

# **RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT REPORT**

**for**

## **RED LODGE, MONTANA**

**FEBRUARY 3-4, 2004**

**In partnership with**

**Montana Economic Developers Association, Montana Department of Commerce,  
USDA Rural Development, Beartooth RC&D Council and the people of Red Lodge.**

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**February 3-4, 2004**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

I am sure I speak on behalf of the team in thanking the community of Red Lodge for its hospitality. It was a privilege to spend two days in your vibrant community and learn of its challenges, strengths and dreams. 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!

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 Jim Klessions, Beartooth RC&D Coordinator and Al Jones Regional Development Officer, Montana Department of Commerce for their efforts in working with Red Lodge on planning this assessment. I also applaud all the volunteer citizens who worked on coordinating this assessment and the town tour of Red Lodge.

The stage is now being set for Red Lodge's future. There are a number of short term and long term accomplishable recommendations that the resource team has provided in this report. Each of you individually must decide what it is that you want to do—what kind of project you want to tackle. It is also important for the entire community 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!

Sincerely,  
Mary Randolph, Team Leader and on behalf of Rod Proffitt and Cindi Fargo, Team Members

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

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

Jim Klessons and Al Jones served as the local contact and local team leader for the project. They 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 Red Lodge officials indicated would be needed to respond to the problem areas identified.

The Resource Team interviewed over 100 people and received several written comments during February 3-4, 2004. The team was available for listening to the following groups: local government, business owners, hospitality, senior citizens, religious community, school faculty and students, realtors and construction trades, hospital employees, lone eagles, ski area employees, agriculture and the community members at large.

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

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 Red Lodge.

A preliminary oral report and a summary of group recommendations were presented to the people of Red Lodge on February 4<sup>th</sup>.

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

## **TEAM MEMBERS OF THE RED LODGE RESOURCE ASSESSMENT**

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**AGENDA  
 RED LODGE RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT  
 RED LODGE, MT  
 FEBRUARY 3-4, 2004**

**LISTENING SESSIONS**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>Tuesday, February 3rd</b>		
8:00 - 9:00	<b>Local Government</b> city, county, forest service, fire / ems	Pollard
9:15 - 10:15	<b>Business Owners - Mfg.</b> processing, distribution, manufacturing	Pollard
10:30 - 11:30	<b>Hospitality</b> <b>(Tavern/Rest/Lodging/Venues)</b> lodging, tavern, restaurant, special events, venues	Pollard
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	<b>Lunch with Finance Community</b> lending, investment, cpa's, insurance	to be announced
1:15 - 2:15 p.m.	<b>Senior Citizens</b> seniors, retired, part-time residents	Pollard
2:30 - 3:30 p.m.	<b>Religious Community</b> religious leaders	Pollard
3:45 - 4:45 p.m.	<b>School Faculty/Students Split</b> faculty / student leaders	High School
5:00 - 6:00 p.m.	<b>Realtors/Construction/Trades</b> realtors, construction trades, suppliers, title co.	Pollard
7:30 - 8:30 p.m.	<b>Informal Listening</b> unemployed, underemployed, can't make it to other sessions	to be announced
<b>Wednesday, February 4</b>		
8:00 - 9:00 a.m.	<b>Business Owners - Retail Community</b> retail business owners in the area	Pollard
9:30 - 10:30 a.m.	<b>Hospital Employees</b> hospital, clinics, eye, chiropractor, therapists	Hospital, Board Room
11:00 - 12:00	<b>Lone Eagles</b> home business, sole proprietor	Pollard

12:30 p.m. -2:00 p.m.	<b>Ski Area Tour, Lunch and Meeting</b> ski employees	Ski Area
2:30 - 3:30	<b>Agriculture</b> farmers, ranchers, ag based business, supplier	Pollard
3:45 - 4:45	<b>Community at Large</b> catch all for those who couldn't make it to another session, or didn't know where they fit in!	Pollard
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.	<b>Closeout Meeting</b> community at Large	Roosevelt School

**MAIN ISSUES**  
**RED LODGE RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT**

**Note: This list of Main Issues is a summary of the comments made during the Red Lodge Listening Sessions. The issues are in no particular order of priority.**

**COLLABORATION**

- ❖ Standardized Process
- ❖ Communication
- ❖ Cohesive Goal orientation
- ❖ Leadership

**MASTER PLAN**

- ❖ Ratification of Process
- ❖ Compliance with State Growth Management
- ❖ Enforcement/Codification

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

- ❖ Roads, Streets, sidewalks
- ❖ Drainage
- ❖ Sewer system
- ❖ Street lights

**PUBLIC FACILITIES**

- ❖ Airport
- ❖ Recreation Trails

**BALANCING ACT – SENSE OF PLACE**

- ❖ Beartooth Highway
- ❖ Ski Area
- ❖ Yellowstone
- ❖ Historic Downtown

Red Lodge Resource Team Assessment  
*Team Member Reports*

**Report by: Cindi Fargo**

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**Introduction:**

To the community of Red Lodge –

Thank you! You are a wonderful group of interested, engaged people who love your community and are working everyday to make it the great place that it is. I am so grateful for your most generous hospitality during the resource team visit. I thoroughly enjoyed working with you and am honored to have been invited to be a part of the assessment process. I would consider it a privilege to be able to assist you (as a volunteer) in further discussion of any of the concepts that I have outlined here. I have so much more to suggest. My resources and enthusiasm for your success are endless

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**Theme: Collaboration**

The people in Red Lodge love their community and spend substantial energy working to make Red Lodge a great place to live, work, do business and play.

Throughout the interview process and in follow-up research it was repeatedly noted that the community of Red Lodge has an incredible asset in its people. Residents and business people in Red Lodge are extremely dedicated to their community. A great number of community and faith-based not-for-profit organizations exist and are doing productive work.

**Challenge: Creating mechanisms that promote collaboration**

Many different organizations are working productively in Red Lodge. It was stated frequently that “we don’t know what each other is doing” and “we could get a lot more done if we were more focused”. Clearly the involvement of people in the Red Lodge community is an asset. The challenge is to create the fullest possible exchange of information and to work collaboratively for greater results.

Mobilizing the entire community towards collaborative economic development requires management of information which will guide the involvement in and success of the community's efforts. Reinventing the age-old concept of the "village well" as a nerve center for the community will contribute to the success of community building efforts in Red Lodge.<sup>1</sup> While the village well provided water for sustenance, it also provided a place to make connection and gather important information and stories. Today's communities, as we have seen in Red Lodge, have the same needs for sustenance and information, and while this exchange will often still occur at watering holes, at local diners, from the pulpit and over the counter, it has never been more important to create capacity and mechanism to enable the exchange of information essential to community building to occur.

**Solution:** The following suggestions are offered to assist the Red Lodge community in the use of existing assets to improve communication and collaboration:

1. Create an action-oriented "community center" website that sets forth the image of Red Lodge as a place of community-based collaboration, functions as clearing house of information, is well-managed and up-to-date, and provides/includes:

- a dynamic place where information can be quickly posted and constantly updated
- a community calendar of events and activities
- topics of discussion, projects and agendas for upcoming meetings of organizations throughout the community
- space/rooms for discussion
- space for organizations to showcase their image, mission, goals, objectives, activities, and needs
- a volunteer skills bank and current list of volunteer opportunities
- a place where people and organizations can, with greater ease and on their own schedules, talk to each other, update themselves on community activities, and become more informed and engaged.

Expand the local community center to encompass office and meeting space - physical space for local not-for-profit organizations to accomplish their missions.

The community of Red Lodge has an extraordinary number of local not-for-profit groups accomplishing significant work in the community. Great advantage and increase in capacity, coordination and productivity could be gained by created a multi-tenant non-profit center to provide workspace, meeting space and administrative support for these organizations. Vacant or underutilized space in the community could be well utilized in this way, and ownership of such a facility by a consortium of these organizations would be a financial asset and enhancement of the groups' portfolio. In addition, community groups working on a regular basis in proximity to one another develop greater awareness of each other's mission and activities and tend to operate in an atmosphere of mutual support. The simple sharing of space between organizations in a publicly accessible building increases each organization's visibility in the community and can serve to attract additional resources.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight, Building Communities from the Inside Out – A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets, Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University, 1993 pg. 351.

Create and fill a city manager position for the City of Red Lodge.

Community participants interviewed in Red Lodge expressed concern about the lack of a single point of coordination and contact for the City. It is noteworthy that the city has no City Manager. It is highly recommended that a community as diverse and engaged as Red Lodge develop and fill the position of City Manager. It is recommended that the city conduct a nation-wide search for the individual having the expertise and sensitivity necessary to assist this diverse community in defining, adhering to and achieving its goals. Those in elected office over time make an amazing contribution to community goals, but what is always necessary is a mechanism to create continuity and commitment to the larger vision. Participants noted the absence of this continuity.

Devote one Red Lodge City Council workshop per year to showcasing the activities of the community's non-profit organizations, at a time when funding for those organizations is not an issue.

The highest compliment that leadership in the community can pay is to afford its volunteers time and recognition. We encourage you to create a special event council workshop that provides a forum to celebrate the achievements of this segment of your community and economy. Host this event in the gymnasium, or large facility, where sound is good and seating is adequate and the town can come out to cheer.

Invite each organization in the community to participate in achieving an economic development goal – and assist them in doing so.

Local organizations represent significant economic development potential. Each organization has an asset base, engages in economic activity in the town or region and each commands/attracts resources to a certain degree, from outside the community. Engaging each organization in part of the economic development strategy of the community will create partnerships, collaboration and greater results. City leadership can assist local organizations with defining and achieving a goal that supports economic/community development for the Red Lodge community.

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**Theme: Balancing Economic Growth and Quality of Life**

**Challenge:** Creating a thriving economy that supports, but does not compromise, the quality of life Red lodge resident's desire.

**Solution:** The following suggestions are suggested to assist the community of Red Ledge in adoption and implementation of an asset based economic development strategy.

1. Implement a Main Street downtown revitalization program in Red Lodge.

Red Lodge is a perfect candidate for the Main Street downtown revitalization program. Downtown Red Lodge and its business/residential community exhibit a balance of need and ability, assets and challenges

The Red Lodge downtown area benefits from the presence of substantial historic building inventory in good condition that is recognized as an asset in the community.

The Red Lodge downtown business district, while experiencing seasonal fluctuation, has a good basic framework of retail, service, and hospitality, professional, financial and visitor serving businesses. Housing is located in walking distance to Downtown and it appears that there is some opportunity to develop additional housing with careful increase in density that will bring consumers to the downtown area.

There is a strong sense of interest among young entrepreneurs in doing business in the Red Lodge area. Red Lodge residents express interest in supporting local business. Red Lodge has a strong special events calendar, which can be built upon to promote business activity in the community.

The citizens of Red Lodge still believe in downtown as the heart of their community. Montana's legislature will likely take up the proposal for a statewide Main Street Program in the next legislative session. Send your support to the legislature and to MEDA for this program.

2. Implement a project assessment process for land use planning that scores each proposed project in the community based on its contribution to the community's goals as expressed in the city's strategic, economic development and land use planning documents.

3. Seek development opportunities that are an outgrowth of your existing identity.

Red Lodge has chosen to position itself as the host of international/multi-cultural events and has done so with success. It is suggested that the community look at economic development opportunities that come out of the area's identity as "a host of nations" and a "community of voices". Large scale projects that may be considered include: an international secondary school of music, an international elder hostel facility, or international retreat/education center as an extension of a major university system – each of which could have a musical focus. The international music focus for Red Lodge should be developed incrementally for best success, and should begin with strategic packaging, development and marketing of the area's existing strengths. Grow the events and activities that you already have and build tier by tier to the project scale that the community considers appropriate

A number of technology-based entrepreneurs operate as "lone eagles" in the Red Lodge area. Some of these business owners are already networking together. Invite these entrepreneurs in your community to brainstorm the possibilities for business development in Red Lodge and give them the tools they need to develop the local economy.

