

# **RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT REPORT**

**for**

## **GOLDEN VALLEY COUNTY** **RYEGATE AND LAVINA**

**March 2 - 3, 2004**

**In partnership with  
Montana Department of Commerce, Montana Economic Developers Association,  
Montana USDA/Rural Development, Mid-Rivers Communications, Snowy  
Mountain Development Corporation and the people of Golden Valley County.**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What a delight to meet the people of Golden Valley County and explore the communities of Ryegate and Lavina. It was a privilege to spend two days in your county and learn of its challenges, strengths and dreams for the future.

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>.

Special thanks are due Kathie Bailey of Snowy Mountain Development Corporation. Kathie served as the spark plug behind this project and encouraged across-the-board county involvement. In addition, I applaud each and every team member that dedicated hours of work and travel in order to participate on the team: Al Jones, Regional Development Officer for Montana Department of Commerce; Ethan Stapp, Montana Department of Commerce HOME Program Officer; and Diana Meehan, Sales and Marketing Analyst for Mid-Rivers Communications. 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 being set for Golden Valley'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 your entire community and/or county 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. It can be done. It is your choice, your decision; you can do it!

Be sure to attend the follow-up Town Meeting in Ryegate, June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:00pm. Bring a potluck dish to the Senior Citizens Center and let's work together to set the direction for Golden Valley County.

Gloria O'Rourke  
MEDA

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

Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) provided staff support for the coordination of a resource team to assist Golden Valley County (focus on the communities of Ryegate and Lavina), in evaluating assets and liabilities and in developing suggestions for improving the environment, social and economic future of the area.

Kathie Bailey, of Snowy Mountain Development, served as the local contact and local team leader for the project. Kathie took the lead in agenda development, logistics, budgeting and publicity for the assessment. Resource team members were selected to visit, interview citizens, business and community leaders; and develop a plan of recommended action for the city. The team members were carefully selected based on their fields of expertise that Golden Valley officials indicated would be needed to respond to the problem areas identified.

The Resource Team interviewed over 75 people during March 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. The team was available for listening to the following 9 groups: Ryegate Senior Citizens; Quad 5 Staff; Golden Valley Hutterite Colony; Ryegate Community; Ryegate High School students and staff; Governmental Agencies/Emergency Services; Lavina Senior Citizens; Lavina High School students; and the Lavina Community.

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

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 carefully 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 a final report to Golden Valley County.

A preliminary oral report and a summary of group recommendations was presented to the people of Golden Valley on march 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Following the oral report, this formal written report was prepared and is presented to Ryegate, Lavina and Golden Valley County. Copies will be made available in print and electronically. The report is available on the MEDA website at <http://www.medamembers.org>. A potluck and meeting is planned for June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6:00pm, in the Ryegate Senior Citizen Center to review the report with the people of Golden Valley and to set priorities and initiate action plans.

**GOLDEN VALLEY COUNTY, MONTANA  
RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT  
MARCH 2 – 3, 2004**

**Team Member: Al Jones**  
**Title: Regional Development Officer**  
**Agency: MT Department of Commerce**  
**Address: 2004 Miles Ave.**  
**City/State/Zip: Billings, MT 59102**  
**Phone: 406.655.1696 Fax: 406.655.0899**  
**Email: [aljonesrdo@bresnan.net](mailto:aljonesrdo@bresnan.net)**  
**Web: <http://www.commerce.state.mt.us>**

**Team Member: Diana Meehan**  
**Title: Sales and Marketing Analyst**  
**Agency: Mid-Rivers Communications**  
**Address: P.O. Box 1070**  
**City/State/Zip: Sidney, MT 59270**  
**Phone: 406.433.7405 Fax: 406.433.6789**  
**Email: [dianam@midrivers.com](mailto:dianam@midrivers.com)**  
**Web: <http://www.midrivers.com>**

**Team Member: Gloria O'Rourke**  
**Agency: MEDA/MEDS**  
**Address: 118 E. Seventh St.; Suite 2A**  
**City, State, Zip: Anaconda, MT 59711**  
**Ph: 406.563.5259 Fx: 406.563.5476**  
**Email: [gloria@medamembers.org](mailto:gloria@medamembers.org)**  
**Web: <http://www.medamembers.org>**

**Team Member: Ethan Stapp**  
**Title: HOME Program Officer**  
**Agency: MT Department of Commerce**  
**Address: P.O. Box 200545**  
**City/State/Zip: Helena, MT 59620-0545**  
**Phone: 406.841.2819 Fax: 406.841.2821**  
**Email: [estapp@state.mt.us](mailto:estapp@state.mt.us)**  
**Web: <http://www.commerce.state.mt.us/housing>**

**RYEGATE/LAVINA GOLDEN VALLEY RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT 2004**

**AGENDA**

**Tuesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>**

- Morning      Travel time for Resource Assessment Team
- 11:00      Orientation: Arrive and meet at Catholic Church Rectory in Ryegate (Housing for the week)  
                 Gloria O'Rourke, Kathie Bailey, Carrie Mantooth
- 12:00      Listening Session and Lunch at Ryegate Senior Citizen Center  
                 Millie Paugh, Hugh Willson, MaryAnn and Leonard Schladweiler
- 1:30      Leave for 2:00 Tour of Quad 5  
                 Wiley Micks
- 3:00      Leave for 3:30 Tour of Golden Valley Hutterite Colony
- 5:00      Working Dinner at Ryegate Cafe
- 7:00      Listening Session: General Public Meeting at Ryegate Senior Center adjacent to Catholic Church  
                 John Lewis, Tony Zinne

**Wednesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>**

- 7:30      Breakfast at the Rectory,  
                 Kathie and Carrie
- 8:30      Listening Session: Ryegate High School,  
                 Mr. Bob Rooley
- 10:00      Listening Session: Governmental Agencies/Emergency Services at FSA Office,  
                 MaryAnn Schladweiler, Joy Schanz, David Paugh
- 12:00      Listening Session and Lunch Lavina Senior Citizen Center  
                 Minnie Krause
- 2:30      Listening Session: Lavina High School Students  
                 Lynn Webber, Mr. Osler
- 4:00      Working Dinner at Lavina Café  
                 Gloria O'Rourke - Formulating main issues
- 7:00      Listening Session: General Public Meeting at Senior Citizen Center  
                 Joan Krause, Sid Boe, Bob McNary

## **GOLDEN VALLEY RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT MAIN ISSUES**

**March 2 – 3, 2004**

Note: These main issues are a summary of the comments, ideas, suggestions made during the Golden Valley Listening Sessions. These Main Issues are the outline for the Golden Valley Resource Team written report.

### **POPULATION**

- **Aging population**
- **Lack of school age children**

### **HOUSING**

- **Lack of housing - rental and for sale**
- **Issue of housing quality**
- **Affordability**
- **Variety of housing design structure**
- **Land availability**

### **HEALTH CARE and EMERGENCY SERVICES**

- **Transportation to reach medical facilities**
- **In Home health care**
- **Assisted living**
- **Ryegate – funds for EMT facilities**
- **Lavina – new fire truck**
- **Golden Valley County – need for more volunteer EMTs and firemen**
- **Ryegate - EMT communications from rural sites to hospitals**

### **JOBS**

- **Lack of jobs – full and part time**
- **Lack of living wage**
- **Lack of professional opportunities**
- **Skill sets and/or trade skills**

### **ECONOMY**

- **Define community identity – retirement community? Entrepreneurial? Bedroom community?**

### **TOURISM/RECREATION**

- **Increase public access to recreation points**
- **Marketing the area**
- **Public rest area**

## **BEAUTIFICATION**

- **Pick up the trash, general clean up**
- **Pick-me-ups such as painting, tree planting, flowers**
- **Signage**
- **Theme – involves lighting, signage, main street, architectural integrity**
- **Ryegate – abandoned homes**

## **EDUCATION**

- **Consolidation – to what degree?**
- **Sharing of Art, Music, Shop, Language and Home Ec**
- **Interactive TV Resource**

## **COMMUNITY**

- **Youth center**
- **Ryegate – repairs and accessibility to Senior Center**
- **Lavina – handicap access to church**

## **COUNTY-WIDE COLLABORATION**

- **Coordinate services - maximize**
  - **Assets**
  - **Equipment**
  - **Business - prevent overlap to ensure viability**
  - **See Education for consolidation issues**

## RESOURCE TEAM REPORTS

**Ethan Stapp, HOME Program Specialist**  
**Montana Department of Commerce**  
**301 S. Park Avenue**  
**PO Box 200545**  
**Helena, Montana 59620**  
**Ph: (406) 841-2819 Fax: (406) 841-2821**  
**Email: [estapp@state.mt.us](mailto:estapp@state.mt.us)**  
**Web: [http://commerce.state.mt.us/housing/Hous\\_Prog\\_HOME.html](http://commerce.state.mt.us/housing/Hous_Prog_HOME.html)**

*First, I would like to thank Golden Valley for their hospitality and frankness. The people of Ryegate and Lavina have a strong love for their community and the unique qualities that make them special places. I commend the people on their proactive thinking, and their drive and desire to take control and better their communities. You have a community spirit and a can-do attitude that really works to your advantage.*

*I was also impressed with what Lavina and Ryegate have to offer those in search of a quality of life not found in many areas of the country. Golden Valley has a comparatively low cost of living, low crime rate, a natural beauty, and a small town atmosphere the likes of which is increasingly sought out by young professionals, working families, and retirees. The close proximity of Ryegate and Lavina to the city of Billings, and the location of these communities along Highway 12, is a definite boon for the County's future growth and development.*

### **MAIN TOPIC: HOUSING**

A variety of housing issues was discussed at the listening sessions, including shortage of rental units and single-family units, quality of housing, and availability of developable land.

Before I get into the specific housing issues, **I highly recommend the communities conduct a Housing Inventory/Needs Assessment.** An inventory would determine such things as: number and types of housing units, age/condition, occupancy (occupied vs. abandoned), housing that is owner-occupied vs. renter-occupied, value, mortgage status, renters' costs, etc—many of the areas not covered by this Resource Team assessment. An inventory/assessment would give an accurate picture of the current housing and provide direction for addressing housing issues.

### **Issue: Deteriorated Housing**

Deteriorated homes are a significant problem in rural areas where the cost of rehabilitation work in relation to the value of the property can be significant, particularly for low income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Deteriorated housing may need paint, replacement of windows, repairs to a leaking roof, repairs to a sagging porch or broken stairs, replacement of a wood stove with central heating, replacement of an outhouse with running water, a bathroom, and a waste disposal system, or addition of a front-door ramp for someone using a wheelchair. These types of conditions can severely affect the quality of life for low-income residents.

## **Recommendations:**

For rehabilitation of deteriorated homes, or homes with structural or code issues, there are several programs available as discussed below. Golden Valley County is a good candidate for a housing rehabilitation project through the CDBG or HOME program. Regardless of whether the county decides to pursue funding for a housing rehabilitation project, a grassroots effort to clean up vacant building and lots would still have a positive impact.

Many suggested having a “Community Clean Up” day at the listening sessions. Why not also consider providing basic home maintenance to elderly and disabled as part of this event. A small bit of labor could go a long way to making a significant difference in the appearance of the community. Also, consider conducting locally sponsored workshops for homeowners to learn about home maintenance needs, basic maintenance and repairs, assistance in hiring reputable contractors or “handy persons.”

## **Recommended Resources:**

Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) District VI: HRDC provides a range of services and information to low-income people in these Montana counties: Fergus, Golden Valley, Judith Basin, Musselshell, Petroleum, and Wheatland. Programs include housing/rental assistance, home heating/weatherization assistance, childcare and health services, business loans, and employment training.

HRDC District VI  
Centennial Plaza, Suite 203  
300 1st Avenue North  
Lewistown, Montana 59457  
Ph: (406) 538-7488 Fax: (406) 538-2843  
Toll-Free outside Lewistown: 1-800-766-3018  
Email: [chmartin@state.mt.us](mailto:chmartin@state.mt.us)

HRDC District VI, Roundup Office  
26 Main Street  
Roundup, Montana 59072  
Ph: (406) 323-3857 Fax: (406) 323-3874  
Email: [bvescovi@state.mt.us](mailto:bvescovi@state.mt.us)

HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program: Please refer to the program description under “Housing Shortage” for more details and contact information.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program: One of the programs that the Department of Commerce works with is the federally funded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. The program was designed to combat urban blight and deterioration that encouraged property abandonment and discouraged new investment. The program has a lot of experience with housing rehabilitation and dealing with blight problems. Please refer to the program description under “Housing Shortage” for more details and contact information.

Two USDA Rural Development programs provide assistance for repair and maintenance to existing homes. These are:

Housing Preservation Grants: USDA Rural Development provides Housing Preservation Grants to nonprofit and governmental organizations to remove health and safety hazards to owner-occupied residences or rental housing for low-income individuals. These grants are combined with other funding sources to accomplish the repairs.

504 Repair Loans and Grants: USDA Rural Development helps existing homeowners with home improvement loans to improve or modernize their existing home. Low-income residents can apply for loans of up to \$20,000 at 1 percent interest and repayment period up to 20 years.

Very low-income elderly residents aged 62 or older may qualify for grants or a combination of grants and loans to remove health or safety hazards. Lifetime grant assistance is limited to \$7,500.

Eligible Improvements:

- Installation and repair of sanitary water and waste disposal systems, including related plumbing and fixtures
- Payment of reasonable connection fees for utilities
- Various energy conservation measures including installation of insulation and storm windows
- Repair or replacement of heating systems and electrical wiring
- Structural improvements including repair of, or provision for structural supports; repair or replacement of the roof; and replacement of severely deteriorated siding
- Improvements to make homes accessible to handicapped residents

Deborah Chorlton, Program Director  
USDA Rural Development, Rural Housing Service  
P.O. Box 850  
Bozeman, MT 59771  
Ph: (406) 585-2551 Fax: (406) 585-2565  
Email: [Deborah.Chorlton@mt.usda.gov](mailto:Deborah.Chorlton@mt.usda.gov)

Debbie Swanson, Area Director  
1629 Avenue D, Building A  
Billings, MT 59102  
Ph: (406) 657-6297, ext 4 Fax: (406) 657-6294  
E-mail: [swanson@mt.usda.gov](mailto:swanson@mt.usda.gov)

Section 203K Substantial Rehabilitation Insured Loans: Administered by the Fair Housing Administration (FHA), this program allows an owner occupant or investor to finance the purchase of a property in need of repairs, or to refinance an existing loan and needed repairs. Using a 203K insured mortgage, the borrower can get one mortgage loan at a long term fixed (or adjustable) rate to finance the purchase price of the property as well as the cost of repairs. The benefit to the lender is that the loan is FHA insurable at closing, before any repairs are started. The benefit to the borrower is that only one loan is necessary to purchase and repair the home. Without 203K, a purchaser would likely have to obtain

one loan to purchase the property, another loan to do the repairs and another permanent mortgage when the work was completed to pay off the interim loans with the permanent mortgage.

