

RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

for

VICTOR, MONTANA

APRIL 4th – 5th, 2005

**In partnership with
Montana Department of Commerce, Montana Economic Developers Association,
USDA/Rural Development, Montana Jobs Network, Come Home Montana,
Montana Cooperative Development Corporation, Montana Arts Council and the
people of Victor.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On behalf of the Victor Resource Team, thank you for welcoming us to your community. It soon became obvious that Victor is a unique and wonderful community. The team heard about the many strengths of your community and enjoyed learning about what makes Victor so special. Best of all, Victor is rich in good people who care deeply about the future of your community. Thank you for your hospitality, your time, and for sharing with the team the vision you have for Victor.

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

While a project of this magnitude takes many people to be successful, there are always a few key people that make it all possible. Special thanks are due the Victor Community Development Group which is a part of the Victor Civic Club for making the assessment a reality. Special thanks to Deb Essen and Angie Dobberstein. These individuals served as the champions behind the scene, making sure everything was organized and ready for the team. Thank you for your dedication and hard work.

More thanks are extended to: Victor Schools. Victor Improvement District, Victor Senior Center, Victor Historical Society, Victor Garden Club, Farmer's State Bank and Victor Highway 93 Planning Group. The tour, meals, meeting rooms, lodging and cooperation you provided were invaluable. Finally, many thanks to the individuals living in the Victor area that took the time to attend the Listening Sessions and Town Meeting. Without you, the team could not have compiled this report and made recommendations.

In addition, I applaud each and every team member that dedicated hours of work and travel in order to participate on the team: Julie Foster, Montana Jobs Network/Come Home Montana; Cinda Holt, Montana Arts Council; Philip Belangie, Montana Department of Commerce; Heather Handeland, USDA/Rural Development. Each team member's contact information is provided in the following report. Please feel free to call on any of us for additional information or support. It would be our pleasure.

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

The team will help you get started at the Project and Priorities Town Meeting to be held May 12th at 7:00pm at the Victor High School Gymnasium.

Gloria O'Rourke, Montana Economic Developers Association

PROCESS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THIS REPORT

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

The Victor Civic Club/Victor Community Development Group (contact person was Deb Essen) served as local team leaders for the project. Resource team members were selected to visit, interview citizens, business and community leaders and develop a plan of recommended action for the region. The team members were selected based on their fields of expertise that Victor officials indicated would be needed to respond to the problem areas identified.

The Resource Team interviewed over 80 people on April 4th – 5th, 2005. The notes from the community input sessions are included in this report. The team was available to listen to the following groups: Civic Groups, Churches, Volunteer Fire Department, Victor Area Businesses, Youth Grades 7 – 12 , Agriculture and Natural Resources, Infrastructure/Sewer District/law Enforcement/Health Services, Senior Citizens/Retirees, Interviews with on site business owners, Educators, Parents, and School Board Members.

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

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

A preliminary oral report and a summary of group recommendations were presented to the people of Victor the evening of April 5th.

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

A meeting is planned for May 12th, 7:00pm at the Victor High School Gymnasium to review the report with the people of Victor and to set priorities and initiate action plans.

**VICTOR RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT
VICTOR, MONTANA**

APRIL 4TH – 5TH, 2005

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VICTOR RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT
VICTOR, MONTANA
APRIL 4TH – 5TH, 2005

AGENDA AND COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION SCHEDULE

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

Monday, April 4th

4:15 – 4:30pm Team arrives in Victor. Meet at the Victor High School (turn off the highway at the Exxon station, go straight (about four blocks) until you come to a stop sign. Turn left. Go two or three blocks and the road dead ends at the football field. You will see visitor parking and Deb Essen watching for you at the school front doors.

4:30 – 6:00pm Team tours the Victor area

6:00 – 7:30pm Listening Session/Potluck Dinner- Victor High School Multipurpose Room
Focus on Civic Groups, Churches, Volunteer Fire Department

Tuesday, April 5th

All morning sessions are in the Victor HS Multipurpose Room

7:15 – 8:15am Breakfast – Listening Session with Victor Area Businesses

8:30 – 9:15am Youth Grades 7 – 12

9:30 – 10:15am Agriculture and Natural Resources Listening Session - Victor HS Multipurpose

10:15- 10:30am Team break

10:30 – 11:30am Infrastructure/Sewer District/law Enforcement/Health Services
Move to Victor Senior Center

Noon - 1:00pm Senior Citizens/Retirees (Victor Senior Center)

1:30 -3:30pm Team tours businesses

3:30 - 4:15pm Educators, Parents, School Board **VHS Multipurpose Room**

4:15 -6:30pm Team preparation for Town Hall Meeting and Dinner

7:00 - 7:30pm Presentation to the community on Highway 93 expansion plans/design and improvement plans to downtown Victor **VHS Multipurpose Room**

7:30 - 8:30pm Town Hall Meeting/ Victor Resource Team **VHS Multipurpose Room**

This community summit is organized and hosted by the Victor Community Development Group in cooperation with the Victor Civic Club, Victor Schools, Victor Improvement District, Victor Senior Center, Victor Historical Society, Victor Garden Club, Farmer's State Bank and Victor Highway 93 Planning Group.

VICTOR, MONTANA

Resource Team Assessment Report

April, 2005

REPORT BY: JULIE FOSTER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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<http://www.montana-jobs.net>

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS

ISSUE: GETTING IT DONE THROUGH COOPERATIVES

Many Victor citizens mentioned businesses they would like to see in the downtown area; a hardware store, drug store, and clothing store. Current Victor business owners told of their struggle to be in business as a sole proprietor, "everything is put on one person, advertising, manufacturing, etc."

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The risk is probably too great for a sole proprietor to start-up a hardware store, drug store, or clothing store in Victor. Potential return on investment would not offset the risk.

Cooperative developments help people band together to achieve what they can not do on their own. A co-op is a business owned and controlled by the people who use its services.

Historically cooperatives came into being during depressed, recession era times. Our current economic situation in many rural communities is reflective of harder times creating a strong environment for and a need to re-establish cooperatives as business development models.

Cooperatives differ from other businesses because they are member owned and operate for the benefit of members, rather than earn profits for investors. Margins - which is the equivalent of the word "profit" are returned to the members in the form of patronage refunds. As in other prudently operated businesses the Board will not return all the margins in this way but will keep some for education, capital improvements, and other necessary items.

The technically correct definition of a cooperative is:

A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

RESOURCES:

Montana Cooperative Development Center
PO Box 3027, Great Falls, MT 59403.

Executive Director, Cheryl MacArthur
406-268-2644 - phone
<http://www.mcdc.coop>
mcdc@mcdc.coop

Local MCDC Technical Assistant
Julie Foster
PO Box 874
Stevensville, MT 59870
406-777-7185
jmfoster@montana-jobs.net

Mission Mountain Market Cooperative Development Center, Jan Tusik / Cooperative Development Specialist / Ag Program Manager
407 Main St., Ronan, MT 406-676-5901 - phone
jt@ronan.net

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY

Young people and adults of Victor talked about apathy, lack of involvement in the community, declining membership in the museum, poor parent teacher connection.

On the positive side most agreed Victor was full of great people that would help their neighbors and participate when the community needed to come together.

ISSUE: PARTICIPATION AND VOLUNTEERISM

- "Communication Channels" in Victor and "Education" on the community of Victor.
- Positive ongoing recognition for volunteers and organizations that get things done in Victor.
- Opportunities to celebrate successes large and small.
- Well-defined exit strategies for project volunteers. Most people do not want to commit to a project until the end of time. Take care not to burn out good community volunteers.

RECOMMENDATION:

Finding the right something that will help Victor build community relationships (social capital) is like buying a pair of boots. You'll need to try several methods and see which is a good fit.

The goal is to build: Trust, Pride, Reciprocity, and Networks for sharing information.

Following are some methods other communities have used successfully.

Troubadour story, a celebration of community elders. Young people interviewed and wrote stories and histories about the town elders. A troubadour was hired to put the stories to music. This was place on a CD. A booklet with locally illustrated art was created using the interviews and stories. Positive impacts in relationships throughout the community resulted.

Create opportunities for people to get together and spread POSITIVE information.

Try a Porch Cookie Project (PCP)

PCP came from a fond childhood memory of sitting on the porch and eating cookies, drinking lemonade, and talking with friends and neighbors. The goal of PCPs is to transform such positive memories into community knowledge, which ultimately shapes the community.

The PCP also builds positive family communication, developing positive adult non-parent relationships, and building caring neighborhoods (Benson, Galbraith, & Espeland, 1998).

A PCP can be initiated in a month or less with a core group. The first step is to find individuals who have had positive "porch" experiences while growing up. If community members grew up without porches, they should draw on other positive experiences of community from their youth. This could include anything from sitting on the front stoop to playing basketball together. The best way to find people who will help is to ask people to talk about their positive experiences. This is the moment when the PCP begins and is actually the first step in the knowledge-creation process.

During a PCP, members of the core group encourage other community members to host Porch Cookie gatherings at their home, office, business, or other appropriate location. Porch Cookie gatherings' hosts invite their neighbors, friends, colleagues, or constituents over to sit on the porch, deck, or under a tree to sip lemonade, enjoy cookies, or whatever snack they choose, and talk. Questions like the following are used to stimulate the conversation.

- What are some of your best childhood memories?
- When have you felt good about living in this community?
- What was going on at that time?
- Who is your community hero?
- What's the best gift you ever received from someone in the community?

Some communities have modified the PCP and done small neighborhood BBQ's and Street Corner Meetings.

The PCP or other variations can also be used to provide a structure for neighbors to get together as a Problem Solving Event.

Several Victor groups mentioned Junk vehicles. Use a positive approach to find out why the vehicles are there. If the owner wants them removed as well contact Ravalli County as a community and ask that they be removed.

Create a recognition / reward system for celebrating successes in Victor. If the junk cars are removed reward the owner by planting flowers in their place.

RESOURCES:

Porch Cookie Project
<http://www.joe.org/joe/2002june/a2.html>

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

Montana Community Foundation
<http://www.mtcf.org/>

Better Together
<http://www.bettertogether.org/150ways.htm>

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS

There is a need to create a climate for economic development to take place in Victor.

ISSUE:

Business owners need to know what resources exist to help them improve their enterprise.

Opportunities to network with peers should be readily available.

People make economic development happen. Do all that is possible to attract outsiders, retain, and regain people.