Utilize the philosophy of economic gardening in Red Lodge. Look to the existing strengths in your business community and contribute to their growth. Communities all across the United States are recognizing that investing in the growth of successful businesses generates direct and often more timely results. Utilize the assistance of the "economic gardening" founding experts in Littleton, Colorado and develop a program that provides premier levels of technical assistance to your community.

Position the community as a year-round “weekend away” tourism destination. Engage your chamber of commerce, downtown group and residents in developing a strategy that positions Red Lodge as the ultimate weekend escape. Many people already utilize the community in this way and increased focus on this asset and successful niche should be considered.

Utilize the new “Beartooth All American Highway” as a community and economic development asset. You have already begun significant work in this area and this work should continue.

Create value added opportunities for the agricultural operations in and around the Red Lodge community. Much of the landscape around Red Lodge is controlled by government or is in large private landholdings. This landscape contributes to the environment, quality of life and perceived value of the Red Lodge area. If your community is dependent on this landscape for its identity, then you must look for opportunities to support the continued viability of locally owned agriculture.

## **REPORT BY ROD PROFFITT**

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**Introduction:** Thank you for the opportunity to visit your community. Although my wife and I have visited Red Lodge on a number of occasions as tourists, it always quite different to get to know people. I found it to be so during the three days we had in Red Lodge for this community assessment. You truly have a nice community, wonderful people, and a great deal to build on for the future.

**Theme:** Collaboration

**Challenge:** Red Lodge has a burgeoning economy based on tourism, but significant segments of the community are not dependent on tourism. The community is struggling with priorities because no one segment of the community pre-dominates. No common goals and priorities have been identified to collaborate on that would bring the community together.

**Solution:** Many resort communities have gone through this in the past. Some have grown so big so fast they have really lost their soul - the very thing that brought people there in the first place. Yogi Berra is often quoted as saying "That restaurant is so crowded no one goes there anymore." Some communities meet this same fate, but even those that do have much to teach those, like Red Lodge, that are just now facing growth pressures.

Since Red Lodge is not unique, many of the trials and tribulations of other communities can be used to get a perspective on issues of collaboration. I was in college during the 1960s when college enrollments were exploding, as were the campuses themselves. To get a handle on all the committees, task forces, and ad hoc groups forming around college issues, the school I was in came up with a 'Committee on Committees'. It was a chance to connect for most groups, which resulted in alliances around certain goals. The book "In Search of Excellence", touched on this issue when it talked about forming working groups around specific product design and production issues. Red Lodge could adapt the same concepts to its own issues to form coalitions of groups to accomplish limited goals.

The key to any of these efforts to find those issues, projects and goals people want to solve, while avoiding those that separate people. Facilitators are a good way to cut through to the positive things, and there are any number of groups, organizations and companies that can do this for the community.

When I was with the Town of Crested Butte, a schism occurred that captivated the town council. The town hired a facilitator for a weekend retreat. One of the exercises we did during that retreat was to physically show the connections we had to one another. It took a long time, but that exercise proved to be a breakthrough because it showed we were more connected than any of us thought. The exercised

showed us the lines of communication between and among the differing groups, and just where we all stood in relation to others in that small town government organization.

**Resources:**

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Colorado Association of Ski Towns ("CAST")  
C/O the Colorado Municipal League  
Denver, CO 80202

Matthew McKinney, Director Montana Consensus Council  
(406) 444-2075

Karl Samp, Director of Community Initiatives Initiative Foundation  
405 First Street Southeast  
Little Falls, MN 56345  
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Dr. James A. Segedy, AICP College of Architecture and Planning  
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**Theme:** Collaboration

**Challenge:** Red Lodge has so many gifted, educated, and self-directed people, it is hard to distinguish the Indians from the chiefs, but for collaboration to work, leaders sometimes have to let others take the reins. Leadership takes many forms, and those skills are often hard to keep tuned as roles change from group to group in a small community.

Worland is not so blessed. We were short on leaders, so the same people kept stepping forward, which eventually led to those left on the sidelines rebelling against the entrenched leadership in the community. Worland also has an "aging in place" problem common to many rural agriculture communities. The same people who had been leaders in the community for so long were aging, and because leadership had

not been shared with a younger generation, those who wanted and needed to take leadership roles were not prepared to do so. Although Red Lodge is unlike Worland, it is still experiencing some leadership issues that are keeping efforts at collaboration from happening.

**Solution:** Various organizations at the State level have created leadership-training programs, and Worland started sending people to those programs. Montana must have some leadership programs Red Lodge can tap into to grow its leaders. Often it's just a weekend seminar to remind people what is important in the process, and to rekindle lost or stagnant skill traits. The other thing we did at the local level was to start our own leadership institute. We had some help. Park County had a successful program and they gave our community the seed money we needed to get started. After that, many of the core group that formed the institute both took and taught courses. It has proven so successful, the Washakie Leadership Institute recently provided seed money to a group in Big Horn County so they could start a leadership program. Both Park and Washakie counties relied on grant awards from the U.S. Forest Service under their Rural Community Assistance program for the bulk of the funding needed on the front-end. Thereafter, tuition payments made by participants carried the program.

**Resources:**

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**Theme:** Collaboration

**Challenge:** Small towns are often cliquish, and Red Lodge appears to be no different. Cliques form any number of reasons, but they often result in a breakdown of communication. We noted communication problems from the comments we got from the public. I just want to address one specific instance the public is very concerned about - the lack of good communication between the town and county government officials.

**Solution:** When I was in Crested Butte, communication had broken down between and among the town and the mountain resort, the town and the county, and the town of Crested Butte and the town of Mt. Crested Butte. There were some significant obstacles to overcome to breakdown the differences that separated these groups. I think the break through came when we found a common problem that each wanted solved, and solving it required us all to spend time together. It was the personal relationships that grew out of solving a common problem that led to more and better communication and real collaboration.

The issue was the entrance to the Town of Crested Butte. Both the State and the County had road shops at the entrance to the town, and they both detracted from the image the ski area wanted for tourists. The shops were old, failed to adequately meet the needs of the State and county road departments, and could not be enlarged in their existing locations. Once everyone recognized the need for new road shops was a

common goal, it was a complicated and expensive process to move those shops, transfer title, etc., but in the end it was well worth the effort.

Carbon County government is spread out in three separate buildings, and the Town of Red Lodge is in inadequate quarters; in fact, it appears from comments that a number of governmental functions are in need of re-locating. We heard comments from a number of sources indicating each entity in need of moving is working on its own to move, and none of these groups is coordinating their efforts to see if there are links that can be joined to sequence a series of moves to the mutual benefit of all.

There is also a great deal of consternation in the community over the entrance to Red Lodge, and how the development taking place at the entrance is in keeping with the master plan for the community. The master plan is a town document, which uses the extra-jurisdictional authority allowed by State law, but which did not have County approval. Although I had the master plan as a separate theme for purposes of this report, the master plan needs to be ratified by the County if it is to succeed. This is an opportunity for communication between the town and the County in resolving this issue.

The fringe area around the town is where the action is, and the master plan represents a "position" taken by the town. I implore both the town and the County to re-visit the master plan; not as a position taken by the town, but as an offer at resolving development at the fringe of the town. When we were doing the themes at the end of our visit to Red Lodge, I felt a ratification process was needed, but after actually reading the master plan, I feel the town has already ratified it. Now, it's a matter of presenting those efforts to the County as a vision for the County. It seems to this observer that the plan has proven to be overwhelming so ground rules for considering this by the County need to be decided and laid out as a standardized process. Then the points of the plan can be reviewed, discussed and analyzed issue by issue. Many found something wrong in the plan as a whole, but it may be more palatable in forming a majority of this is approached as a series of plans for limited purposes.

**Resources:**

Rocky Mountain Institute  
1739 Snowmass Creek Road  
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Sister cities International  
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Sam Mamet, Associate Director The Colorado Municipal League  
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[www.cml.org/](http://www.cml.org/)

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**Theme:** Master Plan

**Challenge:** The team heard a great deal about the master plan. Some favored the master plan; others thought the town had strayed from the plan, while others thought the master plan never really expressed the intents and purposes of the community. My review of the plan itself leads me to believe a great deal of work went into putting the plan together and updating it by seeking input from the community. Given the other issues, which have arisen in the community, it is my impression those that participated nearly universally were left feeling the plan failed to live up to expectations. The master plan consists of a well-thought and reasoned vision for the community. It establishes public policies for development, but it is not a regulatory fabric that is enforceable in a court of law.

The comments I heard indicate they thought the plan was an end in itself, but in reality, the plan is merely the starting place for developing a regulatory framework for those policies and vision for the community. Municipalities often adopt a "master plan", while counties usually pass a "comprehensive plan" to accomplish the same end. It is not a land use plan, and is not generally enforceable, although the courts may hold a community accountable if its regulations stray from the plan. Enforcement is a challenge in such a one-sided situation because a developer can use the plan to defeat the regulation, but the community cannot use the plan to enforce the regulation. Red Lodge seems to be caught in this conundrum, and the community has become disenchanted with the merits of the plan as a result.

**Solution:** It is not a problem with the plan, or with the process that gave rise to the plan. Rather, it is my conclusion the problem has arisen because the necessary steps needed to implement the plan have not taken place. The regulatory framework for enforcement has not been enacted, and complimentary action by the County has not occurred. Developers have been able to play the community off against itself, but not to their advantage, but only to a stalemate. I know the Town Planner, Dave Stauffer, recognizes the problem and is working on regulations to compensate. This would be the logical approach in most situations, but because of the history of the plan, I have two suggestions.

First, the town needs to approach the County and develop a process for ratification of those policies the County is politically capable of adopting and incorporating into its comprehensive plan.

Second, the City and County need to develop a complimentary process one to the other to assure constitutional standards of due process are in place for the rule making process as well as applications, enforcement, and review processes.

**Resources:**

National Association of Counties ("NACo")  
440 First Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-2080  
(202) 393-6226  
[www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org)

Heartland Center for Leadership Development  
941 O Street, Suite 920  
Lincoln, NE 68508  
(402) 474-7667

Center for Applied Rural Innovation (CARI)  
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**Theme:** Infrastructure

**Challenge:** The Town of Red Lodge, like many rural communities, has been unable to keep pace with its infrastructure needs. To the credit of the community, it has adopted a three (3%) percent resort tax, which is now being used to bring some infrastructure projects to fruition. Unfortunately, the tax revenue is not enough. When we visited the ski area, I was very surprised to hear their COO complain about the tax. My experience in resort communities leads me to believe the ski area should be embracing the community's efforts to tax itself. A resort generally has needs for urban services far in excess of the ability of the residents to provide. The only way to fill that gap and provide a good experience for the tourists who use those services is to tax them.

In Colorado, the credo often heard is that 'growth must pay its own way'. A quick look at the successful ski resorts operating in Colorado will show that taxation is the "mother's milk" of the industry. Obviously, there needs to be a great deal of education done. "Tax" is not a four-letter word. It is a tool, and one the community needs to maximize for its own benefit and the benefit of the tourists that normally pay the bulk of the bill. Red Lodge, even though beautiful, is in competition with other resort communities, which are also beautiful. The difference is in the quality and quantity of the experience the community can provide in establishing a sense of place for the tourist they will enjoy.

