of the town which I suspect is considerable with this kind of people flow (but no one mentioned it so it's just a guess.)

If you figured a worst case of a 1,000 sq. ft. building of concrete and tile with a colored dryvit exterior or concrete poured to look like stone walls or even logs such as by <http://www.concretelogs.com/constructionbenefits.htm> (neat company in the Western part of the state) at \$200/sq. ft. with a likelihood it should be much less, that's about \$200,000). Hard to tell how much Park County would have in CTEP funds currently and how much is already committed years into the future, but if it was a 25% match to an NPS 75%, that might work.

It'd also reduce the strain somewhat of the bottlenecked gate into the park which many residents referred to.

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## **MAIN TOPIC: ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES**

### **ISSUE: TOURISTS AREN'T THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN**

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES:**

The biggest thing to keep in mind is that tourists aren't the only game available. It's easy to get overwhelmed by the most visible, noisiest, complainingest (a Yosemite Sam sort of word) customers and forget the quiet, unobtrusive ones like shoulder season visitors, like the thousands of guest workers jammed into NPS and Xanterra facilities, the permanent employees of NPS and Forest Service, the

Royal Teton Ranch residents and their 4 major conferences, the increasing number of residents down Paradise Valley...

E.L.K.inc. on Park Street is a prime example. Almost all of its sales are worldwide via e-commerce, retailers, catalogs, shows, etc. rather than YNP tourists walking in their door. The Royal Teton Ranch publishes dozens of books in 14 languages and has very sophisticated Internet capacities (not to mention the building blocks for any company trying to sell to non-English speaking markets.)

There were some vague references to (but we didn't meet or hear from them) artists and writers living in and around Gardiner... obviously most of their work wouldn't be sold to tourists wandering in. The lack of art galleries in a place with 500,000 tourists of whom over 100,000 would have over \$100,000/yr incomes (i.e. \$2,500-25,000 art prices become sustainable) and thanks to galleries elsewhere, the Internet, commissions, etc. those artists can sell well beyond Gardiner all year long. The average Montana artist sells a third of their work out of state and gets 2/3rds of their total art income from those sales. Livingston's 14+ art galleries suggests the opportunity Gardiner's been missing in this regard as it certainly isn't the general commercial travelers on I-90 detouring off into Livingston in search of a painting to take home tonight.

**Cybercafes** (or cyberbars, cyberlaundromats, cyberkiosks, etc.) was one thought that hit many of us on the team when it was mentioned the many guest workers (and visitors) who want to check their e-mail (or confirm reservations, appointments, etc.) Basically it involves taking a place where people already come in to wait for a meal, a drink, a spin-dry cycle, and offer them a by the minute or by the quarter hour rental of an old computer with a decent Internet connection (and excellent virus and firewall protection.) So in a café for example, 2-4 tables for 2 might become a table for 1 person and 1 computer. Since the computer's speed isn't the issue for this (it's the speed of the internet connection, i.e. dial-up 28K, DSL, satellite, cable-modem, wireless broadband, etc.) 5-10 year old computers (with a market value of \$25-100) could readily be used. <http://www.easybrowsing.com/faqcafe.htm> has the frequently asked questions about setting up and operating a Cybercafe that makes a good starting point.

### **Other services for guest workers, park staff, and year-round residents?**

Thinking about hundreds or even thousands of folks 18-80 working for weeks at a time up here, it's cause to wonder about what other services and amenities they need either just to live better or for recreation. We never had a chance to dig into this as it would take a lengthy tour of Mammoth's facilities, Xanterra's worker accommodations, and discussions with the folks themselves over the busy season.

Here's some uninformed guesses based on other places and businesses I've worked with over the years:

**Laundromats:** I imagine many tourists would use them too, not a lot of motor homes and RV's have washers and dryers. Very profitable, minimal labor, easy to add profitable amenities like vending machines, book and magazine sales, soda pop or espresso, internet-connected computers (cyberlaundromat), big tv with satellite dish (to outcompete the park's), drycleaning pickup/dropoff, detergent/fabric softener sales, sewing repairs and alterations...it's particularly well suited to being run by retired folks as a second income.

Housing alternatives to the dorms, an RV, or perhaps a tent. **Renting out spare bedrooms and including board**, the 19<sup>th</sup> century model of worker accommodations, gets surprisingly forgotten or only

considered in the most upscale way as a bed and breakfast. I think the workers over 55 at the park would especially appreciate it although anyone likes privacy, quiet, and a larger bed (even college dormitories are shifting to single units or single bedrooms around a common living/kitchen room.) This would provide supplemental income to many residents as I'm guessing there are many spare bedrooms around town-these could be listed in the Chamber newsletter or posted on a corkboard in the Chamber office or a café/Laundromat.

**Renting old but reliable cars** to the workers or RV-based folks might be viable, on the “**Rent-A-Wreck**” model. Car rentals are generally very profitable and the distance to Livingston, let alone Bozeman or Billings seems to make this a natural. This smells like an opportunity but it might just be burnt toast I'm smelling.

**Mountain bicycle rentals** seems like another possibility, since I'd assume most of the guest workers weren't able to bring their bicycles with them. If some of the bicycles had a Dimension Edge **bike motor** system (made in Billings) <http://www.dimensionedge.com/>, a small gasoline motor that gets well beyond a 100mpg and allows speeds up to 35 mph, it would make riding to Livingston doable and Mammoth a breeze. These can be mounted on 3-wheeled bikes with a big storage basket, very popular in senior communities and more practical for either picnicking or shopping. In a few years one could probably rent the 2-wheeled Segways for seniors zipping around the town streets.

I didn't notice a **car wash**, much less an RV wash, but I wasn't looking for one. Profitable business, not much cost or complexity to build one. Could be quite a bit further down the highway-i.e. a roadside venture by a local ranch.

A small **artisan bakery** would likely do very well here, like Beartooth Bakery in Livingston for awhile or City Bakery in Red Lodge for 60+ years. Fresh ethnic breads, pastries from scratch, good coffee, croissant and foccaccia sandwiches...I think it'd do really well. Margins aren't as good because it is labor intensive so it'd need lots of coffee/beverage sales to make it really cash-flow.

Converting a house into a **new and used bookstore** would also seem likely given both the park's visitors and workers, as well as the long quiet periods in town. These are more a labor of love than a road to wealth however, but do fit retired people who love books quite well. The excellent bookstores in Livingston might be interested in a branch and the book publishing operation at the Royal Teton Ranch might be interested in doing one too. Great resource for the school's students and teachers too. Given the populations and remoteness, I'd guess that **music CD sales**, new and used, would also be very strong.

I wondered if the video rental store is **renting out portable DVD players** yet...I was thinking if I was a guest worker in a dorm room that could be very appealing entertainment since renting a TV/VCR unit would be pretty space intensive and clunky.

An **RV towing and repair operation** seems like it would do well, perhaps again on some highway frontage of a ranch down the valley. I think it's a very long ways to this service, Billings and Bozeman are the closest I think. That'd also have some or all of the capacity to service the heavy trucks and buses which of course can also have trouble.

**Building cottages and cabins for rent along the highway on farms and ranches** is how motels got started in the first place, as supplemental income for the farmer and built by the farmer during the slow times. Seems like there'd be an opportunity for this sort of low density accommodations for both tourists and guest workers as the land layout makes extending sewer and water to allow actual motels or dorms down the valley pretty unlikely.

**Horseback riding** opportunities at ranches down the valley would almost certainly be a nice supplemental income (plus guided wildlife watching tours on the ranch) and Chico Hot Springs is the closest offering I was aware of.

**Homebuilding** both on the tricky steep slopes around town as well as out on the more amenable gentle slopes further down the valley can be a very good group of businesses and economic driver for the community...the relatively snowless winter also suggests construction might be feasible 10-11 months a year in the area making it solid shoulder season employment. Even the basic construction jobs in this part of the state pay in the \$10-14/hr range. As a contractor works on site primarily, it's also a realistically home-based business (no pun intended) for local entrepreneurs/craftsmen rather than requiring an expensive shop/storefront space in land-constrained Gardiner.

**The Chamber could contact the School of Architecture** and the Civil Engineering faculties at MSU-Bozeman to make figuring out how to build houses in and around Gardiner an annual student design challenge. That would apply new ideas and technologies to the challenge and perhaps gradually solve the problem. On the other hand, homes and businesses have been built on these sorts of basalt and limestone slopes in the Mediterranean coastal towns for at least 3,000 years so it's certainly not an insuperable problem. I wondered about houses perched on a single big concrete column like a birdhouse (seen it on HGTV's "Extreme Homes") with essentially a "bridge" driveway attaching it to the road/hilltop, , homes on wood, stone, or concrete stilts like many beach communities have, or even just the multi-story daylight basement of poured concrete (with a faux stone finish) until it's gotten wide enough at the top to provide a sizable main floor at hilltop height...

**Homebuilding dollars** turn over as much as 24 times in the local economy (since so much is paid out in good wages and to local subs) while tourist dollars would turn over less than 3 times in the Gardiner economy so this would go a long ways to making the town overall less hungry during shoulder seasons.

Along that same line is **home repair** (small scale handyman stuff that a retired population really appreciates and also might offer) and **home remodeling**. The escalating value of the homes there means a home-equity loan for remodeling would be easy to get as well as the new owners of homes generally will want to make changes, typically starting with updating kitchens, master baths, window and door replacement, finishes, etc. . So that would suggest steady work for painters (including faux finishes), wallpaperers, cabinetmakers, glaziers, electrician, plumber, custom furniture makers, deck builders, roofers, stained glass artists, carpet layers, tile installers, concrete pourers, garage builders, locksmith, etc.. Some of this would come from Livingston or beyond but the overheated building market in Gallatin County suggests that there would be market niches available for Gardiner area folks serving much of Paradise Valley. I'd suspect the Park Service would also be interested in hiring for these occasional services, something many contractors never look into (*Maureen Jewell at the Procurement Technical Assistance Center in Billings 406-256-6875 can help them figure out the*

*process, she's free-it's a federally funded service.)* This sort of activity will also expand what hardware, lumber, and finishes are stocked in town which will make living there easier for everyone.

**Art Galleries** are mentioned below. The biggest factor is really how many people who buy art wander by and Gardiner certainly has that. Essentially it's an empty storefront or converted home with white or black painted walls, track lighting, quiet flooring, and ideally someone there who knows quite a bit about the artists and works displayed, so it's not a capital-intensive business. Typically the gallery retains between 25-60% of what the artwork sells for (the percentage is a factor of their relative bargaining power, client bases, and naiveté rather than a standard formula, one reason many artists operate their own gallery and an increasing number do it as an artists cooperative like the Sandstone Gallery in Billings.) So if a gallery sold 100 limited edition prints at \$200 each, 30 paintings avg. \$1,500 each, 5 bronze castings of sculptures at \$5,000 each, and took a 40% commission, it'd gross the princely sum of \$32,000 which wouldn't be bad for a retired person who converted a floor of their home into a successful gallery. Many do framing as well for additional revenue as well as making the pieces more salable.

**Microbrewery** would make obvious sense here partly because of the tourist flow through town but also because of the "tasty" water I noticed here. Water from coal country, since coal is a common water filtration element, seems to give more of a crisp, refreshing bite to beer (or root beer, crème soda, Coca Cola, etc. for that matter) as I've noticed working with many microbreweries around the state (Red Lodge Ales and the Belt brewery are the coal-country water fed beers I'm referring to.) Brewing's at least 6,000 years old so it doesn't require high technology, one can start small batch brewing to learn how for less than \$100 in equipment from Home Brewer's Supply in Billings (*Errol Seifert there is a fount of wisdom and has helped many microbreweries figure out formulations.*)

Typical commercial operations I've seen around the state required an investment of \$125,000-500,000 but most are really over-sized, producing too much beer under the assumption the brewer will turn into a regional beer marketer with dozens of bar accounts or bottle it for dozens of crowded grocery and convenience store beer sections. While the economies of scale will look bad, setting up a very small operation at one or all of the area bars that also uses \$6-10,000 in used bottling equipment to offer "souvenir sales" 6 packs with colorful, localized labels like "*Yankee Jim's Canyonwater*", "*Devil's Slide*", "*Woolly Mammoth Wheat*" "*Horace Albright's Ale*" "*Bierstadt's Bock*" "*Buffalo Blinder*" "*Footloose Elk Ale*" "*Conrad Wirth's Weizen*" etc. (Jackson Hole's microbrewery, Grand Teton Brewing already has some of the obvious names like *Old Faithful Ale*.)

There are constantly changing and shifting regulations for microbreweries both in their production and direct sales to consumers so it's best to go to the state website, [www.discoveringmontana.com](http://www.discoveringmontana.com), go to the state's laws, Montana Codes Annotated, and do a search for "breweries" as well as check the Administrative Rules (the Montana Dept. of Revenue handles alcohol licensing for the state and that's a confusing quest in itself while the U.S. Treasury Dept.'s Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, & Firearms regulates it from a federal level, which you hit if you produce more than a few hundred gallons a year for home use. [www.beertown.org](http://www.beertown.org) is a great place to start researching this opportunity. Buying the textbook "Brewing" by Michael J. Lewis would be a smart start for planning a commercial operation, there are many guides for small scale home-brewing and it takes often several years of this small scale experimentation to come up with palatable beers consistently. If you go to [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com) and look under "textbooks" with the search word "brewing" you'll get 513 books on beer (and coffee

brewing) ranging from brewery histories, recipe books, brewery science for doing large batches, etc. and that's the cheapest and deepest way to research the opportunity and develop something competitive, safe, and tasty. Checking ebay.com and other online sources for used equipment is prudent as a lot of it comes into the market either from failed breweries or growing ones.

The same technology also allows you to produce excellent old-style root beer, crème soda, birch bark beer, sassa-parilla, etc. which is a very nice lunch time offering, makes a nice bottled souvenir or kid pleaser, so don't think of it as just another form of alcohol, it's more like baking your own bread for competitive advantage.

**Droppings for Dollars.** Bagging bison and elk manure for resale for gardens is almost certainly at least a fundraising opportunity if not a small sideline business. Manure of course should be cooked first to kill the weedseeds within it, but a warning label might suffice. A number of major zoos now sell their critter's manure, "ZooPoop" is at least one brand name as a fundraiser instead of a waste disposal cost. Noticing some big bison loads on Front Street's edge got me thinking along this line. The other twist with bison droppings would be to sun dry them and then sell them in a nice package with historic label as "Wagon's West Campfire" "Frontier Fires" or "High Plains Fire Fuel" since both the tribes and settlers up through the 1880's were as likely to use sundried buffalo droppings as campfire fuel as the much scarcer wood. Could also be used for ultraauthentic picnics featuring roast buffalo, elk, or venison (tourists are usually looking for local color and stories that will make their friends' eyes bug out.)