Invitations and information should readily be available to entrepreneurs that may be thinking about business start-up ideas.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Many business resources are available both to existing and start-up companies. There are resources that will take someone all the way from the idea to implementation.

Being isolated whether by actual space or by choosing to NOT find the time to network will not create a climate for business and innovation to thrive. Find the time to network.

- * Create a local business networking group.
- * Participate in a regional organizations like the Bitterroot Valley Chamber of Commerce.
- * Find places to meet and interact with people you don't already know.

- * Create a volunteer board of mentors and coaches for local businesses. Make use of existing organizations like S.C.O.R.E. - A Bitterroot Chapter of SCORE is underway. There must be value on both the mentor / coach and entrepreneur / business side for the system to work.

- * Let those outside the community know of your assets and vision for growth. Create a brochure. Send it to all the alums on record at the high school. Place the information on Come Home Montana, in the visitor centers, in local cafes. Make sure visitors coming through town will find the information easily.

- * Employees are one of the best assets for strengthening or growing business. Make organized efforts to

get them involved and obtain their ideas for growth and improvement.

* Community support for existing business must be strong. Entrepreneurs go where the least barriers to entry exist. If the community is not supporting existing business that is a sign that it will be more difficult for them to succeed here. As a community make a decision to support local business. If a local business has prices that are too high, hours that do not fit, or poor customer service or product. Communicate that to the owner in a positive way. Invite them to a local business owner networking meeting.

RESOURCES:

Business Resources

Ravalli County Economic Development Authority
Betty Davis
375-9416
<http://www.receda.org>

Bitterroot Valley Job Service
Patti Furniss
<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/hamilton/>
406-363-1822

This place is not just about getting jobs and hires. They have an incredible array of business resources. An example is the video library. Videos can be checked out and used as a conversation catalyst for a local Victor business owners group.

Come Home Montana
<http://www.comehomemontana.org>
<http://www.montana-jobs.net>
Julie Foster | 777-7185

Montana Associated Technology Roundtables
A web site and weekly email digest that will keep you up to date on business and entrepreneurship.
<http://www.matr.net> | russ@matr.net - Russ Fletcher.

Montana World Trade Center
Gallagher Business Building, Suite 257
The University of Montana
Missoula, MT 59812-6798
<http://www.mwtc.org/>

Montana Community Development Corporation
Small Business Development Center
Steve Grover
sgrover@mtcdc.org
<http://www.mtcdc.org>

Find out what other communities are doing to create business friendly environments which includes reinventing existing businesses.

<http://boomtownusa.blogspot.com/>
[Read Wednesday, April 20, 2005 From Moo to You!]

Revitalizing Rural Communities through Agriculture
<http://www.ssu.missouri.edu/faculty/jikerd/papers/BrandonRuralRev.html>

Business Networking Group.
Meets first Thursday of the month, 4pm, Exchange Club in Hamilton. This is a Chamber Committee; it is not necessary to be a chamber member to attend. Check out the meeting format and do something similar in Victor.

Missoula SCORE
<http://www.missoulascore.org/>

Montana Manufacturing Center
<http://www.mtmanufacturingcenter.com/>

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS

Forming Cooperative Developments to help the Victor community achieve needs for businesses and services was mentioned at several of the listening sessions.

ISSUE: FORMING COOPERATIVES

Many resources available for Montanans that wish to look at the cooperative business model are listed under the topic of Business / Hardware - Drug Store. Listed here are the types of assistance that Montana Cooperative Development Center can/will provide.

RECOMMENDATION:

Montana Cooperative Development Center can provide assistance with the following list of services:

- Pre-feasibility studies to identify potential opportunities and/or markets
- Feasibility study and or business plan analysis
- Technology transfer ;V identifying the tools & resources necessary to operate profitably
- Cooperative verses other business model workshops
- Profession referrals legal or consultants.
- Legal document assistance ;V articles of incorporation & by-laws
- Assistance in obtaining start-up funds
- Membership drive assistance
- Capitalization plans
- Board member training
- Revolving loan fund training
- Specific technical assistance provided includes:
 - Meeting facilitation

Member surveys
Project planning
Grant writing assistance
Specific informational resources include:
Access to attorneys and accountants versed in the ins and outs of starting cooperatives.
Grant funder information
Cooperative member roles & responsibilities
Cooperative board member roles & responsibilities
Legal guide to incorporating in Montana
Various publications, handouts, brochures and newsletters
Industry information

Sustainable Living Systems in Corvallis is currently working with MCDC to establish a local producers cooperative in the Bitterroot. The coop will allow local producers to sell their products to local consumers. A key partner in this project is Cary Kutter and the Bitterroot Community Market. Mr. Kutter is working with the producer coop helping producers establish a store within his store, the Bitterroot Community Market.

A grant will be submitted to the Growth Through Agriculture program for a business / marketing plan. Anyone interested in cooperative developments could learn a great deal by participating in the start-up of this cooperative, and your participation would help the coop as well.

RESOURCES:

Growth Through Agriculture (GTA)
<http://agr.state.mt.us/business/GTA.asp>
GTA Program Manager
Montana Department of Agriculture
P.O. Box 200201
Helena, Montana 59620-0201
(406) 444-2402 phone
(406) 444-9442 fax

Montana Cooperative Development Center
<http://www.mcdc.coop>
Local Technical Assistant - Julie Foster, 777-7185

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY

During the High School listening session and through written comments from the Middle School we learned that young people were concerned about drug abuse that was taking place. The young people expressed a desire for a stronger focus, more time spent, with the good kids.

Adults in the community expressed concern over future volunteers and leadership in the community.

ISSUE: YOUTH AND COMMUNITY

Victor young people are a tremendous and strong source of the future leadership for your community.

The young people we met with were fantastic, well spoken, and intelligent. Several identified drugs as a problem saying they were not sure they would want to raise children in this environment.

Middle School students wanted teachers to spend more time with the “good” kids.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Community elders - get involved with the kids that want to bring about positive change. Help them get started and give them a chance to lead.

Victor young people, this is your community, over the next generation the community will be what you make of it. Take charge. You are smart people. With your leadership Victor can become an even better town than it is today.

Definitely easier said than done, however, if you move to another community that too will be what you make of it. Towns with strong leadership and people willing to help bring about positive change are those that will be desirable places to live work and raise families.

A common recommendation of community development specialists is to have young people working on local projects and with local organizations. The reason is because young people bring out the best in the adult group. Find an adult leader in your town and ask them to help you get started making Victor the town you want it to be. Everyone will benefit from this type partnership.

The first step might be getting together and discussing what you see as the perfect town. Do some research on the Internet to see if there are any communities that come close to meeting your wish list. Visit a few of those towns. Talk with them, find out how the town developed. Create a plan for the change to occur. Mix your short term and long term projects so your group and the town of Victor can be bolstered by the small success you will have along the way.

Cornerstone Leaders is a leadership development and coaching organization based in Montana. Working nationwide with businesses, individuals, students, communities and non-profit organizations we enhance leadership competencies for those striving to produce life-affirming change in the world.

RESOURCES:

Cornerstone Leaders
Cornerstone Leaders, LLC
Post Office Box 1779
Red Lodge, Montana 59068
406.446.1380 or 406.585.0991

John, the founder of Cornerstone has had some wonderful successes helping communities to bring young people into leadership within the community. Cornerstone Leaders is a leadership development and coaching organization based in Montana. Working nationwide with businesses, individuals,

students, communities and non-profit organizations we enhance leadership competencies for those striving to produce life-affirming change in the world.

<http://www.cornerstoneleaders.com/pages/1/index.htm>

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS

Community betterment and building attracting a healthy business community require good marketing.

- Why should I move to this town?
- Why should I volunteer my time for local projects?
- Why would I want to locate my business in Victor?
- Why would I want to visit Victor?

ISSUE: VICTOR’S NICHE

During the listening session when the question - "what are Victor's assets?" was asked Gloria told everyone that in every community a resource team was held people always answer "we have good people".

Great, we all need good people in our towns, so it's good to know we've all got them. The question that needs to be answered is, "what makes Victor, unique, special?". What is Victor's pitch to the world that is different than everyone else’s?

RECOMMENDATION:

Find Victor's niche in the world. What makes your town special? Don't try to be everything to everyone. Pick something that will appeal to a targeted audience, the people that you want living and working in your community, and be the best at delivering those few things.

RESOURCES:

Read "Purple Cow" by Seth Godin. A wonderful and easy read on the concepts of being remarkable. Wall Street Best Seller list.

Community Wisdom 2 by Maury Forman and Jim Mooney

<http://www.oted.wa.gov/cea/publications>

MAIN TOPIC: FACILITIES

Victor would like to build an Arts and Science Building, Civic Center, and other community facilities.

ISSUE: SCIENCE/ART BUILDING

The people recommended in this report may not be able to contribute to the physical building but they will be invaluable to the project.

RECOMMENDATION:

Media Arts in the Public Schools (MAPS) is a non-profit organization founded by Peter Rosten. Peter would be a good person to ask for ideas on the Arts / Science Building.

”Arts Without Boundaries Brings Artists to Public Schools”

Artists enlisted by the foundation are professional concert artists committed to public music education. The foundation acts as a clearing center with concert presenters and community groups wishing to have nationally and internationally known musicians work in their schools, but lacking the funds. Artist activities emphasize creativity and regionalism, community building, audience building (including concert decorum, how to listen, what to listen for), sound sculpture, composition for young people, and production of school fundraising CDs.

RESOURCES:

MAPS

Peter Rosten

PO Box 750

Darby, MT 59829

406.375.3745

prosten@earthlink.net

<http://www.mediaarts.org>

Arts Without Boundaries

Founded by Grammy-nominated composer and pianist Philip Aaberg.

Patti and Phillip Aaberg

A Montana native. His music is incredible!

<http://www.artswithoutboundaries.org/>

1 First Street East

Box 625

Chester, MT 59522

Phone: 888.329.4338

406.759.5347

Fax: 406.759.5349

Find out more about Philips music.

<http://www.sweetgrassmusic.com/>

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS

Collaboration is good. During several of the listening sessions we discussed that Victor was working on a business directory. As always it is amazing to see how many businesses there are that you would never know existed without such a directory. This will be a wonderful resource for locals and visitors.

Victor Main Street Association was working on several projects that will be highly visible.

ISSUE:

In the Bitterroot Valley there are three Main Street Associations, Stevensville, Darby, and Victor.

There are many printing projects that go on in the valley. The Bitterroot Chamber of Commerce is probably one of the largest "print" consumers in the valley.

