

# RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

for

## JUDITH BASIN COUNTY

**February 9 – 11, 2003**

**In partnership with Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA),  
Snowy Mountain Development Corporation, USDA/Rural Development,  
NorthWestern Energy, MT Department of Agriculture, MT Department of  
Commerce, US Forest Service and the people of Judith Basin County.**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I am sure I speak for the entire team when I say we were impressed with the people of your county and the passion that was displayed to preserve your communities and unique rural lifestyle. We were impressed with your community leaders, students, volunteers, schools, business owners, entrepreneurs, senior citizens and all the people in between. It is obvious that in working together, there is nothing to stop Judith Basin County from being all that you envision it to be.

I doubt that the people involved were aware of this fact, but the Judith Basin assessment was a test case for the Resource Team process. Never before had a county-wide assessment been attempted. Thanks to the skillful agenda planning of Kathie Bailey (Snowy Mountain Development Corporation) and a devoted team including Cindy Stene (USDA/RD), Dave Cole (MT DOC), Mike Sullivan (MT Dept. of Ag), Betsy Pahut (Northwestern Energy) and Carol Hatfield (USFS) I believe the “test” was passed with flying colors. There is no doubt Judith Basin County has paved the way for future county-wide assessments.

The Judith Basin County Resource Team could not have taken place without the support and leadership of the Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA). Prior to the scheduling of the Judith Basin project, Montana Rural Development Partners (originators of the project) lost its funding and had to close its doors. The MEDA Executive Committee, however, decided to provide contracted services to allow the resource team visit to take place.

On behalf of MEDA and the Judith Basin team, I would like to thank the local team leaders, planners and tour guides that made this visit possible:

- US Forest Service (provided grant funds)
- Snowy Mountain Development Corporation – Kathie Bailey and Carrie Mantooth
- Listening Session leaders – Dave Wichman, Ed Arnott, Amy Hughes, Cheryl Spratt, Patrick McNulty, Bob Williams, Steve Henderson, Henry Vasley, Jerome Kolar and Dale Longfellow
- Tour guides in Judith Basin Manor, Steve Lilligaard, Taylor Honey, Mr. and Mrs. John Gee, Moccasin Experiment Station, Heartland Seed, and Raynesford Senior Center.
- The people of Utica, Stanford, Geyser, Hobson and Moccasin - for making us feel so welcome.

The elements are all in place for Judith Basin County to have a successful future. There are a number of short term and long term accomplishable recommendations that the resource team has provided in this report. Each of you individually must decide what it is that you want to do—what kind of project you want to tackle. It is also important for the entire community and/or county to be involved in finding ways to accomplish its goals. A few celebrations at the successful conclusion of an activity that has involved a large number of citizens will lead to a feeling of accomplishment that will carry over into other activities. Look through the suggestions, pick out one, and get started. It can be done. It is your choice, your decision; you can do it!

Gloria O'Rourke

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

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

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

The Resource Team toured the county and interviewed approximately 200 people over a three-day period from February 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>. The team interviewed representatives from the following segments of Judith Basin County: Ag Producers, Ranchers, Businesses, Local Government, Law Enforcement, Human Services, Churches, Community Organizations, Hobson High School Students, Stanford High School Students, Cultural Community, Financial, Law and Chamber groups, State and Federal Programs, Stanford/Hobson/Geysers/Raynesford Senior Citizens.

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 Judith Basin County (or in your community?)
- What do you think are the major strengths and assets in Judith Basin County (or in your community?)
- What projects would you like to see completed in two, five, ten and twenty years in Judith Basin County (or your community?)

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 Judith Basin County.

A preliminary oral report and a summary of group recommendations was presented to the people of Judith Basin County on February 11th and many of the county's citizens who participated in the interviews were in attendance.

Following the oral report, this formal written report was prepared and is presented to Judith Basin County. Snowy Mountain Development Corporation agreed to print copies or make electronic copies available. The report is available on the MEDA website at <http://www.medamembers.org>.

**JUDITH BASIN COUNTY  
RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT**

**FEBRUARY 9 – 11, 2003**

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# **JUDITH BASIN COUNTY RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT**

## **AGENDA**

Session Recorder – Carrie Mantooth and/or Kathie Bailey,  
Snowy Mountain Development Corporation

### **Sunday, February 9, 2003**

- AM Travel Time and check into Sundown Motel
- 12:00 Lunch at “The Deli”, 76 Central Avenue, Stanford and tour of Mall
- 1:00 Leave for tour of Stanford: Judith Basin Manor, Steve Lilligaard, Taylor Honey, and John Gee’s Feedlot
- 3:30 Ag producers and businesses at Moccasin Experiment Station
- 4:30 Tour of Moccasin Experiment Station, Heartland Seed, Hobson, and Utica
- 6:00 Dinner at the Oxen Yoke Inn in Utica

### **Monday, February 10, 2003**

- 7:00 Breakfast Buffet at Courthouse Meeting Room
- 8:00 Local Government, Law Enforcement at Courthouse Meeting Room
- 9:15 Human Services, Churches, Community Organization at Courthouse Meeting Room
- 10:30 Area Ranchers and Producers at Courthouse Meeting Room
- 11:45 Leave for Hobson (18 miles)
- 12:00 Lunch at Hobson Senior Center
- 1:15 Seniors at Hobson Senior Center
- 2:15 Hobson High School Students at Multipurpose Room
- 3:30 Hobson Teachers at Multipurpose Room
- 4:30 Tour of Hobson Businesses, Java Garden, Nancy’s Country Market, etc.
- 5:30 Businesses, Local Govt. & Cultural Community at Black Bull Bar and Steakhouse
- 6:30 Dinner at Black Bull Bar and Steakhouse

**Tuesday, February 11, 2003**

- 7:00 Working Breakfast/Businesses, Financial, Law, Chamber members at “The Wolves Den”
- 8:15 State and Federal Programs at “The Wolves Den”
- 9:30 Stanford High School Students
- 10:45 Stanford Senior Citizens
- 11:45 Leave for Geysers
- 12:00 Lunch at Geysers/Raynesford Senior Center
- 1:00 Seniors, Businesses, etc. at Geysers/Raynesford Senior Center
- 2:15 Return to Stanford
- 2:30 Prepare for evening meeting – Dinner Brought In (Stanford H.S.)
- 7:00 General Public Meeting at Stanford High School Auditorium

**SUMMARY OF LISTENING SESSIONS  
MAIN ISSUES AND TOPICS  
JUDITH BASIN COUNTY**

**FEBRUARY 11<sup>TH</sup> TOWN MEETING REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY**

The following list was compiled as a result of 13 Listening Sessions with the Resource Team and the people of Judith Basin County. There is a main heading at the top of each list with sub-topics listing areas of attention. The needs refer to the entire county unless otherwise noted.

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

- Water
- Solid Waste
- Sewer
- Streets
- Sidewalks

**TRANSPORTATION**

- Airport – better utilization
- Railroad – better utilization
- Highways – speed reduction
- Commuting for youth and senior citizens – Note use of Judith Basin van
- Utilization of commercial bus line

**COMMUNITY**

- Childcare – Stanford
- Explore faith-based services
- Health/Fitness Center
- Recreation such as bowling, theater, etc.
- Recreation Center – Note center in Geyser
- Volunteerism
- Beautification and blight
- Welcome signage – into and out of county
- Welcome newcomers to town
- Attitude or Mind Set Adjustment
- Support of local businesses
- Best use of foundation funds
- Strengthen the Arts

## **ENERGY Exploration**

- ➔ Wind
- ➔ Biomass
- ➔ Ethanol

## **JOBS/POPULATION/SCHOOL LINK**

- ➔ Promotion and Marketing
  - Website umbrella/portal for county
  - Promote retirement destination
  - Community/County recognition
  - Consistent signage
  - Low crime area/safe
  - Hunting/recreation
  - Tourism in general
  - The Arts
  - Lodging/Fuel/Restaurants
  - Snag highway traffic
  - SuperHost training
  - Potential driving tour
  - Charlie Russell emphasis
- ➔ Business Retention, Recruitment and Support
  - Tap into retirement experience
  - Business incubator potential
  - Cooperatives
  - Nurture entrepreneurial spirit
  - Engage youth – job enterprises

## **AGRICULTURE**

- ➔ Diversify
- ➔ Quality products
- ➔ Value Added
- ➔ Market
- ➔ MT Cooperative Center

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## **MAIN TOPIC: INFRASTRUCTURE – PUBLIC FACILITIES**

In most of the listening sessions we participated in, participants indicated their support for growth, economic development, and job creation. Many mentioned potential opportunities for “value added” processing of the natural resources to be found within Judith Basin County, whether livestock processing, grain or plant by-products (straw board), wood products, etc.

One of the fundamental building blocks for encouraging and supporting economic development is having adequate infrastructure. “Infrastructure” is a fancy word meaning the basic public facilities that support community life and economic activity, including:

- Airports,
- Buildings for governmental functions (courthouses and jails, police and fire stations, city or town halls),
- Drinking water and wastewater (sewer) treatment and distribution/collection systems,
- Libraries and museums,
- Parks, playgrounds, and swimming pools,
- Roads, streets, highways and bridges,
- Solid waste disposal facilities.

Two of the most fundamental and important types of basic community infrastructure are systems for the treatment and distribution of drinking water and for the collection and treatment of sewage (wastewater). The communities within Judith Basin County (JBC) have all taken steps over several years to improve their water and wastewater systems:

### **Geyser**

In 1982, the County applied successfully to the Montana Department of Commerce on behalf of Geyser for a \$161,938 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) in 1982 to develop a community wastewater collection and treatment system. The Geyser Water and Sewer District applied for a Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP) \$10,000 planning grant in 2001 and the County applied for and received a CDBG \$10,000 planning grant in 2002 to prepare a preliminary engineering study for a new water supply for Geyser.

In May 2002, Geyser applied for a \$330,000 TSEP grant to help finance construction of a new water supply. The Geyser application was ranked #2 out of 55 TSEP applications that are being considered for funding by the 2003 Montana Legislature. Given its high ranking, it should be assured of receiving funding.

In January 2003, JBC submitted a \$308,000 CDBG application that, if successful, would be combined with the TSEP grant to help finance a new water supply and distribution system for Geysers.

### **Hobson**

Hobson applied for and received a \$284,463 CDBG in 1991 for a community wastewater treatment project.

### **Stanford**

Stanford applied to CDBG in 1991 for a \$10,000 grant to prepare an engineering study for wastewater treatment improvements.

In 2001, Stanford was successful again in applying for a \$500,000 TSEP grant to help fund the wastewater project.

Also, in 2001, Stanford obtained a \$15,000 grant from TSEP and a CDBG \$10,000 planning grant to pay for a preliminary engineering study for water system improvements.

In 2001, Stanford also applied for a \$350,000 CDBG to help fund the water project, but was not successful.

In 2002, it applied for a \$500,000 TSEP grant that is being considered by the 2003 Legislature. The application was ranked #9 out of 55 TSEP applications that are being considered for funding by the 2003 Montana Legislature. Given its high ranking, it should receive funding.

### **Raynesford**

In 2000, JBC successfully applied for a \$15,000 CDBG planning grant to prepare a preliminary engineering study for a wastewater system for Raynesford.

### **Recommendation:**

All of these Judith Basin County communities should be commended for taking steps to make sure that their basic drinking water and wastewater systems are adequate to meet state standards. Nothing is more important to quality of life than to have adequate and decent drinking water. It is also critical to be able to have any reasonable hope of attracting or supporting local economic development.

The Resource Team was told that Hobson faces special challenges regarding the question of whether to develop a community-wide drinking water system. As we understand the situation, roughly half of the families in town have adequate individual wells for a drinking water source; the other families have individual wells with water quantity or quality problems. As a result, it has apparently been difficult to achieve consensus on whether to develop a community-wide water system, particularly given the high user charges that might result. When we held the listening sessions in Hobson, many persons spoke of their hope that the town could attract

businesses to create jobs. Several people mentioned the possibility of some type of processing facility that could use local resources in some kind of “value added” process. Many of the types of processing facilities that use grain, wood, or livestock products often place serious demands on local water or wastewater treatment systems. The lack of an adequate community water system could be an obstacle to that possibility.

There is a considerable lag time between when a community makes a decision to pursue a water or wastewater project and when funding is available. It typically takes at least two to three years to assemble a funding “package” using the maximum number of grant sources to reduce costs to local residents. Because of the high cost of these projects, it usually requires a combination of two to four funding sources to finance a project at the lowest possible cost. For example, the TSEP program has become the first choice for most communities assembling their funding package. This is because, even though the program is competitive, TSEP has historically been able to fund about three out of every four applications. TSEP grants must be approved by the Montana Legislature that meets only every other year. For example, the applications being considered by the 2003 Legislature had to be submitted the previous year, in May 2002. In the case of Geysers, described above, the Geysers Water and Sewer District had to apply for a TSEP engineering grant in 2001 so it could have the preliminary engineering report for the water system ready for it to be able to apply in May 2002.

No business development can wait this long for a community to upgrade its water or sewer system in order to serve a new processing or manufacturing plant. The community has to be ready to supply adequate services when the economic development opportunity presents itself. Otherwise, the investors will take their proposal to another community that is ready for them. If the Town of Hobson invested in a community water system, no one can guarantee that economic development projects will automatically follow. However, most economic development professionals would agree that, without an adequate community water system, the town would be at a competitive disadvantage in its efforts to attract and encourage local economic development.

This is understandably a difficult decision for the citizens of Hobson to make. However, there are resources to help them. The first step is to complete the preliminary engineering. TSEP provides matching grants to help communities fund preliminary engineering studies to determine the most cost-effective technical alternative for their local water or wastewater project. The funds are first come, first served and the \$425,000 that will be available for the next two years will be awarded until it is gone. The appropriation is effective only for fiscal years 2004 and 2005 so there is no assurance that TSEP engineering grants will be available in the future after these funds are expended. The TSEP preliminary engineering grants require a dollar-for-dollar match consisting of local funds. If the citizens of Hobson decide to pursue a community water system, it should apply to TSEP for a preliminary engineering grant soon as possible in order to begin the preliminary engineering this summer. Applications for TSEP grants to be considered by the 2005 Legislature must be submitted in May, 2004, so this spring would be the right time to apply for a TSEP engineering grant to get the process started for any community that wants to pursue a water, wastewater, storm drainage, or solid waste project.

We have no idea what the projected user charges were when the community discussed the possibility of a community-wide water system for Hobson. Whatever they were, it appears that

they caused “sticker shock” for residents. One of the purposes of programs like TSEP or CDBG is to help make local public facility projects affordable for local residents. It would be worth your local officials’ time to determine whether the state and federal infrastructure programs available to them could help make the costs of a water project more financially feasible. The process only takes a telephone call to start. For example, the same engineering firm that will be working with Geysers and Stanford will probably have their staff in the area in the future. You could probably schedule a meeting with them to start finding out what options might be available to you.

During the listening sessions in Stanford, several people mentioned that handling garbage or solid waste was a problem for the community and complicated efforts to do community clean up projects. Solid waste facilities are also an eligible project under TSEP. The engineering firm the city is using for its wastewater and water projects has a good reputation for solid waste projects, as well. City officials might explore options for improving the handling of solid waste with their engineers.

TSEP funding is also an opportunity for counties. TSEP provides the only source of grant monies for construction or reconstruction of county bridges. The TSEP preliminary engineering grants can also be used to prepare preliminary engineering studies for bridges. Five of the top ten ranked TSEP applications before the 2003 Legislature are for county bridge projects, most of them proposing to rebuild more than one bridge.

To sum up, the following comments are from an August 22, 1994 Great Falls Tribune on the topic of “Keys to Small Town Survival.” The comments are from Dick King, former Executive Director for the Bear Paw Development Corporation of Northern Montana, based in Havre. Bear Paw serves a multi-county area with grant writing and administration services, similar to the Snowy Mountain Development Corporation. Dick is now the economic development director for Missoula.

“People need to sit down and make an honest, objective assessment of what the community has to offer and what the needs are.” He said being objective is important because some towns simply think that because they have a good school, little crime and friendly people that they will be attractive to outsiders. “But there are a lot of towns all saying that same thing. The fact is, you often have to offer more. And each town needs to know what else it is offering. Armed with information on strengths and weaknesses, a town should make a long-term plan to address its needs.

He added that a critical component is making sure the town’s infrastructure is in good shape. “Those who invest in their infrastructure have a chance to survive. You have to wonder about the future of a town that isn’t willing to make such basic investments.” King warned that economic development does not come easy: “It’s not free. You may have to raise your taxes, invest in the infrastructure and devote your time. And it’s not a one-shot deal – it’s a long, ongoing process that requires a good deal of commitment.”

I couldn’t say it any better than that.

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## **MAIN TOPIC: DEALING WITH BLIGHT & COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION**

In every community we visited there appeared to be real concern about the physical appearance of the community, particularly the buildings that were vacant and deteriorated. In some cases, the property owner may be deceased and the property may now be owned by people who live out of town or even out of state. For them, out of sight is out of mind. But the concern about abandoned and deteriorated property and weed-filled lots was clearly on the minds of people in Stanford, Hobson, and Geysers. Sometimes referred to as “community decay” or “blight”, it can kill communities over time.

The visual impression created by the physical appearance of our communities is powerful and very important. It can either be strongly positive or strongly negative. What kind of message do vacant, abandoned buildings send about the community to someone driving through who might potentially be thinking about retiring there or even bringing in a business? The presence of a number of deteriorated and apparently abandoned buildings can send the message that this community is dying or that the residents don't care about its appearance. Community appearance is important but not only in terms of it affects potential newcomers. Existing local businesses, lenders, and property owners are also reluctant to invest in their own buildings or homes when the presence of blight signals that properties are depreciating. Blight serves as a disincentive to adjacent property owners to maintain their own properties and can start a downward spiral of decline for a whole neighborhood. In the words of the current mayor of Chicago, Richard Daley, “One bad building can bring down an entire block.” Whether it is a big city or a small town, the effect is the same: it discourages maintenance of existing properties and new investment and construction, too.

The presence of many deteriorated buildings can affect the attitude of local residents, too. When we conducted one of the listening sessions with the high school students, we posed the question of whether they would like to come back to their town after they get done with college. One

student's response was, "Why would I want to come back to this junky town." The student also referred to the number of run down homes around town. Even the kids are very aware of the problem.

### **Recommendations:**

One of the programs that the Department of Commerce works with is the federally-funded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. The program was established by Congress back in 1974 and has its origins in the urban renewal programs of the 1960's that were designed to combat urban blight and deterioration that encouraged property abandonment and discouraged new investment. The program has a lot of experience with housing rehabilitation and dealing with blight problems. One of the lessons we have learned here in Montana is that if a home or building is left unattended and unheated for more than about five years, the elements, frost, and humidity can seriously deteriorate the structure. The deterioration is accelerated even more if broken windows or a leaking roof lets in rain or snow.

Many communities across Montana are tackling this problem with local "sweat equity" from volunteers involving local citizens, Scouts, civic groups, and volunteer fire departments, as well as city and county public works crews. The small town of Medicine Lake in northeastern Montana worked with the Sheridan County Road Department on a project that demolished nine buildings. The road department used their dragline to demolish a condemned restaurant on Main Street. Several abandoned homes and garages were demolished at the same time. Their efforts had a snowball effect, motivating local residents to also tear down and clean up other vacant structures. In addition, a local contractor used the Road Department's dozer to demolish several abandoned houses, a deserted body shop, and an old church. The town organizes a "Clean Up Day" in the spring, every other year. Sheridan County's Solid Waste Department provides a truck, free of charge, to assist in disposing of old appliances, branches, and other debris collected by the town residents.