**This program is flexible. It can be used to improve an existing one-to-four unit dwelling in any of the following ways:**

- Buy a home and remodel
- Refinance your present home and remodel
- Buy a house and move it onto a new foundation on another property
- Place your manufactured home (built after 6/15/76) on a permanent foundation
- Convert a single family home to a 2- to 4-unit property
- Remodel a multi-unit property to a single family home
- Rebuild a damaged or demolished home as long as the existing foundation is acceptable

*For example, the 203K can be used to remodel a kitchen, add a bathroom, finish a basement, build a new garage, install new siding, drill a well, replace a septic system, update the plumbing, heating or electrical systems, repair or replace a roof, install new flooring, install energy efficiency items or any other type of remodeling idea you might have. Contact a lender for information on maximum mortgage limits in your area and to apply for an FHA 203K insured mortgage.*

Don Smith, Supervisory Housing Specialist  
Ss Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Helena Field Office  
7 W 6th Avenue  
Helena, MT 59601  
Ph: (406) 449-5050 Fax: (406) 449-5052  
E-mail: [Don.H.Smith@hud.gov](mailto:Don.H.Smith@hud.gov)

Montana Reverse Annuity Mortgage Loan Program for Elderly Persons: This program enables elderly Montanans to benefit from an additional income source from the use of their home equity. In addition to other uses, the funds may be used to make repairs or improvements to the home. Eligibility is subject to certain age and income requirements. This loan also requires borrowers to complete a reverse annuity mortgage-counseling program. Loans can be from \$15,000 to a maximum of \$100,000 each. The maximum loan amount would be based on 80 percent of the FHA-determined property value. Currently, loans are at a five percent interest rate.

Gerald Watne  
Montana Board of Housing  
301 S. Park Avenue  
Helena, MT 59620  
Ph: (406) 841-2840 Fax: (406) 841-2841  
Email: [gewatne@state.mt.us](mailto:gewatne@state.mt.us)

Weatherization and Energy Assistance Programs: These programs provide funds to help low-income persons reduce their home heating costs. Measures include insulation, caulking, furnace repair, and replacement. Labor and materials are purchased locally. By reducing overall costs, weatherization helps

a family stay in their home, increasing family self-sufficiency. These programs are administered through the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services.

Jim Nolan, Bureau Chief  
Intergovernmental Human Services Bureau  
Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services  
1400 Carter Drive  
PO Box 202956  
Helena, MT 59620  
Ph: (406) 447-4260 Fax: (406) 447-4287  
Email: jnolan@state.mt.us

### **Issue: Housing Shortage**

A shortage of housing and limited diversity of housing choices in the County is predominant in most people's minds.

### **Recommendations:**

Cost and supply of rental housing is a problem across Montana. The market for rental housing in Golden Valley would be an important consideration for rental housing development. What is the current and future demand for single- and/or multi-family rental housing? **A study would certainly be necessary to assess the market potential. The financial viability of a rental project would be the primary concern for a potential developer/funder.**

Housing grants and subsidized loan programs focus primarily on low-income homebuyers and renters, and do not sponsor market-rate development. Low-income housing has an undeserved stigma. It has long been assumed that low-income housing attracts only undesirable people. This is simply not the case. In Golden Valley County, the median income (i.e. half the population earns less, and half earns more) for a family of four is \$42,188. Low-income is defined as 80% or less of median income. In Golden Valley, low income for a family of four is \$33,750 or less. For a single individual, it is \$23,650 or less. Low-income households include families, the elderly, and people with physical or mental disabilities.

Bringing in private, for-profit developers is an issue for the city and county. Attracting market rate housing development is a complex issue, entwined in matters of provision of infrastructure, job growth, public services, and quality of life issues – all those things that fuel market potential. The two highest priorities for the County and the communities of Ryegate and Lavina are infrastructure development and economic development and community planning, and these ARE areas for which assistance is available. Please refer to my discussions in Tourism and Countywide Collaboration for more information. Constructing an assisted care facility for the elderly, as discussed later in the report, would also in turn free up some housing, thereby helping somewhat with the housing shortage.

### **Recommended Resources:**

A variety of public funding sources is available and is discussed below. These programs have complex requirements, and grant application and grant management procedures can be burdensome for local governments and organizations with limited capacity. **I would recommend consideration of joint application or sponsorship between city or county government and an experienced private, non-profit development organization, consulting group, or local resource development council. The Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) District VI in Lewistown is a good resource and can assist with grant applications.**

Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) District VI  
Centennial Plaza, Suite 203  
300 1st Avenue North  
Lewistown, Montana 59457  
Ph: (406) 538-7488 Fax: (406) 538-2843  
Toll-Free outside Lewistown: 1-800-766-3018  
Email: [chmartin@state.mt.us](mailto:chmartin@state.mt.us)

HRDC District VI, Roundup Office  
26 Main Street  
Roundup, Montana 59072  
Ph: (406) 323-3857 Fax: (406) 323-3874  
Email: [bvescovi@state.mt.us](mailto:bvescovi@state.mt.us)

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program: CDBG is a US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program, and is managed within the State by the Department of Commerce. The primary objective of the State CDBG program is to develop viable communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment and by expanding economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income persons in Montana. Fifty-one percent of the funds must be used for activities that benefit low- and moderate-income persons.

**Montana administers two components of the State CDBG program through the Community Development Division and the Business Resources Division of MDOC. Two-thirds of the program funding is for public facilities and housing projects, administered by the Community Development Division. One-third of the funding is for economic development projects, administered by the Business Resources Division. The State makes grants for community development activities to units of general-purpose local government (counties and municipalities, except Billings, Great Falls and Missoula). Montana's Community Development Block Grant Program is a federally funded competitive grant program designed to help communities of less than 50,000 in population with their greatest community development needs. All projects must principally benefit low- and moderate-income persons.**

Some of the activities that can be carried out with CDBG funds include:

- acquisition of real property
- rehabilitation of residential and nonresidential properties (including special facilities for the handicapped)
- construction of new, affordable housing (when sponsored by a nonprofit organization)

- provision of public facilities and improvements such as water, sewer, or solid waste facilities or senior citizen centers

Under the housing category, CDBG funds can be used to provide homebuyer assistance, including the subsidy of interest rates and mortgage amounts for low- and moderate-income homebuyers. CDBG funds may also be used to make low interest loans or grants to low- and moderate-income families to allow them to rehabilitate homes in substandard condition. CDBG funds can be used to finance or subsidize the construction of new, permanent residential units where the CDBG funds will be used by a local nonprofit organization. Housing projects can include site improvements to publicly owned land or land owned by a nonprofit organization to be used for new housing. Community revitalization activities, such as neighborhood clean-up and fix-up projects, as well as the demolition of vacant, seriously dilapidated structures are also eligible housing activities.

**Transitional (temporary) housing is eligible under the housing category. The acquisition of sites for new housing and conversion of existing nonresidential structures for residential use are also eligible CDBG housing activities.**

CDBG public facility funds have been used to upgrade or undertake the new construction of dozens of community water and sewer systems. During the last few years communities have also utilized the CDBG program to construct or rehabilitate senior citizen centers, centers for abused or runaway youth, and nursing home facilities.

Gus Byrom, Program Manager  
Montana Department of Commerce  
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program  
301 S. Park Avenue  
PO Box 200523  
Helena, MT 59620-0523  
Ph: (406) 841-2777 Fax: (406) 841-2771  
Email: [gbyrom@state.mt.us](mailto:gbyrom@state.mt.us)

HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program: HOME is another HUD-sponsored program administered by the Montana Department of Commerce (MDOC). This program allows tenant-based rental assistance; assistance to first time home buyers; property acquisition; new construction; rehabilitation; relocation; building rehabilitation; site improvements; and other activities for developing non-luxury housing.

All HOME funds assist families with incomes below 80% of the area median income. HOME funds are distributed on an annual competitive basis. All cities (except Billings, Great Falls and Missoula, counties, Public Housing Authorities and MDOC-certified Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) are eligible to apply for HOME funds. An individual may not apply directly to the HOME program; however, individual households are the ultimate recipients of all HOME grant funds through the eligible applicants.

Julie Flynn, Program Manager  
Montana Department of Commerce

Home Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program  
301 S. Park Avenue  
P. O. Box 200545  
Helena, MT 59620-0545  
Ph: (406) 841-2818 Fax: (406) 841-2821  
Email: [juflynn@state.mt.us](mailto:juflynn@state.mt.us)

*Several programs of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development are available as loans or grants to assist rural Montana with Single Family Housing and Multi-Family Housing needs. Rural Development partners with local lenders, community groups and local, state and federal funding sources.*

Single Family Housing program: USDA RD provides homeownership opportunities to very low-, low- and moderate-income rural residents through several loan, grant and guarantee programs. The program also provides loans and grants to individuals to finance the vital improvements necessary to make their homes decent, safe, and sanitary.

Because a down payment is not required, this program helps borrowers by reducing the closing costs. In addition, there is no mortgage insurance premium cost which further reduces the up front costs and monthly payments.

To qualify for a loan guarantee, each applicant must certain income restrictions and credit requirements. In addition to applicant requirements, there are also certain requirements for the home. It must provide modest, decent, safe, and sanitary housing for the family and cannot have an in-ground swimming pool or other structures designed for income-producing purposes. In addition, the land value of the property cannot exceed 30% of the appraised market value of the home. The property must meet FHA requirements.

Another option available for some families in Montana is the Mutual Self-Help Housing Program. Through this program, nonprofit organizations receive technical assistance grants to help very low- and low-income families build their own homes. Applicants must show a need for self-help housing, the professional expertise to supervise a project and a lack of funding to be eligible for this assistance.

*Approved applicants in groups of 8 to 12 families provide sweat equity, working together under the guidance of professionals to build each other's homes. When all the homes are completed, each family has gained shelter, confidence, beneficial skills, and an unparalleled sense of community relationship. This program has worked well elsewhere in the state.*

Section 515 Rural Rental Housing Loans: Increased home prices have resulted in a higher percentage of renters throughout the nation. More facilities are needed to meet this demand. The USDA RD multi-family housing Section 515 program provides financing to build, purchase or repair apartment style housing for low- to moderate-income residents in rural communities with a population of up to 20,000 people. Financing is also available for rental assistance subsidies.

Eligible applicants include individuals, trusts, associations, general partnerships, limited partnerships, local governments, for-profit, and nonprofit corporations. Nonprofit corporations may be organized on a

regional or multi-county basis. Loans to nonprofits may be up to 100 percent of the appraised value or development cost, whichever is less.

Section 538 Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing Program: The USDA RD Section 538 Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing Program is available thanks to a partnership between the Federal government and major financial lending institutions. The program is designed to help qualified local lenders serve the rental housing needs of low- and moderate-income households in their community.

Under the RHS Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing Program, qualified lenders are authorized to originate, underwrite, and close loans for multifamily housing complexes requiring new construction. In turn, USDA will guarantee the lender's loan up to 90 percent of the total development cost and will commit to paying up to 90 percent of the outstanding principal and interest in the event of a default on the loan. The program has had less than a 1 percent default rate over its history.

Loan guarantees can be used for:

- New construction, moderate or substantial rehabilitation
- Acquisition of buildings that meet "special housing needs"
- Combination of construction and permanent loans
- Construction of a wide variety of housing types

Eligible borrowers include:

- Individuals
- Nonprofit or for-profit corporations
- Partnerships
- Limited liability companies
- Trusts
- State and local governments
- Indian tribes, and any other entity deemed eligible

The loan guarantees can be used with other subsidy funding programs such as the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program, Montana Department of Commerce's HOME program, and state rental assistance programs.

Deborah Chorlton, Program Director  
USDA Rural Development, Rural Housing Service  
P.O. Box 850  
Bozeman, MT 59771  
Ph: (406) 585-2551 Fax: (406) 585-2565  
Email: Deborah.Chorlton@mt.usda.gov

Debbie Swanson, Area Director  
1629 Avenue D, Building A  
Billings, MT 59102  
Ph: (406) 657-6297, ext 4 Fax: (406) 657-6294  
E-mail: swanson@mt.usda.gov

*Several state programs through the Montana Board of Housing are available as loans to assist with Single Family Housing and Multi-Family Housing projects. The Montana Board of Housing was created by the Montana Housing Act of 1975 in order to alleviate the high cost of housing for low-income persons and families. The funds to operate the programs administered under the act are generated through either the sale of tax-exempt bonds or from administrative fees. The Board receives no state funds to operate the programs. The Board's programs fall into three categories: home ownership, multifamily, and elderly programs.*

Single Family Mortgage Program: This program is financed through the sale of tax-exempt bonds issued by the Board. Because of the tax-exempt status of the bonds, the Board is able to loan the funds to lower income individuals in the form of low-interest loans. While the program is mainly to assist first time homeowners, in certain targeted areas, the borrowers need not be first time purchasers. The home is to be owner-occupied with limited business use of the property. Income and purchase price limits apply for area of Montana where the house is located. The refinancing of an existing home loan is not permitted.

Disabled Accessible Affordable Homeownership Program: The Board sets aside funds to provide affordable, architecturally accessible homes for people with disabilities such that they can live independently. An eligible home buyer, spouse, child, or parent must have a permanent physical disability with a mobility impairment, may not have an annual income in excess of \$30,000 or total family assets exceeding \$50,000, and must be a first time home buyer or had purchased a home prior to becoming disabled and it is no longer accessible to their needs.

Bob Morgan, Single Family Program Manager  
Montana Board of Housing  
301 S. Park Avenue  
P. O. Box 20052  
Helena, MT 59620-0528  
(406) 444-3040 Fax: 841-2841  
Email: [bmorgan@state.mt.us](mailto:bmorgan@state.mt.us)

General Obligation (GO) Multifamily Rental Program: This program provides mortgage financing to owners of qualifying housing when the owner agrees to restrict the rents to a specific amount, and to rent only to tenants below a maximum income level (generally 60% of median income). Currently this program is financing the permanent loans for projects, which receive multiple sources of funding through other programs, where rents on the projects are affordable to very low-income state residents.

HUD/Housing Finance Agency Risk-Sharing: On June 13, 1994 the Board received final approval from HUD to participate in the Risk Sharing program. The Risk Sharing Program works in partnership with the Department of Housing and Urban Development, whereby HUD provides mortgage loan insurance and the Board provides mortgage underwriting and loan management as well as financing, and the two entities share the risk of loss from a project default. The Board intends to finance the Program through the sale of tax-exempt multifamily bonds.

Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program: The low income housing tax credit, established by Congress in the Tax Reform Act of 1986, is intended to provide for the retention, rehabilitation and construction of low income rental housing. Through the program, developers and owners of qualified housing receive

an annual federal tax credit for 10 years, based on the number of housing units provided to low-income individuals and families. The tax credit can then be sold to an investment entity to provide project development funds. The Montana Board of Housing receives authority to allocate the credit through the Internal Revenue Code of approximately \$2 million per year.

Matt Rude, Multi-family Program Manager  
Montana Board of Housing  
301 S. Park Avenue  
P. O. Box 20052  
Helena, MT 59620-0528  
(406) 444-3040 Fax: 841-2841  
Email: mrude@state.mt.us

## **MAIN TOPIC: HEALTH CARE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES**

### ***Issue: Public Transportation***

Listening Session participants, particularly the senior citizen group, mentioned the need for transit services for those are unable or should not drive. They spoke of the need for both services within the community as well as from Golden Valley to Billings. In the United States, the private automobile is the predominant form of transportation for the elderly. The percentage of those who drive and who have licenses declines slowly up to 85 years old, and after that there is a substantial decrease. When no longer able (or comfortable) to drive oneself, what are the elderly to do?

### **Recommendations:**

Transportation and access to services is vital to the health and quality of life for the elderly in Golden Valley. According to the Community Transportation Association, nearly 40 percent of the country's transit dependent population – primarily senior citizens, persons with disabilities and low-income individuals – resides in rural areas. Most senior citizens are going to live for a number of years after they cease driving, and many will cut back on driving for several years before they completely stop. The challenge is to meet the special transportation needs of the people so that they can enjoy the last years of their lives -- living independently in their own homes and connected to their communities. Lost mobility jeopardizes not only the physical and emotional health of the individual – who may feel a sense of loss and dependency – but also the quality of their community. Transportation options provide the mobility that prevents isolation and promotes independence, enabling access to health care, to stores, community and social activities, and to family and friends.

### **Recommended Resources:**

Transportation Assistance for the Disabled and Elderly (TRANSADE): This program provides operating assistance in the form of state money to agencies that are providing services for the elderly and disabled. A community/county now has the option of applying for Federal funds for equipment and for state funds for operating costs of that equipment. The Montana Department of Transportation holds grant application workshops in the fall – usually in October.

Section 5310 grant program: The purpose of this grant is to provide transportation services that meet the special needs of elderly persons and persons with disabilities. The Transit Section currently has 82 recipients of this funding with an inventory of 165 vehicles. Successful applicants receive funding for 80 percent of the capital equipment cost from federal funds. The remaining 20 percent must be matched with local funds. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding is supplemented annually with Surface Transportation Funds approved for the purchase of capital equipment by the Montana Transportation Commission.

Eligible recipients for capital assistance funds include private, nonprofit organizations, and approved local governments.

Section 5311 grant program: this program offers operating and capital assistance to qualified organizations providing transportation to the general public in rural areas of less than 50,000 population. Federal funds pay 50 percent of deficit operating costs and 80 percent of capital costs. The remaining 50 percent and 20 percent respectively must come from the local recipient. Applications are due to the Transit Section by the first working day of February each year. Eligible recipients of this funding include local governments, private nonprofit organizations, and operators of public transportation services.

Rural Transit Assistance Program: RTAP funds may be used to support nonurbanized transit activities in four categories: training, technical assistance, research and related support services. This program is a component of the Section 5311 grant.

Dick Turner, Bureau Chief  
Multimodal Planning Bureau  
Montana Department of Transportation  
2701 Prospect Ave.  
P.O. Box 201001  
Helena, MT 59620-1001  
Ph: (406) 444-7289 Fax: (406) 444-7671

HRDC District VI  
Centennial Plaza, Suite 203  
300 1st Avenue North  
Lewistown, Montana 59457  
Ph: (406) 538-7488 Fax: (406) 538-2843  
Toll-Free outside Lewistown: 1-800-766-3018  
Email: [chmartin@state.mt.us](mailto:chmartin@state.mt.us)

HRDC District VI, Roundup Office  
26 Main Street  
Roundup, Montana 59072  
Ph: (406) 323-3857 Fax: (406) 323-3874  
Email: [bvescovi@state.mt.us](mailto:bvescovi@state.mt.us)

Several good sources of information regarding public and senior citizen transportation. The CTAA website has several great transportation development “toolkits” that can be used as a resource for researching and initiating senior transit options for Golden Valley:

Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA)  
1341 G St NW, 10th Floor  
Washington, DC 20005  
Ph: (202) 628-1480 Fax: (202) 737-9197  
Web: <http://www.ctaa.org>

Montana Transit Association  
Ph: (406) 543-8386

### ***Issue: Assisted Living/ In-Home Health Care***

Another theme that was prevalent in most of the listening sessions was concern for the elderly that need assisted care. When senior citizens reach the stage of their lives when they need limited assistance, it is not available in Golden Valley. Many of these folks of the may move to other communities, which places burdens on the family and means the loss of members of the community.

A need for assisted living as an expansion of the nursing home was discussed along with affordable homes to purchase.

Elderly residents would prefer to age in place, but may feel the need to relocate to Billings to be in closer proximity to medical services. Elderly residents will experience diminished retirement income due to inflation, death of spouse, et cetera. This, combined with increased frailty and disabilities that come with aging, increases the demand for more housing with handicapped accessibility (wider doorways, grab bars, etc) and/or assisted care services.

### ***Recommendations:***

Golden Valley does not have an assisted living facility. It was suggested a facility be built that could address both the assisted living issue. Golden Valley could become increasingly attractive to retirees with diverse housing needs. With the Baby Boom generation nearing retirement age, this group may be drawn to the area for its attractive natural environment and “small town feel.” The presence of on assisted living facility could be an important factor in the selection of a community, even if the individual does not expect to need such a facility for many years.

There are programs that can provide financial assistance for the construction of this type of facility. **A feasibility study should be done to determine the viability.** It must first be determined if there is a customer base sufficient to support the proposed facility. If the need exists, is it financially feasible to construct the facility and can the community support it. A well-conducted feasibility study should answer these questions.

### **Recommended Resources:**

Several of the programs described under the Housing topic also provide assistance for assisted living facilities, particularly CDBG and HOME. Please refer to the Housing section for information.

Several excellent resource for information and services for housing for seniors and persons with disabilities are available locally, these are:

Aware, Inc.  
118 E. Seventh Street  
Anaconda, MT 59711  
Ph: (406) 563-8117 Fax: (406) 563-5956  
Web: <http://www.aware-inc.org/>

HRDC District VI  
Centennial Plaza, Suite 203  
300 1st Avenue North  
Lewistown, Montana 59457  
Ph: (406) 538-7488 Fax: (406) 538-2843  
Toll-Free outside Lewistown: 1-800-766-3018  
Email: [chmartin@state.mt.us](mailto:chmartin@state.mt.us)

HRDC District VI, Roundup Office  
26 Main Street  
Roundup, Montana 59072  
Ph: (406) 323-3857 Fax: (406) 323-3874  
Email: [bvescovi@state.mt.us](mailto:bvescovi@state.mt.us)

USDA Rural Development offers several programs to aid financing of public services such as medical care and fire departments:

USDA-RD Community Facilities Program: This program includes a CF Guaranteed Loan Program, CF Direct Loan Program and a small CF Grant program. It is possible to utilize funds from all three programs along with funds from other sources to complete the financing package for a particular community facility project. Eligible uses of funds include construction or expansion of facilities, purchase of land or major equipment, and payment of reasonable professional fees associated with the project. Examples of eligible projects include:

- Health Care – clinics, nursing homes, assisted living centers
- Cultural – museums, theatres
- Public Safety – child and adult care centers, libraries, community centers, senior centers, youth centers, municipal buildings
- Educational – public schools
- Transportation – bridges, airports, sidewalks, street improvements

Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grant Program: This program is designed to specifically meet the educational and health requirements of rural communities. Eligible uses of funds include equipment for

distance learning classrooms and equipment for telemedicine programs. This technology allows smaller clinics to interact with health care specialists located elsewhere in the state or in the nation. Eligible applicants include hospitals, health care clinics, educational institutions, libraries, etc.

Economic Development Loan Program: This program provides zero interest loans to electric and telephone utilities financed by the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) to promote sustainable rural economic development and job creation projects. The RUS utility is required to re-lend, at zero percent interest, the loan proceeds to an eligible third-party recipient for economic development projects. Examples include business expansions, business startups, community facilities, medical facilities and equipment, educational facilities and equipment and infrastructure necessary for economic development and job creation.

Rural Economic Development Grant Program: This program is designed to establish a revolving loan fund and it requires the RUS utility to contribute to the fund an amount equal to 20% of the grant proceeds. Eligible third-party uses of funds include seed money for revolving loan funds to finance community facilities and infrastructure, project feasibility studies/technical assistance, and the establishment of business incubators.

Supportive Housing for the Elderly (Section 202): HUD's Section 202 program provides funding to expand the supply of housing with supportive services for very low-income persons 62 years of age or older. Initial legislation authorizing this program was enacted in the Housing Act of 1959 (Section 202) and was amended in 1990 by Section 801 of the National Affordable Housing Act. Section 202 funding falls into two categories: capital advances and project rental assistance. Capital advances are to finance elderly housing that also offers supportive services. The advances are non-interest-bearing, and are based on development cost limits published in the Federal Register. Project rental assistance covers the difference between the HUD-approved operating cost per unit and 30% of resident's adjusted income. Funds can be used for acquisition, rehabilitation, new construction, rental assistance, and support services for households containing at least one person over 62 years of age. Private, nonprofit organizations and consumer cooperatives are eligible to apply.

Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities (Section 811): Section 811 grant monies are awarded to private, nonprofit organizations providing assistance to expand housing with supportive services for persons with disabilities. This often includes group homes, independent living facilities, and intermediate care facilities. Section 811 targets persons with a physical or developmental disability or chronic mental illness of long and indefinite duration that substantially impedes the person's ability to live independently, but could be improved by more suitable housing conditions.

Marcie LaPorte, Director  
Rocky Mountain Region Multifamily Hub  
US Department of Housing and Urban Development  
1670 Broadway, 23rd Floor  
Denver, CO 80202  
Ph: (303) 672-5343 Fax: (303) 672-5388  
E-mail: [Marcie\\_D\\_LaPorte@hud.gov](mailto:Marcie_D_LaPorte@hud.gov)  
Web: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/mfh/progdesc/progdesc.cfm>

## **Issue: Lack of EMS/Firefighting Resources and Equipment**

### **Recommendations:**

Please see the resources listed below.

### **Recommended Resources:**

Many of the resources listed above for assisted living facilities are applicable for EMS/fire facilities. Please refer to the above section for more information.

Montana Board of Investments INTERCAP Loan Program: This program lends low cost money to Montana local governments and state agencies for a variety of purposes. Eligible projects include new or used equipment of all kinds, real property improvements, interim financing for construction, preliminary engineering, and grant writing work.

Montana Board of Investments  
Bond Program Office  
2401 Colonial Drive, 3rd Floor  
P.O. Box 200126  
Helena, MT 59620-0126  
Ph: (406) 444-0891 Fax: (406) 449-6579  
<http://www.investmentmt.com>

## **MAIN TOPIC: BEAUTIFICATION**

### **Issue: General Clean Up**

Numerous comments, particularly at Ryegate listening sessions, were made concerning the unattractive appearance of properties in the town. The visual impression created by the physical appearance of a community can have a powerful influence on community pride, interest, and involvement of residents, and the ability of the community to attract outside investment. Uncut weeds, trash, junk vehicles were all examples of conditions that degraded the appearance of the community.

Mosquitoes also came up as an issue. In places where refuse and wrecked vehicles, appliances, tires and the like have collected, mosquito control can be inter-related with the issue of community beautification. The best way to stop mosquitoes from breeding is to regularly remove all man-made sources of stagnant water, because mosquitoes can potentially breed in any stagnant puddle that lasts more than four days.

### **Recommendations:**

Many suggested having a “Community Clean Up” day at the listening sessions. Clean up efforts such as these results in such a dramatic visual improvement that it tends to energize communities to do even more. The quality of housing in small towns and rural areas is threatened, with less incentive for

reinvestment as the number of jobs declines and the remaining population becomes relatively older. At an early stage, a highly visible project is a good idea.

Many mentioned the strong community spirit and volunteerism in Ryegate and Lavina. Both the students at both high schools said they would like to do more to help their communities. It appears that we should have all the necessary ingredients to start a clean up effort in these communities and to make it a regular community event.

### **Recommended Resources:**

Montana Community Foundation  
101 N. Last Chance Gulch, Suite 211  
Helena, MT 59601  
Ph: (406) 443-8313 Fax: (406) 442-0482  
Email: [ryaeger@mtcf.org](mailto:ryaeger@mtcf.org)

The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center: This website provides some helpful information for organizing a community clean up day. Web:  
[http://www.walkinginfo.org/cps/guide\\_issue7.htm#organize](http://www.walkinginfo.org/cps/guide_issue7.htm#organize)

### **Issue: Abandoned Buildings**

The people of Ryegate and Lavina appear to have a real concern about the physical appearance of the community. In Ryegate, there was particular concern for the buildings that were vacant and deteriorated. There may be numerous reasons why these buildings are not maintained or occupied. Whatever the reason, these buildings can have a powerful influence on the visual appearance of the community. What kind of message do vacant, abandoned buildings send about the community to someone driving through who might potentially be thinking about retiring there or even bringing in a business? The presence of deteriorated and abandoned buildings can send the message that the community is dying. Moreover, community deterioration can be a vicious cycle not easy to break. Existing property owners may be reluctant to invest in their own property when the presence of abandoned or deteriorated buildings means depreciating property values. Whether it is a big city or a small town, the effect is the same: it discourages maintenance of existing properties and new investment and construction.

In addition to the visual problems, abandoned buildings can be real threats to public health and safety. Children often find the buildings attractive places to play. Added to the dangers of something collapsing on them or children starting fires or using drugs, many are infested with rodents. This has become a serious health concern because of Hantavirus, a potentially fatal respiratory virus that is associated with deer mice and other rodents.

### **Recommendations:**

It does not take many years of abandonment to seriously deteriorate a structure and warrant demolition. Obviously, the community would want to preserve any building that is structurally sound and capable of re-use or that is historically significant.

Many communities across Montana are dealing with this problem using local volunteers. The town of Medicine Lake, in northeastern Montana, started such a project, and with the assistance of the Sheridan County Road Department demolished nine buildings. The project caught the attention of other residents, who took it upon themselves to also tear down and clean up other vacant buildings. The communities of Baker and Forsyth also started projects to remove abandoned buildings. It might be helpful to contact those towns to see how they went about it, and how they dealt property owners to get permission to remove the buildings.