Guest speakers are brought in to talk with the individual organizations.

Insurance for boards is purchased.

Other supplies and software are needed.

These are just a few examples of what organizations purchase and use separately.

RECOMMENDATION:

Collaborate.

Main Street Associations could team up to bring in guest speakers. Depending on the projects that are underway in each community working together on portions of them could really enhance the project as well as help the budget.

What if a majority of the print jobs, such as the directory, were combined and then sent out to bid?
The Chamber would be a great place to begin researching potential savings in this area.

More and better communication and collaboration will help all the organizations to be more sustainable when budgets are very hard to meet.
What overhead could be reduced?

RESOURCES:

Leadership in each of the Main Street Organizations and the Bitterroot Valley Chamber could get together for a discussion and discovery meeting on where they might be able to save or have greater opportunity through working together

REPORT BY: HEATHER HANDELAND

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INTRODUCTION:

Thank you so much, Victor. I am overwhelmed by the generosity and kindness you showed the team and me while we were in your great little town. This is an exciting time for Victor and I look forward to seeing you meet the challenges and goals you set for yourselves!

The residents of Victor amazed me by their dedication to volunteering, organizing, and their overall deep commitment to maintain a united community and plan the future of Victor while keeping the small-town feel and identity unique to their town.

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY

ISSUE: UNITED AND ACTIVE COMMUNITY

During our listening sessions, we often heard comments about how everyone liked living in Victor because it had a small-town feel and everyone knows everyone. However, there was concern that in the current climate of expansion, that feeling could be lost.

There were many comments about the roles of leadership that would be guiding the town through this growth.

Also, there was concern of the over-lap of volunteers in the various clubs and associations and how to engage the next generation of volunteers and members of the community

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES:

I recommend determining which local organization would best be fit to be the town's core administrating committee. This committee could coordinate and delegate projects to other civic organizations to meet Victor's identified needs. The committee would organize public meetings for input and feedback on existing or proposed projects.

The assessment team also discovered a great resource in the students of Victor's school. The core committee can use these bright students to create a webpage for the town. It could have updates on projects, information on proposed projects and other community news and calendar events. This would be in accordance with a monthly paper newsletter. Everyone would be informed regardless of the manner in which citizens prefer to receive the information.

This also realizes the identified need of more and future volunteers who will become involved in the community. Bringing Victor's youth into these community organizations will bring many benefits to all residents of Victor. A recent article, "Youth-Led Community Building: Promising Practices from Two

Communities using Community-Based Service-Learning,” describes the benefits of engaging youth in the community:

“Successful community building also involves developing local leaders who are able to gain self-understanding, as well as facilitation and community-building skills (Mattesich & Monsey, 1997). As residents learn leadership skills, their ability to lift their voices for the common good is enhanced. In Oxford Hills and Upton, youth were trained in relevant skills, including leading and facilitating discussions, public speaking, problem solving, conflict resolution, and community event planning. Youth also learned to routinely assess their strengths, identify areas for improvement, and to give and take constructive criticism from teammates. In particular, youth learned to recognize the difference between their personal wants and needs, and those of the community. This was important because the community-building work necessitated that youth lead the community, which meant including diverse groups and voices of youth and adults, and helping them come to consensus in decisions.”

The article concludes with:

“Looking across the promising practices, it is interesting to note similarity to ones emerging from the research by the Search Institute about assets that youth need for positive development (Benson, 1997). These include support from the community, empowerment, and commitment to learning, and engagement in planning and decision-making. The experience of the service-learning teams in this demonstration expands the Search Institute findings by highlighting that youth cannot only benefit from such practices, but can themselves follow the practices to promote positive community building.”

[Camino, Linda (2005). Youth-Led Community Building: Promising Practices from Two Communities using Community-Based Service-Learning. Journal of Extension (On-Line), 43(1). Available at: <http://www.joe.org/joe/2005february/a2.shtml>]

Funding is available for this program. Please see the resource section.

With these tools the core committee would keep its goals closely aligned with the desires of the general public and this paralleling would maintain the small-town feel many people hold dear about Victor.

MORE RESOURCES:

A Few of the Many Available Resources:

Learn and Serve

The National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 expanded funding for service-learning programs, creating the Learn and Serve America program. The Learn and Serve program is divided into school and community-based divisions. CBSL is operated through community organizations, not schools.

<http://www.learnandserve.org/>

Bitterroot RC & D

The RC&D program is based on the belief that our local citizens, with coordinated assistance provided through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, could successfully develop and carry out an action-oriented

plan for social, economic and environmental betterment of their communities.

1709 N. First Street
Hamilton, MT 59840-3112
406-363-5450
<http://www.bitterrootrcd.org/>

The Community Leadership Association
A non-profit organization, founded in 1979, is dedicated to nurturing leadership in communities throughout the United States and internationally.
<http://www.communityleadership.org>

Leadership for a Changing World
This program seeks to recognize, strengthen and support leaders and to highlight the importance of community leadership in improving people's lives. The program seeks to confirm that resourceful leaders are bringing about positive change in virtually every community. Together with these leaders, Leadership for a Changing World hopes to facilitate a new dialogue about community leadership, one that encourages others to appreciate that leadership comes in many forms and from many different communities.
<http://leadershipforchange.org>

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation
A nonprofit organization whose mission is to apply knowledge to solve the problems of people. Its founder W.K. Kellogg, the cereal industry pioneer, established the Foundation in 1930. Since its beginning the Foundation has continuously focused on building the capacity of individuals, communities, and institutions to solve their own problems.
<http://www.wkkf.org>

MACo
Montana Association of Counties. This association enhances the public service mission of counties by promoting integrity and providing proactive leadership while acknowledging and respecting Montana's diversity.
<http://maco.cog.mt.us>

Rural Development has also prepared an exhaustive resource directory to improve lines of communication and networking opportunities between agencies, organizations and others working in the fields of economic and community development in Montana. In an effort to keep from overwhelming the reader, I have included the website only for this directory.

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt/Resource/Montana%20Resource%20Directory.htm>



MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS AND JOBS

ISSUE: BUSINESS POTENTIAL

Victor has a vibrant business and cooperative community. The range of goods and services offered now is impressive. It also has a high school with a very bright and motivated body of students, which will soon move into the workforce and become the next business/cooperative owners/members. There is so much potential between the already lively economic environment and the hard-working people who reside in Victor.

The most common issues discussed were how to create new businesses/cooperatives adding more jobs to Victor and to organize present businesses/cooperatives to build a stronger sense of economic community.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Victor has the drive to grow and nurture its businesses and cooperatives. It has farmers and ranchers already interested in forming cooperatives but need the know-how and know-where for the resources that are available to them. The business owners of Victor want to work together to build a directory and generate more communication and support between each other. I recommend both of these groups create a committee of 4-6 people which would act as a steering committee for the co-ops and businesses.

The cooperatives committee would be a resource for technical assistance on how to form new co-ops or improve operations of existing cooperatives. It could also explore and research the numerous resources available for loans and grants on a continuing basis. Similarly, the business committee would evaluate what type of businesses could succeed in Victor, how to start them, and also be a resource for funding. Both committees could talk to each other since they are so closely related and possibly collaborate on all-inclusive directory.

This leads to the other common issue that arose during our listening sessions, the need for a directory. With a directory, the residents of Victor would know what was available locally and where, while other cooperatives/businesses would be aware of each other and be able to communicate more effectively to organize and work together. The students of the high school would be an excellent resource for this job. They are very adept with computers and could create web pages with any desired economic information to share on the internet. Aside from opening Victor's markets to the world, the other benefit of this is the early involvement of Victor's young people in the economy. This would further a mentoring relationship between the economic community and the youth. It will also open young people's minds to the opportunities in the cooperatives and businesses in Victor which may influence them to remain and succeed as part of the community. I have included pertinent information regarding early involvement of youth in the community in the previous Community section.

RESOURCES:

There are vast resources for new businesses and cooperatives available for start-ups as well as resources for existing business and co-ops. Rural Development has assistance programs for both rural businesses and cooperatives. The committees can analyze these programs and utilize them as necessary. These programs include:

Guaranteed loans for business development and expansion, loans to nonprofit development

organizations, grants for technical assistance and revolving loan funds to small emerging private businesses, grants for nonprofit corporations and higher education institutions, assistance to cooperative businesses, planning grants for nonprofit development corporations or public bodies.

John D. Guthmiller
Program Director
900 Technology Blvd, Suite B
PO Box 850
Bozeman, MT 59771
406-585-2549

Again, Rural Development has also prepared an exhaustive resource directory to improve lines of communication and networking opportunities between agencies, organizations and others working in the fields of economic and community development in Montana.

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt/Resource/Montana%20Resource%20Directory.htm>

Other resources:

MCDC/SBDC

Their mission is to work with people and communities that want to prosper, offering financing and business development services that create income opportunities for all members of our community.

110 East Broadway, Second Floor
Missoula, MT 59802
406-728-9234
Toll Free 888-745-5601
mcdc@mtcdc.org

RCEDA Programs

Ravalli County Economic Development Authority provides a variety of programs aimed at improving and enhancing Ravalli County's economic and business climate. Working closely with private business, county government, state agencies, and federal and private programs, the RCEDA assists start-up and existing businesses with the technical and financial assistance necessary for mutual success.

Relationships with all groups from Ravalli County, the Bitterroot Valley Chamber of Commerce, and other local organizations provide a springboard to help Ravalli County develop to the fullest potential.

Betty Davis
Executive Director
105 East Main
Hamilton, MT 59840
406-375-9416
<http://www.rceda.org>

Bitterroot RC & D

The RC&D program is based on the belief that our local citizens, with coordinated assistance provided

through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, could successfully develop and carry out an action-oriented plan for social, economic and environmental betterment of their communities.

1709 N. First Street
Hamilton, MT 59840-3112
406-363-5450
<http://www.bitterrootred.org>

MAIN TOPIC: INFRASTRUCTURE

ISSUE: WASTEWATER AND SEWER

It is my understanding the sewer demands immediate attention. We listened to many citizens discuss the growth of Victor and the issues associated with that growth. The sewer and water system came up the most frequently.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

I recommend the core committee research and attain technical assistance on the sewer and water issues. Numerous organizations specialize in these kinds of problems. It would be helpful to the committee to understand all of Victor's options. Also, it could be helpful to research other communities who have experienced similar problems and see how they were resolved. A neutral third party could open up Victor's options with some creative solutions.