We don't want to incur the wrath of historic preservation advocates by suggesting that any old building should be torched or bulldozed. Obviously, the community would want to preserve any building that is structurally sound and capable of re-use or that is historically significant. However, in addition to the visual problems of blight and deterioration, abandoned buildings can be real threats to public health and safety. Children often find the buildings attractive places to play. Added to the dangers of something collapsing on them or children starting fires or using drugs, many are infested with rodents. This has become a serious health concern because of Hantavirus, a potentially fatal respiratory virus that is associated with deer mice and other rodents. Hantavirus claims the lives of several people each year. In some areas, the presence of skunks and concern about rabies is another issue with abandoned property.

The communities of Baker and Forsyth started projects to remove abandoned buildings after Resource Teams visited their towns. It might be helpful to contact those towns to see how they are approaching property owners to get permission to remove the buildings. In some cases, a relative may have title to the property and be reluctant to have it torn down because of the positive memories they have when the family lived there and it was in good condition. It may be helpful to send a photograph of the property in its present condition. If there are back taxes on the property perhaps the county would be willing to waive the past due taxes if the owner will

give permission to have it removed. The town might offer to list the lot for sale with a local realtor after the property is demolished and the site cleaned up. The property may well have more value after the dilapidated structure is removed and it is available as a building site for a new home since it probably fronts on a street with available water and sewer services.

In the event that a property owner is completely uncooperative, under Montana law, counties and municipalities have the authority to adopt what are called “Community Decay Ordinances” to declare properties a public nuisance or threat to public health and safety and order owners of deteriorated properties to either improve them or tear them down. This is an option if persuasion is not effective.

The communities within Judith Basin County could be excellent candidates for a housing rehabilitation project under the CDBG program. I will try to contact the consultant that managed the housing rehabilitation project in Lewistown a few years ago to see if they might be interested. CDBG Planning Grants are due in April and it might be possible to get a grant to hire a consultant to prepare a grant application. CDBG Housing Grant applications are due in October.

Regardless of whether the communities decide to pursue funding for a housing rehabilitation project, a home grown effort to clean up vacant building and lots would still have a positive impact. Clean up efforts such as these result in such a dramatic visual impact that it tends to energize communities to do even more.

The quality of housing in small towns and rural areas is threatened, with less incentive for reinvestment as the number of jobs declines and the remaining population becomes relatively older . . . At an early stage, a highly visible project is a good idea. Visible improvements can boost local confidence in the future, garnering additional support . . .

*“Approaches to Community Revitalization: Lessons Learned,” Northwest Area Foundation*

Several years ago, Sunset magazine highlighted an annual event in Boise, Idaho:

Each year in June, they scheduled a Saturday “Paint Your Heart Out” Day, an annual binge of community open-heartedness wherein teams of volunteers upgrade homes owned by old-timers or the physically limited. Volunteers descend on houses needing help: brush to be cleared, fences that could benefit from straightening or shoring, porches to be fixed, and acres of exterior wall to be painted. . . . The work doesn’t begin and end with brush and roller. Landscaping, debris hauling, plumbing, roofing, glazing, and wall repair were done as needed. The day has turned into a citywide caring day -- when residents of Boise and surrounding communities make an all-out effort to beautify their neighborhoods and help each other.

*The physical appearance of a community is essential. Whether it’s potholes and graffiti or boarded-up houses and vacant lots, a city’s looks are important to*

*keeping residents and businesses and attracting new ones. Anything we can do in terms of improving the housing stock is a priority . . . taking down the structures that aren't any good is part of it. When a dilapidated house is razed, it actually improves the neighborhood.*

During many of our listening sessions, people commented on the community pride that existed in the communities of Judith Basin County. Many mentioned the strong spirit of volunteerism and helping that makes these towns special places to live. The high school students said they would like to be able to do more to help their communities. It appears that we should have all the necessary ingredients to start a clean up effort in these communities and to make it a long-term, on-going community event.

**Resources:**

Roger Schmidt  
City of Baker  
Ph: 406.778.7111  
Email: [rdls@midrivers.com](mailto:rdls@midrivers.com)

Dennis Kopitzke, Mayor  
City of Forsyth  
Box 226  
247 North 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Forsyth, MT 59327  
Phone: 406.356.2521  
Fax: 406.356.7560  
E-mail: [cityforsyth@mcn.net](mailto:cityforsyth@mcn.net)  
Web: [www.goforsyth.com](http://www.goforsyth.com)

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

**MAIN TOPIC: PROMOTING RETIREMENT IN JUDITH BASIN COUNTY**

The possibility of promoting retirement in the communities of Judith Basin County was mentioned by several participants of the listening sessions in Stanford, Hobson, and Geyser. This may seem contradictory because so many people mentioned trying to attract young families with children to help support the local schools. That desire is understandable but first requires available jobs. One of the basic fundamentals of economic development is to, first, focus on retaining the businesses you have. That means maintaining the demand for the goods and

services those businesses provide. That translates into having sufficient people to create the demand for those services. Ultimately, if sufficient numbers of persons retired or moved to communities in the county it would support the existing businesses and jobs and possibly result in other jobs to serve this population.

According to an editorial in a July 1991 Great Falls Tribune, which promoted the idea of recruiting retirees, a study by Washington State University estimated that the average retiree brings \$325,000 in assets with them. Every month, the communities that retirees live in get an infusion of dollars from Social Security, pensions, and retirement investments that are spent locally. This “mailbox economy”, as some refer to it, is often more insulated from the ups and downs of regional economic trends. Their presence in the community would support local retail sales, service sector jobs, and medical services. For example, in the case of the Stanford senior housing facility that has had problems with vacancies, an increased population of retirees could create additional demand for the available apartments. A study in Maine, which is promoting retirement as a state economic development policy, estimated that every retiree’s household moved to the state had the equivalent economic effect of 3.7 factory jobs.

The communities within Judith Basin County do have some attributes that could help retirement an attractive option for someone willing to re-locate. Some of those attributes are the same ones mentioned by current residents as the positive aspects of living in Stanford, Hobson or Geysler:

- Beautiful environment, scenic vistas, mountains
- Centrally located in Montana, access to Great Falls shopping and services
- Community pride and spirit, volunteerism
- Friendly, neighborly, small town atmosphere, no traffic
- Good bars and cafes/restaurants
- Good climate, clean air, peace and quiet
- Good fishing, hunting and access to public land and National Forest campgrounds
- Good schools, library, museum, churches
- Inexpensive cost of living, inexpensive houses available to buy
- Medical clinic
- Parks, swimming pools
- Safety, no crime
- Senior centers

Of course, these attributes would not appeal to everyone but that isn’t necessary. Just so it appeals to some might be sufficient. The explosive growth in the western tier of Montana counties is well known and the growth there will likely continue for the foreseeable future. Judith Basin County may not have scenery as spectacular as the Bitterroot or Mission Mountains or Flathead Lake, but by national standards it is very scenic, has good access to public lands in the National Forest, and has good fishing and hunting opportunities, plus many historic areas. It appears that the basic features attracting people are mountains, streams and lakes, and forests. This area has enough of these features to be seriously considered for a retirement location. Another issue that appears to be a major issue in retirement promotion is emphasizing safety and the lack of crime.

Many retirees moving into Montana have sold their homes in other states at substantially appreciated prices and are pleasantly surprised to find out how relatively inexpensive Montana real estate is. This is even occurring within Montana as people sell their property in the rapidly growing areas of western and southwest Montana and relocate to smaller communities that have not seen the same growth. The growth pressures in some areas of Montana are actually prompting many long time residents to move eastward to smaller towns to find the kind of atmosphere they feel is disappearing in the rapid growth areas. Housing in the Flathead is increasingly unaffordable for even moderate income families and many people feel like they are being squeezed out by higher costs of living and rising property taxes. It's these kinds of retirees that the communities in Judith Basin County could be marketing to.

The so-called Baby Boomer Generation includes people born between 1946 and 1964. The oldest of those would be in their mid-fifties and approaching retirement. Census figures estimate that by 2005, the 50-59 year old pre-retirement age group will reach 35 million people. This is an incredible potential market of millions of people all over the U.S., including Montana, who will be making decisions on where they will live in retirement. According to Travel Montana, 80 percent of leisure travelers are aged 50 and over, just the segment you would be trying to interest in your community. According to American Demographics magazine, since 1960, the net migration of adults aged 60 and over has been toward rural areas. In one survey, forty percent of people who lived in big cities said they would prefer to live in a smaller community.

### **Recommendations:**

The tools that might be used to promote retirement would be essentially the same ones that might be used for tourism promotion such as brochures on the county and the individual communities. The county website could be an very important resource for tourism and retirement promotion by providing basic information on the communities, local activities and events, and links for people to ask questions or seek more information. More and more, the Internet has become the basic method for people to research topics like this. For example, for questions on available housing or building sites, the website could have links to local realtors or e-mail addresses. You could prepare information packets on the area or put advertisements in newsletters or magazines targeted to seniors, such as those published by AARP or even in regional newspapers. One community used alumni lists from the local high school to find graduates who might be interested in returning home for retirement and possibly bringing their business with them. North Dakota actually developed a "Project Back Home" which tried to attract former residents by using mailing lists made up of people that had graduated from local schools and left the state. Three of the people who participated in the listening sessions said they had retired in Judith Basin because their spouses were from there and wanted to return. The most likely candidates to retire here are former residents or those that already have some kind of personal connection to or familiarity with the area. Over the years, many people have left Montana for employment opportunities that now might want to return as they near retirement age.

Retirees often bring much more than savings accounts to the communities they select for their retirement. These people are often successful business or government managers themselves who can bring new energy, ideas, enthusiasm, and volunteerism to their adopted communities.

People are discovering that small towns are wonderful places to live and work. For office-based and information management businesses, the owners can largely ignore distance as a market factor. In tiny Medicine Lake, Montana, a former resident returned home and created a web-based business that employs six local people.

This is a case where an effort to clean up deteriorated buildings and spruce up the towns could help efforts to promote tourism, investment, and, potentially, retirement in the community, too. Likewise, the efforts of the communities in Judith Basin County to upgrade their water and wastewater systems are fundamental steps for any effort to attract retirees. For the communities of Judith Basin County, tourism promotion, retirement promotion, and efforts to encourage economic development really overlap. Efforts to market retirement within the county might, at a minimum, increase tourism activity if potential residents travel to look at the area before they make a decision.

## **REPORT BY: MIKE SULLIVAN**

**MT Dept. of Agriculture**

**Business Development Officer**

**P.O. Box 200201**

**Helena, MT 59620-0201**

**Ph: 406.444.2402    Fx: 406.444.9442**

**Email: [misullivan@state.mt.us](mailto:misullivan@state.mt.us)**

**Web: <http://www.agr.state.mt.us>**

### **Overview:**

All the meeting participants in Judith Basin County expressed a great deal of pride in their communities, and dedicated interest to the long-term preservation and improvement of not only communities in the county, but of the way of life and ideals embodied by the residents of the county.

**Quite simply, the views expressed that, “Judith Basin County is a beautiful place to live, and even to retire, but a lack of jobs is keeping people from staying in/moving to Judith Basin County, and some of the services and entertainment options are lacking.”**

**Clearly the greatest need expressed was jobs, employment, and sustainable vocations to not only retain the youth of the county, but to encourage people to move to Judith Basin County.**

### **MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS ASSISTANCE**

Government has the ability to assist in the creation of jobs throughout the state.

A large selection of free services is available to entrepreneurs and business owners state wide, such as local economic development offices, Small Business Development Centers, (SBDC), and other business related services from state offices in Helena, such as exporting and marketing assistance, and even manufacturing assistance from the Montana Manufacturing Extension Center (MMEC).

Eighty-five percent of Americans view small businesses as a positive influence on American life (NFIB, 2001). An estimated 25.5 million small businesses in America employ more than half of the country's private workforce, create three of every four new jobs, and generate a majority of American innovations. Small businesses represent more than 99 percent of all employers (Small Business Administration, 2000).

We rely on the resiliency, creativity, and energy of small businesses.

SBA has established a size standard for most industries in the economy. The most common size standards are as follow:

- ▶ 500 employees for most manufacturing and mining industries
- ▶ 100 employees for all wholesale trade industries

- ▶\$6 million for most retail and service industries
- ▶\$28.5 million for most general & heavy construction industries
- ▶\$12 million for all special trade contractors
- ▶\$0.75 million for most agricultural industries

**Recommendations and Resources:**

A Business Steering Committee could develop a plan or a scope of business recruitment for Judith Basin County. The committee would work with Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis. The steering committee would have the opportunity to explore developing local legislation for tax incentives and tax abatements, or even working to develop a Tax Increment Finance District (TIFD).

Barbara Andreozzi, an Extension Agent from Anaconda is extremely well versed and adept at helping communities to develop their own criteria and focus for expansion, growth and development.

Barbara Andreozzi, Deer Lodge Co.  
 BANDREOZZI@montana.edu .  
 (406) 563-4035, (406) 563-4036

The Montana Department of Revenue lists business tax incentives for both corporate and property taxes. These lists are available off the internet:

<http://discoveringmontana.com/revenue/css/3forbusinesses/03taxincentives.asp>

Tax Increment Finance Districts are another consideration in making relocation more attractive to businesses. The municipality, a city or county, designates a geographic area as the TIFD site. The TIFD then provides a vehicle for paying for improvements that would be used by a business, but owned by the municipality, such as power, water, sewer, roads, and others. See the Montana Codes Annotated 7-15-4282 through 4293:

<http://data.opi.state.mt.us/bills/mca/7/15/7-15-4282.htm>. Mae Nan Ellingson is an attorney and an authority on TIFDs in Montana.

Mae Nan Ellingson  
 (406) 721-6025  
 Dorsey & Whitney LLP  
 125 Bank Street; Suite 600  
 Missoula, MT 59802

NxLevel Entrepreneurial Training is comprised of a ten to 12-week series of classes designed to assist entrepreneurs and business owners with education on how to start businesses, resources, contacts and other considerations. There is also an agriculture-specific version of NxLevel called “Tilling the Soil of Opportunity.” For more information, the Montana Department of Commerce has a NxLevel coordinator:

Philip Belangie  
 728-9234 ext. 202  
 301 S. Park  
 Helena, MT 59601

<http://www.nxlevel.org/Pages/main.html>

Local economic development offices have resources, knowledgeable personnel, networking and contact information, and some have loans or finance programs. The nearest office is the Snowy Mountain Development Corporation:

Kathie Bailey  
613 NE Main  
Lewistown, MT 59457  
(406) 538-2591  
[smdcdist6@hotmail.com](mailto:smdcdist6@hotmail.com)

There are several Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) located around the state; the nearest one is in Great Falls, run by Susie David. She can help people develop good business plans, typically a vital component when applying for loans and other financing. Business plans also address the mission statement, marketing, and financial parameters of a new business.

[Suzanne David](mailto:suzie@hpda.org) - [suzie@hpda.org](mailto:suzie@hpda.org)  
Director, Great Falls SBDC  
Great Falls Development Authority  
710 1st Avenue North/PO Box 2568  
Great Falls MT 59403-2568  
(406) 453-8834  
FAX: (406) 454-2995  
[Great Falls SBDC Website](http://www.hpda.org/smallbusiness.htm) - <http://www.hpda.org/smallbusiness.htm>  
[http://commerce.state.mt.us/BRD/BRD\\_SBDC\\_map.html](http://commerce.state.mt.us/BRD/BRD_SBDC_map.html)

The Montana Manufacturing Extension Center, based in Bozeman, has several engineers around the state that can meet with companies to help determine ways to improve a business' manufacturing process. The engineer for Judith Basin County is Todd Daniels

Todd Daniels  
301 South Park  
Helena, MT 59601  
(406) 841-2745  
(406) 841-2731 (fax)  
e-mail: [tdaniels@state.mt.us](mailto:tdaniels@state.mt.us)  
<http://www.mmec.montana.edu/>

USDA Rural Development Montana Office offers a great deal of assistance. One of those areas of assistance is cooperative development services. Bill Barr manages USDA-RD Cooperative Services

Bill Barr  
(406) 585-2545  
(406) 585-2565 fax  
[Bill.Barr@mt.usda.gov](mailto:Bill.Barr@mt.usda.gov)  
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt/RBS/coops.htm>

## **MAIN TOPIC: FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

The Montana Department of Agriculture has programs designed to provide financial assistance to rural enterprises.

### **Recommendations and Resources:**

Lee Boyer is the Bureau Chief of the Rural Development Bureau at the department, and the loan programs the bureau administers include:

The Rural Assistance Loan Program, which provides loans to producers with modest financial investments in agriculture. These loans finance agricultural enterprises to provide financial experience and assist in the economic growth and welfare of Montana agriculture.

The Rural Community Development Grant program helps fund community development projects, conducted by rural youth organizations such as FFA and 4-H, to encourage rural youth to conduct projects that will improve the quality of life in Montana communities and will foster the interaction between the rural and urban parts of these communities.

The Montana Junior Agriculture Loan Program was developed to assist and encourage members of agricultural youth organizations in financing agricultural projects; especially those unable to obtain financing from other sources. Such projects can involve crop and livestock production, custom farming, marketing and distribution, processing, and other financially feasible projects.

Lastly, there is the Beginning Farmer and Rancher loan, designed to help keep young people in the field of agriculture.

Lee Boyer  
Montana Department of Agriculture  
PO Box 200201  
Helena, MT 59620-0201  
(406) 444-2402  
(406) 444-9442 fax  
[lboyer@state.mt.us](mailto:lboyer@state.mt.us)

One of the Montana Department of Agriculture's most unique financial assistance programs is the Growth Through Agriculture program. Growth Through Agriculture was established to strengthen and diversify Montana's agricultural industry through activities promoting private-public sector partnerships to assist in the development and commercialization of new agricultural products and processes. The intent is to create jobs and expand agricultural business opportunities.

Quinn Holzer  
Montana Department of Agriculture  
P.O. Box 200201  
Helena, Montana 59620-0201  
(406) 444-2402  
(406) 444-9442 fax

[gholzer@state.mt.us](mailto:gholzer@state.mt.us)

Regional Development Officers (RDO) are part of the Montana Department of Commerce. They work in a similar capacity to the SBDC offices around the state offering business assistance, yet the RDOs have an extra emphasis on financing, including working with Community Development Block Grants. The RDO for Judith Basin County is Randy Hanson, based out of Havre.

Randy Hanson  
P.O. Box 311  
Havre, Mt 59501-0311  
(406) 262-9579  
(406) 262-9581 fax  
[hanson@ibic4.ibic.org](mailto:hanson@ibic4.ibic.org)

USDA Rural Development has a large selection of funds available for various rural development needs. John Guthmiller is the Program Director for Montana USDA Rural Development, and he has a very helpful and knowledgeable staff ready to answer questions and assist.

John D. Guthmiller  
USDA Rural Development  
Bozeman, MT  
(406) 585-2549  
[John.Guthmiller@mt.usda.gov](mailto:John.Guthmiller@mt.usda.gov)  
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt/index.htm>

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) is a part of the federal department of commerce. The EDA has the ability to assist with financing large infrastructure projects.

John Rogers  
Economic Development Administration  
Helena, MT  
(406) 449-5380  
[edrmteda@aol.com](mailto:edrmteda@aol.com)  
<http://www.osec.doc.gov/eda/>  
<http://www.commerce.gov/>

The Montana Board of Investments has funding available to work with virtually every bank in the state to provide a variety of loans to businesses in Montana. In some cases loan amounts can be in excess of \$60 million.