Dave Cole of the Montana Department of Commerce referred me to the Resource Team assessment for Judith Basin. In it, he offers suggestions for dealing with property owners who may be reluctant to demolish abandoned structures. In some cases, a relative may have title to the property and be reluctant to have it torn down because of the positive memories they have when the family lived there and it was in good condition. It may be helpful to send a photograph of the property in its present condition. If there are back taxes on the property, perhaps the county would be willing to waive the taxes for permission to demolish the building. The town might offer to list the lot with a local realtor following demolition. The property may well have more value after the dilapidated structure is removed.

Counties and municipalities have the authority to adopt “Community Decay Ordinances” to declare properties a public nuisance or threat to public health and safety and order owners of deteriorated properties to either improve them or tear them down. A properly drafted decay ordinance will enable the local government to correct the conditions and bill the landowner for the costs. This is an option if persuasion is not effective.

### **Recommended Resources:**

City of Medicine Lake  
201 Main Street  
PO Box 5  
Medicine Lake, MT 59247  
Ph: 789-2422

City of Forsyth  
247 North 9th Avenue  
PO Box 226  
Forsyth, MT 59327  
Ph: (406) 356-2521

### **MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY**

#### **Issue: Youth Center**

The youth in Lavina and Ryegate were concerned about the lack of after school activities. Many of the students and other community members we visited with in both Ryegate and Lavina mentioned the need for a Youth Center.

Also, another request made by the students of Lavina: provide after school access to the high school computer lab. Funds and staffing may be limiting factors, but having the lab open one night a week or for limited hours on the weekend would make a big difference. It would provide additional access to students that do not have computers at home, and provide a safe, alternative recreational activity. Are there innovative ways to make it feasible, such as community volunteers or appointing a student as a “monitor” during the hours the lab is open?

### **Recommendations:**

Fortunately, there are many foundations that offer grant funding for youth centers. Begin by forming a committee or task force of people who share the goal of building a youth center and then start the planning process by asking questions. Youth of all ages should play an active role in developing this project. Give them responsibilities, let them make decisions, and allow them to make mistakes.

**In addition, would the local senior citizens centers be willing to consider providing their facilities for youth activities on a regular basis?**

### **Recommended Resources:**

For more information about the logistics of running a youth facility, you may contact Havre Encourages Long-Range Prevention (HELP). HELP operates Havre’s Boys & Girls Club and is a good source for information and ideas.

Havre Encourages Long-Range Prevention  
P.O. Box 68  
Havre, MT 59501  
Ph: (406) 265-6206 Fax: (406) 265-6206

**Youth in Action/Community Service Grants:** This program supports ongoing community service programs to stimulate new and creative youth-led community service programs. Web: <http://www.n4h.org/programs/main.asp?subid=6&catid=1>

**Youth Development, Education, and Social Entrepreneurship Program Grants:** The foundation’s goal is to empower poor and at-risk youth to become productive citizens, and looks primarily to preventative programs to accomplish this goal. Web: <http://www.jenesis.org>

**The National Youth Development Information Center:** This is a project of the National Assembly through its affinity group, the National Collaboration for Youth. NYDIC provides practice-related information about youth development to national and local youth-serving organizations at low cost or no cost. Youth grant opportunities can be found at <http://www.nydic.org/nydic/funding.html>

Altec/Styslinger Foundation  
210 Inverness Center Dr.  
Birmingham, AL 35242

Deramus Foundation, Inc.  
c/o David Zimmerman  
120 W. 12th St.  
Kansas City, MO 64105

MacDonald Family Foundation  
P.O. Box 64788  
Los Angeles, CA 90064  
Ph: (310) 571-2492 Fax: (310) 571-2496

Robertson Foundation  
c/o American Express TBS, Inc.  
1185 Ave. of the Americas  
New York, NY 10036-2602

Sherwood Foundation  
c/o Susan Buffett  
105 N. 54th St.  
Omaha, NE 68132-2810

Dennis & Phyllis Washington Foundation, Inc.  
P.O. Box 16630  
Missoula, MT 59808-6630  
Ph: (406) 523-1300  
Web: <http://www.washcorp.com/foundation>

**Issue: Accessibility and repairs to community facilities**

In Ryegate, several people mentioned the need for repairs and increased handicapped accessibility at the Senior Center. In Lavina, handicap access at the church.

***Recommendations:***

Many mentioned the strong community spirit and volunteerism in Ryegate and Lavina. Both the students at both high schools said they would like to do more to help their communities. Your communities have all the necessary ingredients get a project accomplished. All it takes is one person to raise his or her hand and take charge, or be nominated, and others will step forward to help. The sense of community responsibility is an overwhelming motivator, and can get many things done when community leaders know how to take advantage of it.

***Recommended Resources:***

Many of the funding sources described in the section on Housing also provide assistance for community facility repair.

## *Issue: Infrastructure*

**I group a number of the community concerns under the issue of infrastructure. There was a lot of discussion about streets, curbs and sidewalks, water supply and treatment, and the like.**

In most of the listening sessions, participants indicated their support for economic development. One of the fundamental building blocks for encouraging and supporting economic development is having adequate infrastructure.

Nothing is more important to quality of life than to have adequate and decent drinking water. It is also critical to be able to have any reasonable hope of attracting or supporting local economic development.

### **Recommendation:**

Ryegate provides water and sewer services for the town. Due to water shortages in the summer season, an additional water source is currently being pursued. Lavina has public sewer services, but residents receive water is from private wells. Residents of both Lavina and Ryegate spoke of poor water quality.

Lack of a community water system in Lavina and poor or inadequate water in Ryegate could be an obstacle to the potential for future economic development. No business developer wanting to locate a processing or manufacturing plant in Golden Valley will wait three years for a new water system. The community has to be ready to supply adequate services when the economic development opportunity presents itself. Otherwise, the investors will take their proposal to another community that is ready for them.

I spoke with Dave Cole of the Montana Department of Commerce Community Development Division. Through the CDBG and TSEP programs, his division is a common source for infrastructure development dollars for water system projects. One of the purposes of programs like TSEP or CDBG is to help make local public facility projects affordable for local residents. He says there can be significant time lag between when a community decides to develop or upgrade its water system and when funding is available. It may take two to three years to put together the necessary grant or assistance loans needed to make the project feasible and not overburden local residents with the project costs.

Because of the high cost of these projects, it usually requires a combination of two to four funding sources to finance a project. The TSEP program is a common source for small communities in Montana. TSEP provides matching grants to fund preliminary engineering studies. These funds are provided on a first come, first serve basis. The appropriation for these engineering studies is effective only for fiscal years 2004 and 2005 so there is no assurance that TSEP engineering grants will be available in the future after these funds are expended. The TSEP preliminary engineering grants require a dollar-for-dollar match from local funds. If Lavina decides to pursue a community water system, it should apply to TSEP for a preliminary engineering grant soon as possible.

**Local officials need a long-range plan for prioritizing and addressing infrastructure concerns. There are several State and Federal loan and grant programs available that provide financial assistance to assist with both the planning and funding of infrastructure development. It would be**

**worth your local officials' time to determine whether the state and federal infrastructure programs available to them could help make the costs of a water project more financially feasible.**

**Recommended Resources:**

Karyl Tobel, Program Manager  
MT Department of Commerce  
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program  
P.O. Box 200505  
Helena, MT 59620-0505  
Ph: 406.841.2733 Fax: 406.841.2731  
Email: [karylt@state.mt.us](mailto:karylt@state.mt.us)  
Web: [http://commerce.state.mt.us/brd/BRD\\_CDBG.html](http://commerce.state.mt.us/brd/BRD_CDBG.html)

Jim Edgcomb, Program Manager  
*Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP)*  
P.O. Box 200523  
Helena, MT 59620-0523  
Ph: 406.841.2785  
Email: [jedcomb@state.mt.us](mailto:jedcomb@state.mt.us)  
Web: [http://commerce.state.mt.us/CDD/CDD\\_TSEP.html](http://commerce.state.mt.us/CDD/CDD_TSEP.html)

**MAIN TOPIC: COUNTYWIDE COLLABORATION**

Issue: Coordinate Services

Some residents mentioned a lack of planning or zoning in the County.

**Recommendation:**

I highly recommend that Golden Valley County find the means of funding a full time planning or development position. There needs to be one person that has expertise in community and economic development that can handle business relocation requests, grant development/management, business expansion strategies, community planning and general community development. The organization needs to be staffed by a full-time paid employee, not volunteer and not part-time. This is the type of position the county needs to help the commissioners and town leaders make and promote economic development policy.

**Second, I would recommend that Golden Valley implement a long-range comprehensive planning process in the County. This Resource Assessment is intended to provide Golden Valley with a basic guide to addressing immediate community and economic development needs. It is intended to provide the sort of community consensus needed to get a few projects done. This assessment is just the first step. It in no way provides direction for what Golden Valley wants in the future much more planning is needed. What Ryegate or Lavina want to be in the future requires comprehensive planning, if that future is to be realized.**

Planning for the future may seem like an overwhelming challenge, but should a community just wait to see what happens? Without planning, the future will be decided haphazardly through the individual actions of every individual, with each action affecting the economy, business development, housing, infrastructure, schools, transportation, water resources, recreation, health services, and property values.

I would seriously consider adopting of the necessary zoning ordinances in the County. Without a set of rules governing development in the community, there results in a hodge-podge of mixed or inappropriate land uses. It also undermines incentives to make further property improvements.

### **Recommended Resources:**

The University of Montana Department of Geography has programs in rural, town, and regional planning. I would recommend seeking out the school for a student project on Golden Valley. Suggest to the school that Golden Valley be the site for a student or class planning project. This would be a great resource for Golden Valley to address planning, and provide a real world planning experience for the School.

Jeffrey A. Gritzner  
The University of Montana  
Department of Geography  
Social Science 203  
Missoula, MT 59812-5040  
Ph: (406) 243-4302 Fax: (406) 243-4840  
[geog@selway.umt.edu](mailto:geog@selway.umt.edu)

Also, I recommend the Local Government Center at Montana State University—Bozeman. The mission of the Local Government Center, is to help strengthen the capacities of Montana’s local governmental units to deliver essential services efficiently, and to provide training, technical assistance, and research to local officials.” Take advantage of this resource!

Jane Jelinski  
Local Government Center  
Montana State University, Department of Political Science  
Phone: (406) 994-6694  
Fax: (406) 994-1905

This book is the classic text on planning in small communities. It is available at the Billings Parmly Library or may be purchased from Amazon.com.

Rural and small town planning. 1979. Judith Getzels and Charles Thurow, editors. American Planning Association, Planners Press, Chicago.

### **Issue: Zoning**

Some residents mentioned a lack of zoning codes in the community. This results in a. Zoning codes typically are established to protect and promote the general health, safety, and welfare residents, and to protect and enhance property values by preventing a hodge-podge of mixed or inappropriate land uses. They also help to guide new growth and development of a community with the most efficient use of land, and reduce potential hazards to the public that result from incompatible land uses. Most importantly, they promote the economic stability of a community by limiting the uncertainty that can undermine incentives to economic development in an area. The best example in Golden Valley of this disincentive is the issue of housing deterioration that is occurring in Ryegate. What kind of message do vacant, abandoned buildings and dilapidated housing send about the community to someone driving through who might potentially be thinking about retiring there or even bringing in a business? Bottom-line, it discourages maintenance of existing properties and new investment and construction.

**Recommendation:**

Pursue adoption of the necessary zoning ordinances. Also, consider “Community Decay” ordinances for cleanup and blight removal.

**Recommended Resources:**

**PlaceMatters.com:** PlaceMatters.com is designed to help community leaders, public agencies, and land use planners understand and employ new tools and techniques for community planning. They also have a great planning resource guide available online at:

[http://www.placematters.com/Placemaking/Placemaking\\_v1.pdf](http://www.placematters.com/Placemaking/Placemaking_v1.pdf)

**US Department of Energy, Smart Communities Network:** Provides a variety of information on community planning/zoning, and links to communities to show what’s being done elsewhere. Online at:

<http://www.sustainable.doe.gov/landuse/lucodtoc.shtml>

**MAIN TOPIC: ECONOMY, JOBS, AND TOURISM/RECREATION**

Golden Valley has a great resource in Al Jones—I highly recommend you take full advantage of his experience and background.

**Issue: Theme and Community Identity**

I will leave the discussion of economic development and job growth to Al Jones and the other members of the Resource Team, but I *will* expand on several issues for which I have some background. Several issues came up in the listening sessions that are directly related to economic development—community identity, development of a community theme, promotion of retirement in Golden Valley, and development of a main street or town center.

**Recommendations:**

An important element of Golden Valley’s economic development future is tourism. Golden Valley is fortunate to be located near many important historical, cultural and natural sites all of which could be

included as part of the County's efforts to attract more tourists. Although Golden Valley's proximity to Billings is an important factor, studies have shown that distance is not a limiting factor if the activity is sufficiently compelling. For example, a 2002 study by the Arizona Planning Association on tourism in rural Arizona showed that tourists will travel to a destination if the recreation activities at the destination take four times longer than the travel time.

I encourage Lavina and Ryegate develop a theme to further support tourism. This will promote a sense of unity throughout town and make the community more visually appealing. Developing a theme also gives communities the opportunity to define who they are and illustrate the character of their community. A community theme would help to enhance the economic development potential of Lavina and Ryegate. Studies on tourism have shown that themes are excellent ways of providing potential visitors an incentive to visit a community, especially when the theme reflects a community's history and physical or economic heritage. The adoption of a theme is important if the communities of Golden Valley are to take full advantage of their potential as a tourism destination.

Themes should be simple and not attempt to pull visitors in too many directions. A number of possible themes could be used in Ryegate or Lavina based on their history or natural setting. In Lavina, for example, a theme and possibly a museum related to regional or local history, might give a reason for visitors to stop, and other shops related to this theme might give them reason to stay longer. There already exist the key ingredients in Lavina: the Adams Hotel and the Slayton Mercantile. Support and expand on these assets in the way suggested by Raymond Barry, owner of the Adams Hotel. He has some excellent ideas about how to develop the main street to showcase the town's historic significance. A possible example to follow is Tombstone, Arizona. Though perhaps a bit tacky, Tombstone has done a great job of promoting itself as a tourist destination, while preserving its history and maintaining livable neighborhoods. Their website is: <http://www.cityoftombstone.com/>

One way to develop a theme is to first develop a community identity, or vision—the exploration of how community members would like to see their community grow and thrive in the future. This is an opportunity for community members to understand the different components of your community and capture what you would like to see in the future. A vision should reflect the values of the residents of the community and incorporate the voices of all different groups. This process will not only help residents create a theme for the “look” of the town but will also help guide future community planning, in regard to the development of new community projects and growth.