**Landscaping.** An overlooked opportunity that already employs at least a hundred Montanans around the state and might well be a shoulder-season business venture employing local high school students would be collecting, cleaning, and shipping travertine, basalt, and other small, medium, and **large rocks for use in landscaping residential yards** and commercial grounds. Robinson Brick in Billings sells this sort of rock from all over the region, again selected for color, shape, textures, weight (typically sold by the pound), and loaded on wooden pallets with chicken wire sides. I assume there are similar outlets in Bozeman, Missoula, etc.. Landscaping contractors, pond builders like Aquatic Design of Livingston, landscape architects, greenhouses, nurseries, and even large hardware stores would all be logical buyers, specifiers, or retailers. Since this is shovels, picks, wheelbarrows, pick-up trucks, hauling trailers, forklift, garden hose kind of work, start-up expenses could be less than the cost of a television set, and Gardiner's mild winters might well make this a year-round business. Shaping and cutting rocks involve considerable expense and tooling, but digging, carrying, and washing rocks doesn't.

I was surprised not to see a local **taxidermist** nor a **wild-game meat processing** operation, as those are very common in most of my region where there's consistently a lot of hunting. The dwindling elk population may mean that's a thing of the past, although with the other critters in the area, I'd wonder if these might still be viable since deer are the mainstays of both. Not knowing what's done locally with the elk and buffalo hides from the hunts and animal control efforts, I can't say for certain, but if the hides are available, you can turn them into very valuable finished hides with minimal tools and no environmental impact by using Indian brain-tanning or Old European oak-chips or vegetable **tanning** methods for historically accurate, very soft hides either for further conversion into finished clothing and artifacts for Indian or Fur Trade Mountain Man Rendezvous sales. Great project for shoulder season and winter, can be done in a home garage, very labor intensive, almost no set-up costs. Larry Belize's

book “*Braintanning the Sioux Way*” or Richardson’s “*Deerskins Into Buckskins*” are excellent guides and available through Amazon.com if your local shops can’t find them.

**These are just some of the entrepreneurial opportunities I suspect** (*based on too little information or time*) might be viable in Gardiner or that part of Paradise Valley. There are probably quite a few other opportunities in consumer services (haircuts, dog grooming, insurance sales, tax preparation, lawyering, curtain-making, plumbing, roofing, property management, housecleaning, fence building, food delivery, midwifing, catering, concrete repair, counseling, personal fitness training, housepainting, horse-training, saddle-making, home health care, etc. might all be viable part-time or full-time home-based businesses in the area already or potentially.)

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## **MAIN TOPIC: ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES**

### **ISSUE: MANUFACTURING**

I always harp on manufacturing because the dollars it brings in to a local economy like Gardiners will turn over an average of 8-9x in the local economy vs. the 2-3x that tourism and recreation dollars will. Homebuilding by the way is as high as 24x which makes it a huge stimulus to any community’s economy unless all the labor comes from outside and commutes.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES:**

While **E.L.K. Inc.** was the only manufacturer we stumbled across inside Gardiner, and it’s a neat company with all kinds of growth potential since it’s developed products for drawing coyotes, dog training, etc. as well as versatile competences in creating instructional DVD’s and Videos, an e-commerce website, national catalog, sophisticated relationships with national media, and worked the trade show/wholesaler market better and longer than most companies serving the sportsman’s market. With 70 million+ dogs in the U.S. and coyotes a plague across the country, ELK’s new markets certainly dwarf elk hunters. A spin-off could be a hunting dog training school in Paradise Valley using Don Laubach’s very impressive methods. That would also encourage hunting dog breeding operations in the area.

The **Lighthouse book and tape publishing arm** at the Royal Teton Ranch would be one of the largest employers in Park County and since it’s translating into something like 14 languages, those core competencies could readily grow into translating technical reference books and other complex non-fiction that the emerging language translation software just can’t handle but the highly educated staff there could. Adding printing presses, bookbindery, DVD-duplication, etc. are possibilities. Book publishers historically have sent out all the actual reproduction and binding because the equipment was so costly and the freight considerable as well; ever cheaper/smarter equipment is changing that and of course more books are being delivered over the web to be printed out by the recipient’s laser printer/copier. The 75 or so employees also put this enterprise at a scale where adding production equipment, expanding translation work, etc. is far more doable than if the firm is a handful of folks.

**Montana Travertine's** quarries in the area, and stonecutting/polishing operation in Livingston, are starting to realize their potential as well and could grow considerably. In our research over the years on the cut stone market, it's been booming for about 20 years now as it's become mostly decorative surface instead of structural support. That makes color and texture paramount while load-bearing, hardness, and fire-resistance characteristics lose importance.

The Romans (as well as the later Vatican City) clad their best public structures in travertine over concrete and/or brick walls as it's soft limestone is far easier to cut with bronze, iron, and steel drills than marble...their quarry outside Rome is still in operation 2300+ years later which has to make it among the world's oldest continually operating businesses. It's not an ideal material for floor tiles (too soft), countertops (needs chemical sealing like granite), but it makes an excellent wall-cladding indoor or outdoors, table top, award plaque and can be cut with industrial-diamond-edged saws, waterjet cutters, lasers, or older-style slow steel sawblades, so recent advances in technology are suddenly making this much more doable. The travertine in the area is also "pharmaceutical-grade" limestone in it's purity so it would have potential uses in food and drug manufacturing as well.

**Spec-Tec** in Paradise Valley employs over 25 area residents in manufacturing an assortment of small magnetic sensors for incorporation into all sorts of products including the Space Shuttle and International Space Station. The credibility, customer base, and expertise they've built up over the years position them for producing other sensors for the same customers as well so if they make the right choices, they could become one of the County's largest employers over the next 5-10 years.

**Montana BoatBuilders** near Emigrant designs and builds beautiful wooden driftboats (featured in the Orvis catalogs) as well as some other intriguing designs for duckhunting and airboats, and is at the same stage that Chris-Craft was long ago in moving from a few custom boats each year to larger scale production, again heading them towards many new jobs and likely spin-off suppliers.

**Golden Ratio Woodworks** between Emigrant and Gardiner IS among the top 5 manufacturers in Park County and a large one for Montana with between 85-100 crew building wooden massage tables for sale all over the world. Those skills and tooling could obviously adapt readily to other sorts of furniture or clinical fixtures, or additional sales of other items to their customer base of massage therapists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, spas, sports facilities, etc. The owner has also been developing a basalt quarry nearby so adding stone-cutting, large stone handling, and shipping capacity is certain while he's also exploring surprising applications of basalt that could also generate many new good jobs in the Gardiner area.

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## **MAIN TOPIC: ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES**

### **ISSUE: ENERGY INDEPENDENCE**

While full energy independence makes sense if a home is so far from the centralized power infrastructure that it makes easy economic sense, there are current and emerging technologies to reduce current heating/cooling/ power costs at area homes and businesses.

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES:**

Wind energy came up. Area rancher Gordon Brittan who teaches at the Wheeler Center at MSU/Bozeman has more practical knowledge and experience about small scale wind energy equipment, installation, etc. than just about anyone in the whole state (he also operates the solid waste incinerator in Livingston. [wheeler@montana.campus.mci.net](mailto:wheeler@montana.campus.mci.net) or 994-5208. Going to the website for the American Wind Energy Association and the U.S. Dept. of Energy National Renewable Energy Laboratory is the best way to get started learning about wind in all regards (NREL also does the mapping of where the wind resources are that are the next step to look at and can be downloaded from the web.)

<http://www.awea.org/> and <http://www.nrel.gov/> .

[http://www.energyatlas.org/PDFs/atlas\\_state\\_MT.pdf](http://www.energyatlas.org/PDFs/atlas_state_MT.pdf) discusses Montana’s specific renewable energy resources and it looks like this part of Park County has very uneconomic wind resources. A \$3-4,000 anemometer to record wind speed at 30-50’ for a year might reveal that the funneling effect of the valley provided some adequate wind resources but it wouldn’t be the way to bet.

**Solar** cell arrays on rooftops, particularly large roofs like the school’s, are becoming more and more economic as the silicon computer chip material migrates into solar cell components. If you contact Northwestern Energy about using the Universal System Benefit funds for solar cells, energy conservation measures like better insulated windows, more efficient lighting, etc., facilities like the school could considerably reduce their energy costs.

**Ground source heat pumps** for heating and cooling may make a lot of sense given the town appears to mostly use propane now. Contact Park Electric Cooperative in Livingston as they either will have such a program like Yellowstone Valley Electric Cooperative in Huntley does, implement one, or direct you to vendors (it’s a standalone installation so you don’t have to be on the grid to use it.) This is a very proven technology in increasing use over the past 20 years, using the temperature differential between underground and aboveground. There’s probably a local business opportunity installing these in the area.

Looking at the average age and construction standards of most of the homes in town, I suspect there’d be considerable utility bill savings potential. Obviously that’d make surviving the off-season cheaper too. Upgrading windows to Low-emissivity glass/vinyl frames, upgrading roof insulation, replacing old water heaters/dishwashers/air conditioners /refrigerators, earth berming foundations, planting more trees in town, more awnings, etc. would all make considerable differences. Northwestern Energy offers energy audits for home and business and that’s a great way to start. Some improvements may be fundable out of the Universal System Benefits funds (from everyone’s utility bills), lower income households will qualify for Energy Share MT help, and Park County could apply for a MT Dept. of Commerce Community Development Block Grant from the Housing program, contact Ethan Stapp [estapp@mt.gov](mailto:estapp@mt.gov) or Leslie Edgcomb at [ledgcomb@mt.gov](mailto:ledgcomb@mt.gov) that would establish a small pool for low and moderate income county residents to borrow from. I’m assuming propane costs are going up as both petroleum and natural gas have and electricity has been so reducing these growing monthly costs would make a considerable difference in resident’s lives and help many retain their homes.

[http://housing.state.mt.us/Hous\\_HM.asp](http://housing.state.mt.us/Hous_HM.asp)

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## MAIN TOPIC: ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

### ISSUE: ARTIST OPPORTUNITIES

Walking the streets of Gardiner, the team was consistently struck with how many special, interesting, and attractive homes with real personality the town has. That's very appealing to artists both to live in and to stimulate them. Coupled with mild weather, stunning landscapes and paintable wildlife wandering through the front yard it makes a natural artists colony while the flow of 100,000 plus visitors with the incomes to pay good to excellent prices for art is an ideal intersection for the arts.

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES:

Current home prices mean the artist would already have to be very successful nationally to afford it, and such artists have been moving to or emerging from Montana for a century now...a profile article on the community for a magazine like *American Artist*, *Southwest Art*, or *Art of the Rockies* might well be all the trigger that's needed. An area writer and photographer would collaborate and submit the completed article to the magazine rather than just sending a press release and hoping the magazine seizes upon the idea. Ideally these would be profiles of area artists that also really emphasized where and how they lived rather than just their work, so a number of pieces over the years built the mystique. Hal Rothman's book "*Devil's Bargains, Tourism in the New American West*" has an excellent description of how Santa Fe became an arts center while Meyer's "*Pistols & Paintbrushes*" really digs into how Taos & Santa Fe became artists clusters. The same process started here with Bierstadt, Moran, and Haynes works for the Northern Pacific Railroad to develop tourist interest in Yellowstone, but while our railroads gradually lost interest in this, the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad kept at it longer until it built decades worth of momentum that continues to this day.

Park County has among the most vibrant, successful, and diverse arts economy in the state and Northern Plains/Rockies. With the Firehouse Players in Livingston, it made me wonder why there wasn't a summer stock theater company in Gardiner, using either the movie theater, community center, or school's stages since all 3 would work (in an ideal world Gardiner would have 3 separate summer stock theater ventures each tied to a particular theater so tourists, kids, guest workers, day visitors, and local residents had different shows available most nights say from July 1-Labor Day. I heard rumors that there is quite a bit of talent and skill locally already and Gardiner has a very long heritage of shows folks would come a long ways to watch.

One resident I talked with about it mentioned maybe the infamous "Ringling 5" would set up at a local theater for a summer's worth of their shows...that's too good of an idea for me to take credit for and might be close enough to the Ringling 5's stomping grounds in Meagher County to lure them. There is a lot of talent scattered throughout Paradise Valley as well, including many technical folks and writers, as well as I think nearly all of the campuses in the state have some theater folks as do most high schools (most of the summer stock theaters I'm aware of rely on high school and college students for much of the crew. ) The Big Fork Summer Playhouse and the Virginia City theater are what got me thinking along this line for Gardiner after the comments about lack of things to do in the evenings. Stand-up comedy, musical performances, magic shows, lectures, slide shows, etc. are all additional ways to fill a stage with something worth watching but with far less work than full-blown plays.

MSU-Bozeman's touring company "**Shakespeare in the Park**" has probably played Gardiner before but any of your 3 theaters would be a nice setting. <http://www2.montana.edu/shakespeare/>

Looking at your new picnic enclosure at your park on the edge of the school, I was struck by how readily it's surrounding hillside could be turned into a **natural outdoor amphitheater** with some work with a Bobcat's blade and maybe some organized stones. It'd be the same as what the ancient Greeks originally built for the first dramas, tragedies, and comedies, designed to be heard by the spoken rather than electronically-amplified voice and would provide another nice venue for guitarist/singers, church choirs, string quartets from either the adults or high school, lectures, comics, town meetings, public hearing, etc. I think it could nearly all be done with sweat and borrowed equipment rather than hundreds of thousands of dollars, and could certainly be done over several years during quiet times of shoulder season.

### **The Movie Theater as a Movie Theater again**

If the town wants to reopen the movie theater, and it sounded like the film projector needed to be replaced, here's a quick intro: <http://stuffo.howstuffworks.com/movie-projector2.htm> and here's a resource for finding parts or used projectors <http://38.fixprojector.com/35mmmovieprojectors/> may help them (if this theater given it's size uses a 16mm projector, those are cheap and available since most schools had them too, while the 35mm & 70mm movie projectors were limited to full-fledged movie theaters. The new digital ones are still pretty pricey and rapidly getting outmoded so it'd likely be a dangerous investment for here. You can rent old and not so old films to show there too, generally cheaper than a current box office release as it's for a fixed day rental instead of a percentage of the ticket sales like a current release. Running classic children's movies, Westerns, nature films, films with ties to the area for local color, or for that matter a shoulder season film festival are all options and can be fundraisers for local organizations as much as a profitable business.

