

MONTANA RURAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS, INC.



Rural Resource Team Report

**Forsyth, Montana
Rosebud County
October 1, 2, & 3, 2002**

MT RDP Mission

As our Mission, the Montana Rural Development Partners, Inc. is committed to supporting locally conceived strategies to sustain, improve, and develop vital and prosperous rural Montana communities by encouraging communication, coordination, and collaboration among private, public and tribal groups.

THE MONTANA RURAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS, INC.

The Montana Rural Development Partners, Inc. is a collaborative public/private partnership that brings together six partner groups: local government, state government, federal government, tribal governments, non-profit organizations and private sector individuals and organizations.

An Executive Committee representing the six partner groups governs MT RDP, INC. The Executive Committee as well as the Partners' membership has established the following goals for the MT RDP, Inc.:

- Assist rural communities in visioning and strategic planning
- Serve as a resource for assisting communities in finding and obtaining grants for rural projects
- Serve and be recognized as a neutral forum for identification and resolution of multi-jurisdictional issues.

The Partnership seeks to assist rural Montana communities with their needs and development efforts by matching the technical and financial resources of federal, state, and local governments and the private sector with locally conceived strategies/efforts.

If you would like more information about the Montana Rural Development Partners, Inc. and how you may benefit as a member, contact:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The elements are all here for Forsyth to have a successful future. To become a growing, vibrant community takes people willing to roll up their sleeves and go to work. Once this nucleus begins to exert effort, it will begin to show some successes. Then this nucleus needs to expand to include more and more of the community until the entire community is involved. But the work is not on the big jobs; it is on small ones that can be achieved quickly. The big ones come later after Forsyth has seen the results of the smaller efforts and sees that it can accomplish things.

There is a number of short-term, accomplishable recommendations that the resource team has provided. The most important thing is to get the entire community involved in trying to find 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!

Each of you individually must decide what it is that you want to do—what kind of project you want to tackle. There are enough tasks for everyone. Each small step, every accomplishment, no matter how limited, is movement in the right direction toward achieving Forsyth's goals. It can be done! There is no problem-facing Forsyth that cannot be solved by the people living in the community. It is your choice, your decision; you can do it. The Montana Rural Development Partners, Inc. can only help you to help yourself.

On behalf of the Forsyth Resource Team, I want to thank the community and our sponsors, Mayor Dennis Kopitzke, City and County Governments, for the warm hospitality shown to us during our stay. The meals and accommodations were outstanding and certainly deserve a gold star from this team! We heard over and over in the listening sessions that Forsyth, has great people and we can certainly attest to that! Thank you very much.

We hope you will find great value in this report and remember, any team member is available for you to call to clarify or provide more information and assistance. Use these folks!

The Montana Rural Development Partners, Inc. is here to help you in any way we can.

Sincerely,

Gene Vuckovich

PROCESS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THIS REPORT

The Montana Rural Development Partners, Inc. has provided a resource team to assist the community of Forsyth, Montana in evaluating the community's assets and liabilities and in developing suggestions for improving the environment, social and economic future of Forsyth.

The City of Forsyth requested a community assessment from the Montana Rural Development Partners, Inc. Forsyth's Mayor, Dennis Kopitzke, and his staff served as the community contacts and took the lead in agenda development, logistics and publicity for the assessment. Resource team members were selected to visit, interview citizens, business and community leaders; and develop a plan of recommended action for the city. The team members were carefully selected based on their fields of expertise that Forsyth officials indicated would be needed to respond to the problem areas identified.

The Resource Team toured the city and interviewed approximately 200 people over a three-day period from October 1 - 3, 2002. The team interviewed representatives from the following segments of the Forsyth community: Agriculture, Government and Law Enforcement, Churches, Youth, Educators, Retail Businesses, Utilities, Banking and Financial Institutions, Healthcare, Civic Clubs, and Seniors. Each participant was asked to respond to three questions designed to begin communications and discussion and to serve as a basis for developing the action plan. The three questions were:

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

Upon completion of the interviews, the team met to compare notes and share comments following the three days of intense study. The team then agreed that each team member would carefully analyze the things said, synthesize what they heard with their knowledge of programs and resources, prepare their notes and suggestions, and forward these items to be combined into MT RDP's final report to Forsyth.

A preliminary oral report and a summary of group recommendations was presented to the people of Forsyth on October 3, 2002 and many of the citizens of Forsyth who participated in the interviews were in attendance.

Following the oral report, a formal written report was prepared and presented to the community of Forsyth. It was agreed that the Community would print copies or summaries for each person interviewed.

RESOURCE TEAM MEMBERS

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<p>Forsyth Team Member: Kathy Kaufman Title: Community Dev Manager Agency: USDA/RD Address: 1629 Ave. D; Bldg A #6 City/State/Zip: Billings, MT 59102 Ph: 406.657.6297 x 4 Fx: 406.657.6294 Email: Kathy.Kaufman@mtbillings.fsc.usda.gov Web: www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt</p>	<p>Forsyth Team Member: Nick Rich Title: CDBG Prog Specialist Agency: DOC/CDBG Address: P.O. Box 200505 City/State/Zip: Helena, MT 59620-505 Ph: 406.841.2735 Fx: 406.841.2731 Email: nrich@state.mt.us Web: www.commerce.state.mt.us</p>
<p>Forsyth Team Member: John Tubbs Title: Bureau Chief Agency: DNRC/Resource Dev Address: P.O. Box 201601 City/State/Zip: Helena, MT 59620-1601 Ph: 406.444.6687 Fx: 406.444.2684 Email: jtubbs@state.mt.us Web: www.dnrc.state.mt.us</p>	<p>Forsyth Team Recorder: Gloria O'Rourke Title: Deputy Director Agency: MT RDP Address: 118 E. Seventh St.; Suite 2A City/State/Zip: Anaconda, MT 59711 Ph: 406.563.5259 Fx: 406.563.5476 Email: gloria@mtrdp.org Web: www.mtrdp.org</p>

LOCAL CONTACTS/COORDINATORS

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Forsyth, MT 59327
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Forsyth Community Assessment October 1 – 3, 2002

AGENDA

Tuesday, October 1st

1:00 PM to 2:00 PM	Orientation/Organizations Meeting	City Hall
2:00 PM to 4:00 PM	Resource Team Area Tour	
6:00 PM to 8:00 PM	Team Working Supper	Rails Inn

Wednesday, October 2nd

6:30 AM to 7:30 AM	Breakfast	Bloomin' Onion
7:30 AM to 8:45 PM	Agriculture	Bloomin' Onion
9:10 AM to 10:15 AM	City/County Governments, Law Enforcement, Emergency Services	City Hall
10:20 AM to 11:25 AM	Churches, Civic Groups, Health Care, Non Profits	Hospital
11:30 AM to 12:45 PM	Lunch	Hospital
1:00 PM to 1:55 PM	Break: Review Listening Sessions	City Hall
2:10 PM to 3:15 PM	Youth – 7 th – 12 th School	High School
3:20 PM to 4:25 PM	Educators, Bankers, Financial Planners	City Hall
4:30 PM to 4:55 PM	Break: Refreshments	City Hall
5:00 PM to 6:05 PM	Econ. Development, Chamber of Com., Utilities	City Hall
6:10 PM to 7:15 PM	Business, Retail, Industry	City Hall
7:20 PM to 9:00 PM	Supper	Speedway