**Solution:** I will not bore you with the usual taxing mechanisms, bonding opportunities and loan sources that might be utilized. There are some new financing mechanisms Red Lodge might look at that would allow for cooperation between the ski area and the community. For instance, there are non-profit corporation revenue bonds and developer tax districts. These programs are outside the normal government issued funding mechanisms. It allows the developer, or in this case, the ski area to participate in the financing. The ski area is part of the community, and its infrastructure needs are community needs. I strongly recommend the community find ways to partner with the ski area for mutual benefit.

**Resources:**

Kaiser & Company Investment Bankers  
1920 Thomes Avenue, Suite 110  
Cheyenne, WY 82001  
(307) 634-1547

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**Theme:** Infrastructure

**Challenge:** It is my understanding from the comments made during our listening sessions that the City has decided to put revenue received from the "resort tax" into sewer and water system improvements. I feel certain there are practical reasons for setting particular projects, but I sensed the community feels the improvements are moving along too slowly, and the projects picked are not necessarily increasing tourism as advertised. It may be time for the community to re-think the priorities to assure the tax keeps a voting constituency.

**Solution:** Two things come to mind as possible solutions.

First, the projects chosen are not high profile; they do not give the community the sense they are seeing value. I suggest the City use revenue from the resort tax for at least one high profile project of value to the community, and I further suggest that the project be the historic street light project that is presently on the back burner. Although the Bush administration is cutting back on funding for many rural development-funding sources, it has identified one new initiative that could be leveraged for street lighting and landscaping for the downtown. Preserve America Initiative, which can be found on the White House, has few requirements, and Red Lodge already meets most of them.

The second suggestion I have is a suggestion to re-think the streets, drainage and sidewalk issue to make it more feasible to do some street work first. The Town of Crested Butte went through a real slump in the local economy in the mid-80. To compete against the larger and better financed resorts in Colorado, the community created an improvement district out of most of the Town's plat, and beautified the town by putting in lower cost chip and seal on a narrow roadway of 24', low profile curbs to make sure snow plows would not later destroy them, and then graveled 10' on either side of the roadway for parking. This allowed sewer and water line work to proceed at a later date without undue expense, allowed the Town to develop a drainage system for the Town without substantially increasing the run-off, and provided better residential parking. It really was a great project, and it is one that Red Lodge could modify and use to its benefit.

The improvement district was formed to issue bonds, which paid for the project. The Town acted as the administrator for the district, which allowed it to fund its costs in supervising the project and carried the costs of administering funds. The Town was able to clean up some dead-end streets, abandon unused streets, and build proper drainage swales. The chip and seal proved to be less expensive to maintain for the Town than the dirt streets previously had been, and projections showed maintenance was much less than pavement would have been. Telluride did a project in a similar vein. When they did the streets, they even put in pipe for water and sewer at intersections and at alleyways under the streets. They knew the pipe would not be used for years to come, but having the pipe in place allowed them to keep costs down later and made the water and sewer projects go faster and with less disruption later.

**Resources:** Please contact "CAST" referenced previously. I was able to get a contact name for CAST from the Colorado Municipal League for you. Jackie Witsett, Town of Basalt Town Council Person, at (970) 927-4701.

Preserve America. Visit [www.preserveamerica.gov](http://www.preserveamerica.gov) or call the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation at (202) 606-8503 or by e-mail at [PAcommunities@achp.gov](mailto:PAcommunities@achp.gov)

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## **Theme:** Public Facilities

**Challenge:** It is extremely important for a resort community to move people efficiently. Tourists do not know their way around. They prefer having access to public transportation or being able to walk to everything they need as a result. It is hurting Red Lodge that there is limited access to the ski area, and that once there, there is poor parking facilities at a distance from the lifts. Even downtown, Red Lodge lacks many of the amenities tourists have come to expect in a resort community. The nice thing about amenities is that they lend themselves to the quality of life for residents as well, which increases property values among other things. Red Lodge has no recreational trails system, although it has a beautiful streambed running through Town, and a great deal of open space very suitable to the creation of such a system. For purposes of this report, I have combined intra-community transportation problems together because I think they are so linked they need to be planned for altogether, which may be one of the challenges the community has in planning for this aspect of their transportation needs.

**Solution:** Not only were we told of the poor road that serves the ski area, but also we drove the road and experienced it for ourselves. Roads are expensive, and it was not clear to this observer whether re-engineering that road for better traffic flows would help that much. Rather than take a straightforward repair approach to the ski area road, I would suggest looking at two alternatives that might actually save money in the long run and provide more opportunities for expansion of the ski area.

First, I suggest the community look at putting in a high-speed gondola from the Town to the ski area rather than trying to improve the ski area road. It would make it easier on the tourists, mitigate the traffic and parking problems at the ski area, and provide more opportunities for development at both the ski area and in Town around the gondola.

Second, it occurs to me the base facilities for the ski area are outdated, poorly situated and are more of a detriment to developing a year round operation than they are worth. Better to re-locate the base facilities lower on the mountain, preferably on private land, that can be developed to off-set the costs of the re-location of the facilities.

This brings me to the other part of the intra-community transportation issue. The Economic Research Service within USDA recently released a report entitled "Infrastructure and Rural Development Policy: Water Infrastructure". This report has a number of findings and conclusions this community should know about. One point of importance here is that proximity to water bodies increases the value of real estate on average by 30 percent, compared with similar real estate not near water. I doubt properties in Red Lodge near the creek aspire to such a value differential, and the reasons are the same as we face in Worland along the river and the canal. The community has turned its back on a valuable amenity to the community. Recreational trails, landscaping, fishing docks, etc. are all ways to enhance the streambed at little expense, but with high value to the community. It is also a good way to connect the community without requiring people to get in their cars and go from one part of Town to another.

Worland just completed a project to determine the feasibility of doing a recreational trails system. One of the suggestions from the report issued from that project was to use the "ditch rider" roads along the canal for equestrian trails. Graveled trails are cheaper to build and could even be done with volunteer labor, and Worland does have a number of rural residents with horses. The community has embraced the concept and we are working on implementing the plan.

I think Red Lodge could develop equestrian trails on the outskirts of the Town; possibly using old railroad right-of-way, and floodplain areas along the streambeds to build such trails. Closer in, recreational trails could link schools, parks and recreational fields. Tourists use recreational trails to get to know a community so the amenity has multiple benefits on a number of levels. It is our intention to have the local recreational district take over the maintenance of the recreational trails system as it is built out. Billings and Denver have used canal roads for recreational trails and have been successful in doing so. The Town of Jackson Hole tells me USDA's point was well taken in their community. Residences along the stream and trail have increased in value at a far more rapid rate than properties outlying from the stream and/or away from the trails (source; Nelson Engineering).

**Resources:** Please feel free to contact myself for further information on this suggestion.

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**Theme:** Public Facilities

**Challenge:** Besides intra-community transportation, there were a number of comments concerning inter-community transportation issues. Specifically, people talked often about the airport and road leading into Red Lodge from Billings. Let me address the issue of the airport first. Our information is the airport can no longer qualify for FAA funding due to the proximity of residential development to the runway. It seems to this observer the residential development is an immovable object; I must also presume the FAA is also not going to grant a waiver, which would put the public in jeopardy. Therefore, the most obvious approach to the issue is to move the airport. Airports are expensive propositions and they take up a lot of land, so I can understand the reluctance to jump into moving it to a new location. This is a huge project for the community, but with the community at a dead-end in trying to utilize the airport in its present location, it would seem the challenge is how best to relocate it.

**Solution:** I remember when I was growing up, the government started closing its WWII bases around the country, and one of the first was Salina, KS. Salina had an air force base one day, and the next day; the population was cut in half when the base closed. It took quite a few years for the community to fill that vacuum. Fortunately, for Red Lodge, the proximity of the airport to the town and the residential development that prompted this problem in the first place really creates an opportunity for the Town. Several people told us the community had already identified the need for a business/industrial park, expanded recreational facilities, sites for public facilities like a justice center and courthouse, and so much more. Most communities would envy having such an opportunity.

A site for a new airport is quite another thing. We heard some comments indicating the County residents felt like decisions regarding the airport were being made without their input and consideration. This is another opportunity for a collaborative effort between the City and the County for mutual benefit. I would also suggest looking beyond collaboration within the County and evaluate what opportunities there are to pool resources with other communities to the north and west of Red Lodge for siting a regional airport. The further away the new airport is from Billings the better the chances the FAA will support funding the airport. In addition, the more people served by the airport, the more likely the FAA will support financing the airport. This is a big project, and it needs a lot of planning and analyzing to give it credibility and public support. I suggest starting with a planning grant through the community

development block grant program simply looking at the basic issue of what is the best use of the airport/fairgrounds site.

**Resources:**

Al Jones, Regional Director Montana Department of Commerce  
2004 Miles Avenue  
Billings, MT 59102  
(406) 655-1696  
aljonesrdo@bresnan.net

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**Theme:** Public Facilities

**Challenge:** We did not hear much about Yellowstone National Park as an asset for the community, but most people recognized the route to Yellowstone as an asset. The Beartooth Highway is nationally known for its vistas, and its status as an All American Scenic Byway has only enhanced its reputation and gained that road a wider respect. Unfortunately, the Beartooth Highway is only one link into the community and it is a seasonal highway. The community voiced its concern for how people get into Red Lodge during the winter ski season, and it is the year-round roads that appear to be the challenge.

**Solution:** Like Wyoming, Montana has not taken advantage of the Federal Highway Administration's Scenic Byway Program to upgrade tourist facilities on its highways and give people a reason to drive. Colorado has been the most aggressive in taking advantage of the program. If you go to the Scenic Byways website you can get a free map of all the scenic byways in the United States along with a description of why it was chosen for that status. AAA routes people over scenic byways, and they do that for two reasons. First, because of the aesthetic qualities of these roads, but also because public facilities is one of the criteria for designation. My recommended solution to the challenge presented by the roads into and out of Red Lodge is to look seriously at having them designated as scenic byways through the Federal Highway Administration. Red Lodge should not think it couldn't do this. It was the City of Evanston, WY not the Forest Service, the State or the County that put the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway together. They were able to get State and forest service designation as a scenic byway, and with that status in-hand, they were able to get a \$400,000 grant from the Federal Highway administration for improvements to the byway setting it up for designation under their program.

**Resources:**

U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration  
National Scenic Byways Program  
HEPN-50, Room 3232  
400 Seventh Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20590  
1-800-429-9297  
[www.bywaysonline.org](http://www.bywaysonline.org)

Paul Knopf, Director Evanston Planning & Development Dept.  
1200 Main Street  
Evanston, WY 82930

(307) 783-6470  
[planning@allwest.net](mailto:planning@allwest.net)

Scenic Byways Program Staff  
FHWA-MT Division  
301 South Park/Drawer  
10056 Helena, MT 59626-0056  
(406) 449-5310

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**Theme:** Public Facilities

**Challenge:** Red Lodge recognizes it needs to diversify its economy. We heard a number of comments from people who voiced real concern for the local economy based on their experience of the last few years. The drought has hurt the winter ski season, and people want more diversification to bolster the economy over the "shoulder" months. The use of a term like "shoulder" months through the team off in the beginning. Mary and I are both veterans of ski resorts in Colorado, and had never heard the term. Once it was explained to us, we recognized it as the "off-season" we are used to. The listening session comments followed two tracts toward a more diversified community. The first tract had diversification coming in the form of a manufacturing and light industrial businesses, which could be located into a business park. The other tract built on the skiing and recreational resources of the community. Generally, these comments proposed a convention center, year-round activities at the ski area, and better facilities for the rodeo/fairgrounds.