<http://www.reelclassics.com/Buy/films.htm> connects you to most of the sources.

As both the Community Center and movie theater obviously date back to the silent films and vaudeville, you could bring in local live performers, follow that with silent comedies accompanied by live piano/organ, and finish with an ice cream social out on the street (blocked off) on a summer's evening with the hosting charity/service club in period attire (be a great opportunity for barbershop quartets/Sweet Adelines, school band performance of Sousa marches, etc.)

### **Yellowstone Park Historical Archives expansion**

This would be a significant tourist experience in Gardiner but only if it develops into a true public museum of YNP instead of a vast repository accessible only to a few scholars. That's the classic dilemma of nearly all NPS resources and as someone familiar with the Little Big Horn National Battlefield site, with it's thousands of inaccessible archived materials and paltry public displays, if you wait for the NPS to solve this it could well take another hundred plus years (that is how fast they get these done if you look at their history. )

To display materials smaller than the old park buses, I'm wildly guessing it would take about 25,000 sq. ft. to be a 1-2 hour museum experience. So call it a \$4-10 million dollar expansion, probably between \$6-7 million using rough per square foot costs to build and display it, with an additional operating budget of probably around \$500,000/yr. to staff it, interpret it, clean it, and secure it.

By adding an additional \$2 per visitor vehicle admission for the park, that'd generate enough to build it in within 3-4 years. Then charging admission for the museum of \$5 per person and assuming 1 in 5 visitors coming through Gardiner stopped and went through it would generate the operating budget. I

suspect this would be the cleanest, simplest, fastest way to do it, but I don't know if the park's fee system currently allows or blocks this sort of targeted use although it's an extremely common way to pay for other public venues like stadiums, convention centers, parking lots, etc.

The Park Service has it's own system for deciding on, designing, building, and operating facilities that would have to be navigated. Essentially the expansion would have to seize the heart of a Park Superintendent and the permanent staff who'll be stationed here the 5-10 years it would take to get done "on the fast track." Certainly seems worth doing both for the visitor experience and to keep the contents from essentially just being warehoused for posterity.

### **Wildlife Viewing – Guided- in other words they pay somebody...**

Why is this important to Gardiner? It's not restricted to a season like hunting so it could provide varying levels of year-round revenue for guides. Guides for wildlife viewing don't need the licensing outfitter have as long as they don't include fishing or hunting:

[http://www.discoveringmontana.com/dli/bsd/license/bsd\\_boards/out\\_board/faq.asp](http://www.discoveringmontana.com/dli/bsd/license/bsd_boards/out_board/faq.asp) . That means landowners or their family members, bird enthusiasts, wildlife photographers or painters, school teachers, plant buffs, etc. could be sources for good viewing guides and many private landowners could mark out trails/routes on their land for a fee.

Anybody can look at stuff, it's worth a fee to get taken to it, have it explained and put in context. We often assume most other people have our same level of knowledge about a subject that intrigues us and also assume no one would pay us for our comments and observations. But how many of us would enjoy a nature program that wasn't narrated, edited, or focused? If you don't know what you're seeing, you're missing most of it. So beyond talking about the critters, the plants, geology, weather, ecosystem, river, volcanoes, soils, primitive peoples, etc. means many different guides can provide considerably different experiences over the same terrain. In our tours of the Gardiner Area, all of our local tour guides were fascinating and had lots of color commentary, context, history, and analysis that made it all a far richer experience than just looking and guessing.

It's a rapidly growing tourist experience in many parts of the world so many visitors are prepared to pay for it, want to go, and looking for a variety of services. Adjusting experiences to the walking abilities (and attention span of say small children versus lifelong bird watchers) is particularly successful.

### **Resort Tax**

Gardiner has too many unpaved streets, enormous tourist impacts, and other needs for emergency services, etc. for a resort tax to sound like a frill. Since the existing tax base obviously hasn't been adequate or accessible for getting this done, this would be a good tool as West Yellowstone, Red Lodge, and Whitefish have discovered. Business has grown with the improvements, rather than fled to avoid the 4% price hike (*more people flee bad infrastructure and few public services too than flee sales taxes.*) Theoretical arguments can continue forever about how just about everything should be exempted so it only soaks the other guy, the visitor, but if the results of the resort tax are used on stuff like streets, sidewalks, water, emergency services, etc. that the permanent residents will use considerably more than the tourists, making only the tourists pay seems unfair.

A Resort Tax would provide locally-controlled and locally-directed funds as opposed to county, state, or federally allocated funds and that'll make a world of difference in addressing Gardiner's needs. It

also creates local matching dollars to draw other funders (county, state, feds) into contributing towards projects like an EMS building, a deputy station, public lavatories, city park, Rails to Trails or riverwalk, firefighting equipment, 4 wheel drive ambulance, etc..

One of the things I wondered about when I got to Gardiner was whether the town needed or would benefit from a Resort Tax or if it was a tool to be left in the toolbox awhile longer. I'm convinced by what I saw and heard.

The Northern Rockies RC&D has already been looking into that for Cooke City and I'm happy to work with them in assisting Gardiner in getting a Resort Tax put to a vote.

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## **MAIN TOPIC: PARK SERVICE**

### **ISSUE: GARDINER NEEDS A VOICE**

From what I've read, particularly in histories of the park service and YNP, it's always been an organization whose reach was far greater than it's grasp. Now with hundreds of parks, battlefields, and other national monuments (300+ of those alone) along with decades of accumulated maintenance and replacement needs, assuming NPS management will always be distracted and cash poor seems realistic. Conrad Wirth's tenure as head of NPS 50 years ago shows that's not carved in stone but his proactive approach remains unique in NPS history from what I could tell.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES:**

The inadequate resources and a deep basic mission conflict throughout NPS about protecting the sites from the public and making the sites accessible to the public is probably the single strongest reason for Gardiner to incorporate. At the start of the assessment I didn't think it would be worthwhile but listening to the community and thinking about it, **Gardiner needs a formal local government to negotiate on a more peer-to-peer, long-term basis with both NPS and the Forest Service.** Many of these negotiations, projects, etc. will take longer than the tenure of a Park Superintendent, let alone that of a few community volunteers without more official standing than this year's Chamber leadership...unfortunately government tends to listen to government.

A Mayor, while not a panacea and often ignored as well, is much harder to ignore. City staff, albeit it would be but a handful for Gardiner's size and taxbase, can undertake and maintain formally contracted relationships like for shared services, impact fees, access, wildlife management, road maintenance, etc. that now I guess would be up to the County Commissioners to negotiate and oversee. Obviously too much happens in Gardiner as a result of this relationship that the County doesn't notice...as with all the counties I know, the town the courthouse is in tends to shape the agenda and list of pressing problems while the outlying towns have to make a lot of noise to get heard.

Using either Resort Tax or City Tax dollars, I'd suggest joint trips with West Yellowstone and probably Cooke City representatives to meet not only with the Superintendent of the Park but also the regional manager in Denver who oversees this staffer so you have more than one connection for getting things done. Traveling with staffers from the Congressional delegation would be very effective for these as NPS has lived and died based on the actions of the Appropriations Committee (both Burns and Rehberg

are now on their respective Appropriations Committee and one or both oversee the Dept. of the Interior as well and serve on Ag which oversees USDA's Forest Service.) A Mayor could meet with the delegation's state directors in Billings to present Gardiner's problems (and opportunities like expanding the Yellowstone Archives or keeping the road plowed between Cooke City and Gardiner through the Winter) in a coherent, detailed, and ongoing manner. West Yellowstone has been the much squeakier wheel in this regard and has made real progress in addressing impacting NPS decisions.

Oddly the grumpier and more cantankerous that the City of Gardiner gets with NPS, the more likely it is to be treated fairly and included at the table when decisions affecting it are being made, while being mostly quiet and polite obviously haven't worked very well for Gardiner's interests. YNP Superintendents are generally on the career track to step up to heading a region so they're unusually interested in avoiding black eyes and adverse publicity. The National Parks Conservation Association, which has a field staffer based in Livingston I learned recently, is a long time partner, advocate, and nag of NPS and might be an excellent alliance for both Gardiner and West Yellowstone.

Gardiner will still do better working with West Yellowstone, Cooke City, and the Commissioners for Park, Gallatin, & Carbon Counties since all share most of the same impacts from NPS decisions. Taking action jointly, negotiating as a team, generating media coverage for your side of the stories, and coming up with matching resources will all be far more effective than operating singly.

<http://www.headwatersnews.org/HeadwatersSub.html> is a free subscription to a University of Montana webservice that offers a weekday list of articles from newspapers across the West that can serve as an ongoing education in how these issues are being addressed (a lot of NPS and Forest Service decisions and actions are included.) It's interesting and useful content for anyone who lives West of the 100<sup>th</sup> Meridian.

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**MAIN TOPIC: PARK SERVICE**

**ISSUE: FRONT OR PARK STREET'S NPS UNFENCED BISON PASTURE**

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES:**

Short of having the NPS put a bison-proof fence (10' fence posts with 4' of it in concrete) to end the days of irresponsible "open range" funneling of big wild game into the town, creating a plant barrier of say 50' of densely planted native juniper and other coniferous shrubs would be a great start and also cut down on the dust. It'd also discourage vehicles, pets, and tourists from walking there. Intermixing it with local basalt boulders for visual interest could make it reasonably attractive.

Earlier in this I've suggest that land as the place to put an Emergency Services bldg and helipad, public lavatories, and making another hundred diagonal parking spots to better address the impact of park visitor crowding would make sense too. With Resort Tax and perhaps City Tax revenues to provide match along with perhaps other pieces from the Forest Service's grants, MT Dept. of Transportation Community Transportation Enhancement Program grants, or even Fish Wildlife & Parks (maybe fence

money, maybe search and rescue) that would allow some partnering rather than just begging from the NPS to get some or all of this done.

Planting the section could be done by volunteers during shoulder season simply with the park's permission and some technical assistance on selecting plantings. Adding some tree-shaded benches would likely also be very popular with visitors (the older the population gets, the more a convenient place to sit becomes.) Don't forget trash cans near the benches.

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**MAIN TOPIC: PARK SERVICE**

**ISSUE: SEASONAL WORKER HOUSING**

Mammoth's role as a quasi middle-class suburb of Gardiner is an odd one. Adding more seasonal worker housing there puts the workers close to work but little else which must impact the workers' attitude, retention, etc. somewhat.

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES:**

We didn't learn enough to clearly see how it might work out, but several residents pointed out how the additional and modernized worker housing (to reflect the growing workforce of seniors and adults, even couples, rather than the barracks a bunch of college students would tolerate.) Without modifying both existing worker housing and addressing the changing available workforce's needs, NPS and Xanterra will force themselves into relying on increasingly more desperate workers from all over the world. Desperate foreign workers become important not only because of the poor pay, poor working conditions, long hours, and monotonous work they'll tolerate, but because they have no way to return home or leave to look for better work. While this allows the employer to make budget or profit targets, it imposes a considerable, unrecognized cost on the adjacent communities as well as being far less cost effective than it appears.

Building new worker housing on the sizable flat ground owned by NPS on the edges of town would have the least impact on the park itself while also being able to access the city water and sewer system (a cost savings of several million dollars potentially), city roads, city amenities like the grocery store, restaurants, rentals, etc.. It would increase local retail sales during the summer, boosting resort tax revenues as well as strengthening local businesses. Many of the workers might well also take additional part-time jobs both to increase income and fill empty time so it could somewhat alleviate the worker shortage in Gardiner's summers.

Applying pressure on Xanterra to pay higher wages and improve living conditions rather than just cast it's recruiting net worldwide would have a lot of benefits for Gardiner. If Gardiner doesn't raise standards and expectations, the emerging national labor shortage, because of the 50% fewer generation following the Baby Boom, will only worsen the situation. Santa Fe's been doing that while Vail, Aspen, and others try to ignore a workforce sleeping 8-10 on the floor of a single bedroom (or that many living in an old van by the side of the road as one reporter interviewed them.) One of the listening session participants mentioned a rumor that at least one Gardiner service worker'd spent his summer there living in a refrigerator carton...if it's untrue for Gardiner, it's already true for many resort communities.

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**MAIN TOPIC: HOUSING**

**ISSUE: AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Gardiner’s landlocked status may well be making it one of the top 5 most expensive housing markets in the state and since the average household income would need to rise to at least \$70-90,000/yr to handle \$200-250,000 mortgages on basic homes, this is a heckuva problem if Gardiner’s to have a working local population rather than just wealthy retirees and absentee second home owners as many resort communities are headed towards.

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES:**

The usual defacto solution (no plan, just drifted there) is to force the working population to gradually live a long commute away but with land prices in Paradise Valley where they are, either reconstituting Jardine as a working class suburb or turning Emigrant into a town with a significant water treatment/wastewater system and high density housing would be the only obvious solutions.

I noticed the ranchlands along the highway could be subdivided and converted into middle and upper middle class suburbs, but the infrastructure cost (water and sewer, along with roads are a big hurdle) and beauty of those locations would likely result in 1-5 acre lots (making a water system untenable) with \$350,000-\$1 million homes, so while it would add to the customer base/population of the valley, albeit many would be second homes, it wouldn’t solve (and probably actually worsen) the affordable housing for people earning typical Montana incomes (that means \$50-150,000 homes generally.)

A good reference for analyzing costs and layouts for adding more residential housing is this book by an experienced civil engineer/real estate developer: “*Real Estate Land Development Practices, A Textbook on Developing Land into Finished Lots*” by David E. Johnson, © 1997 by the American Society of Civil Engineers Press. It’s pretty conventional, so looking at Sim Van der Rijn’s books and articles on *Sustainable Communities* would be worthwhile to look at other, often higher density solutions with smarter land use.

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**MAIN TOPIC: HOUSING**

**ISSUE: REPAIR AND RENOVATION OF EXISTING HOMES**

Most of the homes I saw were 40-100 years old, built when insulation standards were far lower, window and door technology poor, materials options relatively few, home usage different, electrical demands of just lamps and radios instead of a home computer, stereo, tv, etc. , and before multiple vehicles were the norm.

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES:**

It looks like most of the larger yards and lots have gradually been sold as smaller building lots or expanded onto which means:

**Go up.** Short of razing the building and starting fresh, adding a second story can often be done with some creative engineering to create new load-bearing structures rather than the often inadequate existing walls, i.e. extending the second floor beyond the first floor's footprint and using perimeter masonry columns to support it. Adding a living space floor above a previously single story garage is also more feasible. This would be a creative way to use home equity loans based on the wildly appreciated home values to further raise the value of the home. If rental space was created, i.e. over the garage or rooms for rent, that could provide the cash flow to pay off the home equity loan as well (and address seasonal and worker housing needs too.)