Thursday, October 3rd

6:30 AM to 7:30 AM	Breakfast	Rails Inn
8:00 AM to 9:05 AM	Parents, Social Services, College Students	City Hall
9:10 AM to 10:15 AM	Break	
10:20 AM to 11:25 AM	Retirement Community – Villa	Haugo Center
11:30 AM to 1:00 PM	Lunch – Senior Citizen Center	Senior Center
1:00 PM to 4:30 PM	Team Meeting Preparation	City Hall
5:00 PM to 6:30 PM	Team Working Supper	M & M
7:00 PM to ??	Resource Team Town Meeting	Auditorium

By: Kathy Kaufman
Community Development Manager
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Website: www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt/

I would like to thank the people of Forsyth and especially Mayor Dennis Kopitzke for the wonderful hospitality we received on the Forsyth Resource Team. I have traveled by Forsyth on several occasions but never realized all the great resources your community has to offer. This was a great experience for me and I definitely enjoyed my time in Forsyth.

The following report will offer some resources or suggestions raised during the listening sessions:

AGRICULTURE

There appears to be some agricultural diversity in the area with the possibility of pursuing ethanol resources, expansion of the local meat packing plant, cottage industries and value added agriculture. The community suggested forming an agricultural marketing club that could take advantage of the Internet and ways of marketing along with forming programs for the young people to get involved in agriculture. There is also the possibility for expansion of the stockyards and feedlot along with the development of your own products. The following resources can provide a variety of information in the area of agriculture issues:

Resources: Brent Poppe, Agricultural Marketing & Business Development Bureau
Montana Department of Agriculture
Livestock Building, 303 North Roberts
P. O. Box 200201
Helena, MT 59620-0201
(406) 444-2402 (www.agr.state.mt.us)

Montana State University Extension Service
336 Culbertson Hall, Montana State University
P. O. Box 172230
Bozeman, MT 59717-1752
(406) 994-1758
Website: <http://extn.msu.montana.edu/index.html>

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

There was a lot of concern on the drainage and storm sewers, streets and curbs, sidewalks and lighting for the exit ramps. The City has a long-range plan for prioritizing and fixing the concerns and doing other major projects. With the City owning adequate equipment, the labor could be done through the City/County employees. There are several State and Federal loan and grant programs available that provide financial assistance to communities to assist with both the planning process and funding for completing the projects.

Resources: Mitch Copp, Program Director
USDA Rural Development - Rural Utilities Service
P. O. Box 850
Bozeman, MT 59771
(406) 585-2529
E-Mail: Mitchel.Copp@mt.usda.gov

Treasure State Endowment Program

Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

RECREATION/TOURISM

A skateboard park, teen or activity center, safer playground equipment at some of the parks, more activities for younger generations and more community functions were expressed as a need for the community. The community may want to organize a Task Force to facilitate the development of a skateboard park along with some of the youths interested in the development of the project. I feel the teens need to be involved in the development. They can research funding opportunities and even be involved in fund-raising activities which in turn would give them an understanding of all the issues and costs involved in planning and developing a facility. The establishment of a teen club to organize youth activities may be an idea and possibly the basement of churches or community rooms could be a starting place for supervised activities

The possibility of more high school aged after school activities, preferable work oriented, could be established, such as low rate small businesses for lawn mowing, snow shoveling, etc. and target the seniors in the community.

The identification and whether the availability of Block Management in the area for hunters may also be a way to bring tourism in during hunting season. Having available maps of the specific areas and telephone numbers would be advantageous to the community if the program is available in the Forsyth area and hunters knew whom to contact.

Resources: Randy Lilge, Director of Parks and Recreation
316 North Park Avenue
Helena, MT 59623
(406) 447-8462
E-mail: rlige@ci.helena.mt.us

State of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
E-Mail: <http://fwp.state.mt.us/parks>

Victor Bjornberg
Travel Montana/Montana Department of Commerce
P. O. Box 200533
Helena, MT 59620-0533
(406) 444-4366
E-mail: victor@visitmt.com
Website: <http://travelmontana.state.mt.us>

Montana State Parks
1420 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, MT 59620
(406) 444-3750

MARKETING FORSYTH

There are currently several major events held in Forsyth and marketing the area to bring in additional tourists to visit the community was discussed. Signage both on the Interstate and in-town for places to visit need to be installed along with lighting on the exit ramps and welcoming signs. The community seems to work well together and some type of training outlining the sights and activities available in the area need to be implemented. City Hall has excellent handouts on things to do in Forsyth. This could be shared with the business owners and their employees so when tourists do stop and ask about things to do in and around the community, the employees/residents are willing and able to share this information.

A tourist information center patterned to bring tourists through town with rest rooms; picnic tables, etc. would be a good method to get information out about the community. Possibly the senior citizens could volunteer to man the center during peak hours.

Resources: SuperHost

COMMUNITY

Beautification was a major concern of the local residents. The City has a long-range plan for fixing the streets and completing other major projects. Promote and emphasize group work and public service. Possibly set up beautification events to include media coverage and maybe some type of recognition for those who participate.

Leadership fund-raising and marketing are key elements to initiating downtown improvements. Promote and initiate events that bring people to downtown.

Resources: Gus Byrom or Ann Desch
Community Development Block Grant Program
Montana Department of Commerce
1424 Ninth Avenue
Helena, MT 59620
(406) 444-2488 or (406) 444-1759

Montana Community Foundation
101 N. Last Chance Gulch
Helena, MT 59620

Rosebud County Extension Agent

LOCAL GOVERNMENT/COMMUNITY SERVICES

There is a need for childcare and expansion of career counseling and entrepreneurship training. A one-stop shop for human service offices that could include WIC, daycare, public health, etc. would be beneficial for the community.

The need for any essential community facility for rural communities has loan and grant programs available to help with economic development of these communities. There are also technical assistance grants available through State and Federal Agencies and various organizations to help assist with writing and submission of these grants.

Resources: Jim Atchison, Executive Director
SouthEastern Montana Development Corporation
P. O. Box 1935
Colstrip, MT 559323
(406) 748-2990
E-mail: southea606@earth
Website: www.semdc.org

Sue Gantz, Community Facilities Specialist
USDA Rural Development – Rural Housing Service
P. O. Box 850
Bozeman, MT 59771
(406) 585-2555
E-mail: Sue.Gantz@mt.usda.gov

HOUSING

A need for assisted living and expansion of the retirement community living was discussed along with affordable and livable rental properties and construction of new homes to purchase. A need to rehabilitate existing older homes was also a concern.

There are several loan and grant programs available for construction of new homes; purchase of existing homes; and rehabilitation of owner occupied homes and rental units. Community Facility loan and grant programs are available for rural communities and both low and guaranteed loan programs for construction of new rental units.