**Solution:** There is no reason the community cannot build on both of these tracts. They both have merit. As a planner, my inclination would be to relocate the hospital and possibly the high school to create open space at the center of the community. I have seen how Telluride and Aspen have been able to use their centrally located parks extremely well to bring and keep tourists in the downtown area and add to the recreational opportunities of their residents with those park facilities. I do not offer this as a solution so much as I do something to consider. Moving out one large public facility from the downtown will decrease traffic and give some breathing room to other facilities. The other approach is to move two facilities out and then use one of those buildings for something else; and in this way, a progression is created whereby everyone gets an updated hand-me-down, which better suits their needs.

Also, as a planner, I hate to see any governmental functions leave the core of a municipality - that tends to take the energy of the community elsewhere. I realize this is really "out of the box", but I am wondering if the old brewery and adjoining properties could not be configured and re-used as a governmental campus for the Town and County.

Many communities have found advantages to combining their law enforcement functions under one roof, and there may be other opportunities to combine services if the governmental operations can be placed in close proximity to one another. The Town already has a great site for a business park at the airport.

What is needed is a master plan to bring it altogether. This will involve a collaborative effort between the Town and the County to really evaluate their needs, wants and expectations. However, most of all, it will require a realistic commitment to the work needed to bring all of this about.

We heard comments suggesting the high school, the hospital, and the courthouse/justice center could all be located at the existing airport site and room would still remain for a business park. This all may be so, but with so many options, the community really needs to narrow things down and take a holistic look at everything.

I recently heard of a small town in Kansas with a problem. It seems it had a school building that could no longer be used for a school. After trying and failing to sell it locally, the community decided to put the building on the market over E-Bay. They got quite a few bids for the building, but decided to accept one from E-Bay itself, which will use the building as a call center. There are businesses out there looking for opportunities. There are uses for existing buildings no one has conceived of yet. The adage "Build it and they will come" has merit, but so does putting existing buildings to use by giving more people the opportunity to consider them.

Colorado has a really good backcountry hut system, which is used by skiers in winter and hikers in the summer. These huts have been built for the most part one at a time over half a century by volunteers and small amounts of money. Red Lodge could be the hub for a hut system in the Beartooth range. Red Lodge could start with one hut, which is better than none, just to see if it generates any interest from people. There is an existing golf course, but it has remained private. Vail too started with one course, and now that valley has a number of golf courses. Adding golf courses has changed the reputation of that resort from that of a ski area to that of a world-class resort. Having recreational opportunities year round enhances property values, adds amenities that attract business opportunity and create a sense of place. Most golf courses in Colorado resorts double as cross country ski courses in the winter. When it comes to golf - more is better. The Air Force Academy has two 18-hole golf courses (the Silver course and the Blue course). They compliment one another and military people come from all over the world to play those courses. People come in the winter and learn about summer opportunities and they come in the summer and learn about winter opportunities.

**Resources: 1**

10h Mountain Division Hut System  
(970) 925-5775

Summit Huts & Trails Association  
(970) 925-5775

Alfred Braun Memorial Hut System  
(970) 925-5775

Never Summer Nordic Yurts  
(970) 482-9411

Hinsdale Haute Route  
(970) 944-2269

San Juan Hut System  
(970) 728-6935

John Rogers U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration  
P.O. Box 578 301  
South Park Avenue, Rm 123  
Helena, MT 59624  
(406) 449-5380  
Edrmteda@aol.com

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**Theme:** Balancing Act

**Challenge:** When I was living in Cripple Creek, I was the president of the local chamber one year. We received a letter from a tourist complaining about the condition of the buildings; really berating the chamber for allowing the downtown to deteriorate. I responded to the letter that it was really hard to keep up a town built for 35,000 people with only 1,000 people. One winter evening the Grubstake Bar caught fire. It was a beautiful three story structure in mid-block. To stop the inferno that resulted, the fire department had to dynamite buildings on either side. The fire was not the first, nor the last. It left a huge hole in the fabric of the downtown; taking with it a stock exchange building that served as the only grocery, and three other historic structures worthy of saving. Although Red Lodge is not quite in that situation, it does have an incredible inventory of historic buildings and a structural environment built for a much larger population - especially downtown. The challenge is to create uses and revenue sufficient for downtown property owners to keep up their property. Failure of even one building to be maintained in such a concentration of buildings jeopardizes all of the buildings. Public and private interests need to balance out.

**Solution:** Cripple Creek eventually resorted to becoming a gambling mecca to bring in the revenue needed to save the downtown from complete collapse. Most of the beautiful woodwork, tin ceilings, and hardwood floors were lost when the buildings were gutted. I would not recommend gambling as the means to save downtown Red Lodge. Downtown Red Lodge is a treasure; so too are the many outlying structures still in its inventory from the original mining days. Not only does there need to be a concerted effort to save every contributing structure to this fabric, but it is important these buildings find new uses that contribute the community as well.

Previously, I touched on some aspects of this issue, but much more can be done. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has a program called "Main Street", which has been very successful in helping communities like Red Lodge achieve economic sustainability in the context of historic preservation. Cities like Sheridan and Evanston in Wyoming have used some aspects of this program to their advantage. Red Lodge would benefit greatly from the Main Street program and I recommend it highly.

Comments from the public during the listening sessions indicated there are no land trusts operating locally, which could be used to minimize sprawl and encourage in-fill development in Red Lodge. Transfer of development ("TDRs") programs elsewhere, especially in high view amenity areas such as

Red Lodge, have used TDRs to their advantage to move growth away from rural sprawl and toward areas already served by utilities and access. With statutes allowing municipalities certain extra-jurisdictional authority over areas at the fringe, a collaborative effort with the County could produce a TDR program without having to develop a countywide zoning plan. The land trusts concept may also be applicable to preserving the downtown. Facade easements have long been a way for historic preservationists and property owners to work together for the good of a community's downtown.

There is value in preserving the outside of a building the public sees. As one looks down the main street, it's easy to see how buildings form a cohesive pattern, but it's also easy to see those buildings, which do not fit that fabric. If the local historical society is not prepared to buy or hold facade easements, then possibly the downtown merchants association could be. Even if a property owner receives compensation for a facade easement, this will likely not come close to the costs of renovating a building. Other means must be found to help.

One approach is to create a revolving loan fund for historic preservation. While this can be done through a number of options, I suggest Red Lodge look at using a USDA program it has that allows an REA to create a revolving loan fund for economic development.

Finally, the downtown can form an improvement district. Since the buildings form one unit, help for one really helps all. A bond issue from a local improvement district could raise enough to complete much of the work, and still create an endowment for the downtown properties, which could be used for grants and loans on a competitive basis to finish the work. One thing that comes to mind to help the downtown and which could be funded through an improvement district is to create a "linear mall" concept. Since the downtown consists mainly of one street, people movers could circulate downtown like an old trolley line. Downtown Denver was dying in the late 1970's; the suburbs were sapping the strength out of the downtown. Denver came up with the Sixteenth Street Mall. It is linear with many buildings, and natural turn-around. Red Lodge is in much the same situation. It could put the gondola on one end with the chamber building on the other end as turn-around. The trolley would eliminate parking on the street, which would allow more street scaping, more sidewalk cafe operations, and better control over traffic through the town for the benefit of local merchants and attractions.

**Resources:**

Wyoming has a bill pending in the legislature, which would utilize the expertise of one of our team members for a Statewide Main Street Program in Wyoming. Please contact Mary Randolph for more information on Main Street. My other teammate is also a good resource on historic preservation issues. Cindi Fargo is dealing with downtown historic structure issues and I recommend her to you for more on the Main Street program. American Express and the National Endowment for the Arts just released the "Cultural Heritage Tourism Resource Manual", which is full of resources Red Lodge might find valuable. John Hickenlooper, Mayor City and County of Denver 1437 Bannock Street, Rm 350 Denver, CO 80253 (303) 640-2721

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**Theme:** Balancing Act

**Challenge:** If public and private interests are difficult to balance in finding a way to sustain the downtown, it is geometrically harder to balance those interests when dealing with the ski area, Red Lodge and the County.

One issue came up of considerable interest to me that might be one that all could find a way to balance their interests. Its water. Prior owners encumbered operations by developing a back bowl several years ago, but the ski area has been unable to use that expansion area with all its new equipment and terrain because of the drought. This is crippling their ability to generate revenue to do further work that would upgrade their operations and bring in more people. All of their snowmaking equipment is within the drainage they have for their existing water rights. This is not the only bottleneck in the ski area's ability to provide a quality experience for skiers. I touched on the road up to the ski area previously as an issue that needs addressing and offered a possible solution. However, the road cannot simply be eliminated; it has other uses and will continue to have purpose for the ski area even if a gondola is put in. Elimination of one bottleneck at the ski area will not be enough, both of these issues will need to be addressed if the ski area is to reach the next level and enhance the quality of experience skiers have come to expect in a competitive market.

**Solution:** It was my impression from the comments made by the ski area representatives that they are now operating on their own, except for some consulting help from the State on employment issues. There was no indication Red Lodge or the County is in discussions with the ski area to solve either the road issue or the water issue. My solution is simple, but straight forward, unless there is good communication between and among the parties in a position to influence the outcome of these issues, the parties will only move further apart with time. My recommendation is to meet regularly, set public presentations to get the word out on these issues, and rotate the location for meetings and presentations to various sites so everyone can see for himself or herself what is going on.

**Resources:** Resources already offered would be appropriate for this, but I would encourage the parties to look for facilitators mutually agreeable to all that might help as well.

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**Theme:** Balancing Act - Sense of Place

**Challenge:** During the 1970's there was a push to form regional organizations. Generally, this was a top-down approach by the federal government to get a handle on the flood of people deserting the cities for the suburbs. The various organizational units hung on, and now a push is on again for regional development. Al Jones recently sent me a website on regional clusters, and everything I have received from the Center for the Study of Rural America at the FedBank in Kansas City has emphasized regionalism in all facets of rural life. We were surprised by how few comments we got from local citizens about the part Yellowstone National Park, and other nationally known parks and forests in the area received. I did not hear one person mention the Chief Joseph highway. The challenge seems to be for Red Lodge to find its place in the region and bring the benefits of the region back to the community for the community's benefit.

**Solution:** I think Red Lodge has started the process of working toward using regionalism to their advantage, and certainly the work Al Jones and Jim Klessens have done already toward that end is great. Red Lodge is positioned to be a hub for the region, and really needs to build on its location. At a minimum, links to the Gallatin, Shoshone, and Custer National Forests; the Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, and the scenic byways websites, etc. will work to the advantage of Red Lodge.

With the disruption in snowmobile policy for Yellowstone Park, surrounding communities are presented with an opportunity. The Bighorn Mountains are working on developing snowmobile trails between highways 14 and 16, which would allow snowmobiles to tour the mountains without seeing the same thing twice. The areas around Red Lodge are even better situated for the development of long distance touring for snowmobiles. For instance, Red Lodge might be able to work out a trails system between Cooke City and Red Lodge that would allow snowmobilers one day over and a day back without seeing the same thing.

The Main Street Economist for the Center for the Study of Rural America just came out with the "Top Ten Ways to Reinvent Rural Regions", which might be helpful to Red Lodge.