**Go down.** There was an interesting piece in the current Fortune where a former hard-rock underground miner was now excavating caves beneath homes for home theaters, storage, pantries, rec. rooms, etc. and there's a long tradition of that in mountainous country. With likely a few remaining hardrock miners from Jardine still around, that might be a possibility.

**Reconfigure layouts/uses and upgrade finishes.**

Reduce operating costs. There are a number of tools that probably half the population qualifies for, based on household income primarily. Most of them for the region are administered through the Human Resources Development Council in Bozeman, like EnergyShare. Northwestern Energy does home energy audits and can tap the Universal System Benefit program sometimes for making the proposed changes. The community or county could apply to the MT Dept. of Commerce HOME program for a grant to set up a small low-interest revolving loan fund to fund home improvements that would save significant utility costs (creating a way to pay back the loan) such as replacing old windows and doors with well-insulated (R 2+) ones, adding more wall and ceiling insulation, etc.. If it was done as a grants program like many folks imagine or hear about on TV, it'd help only a handful of lucky, aggressive initial applicants (the inherent fallacy of many demonstration grants/projects-what's the point of demonstrating the success of something that can't be repeated or broadly done?)

**Volunteer Effort:** In many communities such as Billings, volunteers come together to paint the homes of the elderly or disabled, build wheelchair ramps, or even build a new house in the case of Habitat for Humanity. Given the mild winters and considerable free time of shoulder seasons and winter, that might go a long ways towards sprucing up the town and especially helping low-income seniors. Paint's an amazing motivator for neighborhood clean-up as is getting people to move their rusting "projects" inside or under tarps.

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**MAIN TOPICS: TOURISM**

**MAIN ISSUE: MARKETING MONTANA'S ENTRANCES**

Marketing Montana's entrances to YNP to the Black Hills/Eastern I-90 travelers as Wyoming does.

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES:**

This is one of those profound insights (from Merv Olson, not me) that creates a "well, duhhhh" moment. The billboard or highway signage presence that Wyoming creates down there probably diverts thousands to cross the Big Horn Mountains instead of staying on I-90. It's too big and long of a project for Gardiner to tackle by themselves since it involves about 200 miles of I-90, but it's an ideal idea to

present noisily and repeatedly to the Yellowstone & Custer Country Tourism Regions during their annual marketing planning (someone from Gardiner must sit on the Yellowstone Country Board, probably a hotel manager?) <http://travelmontana.org/faq/regcontact04.SHTM> takes you to the contact people. They'd have the budget for the billboards and should be quick to grasp the size of opportunity (about 750,000 people visit the Black Hills annually, about 300,000 visit the Little Big Horn Battlefield National Monument annually so that's a big opportunity.)

Renting a billboard or three in Wyoming would only run a few thousand dollars, a small amount in either region's budget and certainly if split between the two benefiting regions. I-90's a historic travel corridor between Wyoming and to Butte at least but we've mostly ignored that since the multi-state "Old West Trail" marketing program faded away in the early 1980's after decades of success (if things work we tend to abandon them, an unfortunate Montana trait recurrent in our history.)

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## **MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM**

### **ISSUE: EVENING EXPERIENCES FOR ADULTS AND KIDS**

The tourism research I've read really emphasizes this as the often forgotten portion, especially in Montana where we focus mostly on what you can see or do in daylight and full energy. I guess we assume all the tourists fall asleep exhausted about 7pm.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES:**

It makes a considerable difference, evening entertainment, as to whether visitors have dinner here and especially stay the night or push on down the road say to Livingston, Bozeman, or Billings. Gardiner's obviously not been retaining the number of visitors it should given its location and the gap in stuff to do in the evening may well be the culprit.

I've addressed this earlier with the ideas for the 3 theaters and possibly an outdoor amphitheater at the town park. What else?

**Encouraging street musical performers** can be another easy tool since a singer with an acoustic guitar and a hat for tips is both low impact and a nice amenity. Billings' summer farmer's market will typically have 4-8 impromptu acts playing throughout the morning on the street, ranging from veteran bluegrass 4-5 piece bands to young teens with violins, horns, or guitars. The variety and informality is key and I'd suspect that many of the summer guest workers play an instrument (the less mass media you have, the more likely you are to play and sing instead of sit and watch...a hundred years ago the majority of adult Americans could play an instrument with 20% able to play 3 or more.) Offering hourly musical instrument rentals to the guest workers might be a profitable sideline and a way to facilitate that as I doubt many were able to bring them with them.

**The music teachers** at the school, band and orchestra members at the school, retired folks in the area would all be some additional sources of performers. Rather than try to coordinate it, I'd probably just announce it and encourage it so it could be spontaneous (the musicians that didn't make enough tips to make it worthwhile would move, change their tunes, or quit.)

**Cowboy poetry readings**, story-telling, lectures, tall-tale contests about Yellowstone, artists' quickdraws, oral book readings both by fans and area authors like Richard S. Wheeler, Christopher Paolini, Landon Jones, etc. would all be easy to do with the theaters in town.

**The evening restaurants in town would want to look harder at their menus** (do they feature enough local food, fit the dietary needs of health conscious travelers, offer the right ambience to make it a special night, have any entertainment going on or even just an interesting, conversation-provoking décor? ) Livingston has done phenomenally well with it's mix and caliber of dinner offerings at many places which suggests it's capturing the majority of Gardiner-exiting tourists' tummies.

**Does Gardiner do anything with street food vending**, i.e. from carts? That could address the tourists at peak season with very quick meals

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## **MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM**

### **ISSUE: UTILIZING GARDINER'S HISTORY**

#### **RESOURCES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**A living history exhibit** during peak season or as a short multi-day event during shoulder season would take a lot of work but could be fascinating. By going back to the prehistorical obsidian miner/knappers/traders of the era of dog-pulled travois, tipis the size a dog could pull so far smaller, etc. instead of the more familiar horse culture era, it'd be very fresh and interesting while also much smaller scale to make. Kids would especially enjoy the critical role that dogs play as beasts of burden, hunting companions, guides, watchdogs, and stewmeat. Karl Schlosser, Brian Fagan, and Francis Jennings all have relatively recent books about that little-known (pre-1800) period and cultures that would be starting points.

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## **MAIN TOPIC: OTHER ISSUES**

### **ISSUE: INCORPORATE OR NOT INCORPORATE?**

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES:**

<http://www.montana.edu/wwwlgc/tassist.htm> takes you to the Montana League of Cities & Towns website and resources. They may well be the best prepared to help you look at all aspects of this complex question and also determine the process for going through the public election to become one. Alec Hanson is their Executive Director and they draw on many of the faculty at MSU/Bozeman for their research so that proximity could be very helpful. I'd think about having the League staff down for a workshop open to anyone in town about what it means to incorporate as a town as the starting point.

The Assessor at the County Courthouse may be able to give you some very rough ideas as to what city tax rates might be (a choice rather than a mandate), how much revenue they would generate from the current property values in Gardiner, and that would be very useful in figuring out if there'd be enough revenue to add enough services to make the taxes worthwhile to bear.

In other words, if it would only fund 1 badly paid city staffer while the existing districts, sewer, fire, water, etc. continued to handle the rest, I can't see enough value for the town to pay an extra \$100-200,000/yr in taxes.

Gardiner might choose not to have a city staff but have a city council and mayor so there's a forum to work through community problems and a formal leadership to negotiate with other government bodies, while continuing to have the majority of public services handled by the districts. It might fund a Sheriff's Reserve program so additional local deputies were available during the busy season or big problems like a multi-vehicle accident or house party turned violent. That would probably be the cheapest way to expand and deepen this part of the County's law enforcement resources. It might also be used to offset some costs of the County Road Dept. for paving more of the town's streets along with Local Option Tax Revenues...or help fund a sidewalk and stormwater drainage program.

By the nature of any community this size, let alone with enormous external impacts from it's Federal neighbors, Gardiner needs some kind of open, broadly accessible forum for all of the community that's interested in an issue to participate, share concerns, identify solutions that work for most concerns, and implement them. New England style Town Meetings could be an example that's robust and cheap..."Community Council" is more the Montana term and doesn't require incorporation to have one. If Gardiner didn't have to negotiate with federal, state, and county entities more than most places, that's what I'd recommend, but I think a formal government role i.e. "Mayor of Gardiner" might, just might, carry enough weight to make it worthwhile. But that's a guess based on the many capable people I met in Gardiner during this who showed a lot of leadership, broad concerns, and depth (in other words, plenty of solid mayoral candidates.)

I'll be happy to work with Gardiner on exploring this complex choice as will the Northern Rockies RC&D and doubtless others.

**THANKS FOR THE GREAT HOSPITALITY AND DEEPLY CONSIDERED OBSERVATIONS...**

**As Gardiner is part of my service area for Commerce, I'll help as I can.**

**REPORT BY: Richard Knatterud, Project Engineer**  
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**MAIN TOPIC: PUBLIC FACILITIES**

Introduction: Several comments were heard about beautification of the Town and the Front Street area in particular. Other comments related to a visitor center in Front Street area.

**ISSUE: Aesthetics, Drainage and More...**

Aesthetics and drainage of Front Street could be improved. Visitor Center could draw people to retail area in Gardiner. The new YNP research center may become more of a tourist draw when the Park's transportation museum is funded as part of phase II. Some historical buildings, such as jail could use work.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Community Transportation Enhancement Program has eligible categories that may be of benefit to Gardiner. Application would have to go through Park County. Eligible categories include, but are not limited to: landscaping and other scenic beautification; establishment of transportation museums; pedestrian and bicycle facilities; and historic preservation.

**RESOURCES:**

Montana Department of Transportation  
Community Transportation Enhancement Program  
Mike Wherley, phone 444-4221

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**MAIN TOPIC: PUBLIC FACILITIES**

Introduction: Management of wastewater was an issue brought up by one of the business/chamber members.

**ISSUE: WASTEWATER**

Gardiner needs to assess its wastewater collection and treatment capabilities.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

Gardiner (Park County) is pursuing a Preliminary Engineering Report grant through the Treasure State Endowment Program. Gardiner will need to incorporate into a sewer district if they wish to be eligible

for TSEP construction grant funds. Gardiner has already accessed TSEP grant funds for its water treatment plant improvements project.

**RESOURCES:**

Montana Department of Commerce  
Treasure State Endowment Program  
Jim Edgcomb, phone 841-2785

Lori Brenner  
Grant writer/consultant for Livingston/Park Co.  
222-6111

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**MAIN TOPIC: AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Introduction: Several comments were heard about the lack of affordable housing for both permanent and seasonal workers.

**ISSUE: BUILDABLE SPACE AND AFFORDABILITY**

The buildable footprint of Gardiner is limited by adjacent geology and land ownership. Teachers and others noted that affordable housing is hard to come by. Seasonal workers for Xanterra and other businesses have trouble finding a place.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

One possibility may be the Montana Community Development Block Grant Program. Housing projects under the categories of community revitalization, housing rehabilitation, new construction, etc. may be available if they can demonstrate that at least 51% of the project's beneficiaries are low to moderate income (LMI).

**RESOURCES:**

Montana Department of Commerce  
Community Development Block Grant Program  
Gus Byrom, phone 841-2777

HRDC  
Caren Roberty  
587-4486

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**REPORT BY: Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development Coordinator**  
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Thanks to all our Gardiner hosts and the folks we met during our listening sessions. It was a fun experience and we wish you the best in your work to make your community the best that it can be!

## **MAIN TOPIC: PUBLIC FACILITIES**

### **ISSUE: REST ROOMS, VISITOR CENTER, CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

A number of community groups mentioned the need and interest for more public restrooms, a visitor information center and improved chamber of commerce office facilities. While these could be separate projects, there is benefit in looking into a facility that provides space and services for each of these areas.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS (and some resources):**

Gardiner should look at the model provided by West Yellowstone's Visitor Information Center constructed and operated as a cooperative service by the West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce & Convention & Visitors Bureau, National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Forest Service (FS) and the MT Department of Transportation (MDT). A combined facility like this would not be a short-term project because of the multi-agency involvement, but bringing these entities together would provide access to financial and technical resources that none of the entities could provide on their own.

In addition to the agencies listed, the West Yellowstone VIC receives support for staffing and equipment from the Montana Commerce Department's Travel Montana VIC Program. More information on that program is provided in the MAIN TOPIC: Tourism section of this report.

A combined facility like this would fit very well on the triangle of land just south of Park Street. It's location should be easily accessed by the public, provide ample parking and allow visitors to access the business services of downtown Gardiner. It's design or services could also incorporate ideas to address the bottleneck issue at the Park's North Entrance mentioned by numerous groups. If the triangle of land just south of Park Street is not available, the entities would need to look for space that was on the main travel corridor through Gardiner and into the park. For a successful operation, easy access and visibility for the public is key. It should not be tucked away off the beaten path simply because that is the only space available. You would be wasting resources in doing that.

Another entity that might be interested in being a partner in a multi-agency VIC facility would be the Friends of the Beartooth All America Road. While this National Scenic Byway runs between Red Lodge and the NE entrance to the Park near Cooke City, Gardiner serves as a gateway point to access the byway from the northern part of the park.

Another potential funding source for a VIC project would be the Montana Commerce Department's

Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program (TIIP). This is a competitive grant program for tourism-related infrastructure projects (bricks and mortar) sponsored by a non-profit organization. VICs are eligible for TIIP funds, although they are not considered a high priority project. High priority TIIP projects include those that can attract new visitors or retain current visitors based upon cultural, historical, or interpretive significance or activities or that save or protect a recognized cultural or historical Montana treasure. The TIIP Grants Pool has been \$200,000 over the past few years. Normally, 3-5 projects are awarded funds from this pool, out of the 30-35 that apply. The TIIP grant cycle has applications available in March of each year with the submission deadline at the beginning of August. Information and application materials for TIIP Grants are available at <http://travelmontana.state.mt.us/OURPROGRAMS/TourismDevEd.shtm>

**RESOURCES:**

There are a number of funding resources for VIC facility projects:

Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP): These are federal highway dollars distributed to Montana local governments and tribes by the Montana Department of Transportation. They can be used for a variety of projects including VICs, Interpretive Centers, paved walkways/bikeways. For Gardiner, you would apply for these funds through the Park County Commissioners, 222-4107, [commissioners@parkcounty.org](mailto:commissioners@parkcounty.org)

U.S. Forest Service Rural Community Assistance (RCA): Forest Service Ranger Districts submit community project ideas to the Northern Region Headquarters for funding on an annual basis. VICs, bathrooms, community centers, and other public facilities are some of the projects that work for RCA funds. Ken Britton at the Gardiner Ranger District could provide information on how to get a project submitted through this program; 848-7375, [kbritton@fs.fed.us](mailto:kbritton@fs.fed.us)

Yellowstone National Park, NPS, Superintendents Office, 307-344-2002, for information about park plans and programs.