Herb Kulow, CMB  
Senior Portfolio Manager  
[Hkulow@state.mt.us](mailto:Hkulow@state.mt.us)  
(406) 444-1218  
(406) 449-6579 fax  
<http://www.investmentmt.com/>

**MAIN TOPIC: AGRICULTURE**

The subject of agriculture came up often, as did the issues related to drought, CRP, low prices, value-added agriculture and agricultural diversity, yet everyone expressed great pride and appreciation for the renowned quality of Judith Basin County's primary crops of livestock and small grains.

The Montana Department of Agriculture has several ways to assist with the development and expansion of agricultural projects and value-added enterprises in our state.

**Recommendations and Resources:**

The Agriculture Marketing and Business Development Bureau has marketing staff to help provide state, national, and international marketing assistance. This assistance is available free of charge.

Montana's Choice is a promotion to help identify Montana products on the shelves of participating grocery stores. The program will start up again this spring. There are more than 400 food companies in Montana that produce everything from buffalo hot dogs to fudge, to spices and condiments, to bottled beverages. Montana's Choice makes these Montana products more visible to consumers.

<http://www.agr.state.mt.us/business/company.shtml>

The Trade Show Assistance Program (TSAP) provides financial assistance and direction for Montana businesses looking to attend state and national trade shows to help expand their markets. Companies can apply for reimbursement for a percentage of the cost of attending many trade venues, including farmer's markets, fair booths, and local, regional and national trade shows.

<http://www.agr.state.mt.us/business/TSAP.shtml>

The Buyers Guide, and the Food and Beverage Directory are published every other year at no cost to either those participating in the publications, or to those receiving the publication. These reference books are links to agricultural producers and processors across Montana.

<http://www.agr.state.mt.us/programs/add/BUYGUIDE.shtml>

Brent Poppe, Bureau Chief  
Agriculture Marketing and Business Development Bureau  
PO Box 200201  
Helena, MT 59620-0201  
(406) 444-2402  
(406) 444-9442 fax  
[bpoppe@state.mt.us](mailto:bpoppe@state.mt.us)

## **REPORT BY: CINDY E. STENE**

**Community Development Manager**

**USDA Rural Development**

**12 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW, Suite 300**

**Great Falls, Mt 59404**

**(406)727-7580 Ext 4**

**(406)452-3806 fax**

**[Cindy.Stene@mt.usda.gov](mailto:Cindy.Stene@mt.usda.gov)**

### **OVERVIEW**

Over and over the assessment team heard “it’s the people that make our community”. I truly believe that concept based on the meetings we sat in on and the people we talked to. There are needs and wants in each community, but overall people like the small town atmosphere.

USDA Rural Development has many programs available to meet these needs and wants. We basically have every program available to build a community from the ground up. Our mission is to “Improve the Quality of Life for Rural Montana”.

The web site for all of the programs available is [www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt) . The programs available include:

#### **Business Programs**

Business & Industry Guaranteed Loan Program (B&I)

Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program (RBEG)

Rural Business Opportunity Grant Program (RBOG)

Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant Program (REDLG)

Business Intermediary Relending Program (IRP)

#### **Cooperative Programs**

Rural Cooperative Development Grant Program (RCDG)

Cooperative Stock Purchase Program

Cooperative Services Technical Assistance

#### **Single Family Housing Programs**

Guaranteed Loan Program

502 Direct Loan Program

504 Home Improvement Loan and Grant Program

#### **Multi Family Housing Programs**

515 Direct Loan Program

538 Guaranteed Loan Program

533 Housing Preservation Grant Program

514/516 Farm Labor Housing Loan & Grant Program

Mutual Self-Help Housing Technical Assistance Grant Program

## **Community Facilities Programs**

Guaranteed Loan Program

Direct Loan and Grant Program

## **Utilities Programs**

Water & Environmental Programs

Distance Learning & Telemedicine Programs

It is understood that Rural Development is a wealth of information, but can't be the answer for everything. Below are some additional recommendations that I have for other agencies and programs.

### **MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY - Housing**

Issue: Some areas are identified areas of vacant homes, abandoned homes and sub-standard housing. This does not make the community a very desirable place to live or stop when visitors come through the town.

### **Recommendations and Resources:**

Consider making needed repairs and improvements before they get to the sub-standard point.

1. USDA Rural Development (RD) 504 Home Improvement Program - RD has loan and grant home improvement program for very low income homeowners that occupy the property to make necessary. The max loan amount is \$20,000 with an interest rate of 1% and can be termed out over a max of 20 years. Other rules and regulations apply.

Contact the Rural Development Office in Great Falls for Judith Basin County:

USDA Rural Development Office

12 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW, Suite 300

Great Falls, Mt 59404

(406)727-7580 Ext 4

(406)452-3806 fax

2. Home equity loans through local lenders are available for moderate income families.

3. Programs are available to public bodies to repair and rehabilitate rental and owner-occupied housing.

Contact the USDA Rural Development Office in Bozeman for this program for JB Co.

USDA Rural Development

PO Box 850

Bozeman, MT 59771

(406)585-2515

4. Please note that programs are available for people who want to own their own home. If you can get people into home ownership, maybe that could lessen the amount of vacant homes available. Classes are available to learn about the home ownership process and about financing sources for the home and for closing costs. Contact:

Central MT RC&D  
Carrie Mantooth  
1613 NE Main  
Lewistown, MT 59457  
(406)538-2591

**MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY – Welcome Signage**

Issue: Welcome signage

There is not much signage going into and out of the county. People are passing by without stopping or even slowing down as they may not know the community that well or what services they may offer. Congress passed the Highway Beautification Act to control and limit signs along the interstate and primary highways which allows the traveling public to enjoy the nation's scenic beauty. MDT is responsible for enforcing laws and failure to do so could jeopardize millions of dollars in highway construction funds.

**Recommendations and Resources:** There were several comments made about the “people” in each of the communities and how they were kind, friendly, caring and hardworking. Success of communities may not depend on the number of people who pass by, but the quality of their visit.

2. The SUPERHOST! Program - Montana already has a comprehensive customer service training/visitor information program in place. It is designed to create an awareness and understanding of Montana's travel industry and to enhance the level of customer service provided by the industry. Ultimately, the program strives to encourage the state's visitors to stay longer, to tell their friends about the positive experiences they found here and the great people they met, and to make plans to return to the state year after year. The SUPERHOST! Program stands ready to lead the way in educating Montana communities and businesses about the importance and economic impact of Montana's tourism industry. Signs are available to show you are a member of the SUPERHOST! Program.

Additional information available on their Web site:

[www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/OURPROGRAMS/Superhost.htm](http://www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/OURPROGRAMS/Superhost.htm)

To set up a SUPERHOST! Seminar contact:

Call: 406-756-3832

Fax: 406-756-3351

Email: [superhost@fvcc.edu](mailto:superhost@fvcc.edu)

Jeri Mae Rowley – Statewide Coordinator

SUPERHOST!

Flathead Valley Community College 777 Grandview

Kalispell, MT 59901

3. Outdoor Advertising in Montana – Again, community pride was a comment we heard over and over. Let them know you are it! Consider a sign at each end of the county with one side stating “Welcome to Judith Basin County – Russell Country” as people enter the county and the other side stating “Thanks, Please come again!” as people leave the county. Then, each town has a sign. Whether it be a sign that states: “Town” “Home of the (mascot)” and the “Basketball/ football champions” etc. Each sign can be similar in size and design to depict a team attitude.

Additional information regarding specific limitations such as where they may be located, how close they can be to other permitted signs, how large they can be, and how they must be maintained, applications and fee schedules are available on their Web site:  
[www.mdt.state.mt.us/rw/oacinfo.html](http://www.mdt.state.mt.us/rw/oacinfo.html)

MT Department of Transportation  
Right-of-Way Bureau  
Great Falls District  
104 18<sup>th</sup> Ave NE, PO Box 1359  
Great Falls, MT 59403-1359  
Phone: (406)727-4350

### **MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY – Beautification and Blight**

Issue: Beautification and Blight

**Recommendations:** Spruce up down town or main blvds. What a better way to advertise the beauty of your community to visitors and make the home town people feel good.

1. Have the garden club plant flowers and keep them maintained. This club is not a year long commitment, only a four month time frame. Many people get spring fever and love to garden. Can do a fund raiser or raffle for money. Some estates may leave money for the club. Contact foundations for funding.
2. Hang Christmas decorations from light poles. Contact bigger cities and see if they have and old decorations they want to get rid of.
3. Have a May or April clean up day. Many students were willing to volunteer to help clean up the community.

### **MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY – Welcome Newcomers**

Issue: Welcome newcomers to town

Some newcomers felt very welcomed in a community others felt as though the community was reluctant to listen to new comers.

**Recommendations:**

1. Establish a Welcome Wagon Committee - The committee can responsible for preparing a “Welcome Wagon Basket” that contains information about the community, government services, community leaders, attractions, local business located there, list of community events, churches, daycare centers, a small product compliments each local merchant, a coupon for a free meal at a local restaurant, list of Volunteer Services available, Volunteer Survey sheet, and even a loaf of banana bread or a plant/flower. This basket should be delivered personally by a member of the committee.
2. Everyone, introduce yourself to the newcomer. Take time to get to know them personally, not just the Welcome Wagon Committee. So many times the community already knows the newcomers, but the newcomer does not know the people who have lived there for years. A new community is so overwhelming and it is hard to remember everyone new you meet. You never know, you may have a great new volunteer right under your nose.

**MAIN TOPIC: JOBS/ POPULATION/ SCHOOL LINK – Promotion and Marketing**

Issue: Promotion and Marking

Not much marketing has been done to promote the community. And communities may not be using other communities’ assets to their potential.

**Recommendations and Resources:**

1. Currently, there is one chamber of commerce for the county. The web site address is [www.judithbasin.com](http://www.judithbasin.com). The Judith Basin Area Chamber of Commerce should be the voice of business and catalyst for economic growth. Working together as a team. When one community succeeds from economic growth, others may prosper from it. The main web site should have links to each towns own web site. Show people pictures of the beauty of what you are trying to sell or get them to visit. Each town should prepare a web site and keep it updated with community events, activities, businesses, etc.
2. Get information on the [www.visitmt.com](http://www.visitmt.com) web site updated. It does not list all of the businesses and activities you have in your local towns. This is free advertisement that you may be missing out on.
3. The Russell County travel planner magazine is a publication offered free to individuals wanting more information about Russell Country. Check into a larger article or advertisement.

**MAIN TOPIC: JOBS/ POPULATION/ SCHOOL LINK - Business**

Issue: Business Retention, Recruitment and Support

**Recommendation and Resources:** Many existing businesses appear to be struggling. On the other hand, there is an opportunity for some entrepreneurial spirit.

1. Tap into retirement experience. Establish a Service Corps of Retired Executives Association (SCORE) group or see if the businesses can use the group already established in Great Falls. The primary objective is to provide FREE confidential, technical and managerial guidance to

existing or prospective members of the business community to increase their potential for success and further the free enterprise system.

SCORE in Great Falls  
761-4434  
[score@sofast.net](mailto:score@sofast.net)

2. Free help for businesses. Funded jointly by the U.S. Small Business Administration and the Montana Department of Commerce, the Montana Small Business Development Center (SBDC) works to increase profits for small Montana firms and to create jobs for the state's workers.

The SBDC accomplishes this goal by offering free confidential counseling, business training, and information to small business owners statewide. With the assistance of the SBDC's full-time professional staff, Montana's entrepreneurs can develop or enhance the financial, managerial, and technical skills they need to succeed in today's highly competitive business world.

High Plains Financial and Port Authority / SBDC  
Suzanne David, Director  
PO Box 2568  
Great Falls, MT 59403  
(406)453-8834

3. The Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) outreach program identifies and assists Montana companies in research and development grants from ten federal agencies. Nationwide, the SBIR program has helped to bring thousands of products from concept to the commercial market. For more information, call the

Program Coordinator at 406-444-4780.

4. The MicroBusiness Technical Assistance Program provides basic business training to low-income micro business owners in Montana. The program will use distance-learning technologies such as video, audio conferencing, and the Internet to make training available statewide. An important feature of the MicroBusiness Technical Assistance Program is to direct people to resources in their area for specific and hands-on training.

For more information, call 406-522-8861.

5. The MicroBusiness Development Corporation offers loans for startup or expansion.

Human Resource Development Council, District VI  
300 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N, Suite 203  
Lewistown, MT 59457  
406-538-7488  
406-538-2843

1-800-766-3018

5. A couple of small businesses have a need for part time person or additional help. If each business was willing to share a “person” they could each pay a portion of wages. The “entrepreneur” could contract to each business for a certain number of hours each week or month with the potential of full time work.
6. There are over 70,000 foundations that can be tapped into for funding sources. It is just a matter of finding them. An “entrepreneur” could contract out with certain organizations for put in for applications on their behalf. A portion of the funding for the grant writer may be able to be paid out of the foundation funds (guidelines may vary). Check out The Foundation Center web site at [www.fdncenter.org](http://www.fdncenter.org) for information on proposal writing seminars and grant seeking. The State of MT also has a web site at [www.state.mt.us/prc/](http://www.state.mt.us/prc/) .

**MAIN TOPIC:        JOBS / POPULATION / SCHOOL LINK – Tourism and Recreation**

Issue: Tourism in general and recreation

**Recommendations and Resources:** Many people talked about the natural resources and the beauty of the mountains. Look into creating mountain bike trails and outdoor adventures for visitors.

1. The Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks has a recreational Trails Grant Application that can be used for all types of trails including non-motorized, multiple use, community, rural and back country. The department also provides advice and assistance with trail design and management. [www.fwp.state.mt.us](http://www.fwp.state.mt.us)

For more detailed information on bicycle tours, bicycle and pedestrian routes and trails in MT contact these sites:

Recreational Trails, Inc.  
PO Box 553  
Great Falls, MT 59403  
761-4966  
[tailsrus@in-tch.com](mailto:tailsrus@in-tch.com)

Adventure Cycling Association  
[www.adv-cycling.org](http://www.adv-cycling.org)

## **REPORT BY: Gloria O'Rourke**

**Montana Economic Developers Association**

**Montana Economic Development Services**

**118 E. Seventh St.; Suite 2A**

**Anaconda, MT 59711**

**Phone: 406.563.5259**

**Fax: 406.563.5476**

**E-Mail: Gloria@medamembers.org**

**Web: <http://www.medamembers.org>**

### **GENERAL OVERVIEW - and Top Four Recommendations**

It was my privilege to be a part of the Judith Basin County Resource Team Assessment. At times, I wished that each one of you could have been in my seat to hear all that the people of your community had to say. Yes, there are some problems, but the assets you have far, far outweigh those problems. I found myself more and more excited as the listening sessions went on as the comments confirmed the fact that the area has all that it needs – in its people. The people of Judith Basin County are the greatest asset you have.

I do have four recommendations that could make an impact on any project or plan Judith Basin undertakes.

1. Utilize the Volunteer Survey sheets that were filled out during each session. Snowy Mountain Development already created a database gleaned from the information volunteers wrote down that they were willing to do. Read over the database (attached in this report) and start tapping some shoulders. It is easier to ask someone to jump into a project when they have already indicated their interest.
2. Participate in MEDA. The Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) is an association of economic development professionals. MEDA is made up of lead economic developers, business specialists, government employees, and staff members of affiliated non-profit organizations which promote and foster economic development activities in Montana. MEDA, a non-profit organization, is high on networking and mutual assistance that would be of benefit to Judith Basin County. Learn more about MEDA by visiting their website at <http://www.medamembers.org/> and attend the spring conference April 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> in Helena (information is also on the website).
3. Let bygones be bygones. Perhaps this is the hardest of my four overall recommendations. In this difficult time of stretched resources, dwindling populations and reduced budgets, there must be no accommodation for a “we vs. them” attitude. A process must begin to rebuild trust and communication between the communities of Judith Basin County. Only in working together as a region will Judith Basin County survive and thrive. If your county needs help in pulling together, call in an outside facilitator. Montana is blessed with many talented individuals that specialize in conflict resolution. As a starting point, here are several references: Barbara Andreozzi, MSU Extension, 800 Main, Anaconda,

MT 59711, ph: 563-4000; Gene Vuckovich, GV Consulting, [genev@ixi.net](mailto:genev@ixi.net). Another resource is the Heartland Institute. The Heartland Institute was founded in 1995 by Patricia and Craig Neal with the belief that by linking personal growth with organizational transformation, individuals can achieve their greatest dreams and organizations can serve the greater good. The Heartland Institute works to “discover the untapped resources of spirit and creative energies in individuals, businesses, and organizational life. By bringing greater purpose and meaning to work, we ultimately achieve the highest levels of productivity in our organizations.” Several colleagues have attended the Heartland Institute trainings and have found them to be well worth the time and expense. For more information visit <http://www.heartlandinstitute.com>.

Contact: Heartland Institute  
4243 Grimes Ave S  
Edina, MN 55416  
Phone: 952-925-5995  
Fax: 952-920-7168  
Email: [patricia@heartlandinstitute.com](mailto:patricia@heartlandinstitute.com)  
Web: <http://www.heartlandinstitute.com>

4. Do utilize your nearby economic development assets. MT Department of Commerce Regional Development Officer, Randy Hanson, is an incredible resource for topics all across the board in the economic development field. Also, do not hesitate to call on the Central Montana RC&D. They have an excellent staff and programs that are designed to assist communities in a variety of ways.

Contact: Randy Hanson, MT DOC/RDO  
Box 311  
Havre, MT 59501  
Phone: 406.262.9579  
Fax: 406.262.9581  
Email: [hanson@ibic4.ibic.org](mailto:hanson@ibic4.ibic.org)

Central Montana RC&D  
P.O. Box 656  
Roundup, MT 59072  
Ph: 406.323.2755

In my comments below, I will include several topics identified during our Listening Sessions, make recommendations and include contact information for available resources.

### **MAIN TOPIC: INFRASTRUCTURE**

Under this topic of infrastructure, the sub-topics of water, solid waste, sewer, streets and sidewalks were frequently mentioned by the community members of Judith Basin County.

### **Recommendations:**

Knowing very little about water issues in a community, I will leave that to my fellow team members to address.

As for sidewalks and streets – for maintenance and beautification purpose, initiate an Adopt-A-Sidewalk/Street campaign to remove weeds, trash and in winter - snow. The program can be patterned after Neighborhood Watch where one person per block or block area is the coordinator. To encourage interest and participation, a contest can be held every month with a photo of the project and the volunteer placed in the local newspaper. Businesses could also get involved with a Business of the Month beautification award. A little effort and pride will cause a ripple effect and increase pride community-wide.

Perhaps your community wants to create walking trails or put in sidewalks where previously none existed. Put together a taskforce that could:

- map where current sidewalks are located.
- Map out where sidewalks need to be in high pedestrian traffic areas (schools, public facilities, shopping areas)
- Map out where the group feels other sidewalks ought to be placed
- Identify cracked or broken sidewalks and establish which have the highest pedestrian traffic to prioritize repair

### **Resources**

Utilize program resources mentioned by other team members in this report.

### **MAIN TOPIC: TRANSPORTATION**

Each community we visited mentioned similar issues regarding transportation: better utilization of local airport and railroad; highway speed reduction; better utilization of commercial bus service; and commuting options for youth and Senior Citizens.

### **Airport Recommendation:**

I recommend that you contact Betty Curry of Beartooth RC&D. She has experience in improving local airport utilization having worked with the community of Laurel and the Laurel airport. I contacted Betty and she is expecting your call or email.