1. Build a home for the regional partnership. The home can take many forms, but must be capable of forging regional partnerships to guide new development efforts.
2. Find your region's unique competitive niche; whatever the product or service, it must be able to stand the test of the global market.
3. Grow the farm system instead of buying free agents. In economic development it's best not to go after the home run hitters, but rather the free agent market.
4. Create clusters around your core niche. Clusters provide two distinct advantages; they provide the muscle to tap domestic and global markets and they develop synergies among businesses in the region.
5. Improve and leverage local amenities. Most regions must have a dual strategy going forward, one focused on competitive advantage and the other focused on quality of life. This is the factor I emphasized for this community and clearly shows how balance plays a part in planning for the community's future. So many successful resort communities have sacrificed the quality of life that brought people there in the first place for the competitive advantages in going wholesale.
6. Invest in your people. Red Lodge has attracted a good workforce prepared to meet the demands of this century, and they are leaders capable, willing and ready to take on spreading their skills to other members of the community. This resource needs to be harnessed for the benefit of the community.
7. Enrich the region's supply of equity capital. Red Lodge has a good supply of equity capital that came with its new residents, but that capital has not been marshaled for the community's benefit.
8. Tap technologies suite to your region. Red Lodge is ahead of itself in this regard in some ways and catching up in others, but it obviously has a good handle on what the "cutting edge" is and sets its sites on that moving target to its benefit.
9. Invest in 21st century infrastructure. Transportation is always an important consideration, but the Center considers such things as community centers, parks and recreation as essential infrastructure to retain talented people. Finally, they tout "regional air service" as 'infrastructure worth pursuing'.
10. Reinvent regional governance. New governance may mean reinventing some key public institutions. Census information that came out in 2000 is now being updated with information on farms and business. Based on the 2000 census, Carbon County has already become economically diversified and no longer relies on agriculture as the basic component of its economy. The Center states unequivocally that the new economic engines for the rural economy will not come from agriculture, but may extend from it. Red Lodge and Carbon County are there, but the realization of that fact has not yet settled in for leadership to work off of for the future.

**Resources:** Center for the Study of Rural America Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City  
[www.kc.frb.org](http://www.kc.frb.org) fedgazette, a Regional Business & Economics Newspaper Federal Reserve Bank of  
Minneapolis Ron Wirtz, Editor [minneapolisfed.org](http://minneapolisfed.org)

**Report by Mary Randolph**

Executive Director

Wyoming Rural Development Council

2219 Carey Ave.

Cheyenne, WY 82002

307-777-6430

**Introduction:** I would very much like to thank the City of Red Lodge for hosting the resource team. Your hospitality was gracious and I enjoyed getting an "inside" look at your community. I think it is healthy for our states to share ideas and resources and I certainly gained many new ideas to take back to Wyoming for our resource teams and through my report I will share a few Wyoming ideas! Again, thank you for hosting the team and I look forward to returning to Red Lodge as a visitor!

**Theme:** Collaboration

**Challenge:** During the many listening sessions, communication or lack of was heard over and over. People perceive that there is a lack of communication between city/county and various organizations in the community. Communication always seems to be the root of all-evil!

**Solution:** I suggest that the community form a Council of Non-Profit organizations - this council could meet 1 time a month to communicate. Each organization can report on their activities and through the discussion determines if there is overlap of activities or where one organization can help another.

**Resources:** I suggest patterning this organization after your religious entities. The clergy of your churches meet once a month and seem to coordinate and communicate very well.

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**Theme:** Collaboration

**Challenge:** The majority of small communities rely on volunteers to make sure projects get accomplished. Red Lodge has many talented and skilled individuals and you need to capitalize on everyone's abilities and skills.

**Solution:** NRCS, Natural Resource Conservation and Development, has a wonderful program called, ABCD-Asset Based Community Development. The concept of asset based community development is a derivative of community capacity development and provides a mechanism to gather information about the community that can be reorganized to generate new entrepreneurial endeavors, enhance social services and potentially protect natural resources. It is a model that assumes the community already has many of the assets necessary to create a viable future. Rather than focusing on needs and problems or concerns as in the traditional path of community development, the conversation at the local level draws on the assets of the community which include: natural resources, youth, elderly, businesses, libraries, cultural groups, clubs, farms and ranches as well as a long list of other locally located assets.

Traditional Community Development Models often times rely on small groups of citizens who determine the final assessment of priorities. Smaller groups are usually involved in the follow through and implementation of plans developed to focus on resolving problems. ABCD engages as much of the community as possible. It focuses on the inherent ability of citizens to create their future drawing upon

locally identified assets. With this method, grants are looked for only to fill gaps in local efforts when the current assets of a community are reorganized. NRCS offers training sessions in this process as well as technical assistance.

**Resources:**

Natural Resources Conservation Service  
10 East Babcock Street Federal Building, Room 443  
Bozeman, MT 59715-4704  
Phone: (406) 587-6813  
Fax: (406) 587-6761  
State Conservationist: Dave White

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**Theme:** Collaboration

**Challenge:** I come back again to the idea of communication and the perceived lack of in your community.

**Solution:** I ran across a great idea that the City of Forsyth, Montana did after their community assessment. They completed their assessment last year. After the priority setting meeting, they developed "Phases" of completion. They took their assessment priorities and developed an action plan. To "kick" this off in the community, they developed a program they called, "Economic Development Kick-Off 2002", Phase I. A person in the community that was talented in creating power point presentations, developed a presentation to show what the priorities were and in what Phase these priorities would be completed and how. They set up an evening program and invite the community. They show the power point, hand out a brochure that lays the program out as well as a form they can fill out to help! They plan on holding this Kick off every year and just completed Kick off 2004. The same concept could be applied to Red Lodge with the completion of the assessment, CEDS report and even your master plan. It is a great way to inform the community and find new volunteers

**Resources:**

City of Forsyth  
247 N 9th Ave  
P.O. Box 226  
Forsyth, MT 59327  
406-346-2521  
Mayor: Dennis Kopizke

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**Theme:** Infrastructure

**Challenge:** Your downtown was a delight to walk through and actually shop! You are fortunate to have a Main Street and have it be vital and vibrant. We did hear concerns about Main Street, vacant buildings and some additional thoughts on beautification.

**Solution:** Main Street program has been referenced by Rod Proffitt and Cindi Fargo in their reports, so I will not go into detail. Wyoming has just passed legislation creating the Wyoming Main Street Program

and I understand Montana will be addressing this issue in your next session. Main Street revitalization can be an incredible boost for a community. There are 43 states participating in the Main Street program with over 1700 Main Street communities. Since its conception Main Street programs have generated over \$17 billion in new investments with a gain of more than 231,682 new jobs and 57,460 new businesses. Every dollar a community uses to support Main Street leverages an average of \$40.35 in new investment. I agree with Cindi - support Main Street for your next legislative session!

**Resources:** For more information on how the Main Street program works, contact:  
The National Main Street Center of the National Trust for Historic Preservation  
1785 Massachusetts Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20036-2117  
202-588-6219  
www.mainstreet.org

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**Theme:** Public Facilities

**Challenge:** Funding for facilities (public restroom in park)

**Solution:** USDA Rural Development has a Community Facilities loan program. Community Facility loan programs are for constructing, enlarging, or otherwise improving community facilities providing essential services in rural areas and towns with a population of 20,000 or less. The funds are available to public entities such as municipalities, counties, special-purpose districts, Indian tribes, and corporations not operated for profit. Rural Development Community Programs also guarantees community facility loans made by banks or other lenders. Community Facility grants is designed to assist in the development of essential community facilities in rural areas. The Agency will authorize grant funds on a graduated basis. Eligible applicants located in small communities with low populations and low median household incomes may receive a higher percentage of grant funds. The amount of grant funds provided for a facility shall not exceed 75 percent of the cost of developing the facility. I know that the population in Red Lodge in 2000 was slightly over 2,000; it still might be worth your while to discuss this with USDA Rural Development.

**Resources:**  
USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT - MONTANA STATE OFFICE  
P.O. Box 850  
Bozeman, MT 59771  
(406) 585-2580  
FAX (406) 585-2565

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**Theme:** Miscellaneous

**Challenge:** Funding and information sources.

**Solution:** I would offer to you, several outstanding resources in your State and outside of your state for grants and loans. One resource we use in Wyoming for grant searches is GrantStation. This was a search engine developed in Alaska primarily for rural communities.

**Resources:**

For grant searches:  
GrantStation.com

An outstanding source for grants and loans for facilities, small business ventures, etc. Contact your State's USDA Rural Development office.

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P.O. Box 850  
Bozeman, MT 59771  
(406) 585-2580  
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**Theme:** Miscellaneous

**Challenge:** Being a vibrant, healthy community.

**Solution:** I always like to share the 20 clues to community survival created by the Heartland Center. It is a good measure of your community's ability to survive!

**CLUES TO RURAL COMMUNITY SURVIVAL**

From: Heartland Center for Leadership Development According to research performed by the Heartland Center for Leadership Development there are clues to rural community survival. Successful communities display most of the following characteristics, which follow:

**CLUES TO RURAL COMMUNITY SURVIVAL**  
*From: Heartland Center for Leadership Development*

According to research performed by the Heartland Center for Leadership Development there are clues to rural community survival. Successful communities display most of the following characteristics, which follow:

**1.) Evidence of community pride**

Successful communities are often showplaces of community care and attention, with neatly trimmed yards, public gardens and well-kept public parks. Pride shows up in other ways such as community festivals and events that give residents the chance to celebrate their community, its history and heritage.

## **2) Emphasis on quality in business and community life**

People in successful communities believe that something worth doing is worth doing right. Facilities are built to last, and so have homes and other improvements. Newer brick additions to schools are common, for example, and businesses are built or expanded with attention to design.

## **3) Willingness to invest in the future**

Investments of time and energy in community improvement projects by residents. They concern themselves with how what they are doing today will impact on the lives of their children and grandchildren in the future.

## **4) Participatory approach to community decision-making**

Authoritative models don't seem to exist in these communities, and power is deliberately shared. People still know whom you need to be on your side to get something done, but even the most powerful of opinion leaders work through the system-formal and informal-to build consensus for what they want to do.

## **5) Cooperative Community Spirit**

Successful rural communities devote more attention to cooperative activities than to fighting over what should be done and by whom. The stress is on working together toward a common goal and the focus is on positive results. They may spend a long time making decisions, and there may be disagreements along the way, but things get done.

## **6) Realistic appraisal of future opportunities**

These communities build on assets and minimize weaknesses. For example, few small communities believe that they are likely to land a giant industry; and many wouldn't want one if it came along because they would depend on it, and that could be dangerous. They realize a more realistic approach considers the community and region as the context for future opportunities.

## **7) Awareness of competitive positioning**

Thriving communities know who the competition is and so do the businesses in towns. They try to stress local loyalty as a way to help, but many businesses also keep tabs on their competitors in other towns. Recognition of community assets – people, associations and institutions, is vitally important. Their comparison of one town to another is a significant means to spur improvements.

## **8) Knowledge of the physical environment**

Importance of location is underscored continuously in local decision-making as business and civic leaders picture their community in relation to others. Beyond location, however, communities must also be familiar with what they have locally. For example, the issue of preservation and protection of natural resources must be balanced with development options.

## **9) Active economic development program**

Organized and active approach to economic development is common in successful communities. This type of approach depends on public and private sector resources working hand in hand. Private economic development corporations are common, either as a subcommittee or an outgrowth of a Chamber of Commerce, etc. However, it's clear that the most successful towns emphasize retaining and expanding existing businesses as well as trying to develop new businesses. It's a "gardening not hunting" model of economic development.

**10) Deliberate transition of power to younger generations of leaders**

Young leadership is the rule rather than the exception in thriving rural communities. These may be young people who grew up in town, returned or they may be people who've decided to move into the community. In these successful communities there is a formal or informal means for established leaders to bring new recruits into public service.