Resources: Kathy Kaufman, Community Development Manager
USDA Rural Development
1629 Avenue D, Building A
Billings, MT 59102
(406) 657-6297, extension 4
E-mail: Kathy.Kaufman@mtbillings.fsc.usda.gov

Sue Gantz, Community Facilities Specialist
Laura Horn, Multi-Family Housing Specialist
USDA Rural Development – Rural Housing Service
P.O. Box 850
Bozeman, MT 59771
(406) 585-2555 (Sue) and (406) 585-2559 (Laura)
E-mail: Sue.Gantz@mt.usda.gov
Laura.Horn@mt.usda.gov

Connie Onstad, Program Manager
Community Development Block Grant – HOME Program
P. O. Box 200545
Helena, MT 59620-0545
(406) 444-0092

Bob Morgan (Single Family Housing)
Matt Rude (Multi-Family Housing)
Montana Board of Housing
P. O. Box 20052
Helena, MT 59620-0528
(406) 444-3040

Fannie Mae Foundation
Mary Lou Affleck, Senior Deputy Director
Montana Partnership Office
404 N. 31st Street, Suite 220
Billings, MT 59101
(406) 259-7049
E-mail: mary_lou_affleck@fanniemae.com

Gus Byrom
CDBG for Public Facilities and Housing
P. O. Box 200523
Helena, MT 59620-0523
(406) 444-4477

JOBS AND BUSINESS

Support of existing businesses is a major concern as is customer loyalty. Stressing the importance of buying locally is critical in any community. A suggestion may be to have the high school students make buttons “I Love Forsyth” and sell at school activities/functions as a fundraiser. Then the local businesses could support this by offering a “Monthly Forsyth Community Day” where ALL local businesses could offer a 5-10% discount for local shoppers wearing their buttons on the designated day. This would need to be supported by all local businesses and would also help to establish customer loyalty.

Outreach for medical specialists to come to Forsyth on regularly scheduled days may also help to keep the residents in the community and outlying areas from traveling to Miles City and Billings to visit doctors.

Resources: John Guthmiller, Program Director
USDA Rural Development – Rural Business-Cooperative Services
P. O. Box 850
Bozeman, MT 59771
(406) 585-2549
E-mail: John.Guthmiller@mt.usda.gov

American Association of Healthcare Consultants
1926 Waukegan Road, Suite 1
Glenview, IL 60025
(847) 657-6964
E-mail: info@aahc.net
Website: <http://www.aahc.net/>

Forsyth has wonderful people and is a great location with good schools, hospital, historical buildings, museum, library, recreation, businesses, etc. The community needs to work together and support each other.

Thank you again for the wonderful time and rewarding experience.

By: John Tubbs
Resource Development Bureau Chief
Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
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Fax: 406-444-6721

Thank you for the opportunity to participate as a team member in the Forsyth Resource Assessment. I found out that Forsyth is a great community. Your community is proud and should be of all that Forsyth has to offer its residents. I see no reason that the community should be anything but optimistic about the future. Yes there are challenges, but they are outweighed by the strengths in the community from schools and hospitals to the community leaders.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:

Forsyth has tremendous assets. The schools buildings, administration and students are impressive. From ambulance to hospital to nursing home, Forsyth has a strong medical community. Two exits off of I-94, Highway 12, the railroad and access to near by airfields all are tremendous assets. The Yellowstone River and Forsyth's two river access points support current recreation and represent a great future potential to attract visitors. The historic main street businesses are a great local resource. The fairgrounds, retirement village, swimming pool, library, museum, churches, and golf set Forsyth apart from many rural Montana communities.

Community leaders are already taking the first step to build on these assets. The efforts to clean-up junk cars, lawns and buildings are beginning to show results. At several of the listening sessions the idea of improving the look of Forsyth as you exit the interstate was raised. One suggestion was the development of a visitor's center near one of the entrances to town. Another suggestion is to focus on the intersection of Front Street and 10th Avenue. Travelers often exit the freeway on to Front Street but do not cross the tracks to see downtown and all that Forsyth has to offer.

Forsyth offers an excellent place to raise a family. A strong feeling of community makes Forsyth a safe place to raise a child. Some people are moving back to raise their children. The difficulty is career employment. There is a good business base in retail, service with some manufacturing. Of course agriculture is the base. Growing existing businesses and attracting some new ones is the challenge. The community is focused on this issue. As I listened to the high school kids, I thought of all the graduates from Forsyth who have moved away and are pursuing careers across the country. The graduating class is ready to go; to leave Forsyth and face the real world. Graduates from 5, 10 or 15 years ago are the population that remembers simpler days growing up along the river. A community effort to contact these graduates and remind them of how great Forsyth is, along with a challenge to them to come back and invest in their hometown may bear fruit.

FISH WILDLIFE AND PARKS:

The two river accesses in Forsyth are valuable assets to the community. These provide great access to the Yellowstone River. My reaction when I saw the lower access was that it was good now but has great potential. Working with Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Forsyth could develop a real gem. In Helena we have Spring Meadow Lake. Spring Meadow was a gravel pit when I grew up. Today hundreds of Helenans cool off in its waters and enjoy the improved walking trail, maintained grounds, flush toilets and many picnic tables on hot summer days. It seems that with some strategic investment in the lower access site, Forsyth could develop a very appealing site that would attract visitors and the community of Forsyth.

From a tourism perspective, travelers are looking for good public access to the Yellowstone River. If you look close, you can find Forsyth's river access points. I am sure that more people would stop if there are signs at key intersections to direct people. With community services and great access, people will take advantage of the opportunity to be on the Yellowstone River. With the Lewis and Clark bicentennial upon us Montana is already seeing increased tourism associated with the trail. Forsyth's River access, if promoted, would attract some of these tourists to stop see the river where Clark floated by and visit Forsyth.

Contacts:

Doug Monger, Parks Administrator
Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks
PO Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620
Phone: 406-444-3750

Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development Coordinator
Montana Promotion Division
Department of Commerce
PO Box 200501
Helena, MT 59620
Phone: 406-444-4366

LEWIS AND CLARK BICENTENNIAL:

Captain Clark and his party (York, Charbonneau, Sacagawea, Pomp, Pvt. Bratton, Pvt. Gibson, Pvt. LaBiche, and Pvt. Shields) descended the Yellowstone River in the summer of 1806. The party of 9 was on their way back to meet Captain Lewis at the confluence of the Yellowstone and the Missouri and to proceed on to St. Louis. In 2006, the National Bicentennial Celebration of the Lewis and Clark expedition will host a signature event at Pompey's Pillar. I have copied the National Bicentennial Web Page Description of this event (<http://www.lewisandclark200.org/>).

July 25, 2006 • Pompey's Pillar, Billings, Montana

Communities along the Yellowstone River, the longest free-flowing river in the lower United States, will welcome visitors to one of America's newest National Monuments, Pompey's Pillar. This event will focus on Clark's journey down the Yellowstone and the inscription of his name on Pompey's Pillar, the only remaining physical evidence of the Lewis and Clark Expedition appearing on the trail as it did 200 years ago. Clark, showing his affection for Sacagawea's infant son, whom he called "Pomp," named this sandstone pillar at the river's edge in his honor. In commemoration of this event, a Day of Honor will be declared with visitors being greeted by a new interpretive center and activities ranging from river floats, historical reenactments, and Native American games.

Signature Event Contact:

*Mr. J. Jeffrey Dietz
2109 11th Street West
Billings, MT 59102
Phone: (402) 256-8628
E-mail: dietzjjsl@aol.com
Website: www.clarkontheyellowstone.org*

Partners

Clark on the Yellowstone, a National Signature Event occurring on July 25, 2006, is a collaborative effort. Many individuals, businesses, agencies and civic organizations will contribute to this national commemorative event. New partners are welcome and may join the activities by contacting one of the persons listed below.