### **Airport Resource:**

Contact Betty Curry

Beartooth RC&D

P.O. Box 180

Joliet, MT 59041

Ph: 406.962.3914

Fx: 406.962.3647

Email: [Betty.Curry@mt.usda.gov](mailto:Betty.Curry@mt.usda.gov)

**Highway Speed Reduction Recommendation:**

The request to have a lower speed limit near Stanford, Hobson and Geysler came up repeatedly during our Listening Sessions. I spoke with Doug Bailey of Montana Department of Transportation regarding this issue. Doug was very helpful and offered the following information:

A study was done regarding the speed limit near Stanford about five years ago. At that time it was determined that the average pace of cars and the amount of traffic the highway received in that area was compatible with the non-numeric speed limit at that time. Doug suggested that with the now numeric speed limit, Stanford could address this issue once again. Doug also said that a study has never been done for Hobson and Geysler.

Doug explained that the Department of Transportation works with local officials on this matter – so the place to start is with a group of concerned citizens approaching the Judith Basin County Commissioners. Once a request has been made by the Commissioners for a study, the Department can set the wheels in motion. Doug commented that several studies have been done near Raynesford – and determined signage (a “guide sign”) was needed to alert drivers that a community was in the near vicinity.

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

Doug noted that Stanford and Hobson sit well away from the highway – which contributes to not lowering the speed limit.

**Highway Speed Reduction Resource:**

Doug Bailey  
Montana Department of Transportation  
P.O. Box 201001  
Helena, MT 59620-1001  
Ph: 406.444.6220  
Email: [dobailey@state.mt.us](mailto:dobailey@state.mt.us)  
6220 (444)

**Transportation Within and Between Communities Recommendation:**

I had a wonderful discussion with David Jacobs of the MT Department of Transportation. After explaining to David the need in Judith Basin County for transportation within communities as well as between communities, David offered the following:

There are two grant programs that would be applicable to Judith Basin County’s needs. The grants, one Federal and one State, compliment each other beautifully. The Federal grant provides equipment only while the State grant provides operational funding.

The Federal Grant, referred to as Section 5310 program, provides funds for strictly capital assistance, i.e., purchasing a vehicle for the elderly and disabled. For example, a Senior Citizen Center could apply each year for capital assistance – funded at an 80% federal 20% local match. A group can apply for a bus, van, whatever the transportation need may be.

The 2001 Legislature voted in a new state transit program called TRANSADE – which stands for Transportation Assistance for the Disabled and Elderly. This program provides operating assistance in the form of state money to agencies that are providing services for the elderly and disabled. A community/county now has the option of applying for Federal funds for equipment and for state funds for operating costs of that equipment.

I asked David if the vehicle could be used to transport youth or non-elderly or non-disabled passengers. He explained that if additional seats are available, you can open the seating up to anyone. You must first make sure to give preference to serving the elderly and disabled.

David further explained that MT Department of Transportation holds grant application workshops in the fall – usually in October. Applications are due in his office by February 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. Notice of the workshops is sent to every Senior Citizen Center in the state – or just call David to get placed on the mailing list.

**Resource:**

David Jacobs  
Montana Department of Transportation  
2701 Prospect Ave.  
P.O. Box 201001  
Helena, MT 59620-1001  
ph: 406/444-6120  
fax: 406/444-7671  
E-Mail: [dajacobs@state.mt.us](mailto:dajacobs@state.mt.us)

Tod Schoenrock  
Community Transportation Association of America  
1341 G St NW, 10th Floor, Washington DC 20005  
Phone Tod: 202.624.1736  
Email: [schoenrock@ctaa.org](mailto:schoenrock@ctaa.org)  
Fax: 202.737.9197  
Web: <http://www.ctaa.org>

Montana Transit Association  
President Steve Earle  
406.543.8386  
[Searle@mountainline.com](mailto:Searle@mountainline.com)

## **MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY**

Under the topic of community, the Resource Team identified the following main sub-topics: Childcare (especially for Stanford), Health/Fitness Center, Recreational Facilities, Recreation Center, Volunteerism, Beautification and Blight, Welcome Signage, Welcoming Newcomers, Attitude or Mind Set Adjustment, Support of Local Businesses, Better Use of Foundation funds and Strengthening the Arts.

It is usually easier to build and expand on existing organizations than to create new organizations or programs. For example, you have several active church groups that are working together - tap into that already organized resource to implement community improvements or projects. Below are several specific suggestions on some of these sub-topics.

**Group Activities Recommendation** – ask that the local church groups join together and as a group offer activities on a monthly basis to the people of Judith Basin County. A different church could be responsible for the non-denominational activity each week and car-pool to provide transportation. For example, the Hobson church groups would come up with an activity and notify the other groups in Stanford, Mocassin, Utica, etc. Designated drivers in each community would provide transportation to the event. This group activity could meet several needs: improve communication between communities, welcome newcomers, include youth, and generate income for local businesses.

This kind of group activity is currently working well in Anaconda with a youth group focus. An empty (no longer in use) downtown restaurant building is used as the regular meeting place.

### **Resources:**

Investigate faith-based funding for providing child care, transportation or services to improve your community.

**Faith based info:** More and more communities are learning how to tap into Faith Based fund to create programs that meet specific community needs. I have listed two sources below – one Montana based and the other in Washington, DC. The following restrictions do apply: *Compassion Capital Funds cannot be used for direct services to needy individuals or families nor to replace/supplant existing funding available for similar activities. Funds cannot be used to support 'inherently religious' activities and/or practices such as religious instruction, worship, prayer or any form of proselytization nor can they be used to purchase any religious or scriptural materials.*

### **Faith and Communities Engaged in Service (FACES)**

FACES helps national service grantees and programs to reach out to these organizations and assists such organizations in learning about opportunities available through the Corporation.

[Colleen Minson](#)

[Sarita Hill Coletrane](#)

1000 Connecticut Avenue, NW

13th Floor

Washington, DC 20036

800-355-1200

[faces@ncpc.org](mailto:faces@ncpc.org)

<http://nsrc.etr.org/article/view/236/1/10/>

### **Montana Faith Based Cooperative:**

The Montana Faith-Health Cooperative was officially formed in June of 2001, and planning, development and implementation of the state-wide collaborative effort is being directed by a [Steering Committee](#) consisting of representatives from the faith community and health care establishment. One project of the Montana Faith-Health Cooperative is the [Montana Faith-Health Demonstration Project](#), funded through the [Compassion Capital Fund](#) (see [Restrictions](#) below), [Administration for Children and Families](#), [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#). The overarching goal of the project is to provide technical assistance and sub-awards to assist Faith-Based and Community-Based Organizations in the delivery of health and [social services](#) to poor and needy individuals and families. In addition to making sub-awards, the Montana Faith-Health Demonstration Project will be providing funds to support the following ongoing programs: Parish Nurse training and Congregational Health Ministry training through the Parish Nurse Center, Carroll College; continuing education through the Northern Rockies Institute of Theology; and prisoner-community re-entry through Teach, Encourage, Assist and Model (T.E.A.M.) Mentoring, Inc.

Additional information about the Montana Faith-Health Cooperative can be found at <http://faithhealthcoop.montana.edu/aboutus.html>.

**Community - Volunteerism Recommendation** – the life and heart of a community! Do use the volunteer database built by Snowy Mountain Development Corporation that is included in this report. Individuals have already indicated their area of interest and are expecting to be approached. Here are ideas as to where to find more volunteers:

1. [Business/Corporate volunteer programs](#) - provide opportunities for employees to become involved in service to the community. Some businesses even allow their employees to work with nonprofit organizations during the workday. You might even discover a new funding source when obtaining corporate or business volunteers.
2. [Scope out other organizations](#) - churches and other institutions with volunteer programs offer a wealth of volunteer prospects who are motivated by their beliefs to serve their community. Service committees and youth groups within these organizations can be a great source of volunteers for special events or other group activities.
3. [Try internship programs](#) - at colleges and high schools. Some internship programs require a stipend for the students while many others provide interns free of charge in exchange for a meaningful volunteer project. For example, interns can develop a marketing plan, perform prospect research, organize a special event, or manage a telemarketing campaign. With the internet, an intern never has to step foot in your community.

4. Career counseling centers - can help you identify individuals who are changing careers and considering entering the nonprofit sector as volunteers. These individuals may need to build their nonprofit resume by volunteering with nonprofit organizations in the community.

5. Civic clubs, fraternal organizations, sororities and fraternities - can be great resources for large numbers of volunteers needed for group projects. For example, a local Rotary Club may assist you with security along the route of a 10K Run or distribute refreshments at a school carnival.

6. Newspapers, radio, television - are excellent vehicles to promote your volunteer needs. Press and media can be enlisted as sponsors of your events and encourage people throughout the community to become involved with and attend your events. Some offer free or as-available space to help you advertise.

7. Governmental offices at local, state, and federal levels may also be a source of volunteers to assist your organization. Many governmental organizations allow employees to leave work for up to one half day a week to serve as volunteers in the community.

8. Court systems offer a ready source of individuals who have committed minor offenses and who have to provide community service in lieu of jail. These volunteers can be of great assistance in performing tasks such as setting up or cleaning up a special event. Our own office benefited greatly from the skills of a high school student who was sentenced to community service. The student was sentenced for hacking into and harming our local high school computer network. Our office realized his computer skills would be of value to us in servicing our computer network. It turned out to be a win-win situation for everyone involved.

9. Volunteer recruitment fairs can be conducted along with other nonprofit organizations to reach a wide audience of volunteer prospects.

10. Other nonprofit organizations can be a tremendous resource in identifying and recruiting volunteers for your organization. If the volunteer needs are made clear to our associates in other nonprofit organizations they can steer volunteers your way who may not fit within their current volunteer needs.

### **How do you keep and encourage the volunteers you currently have in your community?**

1. Ask first if they'd like to be publicly acknowledged, then include them in an event
2. Send a letter to their supervisor at work...tell the manager how much you appreciate their hard work and special qualities.
3. Write an article in your newsletter
4. Have a board or staff member call them to advise them of how much they are appreciated
5. Send a visitor with a flower
6. Have a board member or other special person invite them to an executive lunch in a special place
7. Invite them to a special event or dinner...and honor them there
8. Write an article about their work in your neighborhood or city newspaper

9. Call them to talk and get their ideas
10. Give them more responsibility - but watch for burnout!

### **Community - Stanford Youth Center Recommendation:**

It seems that in every resource team visit, sooner or later, the subject of a youth center is raised. The students of Stanford seemed especially interested in “a place to go and hang out.” It appears to be a difficult task because the facility must be appealing to teens, affordable, somewhat supervised and attract a healthy mix of the entire youth population – ranging from school athletes, intellectuals, privileged as well as the underprivileged student. In my search for answers, I came across a wonderful website sponsored by the National Youth Employment Coalition. NYEC is a non-partisan national organization dedicated to promoting policies and initiatives that help youth succeed in becoming lifelong learners, productive workers and self-sufficient citizens. The program has a special section called “Youth Zone” and gives practical advice and examples of youth center projects: “Whether you have a youth center, are planning to start one or want ideas on how to enhance your employment program to effectively engage youth, check out the resources on this page for examples of programs already out there, resources for planning and information on how to serve youth.” Visit the website at <http://www.nyec.org/Jettcon2001/designguide.htm> and receive information on:

- Examples of Youth Centers/Programs
- Examples of Programs Using Technology Tools for Planning
- Tools for Assessment and Improvement
- Resources on Youth Development
- Resources on Afterschool/Out-of-School Programming
- Tools for Planning
- Tools for Assessment & Improvement
- Resources on Youth Development
- Resources on Afterschool/Out-of-School Programming

### **Community – Communications:**

Perhaps nearly all of the subtopics under Community could be enhanced by improving the county’s communication network.

### **Recommendations:**

With both human and financial resources always scarce, it is essential that communication is improved.

- Glean the email addresses from the Snowy Mountain Development Database in this report and create a listserv with these addresses as well as other community leader’s email. There are free programs available for this purpose that are very user friendly. I recommend Yahoo. Visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/> for easy directions to begin a group. Use this listserv to share information and updates in the area. This would also be a great way to promote the Judith Basin County website.
- Newsletter – create a brief newsletter (nothing fancy) that is simply a fact sheet of events, programs, projects and activities going on in the county. Submit it to the area newspaper on a weekly or monthly basis.

- Local news coverage – if you feel that your area newspaper is not covering your local news there is a simple solution. Time consuming, but simple. Write an article yourself and ask the newspaper to insert it in their next paper. While time consuming, it does guarantee that the information will be correct, timely and available. And think of the payback – with more publicity you might get more \$\$\$ for a project and more volunteers.

**Community – Recreation - Walk/Bike Path information:** A project like this can be partially funded through the Montana Department of Transportation’s Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP). I believe the process would begin like this: a committee is formed to identify sections/location of the trail, explore types of material to be used and provide a cost estimate. The next step would be to present the information to the City and County and request CTEP funds for the project.

Contact: Thomas Martin  
CTEP Bureau Chief  
Montana Department of Transportation  
P.O. Box 2010011  
Helena, MT 59620-1001  
Phone: (406) 444-0809  
Email: [tmartin@state.mt.us](mailto:tmartin@state.mt.us)

**Community – Recreation - Skateboard Park information:** – As with youth centers, skateboard parks are in high demand. Libby, Colstrip and Helena are three communities that I know of that have skateboard/BMX parks. I also found a terrific website that serves as a resource for everyone involved in the process of getting a public skatepark built, and generally promoting skateboarding. Visit <http://www.skatepark.org>. From lollipop sales to 24 hour skate-a-thons, the ideas are there, all you have to do is use them. What a great way to involve the youth in community development!

Contact: Jane Thom  
Libby Skate Park Inc.  
Phone: 293-574  
Email: [janiethom@yahoo.com](mailto:janiethom@yahoo.com)

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

Colleen McCarthy  
ED of Helena Housing Authority

Ph: 406.442-7970

Rick Harbin  
Colstrip Parks and Recreation  
Ph: 748.3326

### **Community – Opportunity for Area Rec Center in Geysers**

The resource team was in awe of the incredible asset that is available to the area in Geysers – the room adjacent to the Senior Citizens Center. What a huge open space just waiting to receive attention from a taskforce to bring the space to life.

### **MAIN TOPIC: JOBS/POPULATION/SCHOOLS**

It was brought out during the Resource Team Town Meeting that the issues of jobs, population growth and maintaining schools are all closely linked. The divisions under this main topic include: Promotion and Marketing; and Business Retention, Recruitment and Support

#### **Promotion and Marketing – Signage – and the Arts, too:**

Every community in Judith Basin County needs more signage – both within their communities and outside of the communities. Creative measures can be used to create and pay for such signage.

#### **Recommendations:**

For aesthetic, legal and financial assistance in determining signage be sure to visit the SBA website at: <http://www.sba.gov/starting/signage/faqs.html>.

Why not use the signage issue to also promote the Arts (another need mentioned during the Listening Sessions). Investigate the Main Street Program to assist in the development and beautification of downtown areas. The Main Street program is designed to improve all aspects of the downtown or central business district, producing both tangible and intangible benefits. Improving economic management, strengthening public participation, and making downtown a fun place to visit are as critical to a Main Street's future as recruiting new businesses, rehabilitating buildings, and expanding parking.

There is a great opportunity for community relationship building across the county as the Judith Basin addresses its need for signage. It is an opportunity to incorporate Native American culture, Charlie Russell attractions and the Arts in general to accomplish multiple goals: signage for the community, promoting area culture and a tool for promoting the arts. Three groups would be coordinated and working together for a common purpose. (See Driving Tour info below.)

The Montana Arts Council recognizes the connection between the arts, culture and community. Please visit their website and explore the resources that are named. A report titled “Strengthening Communities Through Culture” would be of particular interest to Judith Basin

County. This report discusses crucial ways in which America's communities can be identified with, and supported and enhanced by, their art and culture.  
Visit <http://www.art.state.mt.us>

**Resources:**

More information is available at <http://www.mainstreet.org>. Butte and Helena both have active Main Street programs.

Contact: George Everett, Executive Director  
Main Street Butte  
201 W. Granite  
Butte, MT 59701  
Ph: 406.782.8443

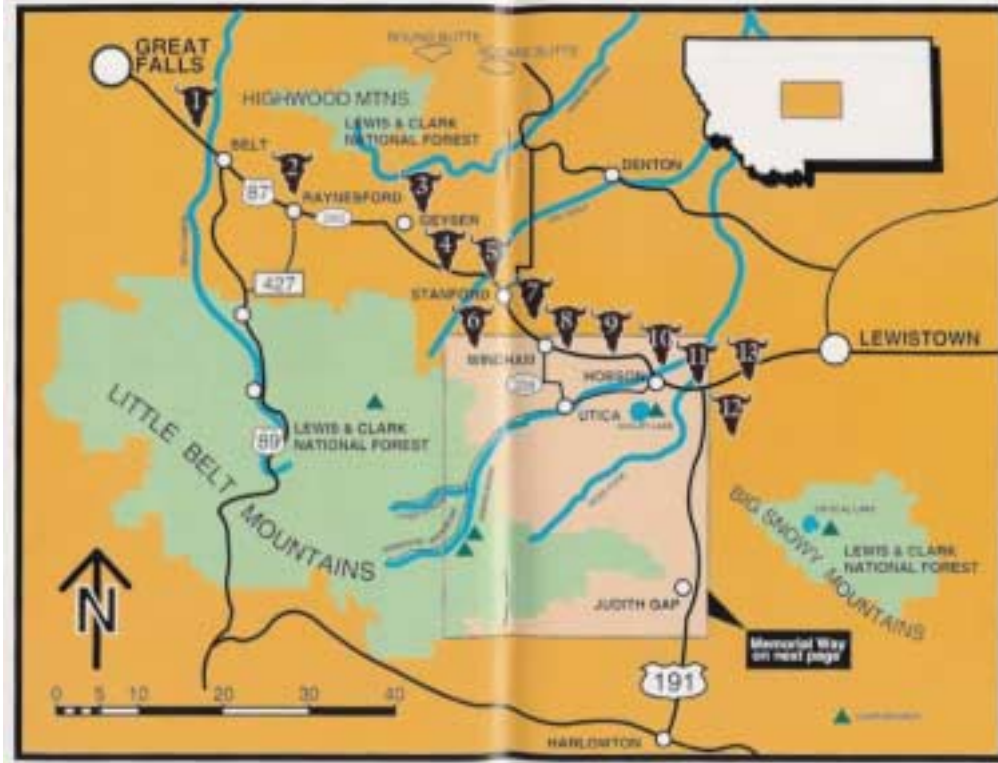
Contact: MONTANA ARTS COUNCIL  
PO Box 202201  
Helena MT 59620-2201  
Phone 406.444.6430  
Fax 406.444.6548  
E Mail [mac@state.mt.us](mailto:mac@state.mt.us)

This report discusses crucial ways in which America's communities can be identified with, and supported and enhanced by, their art and culture.  
**Visit <http://www.art.state.mt.us>**

**Promotion and Marketing – Revive the Driving Tour**

Fellow team member Dave Cole re-discovered a twenty page “C M Russell Auto Tour Guide” that was created in partnership by Travel Montana, Department of Commerce, Judith Basin County, Judith Basin Historical Society and Russell Country. I am not certain of the age of this booklet, but it is in full color and extremely well done. The cover has a picture of “In Without Knocking” by Charles Russell and states “The auto tour uses Charlie Russell’s art to open a window to the Judith Basin and its history.

The Table of Contents contains an Introduction, 25 Points of Interest, Museums, Map, Information Centers and Community Services. I have included below a copy of the map.



This was such a terrific project, and one that the people of Judith Basin County expressed an interest in reviving during our Listening Sessions. I will leave a copy of the booklet with Snowy Mountain Development as a place to begin.

A suggestion by Al Jones, SouthCentral RDO from Department of Commerce, was to make an audio tape of the tour – to go along with the booklet.