RESOURCES:

Rural Development's Community Programs (CP) specializes in water and waste disposal projects. The purpose of the CP Water and Environmental Program is to develop water and wastewater disposal (including solid waste disposal and storm drainage) systems in rural areas and towns. CP also provides technical assistance.

Chris Mullaney
CP Specialist
3550 Mullan Road, Suite 106
Missoula, MT 59808-5125
406-829-3395 Ext. 107
http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt/RUS/water_and_environmental_program.htm

AWWA

The American Water Works Association is an international nonprofit scientific and educational society dedicated to the improvement of drinking water quality and supply.
<http://www.awwa.org>

Montana Water Center

This site provides information on and access to Montana programs, databases, regulations, testing, and technical assistance for a variety of water and wastewater systems.
<http://water.montana.edu>

DEQ
Mark Smith
Section Manager(Water)
Todd Teegarden
Section Manager(Wastewater)
1520 E. 6th Avenue
PO Box 20901
Helena, MT 59620-0901
406-444-5325
406-444-5324

DOC
Jim Edgcomb
TSEP Manager
PO Box 200126
Helena, MT 59620-0523
406-841-2785

MAIN TOPIC: HOUSING

ISSUE: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Affordable housing also came up as a concern throughout the Victor Listening Sessions.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES:

On an individual level, people can apply for financial assistance through Rural Development. It offers affordable housing through its Guaranteed, Leveraged, and Direct loan programs. It also offers affordable multi-family housing.

Chris VanRonk
Area Director
3550 Mullan Road, Suite 106
Missoula, MT 59808-5125
406-829-3395, ext. 4
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt/RHS/rhs.htm>

Other resources:

Montana Department of Commerce
Housing Division
Bruce Brendal
Division Administrator

PO Box 200528
Helena, MT 59620-0528
406-841-2844
http://www.commerce.state.mt.us/Housing/Hous_Programs.asp

Bitterroot RC & D
1709 N. First Street
Hamilton, MT 59840-3112
406-363-5450
<http://www.bitterrootrcd.org>

Please also refer to Rural Development's exhaustive resource directory.

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt/Resource/Montana%20Resource%20Directory.htm>

MAIN TOPIC: FACILITIES

I really enjoyed the tour of the school. The new heating system could be the model for Victor's future, inventive thinking but still practical. I was emboldened by the community's overall great support for the school facilities and its expansion.

ISSUE: COMMUNITY CENTER AND LIBRARY EXPANSION

We heard many ideas about and saw interest in building a community center or a multi-use center. Many people desired a community center used for multiple purposes. These include youth activities, theatre, adult education, or simply a meeting place. There was also some interest in creating a public library or expanding the current school library and granting access to the public.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

I recommend using the core committee to identify the needs of the community and decide what action to take to make it a reality. If they determine Victor needs a multi-use center they can research and coordinate applications for loans and grants to make it feasible for the community. The same is true for an expanded library. Updates and information would be included in the community newsletter.

RESOURCES:

Rural Development has grant and loan funds for this purpose. The Community Facility loan programs are for constructing, enlarging, or otherwise improving community facilities providing essential services in rural areas.

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CP Specialist
3550 Mullan Road, Suite 106
Missoula, MT 59808-5125
406-829-3395 Ext. 107
http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt/RUS/water_and_environmental_program.htm

Community Development Division
Dave Cole
Division Administrator
PO Box 200523
Helena, MT 59620-0523
406-841-2772
http://comdev.mt.gov/CDD_CDBG_FC.asp

Please also refer to Rural Development's exhaustive resource directory.

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt/Resource/Montana%20Resource%20Directory.htm>

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http: www.nxlevelmontana.org

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY

ISSUE: COMMUNITY IDENTITY

At the beginning of the 21st Century the citizens of Victor struggle with both the identity of their community and its future as a community.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES:

There is a strong core of people who picture Victor as their home. This includes “old timers” who settled the area starting in the late 19th Century, community members who have settled in the area in the past twenty years or so, and new immigrants (“comers”) who have more recently made the Victor area their home.

Victor’s strengths (economists call them amenities) are many:

- The magnificent beauty of its location in Western Montana astride the Bitterroots, both the mountains and river.
- The accessibility to Missoula and east-west trade on I-90 as well as the north-south trade corridor skirting the western side of the Continental Divide.
- A mild climate, both winter and summer, that attracts an increasingly recreational minded young adults and retirees.
- Part of the “inshore” as opposed to the “offshore” of the economy of the United States that is creating a wave of growth in Ravalli County (44.2%+ in population from 1990-2000) and the other counties of Western Montana centered on the regional economic center of Missoula.

The core of Victor’s identity is not solid—each person and group we interviewed had a different understanding of what Victor was, is, and will be in the future. Each of these individual “currents” and “streams” made up a kind of “river of identities” that is Victor. And this “identity river” much like the Bitterroot River that has often shaped the community moves forward at its own rate and reflects something that may be very different from the perspective of any one individual.

The strongest components of this “identity river” include but are not limited to the following:

- The Victor school system especially its administration, teachers, parents and students and its strong relationship with the business community that is providing economic support to its infrastructure.

- The landowners of the region—especially those who continue “a way of life” as exhibited by Scott Hackett’s small beef operation and the Dairy operation on the north end of the township
- The “civic” involvement of the local citizens ranging including but not limited to the garden club, the museum, the civic club, the churches, the volunteers at the Victor Park, the members of the Victor Improvement District, emergency services, and, well you name. These citizens are made up of new “comers”, “old timers,” the frustrated, the optimistic; however, as a group, they reflect “the identity of the Victor Community.”
- A sense of identity that seemed to be shared by most--including both the old and the new-- that is skeptical of change, nervous about too much government and highly individualistic. At the same time this sense of identity is aware to varying degrees that the community is not an isolate—but rather exists within a region, and also a world, that does not have boundaries based on location.

Final Recommendation: Continue what you are doing. Enjoy.

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY

ISSUES: LEADERSHIP, VOLUNTEERISM, CIVIC CLUB, FUTURE VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP

Victor is not an incorporated community and as a result of this void in formal leadership the community has relied—for generations—on informal arrangements to provide leadership. As a result a strong current of volunteerism exists in the community as evidenced by the Civic Club.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES:

- Continue what works. Keep adding new blood to your organizations—especially youth. Work together—be thoughtful and creative. Be proactive on how you can involve younger members and youth.
- Have the Civic Club do a needs assessment regarding “incorporation” of some formal systems to complement the informal. What have other unincorporated communities done to grow without adding an additional layer of “government” or “rules?”
- If there is a need for new “rules” or “additional structure” set them up as time limited organizations with “sunset” clauses.
- Victor is not an island. Develop relationships where shared goals exist with other communities in the valley.

MAIN TOPIC: INFRASTRUCTURE

MAIN ISSUE: FINDING RESOURCES

Every community struggles with infrastructure issues. To address these kinds of problems, government, at the Federal, State and local level, has created systems of support through professional advice and grants. It seems a maze to the uninitiated and it is not for the timid to embark on bringing these resources to bear on the local infrastructure problems of Victor and the township.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES:

- Recommendation One: Find a professional grant writer who works in this grant arena. Create the administrative (if they do not currently exist) to manage the grants/or contract for management/or contract with the county. Review the credentials and successes of those you hire.
- Recommendation Two: Find a local “volunteer” or “volunteers” to figure out the maze. Choose wisely: Good communication skills, good listening skills, and persuasive. Choose someone with access. (Ask the Farmers State Bank to provide a “volunteer.”)
- Recommendation Three: Build coalitions. The goal is to build amenities—with infrastructure one amenity doesn’t make it you need them all—water, sewer, streets, sidewalks.
- Recommendation Four: Visit the MEDA (Montana Economic Developers Association), www.medamembers.org. Click on Resource Teams in the upper right hand corner. Click on the Resource Team Report for Darby. The Darby report contains some very specific resources available to assist with updating infrastructure including affordable housing.

MAIN TOPIC: INFRASTRUCTURE

ISSUE: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

There are a number of 800-pound gorillas that affect the Victor Township and this is one of them. It will not go away—and the problem will only grow. In some respects the community already has affordable housing—they are called trailers. Affordable housing is about the future. The cost of residential housing in Missoula last year grew at the rate of 16.2 percent. A home in 1991 bought for \$67,500 in 1990 sold this year for \$330,000. In our interviews with class leaders—most of them wanted to leave Victor—(nothing to do—no opportunity) which is pretty common for most kids. However, unless there is an affordable housing for them when they return—they can’t return. The affordable housing issue is regional. Western Montana is on the map—it will continue to grow at rates similar to those of the last fifteen years—unless there is some kind of major economic disruption. Western Montana, centered on Missoula, is one of the many communities/regions that people want to live. These communities are found on the “third coast” the Western side of the Rocky Mountains from Canada to Mexico. They include great vista, less population then coastal and Midwestern cities, access to education, and access to a diversity of goods and services.

In Western Montana “more families are competing or a limited supply of affordable housing. The price is going up faster than the wages of working families. The number of working families paying more than half of their income on housing (both renting and owning) increased 76 percent from 1997 to 2003.

By 2003 this was a total of 4.2 million households. (2.5 owners/1.8 renters). (Source: Center for Housing Policy).

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES:

- Contract with professional to develop affordable housing using best practices obtained in other communities.
- Use local expertise to assist including possible “volunteer” from the bank.
- Work with other valley communities to develop regional approach to issue (and generate mass).

MAIN TOPIC: FACILITIES

ISSUE: ARTS AND SCIENCE BUILDING, LIBRARY, MULTI-USE CENTER

For the most part the discussion centered around the issue of the new Arts and Science Building; the library with (possible public access) and a multi-use center that includes a youth center.

RECOMMENDATION AND RESOURCES:

Be comprehensive. Be thoughtful about your need for new facilities. Assume you may have the funding for only one of the above. Develop leadership/design team that:

- o Develops focus groups to get input from students, facility, administration and community.
- o Developed open-ended design possibilities that may be able to meet all of major goals.
- o (Think in terms of the old Victor gym—not too pretty—but useful! And for how many generations?)
- o Think outside of the box—facilities use by students and by community members.

Remember those who use facilities often have the best understanding of what is needed.