Friends of the Beartooth All America Road: Kim Capron, Project Coordinator, Friends of the Beartooth All American Road, 1108 14th Street #403, Cody, WY 82414, 307 587 3669, [kim@associationresourceswy.com](mailto:kim@associationresourceswy.com).

MT Department of Transportation: Larry Murolo, Facilities Bureau Chief, 444-6163, [lmurolo@mt.gov](mailto:lmurolo@mt.gov). Larry's bureau handles rest area planning/construction/operations and other public service facilities along Montana's primary and interstate highway system. In addition to the multiple agency facility at West Yellowstone, MDT has be part of multi agency & multi state rest area/VIC facilities at Lolo Pass (MT/ID border) and a rest area with visitor information panels at Lost Trail Pass (MT/ID border)

Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program, Montana Department of Commerce, Travel Montana: Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development Coordinator, 841-2795, [victor@visitmt.com](mailto:victor@visitmt.com)

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## MAIN TOPIC: ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

### ISSUE: LOCATION AND STOP FACTOR

Gardiner is both blessed and afflicted by its location. It is one of five gateways into the world's best known national park, a major draw for visitors to this region. Realistically, Gardiner is not the destination for the majority of visitors using the north entrance. It is the community that many visitors pass through on the way to the destination – Mammoth, Old Faithful, Yellowstone Lake, etc. Obviously, Gardiner does get visitors to stay overnight, primarily in the summer visitor season, July through September. There are destination activities and services offered in Gardiner, i.e., whitewater rafting, flyfishing, and hunting, which attract some visitors specifically to Gardiner. And, Gardiner does act as a service center for the Park's public and private sector employees. The community's challenge is and will continue to be how to get the visitors to stop, or at least slow down, and utilize its services. Another opportunity is to better identify the needs of the park workers that the community can help fulfill.

### RECOMMENDATION(S):

In our community meetings there were a couple of business opportunities identified that could help the community attract both visitors and workers for extended stays and spending money. Here are a few ideas for local entrepreneurs or existing businesses to incorporate into their operations:

- **Cybercafe:** The Gardiner Chamber reports that park employees line up during the summer to use their computer to check email or contact the folks back home. Setting up Internet access terminals with existing businesses and charging reasonable fees (half hour, hourly) for usage would be a very doable thing for a wide variety of Gardiner facilities. Prime locations would be cafes and restaurants, coffee houses, book stores, but just about any businesses could offer this if they had space for the terminal, a table and a chair. If DSL or broadband access is not available, then wireless service could be looked at.
- **Artist Opportunities:** While it was mentioned a couple of times that there was a strong artist community or very talented artists in the area evidence of this was sparse in our walk of downtown. There may be more than I saw on our brief walkabout, but I only noticed one art gallery with local art. There were nick-knacks from other regions or countries, but little that was identified as local product. In contrast, Livingston has done a great job of incorporating artist galleries and studios into their business community and community promotions (14 galleries, 3 stoplights is one of their community promos). Gardiner could do more to attract local artists and their works into town. Arts events, showings, creation of public art to be displayed around the community, performances could be organized as part of a program to create “destination” attractions for Gardiner.
- **Yellowstone Park's Historical Archives Facility** in Gardiner: This is a destination-level resource that Gardiner should work with the National Park Service and any “friends” association affiliated with it to develop and promote. This offers a reason for niche groups – researchers, heritage travelers, genealogy interests, transportation historians, conservation interests, and many others – to come to Gardiner to uncover the treasures housed in this facility. In the listening sessions it was mentioned that NPS does not have enough staffing – and maybe facility space -- to provide ongoing public group viewing of archive materials. It was also mentioned that NPS has long range plans to add on to this facility in phases with a transportation display to be

featured in a setting assessable to the general public. I would encourage the Gardiner Community to work with NPS and any “friends” groups to see what kind of assistance the community can provide to make the entire archive facility as accessible to the public as possible. Regularly scheduled public tours of the facility could introduce the public to the resources here. Developing a public display that features some of the highlights from the archives could give visitors a taste of all the great things kept here. Working with educational institutions, Elderhostel, or others to hold archive research training sessions at the facility could be one way to attract visitors in the shoulder seasons.

- **Promote wildlife viewing (guided):** A number of community members talked about challenges local hunting outfitters are facing with a decreasing elk population. While hunting guide services will continue to be a Montana business opportunity, there is an even larger public interest in watchable wildlife. Some of the advantages of watchable wildlife are that the season is much longer, no license lottery to go through, and hunting outfitters can use the same equipment needed for hunts (minus guns) for a longer period of time. One of the challenges for this kind of business is interesting visitors in hiring a watchable wildlife guide when they can see so many animals for free. This requires offering a value-added service such as photo safaris, naturalist guided viewing trips, backcountry horse or hiking trips to rich habitat areas – some special service or experience the visitor can only get with someone who knows the country or the wildlife well. MSU Extension has developed a Nature Tourism video and is at work developing a Tool Box for people interested in looking at starting Nature Tourism business. This type of business not only focuses on wildlife, but geology, botany, eco-systems – any of the natural wonders that Gardiner sits right in the middle of.
- **Resort Tax:** Here’s the brief explanation of this local option tax from the MT Dept. of Revenue website (<http://www.discoveringmontana.com/revenue/forbusinesses/misc.asp#resort>): A resort tax is collected in certain Montana communities with populations under 5,500 who meet specific resort qualifications. The resort tax is a local option sales tax on the retail value of goods and services sold by lodging and camping facilities; restaurants and other food service establishments; public establishments that serve alcoholic beverages by the drink; destination recreational facilities; and establishments that sell luxuries. The rate is set locally and cannot exceed 3%. Local government administers the tax. I believe there are five Montana communities with a Resort Tax: West Yellowstone, Red Lodge, Virginia City, St. Regis, and Whitefish.

#### **RESOURCES:**

Nature Tourism: Dave Sharpe, Community Development Specialist, MSU Extension, Bozeman, MT, 994-5608, [dsharpe@montana.edu](mailto:dsharpe@montana.edu)

Resort Tax Community Contacts:

Town of West Yellowstone: 646-7795

City of Whitefish: 863-2400

City of Red Lodge: 446-1606

St Regis Resort District Board: 649-2658 or the Mineral County Commissioners, 822-3556

Town of Virginia City, 843-5321

Arts Marketing Workshops: The Montana Arts Council, MSU Extension, local economic development

corporations, MT Commerce Department and other local organizations have been hosting workshops for artists on how to market their products. Workshops have been held in Livingston and Bozeman. May 7, 2005, a workshop is scheduled for MSU College of Technology in Billings. For information about others planned later in the year contact Dave Sharpe, Community Development Specialist, MSU Extension, Bozeman, MT, 994-5608, dsharpe@montana.edu, or the Montana Arts Council, 444-6430, <http://art.mt.gov>

Elderhostel: University of Montana – Western, Campus Box 40  
Dillon, MT 59725 (710 South Atlantic Street), Dillon, MT 59725  
406-683-7302, 866-799-9140, FAX: 406-683-7809,  
[http://www.umwestern.edu/shares/outreach\\_share/elderhostel](http://www.umwestern.edu/shares/outreach_share/elderhostel), v-macpherson@umwestern.edu

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## **MAIN TOPIC: RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT**

### **ISSUE: MORE ACTIVITIES FOR BOTH VISITORS AND LOCAL FAMILIES**

The community expressed interest in offering more things for visitors and families to do during their evening stay in Gardiner. This issue can be addressed by developing activities or facilities for both the community and visitors to use, something to benefit Gardiner residents, whether they are temporary or year round.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Finding a business or community organization to re-open the movie theater was a common request in the community session. Doing this would address the interests of both the local and visiting audience.
- Developing a walking trail with historical and natural history interpretation through Gardiner's neighborhoods and by its historic buildings – particularly on the south and west side of the river – could assist in providing a walking activity while learning the community story. The U. S. Forest Service, the state trails program at the MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department, and the Montana Historical Society Historical Marker Program could be resources to assist in this kind of project.
- Rails to Trails: the development of the old rail line through the Gardiner, Tom Miner Basin and Paradise Valley is something that would add another destination level attraction. The national Rails to Trails Conservancy can provide information resources and examples from other areas of Montana and the country. Here's a link to Montana's Rails to Trails projects:  
[http://www.trailink.com/TL\\_Active\\_Pages/TrailSearch/default.asp](http://www.trailink.com/TL_Active_Pages/TrailSearch/default.asp) Bozeman's Gallagator Trail (1 mile) and Billings Height's Trail (3 miles) are the closest to Gardiner.

### **RESOURCES:**

Montana Recreational Trails Program, MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks Department,  
<http://fwp.state.mt.us/parks/trails/default.asp>, 444-4585

Rails to Trails Conservancy, <http://www.railtrails.org/>

Historical Sign Program, Montana Historical Society, 444-1687

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## **MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM**

### **ISSUE: TOURISM TO BENEFIT GARDINER**

With Gardiner being one of five gateways to the most popular visitor attraction in the region, the community is interested in making sure it receives the most benefits from visitors.

### **RECOMMENDATION(S):**

A number of ideas presented in the community sessions focused on marketing the Gardiner gateway to both non-resident and Montana visitors as well as meeting the challenge of visitors, especially families, having things to do at night while staying in Gardiner.

- **Marketing Montana entrances to Yellowstone Park:** It was mentioned in one of the community meetings that billboards along I-90 in Wyoming direct visitors over the Bighorn Mountains as the shortest route to Yellowstone. The three Montana gateway communities may want to challenge this offer with their own billboards and other visitor information provided along this route in Wyoming. The Yellowstone Country Tourism Region based in Bozeman is a tourism “bed tax” funded promotional organization that has a program of match funds for tourism promotion products like brochures, ads, billboards etc. They could be approached as a partner as could other communities that would benefit from travelers first coming into Montana and then into the park: Billings, Red Lodge, Cooke City, Bozeman, Livingston, Big Timber etc. Joining forces with the Friends of the Beartooth All America Road to promote their route would help to bring visitors into Montana first or in directing visitors that did take the Bighorn Route to Cody. These visitors could be invited from there over the Chief Joseph Scenic Highway to Cooke City and over to Gardiner as part of the All America Road experience.
- **Evening experiences for adults and kids and increase educational opportunities:** It was good to hear that regular summer programming takes place in Arch Park. There are so many topics to choose from to tell this community, region and park’s story. Reaching out for a variety of speakers from various disciplines and those with no discipline, but just fun stories to tell, is strongly encouraged. In addition to evening activities, creating more ideas for public events and celebrations could be looked at. Gardiner might be lacking for the critical mass of volunteers & organizers to pull this off on a regular basis, but events are something that can make your community a destination for visitors and area residents. The Super Volcano Party held at one of the local bars for the April airing of the Discovery Channel Program is an example of a fun theme to build a community wide celebration on. You’ve got some creative thinkers that could come up with themes that locals and visitors would enjoy. You also have some interesting locally produced products that events could be built around. ELK, Inc. makes calls for all kinds of critters, but from what we heard, Gardiner has never hosted a calling contest. (Maybe this would be too dangerous – elk or buffalo or wolves or bear could stampede through the town if the callers were good?) This is something that could attract an audience, fits in with local interests and you’ve got an expert in this area as one of your local residents. He also has great connections

among the outdoor equipment industry and outdoor sports media to provide you access to headliners and publicity to make this work. There are other local resources that may be the tops in their field or well known that events could be built around: artists, crafts people like weavers, quilters, basket makers, Fly Fishers, gun or knife makers, trackers, guides, whitewater rafters or kayakers, etc. The Montana Commerce Department's Travel Montana program has a Special Events Grant Program (SEGP) that can assist with getting new, annual, ongoing events off the ground. The Grant funds are awarded through a competitive application process. The funds can be used for marketing, overhead expenses like security, insurance, speaker fees. The grants are offered annually. The SEGP Grant Pool has been \$50,000 with 7-9 events awarded grants each year. The SEGP applications are usually available in October and the submission deadline is mid-January. Information about the program is available at

<http://travelmontana.state.mt.us/OURPROGRAMS/TourismDevEd.shtm>

- **Montana gateway visitor center:** With Gardiner being a gateway to and from Yellowstone National Park, Montana & Wyoming, it is well situated to provide Visitor Information Services. As mentioned in MAIN TOPIC: Public Facilities, offering visitors an attractive facility with staff that provide quality services could be best accomplished through a cooperative effort between the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, State of Montana, Gardiner and possibly even the State of Wyoming. The VIC in West Yellowstone is an example of this kind of partnership. If interested in pursuing this idea, Gardiner representatives should visit with the agencies involved in the West Yellowstone facility about its origins and current operations. The Montana Commerce Department Travel Montana program does have a Montana VIC program which works in conjunction with gateway communities. The agency currently contracts with 9 gateway communities to operate Montana VICs: West Yellowstone, Dillon, Lolo Pass, St. Regis, Shelby, Culbertson, Wibaux, Broadus, and Hardin. The communities are responsible for providing the building, staffing (May-Sept at a minimum), on-site VIC management as well as facility operations and maintenance. Travel Montana provides funding for VIC staffing, equipment such as furniture, brochure racks, computer terminal & printer, a telephone line for VIC use and technical support. The current Montana VIC Program budget limits the contracts to 9, but Travel Montana is interested in hearing from Montana gateway communities that can meet the program requirements. If the communities can demonstrate that they have the required facilities and local support, Travel Montana can submit proposals through its budgeting process which would determine whether expansion of the VIC program is feasible.
- **Gardiner Tourism Development Strategy:** If the Gardiner community is interested and serious about developing a tourism strategy for the community there is a program offered by Travel Montana, MSU Extension and UM's Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research (ITRR) called the Community Tourism Assessment Program (CTAP). This is a 9-10 month "self help" process offered to three communities each year by Travel Montana with facilitation assistance provided by MSU Extension and UM's Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research. A local community action committee uses the process and facilitation services to analyze local resident attitudes about and interest in tourism, their community's tourism potential, gaps in visitor services, and the identification of affordable projects or actions that could strengthen the role of tourism in the local economy. The key to the program's success and effectiveness for the community is a committed broad-based group of community members willing to invest the 9-10 months of their time and study in this "self help" process. Based on the community turn-out during the Resource

Team Assessment process, this might be a challenge for Gardiner. Since the program was created in 1991, 35 Montana communities have participated. A number of communities in Yellowstone Country have participated in the process and could provide Gardiner insights into its value: Livingston, 1996-97 (the chamber was the sponsor agency; Livingston is the only CTAP community that decided not to pursue any tourism-related projects after the process was complete which is what the process is all about – helping communities decide what they would like to do with tourism, if anything. Doing nothing is just fine if that's what they community decides); Red Lodge, 1999-2000 (the chamber was the sponsor); and Three Forks, 1995-1996 (the chamber was the sponsor). The full list of CTAP communities and the projects that resulted from the process are on Travel Montana's Intranet site:  
<http://travelmontana.state.mt.us/OURPROGRAMS/TourismDevEd.shtm>

### **RESOURCES:**

Yellowstone Country, Robin Hoover, 1822 W Lincoln, Bozeman, MT 59715, 406-556-8680, 406-556-8688 (fax), [yellowstone@montana.net](mailto:yellowstone@montana.net)

Friends of the Beartooth All America Road: Kim Capron, Project Coordinator, Friends of the Beartooth All American Road, 1108 14th Street #403, Cody, WY 82414, 307 587 3669, [kim@associationresourceswy.com](mailto:kim@associationresourceswy.com).