### **Business Retention, Recruitment and Support**

Simply put, education can be the key to improving local support for your local businesses. Put up signs or fliers with the statistics of just what it costs locals to drive out of town for “bargains.” The information below was provided by Al Jones, SouthCentral Regional Development Officer for Montana Department of Commerce.

Al writes: “ Most folks barely account for the cost of gas when they drive 100 miles to shop at big box stores, grocers, etc. and this mileage cost from AAA assumes THEIR TIME IS WORTH NOTHING. In other words that they're unemployed, pay no one for time-saving services like day care or lawn-mowing, and that they'd just be home watching tv during the hours spent driving. So by running to the distant stores 1x-4x a month, in most cases the shopper is actually reducing their purchasing power while also wasting a day in the process.

Take AAA's current numbers, i.e. .501 cents a mile and multiply that by the actual mileage to the 1-2 primary shopping destinations of your town, (don't forget to figure it as a round trip.)

60 mile jaunt = 120 miles @ .501= \$60 cost so if they really saved 20% shopping there on everything (very unlikely), they have to buy \$300 worth of stuff or about a full week's after tax wages for the average Montanan. Just a thought since penny-pinchers tend to be often be penny-wise, pound-foolish. It's also why the large discount stores have far higher net profit rates than average retail stores (see [www.chainstoreage.com](http://www.chainstoreage.com) for the breakdown by store type.)”

**Recommendation:** Take the AAA driving cost per mile, multiply that with the roundtrip mileage to the retail centers your shoppers regularly drive to "to save big money" and then show the math, perhaps on billboards on the way out of town.

**Resource:**

[www.chainstoreage.com](http://www.chainstoreage.com)

**In Closing -**

Thanks once again to Judith Basin County and Snowy Mountain Development for its fine welcome and all the work that was done on the local level to make the Resource Team Assessment possible. I am sure I speak for the entire team when I say we all look forward to hearing of great progress in Judith Basin County. Do not hesitate to contact our office at 406.563.5259 for additional information, support, or assistance. Gloria O'Rourke

**REPORT BY: CAROL NUNN-HATFIELD**  
**Community Outreach Coordinator & State & Private Forestry Coordinator**  
**Forest Service**  
**Lewis & Clark National Forest**  
**Townsend Ranger District, Helena National Forest**  
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## MAIN TOPIC: INFRASTRUCTURE

### Issue: Water, Solid Waste, Sewer, Streets, and Sidewalks

The infrastructure is the physical foundation of a community. These are pieces that make residents and the people visiting comfortable during their stay. If their stay is comfortable and pleasant they'll want to return. How many times have you been on a vacation and the hotel room you stay in has a broken TV, your shower was cold, not to mention a trickle of water. You then decided to discover the town and you tripped and fell over a divot in the sidewalk because they were in such poor condition. As you walked you noticed that the streets were not paved and there was trash in the so-called gutters.

**Recommendations:** Continue to work with the Department of Commerce on acquiring funding for sewer/water infrastructure. There are several grants available to communities through Montana DOT that you can apply for to improve sidewalk. CTEP funding/TEA-21. There is a category that includes pedestrian and bicycle routes, pathways. It includes construction of new or replacement of old sidewalks on publicly owned property or easement. There is also a "Landscaping and other scenic beautification category; and a Historic Preservation category.

Don't forget to use your Independent living centers (senior citizens) for building community capacity. Working with public transportation entities to ensure people with disabilities can use transportation to access their community, work with Montana Board of Housing to improve opportunities for people with disabilities so they can purchase affordable housing.

### Recommended Resources:

For additional information and ideas, please visit the following websites on infrastructure:

[www.commerce.state.mt.us](http://www.commerce.state.mt.us)

[www.dphhs.state.mt.us/dsd/govt\\_programs](http://www.dphhs.state.mt.us/dsd/govt_programs)

## MAIN TOPIC: TRANSPORTATION

**Issue: Airport, Railroad, Highways better utilization of these resources and commuting.** These facilities were mentioned several times. Individuals are willing and wanting to market and find ways to utilize these modes of transportation.

**Recommendations:** These modes of transportation could play as the hubs of exportation and importation of goods, celebrating festivals and linking outside of Judith County. There are

several opportunities that the County could implement; Through CTEP funding through MDOT, i.e. scenic or historic highway programs (including provision of tourist and welcome center facilities) This might include Historic property, building or facility that is either on or eligible for National Register of Historic Places, signing along a public road or highway or preparation of informational pamphlets regarding Charlie Russell Country (the Chamber can be very instrumental in this).

Being able to market your county along these transportation corridors can be valuable. A “Gateway” sign at each end of your county will add a lot of the way you feel. Utilize your artists to help design. A couple ideas that were discussed at the County meeting;

Airport: Hot Air Balloon Festival at the airport, vintage airplane & flight shows

Railroad: Hub for transportation of agriculture products, grocery products... National Historic Preservation – sites in Hobson, contact Burlington Northern Railway for ideas.

Highway: Love “What the Hay” contest, Charlie Russell Auto Tour. Moccasin could be preserved (i.e. Virginia City). Billboard signs outside of Great Falls, Lewistown, Bozeman, Helena, and Missoula to advertise what the real “Charlie Russell” country. Working on a theme and then focusing on marketing that theme will be successful

Recommendation Resources:

[www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/ourprograms](http://www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/ourprograms)

[www.bnsf.com](http://www.bnsf.com)

## TRANSPORTATION TOOLBOX FOR RURAL AREAS AND SMALL COMMUNITIES

In 1998 the [United States Department of Agriculture](http://www.usda.gov) and the [United States Department of Transportation](http://www.dhs.gov) signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](http://www.dhs.gov) in which the agencies jointly agreed to address long-term agricultural transportation, rural passenger and freight mobility challenges. As a result of the Memorandum of Understanding, the agencies have pursued a variety of projects of mutual interest, including the development of this website. The Transportation Toolbox for Rural Areas and Small Communities was designed to assist public and private stakeholders in planning, developing, and improving rural areas and small communities, especially through transportation and related projects. It is a work in progress, and we welcome your [suggestions](mailto:199.79.179.78). <http://199.79.179.78/ruraltransport/toolbox> This web page provides a lot of information on rail, airport and highways.

### MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY

**Issue #1: Childcare, faith-based services, health/fitness center, recreation center, attitude and mind set and volunteers.**

Repeatedly, people from Judith Basin County expressed that they would like to have these services and facilities available. The issues mentioned above are inter-linked some way or another. There were many individuals in each community that were willing to step up and volunteer. There is also the question of “How” to get facilities such as a recreation facility, childcare or faith-based services started? The problem is that it’s usually the same small group of people doing all the work. This can lead to burnout on projects.

**Recommendations:** Volunteerism is the life and heart of a community. The value of the services of the volunteers is inestimable, although it should be obvious to all levels of government and the community at large that we would be unable to cope adequately with without them, and many organizations and individuals in need would suffer dire consequences.

Volunteers also strengthen communities, which grow stronger when they participate actively in their own safety and well-being. Volunteer groups foster a spirit of togetherness and self-reliance at the local community level, which is so sought after today, and while their value may not be quantifiable, they are nevertheless fundamental to building a more resilient society. Value your volunteers or lose them. In order to keep volunteers you need to provide them opportunities.

### **What Volunteers Expect from Healthy Organizations**

A volunteer can expect:

- 1.** To enjoy / be suited to the work assigned. An interview and placement procedure ensures that the volunteer and the organization find a good match.
- 2.** To know what is expected of them. Volunteers should be provided with an orientation, initial training, policy/procedure manuals, a volunteer position description, guidelines that clearly give direction regarding volunteer vs. staff roles and information about the organization's mission, structure, funding and insurance coverage.
- 3.** To be enabled to volunteer. Volunteers may need support to overcome financial, physical, emotional, social or mental challenges that act as barriers to volunteering. Healthy organizations wish to represent the community they serve internally and will accommodate individual needs as much as reasonably possible.
- 4.** To know that a personnel file will be kept. Records will be kept documenting the volunteer's personal information and notes on his/her volunteer experience including: interview, placement, orientation, training evaluation, commendation and disciplinary action.
- 5.** To feel supported and heard. In an organization that respects its volunteers, various opportunities for communication can include one on one conversations with an assigned supervisor, volunteer-staff group meetings, periodic performance reviews (of the volunteer by the organization and of the organization by the volunteer) and on-going training / education.

6. To feel needed. Volunteers should be assigned work that is challenging and worthwhile. The materials needed to complete the assigned work should be available. Volunteers need to feel welcomed by staff and co-volunteers.
7. To feel appreciated. All levels of organization staff should acknowledge the contribution of volunteers. Volunteers should feel appreciated daily while "on-the-job", at social events and by receiving service awards or gifts.
8. To be kept informed. Volunteers should be kept informed of any changes in duties, policies or procedures. Volunteers perform well when given the tools for success.
9. To know what kind of reference / recommendation volunteers can request from the organization.
10. To be able to ask for new assignments within the organization when the volunteer is ready for new / different challenges.

Individuals in the county may want to organize a volunteer team/s that will volunteer to take on issues and projects for the county. Recruit volunteers, appoint a team leader, develop a group of grant writers, and work with Snowy Mountain Development, but research grant and funding opportunities. The volunteer group/s could prioritize projects (take one step at a time, work on 1 project and be successful) then link with the grant group and charge forward in implementation. Your projects could be childcare, exploring faith-based services and a recreation center.

Recommendation Resources:

[www.serceleader.org](http://www.serceleader.org)

[www.communitybuilder.nsw.gov.au](http://www.communitybuilder.nsw.gov.au)

[www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov)

[www.nccic.org](http://www.nccic.org)

[www.calchurches.org](http://www.calchurches.org)

[www.uuahc.org](http://www.uuahc.org)

**Issue #2: Beautification and blight, attitude, welcome signage, welcome newcomers, support of local business, best use of foundations, more emphasis on artists/art.**

There were a lot of responses to these issues, mainly that the county communities need to concentrate on improving these issues. Welcoming newcomers or visitors can tie back into the beautification, attitude of your county and communities, support of local businesses and signage.

## **Recommendations:**

We normally get our first impression of someone new we meet in the first minute, that same thing can apply to a city or town that we visit. We always feel more comfortable and safe in an environment that is clean, neat and pretty. There are many ways of beautifying the county.

### RURAL HOUSING SERVICE

USDA Rural Development's Rural Housing Service provides direct loans, guaranteed loans, and grants for community facilities. Certain public transportation facilities may qualify for these funds. Some past examples include:

- Airport Hanger
- Infrastructure for Industrial Park
- Railroad
- Town Bus Service/Equipment
- Marina
- Municipal Dock
- Street Improvements
- Equipment
  
- Special Transportation
- Airport
- Bridge
- City Airport
- Municipal & County Garage
- Off street Parking
- Sidewalks

### **Issue: Curb the Clutter**

**This program encourages collective responsibility for our environment by encouraging individual citizens and groups to Adopt-A- Street to pick up litter at regular intervals.**

The Fannie Mae Foundation creates affordable homeownership and housing opportunities through innovative partnerships and initiatives that build healthy, vibrant communities across the United States. The Maxwell Awards of Excellence program seeks to identify, recognize, and showcase the outstanding work of nonprofit organizations in developing and maintaining housing for low-income Americans. The program also encourages other corporations and foundations to become funding or investment partners in these endeavors. Grants are awarded annually to nonprofit organizations for having produced the best examples of low-income housing projects. For the fourteenth round of Maxwell Awards, the Foundation will distribute six grants of \$50,000 for a total of \$300,000.

## Neighborhood Clean Up

Offer the opportunity for residents to become involved in the community and work with City to promote clean-up events designed to improve the beauty of the city by cleaning up and removing large trash items in our neighborhoods.

The National Soft Drink Association sponsors this cash awards program for community litter prevention programs. First and second place awards of \$1,000 and \$500 are offered in four categories: government agencies, schools, youth groups, and not-for-profit. Judging criteria include litter prevention effectiveness, education, innovation and partnerships. Entries must be postmarked by March 31, 2003. [www.nsda.org](http://www.nsda.org)

The mission of the Captain Planet Foundation is to fund and support hands-on environmental projects for children and youths. The foundation's objective is to encourage innovative programs that empower children and youth around the world to work individually and collectively to solve environmental problems in their neighborhoods and communities. The next deadline for submitting grant applications is March 31. [www.captainplanetfdn.org](http://www.captainplanetfdn.org)

The Solid Waste and Recycling Division could encourage citizens to set up clean up events throughout the year to give residents a chance to remove large trash items from their neighborhoods. Solid Waste and Recycling Division will provide trash containers and removal of trash from these events.

No household garbage will be accepted during these events, the weekly garbage service is designed to handle your household trash volumes. No hazardous wastes will be accepted. Tires and freon containing appliances will be accepted for a fee. Limited construction materials will also be accepted.

To begin the process select a date and site for the event.

## Recycled Products

Recycling is extremely important to our economy. In order to make recycling cost effective, everyone must help close the loop by buying products made from recycled materials. The school could start a recycling business where the money would go back to the school.

Tree City USA is an opportunity for the county and communities within to earn grant money just by celebrating Arbor Day as a community. The grant funds can be applied towards planting trees and beautification of your community. Your local Forester is:

Mark Lennon

502 First Street East

P. O. Box 640

Polson, MT 59860

Phone: 406-883-5599

Fax: 406-883-1874

E-mail: [mlennon@state.mt.us](mailto:mlennon@state.mt.us)

## **Community Forester Program Coordinator**

Kelley Gundale

2705 Spurgin Road

Missoula, MT 59804-3199

Phone: 406-542-4284

Fax: 406-542-4203

**E-mail:** [kgundale@state.mt.us](mailto:kgundale@state.mt.us)

The Community Tree Planting Program of the National Tree Trust facilitates tree planting on public land (parks, schools, cemeteries, etc.) and along roadsides with the aid of volunteers. Grants fund one-year-old, regionally appropriate tree seedlings, two-gallon plastic containers, and money to pay for soil. All projects must utilize volunteers. Grant recipients must maintain seedlings for at least two years after planting and complete an annual report form each year.

[www.nationaltreetrust.org](http://www.nationaltreetrust.org)

The 4-H Community Tree Planting Grant Program will provide community action grants in the amounts of \$200 to \$1,000 to stimulate community tree planting and/or reforestation projects nationwide. Grants will be awarded to communities in support of ongoing community tree planting and/or reforestation projects or to stimulate new and creative youth-led projects. The role of adults is to provide guidance to young leaders in the tree planting and/or reforestation projects. Applications must be received by March 18, 2003.

### **Issue: Welcoming newcomers**

This can be very important for residents and visitors it goes back to that first impression. Making it hard for new residents to fit into the community can create a lot of tension. Because this was mentioned several times throughout the interviews, it sounds like there will be a conscious effort to work on this issue.

**Recommendation:** Travel Montana puts on a “Superhost” training for businesses and residents. The instructor will come to your community and show you how to be a good host as well as learning how to market your County. This would be an excellent training the Chamber of Commerce could host for the county and schools.

Contact:

Jeri Mae Rowley Customer Service Seminars (406)-756-3674

[www.superhost@fvcc.cc.mt.us](mailto:www.superhost@fvcc.cc.mt.us)

[www.travelmontana.state.mt.us](http://www.travelmontana.state.mt.us)

[www.visitmt.com](http://www.visitmt.com)

[www.montanafilm.com](http://www.montanafilm.com)

### **Issue: Welcome Signage**

This was suggested to help market your community. Having 2 “Gateway” signs entering the Judith Basin County corridor at each end of the county can be very welcoming. Work through

Montana Community Foundation, Urban Community Forestry, and Rural Community Assistance grants through the Forest Service, Snowy Mountain Development Corp. and your local artists to construct beautiful signs. Starting with an Interpretive Plan to develop a theme for your County Gateway signs and carrying that theme through the rest of the county for interpretation, brochures, auto tours, etc... will present your county beautifully.

### **Recommendations:**

Judith Basin needs to offer more reasons for travelers to stop and stay longer. Developing a strategy outlining actions can help with implementation.

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

Identify where visitors come from to Judith County. Tourism development efforts can focus on serving these markets more effectively by anticipating and fulfilling their needs. Pass-through tourists need visible information and activities (farmers market, hikes) and improvements to entrances/community appearance to entice them. Heritage and cultural travelers seek local history, culture and arts (historic buildings, community/tribal culture, local artists/craftsmen, events). Commercial travelers need business support services (data ports in hotel rooms, access to copying/printing services, meeting rooms, cell phone coverage). All of these segments seek good quality dining and shopping experiences.

#### a. Enhance Entrances to Entice more visitors to stop

Visitors will not stop if they do not feel welcome or receive a bad “first impression of the community. “Entrances” should include a number of locations where visitors are likely to make decisions. These locations should tell visitors that they are welcome in the County. The places where visitors are likely to be “one stop away” from a location should be targeted to ensure that information is available. Closer in, welcome signs or even billboards should be placed at a distance. Once someone has arrived entrances should be enhanced to capture visitors’ attention and draw them in.

#### b. Link Hotels to Local Businesses, Services and Attractions

A shuttle service could link destinations/businesses with other area attractions in the County.

Guests in hotels share the lack of information. A promotional piece highlighting local businesses and attractions could be placed in all guest rooms, encouraging hotel guests to patronize local businesses and extend their stays. Coupons or other incentives also could be added.

#### c. Provide Customer Service, Sales and Host Training to Better Service Visitors

Good customer service is key to retaining visitors and encouraging them to come back. When knowledgeable, friendly service providers serve visitors, they spend more money. Word of mouth is the best advertising; satisfied visitors will tell friends and family to visit.

Customer’s service and sales training is available through many sources (Superhost training). Incentives such as window stickers/posters, lapel buttons, certificates and recognition in the

Chamber business directory could be offered to encourage owners and their employees to participate. It is important for all “front-liners”- those directly serving tourist to be well informed about local businesses, events and attractions.

d. Become a True “Gateway”; Cater to International Guests

Find out how many visitors are from other countries. Display welcome signs in several languages. Simple brochures could be printed in most common languages to express recognition and appreciation.

e. Expand Outdoor Recreation Opportunities – Especially Day Trips

Many visitors seek “things to do” that require only a few hours. Guided hikes or interpretive tours, trail rides, canoe rental and other activities would offer guests the activities they seek and encourage them to extend their stays. Opportunities exist both for guided and self-guided activities in the Forest, private land etc... Guided activities can be offered by outfitters (who must be licensed). Self-guided activities can be provided with some coordination, such as a walking tour of historic buildings.

f. Maximize Events: Focus on Heritage, High Value Recreation, Off-Peak Days

Like promotion efforts, events should be targeted to specific markets, tailored to serve them. Some events are targeted primarily to local residents. Other events should be intended to draw visitors. Events targeting visitors should focus on heritage, culture, and high value recreation. This is to maximize the return on investment to the community and local businesses. Heritage and cultural tourists spend significantly more (up to four times) than many recreation tourists. However, some segments of recreationists tend to have higher return such as birdwatchers, snowmobilers, non-resident hunters and fishermen, outfitted guests, downhill skiers, golfers. Events that are scheduled in off-peak seasons will encourage more weekend or mid-week business during slow times of the year.

Cultural Tourism. A project to establish performing arts touring circuits among rural arts agencies becomes a regional partnership. Diverse needs and obstacles define the project's transition into a collaborative strategy to strengthen each agency's organizational structure and presentation capacity.

Two partner agencies spearheaded a countywide alliance of arts organizations, joining with a theatre group and a painter's association to improve communication and coordination of arts activities. This group is now working together to draft a cultural plan for the county.