*Yellowstone County Lewis and Clark
Bicentennial Commission
Jeff Dietz, Chair
dietzjjsl@aol.com*

*Yellowstone County Board of
Commissioners
Bill Kennedy, Liaison
bkennedy@co.yellowstone.mt.us*

*Jim VanArsdale, Member
National Council for the Lewis and
Clark Bicentennial
vanar@imt.net*

*Rochejhone Chapter, Lewis & Clark
Trail Heritage Foundation
Armand Lohof, President
alohof@mcn.net*

*Pompeys Pillar Historical Association
Dan Krum, President
danielk@be.quik.com*

*Bureau of Land Management
Kim Prill, Montana Lewis and Clark
Coordinator
kprill@mt.blm.gov*

*Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Doug Habermann, Regional Parks
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*Rocky Mountain College
Bruce Eberle, Dean of Continuing
Education
eberleb@rocky.edu*

Capitalize on this Signature Event. Forsyth, just one hour east of Pompey's Pillar, is on the trail, has good accommodations, community services, parks for groups of people and an excellent fairground. If done properly, the bicentennial celebration will be the introduction of many new people to a special place in America. Many will return; some may even choose to stay.

Contacts:

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E-mail: dietzjjsl@aol.com
Website: www.clarkontheyellowstone.org

Clint Blackwood, Executive Director
Montana Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Commission
PO Box 201203
Helena, MT 59620-1203
(406) 443-2109
(406) 841-4004 (fax)
cblackwood@state.mt.us

INFRASTRUCTURE:

The infrastructure issue we heard the most about is the need for a storm water system, which would allow the city to maintain streets and gutters. Storm water is an issue that has taken a back seat to providing safe drinking water and to keep sewage treatment in compliance with rules under the Clean Water Act. There are some programs that can help. Rural Development will fund storm sewer. Rural Development's programs provide both grant and loan funds. Funding levels are determined by median household income and system costs. The Pollution Control State Revolving Loan program will provide low interest loans for Storm Water Projects. The Coal Board is another source of potential grant funds for this type of project. However, budget cuts have affected the amount of funds available and future funding for the Coal Board will be an item debated in the upcoming session. The other source of grant funds I would recommend on this project would be to pursue Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) funding through the Department of Transportation.

This will be a great challenge for Forsyth. Storm water, paving and curbs will be expensive. Residents want estimates on how much it would cost so that they can make the decision based on facts. On that note, I would recommend seeking a planning grant through the Treasure State Endowment Program or the Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program. Both of these grant programs provide 50/50 project planning grants. Funds for the current biennium have already been allocated. However, on July 1, 2003 a

new allocation of funding will be available. Planning grants can defray as much as 50 percent of the planning costs. If Forsyth can't wait that long, a low interest loan (right now just over 3 percent) from the Board of Investment is available. Loans for preliminary engineering require only interest payments for 3 years while the community puts the project together. Then with construction of the project the loan is paid off either with grant funds or long-term debt. If the project does not move forward, then loan is amortized over a 10 year term.

Finally, as the City analyzes this investment keep a close eye on the plans and specification to assure access for the handicap. Handicap accessibility is a critical issue when putting in curbs and the community may want to involve experts and individuals from the community to assure this issue is thought about up front and implemented properly.

For more information about water and wastewater infrastructure you can contact one of the people below or log on to the WASACT web page at <http://www.dnrc.state.mt.us/cardd/wasact.htm> .

Contacts:

Mitch Copp
USDA Rural Development
PO Box 850
Bozeman, MT 59771

Phone: 406-841-2785
Fax: 406-841-2771

Newell Anderson, Coal Board
Department of Commerce
PO Box 200501
Helena, MT 59620
Phone: 405-841-2772
Fax: 406-841-2771

Todd Teegarden, Pollution Control
State RLF Program
Department of Enviro. Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620
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Mike Davis, CTEP Coordinator
Department of Transportation
PO Box 201001
Helena, MT 59601
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John Tubbs, Chief
Resource Development Bureau
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PO Box 2001601
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IRRIGATION:

Agriculture in rural Montana is the base of the economy. In the Yellowstone Valley irrigated agriculture provides the opportunity to grow high valued crops. Sugar Beets, potatoes, malt barley are a few of the high valued crops that are grown near Forsyth. Efforts to attract agriculture manufacturing are being forged by local entrepreneurs, economic development organizations, and state agencies. Efforts to keep the agriculture businesses we have now are also being assisted by state efforts. The Vision 2005 task force set forth a series of programs to assist local efforts to sustain and build agriculture. The goal was to double the value of agriculture by 2005. A key piece of irrigation infrastructure in the Forsyth area is the diversion dam and canal facilities of the Cartersville Irrigation District. The facility was built in 1934 and serves approximately 10,000 acres with water from the Yellowstone River. As you might expect, the eighty-year-old facility is in need of repair and replacement. The district failed to compete for a renewable resource grant to replace the Sand Creek siphon this year. We expect an improved application next cycle and for the project to compete successfully.

The diversion dam for Cartersville has been a topic of discussion for some time now. The Yellowstone River is the longest river in America that has not been dammed. Currently efforts are focused on the Intake Diversion downstream of Glendive. The Lower Yellowstone Irrigation District working with the State of Montana, Bureau of Reclamation, and American Rivers is moving forward on the replacement of the intake diversion dam. The diversion at Intake is the first barrier on the Yellowstone River that prevents fish passage. The proposed structure will be designed to allow flows to pass the diversion so fish can migrate and at the same time provide a new structure to the irrigation district so that they can withdraw needed irrigation waters. The investment will improve both the irrigation facility and the river. Once the Intake facility is completed the next barrier across the river is the Cartersville Irrigation District Divers dam at Forsyth. The opportunity exists to team with groups that want to protect the river so that needed investment in irrigation infrastructure is made affordable and the river benefits as well.

The Yellowstone River Conservation District Council is coordinating an effort to evaluate the health of the Yellowstone River and is working with “stake holders” to find solutions to a wide assortment of issues. Agencies such as the Departments of Natural Resources and Conservation, Fish Wildlife and Parks, and Agriculture from the state and Bureau of Reclamation, Army Corps of Engineers, and the U S Fish and Wildlife Service are all partners in this effort. The Council also has the Yellowstone River Forum participating in their efforts. The Forum represents several conservation-oriented groups that are focused on the health of the Yellowstone River system. Through this process, there may be opportunities for the Cartersville Irrigation District to participate in the partnership and in the end may find financial support to both upgrade the diversion facility and improve the river.

In an effort to enhance the value of irrigation, the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation has established the irrigation development program. Headquartered out of

Billings Montana, Pat Riley has already established several contacts with irrigators in the Forsyth area. A key proposal that this program has developed with the Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Districts is the Montana Natural Resources Act. This proposed federal legislation would authorize new irrigation development in Montana in the Lower Yellowstone and Lower Missouri River basins. The Act also secures low cost Pick Sloan Power for existing irrigation and planned future development. This effort will bring new investment into irrigation in Montana and will assure continued low cost hydropower be delivered to Montana irrigators. Water rights for new irrigation may be secured through the local conservation district. With a 1978 priority date, conservation districts have a substantial water right for future irrigation development along the Lower Yellowstone River. The priority date is important because it is ahead of the instream flow right held by the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. By contacting the local conservation district or the DNRC's representative in Miles City you can find out more information on these water rights.