**11) Acceptance of women in leadership roles**

Women hold positions of leadership in these rural communities and those roles extend beyond traditional strongholds of teacher, nurse or librarian. They take on roles as mayors, law enforcement officers, non-profit managers, business owners, etc. In many communities this role is expanded to minorities, newcomers, and all types of non-traditional leaders.

**12) Strong belief in and support of education**

Good schools are a point of pride and stable employment force. However, it goes beyond the K-12 system to include an approach to life-long learning that puts education at the center of many community activities. Whether adult education is targeted at skills and job performance or hobbies and recreation, the successful community makes the most of education at all levels.

**13) Problem-solving approach to providing health care**

Local health care is a common concern in rural communities – however, a variety of solutions are created (train EMTs; telecommunications for augmenting a clinic; keeping a doctor, etc.)

**14) Strong multi-generational family orientation**

Family-oriented communities that have activities built around family needs and ties. The definition of family is broad, however-and includes younger as well as older generations and people new to the community.

**15) Strong presence of traditional institutions that are integral to community life**

Churches are often the strongest force in these characteristics, but other types of community institutions such as newspapers and radio stations, hospitals and schools fill this role also. Service clubs retain a strong influence in social activities as well as in community improvement efforts.

**16) Sound and well-maintained infrastructure**

Thriving rural communities understand the importance of physical infrastructures—such as streets, sidewalks, water systems, sewage treatment plants – and efforts are made to maintain and improve them. In these communities, a clean-up day includes public parks and playgrounds, business owners keep sidewalks repaired, and volunteer labor and donated materials go a long way to maintaining public buildings.

**17) Careful use of fiscal resources**

Frugality is a way of life in successful small communities and expenditures are made carefully. People aren't afraid to spend money when they think they should, and then typically things are built to last. Expenditures are often seen as investments in the future of the community.

### **18) Sophisticated use of information resources**

Rural community leaders are knowledgeable about their communities beyond the knowledge base available in the community. In one town retail sales histories from a state university were studied for trend information. In another, census data was used to study population change. In many community's studies, computer links to the World Wide Web have made all types of information available.

### **19) Willingness to seek help from the outside**

There is little reluctance to seek help from outside resources. These communities understand the system of accessing resources, ranging from grants to infrastructure improvement to expertise about human service programs. Competing for such resources successfully is a source of pride for local leaders.

### **20) Conviction that in the long run you have to do it yourself**

Although outside help is sought when appropriate, it is nevertheless true that thriving small towns believe that their destiny is in their own hands. They are not waiting for some outsider to save them, nor do they believe that they can sit and wait for things to get better. Making a hometown a good place to live for a long time to come is a proactive assignment and these local leaders know that no one will take care of a town as well as the people who live there.

## **WHAT WAS SAID AT THE INTERVIEWS**

The Resource Team spent two days interviewing the local residents to hear what they had to say. Those being interviewed were directed to answer three questions:

- ✓ What are the major problems/challenges in the community?
- ✓ What are the major strengths/assets of the community?
- ✓ What projects would you like to see implemented in your community in the next two, five, ten, or twenty years?

We have listed below, without comment, what we heard from those who volunteered to be interviewed.

### **#1 What are the major problems/challenges in the community?**

- Lack of planning and meshing together of ideas (x1)
- Lack of cooperation and coordination
- Lack of funding (x2)
- Lack of manpower for law enforcement
- Lack of good paying jobs (x2)
- Many plans – no cohesiveness and follow through (x1)
- Need to build quality infrastructure
- Lack of a unified community vision
- Representative types of business (heavy on service sector)
- Cycle of tourism
- With all the bright people, harnessing all the talents
- Rejection of cooperation (Lots)
- Light clean industry (x2)
- Infrastructure is key (x1)

- Many groups not coming together
- Lack of long range planning
- Modernize business structure – understand financial needs of community
- Improve cooperation and coordinate with limited resources
- Need to take care of the assets we have
- Need to promote attributes (environment)
- Inability to set priorities, this community wants to do everything (x2)
- Streamline processes to make it easier to do business
- Service workers – COL makes it difficult for a good QOL
- In budget sessions, we don't adequately fund planning
- Absence of a customer attitude
- Lack of resources to make good informed decisions
- Be more aware of the employees of the city – take them for granted
- Post graduate opportunities are lacking or unavailable
- People in general need to understand the local economy and its effect and limitations
- Lack of ability to take advantage of natural assets
- Lack of consistent and uniform code enforcements (x2)
- Need to harness natural resources in community planning
- Perception that growth is bad and growth is good.
- The current master plan and development plans have failed to be implemented and enforced as the vision was laid out (spoke to the entrances in specific to types of businesses, parking, lighting etc.)
- Lack of the follow through on plans tagged to the lack of funding to provide planning staff in the city.
- The community needs to understand the responsibility of creating a plan take the buy in and involvement of the community in carrying out the plan is not just the city employees, it is the whole community's responsibility.
- Somewhat of a good old boys operation of the code enforcement. The rules are not implemented the same to all people which has caused legal action.
- Council needs to interpret the planning documents and enforce them.
- No city manager. Management is volunteer mayor and council
- Everyone wants to live here-lifestyle. Forced property values up. Start up costs are high.
- Hard for employees to afford housing.
- High COL because of the "amenity" community
- Limited workforce because of the High COL
- Maintaining workforce is difficult
- People choose to be in Red Lodge despite cost
- Transportation of freight is limited
- Distribution costs higher because of freight inefficiencies (x1)
- Concern over growth and the changing nature of the area because of growth
- Perceived trophy home destination
- Available property is limited and services to them
- Need more linkages between the various businesses

- City taxes push some development to the county – need to coordinate with the county to make sure development is done right which may necessitate concession of hook up fees, taxes and such initially
- Airport Business park needs to be done such that businesses are encouraged to build in the park
- Need more specialty manufacturing ... this leads to spin-offs
- Need to understand the realities to recruiting businesses to RL .. not likely to bring in a large manufacturing
- Hard to bring inn comparison type goods, clothing etc.
- Cost of doing business ... property taxes, state taxes are high ... Wyoming is a better place to do business via taxation and incentives
- Cold bed syndrome... more beds than residents (non resident owners)
- Manufacturing and industry seen by some as a threat to the nature of the area
- Lack a base population to support some things we'd like to grow (ski area) – just not enough people which also affects production of other products
- Expensive to offer health care plans to employees drives up cost of doing business
- Some council people seem to have an "agenda" which makes things hard to get done
- City government takes an "if it's not broke, don't fix it attitude".
- Movie lot type of businesses ... look good on the front but on a deeper level not really doing that well.
- Few local government officials who really understand (or want to understand) business on main street
- Chamber is targeted to tourism ...visitation not business development
- Downtown Business Assoc. concentrates on events, not helping support existing businesses
- A lot of people are trying to get things started. Much effort is spent without trying to coordinate efforts.
- Lack of understanding of economics by public officials
- Understanding of the community of working as a group
- Lack of people to draw from workforce (x1)
- Lack of affordable housing (x1)
- Shoulder season reason to come to Red Lodge in Off season (x1)
- Lack of coordination and cooperation with the city
- Lack of support with city management
- Housing – look of and quality
- Taxes
- Lack of a concerted marketing effort for the community
- No promotion of Red Lodge, no budget
- Lack the population based to float businesses through the shoulder season
- Need July, August Sept. Year around
- Local people don't shop here, shops have to become unique which exacerbates the problem
- Sense of cooperation with everyone in town
- Too many agendas, projects which fractionalize workforce, leadership and funding
- Dealing with the severe ness of the seasonality
- Challenge to work with the city government, but also with the county

- A majority of people in the community don't understand the importance of the hospitality community /visitors and its effect on the economy
- Marketing is weak
- Insure that marketing includes everyone.
- We don't give people a reason to come at all time
- Lack of a cohesive group/organizations all doing the same thing
- Stronger building codes needed and enforcement of those codes
- Labor pool is weak in skilled positions
- No coordination of volunteers in the community, each group does their own thing
- Diversity of economic base structural economic change from agriculture to tourism
- Business depends on the ski area ... lull from Sept to Thanksgiving
- Tourist mode because of lodging and services wages are low
- No diversification from the mountain
- People feel manufacturing means smokestacks and naturally resist that
- Need industry to cover gaps in the tourist industry
- Lack of willingness of groups to work together, competition among groups (x1)
- Development is perceived in a negative way. Closed minded.
- Segments of community gung ho on development , one wants none, one wants tourism, no communication and unwillingness to communicate
- Special interests dictate much and not necessarily willing to work together
- Need a involved plan for infrastructure
- Need outreach to bring factions together
- Ask anyone who has started a business, they will tell you they would not do it again because of the hurdles are necessary to jump. An anti business attitude by the city government
- The community has a perceived lack of capital, perhaps a lack of planning which educates people about the potential incentives which could be utilized\
- Need to take care of the businesses which are here.
- No consistent message from city staff .... A manager would help
- A lot of confusion about the process required to get a business started
- A news article reported one time that the planning commission stated " the business wouldn't be profitable anyway. Doing so stretches beyond their authority...they need to follow their guidelines.
- Too much government taken our freedoms away – older class has been put in background
- Businesses don't stay very long
- We are not a resort town, we are a tourist town
- Lack of good jobs
- Growth pains
- More cold beds, live in a community of 24 houses with only 4 full time residents
- Aging infrastructure
- Aging school facilities issues with asbestos
- Airport issues
- Issues of compatibility of uses at business park
- Can't afford a new hospital
- Seniors don't get involved with community

- Average wage about \$15k per year ... how do we pay for these things
- Lack of funding for projects
- School is adequate as it is now, its an extra expense
- We need to be smarter about the things we do.
- City incorporated the golf course and was able to add an employee because of it. Growth in area doesn't necessarily mean the taxes will cover costs.
- Need businesses that don't require transportation
- We're on a dead end
- Transportation doesn't work well for us, interstate pulls people away.
- Road improvements are slow in the coming, MDOT doesn't have funding to move these forward
- Highway 212 is a treacherous road
- Council without locals
- A few people think they are better than others
- Need more people involved in things like the Festival
- The master plan seems to put obstacles in the way of people who want to develop
- Some restrictions are asinine
- Many seniors have a "let somebody else do it" attitude
- Council refers everything to committees
- Weak system of communication between all the groups/committees/boards
- Big disparity between wealthy and struggling means that people's needs run such a wide range it's hard to come up with solutions that fit most.
- Such a diverse community, everyone's going a different way
- Influx of new arrivals trying to change Red Lodge to be more like where they moved here from
- Much that happens is because of a few strong personalities/leaders while most of the folks remain uninvolved.
- Transient nature of the people here makes service delivery difficult
- Inward focus of retirees, seem uninterested in the area's children/youth.
- Adults that aren't elderly are overlooked; kids and seniors get the focus.
- Difficult to find people who qualify for Habitat for Humanity as those who would hold down multiple jobs so they don't have the time available to build the house, nor quite qualify for the low-income housing.
- If an affordable house here is \$150,000, that's not affordable for most of the people who work here in town.
- Seasonality of the jobs either uneven income or means people flow in and out of the community trying to make a living with the seasons.
- Hard to get everybody together, the multiple jobs up to 4 jobs pull people all over and consume all their waking time.
- 7 Day A Week work/shifts keep people disconnected
- Lack of unity
- New arrivals are often experienced leaders who want change and end up butting heads with longtime locals who don't want or can't afford change.
- Spread of gambling establishments from a downtown core into other areas of the community
- Gaming builds an economy on the weakness of people
- Drugs are a problem with the kids