Setting up a web site on the County web page that would market all the opportunities for tourism could be attractive to tourists. Check out this web page <http://www.gordonsguide.com/ecotourism>

g. Enhance Partnerships for More Effective Promotion

To stretch each dollar, the community should enhance partnerships with groups like the Chamber of Commerce; Montana Travel Council grants for tourism promotion can be leveraged by cooperative efforts with these groups and the private sector local hotels.

#### h. Track Visitor Counts and Revenues to Evaluate Performance

Tourism trends can be tracked through traffic counts, hotel sales, event attendance, outfitter guest numbers, visitation to attractions, visitor center inquiries and visitation, and individual business tracking. It is important to track visitors and revenues in order to evaluate the effectiveness of tourism promotions. A central tracking database should be established at the visitor center, with counts for various categories tracked on a quarterly (seasonal) basis. Reporting of results should be made to Chamber of Commerce members, to local/tribal elected officials and to tourism partners.

#### i. Investigate Shuttle Transportation Options in peak Season

The geographic separation between the communities for tourists is that they cannot easily access local businesses in the whole county (i.e. Java Garden in Hobson to retail store in the 1<sup>st</sup> Bank building in Geysers). A feasibility analysis would determine the viability of developing a shuttle that could travel a circular route between those three main areas (and perhaps opportunities for youth and elderly). A shuttle might be partially sponsored by businesses, and partially funded through federal or state transportation funds if local residents, such as seniors, use it as alternative transportation.

#### j. Extend Business Hours in Peak Seasons

Most retail businesses close at 5:00 or 5:30 p.m. during the week, earlier on Saturdays, and they are not open at all on Sundays. Extension of business hours is expensive; however, closures during times when customers want to shop contribute significantly to retail leakage. A cooperative, but incremental approach can minimize the added cost, while gradually encouraging additional business sales.

Businesses might try remaining open late one weekday each month (e.g. "First Thursday"), extending Saturday hours (complemented by an enhanced farmers' market) and/or opening for 3-4 hours on Sundays during peak tourist season. Keys to success with extended hours are to create simultaneous events/promotions to draw customers, to promote the new hours effectively, and to make a long-term commitment to the strategy (it takes 18-36 months to "re-train" local customers). Visitors during peak season will help generate a return on the investment if the hours are promoted to them properly.

#### k. Combine Visitor Center & Museum (and Cultural Center) in One Building

As a long-term strategy, the community should consider combining the visitor center and museum in a larger facility in roughly the same location as the existing visitor center. The existing center is "marginally adequate" (as described by a local business leader), and the museum is open only in summer due to lack of volunteer staff. Rather than staff two facilities, it would be more cost-effective and efficient to combine them. The proposed cultural center also could be co-located as part of this facility. Moving the museum would free up strategic retail space on Main Street. Funding for such a facility could come from a number of sources, including grants from organizations that support historic and cultural facilities.

## **MAIN TOPIC: ENERGY EXPLORATION**

### **Issue: Wind, Biomass and Ethanol**

Renewable energy sources were mentioned many times especially wind and biomass. The county is very interested in pursuing these sources. There are many opportunities to research to determine which would be feasible for residents, business and ranches and farms.

### **Recommendations:**

NorthWestern Energy would be the best opportunity for the county to work with. They have a program called Montana Green Power-Your Guide to Renewable Energy. The web page hosts over 20 Renewable Energy Businesses in Montana that could provide you with information. The following is information provided from the paper, "Innovative State Policy Options to Promote Rural Economic Development"

The traditional divide separating rural America from its urban and suburban counterparts continues to define the challenges facing rural communities. Rural communities are isolated from robust markets, impeding access to markets and making it difficult to move people and goods. Rural areas also have fewer cultural amenities, making it harder to attract new residents and businesses, which in turn hinders the development of new amenities.

Bikes Belong Coalition is sponsored by members of the American Bicycle Industry. Their mission is putting more people on bikes more often. The coalition seeks to assist local organizations, agencies, and citizens in developing bicycle facility projects that will be funded by TEA-21, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century. Bikes Belong Coalition will accept applications for grants of up to \$10,000 each, and will consider successor grants for continuing projects, subject to our policy guidelines. Bikes Belong Coalition will consider grants from local organizations, agencies, and communities in developing bicycle facilities projects. There are no deadlines.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Utilities Service announces a new competitive grant program to assist communities where the average residential expenditure for home energy exceeds 275 percent of the national average. Grants funds may be used to acquire, construct, extend, upgrade and otherwise improve energy generation, transmission, or distribution facilities. Eligible facilities include on-grid and off-grid renewable energy systems and implementation of cost-effective demand side management and energy conservation programs that benefit eligible communities. \$14.9 million is expected to be available. Applications are due February 7, 2003. For more information, contact Karen Larsen, USDA, at (202) 720-9545.

Back to the Basics:

Creating a Local Energy Program: From Smart Communities Network

Growing numbers of communities are taking control of their resources to manage them as efficiently as possible. The benefits are worthwhile. Here's how to get started in your community.

Editor's Note: Other fact sheets in this series provide case studies describing effective programs and projects created at the local government level. This fact sheet is intended to be an overview of the basic process only and not a comprehensive discussion of energy programs.

Constituents are challenging local officials everywhere to manage all resources—physical, energy, human, and financial—more efficiently. The public demands that taxes be well spent. Many local governments are using public policy and regulatory authority, community projects, and public relations to avoid unwise spending.

### **Creating an Energy Efficiency Program**

Outlined below are steps that local governments, or communities at large, can follow to devise an energy efficiency program. In general, an energy efficiency policy is first legislated by the local governing body. Then, an energy program is created to support the policy by developing and executing an action plan. In many cases, the policy and plan will focus solely on how the local government uses energy. Eventually, though, many local energy programs expand to include energy use throughout the whole community.

Some of these steps will depend on how broad your goals are. Do you want to involve only the facilities your city or county controls, or broaden the scope to your whole community? You'll need to base this decision on resources, politics, and time frame. Whatever scope you choose, the process is similar. This process can be adapted to your local conditions.

#### **Step 1: Determine how much you spend on energy.**

Tracking your energy costs is a smart first step. How extensively you track data will depend on how far reaching your city or county's program will be. According to Lera Riley, Deputy Public Works Director for the city of Phoenix, "Energy costs seldom appear as a single line item in a local budget, which makes them difficult to monitor and control." If energy were treated as a single expense, it would be among the largest budget items after payroll for local governments. In some local governments, energy costs are totaled for each department. In others, energy costs are listed as a series of unrelated expenses for each department. If the latter type of accounting is used, managers and department heads may not even know how much they spend on energy. In that event, the first step is to start monitoring consumption and costs. (You may need to develop and implement a system for tracking energy consumption and costs.)

For still other local governments, energy costs are a budgetary line item. Government officials who have tried this approach have found that looking at energy costs as a line item often increases awareness of energy efficiency.

You can sometimes save a surprising amount of money just by checking your utility bills. For example, Phoenix monitors all municipal utility bills. The city checks individual bills for correct charges and ensures that the correct utility rate is applied. In a 2-year period, the city saved more than \$100,000 in utility bills because of this monitoring.

#### **Step 2: Designate or create a lead office.**

Leadership must come from one office, whether it's the planning department, city or county manager's office, public works, environmental services, or a special energy office. This doesn't mean, however, that the lead office is the only department involved. All city or county

departments need to be involved in planning and supporting the process. Forming a staff committee is a good idea, too, as it helps ensure buy-in. Successful policies also clearly give the lead office the authority for implementation. For example, the Portland Energy Office in Oregon manages the city's day-to-day implementation of its energy efficiency policy. "The policy has given us credibility, a way of merging energy with other issues," says Director Susan Anderson. "That's key, because people may not care about energy. But they do care about keeping their houses warm; getting to work, traffic congestion, affordable housing, air and water pollution, and economic development for business. Energy ties all of those individual issues together."

### **Step 3: Link energy programs with community goals.**

A critical component of this step is to identify major community issues and goals related to energy efficiency. The idea is to piggyback energy issues with existing community goals. Your community may already have a general plan that outlines goals concerning land use, transportation, housing, energy, and the environment. You can often link these goals through an energy efficiency program.

For example, lower energy bills can make housing more affordable. In addition, energy efficiency programs create local jobs and benefit the local economy through the purchase of contractor services and materials.

You may not need to look far to discover your major community issues and goals. Often, research will already have been performed on these issues by the city council, a chamber of commerce, citizen groups, or community publications that highlight the issues. A good way to assess community issues is to invite leaders in business, education, and neighborhood groups to give their input. Work with your local media—they can arouse public support.

### **Step 4: Build grassroots community support.**

To carry out your goals and objectives, you'll need community involvement. Building support establishes allies and a clear picture of the [financial resources](#) you need for a project, compared with what you have available. You can build support through task forces, meetings with citizens, informal networking, and meetings with business leaders, utilities, and interest groups. If you can demonstrate why the community should care about energy, your efforts will be more successful. Leadership, credibility, and visibility can be attained by connecting with a known corporate or community citizen. "One of the most difficult but important tasks," says Anderson, "is to enlist the aid of 'champions', people respected in the business community and public arena who will endorse and help to sell your policy." A champion acts as an advocate. Your champion can be an individual or an entire office.

### **Step 5: Don't reinvent the wheel.**

Find out what's working in other communities (see [For More Information](#) as a starting point). Another resource is your state energy office.

### **Step 6: Prioritize actions and develop a draft plan.**

With community members and leaders, create a list of options. Next, determine each option's costs, benefits, environmental effects, economic and technological potential, funding resources, and political acceptability. Choose the tasks that will produce the greatest benefit; then prioritize them according to how well they apply to your community.

Some options will be easier to sort than others. Assess the relative impacts of the difficult options by ranking them on a scale, say from 1 to 5. Once you've decided on your list, you're ready to develop a draft plan. You might try having your task force take a first crack at drafting a plan, and then hold public meetings. It's important for the community to help create and review the draft plan, as this builds public support. Once you have a high level of community support, you can take a formal plan to the city council or board of commissioners for adoption.

### **Step 7: Implement the plan.**

It's important to start with realistic goals, but it's also essential to avoid short-term thinking. Concentrate on projects that will produce the greatest impact. You can look for grants or contracts from utilities, energy or health and social service departments, private foundations, or local corporations. See [Financial Resources](#) for a description of other financing options.

### **Step 8: Evaluate success and update the plan.**

Your policy should be a living document, with short-term plans being reevaluated and updated every 2 or 3 years, and long-term plans every 5 years. An evaluation compares your objectives with your outcomes. And that means tracking and documenting savings. When you evaluate, look for a specific, measurable result, such as reduced vehicle miles traveled or reduced air or water emissions. Tracking ensures that you'll have a mechanism to continually report benefits and fine-tune your program.

### **Step 9: Publicize the benefits.**

Fostering a clear appreciation of the new policy's benefits is critical. That entails marketing, public relations, and media events. These build trust and credibility, too. Let taxpayers know you've provided more services for fewer dollars.

Your city or county can save money and ensure the availability of resources for years to come. By your taking the initiative, your entire community can benefit from forward thinking. You can generate community pride, enthusiasm, and a feeling of empowerment while building a more sustainable future.

The Forest Products Conservation and Recycling (FPC&R) Technology Marketing Unit (TMU) provides for marketing the Forest Service's technology and research capabilities to field personnel who, in turn, provide support to forest products practitioners. The TMU works in collaboration with Research to identify opportunities for working with local governments, private landowners, and forest industries. We support the national and international research mission of the Forest Service in forest products utilization by ensuring ready adoption of wood-based material technologies developed at the Forest Products Laboratory and other Forest Service research installations. Scope of the Forest Products Technology Marketing Program includes harvesting, manufacturing, marketing, and conservation, engineering and recycling of forest-based products.

### Objectives

- Extend the wood resource through implementation of new technologies for efficient use of wood and fiber-based materials.

- Form partnerships and coordinate technology transfer programs to pilot forest products technology adoption.
- Provide consultative support for licensing and commercialization of FS inventions with significant resource implications.
- Communicate needs for new technology by private industry, landowners, and other governmental units to research units for their use in establishing research directions.
- Maintain a network of private and governmental forest products technology utilization specialists as a vehicle for disseminating research information, to obtain input on resource utilization needs, and to promote dialogue between user and researcher.

Develop and apply new systems to increase productivity and efficiency in dissemination of technical information to industry, environmental, governmental, and consumer groups, educators, and individuals.

**Biopower Systems:** We partnered with the U.S. Department of Energy to demonstrate small-scale, biopower units that produce electricity by burning wood chips. Working together, this technology will develop more quickly through field demonstrations that are ongoing at 7 locations throughout the United States. These demonstration units use advanced downdraft gasification technology to convert the energy in wood chips into a clean, gaseous fuel suitable for use by a variety of generators. The current prototype of this biopower unit can produce 15 kW of electricity and up to 50 kW of useful heat. Biopower technology can help improve forest health, increase sustainable domestic energy production, and help form new businesses.

**Fuels-To-School Program:** We are collaborating in a pilot project that promotes wood-fueled heat in schools and other public buildings. A wood-fueled system has been installed in a school in Darby, Montana. The heat source is from SDU material available from that area.

Resources

<http://www.fpl.fs.fed.us/>

<http://www.sustainable.doe.gov>

Contact Dave Atkins

Regional Office Missoula

406-329-3132

[datkins@fs.fed.us](mailto:datkins@fs.fed.us)

## **MAIN TOPIC: JOBS/POPULATION AND SCHOOLS LINK**

### **Issue: Jobs, population**

Bringing jobs and growth into a county requires promotion and marketing of your sources. Be aggressive, go out and seek and brag about Judith County's resources, Website portal, low crime, hunting, recreation, fine arts, Charlie Russell emphasis.

A program that would be excellent for the County to be involved in:

### **RCA-Rural Community Assistance and National Fire Plan - Economic Action**

**Grants:** The intent of the RCA grant program is to assist communities that

have been affected economically due to the loss of jobs or income derived from forestry, forest-related industry or dependence on National Forest or Grasslands resources. Eligible activities: brad-based economic recovery effort aimed at helping rural communities to capitalize on their potential to diversify and expand local economies. Activities can help communities develop strategic plans (Judith County has already) up to \$5,000. Specific actions focusing on organizing, planning and implementing projects contained in local action plans. Up to \$20,000. (Establishing or improving services in the community, development of eco-tourism and alternative rec enterprises that capitalize on areas of natural amenities).

Example of Projects that have been funded in past:

- restoring museum
- pedestrian corridor linking sites, bldgs
- improve existing community center
- development of RV park complex
- funding to develop outdoor theatre
- sheep show and fiber festival
- new park & farmers market complex
- demonstration in utilizing round timber construction (visitor centers, kiosks, park shelters, buildings framed with small diameter materials)

Contact is Scott Bell RCA Coordinator

sbell@fs.fed.us

(801)625-5259

or

Dave Atkins National Fire Plan RCA Coordinator

datkins@fs.fed.us

(406) 329-3134

or

Carol Hatfield

(406)266-3425

### **Recommendations:**

Business-to-Business Montana, or <http://www.B2BMT.com> , "is a dynamic online resource that promotes active Montana businesses, allowing them to better position themselves to compete in the new economy," Martz said. She said the public-private partnership would help every Montana business to increase its bottom line.

The innovative state policy options outlined in this Issue Brief have helped states overcome challenges and build promise for sustainable rural economic development. The policy options are:

- **Adapt Cluster-Based Strategies to Rural Communities.** Clusters of interconnected businesses that cooperate and collaborate are integral to economically successful regions. State support for rural clusters can help them thrive. Connecticut, North Carolina and Ohio have encouraged the development of industry networks that provide a channel for businesses to work together. Minnesota and North Carolina have deployed community colleges and universities as training centers to meet industry needs for highly skilled workers. North Carolina also has ensured that cluster businesses in remote areas have access to the same capital and technical resources as their more advantageously located competitors.
- **Promote Entrepreneurship Outside of the Agriculture Sector in Rural Communities and Regions.** Given the declines in traditional resource-based, extractive rural industries, entrepreneurship development is an effective strategy. Through programs tailored to specific community needs, Kansas and Nebraska are developing the local ability to identify and encourage entrepreneurs. Minnesota uses an online network and other technology to connect entrepreneurs with critical informational and financial resources. Kentucky and Wisconsin are addressing the critical rural business need for access to capital by creating or supporting the creation of venture funds.
- **Reinvigorate the Agricultural Sector Through Diversification and Value-Added Agriculture Strategies.** Farmers have recognized that they can earn more income by growing different types of crops or raising non-traditional species of livestock (agricultural diversification). Others are directly processing their crops into finished products that they market and sell themselves (valued-added agriculture). States can provide the capital and technical assistance that allow farmers to follow this new path to wealth creation. Kentucky, North Dakota, South Dakota and Iowa stress financial incentives for farmers and other entrepreneurs who are interested in these new strategies. Iowa complements its diversification efforts by promoting market expansion opportunities for locally grown products outside the state.

However they are formed and implemented, rural economic development policies must build upon the inherent strengths of rural America, chief among them are abundant natural resources, close-knit communities, strong local business networks and a largely untapped tradition of entrepreneurial creativity. State policies that understand this new environment can be successful in creating sustainable and replicable economic development where it is needed most.

The Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (NEEA) has developed an unsolicited proposals process as a way to identify new projects for assistance by the Alliance. NEEA is looking for fresh, innovative ways to save electric energy in the region. The goal is to make products and services that use electricity more efficiently available and affordable to consumers and businesses in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. See NEEA's website for information on the criteria that proposals must meet to be accepted and how to submit your idea.

The Draper Richards Foundation provides selected social entrepreneurs with funding of up to \$100,000 annually for three years. The funds are specifically and solely for entrepreneurs starting new non-profit organizations. The projects selected will demonstrate innovative ways to

solve existing social problems. The Foundation will accept proposals for a variety of public service areas, including, but not limited to, education, youth and families, the environment, arts, health, and community and economic development. Based on the structure of a venture capital fund, the Foundation offers financial support as well as strategic and organizational assistance.

<http://healthinfo.montana.edu> this web site is a place where you can advertise on needing Health Professionals.

Putting together a “Think Tank” with members of the community that is not always involved in everything. Brainstorm ideas, the sky is the limit, to bring in jobs, increase population (Smart Growth <http://www.smartgrowth.org>), work on one or two big or small projects for success.

Starting a tour of Bed & Breakfasts for tourists. This would mean that new B&Bs would need to pop up; you could create jobs, and market for travelers to stay awhile. The B&Bs could hook up with other local outfitters for recreation venture, shopping ventures or whatever the travelers taste would be.

Keeping Country Dollars at Home for example; U-pick berry farms and bed-and-breakfasts to barn and winery tours.

Because some urban-dwellers do enjoy the country, agricultural areas can lure city dollars. RDO researcher Maggie Flanagan assists new and expanding rural enterprises, many of which fit the agritourism bill—farm-related businesses catering to tourists.

The owners of a bed-and-breakfast and antiques barn in Cobden, Illinois recently wanted to add a blacksmith business, as a "living-history" draw and a training/sales facility. They took their information and drew up a business plan, including marketing strategies and a detailed financial analysis. Things looked favorable; the Shawnee Hill Smithery opened this spring.

Fragrant Fields, a plant business and restaurant, the owner wanted to figure out how to add a bed-and-breakfast. Both businesses are located in Union County, Illinois where Flanagan, the owner is focusing her outreach efforts. It will serve as a model for other counties interested in agritourism. Agritourism, which refers to, "the act of visiting a working farm or any agricultural, horticultural or agribusiness operation for the purpose of enjoyment, education, or active involvement in the activities of the farm or operation" It includes taking part in a broad range of farm-based activities, including farmers' markets, "petting" farms, roadside stands, and "pick-your-own" operations; engaging in overnight farm or ranch stays and other farm visits; and visiting agriculture-related festivals, museums, and other such attractions.