Many communities have followed this process, to great success: check out community websites and see how they have taken a piece of their local culture, heritage or history and created a theme. Aspen, Colorado, is a great example of a community that had a vision and used it to direct development in the area, and it all began with a group of WWII veteran ski troopers who wanted to make the town into a ski resort.

A vision is an important tool a community can employ for directing and prioritizing its development efforts. A vision is essentially the answer to the question, “Who are we and what will we be in the future?” Or more importantly, “What do we *want* to be?” Again, it helps if the community vision is established through a participatory process to accurately represent the collective will of the community. Also, if the vision is to be effective and long-term, the “visioning” process should be led by the community's planning body, and formalized in a document accepted and ratified by the community's

governing body. This, then, becomes the overarching vision that guides the entire planning process, from economic, infrastructure, and public service planning, to community design, zoning, and city ordinances.

What do Ryegate and Lavina want to be in the future? A retirement community; a bedroom community, where folks live and shop in Golden Valley, and commute to Billings; a tourist destination; or a blend of all three? Perhaps something entirely different?

Retirement promotion has definite promise. The March 10, 2004 issue of the Wall Street Journal featured an article about the growth in the number of retirees from around the country who are relocating to rural areas in the West, drawn by less expensive housing and quality of life amenities such as low crime and outdoor recreation. Colorado, Idaho, Utah and New Mexico lead the growth. Each of those states saw its senior population grow at least 6% between 2000 and 2003, placing them among the 10 fastest-growing states for the 65+ age group. Many retirees in Idaho and Colorado move there for the mountain vistas and fresh air but stay close to cities such as Boise and Denver to gain easy access to health care, transportation and shopping.

Whatever your community decides to promote, I recommend that Ryegate and Lavina investigate ways to invest in and promote the development of a town center. The town center can be the central feature of a community's theme, whether it is located along the main street as in the case of Lavina, or perhaps off the highway as in Ryegate. A town center is typically a focal point, with a mix of retail and commercial businesses and residences, and often serves as the hub of community activity.

### **Recommended Resources:**

Dustin Escapule, Mayor  
City of Tombstone  
PO Box 339  
Tombstone, AZ 85638  
Ph: (520) 457-2202 Fax: (520) 457-3516  
Web: <http://www.cityoftombstone.com/>

Community Tourism Planning and Design: Besides a variety of online resources, they have a periodic newsletter that highlights what other communities are doing to promote as tourism destinations. Online at: <http://www.community-tourism.net/>

A Guide to community visioning: hands-on information for local communities. 1993. American Planning Association, Oregon Chapter, Salem.

This book will help citizens understand the connection between the kind of place they want their community to be and the policies that will support their vision. A product of the Oregon Visions Project, it also points you to additional resources, helpful hints, and illustrations of Oregon communities' visions. This book is at the University of Montana Law Library, available through interlibrary loan. Or you can purchase through APA book service, online at: <http://www.planning.org/bookservice>.

Small town and rural economic development : a case studies approach. 2000. Praeger Press; Westport, Connecticut.

The main library at the University of Montana – Missoula has just purchased the book. It is also available through Amazon.com. This book has excellent information on the strategies communities across the country are using, and recommends how these strategies might be pursued elsewhere.

**Report by: Diana Meehan, Sales and Marketing Analyst**  
**Mid-Rivers Communications**  
**P.O. Box 1070**  
**Sidney, MT 59270**  
**Ph: (406) 433-7405**  
**Email: [dianam@midrivers.com](mailto:dianam@midrivers.com)**  
**Web: <http://www.midrivers.com>**

## **RYEGATE**

I will start off by stating, I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know the residents of Ryegate. I appreciate all the kindness and hospitality shown to me during my stay. Thank you!

Before I get into my report there are a few things you should know about me. I am a practical and realistic person, I'm sure this will be evident throughout my report. My goal is to give realistic and "doable" ideas & projects. In doing this I trust your community will be encouraged that little projects can go a long way.

To often communities look at the "big picture" and are overwhelmed by what needs to be done. Because you see immediate results I believe starting with little projects will build your confidence. Smaller projects can also fuel your community and start a fire that will help you endure the larger projects.

I encourage you to keep the "doable" concept in mind even when starting the big projects. Nothing will kill a project or burn a committee out like discouragement.

Because I work in Marketing and Public Relations I will not be listing links for grants. Yet it is important to remember that Mid-Rivers Communications does employ a fulltime grant writer who is willing to assist you. On that note I trust you will find my comments and ideas helpful and doable.

## **BEAUTIFICATION**

I start with beautification because I believe it is the #1 doable project. My suggestions, I believe are feasible from a financial standpoint. They will however, take manpower and a lot of elbow grease.

1. Form a committee including representatives from different age groups. You will find this beneficial in achieving an objective viewpoint.
2. At your first meeting all jump into a vehicle(s) drive two miles out of town turn around and *slowly* drive back to town. Everyone will need to take notes with this question in mind, "What looks bad?" Your list will vary but I will guarantee you will see similarities. Next, drive through, or walk, through every road and ally in town asking the same question, "What looks bad?" You may think this is a negative start but like in anything, you must identify the problem.
3. After you've done the legwork of identifying the problems in your community the committee will need to sit down and discuss, in detail, what the problems are. I encourage you to keep this information confidential. The last thing you want is to information mulling around town that the committee thinks, "Mr. Smith is messy".
4. Prepare a report, without identifying specific neighbors, if at all possible.

5. Organize your report
  - a. What we saw, “The Good Bad and the Ugly”
  - b. What we can do
6. Below I’ve listed beautification problems you as a community mentioned during the town meeting and / or items I made note of. Items listed can be rectified without a grant or a large financial strain to the community
  - a. Overgrown weeds in vacant lots
  - b. Dead trees
  - c. Residential yards with unsafe and / or eyesore items. Such as: cars, machinery and unusable toys.
  - d. Homes with dilapidated buildings on their lot. Such as: sheds, storage facilities and / or detached garages.
7. What to do? Simple, clean it up! Below are a few ideas as to how to clean up the town in a rather short amount of time. The key will be community involvement. This is when marketing to your own community is necessary. You may want to approach the community with the concept, “We’re putting Ryegate on the market”. For example, just as you prepare a home to be sold on the market so must you prepare Ryegate. Ultimately your goal is to attract travelers, new families and new businesses to the area. We need to be honest; Ryegate is not ready to be on the market. Ok, let’s get going!
  - a. Clean-up weekend
    - i. Pick a weekend well in advance and advertise like crazy in the community.
    - ii. Pick a catchy slogan: “Community Day...It’s up to YOU”, “Clean It Up...We want to SHINE”, “Revive...to Survive”, “A More Beautiful Us”. You get my drift. You could have a contest at the school asking the kids to come up with a slogan and posters.
    - iii. Get everyone involved. When our Team was at the school a large majority of the HS kids said they would be willing to help in a cleanup effort. Take advantage of their energy.
    - iv. Have a sponsored meal. This could be done at lunch or at an evening meal. For example, have cleanup from 8 – 5 with “pack your own bag lunch” for the noon meal and FREE hamburgers in the park at 5 p.m. If you have organized meals at organized times you will have more success with people staying all day.
    - v. Be sure to organize what you will do with the trash.
    - vi. Provide assistance to elderly residents.
    - vii. Provide babysitting
    - viii. Fund Raiser – You could use the cleanup day as a fundraiser. Organize a group that could be hired out to clean private yards. Pick a fundraising “cause”, for example, a new highway sign welcoming travelers to stop in Ryegate.
    - ix. Be realistic on what you can get done in a day or weekend. More than likely you’ll need a follow-up day.

## **TOURISM / TOWN THEME**

After you’ve beautified Ryegate, what will it take to make people stop? What will cause people to travel to Ryegate for the day?

1. Town Theme

- a. Brainstorm – Get together and come up with a lot of different ideas. No idea is silly; sometimes the “out of box” ideas are the ones that draw the most attention.
  - b. You can’t do it all. This is very important. Remember be realistic. You may decide to run with an “antique” theme or promote your wildlife and beautiful landscape. Whatever you do, do it well.
2. Communication and Cooperation – If you accept nothing but this point in my report I will be thrilled.
- a. Communication – “The act of communicating”. Communication takes work, it is an action word. Once you stop the act, communication no long will take place. Easy concept...difficult to do. You can have the best ideas but without the simple act of communication you have nothing.
  - b. Cooperation – “To work together for a common end.” Remember, you’re all striving for the same goal. In the end, it does not matter whose idea it was, only that you’ve reached your goal successfully. If you must...read this again! How much easier life would be if we had been created without egos!
  - c. Communication and Cooperation with Lavina – While visiting with residents from both Ryegate and Lavina it was apparent that you all want the same thing...to thrive where you live. What a shame it would be if both communities decided on the same theme. Neither would thrive. On the other hand, how exciting as a traveler if when completing my visit in either Ryegate or Lavina I was encouraged to drive down the road for another small town experience.
  - d. Utilize help offered. As I stated in the begining, I am not qualified to give grant information yet others on our team are. I am more than willing to help with promotional ideas, literature and advertisement.

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS

1. Mid-Rivers Communications is your “Community Partner” we share the same goal... to see your community thrive.
2. I encourage you to get involved with ITV (Interactive Television). You may need to work with the school to see this happen in your community.
3. Mid-Rives offers assistance with grant writing by offering the services of a fulltime grant writer. There is no charge for this service and is extremely beneficial in locating and successfully receiving grants.
4. I reiterate what I stated above; I am more than willing to help with promotional ideas, literature and advertisement.

In closing I would like to thank you again for the opportunity to get to know of little of your community. It was a pleasure! Please do not hesitate to call me, I wish you all the best.

**Report by: Al Jones, Regional Development Officer for South Central Montana**  
**Montana Department of Commerce, Business Resources Division**  
**2004 Miles Avenue**  
**Billings, MT 59102**  
**Ph: 406.655.1696 Fx: 406.655.0899**  
**Email: [aljonersdo@bresnan.net](mailto:aljonersdo@bresnan.net)**

**General notes & personal opinions of Al Jones, *lifelong native of the general area***

**MAIN TOPIC: Diversifying the Local Economy & Generating More Decent-to-Good Jobs**

The mystery to me is why Golden Valley County has shrunk for so many decades from the two dozen or so communities it once had down to Ryegate, Lavina, and maybe Barber and Cushman.... Reading the histories of some of the towns it reveals a very vibrant and entrepreneurial heritage with a much more diverse base than just the 1900-1920 homesteader/immigration boom that is the peak for much of Central and Eastern Montana's populations. The current rock quarrying and logging suggest to me there might be other mostly forgotten resources from those old towns such as what they mined (several are mining towns), oil as drilled for the Lewistown oil refineries, natural gas reserves someone alluded to as still being of interest, and I'd assume some of the same coal seams that underlie Mussellshell County.

The couple of loggers we talked to seemed confident that there was good timber access and the proximity to Billings' market suggests several options to me:

Focusing on *selling small bundles of clean, wrapped firewood, decorative rustic split rail fencing, log cabin logs, tipi lodgepoles, split logs for rustic paneling in restaurants/bars/retail/homes, log front porch kits for existing cabins, log arbors/benches*, etc. would seem like the gist of several small ventures based on pick-up trucks, trailers, chainsaws, and a log splitter rather than the far more costly and inflexible equipment needs for small sawmills to produce commodity dimensional lumber.

This could provide another 10-25 jobs within 3-9 businesses which would do a lot to increase the economic pie in Golden Valley County. All of it should be focused on selling in the Billings and other larger markets, i.e. Bozeman, Livingston, Columbus for both demand and the price they'll pay.

We didn't meet the stone-quarrying folks although several of the high school students worked there. I hope they subscribe to the free trade magazine Stone World to keep up on prices, technology, uses, etc. as stone has been going through a pretty amazing time thanks to the migration of technology from metal and woodworking (water jet cutting, laser cutting/engraving, diamond-bladed chainsaws/bandsaws) computer controlled routers/planers/joiners, sealing chemicals etc. that have made stone much more usable, affordable, and in high demand. Along with landscape boulders/rocks/slabs, rough shaped stone for outdoor retaining walls, the more finished stones are again popular for exterior wall facings (apparently stone is mostly decorative finish rather than a structural member which changes nearly everything), fireplaces, countertops, interior and exterior flooring, etc.. Sandstone, the prevalent rock in the area, is so easily worked that garden sculptures, decorative entrance carvings for gates, mantles, coffee table tops, etc. are all much more feasible and economic than harder stones. This

region of Montana used to export quite a bit of sandstone blocks for commercial and residential buildings and I'm still unsure why such quarrying died out, probably the Great Depression which in Montana started in the middle 1920's.

The Quad 4 Ranch's sophisticated blood serum collection from a surprising array of critters suggest that not only are there plenty of growth opportunities with it's core business and ancillary processing steps, it also suggests that there may be some side ventures that could be done with the particular critters that are their "bloodstock."

**A**n odd thought that hit me was that the Ranch has more of the huge draft horses (Percherons? Belgians? Clydesdales?) than anyone I've heard of in the region; not only does that suggest breeding and training such horses along with rentals for parades...it would also (here's the odd thought) lend itself to jousting. Jousting's been making a big comeback and basically just requires flat empty ground, some seating, and horse-savvy folks. Much of it is organized by chapters of medieval living history enthusiasts, the Society for Creative Anachronism <http://www.sca.org/> , <https://secure.sca.org/cgi-bin/stockclerk/official.html> includes their guide to equestrian events and <https://secure.sca.org/cgi-bin/stockclerk/other.html> includes other reference publications. There's a chapter in Billings that's been around for 15 years and I'd be surprised if there weren't others by now, regional org is at <http://www.artemis.sca.org/>. Often these overlap into Renaissance Fairs. A division of Atlanta Cutlery, Medieval Replicas, makes modern armor, chain mail, shields, etc. already and the opportunity to make clothing, pennants, standards, etc. would be good ones for the skilled home sewers certain to exist in Golden Valley County.

<http://www.gymkhanarider.com/About/history/jousting.html> has links to many jousting events, resources, etc., I see Maryland's had these since 1950 and if Arizona can do them, so can Golden Valley County. <http://search.yahoo.com/search?fr=slv1-&ei=UTF-8&p=Jousting>

These big draft horses were originally bred as knights' chargers/war horses so Golden Valley oddly has the best supply of jousting horses (authentic ones that can run with the weight of a man in armor on them) in probably several states. Along with doing this as a tourism event perhaps in May and September (cooler weather, fewer competing events) to draw visitors to the communities, this could be a training school like a riding academy that could provide work for 2-8 folks...given how hot the outfits are this would be a good Spring and Fall activity, maybe winter. Obviously there'd be spin-off work in tack, wooden lance-making, concessions, stabling, etc.