- High incidence of alcohol use x1
- Lack of industry x1
- Few mid to high paying jobs x1
- Risk taking behaviors are a concern
- Lack of caring in adults and kids about doing well, manners doing the right thing
- Lack of caring and civility
- Better law enforcement and social services
- Fractured groups somewhat territorial with often conflicting goals
- Lack community cohesiveness
- Cant come together for one cause
- Discrepancy between older generation and younger generation
- Lack of regard for our school, support for school activities
- Apathy in kids and adults
- Drugs are not more of a problem here, its maybe its just more accepted here
- Community members don't get involved in avoiding those adverse behaviors
- Perception of the effect of part time residents influence the outcomes of elections
- Police response to drug activity received no follow up – perceived that there is no back up for reported activity
- Not enough for ids to do if they are not in sports
- Disparity in incomes
- Get so wrapped up in being a tourism town, we end up with low income jobs. We lost the base industries that we forgot what made us.
- Can't grow from within unless the people here spend their money here so it can turnover in the local economy many times. Have to make the businesses here healthier.
- Bureaucratic red tape accumulated around the issues of building here
- Not enough community spirit, doesn't get together often
- Avoiding sprawl, losing rangeland to subdivisions, fit to infrastructure
- Enough budget to fully staff the planning dept.
- Bureaucratic resistance to getting anything done in this town or county
- This city, county, and region don't know what they are; don't recognize they're not agriculture anymore, so they're lost in planning.
- Used to be an agricultural community and can't rely solely on it anymore, need to be open to new types of businesses.
- People who grow up here can't find jobs sufficient to stay here as adults.
- Identity crisis: Are we a cow town, ski town, resort town, restaurant town? What do we want to grow up to be and what are we now?
- Too many low wage jobs, precarious footings for the local economy
- Average wage in Carbon County is \$9.24/hr but it's skewed by the high paying Stillwater Mine and local construction jobs
- Sprawl caused by city restrictions, i.e. view shed requirements; make it uneconomic to develop in town.
- State requirements for septic tanks, smaller lot sizes,
- Lots of locals have had to move to Roberts, Bridger, etc. for affordable housing.
- Inconsistency and contradictions of implementation of previous growth plans

- Giving the town away to whoever will pay big bucks for a property but not apparently to any goal/direction, etc., just a series of real estate sales.
- Not following the growth plan the town spent 3 years working on together
- We've been trading our work shirts for t-shirts and stuffed shirts.
- City Council and County haven't worked together consistently/effectively on implementing and enforcing the growth plan that the community developed together
- Lack of leadership, just let things happen (speaking of local government)
- Growth development
- Creating middle class jobs
- Ditto
- Ability to survive financially
- Ditto jobs
- Poor sewer
- Poor traffic movement
- Ditto
- Suitable good paying career type jobs
- Suitable workforce available to employers
- Ditto
- Lack of long-term planning for land use
- Parking is a problem
- Inability to buy necessitates locally
- Only half the county population is in the labor market with poor wages
- Requires multiple jobs to live here
- Real estate values are climbing faster than wages
- Lack of affordable housing
- Poor job market-concerned loss of character
- Resort tax is hurting the locals
- Poor marketing to small business development
- Ditto on the resort tax
- State does nothing to attract industry
- State taxation is not business-friendly
- Lack of incentives for business
- Road's paving does not extend to sidewalks – difficult to park
- Most people don't take advantage of outdoor recreation
- Bike trails are closed down
- High school building is getting old
- People don't use the recycling drop off – maybe they don't know it is there
- Lack of drama and music facilities
- Food bank needs more donations
- Gazebo in park is not really functional for concerts – not large enough and no seating for audience
- Grass doesn't grow well here
- Lame drug and alcohol education program – put money into developing places kids can keep busy

- Don't know who is on City Council
- Too many groups with good ideas, but become territorial
- Job focus is primarily service sector lower paying ( x2)
- Leadership resides outside city limits
- Too few good paying jobs x4
- Diversification of business sector away from souvenirs/restaurants
- Better cooperation between city and county government (several)
- Poor incentives lack of information to attract businesses
- Small town and a seasonal market
- No incentives to create a larger market
- Lack of infrastructure x2
- No capacity for conferences
- People work hard to make it – takes an extraordinary effort by business owners to survive need a way to stabilize the visitor flow
- Need a broader base economy
- Business park needed
- Technological infrastructure needed
- Hard to get beyond the talking stage, need better leadership to get the community focused and moving forward
- Need to gain a consensus on the community direction
- Need to expand mid level job base
- Airport development failed because a lack of communication and a failure to articulate its true need
- Need a comprehensive plan to focus development near the city
- No representation of the business community on the city council x1
- Whole lot of talk not much action
- High paying jobs won't be here until money comes to the community to pay these people. Need to increase workforce capability along with the creation of these jobs
- Can't just rely on the internet to solve ED problems
- Telecommunications infrastructure is weak
- Need marketing for high tech communication
- Lone eagles are overlooked as a viable part of the economy

## **#2 What are the major strengths/assets of your community?**

- Great community with good heart
- Cultural diversity
- God's gifts (x1)
- Great benefactors (giving \$\$\$ and talents)
- Great people (x1)
- Beautiful place to live
- Size, still small enough to keep it personal
- Creative energized individuals

- Natural spectacular setting not everyone is here for rubber tomahawks
- We have a lot of history
- One of the most spectacular places in Montana
- New families
- Our spirit
- Recreational Opportunities are abundant
- Leaders of all ages and their vision
- A lot of opportunity
- Good school system
- People can agree to disagree
- High level of volunteerism
- Diverse community
- Strong Agricultural base—keeps community grounded
- Area attracts unique people that have diverse talents
- Still reasonably affordable to come here compared to other locals
- Not an Aspen or Jackson Hole still has hominess
- High QOL (x1)
- Full fledged community
- Close enough to retail trade center to access many things ... isolated yet nearby
- Recreational opportunities are great – skiing, hiking etc.
- Open spaces
- Location is great
- Multiple opportunities for consumers – two hardware stores is an example
- Construction trades are strong which supports local businesses
- Has a master plan
- Beartooth Front gets things done ...
- Location in the mountains
- People in general are friendly
- Living in Gods country is great (local phone call)
- For the size of population, offer a lot in terms of businesses
- Yellowstone entrance
- Aesthetics, clean air, low crime
- A lot of things to do outdoors
- History of the county/ area
- Environment as a whole
- Diversity of shops
- Commitment of people (especially Hospitality) to make this a better place to live
- Desire to want to make things work
- Huge asset of retired people in time and money
- Talents of people who live here Artists, writers, sculptors, musicians. For being such a small place we have a wealth of talents
- People know about us.
- A realization exists as to a need to get together and work together and share. In doing so we can help ourselves

- Wonderful medical program good doctors
- Good hospital
- Human resources lots of professionals and many capabilities
- Area and surroundings draw amazing resources
- People who are drawn here are fiercely proud and protective of the unique character of the area
- Our most stressful day in RL is somebody else's least stressful day visiting here.
- Great diversity in restaurants ... lead in per capita
- Quality of our products ... those that do world wide sale
- Ag base which is an asset for the draw to the place (open spaces)
- Physical surroundings and recreational opportunities are great x1
- Aesthetics x1
- Extremely bright hard working people
- Diversity of the people x3
- Location relevant to Billings close but isolated
- Low crime
- Focus on children in the community lots of activities, numerous groups which look after kids
- Schools are good
- Amount of services available, car dealers, rest., hotels, etc is high for this size of community
- Resort tax is a good funder of infrastructure
- Good day care
- Fresh air
- Friendly people-helpful
- Activities bringing a lot of people
- Fourth of July rodeo
- Museums
- Wonderful environmental setting
- Recreational opportunities – people want to move to the area.
- Last best place on earth
- Business park beginnings
- Just living in Red Lodge is like living in the country
- The Pollard and other historic structures are a real asset to the community
- Our people-our elderly are an example to the young people, particularly their work ethic seems to be carrying over to the young people.
- Our diversity and disunity opens up so much more opportunities and vitality.
- Fresh air, lack of people/crowds, not bumped on the sidewalks; don't have to be careful when you drive (?)
- Smart well-rounded people moving into Red Lodge have brought a lot of ideas, sometimes returning locals sometimes new, with the resulting museum as an example.
- People do know each other and often try to welcome newcomers into the community (they're noticed instead of ignored.)
- Strong communitarian spirit here
- People come from all over to see the beauty here, the mountains, the pass, etc.
- People can make Red Lodge what they want it to be.  
 "What kind of town is this?"

“Tell me about the town where you’re from and that’s what you’ll see here.”

- Melting pot, this is the American example.
- Gave up bottled water when she moved here-water quality is so good here.
- Town recognizes new babies born here-celebratory dinner
- Meals taken to people in distress quietly and reliably
- We reach out to each other here
- People who love this community
- The retirees here are considerable donors, allowing many good things to happen.
- “Can Do” attitude here, nothing’s insurmountable and this isn’t a popularity contest here.
- Attractive area
- Events for tourists and weekenders
- Economic base that is growing, property values (tax base) is growing
- Growing support for the school
- Incredible socio economic diversity in the community that is now shifting
- Many services are available, doctors etc. lots of stores, entertainment opportunities, big town amenity – small town
- Beartooth Highway
- Educated progressive community
- Opportunity to host tournaments because of existing services
- Beautiful location
- Recreation opportunities
- Wonderful medical services
- Close to advanced car
- Great school system
- Diversity in religions and other beliefs
- Parental support of students
- Lucky to have a hospital
- Situation where People have been in a crisis and the community responds in a great way
- Very progressive school district which has people looking at the school as a place to bring their kids, high academic standards
- Ski run-there was about nothing left before it
- Blessed with the setting and the related opportunities here
- Beartooth Pass and the hundreds of thousands of Yellowstone visitors it brings
- Diverse population interested in participating
- The vitality of the downtown business district-well-maintained core of historic buildings
- Airport close to town-convenient access to town services/amenities
- Beartooth Highway is a significant attraction but has untapped potential as it’s the least used entrance to Yellowstone National Park
- Beautiful land means people want it so they can keep looking at it
- Greeted with smiles from young and old here
- Location – Beartooth Mountains
- Proximity to Billings
- Ditto location
- People

- Low crime
- No traffic lights and no traffic
- Ditto location
- Yellowstone proximity
- Friendly community
- Small town businesses
- Diversity of people – financial diversification
- Every walk of life
- Good place to raise a friendly
- Ditto friendly people
- This is a place I could get my foot in the door
- Affordable ski town
- Lots of volunteers
- For a ski town its affordable
- Ditto affordability
- Real estate prices has stabilized
- Work ethic is good locally
- Roman theater
- Mountain
- Rodeo
- Golf course
- Mountain Music festival
- Boy and Girls Club
- New Daycare
- Food bank
- Hiking, active lifestyle
- Mountain biking
- Pretty economically developed for a town our size
- Shows our town history
- Year round activities
- Youth Council
- We have an economic base that is growing
- Growing support for school
- Socio-economic diversity
- Quality of life
- Location, location, location
- People and the environment
- Good schools
- Good hospital x1
- Characters that live here
- Recreational opportunities
- Ski area is a big plus X1
- People are great, small town atmosphere
- No stoplights!