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS

ISSUE: SUPPORT AND BUSINESS EDUCATION

To understand business in Victor, it is necessary to look outside the township. Business is no longer local, it is no longer regional, and it is worldwide. Every business owner has to ask himself what are the impacts of competition from outside of his business. Business is very specific. The general rules are the same; however, within the particulars of a business how the rules are prioritized and used can be dramatically different.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES:

- There is very little formal educational for small business owners or for the creative business owner—also called an entrepreneur. At the University business schools have focused on training students to be a part of corporate business. It is only in the last couple of years business schools have started to revisit their curriculums.
- Most business owners in Montana started their business because of vocational or survival reasons. Most have had no formal training.
- **Recommendation One:** The Farmers State Bank sponsors the NxLevel Entrepreneur Course. This 13-week course is designed for small business owners. It is taught by Owen Robbins at the bank and includes small business owners and professionals who attend the sessions. The course is designed for the small business owner to use the tools of business—today. The Farmer State Bank program is easily one of the top five programs in the state.
- **Recommendation Two:** Very few high school students start a business immediately after graduating from high school. Nonetheless the Victor High School has a great opportunity to design a curriculum—based on business practices—for graduating seniors. Coordinate with Farmers State Bank, have a couple of instructors take the NxLevel course, design an entrepreneur program for high school students. It will serve them later when/if they decide to start their own business. It may also serve to create jobs for youth.
- **Recommendation Three:** The NxLevel course is taught twice a year. Using graduates as a core group, develop a “business community.” The value of a “business community” is they focus on cooperation rather than competition. How can we work together to generate more revenue? It is not about having a chamber of commerce—its more about looking at the tools of business in more detail—and how they can be applied by individual members of the business community. Invite or include successful business owners—they are the ones that know the tools—they are the mentors (they also speak at NxLevel classes).
- **Recommendation Four:** Main Street development is difficult. Find out what works before you move forward. Another 800 # gorilla is that there is nothing special about the main street of Victor and even with the new highway there is nothing special about Victor. Missoula has low cost, diversity of goods and services, and for some, lots of great entertainment. If I live in other smaller communities in the valley, I will shop in those communities. If a business is to be successful on main street Victor it must:
 - Create some kind of buzz. It appears that several of the local restaurants have been successful at this.
 - Have services available outside of Victor. The Farmers State Bank and the floral business have done this.
 - Have some kind of way of bringing in revenue other than street traffic.
- **Recommendation Five:** Perhaps Victor can be a “destination” business community. Others have been successful at this. Phillipsburg is probably the best-known example with the Sapphire Gallery, which has now expanded to include several other enterprises in the community—usually rehabilitating older buildings.

MAIN TOPIC: YOUTH

ISSUE:

Two of the most enjoyable sessions were with the school facility and the students who represented the leadership of the school. It was obvious from the teacher interaction with the team and with each other that they are a great group of people who enjoy each other and their jobs. The students on the other hand—and they were out of their element—were almost depressed. They were uncertain about their futures and they were uncertain about themselves. (And certainly we have all had these feelings and fears.) However, these students live in a world that is very different than the world we grew up in—and these students know this.

Examples of their world:

- There is going to be very little manufacturing jobs in the future in the Bitterroot Valley or the United States. The current wages of an urban middle class citizen in China is 4% of his peer in the United States. For every \$10.00 earned in this country; \$.40 cents in earned in China. While the students may not know the exact numbers they know the issue.
- China graduates 40,000 engineers a year from their educational system.
- One-third of the engineers/technicians that created Silicon Valley were from countries outside the United States.
- The future lies with the creative class of the world. (Engineering, high tech, biotech, software development, science, arts, media, professionals, medicine, business entrepreneurs). In 1985 this group represented 15% of the population of the United States; In 2004 it represents over 30% of the population and over 50% of income.)
- Of the 2.5 million jobs created in the United States in 2004—1.0 million of these jobs employed illegal aliens.
- Their world is not based on location—no body lives in a valley isolated from the rest of the world—we are a part of a technological revolution that spins faster and faster. (I.e time for 25% of population to obtain ownership: 35 years automobile; 22 years radio; 16 years PC; 13 years cell phone; 7 years internet. In 1992 in order to find its location an engineer on a nuclear submarine required \$1 million in equipment taking up 6 square feet of space, results obtained in 15 minutes and location accuracy in hundreds of meters. Today a GIS device that costs \$300 can have instant accuracy within 20 meters.
- In the United States we are once again they are facing a nation with class divided between the haves and the have not on a scale that has not been seen since the social programs on the 1930s when President Roosevelt created the New Deal.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES:

- It's not just about facilities; it's about what is being taught in schools.
- Teach and practice continuous learning.
- Give students the freedom to be creative.
- Support programs that allow students to grow.
- Support an environment that gives students permission to fail.

The good news. The Bitterroot Valley (Victor) is part of the regional growth that is centered on Missoula (The other regional centers in Montana are Kalispell, Helena, Bozeman, Billings and Great Falls.) This and the amenities of the Bitterroot Valley and other ecosystems surrounding Missoula—really all of Western Montana—are part of the economic development that is very broad based and no longer relies on extractive industries. Highly diversified these small businesses will attract new business that will create new employment in the region. (How fast is the drain brain changing? In Bozeman, MSU statistics for 2004 grads—62% stay in Montana versus 2003—57% and 2002—51%.

Other good news. Victor is, and when the highway 93 is completed, will be even more of a bedroom community of Missoula. Missoula, has, and will continue to be, a great resource for jobs. And the University of Montana and the College of Technology a great resource for workforce training.

MAIN TOPIC: HIGHWAY 93 EXPANSION

RECOMMENDATION: Its too late...if you didn't want more people in the valley you should have reverted to rutted dirt paths. In almost every case, when new highways with greater capacity are introduced to a region—growth accelerates.

REPORT BY: CINDA HOLT

**Communications Director
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Introduction: Victor is a small town with big community pride! Lots of unique challenges and lots of potential. The level of citizen involvement was most impressive and will bode well in moving many ideas into action.

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY

ISSUES: Identity, Leadership, Volunteerism, Civic Club, Law Enforcement, Community Website

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Involve local assets in creativity endeavors.

1. Propane companies can promote a propane-based activity like a hot-air balloon festival, an exhibitor fair, or a contest to paint or camouflage propane tanks.
2. Same thing for the whole log homes industry. Engage them in an endeavor that involves the local youth in the creative aspects of the industry - designing models of homes for a display at the school. Mount a parade. Or a show and tell tour taking kids through completed homes in the area. Take the log process all the way through to that fabulous new school furnace.
3. Engaging the kids in the creative aspects of the local industries will remind them of the potential for finding interesting work in the area as an adult and maybe they all won't feel that they "have to flee."
4. The local-area artists could be convened to help design programs and participate in creating art from the related materials (propane or logs, or other local materials).
5. Somehow market Victor's high number of restaurants for such a small town. Maybe work with all the restaurants to host a street fair day of sampling staffed by volunteers in town.

RESOURCES:

All of the whole log builders in the area.
All of the ancillary businesses in the area that reap the benefits of the whole log builders' activities.
The propane companies.
The area artists and arts organization.
The Montana Arts Council (for database of artists, grant programs for community-based arts activities and Cinda as a resource).
Your students!

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It was a delight to spend time in Victor. It was wonderful to tour the area, meet local business owners, visit with your youth and get the heart of what makes Victor so special – its people.

The Victor Resource Team has done an excellent job of addressing the main topics and issues we heard about during our visit. I have only a little more to add.

OVERALL RECOMMENDATION:

Take some time to review the list of “20 CLUES TO RURAL COMMUNITY SURVIVAL” and compare each statement to current conditions in Victor. Then..get started addressing the issue you feel is most important. This is a simple way to begin making a difference in Victor.

RESOURCE:

This article is from the Heartland Center for Leadership Development, phone 402.474.7667 or view their website at <http://www.heartlandcenter.info> **(Please see next page.)**

20 CLUES TO RURAL COMMUNITY SURVIVAL

1. Evidence of Community Pride:

Successful communities are often showplaces of care, attention, history and heritage.

2. Emphasis on Quality in Business and Community Life:

People believe that something worth doing is worth doing right.

3. Willingness to Invest in the Future:

In addition to the brick-and-mortar investments, all decisions are made with an outlook on the future.

4. Participatory Approach to Community Decision Making:

Even the most powerful of opinion leaders seem to work toward building consensus.

5. Cooperative Community Spirit:

The stress is on working together toward a common goal, and the focus is on positive results.

6. Realistic Appraisal of Future Opportunities:

Successful communities have learned how to build on strengths and minimize weaknesses.

7. Awareness of Competitive Positioning:

Local loyalty is emphasized, but thriving communities know who their competitors are and position themselves accordingly.

8. Knowledge of the Physical Environment:

Relative location and available natural resources underscore decision-making.

9. Active Economic Development Program:

There is an organized, public/private approach to economic development.

10. Deliberate Transition of Power to a Younger Generation of Leaders:

People under 40 regularly hold key positions in civic and business affairs.

11. Acceptance of Women in Leadership Roles:

Women are elected officials, plant managers, and entrepreneurial developers.

12. Strong Belief in and Support for Education:

Good schools are the norm and centers of community activity.

13. Problem-Solving Approach to Providing Health Care:

Health care is considered essential, and smart strategies are in place for diverse methods of delivery.

14. Strong Multi-Generational Family Orientation:

The definition of family is broad, and activities include younger as well as older generations.

15. Strong Presence of Traditional Institutions that are Integral to Community Life:

Churches, schools and service clubs are strong influences on community development and social activities.

16. Sound and Well-Maintained Infrastructure:

Leaders work hard to maintain and improve streets, sidewalks, water systems, and sewage facilities.

17. Careful Use of Fiscal Resources:

Frugality is a way of life and expenditures are considered investments in the future.

18. Sophisticated Use of Information Resources:

Leaders access information that is beyond the knowledge base available in the community.

19. Willingness to Seek Help from the Outside:

People seek outside help for community needs, and many compete for government grants and contracts for economic and social programs.

20. Conviction that, in the Long Run, You Have to Do It Yourself:

Thriving rural communities believe their destiny is in their own hands. Making their communities good places is a pro-active assignment, and they willingly accept it.

*Reprinted from Heartland Center Leadership Development, Spring 2002 *Visions Newsletter*.

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY

ISSUE: VOLUNTEERISM, PARTICIPATION and LEADERSHIP

In Victor (as in other communities) comments are heard such as:

- * we need new members/volunteers
- * we need younger members/volunteers
- * the same people are doing all of the work
- * people are getting burned out
- * how do we get people to stop talking and start doing?

RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

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

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

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

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

RESOURCES:

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

Gloria O'Rourke

406.563.5259

gloria@medamembers.org

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY

ISSUE: INCORPORATION INFORMATION

Victor was the 29th Resource Team Assessment completed in Montana. In learning how the other 28 communities do business, some were incorporated and some were not. It appears there are pro's and con's to incorporation and non incorporation. The critical piece is that some organization, whether it is the Civic Club, a Community Council, or even the local Chamber of Commerce MUST HAVE THE RECOGNIZED AND ESTABLISHED AUTHORITY TO SPEAK FOR THE PEOPLE, and are indeed doing just that.

RECOMMENDATION:

Unincorporated communities that are struggling do not have that designated "council" to regularly and routinely speak on their town's behalf. Similarly, incorporated towns may have the bodies in place, but there is sometimes a breakdown in speaking on the town's behalf.

If the community of Victor is to remain unincorporated, there must be a strong designated and recognized group with imbedded authority to speak consistently and accurately on behalf of the population of Victor.

As other communities have wondered about the pro's and con's to incorporating, I sent a request for information across the National Rural Development Partners listserve. This is a group of economic development leaders representing most of states in the union.

Response from the University of Arizona:

Nicole Fyffe compiled *Choices for Unincorporated Communities in Arizona* as a year-long graduate research project earning her Masters in Public Administration. Nicole has organized a vast amount of information found in the Arizona Constitution, Arizona Revised Statutes, the League of Arizona Cities and Towns, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and various county offices.

Of course, Montana Code will differ from Arizona, but some of the questions and concept may be helpful to Victor. Here are some questions (taken from *Choices for Unincorporated Communities in Arizona*) for the people of Victor to ask:

Since the 1950s, many people have been choosing to live in areas outside of cities and towns. This trend has been caused by many factors, including federal housing and transportation policies and an increasingly affluent society. As a result, counties are faced with growing urbanized but unincorporated areas, and residents like you are faced with many questions.

Some common questions are:

- Do you want the types of services a city provides?
- Do you want to ensure that the taxes you pay are spent in your community?
- Do you want a local government that is closer and perhaps more responsive?
- Do you want the county to do more about growth control in your community?
- Are you concerned about your community losing its identity?
- Are you satisfied with county governance?
- Are you willing to pay more taxes for more services?

- Are you concerned that a nearby city or town will annex your community?

These questions may lead you and other community residents to consider changing the status of your community. These options include forming a new corporation, annexation, creating special districts or establishing community councils.

ARIZONA ALSO SUGGESTS:

If your community wants better representation with county, state, or regional governments but prefers not to incorporate or be annexed, **forming a community council** may be the best option. Community councils in Arizona usually have some type of elected council or board, as well as various committees, and hold regular meetings. The purpose of most of these councils is to **act as a voice for the community, represent the community’s interests at the county, state, and regional levels, and work with governments to accomplish projects in their community.** Most have limited resources and depend on volunteer time and donations, while some have membership fees. Members range from individuals, households, and businesses in the community to homeowners' associations. Some are formed by residents of the unincorporated community, while others are formed under the encouragement of county supervisors. **Some communities use community councils as a stepping stone to incorporation.** In the Town of Sahuarita and the unincorporated communities of Gold Canyon and Green Valley, the community councils researched incorporation as an option. By forming a community council first, community residents may be better able to assess the degrees of leadership and community participation that exist. Limited community identity and political immaturity are stated as reasons that a community may not be ready for incorporation.³⁹ Community councils can also provide an open forum for debates about many other issues concerning the community.

RESOURCES:

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

Do check with Montana League of Cities and Towns as to Montana law and the in’s and out’s of incorporating: <http://www.mlct.org>

MAIN TOPIC: INFRASTRUCTURE

ISSUE: THE “Z” WORD – ZONING

Zoning is a very, very sensitive issue in Montana. Zoning “done right” can be a great tool for enhancing and encouraging community growth and development.

Dave Cole is the Administrator for the Montana Department of Commerce Community Development Division. Dave has many years working in planning and all aspects of community development – and has the gray hairs to prove it! Below is a summary taken from the Broadwater County Resource Team Report as zoning became an issue regarding land around Townsend and the lake. Please take the time to read this important information:

Montana, like other Western states, has a strong tradition of respecting private property rights. As a result, many people dismiss the idea of regulating land uses through zoning, out of hand, without really understanding the protections it offers for private property owners. Zoning is not a radical idea and it’s not new. It’s been 85 years

since New York City adopted the first ordinance in 1916 to assure that people living in crowded tenements had adequate light and air and buildings were built far enough apart to discourage the spread of fire. It's now considered the standard means of implementing community land use plans all across the United States. Zoning has been thoroughly reviewed by both state and federal courts and its consistency with our state and national constitutions is well established in law.

The basic premise of zoning is that, in return for accepting limitations on the type of development allowed on his or her property, the property owner gains predictability about the types of development that can occur around them, as well as the opportunity to comment on the potential impact of proposed adjacent development before it occurs. Contrary to popular opinion, zoning does provide strong protection of property rights, including due process guarantees, such as an appeals process to a board of adjustment and provisions for court review of zoning decisions.

When the issue of property rights is raised in opposition to local zoning efforts, it is often in the context of the right of an owner of undeveloped land to develop it as he or she sees fit. There is seldom much discussion about the rights of existing homeowners or other property owners to have some protection against adjacent incompatible development that could substantially reduce the value or enjoyment of their property. For most families, the purchase of a home is the most significant investment they make. The basic appeal of zoning has always been based on the predictability and protection it can provide to property owners, and in particular, homeowners, regarding the type of development that may occur near them.

In unzoned areas, property owners have virtually no way to effectively influence the development occurring around them. Some subdivisions have covenants but these do not restrict the type of development that can take place outside the subdivision boundary. Covenants also have the drawback of requiring property owners to retain a lawyer to sue a neighbor to assure enforcement.

During hearings on proposed subdivisions, adjacent property owners often testify against the changes a subdivision may cause in their neighborhood, such as increasing the density of development or proposing a commercial use that they see as harmful to their property values or lifestyle. The public seems to be continually surprised to learn that the subdivision review process can't prevent changes in neighborhood land use or density. The issues of density and intrusion of incompatible uses into residential areas are what zoning is designed to address. It appears that more and more people are beginning to understand this.

A principal benefit of zoning is that it is proactive: the appropriate types of land use and density for an area are discussed and agreed upon by area property owners, in advance, outside the emotional debate involving any particular development. For both existing property owners and subdividers, there is predictability about the basic types of development that are considered acceptable in a particular area. Within zoned areas, the question of what land uses will be permitted and the acceptable density for the area have already been discussed by the public and formalized by the local government.

Zoning can be a very flexible tool. Communities can tailor their zoning regulations to fit their needs or desires: standards can vary from simple regulations for low density, rural areas to detailed standards for larger cities. Chouteau County, for example, has adopted a development permit system that doesn't designate land uses at all. Instead, depending upon the land use proposed, it sets minimum development standards for access to county roads, road grades, setbacks from water bodies and roads, lighting, and water supply and sewage treatment.

Across Montana, and, in particular, in counties experiencing rapid growth, we are seeing increasing interest in grass roots neighborhood planning efforts and zoning to regulate land use. It has been said that a neighborhood plan is the opposite of NIMBY: "not in my back yard". Instead, it is a way to say what you want your neighborhood to be like. Support for rural zoning is increasing for the same reasons that zoning is so common all across the country: it appeals to the basic self-interest of most property owners.

Broadwater County has already met the legal prerequisite for adopting zoning by preparing and adopting a county growth policy in conformance with Montana law. If the County Commissioners, area property owners, and affected state and federal agencies are interested in working together to develop a common vision for how the area should be developed, it could be a "win-win" for everyone involved. A plan for the area could be incorporated in the Broadwater County Growth Policy and appropriate land use controls adopted to encourage the type of development the community wants to see there.

Resources:

One resource to help prepare a neighborhood land use plan and zoning regulations is the Montana Department of Commerce, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. The CDBG program has a competition for matching grants for community planning each year in April. For further information, you can contact:

Gus Byrom, Program Manager for Housing & Public Facilities
Community Development Block Grant Program
Community Development Division
Montana Department of Commerce
301 South Park Avenue
PO Box 200523
Helena, MT 59620-0523
gbyrom@state.mt.us
(406) 841-2777
FAX 841-2771

Dave Cole, Administrator
Agency: MDOC/Community Development Div.
Address: 301 S. Park Ave.
City/State/Zip: Helena, MT 59620-2771
Phone: 406. 841-2776 Fax: 406. 841-2771
Email: dacole@state.mt.us
http://www.commerce.state.mt.us/CDD/CDD_Home.html

MAIN TOPIC: INFRASTRUCTURE

ISSUE: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

RECOMMENDATIONS:

As Victor is fairly near a Job Corps Center, I wanted to make sure you knew about a partnership through Montana Board of Housing and the Anaconda Pintlar Job Corps enter. The partnership involves training the youth to learn carpentry, construction and painting skills as they build a home from scratch and then make the home available for low income residents in this region of the state. The Job Corps produced four beautiful, well built homes per year. Perhaps a similar program could be initiated with your area Job Corp Center.

RESOURCES:

VICTOR RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT

April 4 – 5, 2005

The following comments and notes were taken throughout the Listening Sessions held in Victor.

CHALLENGES

Civic Groups, Churches, Volunteer Fire Dept.