Contacts:

Kirk Montgomery
Cartersville Irrigation District
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Forsyth MT 59327
Phone: 406-347-5472

Jerry Nypen, Manager
Lower Yellowstone Irrigation District
Mount Pleasant Road
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Barbara Yoder, Executive Director
Yellowstone River Conservation District Council
1371 Rintop Drive
Billings, MT 59105
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George Jordan
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Pat Riley, Program Manager
Irrigation Development Program
Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Airport Industrial Park

Billings, MT 59105-1978

Duane Claypool, Program Manager
Conservation District Water Reservations
Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
PO Box 276
Miles City, MT 59072

SKATE PARK:

In many of the sessions, people asked about the development of a Skate Park so that the kids have a place to gather other than the Court House or a parking lot. Some even suggested a teen center like the one in Colstrip. Helena built a skate park last year. This was after two years of discussion and at one point real contention between veterans and the city council as to the proposed location in Memorial Park. A new site was found and the City built the park. The cost of the 10,000 square foot skate park was \$150,000 (including design costs). A significant amount of the costs were paid through fund raising and a matching grant from the Turner Foundation. The Turner Foundation required participation by local teenagers as a condition of the grant. Their participation was a strong point and should be part of any plan for Forsyth. The kids we met in Forsyth have a lot of enthusiasm and want to volunteer. Talking with Carol Kirkland of the Helena Parks Department, I found out that one of the difficult tasks was to find a contractor that could form the concrete for a skate park. Since the park in Helena has opened it has been a great success. There seems to always be someone using the park and at times there are up to 50 people skate boarding and inline skating at the facility. Last winter the kids were shoveling off the concrete so they could skate. Carol said that she has received calls from around the country to find out about the park and that people who use the park think that it's a great facility. The World Wide Web has several pages devoted to skate parks two are skatepark.org and skatepark.com. Other skateboard facilities located in Montana are in Libby, Missoula, Great Falls, and Bozeman.

Contacts:

Carol Kirkland
Parks Department
City of Helena
316 N Park
Helena, MT 59623
Phone: 406-447-8463

By: Lee Boyer
Montana Department of Agriculture
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Helena, MT 59620-0201
406-444-2402
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lboyer@state.mt.us email

AGRICULTURE

There were several comments about commodities, products, processing, and value added industry. The best way to address some of these issues is to begin with a core group of people who are interested in this area, get together and do some brainstorming. Perhaps bring someone in that could facilitate the group to give them some guidance. I will try to address some of the issues separately in the following dialogue.

Value added:

Several individuals suggested industry or vertical integration of agricultural segments. Based upon the areas resources, feedlots for finishing cattle or back grounding cattle are a possibility. The individuals involved would need to come together as a group and develop a feasibility plan, find a location, as well as feed sources, water and waste water management plans.

Initial planning session:

Purpose: To bring together those individuals who are very interested in pursuing this idea. Develop a working committee to further develop the project i.e. visiting with resource groups, visiting the Custer area feedlot, visit other feedlot operators to gather information to report back to the group so all involved can decide if this is feasible or not.

Resources:

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Quality
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Kari Smith
Water Protection Bureau
Montana Dept. of Environmental

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Steve Pilcher
Executive Vice President
Montana Stockgrowers Association
420 California
Helena, MT 59601
406-442-3420
steve@mtbeef.org

Profitable/sustainable agriculture (Marketing club):

Marketing club expertise is currently available through the following organizations. They will assist you with establishing your marketing club, etc.

Steve Pilcher
Montana Stockgrowers Association
420 California
Helena, MT 59601
406-442-3420
steve@mtbeef.org

Alex Offerdahl
MarketManager Program Coordinator
Great Falls
(406) 761-4596
E-mail: bkdennis@mgsa.org

Electrical costs for irrigation:

Pick Sloan Act is an option (see John Tubbs)

Work Comp issues:

I would suggest a group of local producers work with their legislators to see what can be done to change those rates. Now is the time since the session starts in January

Keeping young people in farming and ranching:

There are several beginning farmer/rancher loan programs available from the following agencies.

Beginning Farmer/Rancher Loan Program
Lee Boyer

Farm Service Agency
Rosebud County

Montana Department of Agriculture
P O Box 200201
Helena, MT 59620-0201
406-444-2402
lboyer@state.mt.us

P O Box 6
270 South Prospect
Forsyth, MT 59327-0006
406-356-7333

Farm Credit Agency
103 North Sixth Street
P.O. Box 1787
Miles City, MT 59301-1787
406/233-3100
FAX: 406/233-3105

The Montana Department of Agriculture also has a loan program available for 4-H and FFA youth to finance their projects. These loans are a good education tool concerning the world of finance as well as providing funds to start these young people in agriculture. Concerning the transport of products and lack of implement dealers, I'm not sure there is much that can be done. Forsyth producers have easy access to the interstate, which is probably their best transportation resource. Railroad rates are difficult to change but they could garner information concerning railroad rates and what is being done from the following sources.

Jim Christiansen
Transportation
Montana Wheat & Barley Committee
P.O. Box 3024
Great Falls, MT 59403-3024
Phone: (406) 761-7732
Fax: (406) 761-7851
Web Site: <http://wbc.agr.state.mt.us>
email: wbc@state.mt.us

Montana Department of
P O Box 201001
2701 Prospect Ave.
Helena, MT 59620-1001
(406) 444-6200

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS:

See Nick and Kathy's comments. Resources should include, MT Dept of Trans, USDA Rural Development, and DNRC

Streets, curbs, and sidewalks are going to be a city or homeowner expense. Maybe a SID (improvement district) would be a means of funding these projects. Drainage and storm sewers may possibly be funded through some federal grants or long-term federal or state loans. Would need to do some research with Rural Development and Dept of Natural Resources.

RECREATION/TOURISM:

Again, these areas are probably better addressed by John Tubbs, Nick Rich, and Kathy Kaufman

Promote some of the big events that Forsyth hosts. The Quigley Shoot, the river access, get on the Lewis and Clark agenda to promote that Clark came down the river right here. Work with Travel Montana to develop a tourism-marketing plan for Forsyth. See if there are any grant funds available. I think an information visitor center would be a great addition to Forsyth. Man it with Senior's or high school volunteers or maybe a kiosk with information. Work with the MT dept of Transportation to create a more appealing entrance to Forsyth.

MARKETING FORSYTH:

I really encourage them to develop their website, but I also think they should consider looking at a theme, perhaps using one of their major events that they want Forsyth to become synonymous with. I.E. Quigley shoot could become their Montana Sheep Drive or State Fair type of draw. They could then perhaps look at doing other shooting events throughout the year. Cowboy Shooting Sports is a very popular sport and perhaps they should look at hosting something like that.

Work with the Department of Transportation to develop exit ramp lighting and signage. Signs to draw people across the tracks are a must and they should really promote their historical sight.

Redo their existing brochures with their main event as a focus and then get those out in the hotels and motels of the surrounding towns.