Special Event Grant Program (SEGP) and the Montana Visitor Information Center Program: Carol Crockett, Tourism Development Specialist, Travel Montana, 841-2796, [ccrockett@mt.gov](mailto:ccrockett@mt.gov)

Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program (TIIP) and the Community Tourism Assessment Program (CTAP): Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development Coordinator, Travel Montana, 841-2795, [victor@visitmt.com](mailto:victor@visitmt.com)

To make sure all of Gardiner's visitor services and event information is posted and up to date on Travel Montana's [www.visitmt.com](http://www.visitmt.com) website as well as the Yellowstone Country website as well as listed in Travel Montana's statewide travel guides, contact these folks at Travel Montana to get on the scheduled updating system used to keep all this info accurate: Web Data Specialist, Jan Wirak, [jwirak@mt.gov](mailto:jwirak@mt.gov), 841-2788, Bev Clancey, Publications Manager, 841-2898, [bclancey@mt.gov](mailto:bclancey@mt.gov)

Other information about Travel Montana's No & Low Cost Marketing Services for businesses and communities are available on the program's Intranet site at:  
<http://travelmontana.state.mt.us/OURPROGRAMS/TourismDevEd.shtm>

For an understanding of who Gardiner and/or Park County and Yellowstone Park's visitors are, the University of Montana's Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research (ITRR) does non-resident visitor surveys on a regular cycle and posts their findings on their website. These are available at no cost on the website or for copying costs if you want hard copies. Here is the website address followed by links to specific reports that Gardiner might find useful in understanding its visitors, the role tourism plays in the area economy, where visitors spend their money, what draws them to the area and what they like to do once they are here.

<http://www.itrr.umt.edu/>

<http://www.itrr.umt.edu/nichenews/yellowstone.pdf>

<http://www.itrr.umt.edu/nichenews/ParkCounty.pdf>  
<http://www.itrr.umt.edu/nichenews/upperYellowstone.pdf>  
<http://www.itrr.umt.edu/nichenews/vacentryexit.pdf>  
<http://www.itrr.umt.edu/Reg03/yellowstone.pdf>  
<http://www.itrr.umt.edu/research/NonresSeason02.pdf>  
[http://www.itrr.umt.edu/research/vacexp1\\_03.pdf](http://www.itrr.umt.edu/research/vacexp1_03.pdf)

**CTAP Community Contacts:**

Livingston Chamber: 222-0850, Current staff was not involved in CTAP process

Three Forks: 285-4753, current staff was probably not involved in CTAP, but may have some knowledge of it.

Red Lodge: Denise Parsons, 446-1720, 888-281-0625; Denise was not part of the CTAP process, but is familiar with resulting projects and may have some insights into what impact CTAP had on Red Lodge, if any.

2003-2004 CTAP community contacts are:

Crow Community: Latonna Old Elk, Little Bighorn College Extension, 638-3139

Great Falls: Janet Medina, Great Falls Chamber, 761-4434

Wibaux: Dave Bertelsen, Wibaux County Extension, 796-2486

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**MAIN TOPIC: OTHER ISSUES**

**ISSUE: WHO SPEAKS FOR GARDINER?**

The idea of a formal organization representing Gardiner's interests came up a number of times in community discussions. The issue was most commonly presented as "who speaks for Gardiner?" I don't think the Resource Team got a sense of whether the majority of people support or oppose incorporation. The fact that Gardiner is not incorporated may indicate which side the majority is on.

**RECOMMENDATION(S) and RESOURCES:**

There are a number of Montana communities that have formed local organizations and remained an unincorporated community. Those interested in looking at Gardiner's options in area may want to visit with the St. Regis Community Council (Jeff Noonan, President, 649-1800, [jeffnoonan@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jeffnoonan@sbcglobal.net)) or Big Sky (Big Sky Chamber, Marne Hayes, 943-4111, [info@bigskychamber.com](mailto:info@bigskychamber.com))

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**REPORT BY: Michele Herrington, Program Director**

**Montana Community Foundation**

**21 N. Last Chance Gulch #201**

**Helena, MT 59601**

**Ph: 406.443.4546**

**Email: mherrington@mtcf.org**

**<http://www.mtcf.org>**

Gardiner has a lot going for it. The first being its geographic beauty and the interest that visitors from all over the world have in experiencing interesting and unique places. The area's geology, history and natural resources will always make it a terrific to live and visit. It was fun to hear the aspirations of its residents to make it an even better place to live and work.

**MAIN TOPIC: RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT**

**ISSUE: MORE FOR FAMILIES AND TOURISTS TO DO**

Gardiner's youth and adults expressed interest in having more to do. The advantage in developing recreation opportunities is that those same opportunities can enhance tourists' desires to recreate in Gardiner, and therefore enhance the economy.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

- **Movie Theatre:** Many people expressed interest in the revival of the movie theatre. The building exists, but was not profitable the last time it was open. Perhaps a combination of current-running films and Yellowstone- and nature-oriented films could be shown at different times. It is probably easier to secure funding to show educational films than current box-office films, although a case could be made that those box office hits may be income- generators for the educational films.
- **Outdoor Concerts/Entertainment:** Kids and adults also praised the summertime outdoor entertainment. It would be nice to expand the number of concerts/story telling/plays to liven the downtown area and provide entertainment for residents and visitors alike.
- **Walking Trail:** A self-guided walking trail through town would do the same. Maps could be available at local store counters and the trail could include Indian history, geology, animal and forestry, settlers' history, etc. What a fun trail it could be, conveniently passing by the local ice cream shop, souvenir store, etc.!
- **Rails to Trails:** Another fantastic opportunity for residents and visitors would be a biking/walking trail that could be constructed along the old railway line. Think big! What if that trail could lead from Gardiner through Paradise Valley to Livingston?
- **Adult sports leagues:** This suggestion is a good one, especially for the folks remaining in the wintertime. Land space was a recurrent theme, so a baseball or soccer field doesn't sound feasible; but perhaps something could be worked out with the school so adults could have a

volleyball league or indoor league events. It would be a terrific spirit-builder for the whole town during those dark winter months.

**RESOURCES:**

Movie Theatre: The Myrna Loy Center in Helena (406-443-0287) may have some ideas.

See also <http://www.wildlifefilms.org> - a Missoula based organization that rents films that would be of interest to all.

Outdoor Concerts/Entertainment: The National Endowment for the Arts and the Forest Service support arts-based rural community development projects. Also investigate the Montana Arts Council at <http://www.art.state.mt.us>.

Rails to Trails: [www.railtrails.org](http://www.railtrails.org)

Overall:

Resort tax: (See Victor Bjornberg's report for details). It should be acknowledged that the resort tax would bring in some revenue for some of these projects.

The Montana Community Foundation has a small granting program that supports many of the projects mentioned above. The grants are \$500-\$1,500; not enough to do something big, but perhaps enough to get started. See The Foundation's web site at [www.mtcf.org](http://www.mtcf.org) and click grants/scholarships. Deadline for 2005 submissions is May 15. (I called Chris at the Chamber of Commerce to let the word out.)

Mountain Sky Guest Ranch ([www.mtnsky.com](http://www.mtnsky.com)) in Emigrant also has a granting program for organizations in Park County.

Community Foundation: In addition to Mountain Sky Guest Ranch representatives, Livingston resident Tom Elliott sits on the committee investigating the possibility of a community foundation for Park County. His email is [telliott@bigsky.net](mailto:telliott@bigsky.net).

James Klessens ([jklessens@mt.usda.gov](mailto:jklessens@mt.usda.gov)) also has positive experience in helping develop community foundations in Joliet and surrounding areas.

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**REPORT BY: Ken Britton, Gardiner District Ranger**  
**Gallatin National Forest**  
**P.O. Box 5**  
**Gardiner, MT 59030**  
**Ph: 406.848.7375**  
**Email: kbritton@fs.fed.us**  
**<http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin/>**

**MAIN TOPIC: ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES**

**ISSUE:**

Gardiner is currently a "pass-through" community at the north entrance to Yellowstone Park. The community is interested in becoming a year-round destination.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Work with the Park to beautify Park Street.
- Encourage guided wildlife viewing opportunities through businesses based in Gardiner.
- Encourage and support local arts programs and opportunities in an effort to promote Gardiner as an artist destination.

**RESOURCES:**

Business Development:

The Montana Department of Commerce has many programs and expertise to assist communities with Business Development. Regional Development Officers provide on the ground assistance. Al Jones, also of the Gardiner Resource Team, is the RDO for Southcentral Montana. His number is (406) 655.1696.

Small Business Development Centers can provide free business technical assistance, counseling and low-cost training. The local SBDC is at Gallatin Economic Development in Bozeman. The number is (406) 587-9565.

The USDA Forest Service Rural Community Assistance Program (RCA) can help fund community planning, needs assessments, business plans, market analysis and marketing plans. Projects proposals are usually requested in the winter with monies being granted in the spring. Frank Preite, Gallatin National Forest, (406) 587-6757.

Other National Programs are also available. They include:

National Business Incubation Association

Website: [www.nbia.org](http://www.nbia.org)

NBIA advances business incubation and leadership by providing the information, education, advocacy and networking resources to bring excellence to the process of assisting early-stage companies.

National Main Street Center

Website: [www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org)

The National Main Street Center's mission is to empower people, organizations and communities to achieve ongoing downtown and neighborhood district revitalization based upon the principles of self-determination, resource conservation and incremental transformation represented through the comprehensive Main Street approach.

**National Retail Federation**

Website: [www.nrf.com](http://www.nrf.com)

The NRF conducts programs and services in research, education, training, information technology, and government affairs to protect and advance the interests of the retail industry.

**Rebuild America Program**

Website: [www.rebuild.org](http://www.rebuild.org)

Rebuild America is a program of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) that focuses on energy-efficiency solutions in communities. Through Rebuild America, hundreds of communities and businesses are saving energy dollars and reinvesting in their communities by improving buildings and stimulating the local economy. Mission is to build partnerships among communities, states, and the private sector to improve building performance and connect people, resources, ideas and practices for energy solutions to community needs.

**Rural Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community Program**

Website: [www.ezec.gov](http://www.ezec.gov)

This site describes the Rural Community Empowerment Program, describes the activities and accomplishments of participating rural communities, and offers access to resources that may be helpful to all rural communities that seek to enhance the quality of their futures.

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**MAIN TOPIC: PUBLIC FACILITIES**

**ISSUE: HOUSING FOR SERVICES**

The Gardiner Ambulance, Park County Search and Rescue, Park County Sheriff Department and Gardiner Chamber of Commerce all need new facilities. These organizations could all benefit from a common meeting room. The community also needs public restrooms. The ambulance is stored in a rented garage bay owned by the Tire Iron. The Tire Iron would like the bay for storing one of their wreckers. The SAR has equipment stored in several locations and would like to consolidate. The County deputies have a small office and need more space. The Chamber is renting a facility on Park Street. While it is a good location, it would be more cost effective not to pay rent.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

There are several alternatives for resolving the space issues.

1. Sell Park County space at the rodeo grounds for a Ambulance, SAR and Sheriff Building with public restrooms and a common meeting area. The Chamber can use the acquired funds for constructing an office and visitor info center at the fairgrounds. Leverage acquired funds with grants to help fund.
2. Same as above except the Chamber could co-habit the same building as the Sheriff, SAR and Ambulance.
3. Use the acquired funds to acquire and remodel the Gardiner Depot.

**RESOURCES:**

The Montana Department of Commerce has many programs and expertise to assist communities with Business Development. Regional Development Officers provide on the ground assistance. Contact Al Jones, South Central Montana Regional Development Officer. Al served on the Gardiner Resource Team.

The USDA Forest Service Rural Community Assistance Program (RCA) can help fund community planning, needs assessments, business plans, market analysis and marketing plans. Projects proposals are usually requested in the winter with monies being granted in the spring. Frank Preite, Gallatin National Forest, (406) 587-6757.

Other National Programs are also available. They include:

National Main Street Center

Website: [www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org)

The National Main Street Center's mission is to empower people, organizations and communities to achieve ongoing downtown and neighborhood district revitalization based upon the principles of self-determination, resource conservation and incremental transformation represented through the comprehensive Main Street approach.

Rebuild America Program

Website: [www.rebuild.org](http://www.rebuild.org)

Rebuild America is a program of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) that focuses on energy-efficiency solutions in communities. Through Rebuild America, hundreds of communities and businesses are saving energy dollars and reinvesting in their communities by improving buildings and stimulating the local economy. Mission is to build partnerships among communities, states, and the private sector to improve building performance and connect people, resources, ideas and practices for energy solutions to community needs.

Rural Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community Program

Website: [www.ezec.gov](http://www.ezec.gov)

This site describes the Rural Community Empowerment Program, describes the activities and accomplishments of participating rural communities, and offers access to resources that may be helpful to all rural communities that seek to enhance the quality of their futures.

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**MAIN TOPIC: HOUSING**

**ISSUE: PERMANENT, SEASONAL AND AFFORDABLE**

Housing for permanent and seasonal residents, including Park Service and Xanterra employees is at a premium in Gardiner. Affordable housing is even more difficult to find. Because of Yellowstone Park

and the Gallatin Forest, private land is minimal in Gardiner. Most buildable lots have existing structures. Many of these are old, many historic, and many need to be renovated.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- As buildings are razed, encourage land owners to consider multi-plex facilities.
- Investigate grant programs that will assist with and/or identify affordable housing options.