Another strategy to boost rural economies is to develop community foundations—nonprofit agencies that fund community projects and programs. The idea is to leverage dollars, investing local wealth locally.

Having a tour for solely Charlie Russell Country could be a possibility.

Resources

<http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/agritour.html>

<http://fletcher.ces.state.nc.us/staff/jmdavis/agritourism.html>

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/RESS/altenterprise/> Check out the tool Farming for Profit and Sustainability Tool Kit.

## **REPORT BY: BETSY PAHUT**

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### **MAIN TOPIC: TRANSPORTATION**

#### **Issue: Air, Rail, Highways and Commuting**

Transportation opportunities and availability will be of interest to prospective new residents, businesses and manufacturing companies. For manufacturing businesses to thrive they must have export opportunities. Local and prospective small businesses must have opportunity for reasonable transportation resources to import. Current and prospective residents have a right to safely commute within the county and communities to seek minimum required needs.

#### **Issue: Infrastructure, Water, Solid Waste, Sewer, Streets, Sidewalks**

Infrastructure of a community is one of the first things a potential business looks at when determining where they will locate their business. Water, sewer, streets, sidewalks, garbage disposal facilities are all considered the minimum requirements. Therefore it is vital that to attract new business you need to have in place adequate facilities and infrastructure to accommodate the addition of a new business.

Unoccupied homes and buildings should be removed or cleaned up. This is the first thing a potential new citizen, business or residential sees when entering your communities.

#### **Resources:**

National-

[www.pa.gov/region5/water/cwa.htm](http://www.pa.gov/region5/water/cwa.htm)

[www.sustainable.doe.gov/rural/intro.shtml](http://www.sustainable.doe.gov/rural/intro.shtml)

[www.mvp.usace.army.mil/environment/default.asp?pageid=97](http://www.mvp.usace.army.mil/environment/default.asp?pageid=97)

### **MAIN TOPIC: ENERGY**

#### **Issues: Energy Exploration, Wind, Biomass, Ethanol**

Today wind turbines come in a variety of sizes and power ratings. Small turbines rated at 100 kilowatts (kW) and less can be used in application is such as supplementing power supplies for single-family homes and small businesses, water pumping, or communications. Large utility-scale turbines rated as high as 2 megawatts (MW) are commonly grouped to form “wind farms”

or wind power plants that are connected to the utility grid to provide power for hundreds of homes.

Obvious advantages of wind energy systems are free fuel, renewable, and clean. Despite many barriers to the wind energy industry, wind energy's potential to meet the nation's growing electricity needs remains immense.

Net-metering requires a special installation and allows surplus energy generated by a customer's system to go back on the utility's electric system and allows the customer to receive "credit" for the excess electricity the customer produces at retail rates. The meter measures the customer's usage minus the amount contributed to the system. Net-metering is available for renewable installations of less than 50 kW capacities.

Biomass is defined as wood, wood waste, agricultural residues, and dedicated energy crops—contributed more than 3 quadrillion British thermal units (Btu) to US energy consumption in 2000—3% of the total according to the Energy Information Administration's *Annual Energy Review 2000*.

Biomass ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> only behind hydroelectric in renewable energy sources. Biomass is used in industry burns wood and agricultural wastes for cogeneration of steam and electricity. Residences use biomass for space heating. Biomass fuels' availability hinges on the costs of the fuels.

Opportunities exist for biomass in the wood products, mining and automotive service and repair industries, and select public and private fleets. Environmental impacts can be reduced by demonstrated increases in transportation efficiency and changes in fuel and lubricants. Wood waste is Montana's largest volume industrial waste.

#### **Resources:**

[www.deq.state.mt.us/ppa/p2/bioenergy](http://www.deq.state.mt.us/ppa/p2/bioenergy)

Technical assistance with commercial development, information development and information to local businesses, government and industry on biomass solutions.

Hal Haines, 406-444-6773

Bioenergy Engineering Specialist

National:

[www.windustry.org](http://www.windustry.org)

[www.nrel.gov](http://www.nrel.gov)

[www.awea.org](http://www.awea.org)

[www.windmps.org](http://www.windmps.org)

[www.eren.doe.gov/wind](http://www.eren.doe.gov/wind)

[www.sustainable.doe.gov/municipal/intro.shtml](http://www.sustainable.doe.gov/municipal/intro.shtml)

State:

[www.ncat.org](http://www.ncat.org) - Incentives

[www.deq.state.mt.us/energy/Renewable/index.asp](http://www.deq.state.mt.us/energy/Renewable/index.asp) - Taxes and other Incentives  
[www.montanagreenpower.com](http://www.montanagreenpower.com) - Project Information  
[www.northwesternenergy.com/energy](http://www.northwesternenergy.com/energy)  
[energy.sourceguides.com/businesses/byGeo/US/byS/MT/MT.shtml](http://energy.sourceguides.com/businesses/byGeo/US/byS/MT/MT.shtml)  
[www.oasismontana.com](http://www.oasismontana.com) - Project Information  
[www.deq.state.mt.us/ppa/wind\\_atlas/wind\\_atlas\\_index.asp](http://www.deq.state.mt.us/ppa/wind_atlas/wind_atlas_index.asp)  
Wind Atlas – 1987 Edition –  
Wind potential and site analysis.  
[www.energyatlas.org/PDFs/atlas\\_state\\_MT.pdf](http://www.energyatlas.org/PDFs/atlas_state_MT.pdf)  
[www.eere.energy.gov/state\\_energy/mystate.cfm?state=MT](http://www.eere.energy.gov/state_energy/mystate.cfm?state=MT)

## **ETHANOL**

Biodiesel, 10 percent ethanol blend (E-10), and E-85 (85 percent ethanol) are renewable transportation fuels that could help support Montana's agricultural and tourism.

The demand for ethanol is high and incentives are available.

According to recent estimates, the total demand for ethanol in the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Coast states is 302 million gallons per year. These data reflect the amount of pure ethanol mixed in gasoline, not the amount of blended gasoline. The normal mixing ratio is 10% ethanol to 90% gasoline, although E-85 cars are now capable of running on 85% ethanol.

Use of ethanol ranges widely from 95 million gallons per year in California to less than 1 million gallons per year in Montana. Ethanol use in Montana accounts for some 520,000 gallons per year, mostly in Missoula, which is mandated by amendments to the Clean Air Act to have a 10% ethanol mix in winter gasoline in all light duty vehicles. Motorists use ethanol as an octane enhancer.

Demand for ethanol and other biofuels in the region is not only for light duty vehicles, but also from recreational operators who need to employ clean, safe fuels in environmentally sensitive areas, such as Yellowstone Park, and around water and snow sports. Yellowstone Park, with the State of Montana, has launched pilot projects to demonstrate and encourage the use of cleaner fuels.

The ethanol plant has to pass tougher air-quality requirements than other projects, because the Environmental Protection Agency considers it a chemical processing plant, said Dave Klemp, DEQ's air-permitting supervisor. (9/29/01 – *Great Falls Tribune*)

[www.greatfallstribune.com/news/stories/20010929/localnews/1030648.html](http://www.greatfallstribune.com/news/stories/20010929/localnews/1030648.html)

### **Resources:**

National:

[www.eia.doe.gov](http://www.eia.doe.gov)

[www.energyideas.org](http://www.energyideas.org)

State: Rocky Mountain Institute

[www.rmi.org](http://www.rmi.org)  
[www.deq.state.mt.us/ppa/p2/bioenergy](http://www.deq.state.mt.us/ppa/p2/bioenergy)  
[www.agsites.net/links/ethanolprocessing.html](http://www.agsites.net/links/ethanolprocessing.html)  
[www.ethanolmt.org](http://www.ethanolmt.org)  
[www.techlink.msu.montana.edu](http://www.techlink.msu.montana.edu)  
[www.montanagreenpower.com](http://www.montanagreenpower.com)  
[www.e85fuel.com/refueling/montana.htm](http://www.e85fuel.com/refueling/montana.htm)

## **MAIN TOPIC: JOBS/POPULATION/SCHOOLS LINK**

### **Issue: Schools**

**Recommendation:** Combine school districts administration, maintain separate schools in each community, but reduce costs for all by combining administration expenses.

### **Issue: Promotion and Marketing**

**Recommendation:** Montana Made marketing program for local art and products i.e. Taylor Honey, Feed Lot and Ag products. Market on the internet to increase exposure in International markets.

### **Resources:**

International Free Trade [www.sustainable.doe.gov/articles/conserv.shtml](http://www.sustainable.doe.gov/articles/conserv.shtml)

Issue: Website umbrella/portal for County -

**Recommendation:** Using the Judith Basin County website as a portal, create a sub-page for each small community with descriptions of the local businesses, history, unique facts and qualities.

### **Resources:**

Montana Made Products  
[www.discovermontana.com](http://www.discovermontana.com)

AVAX Technology, Nathan Hammtree, CCNA  
[www.judithbasin.com](http://www.judithbasin.com)  
[www.centralmontana.com](http://www.centralmontana.com)

**Issue: Promote retirement destination/Community County recognition**

**Recommendation:** Lewis & Clark centennial celebrations will draw big crowds take advantage of the opportunities to strut your stuff! Have a local contest with all businesses to create store-front displays and costume contests.

**Issue: Consistent Signage**

**Recommendation:** Have local artists work together to create unique signage for both ends of the highway entering county.

**Issue: Tourism in General**

**Recommendations:**

- Promote availability of hunting, fishing and recreation in the county.
- Montana's Gold West Country – Travel Planner, advertising promotional maps of Russell Country.
- Capitalize on the talent in the local communities. Promote the artists with shows and special marketing events.
- Contact the Montana Highway Department and request signage on the Highway that indicates the amenities available in the communities.
- Contact the Montana Highway Department and request traffic signals to slow highway traffic for safety and tourism.
- Training for local businesses to teach the SuperHost Tourism Training.
- Acquire an antique bus to tour the county for shopping and exposure to the local amenities.
- Take back your rights to promote your communities as Charlie Russell's stomping grounds. Tell the unique stories and history that are yours alone.
- Apply for a historic designation for your County.

**Issue: Business Retention, Recruitment & Support**

**Recommendations:**

- Form a local focus group to seek opportunities to bring businesses to your community.
- It is recommended that starting and sharing resources could be economically feasible for small businesses.

**Issue: Youth**

**Recommendations:**

Develop leadership programs such as Junior Achievement, Key Club, and OJT for the youth in your communities to utilize them for volunteer projects and to give them a strong feeling of community.

**Issue: Agriculture****Recommendations:**

Making the transition to sustainable agriculture is a process. For farmers, the transition to sustainable agriculture normally requires a series of small, realistic steps. Family economics and personal goals influence how fast or how far participants can go in the transition. It is important to realize that each small decision can make a difference and contribute to advancing the entire system further on the "sustainable agriculture continuum." The key to moving forward is the will to take the next step.

Finally, it is important to point out that reaching toward the goal of sustainable agriculture is the responsibility of all participants in the system, including farmers, laborers, policymakers, researchers, retailers, and consumers. Each group has its own part to play, its own unique contribution to make to strengthen the sustainable agriculture community.

**Resource:**

[www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/concept.htm](http://www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/concept.htm)

## **Judith Basin County Assessment Team**

**Sunday, Feb. 9, 2003**

### **Listening Session 1 - Ag producers at Central Ag Research Center, Moccasin**

#### *Problems and Challenges:*

- Mindset. People tend to think someone else will generate business, rather than themselves.
- Population loss and smaller size of families. More land in CRP, fewer farms, result is small schools, reduction of teachers and down the line.
- Lack of recreational activities. Hunting and fishing only, but no big lake or ski hill to lure people in.
- Drought.
- Need better ways to utilize natural resources. Plenty of timber, but it's left unharvested and rots and spoils. Wants to see biomass generation for electricity.
- Ditto, loss of population.
- Lack of diversified production and value-added with wheat and cattle.
- Ditto, drought.
- Distance to transport product and marketing.
- Ditto, drought.
- Ditto, mindset. Concentrate on problems, rather than solutions. (Need to be proactive.)
- Ditto, mindset and lack of population. (Say they want people to move in, but can't find a place to live.)
- Ditto, utilize timber. Would result in less fire danger, better economy, better hunting and grazing.
- Ditto, timber.
- Ditto, mindset. Want small population growth, but producers don't want to see small acreages for them to live on.
- Lack of marketing for tourism, recreation activities.
- Ditto, not promoting recreational activities.

#### *Major strengths & assets of your community (county)?:*

- Ability to create resources – ag products, diversity of crops.
- Good work ethic.
- Ditto, resources and work ethic.
- Good way of life (although downtrodden in agriculture, still want kids to have that way of life.)
- Natural resources.
- Land and natural resources.
- Technology.
- Ditto, good place to raise families.
- People here.
- Ditto, way of life, pride, diversification and quality of crops.

- Quality of beef cattle.
- Transportation – major thoroughfare, rail service
- Charles M. Russell country, need to capitalize on that.
- Recreational opportunities on farms and ranches
- Ditto, transportation (highway and railroad)
- Climate – better than Eastern Montana’s extremes!
- Quality of assets, ditto for quality of cattle and grain
- Bill: ditto on all.
- Education: excellent education and good kids.
- Ditto, education. In addition to kids, adult commitment to continuing education, i.e. field days at experiment station, extension programs, marketing clubs.
- Wind. Potential for wind farms, two major power transmission lines are in the county.
- Location, proximity to Great Falls and Billings where could target a niche market.

*What project growth initiative would you like to see accomplished in your county?:*

- More community activities where neighbors play and work together (i.e. branding days, picnics, rodeos).
- Privately owned packing business in the area (or in the state to serve the Western U.S.). Promoting high quality beef raised here.
- Flour mill or small malting facility.
- Ditto on above.
- Capitalizing on recreational opportunities such as Old West Theme – this is where Charlie Russell started – or working vacation opportunities on area farms and ranches.
- Utilization of wheat straw through wafer board, heating products, etc. Possibly mix with wood products.
- Incubator for developing food products using local resources. Building a market before investing capital. Possibly having mature adult work with students.
- Diversified business (would generate more population). Need market survey to find out what sort of facility would be profitable in our area.
- Ethanol plant to use our renewable resources.
- Finish our beef here – find ways to use our homegrown products, value-added.
- Ditto, better use of renewable resources to develop products.
- Less outflow of people and job loss. Stabilize economy and protect existing business.
- Better mindset – shop locally.
- Ditto, develop homegrown products.
- Better job of informing Montanans how important agriculture is to the state.
- Ditto, change state’s attitude. Hard to get capital to help a smaller-scale projects in rural areas. Would like to tap into coal severance fund, low interest loans.
- Develop ski run near Crystal Lake to enhance recreational opportunities.
- Better communications, particularly cell phone coverage. Subsidized?
- Ditto, state support of new projects. (Or will drive away researchers to other states).
- Ditto, communications. One of busiest highways is 87, but many dead areas for cell coverage.

**Monday, February 10, 2003**

**Listening Session 2 - Local Government, law enforcement in Stanford**

*What are major problems restricting economic growth in JB County?*

- Vacated and abandoned property.
- Need to clean-up community.
- Erosion of population base, youth aren't returning, results in declining economy, affecting businesses and schools.
- Lack of garbage service. (Have to drive 50 miles to Lewistown to get rid of furniture.)
- Ditto, garbage problem. Finding garbage along the roads..
- Need rural addressing system. (It is nearing completion.)
- Poor economy, lack of job opportunities.
- Ditto on all. (Had contacted Lewistown Disposal, no response). Need dumpsters.
- More equipment and manpower for law enforcement. (1,100 miles of county road, missile bases, etc.)
- Asked to provide more services with less money.
- Hazard mitigation needed in Middle Fork of the Belts. (Hazard is thick stands of trees that need thinning. Five cabins located there.)
- Ditto, economy, drought and mandated services with less tax base.
- Ditto, population loss.
- Ditto, drought.
- Problem growing the community, shrinking tax base.
- Lack of a good restaurant that's open in the evening. (For people traveling through and locals).
- Ditto, Erosion of population base, youth not returning, businesses and schools suffering.
- Loss of tax base with hits ag is taking.
- Need to promote ag more.
- Absentee landowners. Buy the land as a get away, spend little time here, but want services. Land is basically idle.

*Major strengths & assets of the community (county)?*

- Volunteer services: search and rescue, fire and ambulance.
- Ditto, volunteer
- Ditto, volunteer.
- People: intelligent, well-read, entrepreneurial spirit.
- Great location: major highway, rail service, airport.
- Housing available.
- Good hunting and fishing, recreational opportunities – hiking and packing, good access.
- Strong sense of community and community awareness.
- All communities have, or are improving, infrastructure.
- People are resilient.
- High quality ag products.

- Ditto, emergency services, volunteers great job.
- Cooperation between law enforcement agencies.
- Education and our schools.
- Cattle – primarily Black Angus. Strong hearty cattle.
- Stanford and Hobson have DSL, Geysers supposed to get in next few years (Central MT Communication).

*What project-growth initiative would you like to see accomplished in your community?*

- Would like to see Stanford still here!
- Stanford flourishing – nice restaurant, return of businesses that used to be there, i.e. drug store, implement dealer.
- Would like to see Stanford just hold its own. Don't want to lose government jobs if too much consolidation in courthouse.
- Keep our one grocery store.
- More job opportunities so young people can return, develop industry.
- Ditto on everything, job creation and maintain existing businesses.
- Ditto, job creation and retention.
- Ditto. Job creation, including more jobs on farms and ranches.
- Ditto, more employment opportunities, resulting in more families moving in, community pride, etc.
- Developing more ways to keep elderly population healthy, health center.
- Support Basin Medical Center and keep it open.
- No vacant buildings.
- More recreational opportunities i.e. small golf course, health club.
- Cogeneration utilizing timber.
- Continue to improve infrastructure.
- Wind power.
- Promotion of tourism.
- Strengthen and support schools.
- More value-added products.
- Ditto, value-added. Ag is base, but can't afford to save a family at a time, need cooperative effort and projects.
- See water projects completed in Hobson, Stanford and Geysers.
- Ditto, value-added.
- Market hunting and fishing opportunities.

### **Listening Session 3 - Human services, churches, community in Stanford**

*Problems and Challenges:*

- Lack of employment opportunities.
- People not using food bank services as much as could be.
- Constructive young people moving other places, aging population.
- Lack of community-minded, shopping out of town.
- Need to get more people involved, more volunteers.
- Drought.

- Poor ag prices, drags down whole economy (including support of churches.)
- Lack of unity and antagonism among some groups, particularly communities. Rubs off on youth. (Community loyalty out of hand?)
- New people in community not welcomed enough.
- Ditto, lack of employment opportunities, and jobs here pay far less comparatively.
- Ditto all.
- Need for more privatization of services that would provide jobs and stimulate tax base.
- Drop in enrollment at schools.
- Vacant homes.
- Ditto, poor wages.
- Ditto on all.
- Ditto, lack of support for local businesses and Basin Medical Center.
- Ditto. People going out of community for services, medical, groceries, etc.
- Need for services for elderly, they're lonesome, could use 1 on 1 time, our busy schedules don't allow.
- Need to educate some of our businesses, don't support the other businesses, yet expect to be supported.
- Ditto, need for unity and positive attitude.