- Junk Vehicles, need to do something about them
- Vandalism
- Ditto
- Need a dog catcher
- Apathy in the community, get community more involved
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Ditto all the above
- Need zoning
- Poor addressing system of Victor homes, is a safety issue for fires
- Ditto
- Update school facilities
- Ditto
- Ditto
- More adult education
- Need grants for the museum, museum has 10 members, past membership was 100
- Ditto to all the above
- 16 year museum participant – need room to expand, expand membership
- lack of law enforcement
- ditto
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Instill a sense of future into the community, get them involved
- A place like a theatre for people to get together, a community event
- Ditto
- Ditto on all above
- Welcoming environment for businesses, that is welcoming, allows them to improve
- Sew infrastructure
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Ditto on all above

- ❑ Business development, propane capital, restaurant capital
- ❑ Victor is not incorporated, at the mercy of the county, has more negatives than positives
- ❑ Lack of involvement from citizens, if you ask them though they will get involved, need to involve them more
- ❑ Ditto on all above
- ❑ Water and sewer
- ❑ Junk and vandalism
- ❑ Apathy of the community – too few do all of the work

VICTOR BUSINESSES – CHALLENGES

- ❑ Do not have walk in traffic – must be very diversified.
- ❑ Have to create the “come shop here” all on your own
- ❑ Not a business group to help support each other
- ❑ So spread out – don’t know what the other businesses are doing.
- ❑ Sole proprietors – everything is put on one person, advertising, manufacturing, etc.
- ❑ Chamber of Commerce does not reach us here
- ❑ Not good water/sewer infrastructure
- ❑ Need land to irrigate wastewater – so unable to go forward with sewer project
- ❑ Orphan child of the valley
- ❑ How do we bring in other people to contribute to investing in our community?
- ❑ No street traffic
- ❑ Communication between businesses as well as communication to customers

VICTOR YOUTH – CHALLENGES

- ❑ More of a retirement community
- ❑ Hard to find a job here
- ❑ Underage drinking and young adults supplying the liquor
- ❑ Too much drugs, alcohol and boredom to bring back my own kids and raise them here
- ❑ If you don’t drive, hard to get somewhere to do something fun
- ❑ So many businesses in Victor fail – not much hope of students staying and open a business

VICTOR MIDDLE SCHOOL – CHALLENGES

- ❑ Street activity, a lot of drugs, alcohol
- ❑ Nothing for little kids to do (park, events, etc.)
- ❑ Fewer kids at school = less funding
- ❑ Heat in the school
- ❑ Not enough challenges for the “smarter” kids, bored
- ❑ Parent/teacher connection is poor
- ❑ Needs to provide more stores, opportunities and business for new comers, travelers and vacationers
- ❑ Teachers need to reward and pay attention to good, responsible intelligent students more
- ❑ School is unorganized, not up to date with events
- ❑ Teacher salaries are low

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES - CHALLENGES

- ❑ Have an ag base but it is not the main source of income

- ❑ Ranching is a supplement income
- ❑ **Land is our biggest problem – so expensive you can't even grow something illegal on it :-)**
- ❑ Would love to be full time ranchers/farmers but it isn't feasible
- ❑ **Price of feed – there are more horses in the valley now than when we used horses for transportation.** Demand has raised price.
- ❑ People don't understand the day-to-day life of ranching/farming
- ❑ Traffic will sometimes stop their car and watch us farm/ranch – causing traffic hazard
- ❑ Water – getting water to cattle/hay crops a problem – everyone wants some of that water. Have to always be on the alert to protect the source. Water may go through someone's property but it doesn't mean it is their water.
- ❑ Could go to a meeting every night regarding ag issues
- ❑ Very expensive to get into unless you inherit a system
- ❑ Timber – very difficult to manage – most loggers have to drive long distances for timber
- ❑ Vandalism to timber equipment
- ❑ Lack of middle and upper income people to support products

INFRASTRUCTURE, SEWER DISTRICT, LAW ENFORCEMENT, HEALTH SERVICES - CHALLENGES

- ❑ Have too many variances going out within the sewer district with individuals that are turning Victor into a trailer park. Also within the whole township of Victor.
- ❑ No fire hydrants
- ❑ Currently at sewer capacity
- ❑ Resolution in place- no more hookups.
- ❑ Too many 25 x 100 ft lots -
- ❑ Need to go after water, too.
- ❑ Need 20 acres of land near current plant – but have no sellers at this time. In a quandary.
- ❑ When road goes thru will put another main across for irrigation
- ❑ Land is being divided around Victor because no sewer in Victor – septic systems.
- ❑ Affordable housing
- ❑ Minimum wage jobs with two people working – can't afford to purchase a house at \$150,000 but can rent a trailer on a lot.
- ❑ Hard to find people that care about the water/sewer issue
- ❑ Too few people to handle so many projects and meetings
- ❑ Meth labs – have seven busts in a two block area
- ❑ Lack of law enforcement
- ❑ Get past the ideas and get into the ACTION

SENIOR CITIZENS – CHALLENGES

- ❑ Too many lose dogs
- ❑ Growing too fast
- ❑ No health care – drive to Hamilton or Stevensville or Missoula,
- ❑ New clinic but won't take Medicare
- ❑ No Medicare- no supplement
- ❑ Businesses that people don't know about it – raise level of awareness
- ❑ Growth, density,

- ❑ Community water system needed
- ❑ Ditto
- ❑ Sewer has reached its capacity
- ❑ Ditto
- ❑ Have had two water systems in the past
- ❑ Seniors would like to see the area remain the way it is
- ❑ Cheaper energy source
- ❑ Sidewalks
- ❑ Zoning perception is that it is bad, need to think about zoning in a different light
- ❑ People with money can push through the things they want to happen

EDUCATORS/PARENTS/SCHOOL BOARD - CHALLENGES

- ❑ Need hot water in my classroom – things that are out of date (sinks, hotwater)
- ❑ Affordable housing - seems like there is either high cost or low cost
- ❑ Sidewalks – no where to walk with children but on the streets
- ❑ Need to maintain our community identify
- ❑ Culture – see more cultural activities
- ❑ Hard to get folks supportive of school when children are no longer enrolled
- ❑ Housing – ditto
- ❑ Potholes – very large; need paved roads
- ❑ Ordinance against junk
- ❑ Need a lot of clean up
- ❑ More jobs for kids in town
- ❑ Ditto on housing
- ❑ Ditto on junk
- ❑ Ditto on retirees not being supportive of school bond issues
- ❑ More businesses in Victor – we seem to be stuck where other areas are growing
- ❑ Get new comers involved
- ❑ New school facility
- ❑ Size of school prohibits us from offering advanced classes in sciences, music, arts
- ❑ May have a new Mozart but can't compete with schools with better facilities
- ❑ After school program
- ❑ Money is a big barrier – valley wide problem with the cost of living. Costs have grown more than wages. Where does new money come from?
- ❑ Lots of school absences – for appointments and activities
- ❑ Use of dump is expensive -

**VICTOR RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT
APRIL 4 – 5, 2005**

STRENGTHS AND ASSETS

Civic Groups, Churches, Volunteer Fire Dept.

- ❑ In the middle of the valley, great gathering point for the valley
- ❑ Being a small town
- ❑ The museum
- ❑ Great little park, a place that can be used as a community gathering place
- ❑ Farmers State Bank – heavily tapped as a community asset
- ❑ Ditto
- ❑ Ditto
- ❑ 120 to 180 business in Victor community
- ❑ Community business directory is underway
- ❑ Great Class C School, has raised 2/3 of what they need to toward a \$1 million goal
- ❑ A Main Street Program
- ❑ Emergency Services, have a second sub-station, volunteerism is up and down
- ❑ Ditto
- ❑ Taken down ISO ratings in community (Insurance Services of America) has reduced insurance rate in Victor
- ❑ 90% of HS grads go on to college or higher ed
- ❑ Large number of restaurants
- ❑ Community is in a growth mode, good timing for projects
- ❑ Being unincorporated
- ❑ Ditto on all above
- ❑ School green house
- ❑ Garden Club
- ❑ Ball park
- ❑ Bitterroot Mountains and Bitterroot River, would like to connect the two
- ❑ Beauty
- ❑ Ditto all above
- ❑ Unique, last community in the valley to be developed
- ❑ Log Home industry, cultural corridor
- ❑ Parks, bank,
- ❑ Emergency services, ball park,

VICTOR BUSINESSES – STRENGTHS

- ❑ Lots of little businesses – from t-shirts to designers to manufacturing
- ❑ Highway expansion will bring a stop light to Victor – people will have to slow down
- ❑ 8 acres of landscaping
- ❑ Highway expansion – drastically impact our streetscape – lighting, landscaping, trees, etc.

- ❑ Working progressively and actively with MT Dept. of Transportation
- ❑ Great restaurants
- ❑ We are a blank slate that is ready to be filled in with potential
- ❑ Victor Improvement Project group – has been working very, very hard

VICTOR YOUTH – STRENGTHS

- ❑ Small family involvement
- ❑ Fire department
- ❑ Bank
- ❑ Museum
- ❑ Merc – grocery store
- ❑ Safe House
- ❑ Cheese factory
- ❑ Nazarene church gym
- ❑ Center of Bitterroot valley – have a lot of potential
- ❑ Sports program
- ❑ Outdoor recreation
- ❑ Improvements coming from the highway expansion

VICTOR MIDDLE SCHOOL – STRENGTHS

- ❑ We live in a central area – we should use it
- ❑ Friendly and welcoming in business
- ❑ Small town everyone knows everyone
- ❑ Major advertising advantages and central location
- ❑ Log home industry is big in area
- ❑ Flexible and creative opportunities are available

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES – STRENGTHS

- ❑ Produce excellent cattle and hay
- ❑ Lifeline
- ❑ There are some young people interested in agriculture
- ❑ It is therapy for some people to be in farming/ranching – enjoy dealing with animals and the out of doors
- ❑ Open spaces – people like to see the open land and cattle/animals on the land
- ❑ Gravel pits
- ❑ There is timber to bid on – but people local are not bidding
- ❑ Private entities taking on timber cutting
- ❑ Sheep co-op – more tendency to form cooperatives

INFRASTRUCTURE, SEWER DISTRICT, LAW ENFORCEMENT, HEALTH SERVICES – STRENGTHS

- ❑ Hamilton Pub
- ❑ Bank
- ❑ Quaint community – not changed much in 50 years
- ❑ Good sense of community – rally together for a cause

- ❑ Fires of 2000 – so many people willing to help
- ❑ For as small as we are, we have a lot of volunteer effort
- ❑ Victor Civic Club has taken over a lot of community events and problems

SENIOR CITIZENS – STRENGTHS

- ❑ Good small town
- ❑ Great senior center
- ❑ Great cook
- ❑ Beautiful
- ❑ Nice cemetery
- ❑ Good sense of community, will work on the parade, the school
- ❑ Wonderful open space
- ❑ No city government
- ❑ Can work with Ravalli County to put together Victor zoning
- ❑ Zoning should be done carefully

EDUCATORS/PARENTS/SCHOOL BOARD – STRENGTHS

- ❑ The size and personality of Victor – positive and good friendships you can make
- ❑ Size – get to know almost everyone
- ❑ A core group of people that do a lot of the work
- ❑ Student teacher ratio is good
- ❑ Have a unified student group – gets along and respects people’s differences
- ❑ Community is a helpful community – if you need help, Victor is there.
- ❑ Everyone can make the team!
- ❑ Know our neighbors – very friendly and easy to meet
- ❑ Pride – staff has pride, local businesses have pride, school has pride
- ❑ You can do just about anything here – if a student expresses a desire, the staff/administration tries to assist the student to go as far as possible
- ❑ Community is supportive of the school
- ❑ Students are close to each other and have positive bonds.
- ❑ Ditto the “no one left out” team concept
- ❑ Love the small town feeling
- ❑ Ditto
- ❑ Well behaved kids
- ❑ When you walk down the street, people wave at you and are friendly
- ❑ Can combine Elementary students with Middle School and High School so mentoring takes place
- ❑ Kids don’t skip school much – they like it here
- ❑ We are posed to become an exemplary school
- ❑ Hard to fall through the cracks here
- ❑ Support from Farmer’s State Bank and local businesses – incredible fund raising support
- ❑ Students have a better opportunity to be leaders mor to succeed such a, president of the class, etc

- ❑ Adult education classes are a big plus
- ❑ Very dedicated group of teachers

**VICTOR RESOURCE TEAM ASSESMENT
APRIL 4 – 5, 2005**

PROJECTS

Civic Groups, Churches, Volunteer Fire Dept.