**RESOURCES:**

Rebuild America Program

Website: [www.rebuild.org](http://www.rebuild.org)

Rebuild America is a program of the US Department of Energy (DOE). It focuses on energy-efficiency solutions in communities. Through rebuild America, hundreds of communities and businesses are saving energy dollars and reinvesting in their communities by improving buildings and stimulating the local economy. Mission is to build partnerships among communities, states and the private sector to improve building performance and connect people, resources, ideas and practices for energy solutions to community needs.

National Main Street Center

Website: [www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org)

The National Main Street Center's mission is to empower people, organizations and communities to achieve ongoing downtown and neighborhood district revitalization based upon the principles of self-determination, resource conservation and incremental transformation represented through the comprehensive Main Street approach.

National Trust for Historic Preservation

Website: [www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org)

The National Trust for Historic Preservation provides leadership, education and advocacy to save America's diverse historic places and revitalize our communities.

National Trust Rural Heritage Program

Website: [www.ruralheritage.org/](http://www.ruralheritage.org/)

The Rural Heritage Program is dedicated to the recognition and protection of rural historic and cultural resources.

Community Partners

Website: [www.nthp.org/community\\_partners/](http://www.nthp.org/community_partners/)

Community Partners (CP) assists preservation organizations, local governments and community development corporations in revitalizing historic properties, central business districts and urban neighborhoods. CP functions as a family of four integrated programs that offer financial and technical assistance as well as real estate consulting services.

Barn Again!

Website: [www.agriculture.com/barnagain/](http://www.agriculture.com/barnagain/)

BARN AGAIN! is a national program to preserve historic farm buildings sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Successful Farming magazine. BARN AGAIN! provides information to help owners of historic barns rehabilitate them and put them back to productive use on farms and

ranches.

The Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has staff and programs available to assist with technical advice and financial support to foster historic preservation. "Save America's Treasures" and "Main Street" programs are examples of programs that the MT SHPO has, in partnership with the National Park Service and the National Trust for Historic Preservation to fund restoration projects. They can also provide assistance in providing property owner guidance on historical preservation. The contact at SHPO is Kate Hampton at (406) 444-2694.

The Rural Information Center publication, "Historic Preservation Resources" provides additional information. This publication can be found at [www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/preserve](http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/preserve)

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**MAIN TOPIC: RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT**

**ISSUE: MORE TO DO IN GARDINER**

Several folks mentioned the need to enhance Gardiner's cultural and recreational opportunities, including those that travel to and through Gardiner. Some ideas presented were: an historic walking trail interpreting Gardiner's rich history, converting the former Northern Pacific railroad right-of-way to a biking/hiking trail, improve youth and adult athletic opportunities by constructing a swimming pool and soccer and baseball fields; opening the movie theatre again and constructing a bowling alley.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Recommendations For some funding opportunities, it's a good idea to prioritize the projects to identify those that serve a diverse public, as well as find ways to connect the projects to each other and to the natural resources whenever possible. This will help provide for broader community consensus and make projects more competitive for some types of funding.

**RESOURCES:**

Recreation and Natural Resources:

The Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks administer the Recreational Trails program to help establish recreational trails. Additional information can be obtained by searching the following website: <http://fwp.state.mt.us/parks/grants.asp> or calling Bob Walker at 406-444-4585.

The USDA Forest Service Rural Community Assistance (RCA) program can help fund community planning, needs assessments, project design, and construction projects. Project proposals are usually requested in the winter with monies being granted in the spring. Contact Frank Preite, Gallatin National Forest, 406-587-6757, for additional information.

The USDA Forest Service, Urban and Community Forestry Program that is delivered through the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Forestry Division, can help to develop and beautify parks/communities, by providing technical expertise and funding for inventory, maintenance and planting of trees in the community. Contact Paula Rosenthol, DNRC, at 406-542-4284, for additional information.

The Arts/Culture:

The Montana Arts Council's mission is to boost the local economies, revitalize communities, and improve education through the arts. They have technical assistance support and funding for art projects. They can be contacted at 406-444-6430 or [mac@state.mt.us](mailto:mac@state.mt.us).

The National Endowment for the Arts and National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities fosters excellence, diversity, and vitality of the arts in the United States and helps to broaden public access to the arts. Contact information is 202-682-5441 or [www.nea.gov](http://www.nea.gov)

The Forest Service has a grant program in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts. The purpose of this grant is to help demonstrate the importance and the value of the arts in rural economic diversification and cultural resource conservation in forest and/or natural resource dependent areas. Contact Frank Preite (406) 587-6757 or browse the following website:  
<http://arcai.cgweb.org/>

Tourism/Recreation:

Travel Montana has a number of grant programs to promote tourism development and education. Some of the grant projects completed with TIIP (Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program) and CTAP (Community Tourism Assessment Program) have been quite similar to those mentioned above. Reference the following website for more information about these programs:  
<http://www.travelmontana.org/OURPROGRAMS/TourismDevEd.shtm>

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**Report by: Cynthia Evans Regional Coordinator**  
**Northern Rocky Mountain RC&D**  
**502 S. 19<sup>th</sup> Ave.; Suite 105**  
**Bozeman, MT 59718**  
**Ph: 406. 582.5700**  
**Email: [cynthia.evans@mt.usda.gov](mailto:cynthia.evans@mt.usda.gov)**  
**<http://www.nrmrcd.org/>**

**Gardiner's unique location, history and community character are yet to be fully tapped.**

**MAIN TOPIC: PUBLIC FACILITIES**

Gardiner needs community service facilities: ambulance, sheriff office, public restrooms, visitor center. Amenities including more events, better marketing, beautification are also desired.

**MAIN ISSUE: MULTIPLE SERVICES AND FUNDING**

Providing services that provide needed care and safety, as well as encourage visitors to stay in town a little longer.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

While grants are one method of obtaining funds for projects, Gardiner has limited capacity to research and apply for grants. Some residents complained that many decisions affecting the community are made by outsiders (the Park, Congress, Park County officials.) Instituting a resort tax would be mechanism for obtaining long-term funding without some of the difficulties of finding/paying someone to constantly look for, apply for and administer grants, not to mention follow the constraints of some grants.

A resort tax would allow area residents a lot of latitude in designing what products/services to tax and how to spend the funds. Three percent (3%) is the maximum tax rate allowed. Using the funds to reduce local property taxes is another attractive benefit. This tax-revenue stream would also give Gardiner the ability to borrow/bond for larger projects in the future.

Given Gardiner's unincorporated status, collections would be done by the Park County Treasurer, and spending decisions would be made by the Park County Commissioners. This may actually make the resort tax more appealing, as confidentiality will be maintained and decisions will be made in an open and public forum. The bottom line, however, is that these funds may only be used to benefit the Gardiner area, not elsewhere in Park County.

Annual receipts from Montana resort tax areas range from a high of \$1.7million in Big Sky (also unincorporated, like Gardiner) to \$60,000 in Virginia City. Gardiner receipts may be similar to Red Lodge's, which average around \$500,000 per year.

**RESOURCES:**

Northern Rocky Mountain Resource, Conservation & Development  
Cynthia Evans, Bozeman, 582-5700

Park County Commissioners  
Dick Murphy, Livingston, 222-4106

Montana Department of Commerce  
Susan Ockert, Helena,

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**MAIN TOPIC: RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT**

**ISSUE: Keeping people in town; especially things to do in the evenings.**

Gardiner needs more to do in and around Gardiner. Being a Gateway community is great, but it would be even better if people spent more money before entering the Park.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Several attractive, low- to mid-cost, ideas were mentioned by local residents.

- 1) **Historic walking tours.** Long daylight hours in the summer, Gardiner’s small “footprint” and lack of fast-moving, high-volume highways help make this idea a winner. Local history, geology, the river and the park itself could be highlighted. I have been to Gardiner only a handful of times, and each time I am more fascinated by the area and want to learn more of its history. A few attractive, well-situated signs, some maps (one in my hotel room would have been nice!) and locals regularly policing the route cleaning up garbage and attending to repairs (maybe a Scout troop, or other group?), would make this an easy project. Making sure the walk passed an ice-cream store, the local latte stand or the cybercafe would make this a pleasant outing for visiting families and local businesses.
- 2) **Cybercafe.** This idea seems so clever and obvious, I wish I had thought of it. Contacting some computer geek-types, (maybe in Livingston or Bozeman) and creating a partnership with an existing business (café, or maybe the library that’s not open all the time...), an investment of a few thousand dollars, and you’re up and running. Even if DSL is unavailable, people are a demand to be in email communication with friends all over the world, and will use whatever technology is available. With older technology, it is likely cheaper hardware would suffice.
- 3) **Rails-to-Trails.** The old railway along the river is a beautiful place for people to walk or ride.
- 4) **Services to international visitors.** I am always struck by how little we as Americans do to help foreign visitors. Given the international prominence of Yellowstone National Park, some research into the numbers of different nationalities visiting might provide an interesting opportunity. With the proximity of the Church Universal and Triumphant, and its international ties, it might be possible to work together to provide some basic information in several languages. Some basic facts about the community, events, programs, and perhaps the walking trail guide, in other languages would help Gardiner distinguish itself to foreign visitors. I know a local resident who has found a profitable niche marketing to Asian visitors interested in fly-fishing. Other resources might be foreign students studying at universities in the area, or international workers at Xanterra or the Park.

**RESOURCES:**

Small Business Development Center  
Tracey Jette, Bozeman, 587-3113

Montana Preservation Alliance  
Chere Juisto, Helena

**REPORT BY: Gloria O'Rourke**  
**Montana Economic Developers Association**  
**Montana Economic Development Services**  
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**Anaconda, MT 59711**  
**Ph: 406.563.5259 Fx: 406.563.5476**  
**Email: [gloria@medamembers.org](mailto:gloria@medamembers.org)**  
**Web: <http://www.medamembers.org>**

It was my privilege to be a part of the Gardiner Resource Team. It was mentioned several times throughout the assessment that Gardiner is the 30<sup>th</sup> community in the state to benefit from this process. Having been a part of most of those assessments, I have to say that Gardiner is one of the most blessed communities as it is so rich in assets. The challenge is for the people living in the Gardiner area to take action to make the most of these assets to enhance and maintain your unique quality of life.

If you have read the report thus far, you may realize that there is not a lot left for me to cover. The Gardiner Resource Team is outstanding – this report is filled with many creative ideas and unique resources. I do just have a little more information to add, but first let me thank you for your hospitality and for opening your community to the team.

## **MAIN TOPIC: PUBLIC FACILITIES**

### **ISSUE: PUBLIC RESTROOMS**

Several times, the team heard that there is a need for public restrooms in Gardiner to accommodate the tourist's basic necessities.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

I was recently introduced to a book by Dr. Maury Forman, Director of Education for Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development. This easy-to-read book is titled "The 25 Immutable Rules of Successful Tourism" and is humorous yet to the point. Rule #6: Toilets Attract More Than Just Flies. I strongly encourage you to order a copy of this book and begin to apply some of the rules – starting with #6.

To have a place (more like a complex as described in Al Jones' section of this report) would indeed meet the public restroom need, but may also serve as an information point to get people to stay longer in Gardiner and ease the bottleneck of traffic at the park entrance...attracting much more than flies!

### **RESOURCES:**

"The 25 Immutable Rules of Successful Tourism"

Dr. Maury Forman

\$10.00

To order: email [LindaA@CTED.WA.GOV](mailto:LindaA@CTED.WA.GOV)

Or write:

CTED/Economic Development

Atten: Linda Alongi

P.O. Box 42525  
Olympia, WA 98504-2525

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**MAIN TOPIC: OTHER ISSUES**

**ISSUE: LOWER SPEED LIMIT**

There are more than two footed beings sharing the highway near Gardiner. Concern was expressed that the speed limit is too high, making it dangerous for both man and beast.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

For this issue to be addressed, it will be important for Gardiner to have a “voice” such as a Mayor or civic-type club official to represent the community. I spoke with Doug Bailey, Montana Department of Transportation and asked what it would take to lower the speed limit highway near Gardiner – whether at night or during the day. Doug was very helpful and offered the following information:

Doug explained that the Department of Transportation works with local officials on this matter – so the place to start is with a group of concerned citizens approaching the Park County Commissioners. Once a request has been made by the Commissioners for a study, the Department can set the wheels in motion. Doug commented that the Park County Commissioners recently completed another traffic/speed study, so they are familiar with the process.

Doug explained that obtaining a speed reduction sign is a long process. Once the study has been completed, however, and input has been received from the County Commissioners, the recommendations are presented to the Montana Transportation Commission. It is this commission that has the final authority in determining the speed.

**RESOURCES:**

**Park County Commissioners**

**Doug Bailey**

Montana Department of Transportation  
P.O. Box 201001  
Helena, MT 59620-1001  
Ph: 406.444.6220  
Email: [do Bailey@mt.gov](mailto:do Bailey@mt.gov)

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**MAIN TOPIC: OTHER ISSUES**

**ISSUE: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

I am not sure if anyone came right out and said it, but it appears that Gardiner may be a lot like other towns in getting volunteers to step up and help share the load within the community.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Heartland Institute has some suggestions for dealing with this problem. "Take a look around you at your next meeting. Who is missing? Why are they missing? What has been done to invite missing residents? What would strengthen your association? Is the place where you meet, is it the way new people are welcomed? Is it communication?" Answer these questions and actively make changes in your group.

Be sure that barriers are not keeping folks from participating. For example:

- \* Place - look at the place you are meeting (is it accessible? comfortable?)
- \* Purpose - examine your purpose for meeting - is it of interest to a wide variety of people?
- \* Promotion - is everyone keeping informed about the meeting?,
- \* Price - how much time do we require of volunteers? Dues expensive?
- \* People - are new folks welcomed? Do new people receive training? Do you try out different meeting formats so everyone is comfortable?

The Heartland Institute also has some key qualities that need to be found in local leadership. Look for people that meet some of these qualities and ask them to get on board:

- \* Positive mental attitude
- \* Commitment to the goals of the group
- \* Ability to listen and reflect
- \* Neutrality (hear both sides of an issue without prejudice)
- \* An awareness of what is NOT being said
- \* The ability to "seize the moment"
- \* Good interpersonal communication skills like equal treatment and listening.

**RESOURCES:**

Hold a half day or one-day meeting to focus on strengthening your organization's membership. Using tools provided by the Heartland Institute, I would be happy to conduct a "Strengthening Membership" workshop with you.

Gloria O'Rourke  
406.563.5259

Heartland Center for Leadership Development  
1.800.927.1115  
<http://www.heartlandcenter.info>

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**MAIN TOPIC: OTHER ISSUES**

**ISSUE: GRANT SOURCES**

You have heard there are grant sources out there...but how do you find them?