With their close proximity to Pompey's Pillar, they need to get involved in the Lewis and Clark bi centennial. There could be grant funds from MT Travel and or the Lewis

and Clark groups. Need to move quickly on this one. At the same time they will need to develop those two river access sights with appropriate Lewis and Clark signage.

COMMUNITY:

They have already begun their beautification efforts and everyone seems to be excited about that. I believe this is a community type effort and am not aware of any funds available but others in the group may know this better than I. I think there may be some funds for historical building maintenance and restoration. I know the city is using DEQ's junk car program but maybe there are more funds available from the Dept of Transportation.

Local government/Community Services:

I think there are some folks that would like to see a one stop human services office, which is more of a government effort than something, this team could do. I believe that if the agencies involved grouped together and were all in agreement that this would be beneficial and could show the benefits to the appropriate people, then this could come to fruition.

HOUSING:

See Kathy Kaufman

I know there are special state programs for single and multifamily construction, both state and federal. Someone or a group of folks need to do some research on this and find and individual or corporation who is interested in funding this type of project Resources would be Rural Development, Montana Board of Housing, Housing and Urban Development.

JOBS AND BUSINESSES:

This issue seemed to be the most important to most of the people we visited with. It is also the most nebulous in developing. We all know it is easier to expand existing successful businesses than it is to attract new business. Not that there isn't room for new businesses, it is just easier due to a lesser need for capital.

We would suggest that the best way to expand existing businesses is to get folks to shop at home. Maybe the best way is to go the extra mile to keep and get customers into our stores. Be the very best customer service representative in Forsyth. Every customer is as important as the President of the United States. With that kind of attitude and service, who wouldn't want to shop in Forsyth?

There is quite a little assistance available in the arena. I will list the ones I am familiar with below:

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406-444-2402

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Rosebud County Courthouse
Main Street
Forsyth, Montana 59327
406-356-7320

Jim Atchison
Executive Director
SE Montana Development Corp.
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Colstrip, MT 59323
406-748-2990

Tod Kasten
Regional Development Officer
Montana Department of Commerce
P O Box 200501
Helena, MT 59620-0501
406-841-

Montana Chamber of Commerce
Montana State Extension Service
Montana State University

CRITICAL ISSUES:

1. **ATTITUDE** Forsyth knows what their problems are, now they can work on correcting them but they must have a positive attitude at all times. NO WHINING!
2. **VISION** Forsyth needs to have a unified vision of what they want their town to look like in 5 years and 10 years and they must hold that near and dear and not let anyone steal it away via negative comments.
3. **COMMUNICATE** Forsyth must communicate this vision and the efforts they are making and the headway they have made to anyone that will stand still and listen. They must tell each other and everyone they come in contact with what, how, and why they are doing this. This creates excitement and maintains their vision.

**By: Nick Rich, Program Specialist
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Helena, MT 59620**

**Phone: 406.841.2735
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E-Mail: nrich@state.mt.us
Web: <http://commerce.state.mt.us/>**

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

I want to thank the people of Forsyth for having been such wonderful hosts to our Resource Team. My stay in Forsyth was quite informative, and having the chance to meet with so many different individuals was rewarding. Forsyth is a community rich in natural resources, recreational opportunities, agricultural diversity, community infrastructure, and energetic leadership. It is obvious that the citizens of Forsyth hold a high regard for their community and a genuine desire to work together towards a brighter future.

The citizens of Forsyth have formed individual groups with common goals for the advancement of economic development, in addition to groups that are addressing social issues. I am addressing several major categories and sub themes from the listening sessions for which resources and guidance are available should the Town decide to pursue them.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS:

It was mentioned numerous times that there is a need for infrastructure improvements throughout the community. Projects included storm sewers/drainage, streets and curbs, sidewalks, and lighting on the interstate interchange. There were also comments made that there is a need to upgrade/improve the Town's water and sewer system.

The Town of Forsyth has developed a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). A CIP is typically a 5 to 20 year working document that should be updated yearly. The CIP if utilized as intended will provide the community with a timeline and proposed budget to make improvements to infrastructure throughout the town. Typically a CIP will include the following infrastructure projects:

- Water system
- Wastewater system
- Road/Transportation system improvements
- Storm Sewer/drainage
- Park improvements

- Fire Department
- Sidewalks

Your local planner or consultant can either develop or update your CIP. Doing a “Needs Assessment” and involving the community in public meetings will help in determining project priorities. Plus keeping the community informed helps everyone understand why projects are prioritized the way they are.

There are many financing strategies available to complete projects. Implementing these strategies can take two to five years to coordinate, thus the importance of having comprehensive planning in place.

The following people and agencies can provide guidance on applying for planning grants, preliminary engineering reports (PER) grants, or assist in giving direction on how to best approach certain projects. These agencies can also provide guidance in hiring a professional consultant.

Contacts

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http://commerce.state.mt.us/BRD/BRD_CDBG.html

MDT Glendive District
Bill McChesney, District Administrator
503 N River Ave., PO Box 890, Glendive, MT 59330-0890
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<http://www.mdt.state.mt.us/districts/glendive/>

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Community Development Block Grant Program
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Bob Fischer
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Renewable Resource Grant & Loan Program
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Mitchel R. Copp
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http://www.investmentmt.com/BOIprograms_INTERCAP.htm

MARKETING FORSYTH:

Many comments were made about the assets that Forsyth has. Marketing these assets and letting folks traveling along the interstate know what Forsyth has to offer is key. Prior to actually getting a tour by the Mayor through the town, I had no idea of the wonderful attractions that Forsyth has. If Forsyth is marketed on the tourist market for its assets, it would only be a matter of time before outside businesses start to take notice also. The Resource Team during our brain storming session and reviewing every ones

comments from the listening session came up with a list of different ideas for marketing Forsyth's assets. Here is the list:

- Develop Town Website
- Install Interstate Freeway Signage
- In Town Signage
- Historical Building Designation/Signage/Tours
- Advertise Major Events & Attractions
 - Quigley Shoot
 - County Fair
 - Forsyth Days
 - County Museum
 - Rodeo/Team Roping Events
 - Sporting Events...ect

- Promote the Bi-Centennial event of the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery
- Promote the Available Business Space
- Sports Tournament Capability
- Interstate and Rail Access
- Retirement Community
- Medical Facilities
- Conventions/Conferences
- Workforce Available
- Quality of Life
- Recreational Facilities
 - Golf course
 - Indoor swimming pool
 - Ball fields with lights
 - Rodeo/Fairgrounds
 - Yellowstone River access/FWP Recreation Sites

There are many agencies, organizations, and consultants available to help the Town of Forsyth to promote all of its assets. The Town of Forsyth is a member of the South Eastern Montana Development Corporation (SEMDC). The Town has been utilizing SEMDC in a very effective way to help local businesses improve and expand their assets.

Any development in and around Forsyth affects the region due to the towns' geographic location. Because of this it is important to include Rosebud County, the Chamber of Commerce, local businesses and rural businesses as part of the promotion of Forsyth/Rosebud County. The City of Hardin has done extensive marketing of its resources and could be a very good model for Forsyth to pursue. The City of Hardin had a private community-planning firm from Wisconsin develop a comprehensive plan for the community about five years ago. Priorities were developed out of this plan. Out of the original priorities most have been completed. Funding where planned for utilizing

local, state, and federal loan and grant programs. I am attaching a copy of Hardin's Plan.