Other entrepreneurial opportunities I heard about or noticed in the County would be:

- Home health care with several folks in Lavina and Ryegate already doing it and a lot more demand to come. This could easily grow to 10-15 jobs, many of them just a self-employment method.
- House cleaning as a self-employment option can readily pay \$8-12/hr, better than many jobs in the area and with more flexibility. The number of elderly people, 2-4 job households, commuters, disabled, etc. suggest this has more potential there than generally realized.
- Home handyman services are typically overlooked in ranching communities because the farm/ranch households are used to doing that work themselves and forget about less handy town folks and especially senior citizens who really appreciate someone to do

minor repairs, adjustments, maintenance, painting, light carpentry, replace a hot water heater, hang curtains, fix a driveway or roof, replace a window, lay a carpet or tile floor, remove a shrub or dead tree, etc.. I helped set up an SBDC client of mine years ago at this in Hardin and within a few months he was working night and day at \$25/hr. with just the tools he'd already had in his garage while another friend made a good living doing just that in Billings for 30 years. Also makes a difference in keeping up rental properties as handymen for hire make it much easier on landlords.

The recent pornography arrests in Lavina point out how Golden Valley residents can overcome distance in selling all sorts of stuff using E-Bay (it's amazing what's in there now from original art to Montana beef to specialized industrial equipment.) There are also many more specialized sellers and crosses between paper catalogs and web-based catalogs that all make it much easier to get national distribution or find that handful of buyers who'll pay top dollar.

One of the best job generators for a local community is construction, especially home-building and remodeling. While each tourist dollar might turnover 2x in Golden Valley's sparse economy, each home-building dollar will turnover up to 24x in the regional economy. Just about every job in homebuilding pays very well compared to the local jobs and Montana jobs in general. Billings home builders are busy enough with local demand so Golden Valley-based contractors would be unlikely to get competition from them while being able to draw on the building materials stockpiles and specialty subcontractors building 400-600 houses every year for 14 years does (2600 people in Billings work in construction, 2.6x this county's population!)

There were several particularly nice sites for many homes on either end of Lavina, particularly between Lavina & the river. I do think you'd want a thick windbreak of Aspens and Ponderosa Pines between the sewage lagoon and it though, easy to plant now.

Billings residential buyers are used to looking West along I-90 but the Stillwater Mine has made most of the property along there relatively overpriced. The other 3 directions from Billings are much less developed and marketed.

Getting that market to start thinking "North" could be as simple as teaming with a few realtors that market effectively and start emphasizing the cheap lots, low taxes, low crime, uncrowded schools, good internet and cable-tv connections, and quick commute to Billings. Adding them all together roughly in my head I'm guessing you'd save a Billings household more than enough to make up the commute cost (although no one seems to actually calculate their commuting costs which baffles me.)

Only a small percentage of home buyers can and will wait to have a house built for them, the majority of the market needs either an existing house or a recently built "spec house" or manufactured home.

Until say 10-50 local folks were developed into a local building trades industry, most of the action would have to be either houses brought in off of consolidated farms/ranches and placed on new basements or manufactured/modular housing (which could be done by working with the many Billings dealers for those).

By taking active steps in forming partnerships with realtors, builders, and mfd. Home dealers, planning city sewer & water extensions, and working up the total package of advantages to Golden

Valley living, I suspect that over a 10 year campaign you could bring another 50-100 households to the County (as Billings alone has around 35,000 households now, that's not that many diverted North.)

The Hutterite Colony was rich in small cottage businesses that could really grow into little companies/ventures of their own by employing/training non-Hutterites in partnership with the colony's lead craftsmen. Examples would be their meat-packing/slaughter, metal/welding/blacksmith/stainless steel shop, carpentry and furniture shop, heavy equipment mechanic, shoemaking, etc.. If all of those were further developed, they could employ another 25-100 people as the Hutterite craftsmen had impressive skills when we looked at their work. A starting point might be to conduct high school shop and 4-H classes out at the colony to get folks used to working together and to fill the current inexcusable gap in no vo-tech training being offered at the high schools (I say inexcusable because these are farming communities and very high demand skills in the city too.)

These are the sort of businesses existing or starting that could qualify for some financial help (as gap loans, not loans for the whole project or in place of owner cash) from the Golden Valley Revolving Loan Fund established by my department's CDBG dollars through a Quad 4 loan in the 1980's. It's currently run by the Golden Valley County Commissioners.

These would make the most enduring difference in providing jobs, tax base, students, new volunteers, helping existing businesses, and reversing the county's long decline.

Ryegate needs to move beyond being the town that seems to have said "No" quite plainly to many offers and opportunities over the years and I hear that change has been happening; it's surprising what wet blankets a few dominating folks filled with pessimistic conservatism ("we can't spend any money on anything, taxes are too high, and a tight budget means we have no responsibilities to the future.") There were a lot of solid, optimistic, can-do people in Ryegate so I figure the handful of wet blankets must have just managed to convince folks they were right rather than just scared of the future.

Lavina's got the most obvious tourist potential with the Adams Hotel, the Mercantile, good food, and streets laden with parking.

**MAIN TOPIC: Tourism opportunities for the County include:**

1. Taking advantage of the empty roads, pretty scenery, and varied terrain for mountain biking (including races) in conjunction with the Spoke Shop in Billings, motorcycle touring such as for the Harley Owners Group or the Rainmakers which are nice sets of affluent middle-aged people who probably already know your cafes and antique shops and would go nuts over a catered dinner at the Adams Hotel or a pitchfork fondue at Barber.
2. Horseback riding and stabling opportunities are a perennial interest with endurance riding doing surprisingly well in the area. Again Golden Valley's terrain and proximity suggest this could be a nice additional source of revenue for area ranches.
3. I'd wonder if "ghost town tourism" might be something for riders of horses, 4-wheelers, dirt bikes, bicycles, etc. where they were taken to the abandoned towns in the county by a local guide who could tell them about it. It would add an element of discovery, mystery, and the past to scenic rides and probably lead to repeat travel. Abandoned towns are fascinating but almost none in Montana are offered for controlled tourist visits.

## **MAIN TOPIC: The Schools**

I was impressed with the kids and teachers and I think we heard from nearly everybody. I was disappointed at the percentage of resources and attention devoted to athletics compared to everything else like shop classes, business classes, career planning etc.. Only 10% of high school athletes ever play college sports and only about 3% of those get any kind of scholarship, generally petering out after the first year or two, and only 1% of college athletes ever make the leap into professional sports, typically for 1-3 year careers. So spending so many resources, hours, miles of travel time, facilities etc. to train kids for the unlikeliest and shortest of careers seems like an unaffordable luxury in what I'm told are hard-pressed schools considering consolidation and lay-offs. I'd much rather see an end to Class C sports participation for the two schools than 9-10 teachers there lose their job and Ryegate lose it's school entirely. That's my personal opinion based on the concept that schools are for lifelong learning, not for being the live alternative to ESPN in return for 65% of local and state tax dollars. (No coaches in my family tree but lots of teachers, principals, and school board members.)

Nearly ALL of the kids planned to go to college, out of state, which shows me a big gap in career assessment and counseling.

Typically only about 50-60% of high school grads go to college at all and most have no real or realistic plan as to why except that it's an ill-thought out societal expectation. About 1 in 4 who start college will finish a degree so for most they get some basic classes and no credential.

The majority of good paying jobs in Montana that the research has been showing us are based on 2-4 years of technical training through apprenticeship programs, technical schools/Colleges of Technology, manufacturer programs like Microsoft Certified Software Engineers, or military training. I work on a lot of workforce training issues and directly with the campuses and other programs and there are a lot of great jobs begging out there that aren't reached through the standard 4 year bachelors degree. Many of these jobs pay better than being a college faculty or even a college president, yet require far less investment of cash and time to reach (and offer considerable entrepreneurial opportunity.)

Paying out of state tuition for basic freshman year classes is also a very costly , unrewarding route that these students need to be counseled on.

Most didn't indicate that they'd ever come back even though they liked the community, school, and each other which suggests wildly unrealistic images of adult life are being presented to them as fact, i.e. leave for school and end up a Manhattan sophisticate like NBC's "Friends" instead of the more statistically likely ending up as a Wal-Mart clerk or Manpower temp (America's 2 largest employers these days.) If all the kids leave, the school and the school's activities/fundraisers represent almost a complete economic drain on the community (other than the teachers' jobs), a massive exporting of wealth for no return on investment which is an awful long term strategy despite the claims of education always being a good economic development investment.

It also points to a community strategy of focusing on recruiting adults to move to the communities instead of achieving organic growth (have kids who stay and have kids who stay, etc.)

That would lead to building more housing targeted at people 25-65 when they're likely to have kids at home, be homeowners, both working, energy to volunteer in the community (although long commutes work against volunteerism Robert Puttnam found in his book on social capital/volunteerism "Bowling Alone"), probably avoiding housing that draws people who need significant medical care (assisted living, Alheimers' group homes, patio homes, nursing homes) as the distance from hospitals and physicians is probably too far.

**Report by: Gloria O'Rourke**  
**Montana Economic Developers Association**  
**Montana Economic Development Services**  
**118 E. Seventh St.; Suite 2A**  
**Anaconda, MT 59711**  
**Ph: 406.563.5259 Fx: 406.563.5476**  
**Email: [gloria@medamembers.org](mailto:gloria@medamembers.org)**  
**Web: <http://www.medamembers.org>**

There are advantages to being the last to turn in a report: my colleagues have done an excellent and thorough job of addressing the Main Issues brought up by the people of Golden County during the assessment process. I have only a few thoughts and resources to add.

## **MAIN TOPIC: RYEGATE – LEAKING UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK**

### **Issue: Removal of Leaking Underground Storage Tank**

Local officials as well as the general public expressed frustration and concern regarding a leaking underground storage tank in Ryegate.

**Recommendation:** It is my thought that if this one issue could be addressed and resolved, it would give a much-needed shot-in-the-arm to the community of Ryegate. I don't know if you have used this resource (below) in the past, but if you have, I believe it deserves a second look. Please take a few minutes to read the program description and requirements – it seems to fit Ryegate's situation perfectly.

**Resources:** In addition the resource below, visit the website at <http://www.cfda.gov/public/viewprog.asp?progid=852> It may be necessary to involve Montana's Congressional delegation, or Golden Valley's Certified Regional Development Corporation for support. Note: Snowy Mountain Development Corp. is Golden Valley's CRDC.



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## **66.805 Leaking Underground Storage Tank Trust Fund Program**

### **FEDERAL AGENCY:**

OFFICE OF SOLID WASTE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

### **AUTHORIZATION:**

Solid Waste Disposal Act of 1976, as amended, Section 9003(h); Section 204 of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act, as amended at 42 U.S.C.

3334; Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act of 1999, Public Law 105-276.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

To support State and Tribal corrective action and enforcement programs that address releases from underground storage tanks containing petroleum. Funding Priority: Program funds are to be used to provide resources for the oversight and corrective action for petroleum releases from underground storage tanks (USTs), as well as for enforcement activities related to such corrective action. States that have entered into cooperative agreements with EPA have the authority to respond to petroleum releases from USTs using Leaking Underground Storage Tanks (LUST) Trust funds where owners and operators are unknown, unwilling or unable to take corrective actions themselves, and in certain other circumstances. States may also oversee responsible party cleanups. When the Trust Fund is used, tank owners/operators are liable to the State for costs incurred and are subject to cost recovery actions. Trust funds provide assistance to the States and Tribal governments in developing and implementing corrective action programs. In Fiscal Year 2002, there were certain States and Tribes that entered into competitively-awarded cooperative agreements for the USTfield pilots. These USTfield Pilots have the authority to use LUST Trust funds for their cooperative agreements as described in the workplans.

#### **TYPES OF ASSISTANCE:**

Project Grants.

#### **USES AND USE RESTRICTIONS:**

Program funds are to be used to provide resources for the oversight and corrective action for petroleum releases from underground storage tanks (USTs), as well as for enforcement activities related to such corrective action. States that have entered into cooperative agreements with EPA have the authority to respond to petroleum releases from USTs using Leaking Underground Storage Tanks (LUST) Trust funds where owners and operators are unknown, unwilling or unable to take corrective actions themselves, and in certain other circumstances. In Fiscal Year 2002, certain States and Tribes entered into cooperative agreements with EPA; and have the authority to use LUST Trust funds for the competitively awarded USTfield pilots. States may also oversee responsible party cleanups. When the Trust Fund is used, tank owners/operators are liable to the State for costs incurred and are subject to cost recovery actions. Trust funds provide assistance to the States and Tribal governments in developing and implementing corrective action programs.

#### **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:**

**Applicant Eligibility:** These cooperative agreements are only available to State governments that have demonstrated the capability to undertake effective corrective actions and enforcement activities and that have entered into a cooperative agreement with EPA describing the State's uses of the Fund. Additionally, these cooperative agreements are only available to Federally-recognized Tribes and Intertribal Consortia that must meet the requirements at 40 CFR 35.504.

**Beneficiary Eligibility:** States, Territories, Tribes and Intertribal Consortia.

**Credentials/Documentation:** Costs will be determined in accordance with OMB Circular No. A-87 for State and local governments.

## APPLICATION AND AWARD PROCESS:

**Preapplication Coordination:** Awards under this program are not subject to Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. An environmental impact statement is not required for this program. This program is eligible for coverage under E.O. 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." An applicant should consult the office or official designated as the State's single point of contact for more information on the process the State requires to be followed in applying for assistance, if the State has selected the program for review. (See 40 CFR29.7(b)).

**Application Procedure:** The standard application forms as furnished by the Federal agency and required by OMB Circular Nos. A-102 and A-110 must be used for this program. EPA requires final applications to be made on Standard Form 424. States, Territories, Tribes and Intertribal Consortia, or Regional Offices may initiate the grant process. States, Territories, Tribes or Intertribal Consortia may submit draft grant applications to the Regions. Requests for application forms and submission of completed applications should be directed to EPA Grants Administration Division (3903R), 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20460, and the appropriate Regional Office listed in Appendix IV of the Catalog for the list of Underground Storage Tanks Regional ProgramManagers.

**Award Procedure:** A cooperative agreement must be signed between EPA and the State or EPA and the Tribe or Intertribal Consortia.

**Deadlines:** Proposals generally must be received prior to May 15 for funding in applicable fiscal year.

**Range of Approval/Disapproval Time:** From 3 to 4 months.

**Appeals:** As described in 40 CFR Part 31, Subpart F.

**Renewals:** A renewal or extension of funds is possible.

## ASSISTANCE CONSIDERATIONS:

**Formula and Matching Requirements:** A 10 percent State cost share is required for Section 9003(h)(7). There is no matching requirement for Tribes or Intertribal Consortia pursuant to Public Law 105-276.