**RECOMMENDATION/RESOURCES:**

Throughout this report the word “grant” has been used frequently. If you have a project or idea in mind and are unsure of a potential grant source, please contact me. Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) has a paid membership to GrantStation – a website database for conducting grant searches. Just email me some key words or a simple project description, and I will be happy to run a grant search for you.

Gloria O’Rourke

406.563.5259

[gloria@medamembers.org](mailto:gloria@medamembers.org)

**GARDINER RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT  
GARDINER, MONTANA  
LISTENING SESSION NOTES  
APRIL 17 – 18, 2005**

**Note: The following pages contain the comments made by people in the Gardiner area during Listening Sessions regarding challenges, strengths and vision for the community.**

**CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS**

**BUSINESSES AND CHAMBER MEMBERS**

- Need to continue to work on the Gardiner/Mammoth relationship
- Need to play together more so that we can work together better
- Not enough for kids to do – if not in sports or the outdoors
- Local kids not enough to do
- Tourist that travel with kids – kids do not have enough to do
- No place for kids to gather to make their own entertainment
- Must make your money in three or four months out of 12 in a year
- Need to develop shoulder season/off season business
- Road closures in winter – dead end to the park in winter
- Cost to get into the park – hard to do business at times
- People can buy passes, but local people resent it
- People living in Montana have not been to Yellowstone – need to tap our own market
- Hunting permits are shrinking – hurts outfitters and motels
- Weather sensitive – any of our businesses can be trashed by the weather
- Shake and bake (volcano television movie)
- Small community and limited base to support capital improvements
- A lot of money in school and sewer/water – so no capacity to add something new, i.e., new quarters for the ambulance.
- Not much space available to build on – we have to think about building up instead of out
- Country's energy future will affect the way we do business in Gardiner
- Emergency services
- Wastewater
- Law Enforcement
- Solid waste management
- Relationship with Park County Commissioners
- So many buffalo!
- Older people leave Gardiner because they do not have close medical facilities

**BUSINESSES and ALL CHAMBER MEMBERS**

- Cultural disconnect between Church Universal and Triumphant members and the community of Gardiner
- Previous history of Royal Teton Ranch activities has caused barriers – barriers are improving but some people have long memories
- Division among business owners/chamber members regarding wolf issues

- Sometimes perceived as a company town
- Divisions arise in town over people's need to protect their self interest

#### **GENERAL PUBLIC, NON-PROFITS, WATER, AMBULANCE**

- The locals get squeezed out by “money”
- Most of our kids graduate, very difficult for them to come back when they want to – can't support a family
- Have to answer the basic question – do we want growth or do we want the current lifestyle
- High wage jobs
- Decline in hunting (since introduction of the wolves?)
- People are out of work because of less elk
- Changing economics – mining is no longer here, decrease in hunting but increase in water rafters
- Political issues sometimes divide us – i.e., wolfe issue
- We are an island in a sea of federal land, an unincorporated community
- Decisions get made for us – so we have little turn out for these type of events
- Lack of newspaper
- Housing – geographically we can't go anywhere because of federal land
- All volunteer ambulance crew
- Supplying volunteers and burnout of volunteers.
- Advance life support training is not available in this area
- Some perceived status differences between Mammoth and Gardiner

#### **ROYAL TETON RANCH AND CORWIN SPRINGS RESIDENTS**

- Roaming buffalo leaving brown spots on the school grounds ;-)
- No places to eat during the off season
- A good dry cleaning business is needed – can drop off at the Food Farm
- Better variety of the restaurants when they are open
- Local newspaper
- Need better advertising and more attractive newsletter
- Wireless services needed
- No place to buy clothes in Gardiner
- Hard to find simple things – like pc disks
- Realize the need for shortened hours in wintertime – but would be nice to have one night a week to have late hours.
- Management of Yellowstone Park
- Buffalo issue effects a lot of local people – but it is out of our hands
- Some unkempt buildings and store fronts are a detraction
- Fire district needs to be worked on
- Wolves – lost dog and 25 calves – will be down \$95,000 on the outfitting side of things
- Library has one computer for tourists to use but pc is old and dialup. Chamber only has one computer as well.
- Water quality

- **Rooms for summer workers is lacking**

#### **GARDINER SCHOOL STUDENTS**

- **Hard to see friends –**
- **Need WalMart, bowling alley and new cops**
- **Spend a lot of time traveling places in a car – to Livingston, etc.**
- **To go to doctor and orthodontists you go to Bozeman most often – then you do other things, too**
- **Movie theater closed down**
- **Drive to Livingston on a Friday night – have to dodge deer on the way home**
- **Nothing to do except shoot at something ;-)**
- **Tough to drive from here to Mammoth or to get a ride**
- **Dangerous to ride a bike between here and Mammoth**
- **Hard to get people to come to different sports – besides football and basketball**
- **Nosey people – mind other people’s business**
- **Isolated – we don’t reach out and do something different – i.e., dance club**
- **Gardiner is very set in its ways**
- **Sometimes tourists get annoying**
- **Not enough room for all of the people when it is tourist season**
- **Fast food is lacking**
- **Go through gate to get to and from Mammoth – we live there! – but can’t get home**
- **Everything shuts down at 7:00pm.**
- **Hard to pursue different career choices as there is no hospital here to volunteer at (for example)**
- **Lack of medical emergency help – concern for when we are babysitting**
- **Limited class choices**

#### **TEACHERS/EDUCATORS**

- **Lack of good paying jobs**
- **Housing – ditto**
- **People not cleaning up after their pets along the sidewalks**
- **Lack of political voice in the county**
- **We are unincorporated**
- **Transient local leadership**
- **A lot of latch-key kids**
- **Fluctuating population**
- **No zoning is good but...can be bad too – no regulations as to what things look like**
- **Can’t buy a home on the average person’s salary**

## GARDINER RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT

### STRENGTHS AND ASSETS

#### BUSINESSES AND CHAMBER MEMBERS

- **Yellowstone Country Board**
- **Access to wilderness and wildlife**
- **Original entrance to Yellowstone Park**
- **We are not a tourist trap**
- **We are a base camp to the park**
- **Ditto access to the wildlife**
- **The people**
- **Incredible artistic community**
- **Self sufficient and self-motivated people**
- **Yellowstone River – core asset**
- **Wildlife and western character**
- **Scenic beauty**
- **Parents are committed to kids through the school**
- **Excellent school – able to afford more than the usual Class C school because of federal dollars from out-of-district students in Mammoth**
- **The school is supported by people who do not have children in the school**
- **AA support group**
- **Churches in town**
- **Park service expanding from geo-thermal area and building a research center here**
- **More researchers here than ever before**
- **Great weather – easy winters- warmer in winter**
- **History dating back 10,000 years!**
- **Spirituality – a lot of it here regardless of denomination**
- **People have a lot of associations in the non-profit non-government world**
- **Electric Peaks**
- **Bear Creek Council - Conservation organization**
- **Toastmasters**
- **Elks**
- **Community Center – separate non-profit group**
- **Food pantry**
- **Home grown home theater – drug store owner writes the plays**
- **Community Library Association**
- **Active youth group on Sunday nights**
- **Kids can have a job every summer**
- **Help with water and sewer due to our federal relationships**
- **Sewer district, water district, fire district**
- **Gardiner Chamber of Commerce – (“does the things most people think just happen”) 120 business members**
- **Clinic and doctor in Mammoth**

#### **BUSINESSES ALL CHAMBER MEMBERS**

- Church Universal and Triumphant is a major employer in the area
- State of the art technology at Church Universal
- Church that was here in the 1980s is not the same now – has evolved into a different organization, progress is being made
- Low crime rate

#### **GENERAL PUBLIC, NON-PROFITS, WATER, AMBULANCE**

- The environment
- Our location – next to National Park
- School system
- Ambulance service
- Sheriff's dept, fire, forest service, mutual aid
- Recreational opportunities
- Small town
- The people -
- People are tied together
- Unique place
- Wildlife
- Small town feel in the winter months
- Gardiner would not exist without the park
- Ambulance district levy does provide a small amount of funds – would have to shut down without it

#### **ROYAL TETON RANCH AND CORWIN SPRINGS RESIDENTS**

- Arts, shows and theater in Gardiner
- Beautiful scenery and mountains
- Close to Yellowstone Park
- Gardiner school – facility is great, relationship with parents and teachers is great
- Small town influence – when you have any event or sports, the town gathers
- Teachers very well qualified in the schools
- Park lectures very interesting
- Hunters, the park and the community itself
- Do things together as a family
- Non incorporated area – no zoning or planning
- Wildlife
- Wagon wheel store
- Expansion of cell service
- Stores are open at night
- Very few franchises, no box stores

#### **GARDINER SCHOOL STUDENTS**

- Rafting is not bad
- Fishing

- **Hunting**
- **Parks Fly Shop**
- **Nice view, beauty**
- **The simple life**
- **Quiet at night**
- **Family, tight-knit community**
- **Even if our sports teams are bad, people still attend**
- **Being able to get a job in the summer**
- **School – lot’s of individual attention, smaller school**
- **School – no real bullies, people know each other but, not a lot of variety for classes.**
- **School – sports are good; but not very many teams**
- **School – you don’t have to specialize, can do a lot of things, don’t cut people from the team, you get to play**
- **School – get personal days**
- **School – speech & drama team, lot’s of fun, well-supported by community**
- **School – community supports the school, it revolves around the school, keeps everyone going over the winter, no other choices**
- **School – it’s nice to have everyone in the same building – K – 12; easier to adjust and get along. Mentoring program – high school kids team up with an elementary kid**
- **Very relaxed, not a lot of pressure**
- **Helps to know people to get a job**
- **Seniors have School to Work program**

#### **TEACHERS/EDUCATORS**

- **Size of the community**
- **Winter sports**
- **Scenery**
- **The school**
- **The people are very active in the community and want to see good things happen**
- **Law enforcement –**
- **Community Center**
- **EMTs**
- **Community Library – all volunteer**
- **Pristine quality of air, water**
- **Kids are not transient – not nearly as bad as it used to be**
- **Very accepting community**

## **GARDINER RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT**

### **PROJECTS**

#### **BUSINESSES AND CHAMBER MEMBERS**

- Year round road open between Cooke City, Gardiner and West Yellowstone.
- Provider higher quality higher density housing if we are going to expand
- Look for ways to free ourselves from dependence on centralized infrastructure of a power system, i.e., wind energy
- Explore wind energy options
- Improve relationship with Park County Commissioners
- Front Street issue – been on books for 30 years – dickering with state of Montana, county and park service regarding a strip of land transfer. (The sidewalk curb is the park line.)
- Get north entrance to the park re-developed; unsafe for park workers and bottleneck of traffic
- Roof for the historic jail – built in 1903.
- Develop a historic walking trail – including the jail – will provide something for tourists do to, family friendly at night
- Rails to trails
- Lower speed limit in winter time at night from chapel on the highway to Gardiner (55).
- Effective vaccine for buffalo so can transport out healthy buffalo to tribes
- Road issue addressed with Cooke City – once CC construction is complete.
- Public bathrooms are needed.
- Visitor center – include public bathrooms.
- Fill visitor center void when enter the State of Montana (Wyoming has lots of signs)
- Improve ambulance service so do not have a patient transfer along the highway

#### **BUSINESSES ALL CHAMBER MEMBERS**

- Activities to improve relationship between Church Universal Triumphant and people of Gardiner
- Solution that everyone can live with regarding housing for Sheriff and Ambulance without displacing water department from the depot
- Chamber Visitor Center
- Resolving Front Street Issue – immediate jurisdictional issues and how to get improvements (park does not want to spend money on it, but there are problems for Gardiner)
- Energy independence (SB415 is a start)

#### **GENERAL PUBLIC, NON-PROFITS, WATER, AMBULANCE**

- Preserve the special ness that we have.
- How can Gardiner businesses change fast enough/accurate enough to adjust to the changes around us (wolf watchers? Water rafters?)
- Gardiner must advocate for itself with the park, forest service, other agencies
- Resort tax issue explored

- **Housing for ambulance, chamber, sheriff and search and rescue – two years ago the county allotted \$80,000. (Currently looking at land swap with the county)**
- **Building a 1.6million arsenic treatment plant – 54% rate increase**
- **Ambulance service to have a building, sheriff and search and rescue all have own housing**
- **Affordable housing**
- **Move the school from Mammoth to Gardiner – use that for offices**
- **Park service and Xanterra –two company town**
- **Educate community about the resort tax – so it is in the hands of community as well as the businesses**
- **Series of informational mailings regarding the resort tax – public meetings don't work**
- **Address north entrance bottleneck**

### **ROYAL TETON RANCH AND CORWIN SPRINGS RESIDENTS**

- **Have had lectures from the park service, how about from farmers – more programs like this – advertise them well – to educate city dwellers**
- **Local/valley newspaper is needed**
- **Publicize that the current newsletter is available via email**
- **Develop the railroad path to a bike path – just getting started**
- **Wireless internet service – need additional aerial at Old Forbes place – but road is not accessible in winter. Qwest does have a tower up there.**
- **Fire district to cover the Corwin Springs area**
- **Road from bridge – county owned – needs care**
- **Reduce pollution from the gravel/asphalt place**
- **Address the wolf issue – hurt outfitting, livestock**
- **Prepare for wolf impact, business reduction as a result**
- **Educational trail regarding archeology, geology, little different perspective with real science included**
- **Lobbying group to change legislation regarding Gardiner issues**
- **Summit Lighthouse holds conferences and uses Gardiner hotels – would like a place to reach out to tourists in Gardiner**
- **Teenagers that come from foreign countries that work in the park/Gardiner – need and want more computer access.**
- **Talk with Qwest about bringing in DSL to Gardiner as well as Mammoth**
- **Use school computers in the summer time?**
- **More public rest rooms or another state rest area**
- **Night speed limit needs to be lowered – from rest area in**
- **Summer workers need better housing**
- **Improve communication from school to parents**

### **GARDINER SCHOOL STUDENTS**

- **Bowling alley**
- **Move theater open on weekends -**
- **Put something in next to the theater too – used to be the Geysers but it is closed**
- **Nice place to eat that is affordable for kids**
- **Jobs outside of the tourism industry**

## **TEACHERS/EDUCATORS**

- **More after school programs**
- **Nice baseball diamond and soccer field –**
- **Swimming pool would be great**
- **Beautification**
- **Front street beautification**
- **Something for kids to do in the summer**
- **Revive the theater**
- **Roller skating rink, shooting gallery**
- **Adult sport league – organized sports league**