Contact:

Pam Clark, City Economic Development Director
City of Hardin
406 N. Cheyenne Avenue
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406-665-2719
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Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Infrastructure Development
Montana Promotions Division
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The Montana Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission
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<http://montanalewisandclark.org>

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<http://www.chamberofcommerce.com>

Fannie Mae Foundation
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202-274-8000
<http://www.fanniemaefoundation.org>

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
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406-444-3750
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I wish to thank the community of Forsyth and our sponsors, especially those who provided our lodgings and meals, and to Mayor Kopitzke, City Council members, and most of all the citizens of Forsyth for the time and energy expended in making this Resource Team visit such a pleasure. I was made to feel right at home.

I was truly impressed with Forsyth, its citizens, location and what it has to offer those in search of a quality of life not found in many areas of the country. My impression of Forsyth, through my own observation and the listening sessions is that it has great, untapped potential. We heard over and over again about Forsyth's great location, recreational amenities, access to the Yellowstone River, interstate highways and railroads, swimming pool, library, museum, golf course, movie theater, and fair grounds, services such as: medical, schools, fire, safety, local government, retirement living. With that said, I would like to address a few issues that I became aware of during my visit to Forsyth.

Attitude: Forsyth needs to "Sell Forsyth" to Forsyth before they can sell it to anyone else. Some group (possibly the Chamber of Commerce, City Government, local newspaper or citizens group) should extol Forsyth's virtues and the many pluses they have, but most of all their quality of life (friendly citizens, good schools, highly effective fire department, good police department with low crime rate). Get the word out to the rest of the world that "Forsyth is My Town and there are few, if any that can compare with it." The citizens of Forsyth have rallied support for crisis in the past and must be willing to address some of their 'challenges' such as housing needs, economic development and youth problems as if they were real life crisis.

Training: There appears to be a need for partnership building/teamwork, local leadership training, business planning/entrepreneurship training and marketing. I would recommend that contact be made with nearby Miles City Community College for help in these areas. Someone (Economic Development Team) must take the lead in this endeavor and it might be advisable to send an individual to a grant-writing program. Once the individual is trained in grant writing, he/she could apply for various leadership-training grants, business planning/entrepreneurship training and marketing grants. The trained individual may be able to apply for a community-building grant, which could fund the individual while they search for funding to address community-building issues.

Grant Writing recommendations: Having been involved in several grants efforts, I can appreciate how much time an individual commits to the process. I would suggest reviewing the Volunteer Survey sheets collected during this Resource Team session and contact anyone who may have an interest in grant writing or a passion for a particular project that will require a grant. Organize a grant-writing workshop and actually begin to write the grant during the workshop. Our Forsyth 'Recorder', Gloria O'Rourke attended an excellent class by Janet Cornish of Community Development Services of Montana. As grant writing is a time-consuming and often a thankless task, she suggests "perks" be given to the writer. For example, if funds are not available to pay the writer, offer in-kind donations (such as gift certificates at several local businesses, savings on purchases at a local business, etc.) could serve as an incentive. Should the grant be awarded, the grant writer could be paid from those funds and/or offered, "perks" once again for their efforts.

The Montana Rural Development Partners have recently joined with "Grant Station" and will make available to those interested in obtaining grants for projects a weekly email newsletter of granting opportunities. If you are not receiving this information now, please contact our office and we will put you on the recipients list at no cost.

Contact: Janet A. Cornish
Community Development Services of Montana
954 West Caledonia
Butte, MT 59701
Ph/Fx: 406.723.7993
Email: janallyce@aol.com

!

For in-depth information, review the book online titled "Finding the Funds You Need: A Guide for Grant-seekers located at:
http://cedev.aers.psu.edu/FundGrnt_Bklt_Fnl_REV.pdf

Planning: Before the community can address many of its perceived challenges, there should be some sort of survey(s) done on such things as:

Housing Needs: Survey on housing demand that would look at the type of housing needed (senior housing, starter homes, rental units, multi-family units, apartments, etc) and the affordability of it.

Retail Businesses: A survey is needed on retail leakage and reasons for it. What types of businesses are needed in Forsyth and **are the residents willing to support them?** What can be done to support the existing businesses and help them expand?

Community's Vision: What is the common vision that the majority of the residents can agree on? Where does Forsyth want to be in the next 5, 10 or 20

years? Hopefully, the Resource Team Visit will serve as a starting point for the residents of Forsyth in answering this question.

Tourism/Community Marketing Plan: Do the citizens of Forsyth want to encourage tourism expansion in Forsyth?

Surveys can be conducted by volunteers or with the help of professionals. The Extension Service from Montana State University and local extension agents are used extensively in helping communities do surveys on most of the items listed above. I would suggest that the proposed 'Development Group', the Chamber, City Government or individual citizens contact the Montana State University Cooperative Extension for assistance and information on the items above. Once the housing issues are well defined, I would suggest that the Montana USDA Rural Development Office be contacted for assistance. Resource Team member, Kathy Kaufman would be an excellent resource.

Contacts:

Jennifer Anderson and/or Stephen Hutton
Rosebud and Treasure Counties
Extension Service
Rosebud County Courthouse on Main Street
P.O. Box 65
Forsyth, MT 59327
E-mail: janderson@montana.edu
shutten@montana.edu

Kathy Kaufman@mtbillings.fsc.usda.gov
Community Development Manager
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Phone: (406) 657-6297, extension 4
Fax: (406) 657-6294
E-Mail: Kathy.Kaufman@mtbillings.fsc.usda.gov
Website: www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt/

The Forsyth Community Resource Team identified eight (8) major topics during the listening sessions in Forsyth. Several sub-topics were identified under each of main topics. I will identify each of the major topics and suggest actions for some of the sub-topics.

AGRICULTURE:

Team member, Lee Boyer, has addressed several of the issues regarding agriculture. I would suggest that the agriculture community consider the establishment of an agriculture cooperative. The Montana USDA/Rural Development has a cooperative specialist on board in their Bozeman office that is quite knowledgeable regarding the establishment of agricultural cooperatives and I would urge contact with him if there were enough interest within the ag community. The establishment of some type of value added or vertical integration of agricultural products could prove to be invaluable to the Forsyth area. Concern was expressed by several individuals regarding the Workmen's Compensation requirements on farm labor. The only suggestion I would have regarding this is to talk to your local legislative representatives in both the Montana House and Senate regarding possible changes in state law dealing with Worker's Comp issues in Montana.

Contacts:

Bill Barr, Cooperative Specialist
Montana USDA Rural Development State Office
P.O. Box 850
900 Technology Blvd.
Bozeman, MT 59771
Phone: 406.585.2545
Fax: 406.585.2565
E-mail: Bill.Barr@mt.usda.gov
Web: www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt

Lee Boyer, Bureau Chief
Montana Department of Agriculture
Department of Ag/Rural Development
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Helena, MT 59620-0201
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Fax: 406-444-9442
lboyer@state.mt.us email

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS:

The Resource Team heard at almost every session, the need for drainage and storm sewers. This issue is addressed by several of the other team members. It is our understanding that due to the diligent efforts of local officials NAPA Lake may be a thing of the past. Lighting regarding the on/off ramps from the interstate highway was reported as a real concern. Contact should be made with the Montana Department of Transportation regarding this issue. Also, the Montana Highway Department should be contacted regarding the use of CTEP Funds for a possible walking/bike trail along the Yellowstone River and throughout the community.