- Friendly town
- Merchants are friendly because they have time
- Hospital is a great asset, largest employer
- Beauty and potential are at our doorstep, lots of potential (x1)
- Making money is just a plus to living here
- Beartooth Highway
- Cross country skiing
- We have a real downtown and a real community
- No box stores and strip development
- Nostalgic, real downtown
- Charles Kuralt called the highway the number 1 highway
- Its nice to come to an area where we can ski and do other things
- Have a multitude of restaurants and a diversity of stores, gift shops in one community relative to size
- Proximity to Billings
- Tremendous potential to bring people here in skill positions
- Many amenities which attract businesses
- RLM marketing program is an asset

### **#3 What projects would you like to see implemented in your community in the next 2, 5, 10 or 20 years?**

- Community entrances
- Activities for youth (x1)
- Better opportunities for young people
- Place to get a quick hamburger
- Lagoon system designed for long term
- Poorly constructed school buildings
- Airport
- Create a clear and concise community vision
- Improve the look and feel of main street-recreate the historic nature
- Develop and maintain a capital improvement plan(x1)
- Concept of extension education training
- Support Beartooth All American Road
- Ski area road reconstructed
- Long range budget commitments to maintain quality staff (city)
- Vision of Community,
- Short range synergistic relocation of hospital
- Need to understand the future of northern plains communities and understand that things can go south fast
- Airport and the growth that accompanies it'
- Industry that supports maintaining jobs for our youth (mini0silicon valley)
- Trade or secondary school

- Maintain our community charm
- City and county cooperation for services pool resources
- Recreation center
- Jail
- Well developed maintained bike trail system
- Emphasis toward the prospect of meeting the needs of retirees'
- Revisit and revamp master plan – the current one has been ignored (entrances)
- Lets take action and do something
- A town that does not grow will die. We must expect growth
- Entrances be more beautiful
- Continue to support our cultural features, museum,
- Preserve our character of main street and residential districts
- Loss of interface between commercial and residential
- Bring together the various need of the community in common venues such as the school, hospital and recreation center ideas
- This is another effort ... we need to prioritize items and making sure we manage the plan so that it does happen
- Increased cooperation with county and city vision to avoid conflicts (x1)
- A community that feels like they are “in this together”
- Don't want to see “the quick” hamburger – wish to see the slow pace continue
- Better looking cemetery
- 
- Wish for the follow through of this Assessment and planning process
- Plan to maintain the Civic Center
- City doing a better job of educating people about what they are doing, the whys and the complexity of the process.
- Website for the city- county
- Strong interface among other communities in the county
- Strong Implementation of the master plan
- A cooperative effort of the county around Red Lodge by the county-city to create a common plan for the area. Subscribed to by both.
- Plans need follow through – consistent follow through
- Need an Economic Development Strategic Plan.
- Identify potential for economic growth and preservation of the community
- Small (10 employees) manufacturers recruited to the community
- Identify realistic economic growth and develop plans around those
- Look at ways to expand upon the ski areas assets and diversify that.
- Coordinated Area plan
- High density housing development to slow the 20 acre subdivision mentality
- Need to get everyone on the same page in terms of vision and planning
- Main street lighting
- More conference space for big meetings (x1)
- An integrated school/hospital/ recreation center which helps people of all ages. Brings people in the off season months

- Convention space for big arts shows
- International airport
- No federal state and local taxes
- More snowmobile related activity
- One specific goal for the next two year that everyone agrees to
- A convention center to house conventions and a way to pay for it without tax burden
- Huge marketing program over the next two years to get people here X2
- Beautification of the area (x1)
- Job creation opportunities
- Means to keep people here particularly kids
- Nice retirement home where I can still see the landscape
- Don't lose the sense (flavor), which the community has. Understand growth is going to occur and must be aware of the impact on this
- Don't let the beauty of the area be destroyed by trophy homes
- Public restroom needed badly
- Help partner with the hospital to build a new facility
- Shift in the attitudes in the community so that people embrace the concept of marketing the communities
- Four lane to Red Lodge from Billings
- School expansion problems
- School programs need to be improved
- Consolidate high schools in county
- Embrace the sense of who we are and what we want
- Leave the past in the past and look forward. Deal with past issues and recognize the change that will occur and manage for it
- Need a plan and an entity to manage it ... and stick to it
- Improve streets would improve the aesthetics of the community
- Football field (2 years) lights
- Lights for streets are badly needed
- New school
- State sales tax
- Infrastructure improvements
- An organization to pull all of these ideas together
- New hospital (x4)
- New convention center
- New school (x2)
- Take care of existing businesses
- Redo civic center
- Business park idea – settle on something to do with it (x1)
- Attitude of city fathers to change – it's hard to do business here.
- Get theatre functional
- People who believe that a business park can be more than smokestacks. It can be a great benefit to the community ... should be the priority focused.
- Improve site distance on highway 212 to improve safety.

- Cultural center to bring in a lot of people
- Treatment center for sewer which would last 50 years
- Incinerator plant for garbage instead of landfill
- Junior college for the area
- Community center for conventions
- Festival needs bolstered
- Quality infrastructure – should consider something beyond the typical systems
- Sales tax, maybe we should look at Wyoming and the things they seem to get done because of the additional money
- Need to learn the skills of compromise
- Search for consensus to build a better quality of life for the residents
- Churches here work together even more, more joint projects, resources, shared music, even guest ministers
- See more sharing of ethnic backgrounds, revitalize the Festival of Nations
- Habitat for Humanity as a project of all the church congregations-more construction time
- Domestic Violence Response Team needs to grow
- Greater commitment to funding the local school system as well as mentoring adults for every high school student.
- A viable youth program beyond what Boys & Girls Club can-incorporating faith.
- More stable, reliable jobs so people can plan.
- Eliminate Domestic Violence here
- See serious action taken to address youth drinking and drug use
- Encourage families to stay here and more generations-long projects
- Many more joint, visible projects by the religious community together.
- The churches need to be more visible in their helping/meeting the needs of the community rather than just the visibility of a building.
- Reduce the need/demand for the Food Bank since its activity shows what an extent hunger is an issue here.
- Address children at risk so well that the child welfare office is no longer needed here.
- Inviting other church groups to come up to Red Lodge for retreats, youth programs, worship
- More of the 50 person all-churches' choir performance
- New school !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! (5 years goal) Many times
- Upgraded civic and community center 2 years
- School consolidation (x several)
- Recreation center YMCA, covered pool
- Community clean up /beautification
- Develop alternative healthy activity
- Better policing of large gatherings (Harley rodeo, Fourth of July winter carnival)
- No child left behind – a lot of kids won't be able to provide the programs required which would force consolidation
- Resort tax represents an opportunity to fund a number of community projects and reduce property taxes stirring a number of really good community benefits
- Parks – needed for little kids
- More meaningful activity for youth that doesn't require a ball.

- Performing arts programs, groups to expand the offerings in the communities.
- Parking – schools and downtown
- Lights for football field
- Improve road to ski run
- Sewer & Water up to the base of the Red Lodge Mountain
- Schools and Hospital grow and/or relocate
- Develop the rest of the golf course
- A business park
- Convention Center
- Economic development full-time staffer here
- Expand airport for bigger planes, for cargo, express mail, and people-support local manufacturers
- Build lodging on Red Lodge Mtn so you can ski to the lift
- Equestrian Center
- Make downtown more friendly for pedestrians, less industrial looking
- West Bench Business Park –get infrastructure in place that'll support higher wage businesses
- Business community come together on a joint marketing program instead of all trying by themselves to draw individuals to their business
- Most modern medical facility that the town can support since the population's aging and it's a significant draw/amenity.
- Changes to draw business: taxation (state upper brackets), circulation of dollars in the community (sales tax),
- Enhance and assist the local businesses, many previous community attempts have ended up driving businesses away...
- Tourism boosts for shoulder seasons- create more events
- Get Red Lodge on the map so more think of this as a known destination
- Keep out large corporations
- Increase school funding
- Better roads
- Performing arts and convention center combination
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Veterans civic center upgraded
- Move from doing studies for economic development and do ED
- Develop business opportunities already here
- Place for food at 2 AM
- Ditto
- Get a new hospital
- Affordable housing
- Use the existing hospital site for affordable housing
- Ditto affordable housing
- Active recruitment of small business to the community
- Ditto
- Downtown renovation

- Control urban sprawl
- Encourage homeowners to build green
- Another grocery store in town
- Less resort tax but cabin tax
- High school consolidation
- Ditto
- Community college
- Need a basic clothing store
- Develop a couple of small high tech firms – eight employees
- Need some guide companies
- Great area for consulting businesses
- Get my office moved to Red Lodge
- Community needs more family activities
- Community needs more sport activities
- Need more cultural activities
- Street lamps are needed
- Need entertainment that is for youth and not just adults
- Develop sites with historical perspective
- Indoor pool, basketball, theatre
- Bike trails
- Motorcross track
- Sidewalks
- Amphitheatre
- New schools
- Lights for night skiing
- Lights at basketball court and football field
- Food available after 9:00 p.m. would be nice
- Improve school parking
- Recreation Center
- Performing arts facility
- All weather track – current facilities are unsafe
- Improve civic center of hosting tournaments
- Add trees and landscaping at Gazebo
- Shuttle to ski area
- Ski days for high school students
- City Council should visit school
- Upgraded community center
- New School
- More community group unity
- Community recreation center
- New High School
- Historic tour
- Lights on basketball court
- Non-smoking family fun center

- Performing arts center
- Expansion to the arts guild
- Amphitheatre
- Downtown refurbishing, make it look older and classic
- Outdoor activity firms
- Motorcross track
- Disco bowling
- More snowboarding and skiing competitions
- New high school
- Roller skating rink
- Arcade
- Concert Hall
- Waterslide and pool
- Family activities
- Open coal mines (Bearcreek)
- Offer more at food bank
- Fun nights (concerts)
- More activities at the Mountain (summer, night skiing)
- Develop mountain site real estate
- Better school facilities
- Hiking
- Bike Trails
- Create stronger bonds between youth and adults
- Late evening activities
- Better school facilities
- Performing arts
- Host outdoor activities (organized)
- Bike trails
- Expand Festival of Nations
- Nighttime skiing and snowboarding
- New schools
- Sidewalks and organized streets
- Lamplights
- IGA opened longer
- Gas stations opened longer
- Younger aged sports
- After school high school activities
- Performing arts theater
- High school hangout
- Disco bowling
- Place for kids under 18 after 9:00
- Better clean up in community
- Better construction
- School billboard with activities

- City billboard with activities
- No Walmarts, BK or McDonalds
- A convention center
- A community of great people who have coalesced as one x1
- High tech clean industry, telecommuting
- A group that gets together that makes things happen - take action
- 10 years laws implemented that allow business people to vote and participate in government
- Satellite facility of a college in the community
- Historic lighting
- State of the art business/ professional park (several)
- Get like minded people together to make these kinds of efforts moved forward
- Maintain the downtown character
- Expansion of winter recreation opportunities – family rec opportunities
- Parents follow their kids
- Nature Center /Coal Miners Park turned into a wintertime Geysir Park type of a local venue to draw kid's and families to the town, activates such as sledding, mini snowmobiles
- Historical society buy whole block and expand the museum complex much the way Cody has done
- Historic activity, theatre groups, gunfighters in the street
- Continued finance for an economic development program
- New hospital new
- New schools
- Space available to attract businesses
- Maintain historic character of the downtown
- Work on infill development in vacant lots
- City owns lots in town that would make good development activity
- Upstairs development on main street (X1)
- Better walking connecting the main street to the residential areas
- Lacks a front desk for people inquiring about starting a business here who could provide answers to potential businesses
- Senior citizens who have moved here is a source for linking to business that could be attracted here ... They have the connections that could make things work. Potentially bringing friends or family businesses here.
- Work to expand the lone eagle component
- A comprehensive marketing program for the community
- Seems to be support for a potential business improvement district