**Length and Time Phasing of Assistance:** The cooperative agreement will place a time restriction on funds.

## POST ASSISTANCE REQUIREMENTS:

**Reports:** Reporting requirements are identified at 40 CFR Parts 30 and 31. EPA may include additional information regarding the content and frequency of reporting

**Range and Average of Financial Assistance:** Anticipated: \$50,000 to \$4,300,000; \$1,500,000.

## PROGAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

As of September 2002, 50 States and six territories have cooperative agreements to conduct cleanups and provide oversight of responsible party cleanups and Indian Nations received funding to help develop and implement leaking underground storage tanks (LUST) programs. As of September 2002, 50 UST fields cooperative agreement pilots were awarded to States, Tribes and/or Intertribal Consortia to conduct UST fields pilot work at eligible properties.

## REGULATIONS, GUIDELINES, AND LITERATURE:

40 CFR Parts 31 and 35; Guide: Leaking Underground Storage Tanks Trust Fund. Cooperative Agreement Guidelines; Guide: Proposal Guidelines for USTfields Pilots. Costs will be determined in accordance with OMB Circular No. A-87 for State and local governments and Indian Tribes.

#### **INFORMATION CONTACTS:**

**Regional or Local Office:** See Appendix IV Of the Catalog for list of Underground Storage Tanks Regional Program Manager addresses.

**Headquarters Office:** Lynn DePont, Immediate Office, Office of Underground Storage Tanks, EPA, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW., (5401G), Washington, DC 20460. Telephone: (703) 603-7148; FAX: (703) 603-9163. E-mail Address: depont.lynn@epa.gov. Administering Office Website: <http://www.epa.gov/oust>.

**Web Site Address:** [Electronic Grants Applications and Information: http://www.epa.gov/oust](http://www.epa.gov/oust). <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/>. Program-Specific Information: <http://www.epa.g>.

#### **RELATED PROGRAMS:**

[66.804. State and Tribal Underground Storage Tanks Program.](#)

#### **EXAMPLES OF FUNDED PROJECTS:**

Leaking Underground Storage Tank Trust Fund Cooperative Agreements provide funding for State staff to review site characterization reports, corrective action plans, and conduct enforcement actions. Additionally, these Cooperative Agreements provide funding to Tribes to help develop and implement the LUST program. In Fiscal Years 2001 and 2002, Leaking Underground Storage Tank Trust Fund Cooperative Agreements provided funding to States, Tribes, and Intertribal Consortia to conduct UST fields pilots specific work at eligible properties.

### **MAIN TOPIC: BEAUTIFICATION**

#### **Issue: Signage for Ryegate and Lavina**

Recommendation: Improved signage to advertise all that Ryegate and Lavina have to offer is highly recommended.

To provide more reasons for travelers to stop, the two communities should develop a strategy outlining actions:

1. Identify kinds of visitors (i.e. leisure, pass through, sightseers, retirees, friends etc.)
2. Recreationists; destination visitors
3. Heritage/Cultural Travelers; seeking enrichment from local history
4. Commercial and Business Travelers; international trade, agency/business travelers

Identify where visitors come from. Tourism development efforts can focus on serving these markets more effectively by anticipating and fulfilling their needs. Pass-through tourists need visible information

and activities (farmers market, hikes) and improvements to entrances/community appearance to entice them. Heritage and cultural travelers seek local history, culture and arts (historic buildings, community/tribal culture, local artists/craftsmen, events). Commercial travelers need business support services (data ports in hotel rooms, access to copying/printing services, meeting rooms, cell phone coverage). All of these segments seek good quality dining and shopping experiences.

You MUST visit the MT Dept. of Transportation website regarding Outdoor Advertising Regulations. <http://www.mdt.state.mt.us/rw/oacinfo.html> Here is a *small portion* of the information available on the website.

Congress passed the Highway Beautification Act to control and limit signs along the interstate and primary highways which allows the traveling public to enjoy the nation's scenic beauty.

The Montana Legislature also enacted laws consistent with the federal act. Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) is responsible for enforcing these laws, and failure to do so could jeopardize millions of dollars in highway construction funds.

Outdoor advertising signs are not prohibited, but there are specific limitations such as where they may be located, how close they can be to other permitted signs, how large they can be, and how they must be maintained.

- Signs may be placed in areas that are zoned for commercial and industrial use or in unzoned areas where commercial or industrial activities are located. It's our responsibility to determine if those areas qualify for the placement of signs.

- Permitted signs must be at least 500 feet apart along interstate highways and 300 feet apart along primary highways. Outside of incorporated cities and towns they cannot be closer than 500 feet from a public park or public forest boundary. Also, they must be at least 500 feet from highway rest areas or from an interstate highway interchange

- Signs may vary in size but cannot be larger than 672 square feet in area. (A sign that is 48 feet long and 14 feet high is 672 square feet.) The sign cannot be more than 48 feet long and no higher than 30 feet above the surface of the roadway.

- In addition, there are several other regulations that may apply. Before applying for a sign permit, you should discuss your plans with a right-of-way agent at the [MDT district office](#) in your area.

### **Resources:**

Here are some resources that tell you where to start in posting (and funding) legal signage.

Montana Community Foundation  
Linda Reed  
101 N. Last Chance Gulch #211

Helena, MT 59601 ph: 406.443.8313  
<http://www.mtcf.org>

For onsite signage assistance visit  
<http://www.sba.gov/starting/signage>

**Billings District**

Phone: (406) 252-4138  
424 Morey, PO Box  
20437  
Billings, MT 59104-0437

**Outdoor Advertising Control  
Coordinator**

Phone: (406) 444-7603  
2701 Prospect Ave.  
PO Box 201001  
Helena, MT 59620-1001

**MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY**

**Issue: CAVE and NIMBY people**

Every community has them: Citizens Against Virtually Everything and the Not In My Back Yard people. When these attitudes pop up during a community issue/discussion, it is tempting to answer with a resounding “Lead, follow, or get out of the way!”

**Recommendations:**

I have learned that apathy often comes about due to a lack of process, not lack of attitude. People often care about their community, but they don’t know how to participate. (See #3 below.)

1. Defeat the defeatism. You must not sit back and observe/allow things to happen to you. You DO have a say, you DO have a voice, and with patience, change can begin to happen.
2. Know your enemy. Most people, if properly approached and given direction are willing to help their community, but be aware that you have some natural enemies. These days, time is of the essence – people have prioritized family time, time with the television, sports, eating out, or working late. Be aware of cynics who play the role of “gloom and doom” in a community. Be prepared to say over and over “**Let’s try.**” Some individuals may openly oppose any effort for change. **All you can do is try to understand their objections, work with them as much as possible, and go on.**
3. Become a learning community – a community willing to risk failure to find the best way. Be willing to try new approaches, take on a new project, review what works/doesn’t work and apply the lessons learned to the next project. Some experts call this the gardening approach:
  - Planting – talk about your issue. Call attention to the issue, be descriptive, unfocused, and simply discuss a problem that you feel should be dealt with. This is not just complaining, but reaching out to others. Learn how other communities solved a similar problem. Find five to seven people that you feel you can count on to begin to address the issue. Remember – you don’t have all the answers at this point, but are confident a solution can be found. Consensus to finding solutions will take place in the “blossoming” step below.
  - Cultivating – as interest builds, don’t rush things. Thoroughly investigate an issue before taking a major first step. Put together a steering committee, talk and write about the issue, get public

opinion and input, perhaps conduct a survey to begin intensive planning. Realize that objections and doubts will now be raised such as, “who is going to do all this work?” or “where will the money come from?” and the famous “we have tried this before and it didn’t work”. To replace the defeatism, have short answers prepared as to why your community can – and should – address this issue. Do visit public officials, non-profits, business leaders, etc., to see where they stand on the issue. Ask advice – but it is too early to push for a commitment. As you visit, ask about possible resources. Have a plan in place to put-to-work new volunteers. Now is the time to create your volunteer database.

- **Blossoming** – this would involve a big event or series of events. The purpose is to set the stage for excitement, commitment and direction. To avoid appearing manipulative or “pushy” – thoroughly complete the Cultivating step before moving on to Blossoming. To hold a successful “blossoming” event, think about what other community events have proven successful in the past. Perhaps it was a community dinner, a town meeting, an outdoor get-together. It is not so important as to having a large number turn out, but that there is a good cross-section of the community present. The event must conclude with consensus and commitment. Remember that a solution may be found to the issue that you had not thought of...keep an open mind.
- **Harvesting** – be ready to run with success. Usually a successful event will reveal new volunteers. Plan ahead as to how you will welcome and put-to-work these individuals. The more people you can offer meaningful roles to, the faster and farther enthusiasm will spread. Put people in their right “slot” – matching their ability with a portion of the project. Remain enthusiastic – and enthusiasm will continue to grow.

4. Keep the momentum going: divide big goals into smaller ones – and celebrate success along the way; be sure to broadcast your successes – don’t let people forget what has been accomplished; reward or acknowledge your volunteers; keep attention focused on the problem AND the solution.

**Resources:**

Utilize the upcoming Golden Valley Resource Team Assessment prioritizing town meeting to identify the issues on which Lavina/Ryegate want to go to work.

Review additional ideas and strategies at <http://www.civic-strategies.com>

Subscribe to a free monthly newsletter: <http://www.volunteerpower.com>

**MAIN TOPIC: COUNTY-WIDE COLLABORATION**

**Issue: Coordinate Services, Equipment, Assets**

Communities closely joined, such as in Golden Valley County, need to assemble a formal or informal cooperative effort regarding clean-up, equipment, expensive services, etc.

**Recommendations:**

Contact Larry Bonderud, (currently President of the Montana League of Cities and Towns), to learn how a Tri-Local cooperative was put together in his county. Tens of thousands of dollars have been saved and community services improved as three communities joined together to share equipment and services.

**Resource:**

Larry Bonderud  
Economic Development Director

Port of Northern Montana  
112 1<sup>st</sup> St. South  
Shelby, MT 59474  
Ph: 406.434.5203 Fx: 406.434.2761  
Email: [shbmeta@3rivers.net](mailto:shbmeta@3rivers.net)  
Web: <http://www.pnmshelby.com>

**GOLDEN VALLEY COUNTY  
RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT  
LISTENING SESSION NOTES  
March 2 – 3, 2004**

**RYEGATE – SENIOR CITIZENS - CHALLENGES**

- No Industry (ditto, ditto, ditto, ditto)
- Rain! (ditto, ditto)
- Cats and dogs, animal control, barking (ditto, ditto)
- Housing, affordable rentals (ditto, ditto)
- Transportation for elderly, no buses, no trains, no planes
- Note: can use Harlowton's bus, used school bus in the past
- No main street, no business center
- Widen the "spot in the road", slow the traffic down on highway to see the community
- Decreasing enrollment in school –may lose high school (ditto, ditto, ditto)
- No young people staying around here
- Need more "rock" industries
- Help with Senior assistance – in-home care giving
- Medical services are 30 – 60 miles away, do have wonderful EMTs (ditto, ditto)
- Not enough pregnant ladies! ☺
- No assisted living center for elderly
- No jobs for teenagers
- West Nile – mosquito threat
- County has 1, 100 miles of road
- Need grantwriter (note: Joanne Voise)

**RYEGATE COMMUNITY – CHALLENGES**

- Recreation or entertainment
- Changing the agricultural industry, diversifying
- Losing our kids to the world
- Gas station on highway because of contamination, need to clean up the site
- Ability to get more information on the map, letting people know where you are
- No job opportunities
- 11 - Need to clean up the town
- Aging population, need to attract more youth
- 1111 - Housing is an issue to ability to employ people, need places to build new homes
- Good schools important to attracting people for employment
- Challenges with regulations for dump, monitoring, ability for a small community
- Assisted living, older people here
- In home care
- Care of cemetery, need trees, due to water rights can't sprinkle anymore, watering from the river
- Decreasing enrollment in school, need critical mass, jobs, young people with family
- Don't have natural gas

- Don't know Ryegate is here, need to advertise
- Rent is \$250 to \$500 which seems high for what businesses are able to pay for wages
- Housing can't be financed FHA or VA, need to be conventional loans
- 3 houses for sale, 0 rental available, 3-4 rentals
- Old Railroad, Rails to Trails program from Ryegate to White Sulphur, most of the rail bed is on private ground now
- Don't take advantage of historical sites
- Scholarship program for our schools, to come to this school to receive
- City doesn't pay health insurance
- Jobs are tapped out, need more jobs
- School gymnasium is old
- Environmental destructionists blocking usage of natural resources

### **RYEGATE HIGH SCHOOL - CHALLENGES**

- Low wages
- Not enough jobs
- Not much to do – boring
- Need more businesses
- Ditto all of the above
- Not much to do – besides go to school
- More classes in school – art, shop, metal working
- Bigger gym
- Paved road between here and Rapleje
- Cooperative schools
- More people
- More people and an art program in high school
- Home ec for high school
- No money around here
- Lowest in income
- Consolidation of schools needed
- Low school enrollment
- More youth activities outside the school
- Ditto all of the above
- Ditto
- No way for educated kids to come back
- How to get people to come back here
- Housing – need apartment buildings

### **GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES/EMERGENCY SERVICES – CHALLENGES**

- Need several employers in town
- Rain
- Things have changed – no longer a vital ag community – need to adapt to change
- Need to keep a viable education system in this county

- Must address the school situation
- Infrastructure needs to be improved and maintain
- More employment
- Need dependable workers
- Get people interested in EMS – total family commitment
- Ditto the above
- Clean up – especially the service station
- Tried and tried to address service station problem – tried to get it condemned, etc. No one wants to take it over – too expensive. Owned by private person without funds. Contamination is slowly spreading.
- Need a mechanic

### **LAVINA SENIOR CITIZENS - CHALLENGES**

- Nothing for children
- No businesses, or people
- Cats and dogs, need for animal control
- Lack of opportunity, less agriculture opportunities (hay, cattle, grain, sheep, livestock)
- Kids leave the area
- 11 - Need good housing,
- Land available to subdivide
- Everybody has their own wells, no city water; most have softener and RO system
- Keep school and community alive
- Transportation
- Keeping ranches alive and productive

### **LAVINA HIGH SCHOOL – CHALLENGES**

- Boring, too small
- Talking of consolidating Lavina and Ryegate Schools
- Not enough land available
- Need more community activities, something to do, pool, playground
- Shop inadequate at school
- Need new football field
- Ditto
- No new businesses, dead community, no reason for people to come here
- Lack of fund for school
- Want an outdoor pool
- Need more jobs and houses
- Need more freetime activities for teens
- Need new janitors for schools
- Ditto to everything
- Smells funny, some places
- Way too small