Walking Trail: This project could be funded, in part, through the Montana Department of Transportation's Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP). Through this program, the City of Forsyth, and Rosebud County each receive annual allocations that can be used to finance projects that are traditionally not funded with transportation dollars, such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Public input during the project planning process is vitally important. I would encourage people with an interest in having a walking trail to form a committee that would select a preferred location for the trail, determine what the scope of the trail should be, identify the type of materials that can be used, and then formulate a preliminary cost estimate. The committee would take this information to the City and County and ask that the project be considered for CTEP funding. Ideally, the City and County would share resources so that more sections of the trail can be built.

I am not sure what amounts have been allocated to both Forsyth and Rosebud County under the CTEP program, but with both the city and county working together and with the local match requirement adding another 13.42% to the project's budget, it is possible that a sizable amount would be available for the construction of a walking trail. In addition, the CTEP offers several options that make it possible for the City and/or County to leverage those dollars so that more of their CTEP dollars are available for construction. The key to success is working closely with the CTEP staff in Helena and MDT staff in Billings. It would also be helpful if each government select a single person to serve as their Local Program Administrator (LPA). Mayor Dennis Kopitzke or one of his staff members would be a logical choice. The LPA serves as the liaison between the local government and the MDT. This relationship allows the LPA to learn more about this complex program while developing long-term relationships that help make the project development process more efficient and effective.

Each of the following people is willing to answer any questions you may have about the Community Transportation Enhancement Program or how it is administered by the Montana Department of Transportation.

Contact information:

Thomas Martin
CTEP Bureau Chief
MT Dept. of Transportation
Helena, MT 59620-1001
P.O. Box 2010011
Phone: 406.444.0809
Email: tmartin@state.mt.us

Bruce Barrett, District Administrator
MT Dept. of Transportation

424 Morey Street
P.O. Box 20437
Billings, MT 59104-4138
Phone: 406.657.0210
Fax: 406.657.0932
E-Mail: bbarrett@state.mt.us

RECREATION/TOURISM:

The bike and walking trail were covered in a previous part of this report. The Resource Team heard from the youth and from several adults that there is a need for a skateboard park in Forsyth. Several cities have established skateboard parks, including Helena, Libby and Bozeman. Libby built the first skateboard park in Montana approximately 10 years ago for \$10,000. Last summer, the City of Helena completed a 10,000 sq. ft. facility for \$69,000.

Begin by organizing a Task Force to facilitate the development of a skateboard park. Representatives from the City of Forsyth, Rosebud County, and the Chamber of Commerce should be joined on the Task Force by youth interested in developing the project. Possibly, a City Commissioner or someone from the Chamber of Commerce could serve as the Project Coordinator. The Task Force should then open a dialogue with representatives from the Helena Park and Recreation Department and Libby Skate Park Inc. to understand how each of these communities were able to complete their projects.

Contact Information:

Libby: Jane Thom
Libby Skate Park Inc.
Phone: 293-574
Email: janiethom@yahoo.com

Helena: Randy Lilge
Director of Parks and
Recreation
City of Helena
316 North Park Ave.
Helena, MT 59623
Phone: 447-8462
Email: rlilje@ci.helena.mt.us

Potential Funding Sources:

Turner Foundation
Turner Youth Development Community Initiative
Program Department
One CNN Center, Suite 1090 South Tower
Atlanta, GA 30303
Website: <http://www.turnerfoundation.org/turner/application.html>

Application Deadlines: December 15, March 15, June 15 and September 1 Montana

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
Montana State Parks
1420 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, Montana 59620
Telephone: 444-3750
Website: <http://www.fwp.state.mt.us/parks/landw/index.asp>

MARKETING FORSYTH:

Several task force members mentioned a need for an information/visitor center for Forsyth. Most of the team members had been to Forsyth in the past, but were unaware of the many amenities that Forsyth has to offer. Forsyth is one of the few places on the interstate system that has easy access to the Yellowstone River. Contact should be made with the FWP Department to improve and advertise these access sites.

Visitors are often influenced by their first impression of the community or by whomever they talk with in the community. Thus, there is a need to try 'Super Host' training for those employed in the gas stations, restaurants, motels, etc. If visitors are treated well and told of the many things to do in and around Forsyth, they will stay a little longer and spend more money in the community.

Forsyth has so many assets that would market the community to the outside world, such as: Historical buildings downtown, Quigley Shoot, County Fair, Forsyth Days, the Museum, Team Roping events, sporting events, interstate/railroad access, the retirement community, available buildings, tie-in with the Lewis and Clark Centennial events, the Library and swimming pool, just to mention a few. There is a need for Freeway signage and in town signage to promote these things. Forsyth's website should be maintained and updated frequently.

COMMUNITY:

The City of Forsyth has embarked on a beautification plan that is already showing results with the demolition of sub-standard buildings, planting of trees and flowers, elimination of junk vehicles and weeds. These actions, along with a plan on maintenance and replacement of sidewalks and restoration of historical buildings will do much to improve the community image and attitude. The resource team received mixed signals during the listening sessions regarding community volunteers. Some people said that everyone volunteers and others said they can't get volunteers. There appears to be a need for more coordination and communications between various groups in the community. **Be proud of Forsyth, both the community and its citizens, you have a lot going for you.**

HOUSING:

The Resource Team heard that there is a need for assisted living accommodations in Forsyth. There is a great retirement community complex at the former air force base and excellent medical facilities in Forsyth, however, there is a shortage of assisted living facilities. We also heard that there is a need for modern homes to both purchase and to rent. Many of the older homes could be rehabilitated. As mentioned earlier, contact should be made with Resource Team member, Kathy Kaufman of the Montana USDA Rural Development office.

JOBS AND BUSINESS:

Several individuals said that there was a need to attract new small businesses. There is also a need to support existing businesses. We heard over and over again that several of the small businesses in town provided great customer services (the hardware store and the drug store were mentioned several times). These businesses have discovered that Great Customer Services = Customer Loyalty. We, also, heard that there was a lack of career and/or high paying jobs in the area and that therefore Forsyth is having a problem keeping their young people in the area. This is a problem in most Montana communities that were or are dependent on agriculture or extraction industries such as timber and mining. It is our understanding that Range Cooperative is expanding its service in the area. With the deployment of broadband telecommunications in the area comes the opportunity to attract new businesses that can locate anywhere because they do their business thru the Internet. It should be noted that although it is very glamorous to attract a big business to the area, it is much easier to help strengthen and expand existing businesses in the community. Forsyth is part of the Southeaster Montana Development Corporation and should work closely with it and its Executive Director, Jim Atchison in strengthening existing businesses and attracting new ones.

Again, I wish to thank the community of Forsyth for the hospitality shown our Resource Team during our visit. I, also, wish to thank the team members for their many hours of volunteer service to the community of Forsyth and a special thanks to our recorder, Gloria O'Rourke who keep us on track.