- ❑ Recreation Center at Victor Crossing, bike path that goes out to the Crossing, was dropped by the Highway Dept. as part of the Hwy 93 development
- ❑ Sewer Infrastructure
- ❑ New School
- ❑ Ditto
- ❑ Ditto
- ❑ Victor to have more of a say in their future
- ❑ More volunteers
- ❑ Highway Dept to replace Bitterroots that they are digging up
- ❑ Civic Club would like a Community Center
- ❑ Ditto
- ❑ Ditto on all above
- ❑ More shopping
- ❑ Farmers Coop like in Bozeman
- ❑ Road improvement
- ❑ Ditto
- ❑ Ditto
- ❑ Ditto
- ❑ Ditto
- ❑ Arts & Science complex would have a community center and library included
- ❑ Ditto – and include the museum (expand museum) need storage, archive space
- ❑ Ditto
- ❑ Ditto – and in the community building complex their would be a Chamber of Commerce, Visitor Center
- ❑ More businesses on Main St.
- ❑ School improvement, example is Malta school
- ❑ Further expansion of museum’s services, service to community as it relates to heritage and families of the valley. Museum is open in the summer. 100 visitors, has 200 people attend the Chocolate tasting in December.
- ❑ Sewer Infrastructure
- ❑ Brining people, young people in to the community so they can have a job, manufacturing company
- ❑ Something for the kids, swimming pool, theatre
- ❑ Ditto
- ❑ Co-op
- ❑ Preserve Agriculture

- ❑ Business Directory
- ❑ Obtain grant to hire a coordinator for all these project ideas so they would not have to rely on volunteers
- ❑ Ditto
- ❑ Ditto
- ❑ Reader board on the Highway (not a billboard)
- ❑ Victor Improvement Project did a project with 14 vendors and did excellent with fund raising for the Main Street project. The people that attended requested that this go on a continual basis. A place to showcase locally produced products.
- ❑ Computer and tech upgrade for museum and the BV group, too
- ❑ Main Street Redevelopment seminars for locals
- ❑ Highway reader board
- ❑ Artist cooperative
- ❑ Recreation center – Victor Crossing in coordination with the highway department – picnic area and bike path

VICTOR BUSINESSES – PROJECTS

- ❑ Business directory – continue to work with school business class to accomplish this
- ❑ Begin a marketing coop – buy group ads in the newspapers, etc.
- ❑ Have own branch of Bitterroot Chamber of Commerce
- ❑ Holiday Coop just for a month – at Christmas time in the Alpine building.
- ❑ Food coop would work well with our variety of restaurants – lean toward organic producers
- ❑ Advertise re-development loans more
- ❑ Improve communication to what \$\$\$ is available to business
- ❑ Funding to pay someone to be the economic development and business coordinator
- ❑ Need a business center or our own mini chamber.
- ❑ More viewable windows on main street that are inviting to walk by traffic
- ❑ Feasibility studies done to determine what kind of businesses would succeed in Victor
- ❑ Music/library/arts/culture/visitor center – attach it to pending Arts and Culture building
- ❑ Tap into resources and learn about them – i.e., SBDC, SBA, MT Community Development Corporation, fiber optics access, etc
- ❑ Consider a Business Improvement District – do we have to be incorporated?
- ❑ Fully map out what options/resources are available to us as an unincorporated community?

VICTOR YOUTH – PROJECTS

- ❑ Things to keep teenagers out of trouble, i.e., youth center
- ❑ Bowling alley, places for kids to gather so we don't have to drive for entertainment
- ❑ Swimming pool
- ❑ Skateboard park
- ❑ Recreation center, four wheeler area
- ❑ Youth center had pool, air hockey, foos ball, snacks,
- ❑ Get the word out about the Nazarene church gym – consider using it as the youth center
- ❑ Park improvements
- ❑ Program called ROPES – was a 21st Century Grant – had for three years and lost the funding. Employed young people.

- ❑ Be aware of the school possibly expanding in the future
- ❑ Businesses we'd like to see: Dairy Queen, a store that has a bit of everything from food to clothes – like a Big R.
- ❑ A bike path between here and Hamilton (should be coming with the Highway)
- ❑ New businesses -
- ❑ Improve museum – too small, needs advertised
- ❑ STOP the violence – bring the program to Victor (Family based program)
- ❑ Improve school
- ❑ Advertise the town and unique businesses (similar to Phillipsburg)
- ❑ A program to help kids understand business
- ❑ Teen Day – used to have businesses come and give presentations on how they do business.
- ❑ Advertise the businesses we do have!
- ❑ Students are willing to volunteer
- ❑ Optional night classes – for adults that kids could assist with
- ❑ Community web page – kids would start and maintain it
- ❑ Improve track, soccer field – have track field open for the community, too – fitness course that is outdoors

VICTOR MIDDLE SCHOOL – PROJECTS

- ❑ After school program for kids that can also provide jobs for teens
- ❑ Elementary playground could have more equipment
- ❑ More clubs providing education and interest for all kids in all grades
- ❑ Extra class activities providing education on real life work experiences
- ❑ Cheerleading for middle school students
- ❑ Summer program for youngsters (ROPES)
- ❑ Clean industry
- ❑ Make our community the area for local artisans to set up shop

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES – PROJECTS

- ❑ Explore value added ag – find your niche
- ❑ Explore recreation opportunities and hunting access
- ❑ More awareness when the Forest Service puts out a timber bid - sometimes reluctant to bid because of potential legal complications - but this is often a misperception.
- ❑ Improve communication among ag producers
- ❑ Educate the public as to water rights, water access, tree harvesting, etc.
- ❑ What will make it worthwhile for people to preserve open lands? More profitable to sell it.
- ❑ Program where people could put a conservation easement in, then review in 25 years to end or continue- you would see more people getting into it. Also – farmer doesn't need the tax break – already has a tax break.
- ❑ Investigate an animal cooperative
- ❑ Education, education, education
- ❑ Must look outside of the valley for business – can't sustain just with valley customers

INFRASTRUCTURE, SEWER DISTRICT, LAW ENFORCEMENT, HEALTH SERVICES – PROJECTS

- ❑ Stop signs, yield signs in place, involves school children, too
- ❑ Keep sense of community, even though Victor is growing

- ❑ Highway Dept. is looking to make Victor a show-piece - formed park committee main street project
- ❑ Water – look at municipal water system – can't just keep digging wells deeper – address rust bacteria problem
- ❑ Complete bike path from Hamilton to Lolo
- ❑ Victor can do zoning without being incorporated – should be a priority for Victor (we are a township)
- ❑ Planning now for district wide sewer and water system – and implement it in stages. Must look ahead as well as consider current problems.
- ❑ Enforce the state law that 25ft need to be between trailers
- ❑ Who is going to carry the ball to get the water/sewer problem addressed?
- ❑ As a result of the assessment process, form a cohesive group to move forward from here.
- ❑ Community businesses take on some liability to proved student activities
- ❑ Post infra-red cameras to diminish vandalism

SENIOR CITIZENS - PROJECTS

- ❑ Need theatre and science center built
- ❑ Fix pot holes
- ❑ More businesses on Main St. small health club, boutique clothing store, place for local artisans can showcase their art
- ❑ Hardware store
- ❑ Drug store
- ❑ What could be done on Main St. to attract more business, one entire side of the street is Farmers State Bank, what would attract people to go down there
- ❑ Video store owner did better when she moved off down town
- ❑ Not a good greasy spoon since Garfields
- ❑ Art Center, specialty stores are the way to go. Drug and hardware stores will not make it as long as people can drive to Hamilton or Missoula, competition from big box stores too great for small store to make it
- ❑ Transportation for Seniors to go shopping and to medical appointments
- ❑ Junk cars are an eyesore. There is a dismantling business as well as a junk fee collected by the county to remove the vehicles. There is a paperwork process to get the vehicle removed. May involve sanitarian.

EDUCATORS/PARENTS/SCHOOL BOARD - Projects

- ❑ Fun center or activity building for students to use after school
- ❑ Enclosed connector from the elementary school to other school
- ❑ Kids need transportation
- ❑ Is a hardware store feasible in Victor?
- ❑ Get new comers involved
- ❑ Get our after school programs back
- ❑ Safe house type area for kids or families to go to. Closest is Hamilton.
- ❑ Additional businesses are needed – tourism, hardware store
- ❑ Track and more seating
- ❑ Red phone booth type projects

- ❑ New community library
- ❑ New school!
- ❑ Art gallery or cultural
- ❑ Intramural or after school games
- ❑ YMCA association
- ❑ Establish industry in the area that would provide good paying jobs – would cut down on rotation of students
- ❑ New capital - Industry that actually creates something, not live off of someone else
- ❑ Zap collars for students! ☺
- ❑ More activities for the kids to do
- ❑ Learning lab – fully staffed place with professional that kids can go to get extra help – during the school day
- ❑ Beautification projects
- ❑ New building or library to connect the two buildings
- ❑ More businesses
- ❑ Ditto
- ❑ Community Center – or YMCA – some place for kids to meet
- ❑ Something to connect us so that those that don't work here but live here can connect
- ❑ New school – ditto
- ❑ Bring schools and communities together more - rather than being separate entities. For example, Stevensville has a Spanish teacher, we do not; perhaps our computer programs could be of use to Stevensville, etc. Need to loosen the restrictions at OPI.