- Drive here from Harlo, see there's not a lot of opportunity to bring kids here or keep them here, few jobs for student body, not learning how to work (20 years ago, were employed on farm/ranch), few opportunities.
- Don't live here, Broadview, husband is farmer, but starting manufacturing business (fertilizer spreaders), that will be kind of thing appropriate for Lavina, small manufacturing
- One big piece of property close to town, expensive; housing limited; no housing, but need families
- Need something to attract families with young kids. Only way to improve school budget is more students. Need way to attract more families. No land and houses for sale. Thinks spec homes would sell. (Move from Billings, if have opportunity).
- Need more things for kids to do. I.E. pool

### **LAVINA PUBLIC MEETING - CHALLENGES**

- Too close to Billings, how do we compete? They have discount prices, problems keeping a business here. (Also asset to be that close.)
- Labor pool is shrinking. Qualified, already have a job. (Custom ag services, fencing, spraying, for i.e.)
- Enforcement of the traffic laws. Trucks especially, speeding, jake brakes, parking on Main. (Said City council turned down signage, supposedly because would miss business from truckers.)
- Council member said they are working on the problem of trucks
- Legitimate complaint about trucks, we have a nice Main St.
- No bus transportation out of town
- Fire Department, needs updated equipment, tried of fundraising
- Hotel will be open from fall festival, wants more involvement from Lavina FD, (proceeds go between them and Dean? Creek), two days this year
- Demographics of area, retired, semi-retired, smaller pool of volunteers (average age 52)
- More housing
- City water (fighting fire, working on dry hydrants)
- Need something to keep young people here, few opportunities
- Make more money somewhere else

**GOLDEN VALLEY RESOURCE TEAM  
STRENGTHS AND ASSETS  
MARCH 2 – 3, 2004**

**RYEGATE SENIOR CITIZENS – STRENGTHS**

- Working toward school consolidation
- EMTs, ambulance, emergency services (ditto, ditto, ditto, ditto)
- Rock picking jobs
- Great place to live
- Good people
- Good climate, able to grow things, no wind
- Senior Center – could be used more (ditto, ditto, ditto, ditto, ditto)
- Quiet, easy place to live
- Churches, rectory, religious community – 4 active churches in the area
- Two cafes, good store
- Location, close to billings
- Scenic
- Nice weather, miss severe storms, plenty of sunshine
- Pleasant place to live
- Sense of community
- 3 EMT's
- Taxes are reasonable
- Antique store
- Track field

**RYEGATE COMMUNITY – STRENGTHS**

- Deadman's Basin
- Excellent school in Ryegate, need to promote, people move here for the education
- Combining some programs with Lavina might be a benefit to our students
- Chief Joseph sites, Indian Pictographs, Fossil finds,
- Businesses are providing health insurance to employees, private, schools, county
- Show of community support
- People
- Pretty area, open spaces, hunting and fishing, beautiful valley
- Businesses that we have here, grocery store,
- 11 - Good School, High school enrollment 29, elementary enrollment 40
- Natural gas wells in area, more to be tapped
- Nice place to live, came all the way from Holland to live
- Water well being drilled in Ryegate
- Location, beauty of valley,
- Cheap place to live, affordable, taxes reasonable, costs lower,

- County in good financial position, holding their own
- 11 - Small closeknit community
- Quad 5
- Colony an asset, could bring more into the community
- Colony has a wealth of technical skills
- Deadman's Basin, Snowies,
- Incannon (Canadian Company) own the natural gas wells, expanding
- Young community with experienced adults,
- Excellent climate,
- 1955 Seismographic work done, natural gas resources available,
- Potential coal-bed methane
- Great place to raise your kids, no rat race, but you got to make a living
- Hunting potential, expand block management
- More out of state travelers going by here than Montana travelers
- Game preserve, but hunters don't stop and buy
- Horse boarding service
- TestyFesty ranch rodeo
- Appaloosa Trail

#### **RYEGATE HIGH SCHOOL - STRENGTHS**

- Kids willing to help with a clean up day, clean up projects
- Quiet and calm
- Small classes so easier to talk with our teachers
- Everyone knows everybody
- We can trust everyone
- Strong community
- Ditto
- We pull together when things go wrong
- Everyone is kind – pretty much
- Community backs projects
- Closeness of the town and people
- Everybody backs everybody else
- Small town
- Ditto, ditto
- County seat
- Tight knit community
- Bank, postoffice
- Courthouse
- Store – provides gas
- Two cafes
- Coffee shop
- Rock jobs
- White deer

- Testy festy – but has gone down hill
- Businesses that we do have
- Good kids – don't have problems bigger schools have
- People trust each other
- Beautiful area
- Not too big
- Law enforcement
- Hospital within 30 miles
- We can get anything here – just takes a day or so
- Easily accessible
- EMTs are great

### **GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES/EMERGENCY SERVICES – STRENGTHS**

- Good place to live and raise a family
- Overwhelming asset – the people of the county and in communities
- Nice dry climate
- Proximity and nice road to Billings
- Good traffic
- Antique store
- White deer
- Can't compete with Billings, but there are things here that Billings can't compete
- Use empty roads for bicycle races.
- Hot water springs

### **LAVINA SENIOR CITIZENS – STRENGTHS**

- Easy commute to Billings
- Quiet, no congestion
- Senior Citizen Center, American Legion Hall
- Quality of life
- Store, café, gas station, a bar
- New post office, nice school, combined church,
- People here aren't greedy, friendly, there for each other, stand behind us
- New church camp, youth camp,
- Festival, firemen's event,

### **LAVINA HIGH SCHOOL – STRENGTHS**

- Our store
- People
- Everybody is close
- Our school is one of the best around MT
- Way Billings expanding, could be bedroom community
- Close to mine, (Roundup)
- River next to us, even though dried up

- Water supply under the town, aquifer, everybody has well here, (24-hours a day, 3 months, water out of manhole)
- Lavina such a good community, store, café, have some businesses (she lives in Broadview, none of that, bar & church, so close to Billings)
- Lot safer here, feel safe raising their children
- School is like a private school, 6-8 students in class, Billings has 30 each class, close attention
- Other side of coin – small school, few class selection
- Went to Roundup, not as much attention to kids, teachers don't talk as personally with students (get your homework done!)
- Community members support businesses and students
- Not many students, but have nice school and capable of more students. (Have 26 jr. high/high school students, capable of 60 or so).

### **LAVINA TOWN MEETING - STRENGTHS**

- Town itself, historical structures (nominations), forming historic organization, would like to see consideration of purchase of other historic buildings around the state, bring in, purchase additional frontage
- On a major highway, capitalize on that
- Would encourage more homes if could purchase more land for housing
- Return depot to original location in Lavina (now on Sterling Ranch in Ryegate)
- Good basic services (sewer renewed, school upgrade, excellent teachers)
- Fire Department
- City commission
- Newspapers – Roundup and Harlowton cover
- Good web site for Lavina (for Chamber, Dr. Bob's address)
- Entertainment, George Winston several years, fire festival, etc.
- Christmas lighting ceremony
- Very capable, independent-minded people

**GOLDEN VALLEY RESOURCE TEAM – RYEGATE  
PROJECTS  
MARCH 2 – 3, 2004**

**RYEGATE SENIOR CITIZENS - PROJECTS**

- Lifeline availability from St. V's
- Exercise Center
- Develop rock industry
- Assisted living center (ditto, ditto)
- Faster internet service (is available, need to get work out)
- Better cell phone service (ditto, ditto)
- New roof on Senior Center (owned by catholic church)
- Handicapped access to Senior Center, restroom facilities and door
- New ambulance/fire truck garage 50' X 100' (HAVE \$17,000, NEED \$25,000)
- TLC medical care
- Waterslide
- Sewer system issues, flooding basement, floods off rock hill
- Dig out ditches
- Senior Center needs fan system
- Sidewalks
- Cable television – Mid-Rivers just purchased it and provides it
- Little golf course- 9 hole course
- Better snow removal, (city invested in gravel and oil, need equipment. Have tractor and front end loader.)
- Train new volunteers for emergency services, (better training schedule for volunteers)
- ITV connection – Mid-Rivers has the potential
- Natural gas, no services
- Museum
- Nice rest stop
- Petting zoo, a live albino deer
- Clean up the park, outside bathroom, roof on covered picnic area

**RYEGATE COMMUNITY – PROJECTS**

- Hot water springs north of town, potential
- Rock center, bring in your rocks to sell
- Housing, clean new livable housing
- County dump for ability to clean up the community
- Grass fat cattle industries
- The community in Kansas that built houses and then the people came
- 111 - Bus services to the Stillwater mine,
- Can the sawmill expand, have the logging resources,
- Rails to Trails program to utilize the old railroad bed
- Develop Natural Resources, oil, gas, lumber, coal, etc.
- Museum, history, preserve the history

- Rest area, park, place to stop while driving through, get people to stay
- RV Park
- Market hunting, fishing recreational opportunities and expand
- Ranch based recreation, pay for the experience
- Lavina's water
- Rock-Mart
- Moving visitors to residents
- Restrooms, city couldn't carry liability policy and maintain bathrooms for MDOT
- Ambulance shed and fire hall, meeting/training room
- Cemetery improvements
- Market Ryegate, ie. Reed Point sheep drive
- Subdivision with golf course
- Community event, festival
- Opening up access on the forest (Swimming Women, Careless Creek)
- County and City work cooperatively for larger garbage dumps, County cleanup day
- City still owns the dump south of town, could use that area for dump collection – 1 day transfer
- Recycling bins similar to what Harlowton is doing
- Hughey's Store – Apt. & business store
- Bed & Breakfast
- Petting zoo for school
- Children out of larger city, Horse back riding school
- Shooting range
- Paint Ball Games
- Miniature Golf, Golf Course
- Contacting owners of empty buildings and find out if they will sell
- Hotel/motel

## **PROJECTS – RYEGATE HIGH SCHOOL**

- Consolidate schools – identify pros and cons and make a wise decision
- Housing – apartments, moderate priced homes
- Place for youth to meet
- Get a car!
- A business that will support all of our other businesses
- Perhaps doctors come once a week like they used to?
- New gym
- Pizza Hut
- Drag Street
- Swimming pool
- Water in the river to swim in
- Mall
- Bowling alley
- McDonalds
- Pawn shop

- Parts store, welding shop
- Perhaps partner with Hutterite colony for jobs training
- Build a big school between Lavina and Ryegate
- Rodeo fair grounds
- Stockyards
- Swimming pool
- Auto shop
- Skatepark
- Bigger gym
- Meat processing plant right here in Ryegate
- ATV path
- Youth center
- Bowling Alley
- Playground with grass instead of woodchips
- Fitness center – Y MCA
- Improve weight center
- Baseball complex
- Golf course
- Ditto – ditto
- Fire department and EMS – need volunteers (have to be 18)
- Bowling alley
- Ditto on all
- Youth group activities
- Music store
- Swimming pool
- Arcade with things to do
- Give money to ag
- Football field, baseball field,
- Hooters
- Full size gym
- Outside /basketball court – lighted Use a lot – need better light
- 24 Hours City Brew
- Ambocromie and Fitch
- Better sports facilities – baseball, outside basketball
- Movie theater
- CabellasHotel/motel to get people to stop
- Ditto
- Library (community can use the high school library)
- Update library books
- Lights on basketball court
- Rodeo arena
- Track improved
- Sponsored events

## **GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES/EMERGENCY SERVICES – PROJECTS**

- More EMT/EMS volunteers – a family commitment
- SWAT team for addressing the abandoned gas station problem. Building would be useful.
- Recruit a mechanic into town – use the above building.
- Investigate portable slaughterhouse - market Montana beef
- Old slaughterhouse east of town – in use; disposal of remains is a problem.
- Investigate once again the rest area option
- White deer
- Look into hot spring option
- RV area with dump
- Old Masonic hall – utilize it
- Need to identify a theme –
- Need to decide what we want to be – bedroom community or resort community?
- Interactive Television – get it! Brings programs, classes and services to you. New grants are now available – Erin Lutts.

## **LAVINA SENIOR CITIZENS – PROJECTS**

- Senior housing facility
- Entertainment, once a month, maybe a theatre
- Need handicapped accessibility to church
- Natural herbal flea collar business, expansion (Nick Cox, Musselshell County)
- Lockers at the grocery store
- 111- Retirement/Assisted Living Home
- Apartment building for housing
- Motel Accommodations
- RV Hook-ups
- Roller-skating
- Senior bus
- Adams Hotel (Raymond Berry)
- Original facades on the main street businesses
- Deadman’s Basin needs improvements (Association)
- Water
- Power plant, generation, need training program to train local residents
- More picnic tables, bathroom, sidewalk in the park
- Fishing access down by the river by FWP’s

## **LAVINA HIGH SCHOOL – PROJECTS**

- Swimming pool
- Turn top of store to place where kids can go (Mercantile), empty attic
- Refurbish Adams Hotel, make into working business
- Shop, get it working, two years trying to equip, tools, material (Vo-ag)
- Fire department looking for funding, equipment, etc.
- No art (only jr. high)

- Football field or track (it's there, but needs more)
- Shooting range
- Decent track around the football field
- Go Karts, in Roundup, set up here
- Paint ball
- Sidewalks
- Town beautification projects, to make it stand-out, get travelers to stop and look
- Skatepark
- Air fresheners for locker rooms
- Park accessible to the river
- Need a jazz band
- Need foreign language teacher, only have German, correspondence
- Need Spanish teacher, only correspondence
- Networking computers, no public access after school. Have to ask the teacher to come in.
- Library overtaken by children's books, more selection
- Drive-in movie
- Screen in the park, movie
- Questions from panel:
- Consolidation? In favor: 1; Dead set against: all the rest.
- Problem again; landlock by ranchers, nothing available.
- Consolidation: Survey info disregarded
- Co-op with Broadview, second year, just sports:
- Problem w/consolidation, one school loses high school, then that community really dies, past problems co-op with Ryegate, sports, not successful. Sharing committee since October, co-op, consolidation options, etc.
- In past, co-op, rejects (parents, older generation), lot of hostility, involving county seat, etc.
- Right now sharing vo-ag teacher, only half day (3/4 here, 1/4 in Ryegate), can't get after-school help, teacher not here
- Most of people live outside of town anyway, most not on farm/ranch
- Sports co-op with Broadview, Ryegate has co-oped with Rapelje, problem. Now at C numbers, would end of Class B if did four-way co-op. Bid was rejected by co-op board.
- Dial-up internet, no DSL

### **LAVINA TOWN MEETING - PROJECTS**

- Buy historical buildings, bring into Lavina, purchase additional frontage to place them on
- East-side, improve facades on Main St.
- Abandoned garage, like to see barber shop (has pole and chair)
- Refurbish the old county garage, had a few events (houses original opera house), needs bathroom facilities, one of largest facilities
- Adams Hotel, goal to finish by 2008
- Masonic Lodge, was original bank building, redoing ceiling and could use formal dining room for weddings, etc.
- Retirement home or assisted living
- Golf course

- City water
- Adams Hotel, 1910 artesian well on property, well-head still there