*Strengths:*

- Our people, for the whole they pull together. But usually same people, that gets old! How do you get people involved?
- Beautiful area, no lines, no traffic. Know everyone.
- Close community, if someone needs help, they get help.
- Basin Medical Center. Have health fair.
- School system very good.
- Ditto, Medical Center
- Businesses: full grocery, hardware store, relatively safe place to live.
- Ditto, enough businesses to meet every day needs for most part.
- Churches active programs in reaching out to youth.
- Schools, excellent. Scholarship program for seniors.
- Good summer activities – swimming pool, baseball.
- Library.
- Ditto, we have everything except much clothing, car dealership
- Ditto, medical center.
- Ditto, medical center and health fair screenings. (Screenings in spring wonderfully attended in Denton, Hobson, Geyser, Stanford – saves lives.)
- Ambulance service is wonderful.
- Volunteer core, tremendous.
- Ditto on volunteers
- Senior Center. (Meals, shuttle bus, open daily for social activities).

*Projects:*

- Youth center.
- Youth/ health (fitness) center would be awesome. Indoor pool for youth and elderly.
- Promote tourism and recreation. Great history here, museums, CM Russell country.
- Promote availability for housing, can run businesses out of home. Come here for safety, great services, etc.
- Entertainment – movie theater, bowling alley.
- Family restaurant.
- Ethanol plant
- More businesses, industry – hope they will support the community.
- Improved streets.
- Ditto, fitness center.
- Better communication systems and technology.
- Someone to help with Medicare, and medical bills. (send them to the clinic, already found solution!)
- Waterslide Park
- Western theme park.
- Community volunteer inventory, Gloria, need more people, filling out these forms, database of possible volunteers.
- Basin Medical Center continued expansion of services. (i.e. x-rays.)

Listening Session 4 - Ag Producers in Stanford

*Problems & Challenges:*

- Declining population, and lack of employment
- Mindset, too often people waiting for someone else to do something, wasting energy finding reasons not to do something.
- Infrastructure: need turning lanes for trucks, water, access for railroad
- Keeping ag station and county extension funded, so able to help producers.
- People leaving the community, lack of opportunities. Young people not returning.
- Ditto, migration.
- Economy – ag based, operation costs increasing, prices poor.
- Need Development, infrastructure, need to keep our core businesses going to.
- Ditto, need for extension agent.
- Declining population, schools suffering, enrollment declining, losing young families, vicious cycle, find way to keep young people here.
- Ditto all
- Existing business – we transport out of our community, keep \$ here, we do produce products, need to keep \$ here.
- Promote idea that we have lot of empty houses, good place to retire, away from city, crime...
- Econ. Development needed. Don't know what that is – to do with cows, grain, tourism, won't have viable comm. If no income. No jobs.
- Ditto, need economic development.
- Healthcare is very important. Relying on volunteers, training necessary.
- Ditto, need for volunteerism, fire and ambulance, etc., Have better equipment now, but less people to man it.
- Need capital

- Restaurant on highway sitting empty.
- Ditto, restaurant.
- Out-of-state buying land. They can afford to pay higher prices than the farmer or rancher next door, so less opportunity for them to buy land.
- Eyesore in Windham.

*Strengths & Assets:*

- Basin Medical Center
- Empty houses for people to move into
- People
- Education, good schools
- Good fire and ambulance, law enforcement
- Bank
- Volunteers
- Good location, close to highway, main road between Billings and Canada, capitalize on it.
- Ditto, good place to raise kids, good school, volunteers
- Safe, clean environment.
- Ditto everything, sum up, we have a lot of pride here. We don't want to just be idle and watch things decline.
- Ditto, add great amount of talent in communities, poets, artists, carpenters, etc, can build on that and branch out to other industries.
- Ditto, we may have some things that are already value-adding, ie feedlot, had a local meat processing, possibilities of turning that into something (not operating now).
- Ditto, people are biggest strengths and assets.
- Hunting, mountains close by, need to capitalize on those.
- Ditto, Hunting and recreation, ditto.
- Excellent job of raising cattle and grain, most years, good soil...
- Nice community to live in
- Great grocery, hardware stores.
- Parts store, very accommodating
- Ditto, people.
- Bank, grocery, post office, great customer service.
- Feedlot and vet service.
- Railroad, being agriculturalist complain about BNSF, but are good asset that could be valuable for community. (now it's just used for grain shipping).
- Quality products – grains and livestock, just need to find way to add more value to them.
- Paved airport, lit at night, cropduster based there and on grass strip in Hobson, opportunity to get people in via air.
- Swimming pool in summer
- Ditto, School system, so important, would never see our neighbors otherwise, think main asset of our community.
- Retirement center. People on limited funds can find cheap housing.
- Body shop

- Main Street and parks, all kept up, flowers planted, pleasant place to drive in
- Nice fairgrounds, rodeo in summertime, all volunteer work, quick draw art auction by Stampede club (like Jaycees), 5-10 percent proceeds kept, rest goes to community.
- Have a local foundation works through Central Montana Foundation, has about \$40,000, goes to communities.
- Ditto, Stampede Club, a lot back to community.
- What the Hay contest (5000 people voted last year). Most of income generated, Windham and Utica, does generate some \$ for Stanford.
- Churches, opportunity to worship and express your faith.
- Grant programs for education (scholarships).

*Projects:*

- Wind energy.
- More younger people moving in.
- Ag value-added businesses to provide work.
- Value-added beef products. Find out what IBP, ADM, Cargill, etc., look for in locating to an area and determine what we need.
- Continuing working on update water system.
- Need some industry, good supply of labor.
- Water development very important. Reasonable price energy. Elevator here, problem when someone looked at, no natural gas.
- Need more opportunities to benefit elderly people, and could in turn provide jobs.
- Need to capitalize on natural resources that are currently going to waste. Cottage industries
- Ditto, above, but in addition, find small industry to move in, use labor, high-value product, not requiring lot of raw materials, easily shipped, to eliminate a lot of freight. (ie computer industry, making product easily moved.)
- Would like to see short-term, marketing project reactivated. Ways to enhance income without ever leaving home.
- Ditto, explore energy production, wind farms, ethanol, etc., long-term
- What we have here as community we need to support more, do more in town, support what we have for businesses. (County agent, experiment station, govt. offices, etc.)
- Something besides sports to do, more activities for people in 30s and 40s.
- Wind energy, need to measure wind velocity here so have data.
- Ditto on wind, some wind data has been collected, will have instrument to collect more in the future.
- Go to big companies and let them know what we have to offer (grain, cattle).
- Concentrate on small businesses, try to get them to come in. We can offer housing, schools, water, easier to get something small rather than big.
- Ditto, trying to add value, but big companies need to communicate what they are looking for.
- Explore cooperatives for ag products.
- Continue to maintain school enrollment, quality education.
- Promote our area thru best means possible, on-line.
- Promote this as Russell Country, and Lewis and Clark.
- Promote outdoor recreation opportunities (limited by FWP, limited access areas).

- Ditto, wind farm, but need to pool resources, expensive to finance.

### **Listening Session No. 5**

#### **In Hobson, Seniors**

##### *Problems:*

- Our school, keep it going. Hear talk of more consolidation, and town not far from here!
- All work together and going to keep it that way.
- The road to Utica and disrepair of community hall there.
- Teachers not taking part in community.
- Need young people to help more, mow lawns, repairs, etc.
- Income, lot of ranches struggling because of drought. Need to get jobs to help housewives or moonlight.
- Keeping current businesses alive and prospering and attracting new ones.
- Getting younger blood to do the work around here!
- Ditto, all above.
- Agree, keep our school.
- Ditto, but like to see keep fire and ambulance services up, improve. All volunteer.
- This is ag community, any businesses that deal w/ag we should be interested in.
- Disrepair of elevators (vacated) coming into town.
- No entertainment for young people
- Believe people should trade in own hometown
- Need paved road to Sapphire Village.
- Drought, very serious. (New well in city, but drought could still get worse).
- Ackley Lake an asset, like to see assessment what could be done to stabilize lake levels, use more year-round. Water District, are trying to determine what water levels reduction this year.
- Would like to have natural gas in this town. Ends south of Moore, not far away.
- Friction between communities.
- Want commercial zoning on the Main Street in effort to maintain business or commercial district, not hodge-podge of trailers, etc.

##### *Strengths & Assets:*

- Youth are assets.
- Utica Women's Club, put on Utica Fair in Sept., 1000s of people, have museum and clubhouse.
- Lots to do.
- School. If we haven't learned anything else from communities around us (who've last school). Have to be the surviving community – that's why worked so hard to get new gym.
- New gym at school.
- For small community, tremendous sense of community pride.
- Community-involvement
- Support of different organizations and school.
- Ditto, Good community, working together, pride in town
- Community itself is asset. Safety, low crime.

- Community-spirit, ditto. No cliques, 2 good churches, 2 good bars, don't have to belong to "this" to take part in "that." People get behind someone with an idea.
- Garage Theatre, musicals and other entertainment. Dancing, singing lessons.

*Projects:*

- Want to put up hitching post in Utica (businesses were there, not there anymore).
- More small businesses like those that started in last year, Java Gardens and Gift Shop, remodeled old house, computer shop there too.
- See Boulevard with water, green and beautiful.
- Ditto, Water on Boulevard, have bid for \$18,000, CTEP in now, \$23,000 for sidewalks, \$22,000 to get sidewalk up to school so kids don't have to be in the street.
- Factory jobs
- Updated playground equipment at the park
- Incorporation of pedestrian/bike path, in conjunction with improvement of Utica Highway.
- Bowling alley
- Boulevard, ditto
- Bowling alley, ditto.
- Development of special day(s) that would attract people in, have "what the hay" ie. Annual bull run! Historic event needed.
- Possible coordination of needs between communities.
- Keep Garage Theater going.
- Meadow Brook Inn Bed and Breakfast, theater in historic barn
- Restore 3 elevators on edge of town by railroad as historic landmarks and dedicated to agriculture.
- Ditto, bowling alley.
- Full-time and funded county extension agent back.

**Listening Session 6**

**Hobson High School, Students**

*Problems:*

- Great community, but have to go so far for something to do.
- Not many job opportunities for younger kids, after school and summer
- Ditto, job opportunities, Don't have many opportunities and distance for something to do.
- Ditto, job opportunities.
- No place for kids to hang out.
- Ditto, nothing to do in spare time.
- Ditto, nothing to do.
- School opportunities lacking (No honors or AP classes, disadvantage when competing for scholarships).
- Technology far behind compared to other schools, need better computers
- Ditto, job opportunities.
- Nothing to come back to, if no family farm or ranch.
- Underage drinking, comes with nothing else to do.

- Ditto, drinking
- Ditto, drinking, teens don't have things to do, drift in that direction
- Ditto, drinking
- Some would like to come back to Hobson, but feel unable to for lack of opportunities. Discouraged from returning to family farms and ranches because of tough way to make a living.
- Lack of law enforcement in area

*Assets & Strengths:*

- Clean community
- Community support of youth
- Lots of good extracurricular, FFA, BPA, FCCLA, etc., compete with bigger schools. Excel in these things.
- One of the best communities around, our self-esteem high
- Ditto, community support of youth, know everyone
- Living in small community makes us want to try harder, prove everyone wrong, don't have to be in a big school to do good with technology, etc.
- Good school spirit
- Ditto, school spirit
- High involvement in school activities.
- Good sportsmanship.
- Ditto, above, and community support of school fundraisers.
- Ditto, support. Name we give ourselves really stands out, say from Hobson, say great community. How involved we are, parents, even those who don't have kids.
- Ditto, school spirit.

*Projects:*

- More places for kids to go.
- Population growth
- Gas station, or closer, drive 6 miles to gas station. Lock key pump station here.
- Ditto, hang out, things to do. Maybe park, play basketball, (Black Bull has huge upstairs and years ago had rollerskating, basketball there, like to see it revamped.)
- More businesses - Dentist, doctor, Dairy Queen, general shopping.
- School should be open more, so can play basketball when nothing else to do. Now always closed, unlock for b-ball, not let anyone in if not for practice, say safety issue. Can't even be on playground. If not sports, suppose to go home.
- Basketball court, outdoor basketball court, weight room, bowling alley, ditto, bowling,
- Used to be able to be in musicals, theater, Garage Theatre. (unknown if will reopen). Missoula Children's Theater comes every other year, like that.
- Hang out for kids would also provide more job opportunities.
- Ditto, bowling alley, arcade, small weight room or inside basketball court.
- Skating rink
- Nice town, but more work needed to fix sidewalks, medians, boulevards, etc.
- Students would like to volunteer, be more involved in community. Would also like input in what happens in their town and school.

- Unity between schools. (Girls get along with Stanford guys, but that's about it!)
- Larger grocery store

### **Session 7, Teachers in Hobson**

#### *Problems:*

- jobs, jobs, lack of jobs – why our enrollment is down.
- ditto
- ditto –
- lack of funding for education
- drug and alcohol abuse
- communication – is lacking between admin/teachers/school/town
- support for families
- single parent support – counseling for broken families
- lack of money to keep pool going in summer
- kids have struggle because parents are splitting up
- transportation problem – to a doctor or hospital or recreational opportunities
- fair number of elderly people that need home health care or minimal services at home – will only increase as the population ages
- water – don't have enough
- boat ramps- no water
- underage drinking – and pot smoking; pot smoking is the drug of choice

#### *Assets:*

- School
- Sports
- Diverse population – aged, yes, but also young people
- A lot of educators in the community
- Terrific community spirit
- Volunteer organizations
- A lot of community pride
- Ditto
- Very welcoming community
- A lot for young kids to do – baseball, etc.
- Loyal community
- Long-time businesses
- Volunteer fire dept and emergency services
- Activities for all ages
- Book Fair – businesses always willing to support it
- Ditto all of the above
- Community support for school programs, new comers and local businesses
- Location – close to GF, Billings, Lewistown – also have mountains, prairies, good recreation
- Guest ranch, lake, Shakespeare in the Parks, Missoula Children's Theater, Judith Cultural Society
- Strong churches

- Good childcare center
- Preschool program – will be tied in with HeadStart
- For adults – card playing, cribbage tournament
- Teachers get involved in the community
- 4-H

*Projects:*

- Full service gas station
- Continue to grow and thrive – increased population
- Empty houses filled with families
- Small acreages available for people to buy
- More jobs
- More funding for schools
- More businesses – to bring in more people
- Programs maintained in the high school
- More counseling services for troubled kids
- Kids and elderly working together to meet each other's needs
- Ice skating rink
- Upgrading park for younger kids
- More things for high schooler's to do
- Teen center or rec center for teens to have something to do
- Assisted living support

## **Listening Session 8, Business Local Govt., Hobson Problems:**

- jobs and income
- ditto, more jobs come in, industry
- ditto
- lot more young people come in, support schools, keep comm. Growing, population growth, schools
- Produce higher-paying rather than service jobs, wind energy
- Ditto, working on wind energy
- keep population base
- lacking quality housing, rentals (need if have jobs). No where for employees to live
- Lack of community involvement
- Better work ethic
- Infrastructure and incentives: will bring businesses, families, etc. need to have reason for someone to build business here.
- Put Hobson on map again.
- ditto, above. We're all living here because like living in small town, but do need to be able to keep more young families come in, school essential.
- Increase in public services, tournament, no place to stay, no place to stop and buy gas. Expand businesses we have.

- Library: not a 501c3, needs to happen, so people could donate, apply for grants. Maybe expand with museum
- Ditto on library, and we're restricted on what signage we can put on highway.
- Transportation for sr. citizens for medical Lewistown and GF
- Ditto all, but appearance as town, room for improvement, keep nice. Recruiting and retaining our teachers. With growth comes changes, like to see town remain safe, crime and drug free. Keep standards of excellence.
- Positive attitude and better planning. Enthusiasm.
- Two-edged sword, growth, jobs, young families, lose some of small town things – no crime, drugs, traffic. easy to say what we need, but ie gas station, go to banker, will look at no. of people, competition, etc., fight same things every town.
- Nice to see medical clinic a few days a week. Dr. or PA come by, especially elderly who can't drive. Dentist, part-time.
- Getting schools to work together (moore and hobson), wedge between them. Cooperation with education lacking.
- Stabilization of Ackley lake water levels.

*Assets:*

- Hobson, beautiful, landscaping, pride in town, trees
- small community, clean, lawns always nice, pride. Don't see teenagers causing trouble
- community involvement, want to make changes and improvements.
- Good to have grocery store, 6 miles to Eddie's Corner, 24-hour gas/convenience, etc.; saw mill
- The people
- People, ditto. Community, wonderful. Lot of young people.
- Good schools, great businesses, good location, centrally located.
- Good schools, gym, store
- For our population, good place
- Good access to technology (broadband) and knowledge-base. Ability to build a business and earn income in technology. Central MT Communications of Havre 3-mile perimeter from here, switch house, (Triangle Telephone) lot of businesses could take advantages, have people who have expertise, enterprising people.
- Have risk-takers, try new things, expand, have to be a risk taker. Pioneer spirit!
- Exel. Food service (3 places in town), museum at Utica supported by historical society, Ackley lake, daycare, What the Hay contest (big draw), Ag technology, sawmill, sr. center, schools, all quality, tech. Expertise. See potential for Hobson/Spring Creek tour, from Gfalls? Woods Metal Art.
- Ditto all of above, came from diff. Small community, we have diverse age group here, not true from where I came from. Awesome daycare here! Work at school, know young people have good morals, ethics, lot of pride.
- Swimming pool.
- Customer service, friendliness
- Moccasin is our community too, lot going on, seed plant, have people who do and have always cared. Businesses could use help in keeping.
- Great snow removal system, couple volunteers do a good job!

- Daycare, awesome, ditto.
- Good community with good people,
- Community support, ditto.
- Ditto, everything
- Have excel. School system, new gym is asset, booster club is super, volunt. Fire dept. and EMT system, beautiful bed and breakfast outside town, 2 nice churches.
- Ag-based town, all businesses here. Not a lot of turn-over, tied to land.
- Hobson Insurance, employ quite a few people. Dale agent for about 48 states. Stevenson and Basin Angus ranches lot of people employed.
- Mayor really cares. & former mayor(s)
- Judith Cultural Society, season tickets, 3 performances including dinner theater
- No traffic lights, Basin Angus employs families (and others); technology, Hobson Insurance, have web page, had businesses that wanted to buy our web page. Nathan's web page maintenance, state of the art, user friendly. Big asset
- Question? For Hobson, No. but for JB Chamber. One for school, lot of businesses. Have general area page, mostly listing of sites from area. Asked for list of websites.
- School, no. one. Don't want to follow Kolin, Moccasin, Utica. Need to do what can to keep going. Still need more school cooperation. Set aside egos and personal agendas.
- Location, clean, work ethic, ditto.
- What the Hay, year-round inquiries.
- Rail, missing the boat, right on our front door, figure out way to get them to stop.
- Fishing and hunting.
- Utica, Women's organization, never disbanded, May 3, hosting the Northern Plains District. 60-70 women to Utica (6 ladies)

### **Projects:**

- water on boulevard, new sidewalks, walkway to school
- jobs, industry
- playground equipment at park, needs replacing
- ditto sidewalks
- ice skating rink, looking into that. For kids to do. Fitness center, along with community center
- Shopping tour out of Great Falls, other, come to Judith Gap, Hobson, Lewistown, other, before Christmas – would come back other times
- Recreation center (ditto). Kids have to drive to Lewistown or GF, put teens on road a lot. (video games). Trouble happens when don't have something to do.
- Riding arena. Indoors.
- Ditto on arena, lot of elderly could also walk inside there also.
- Lots of dittos,
- Switchboard for independent contractors, take calls, schedule appointments. Business incubator.
- Ditto on central office.
- Ditto rec center, and industry. Lived in Bozeman, back there, lot of industrial people leaving, high taxes, problem in state.

- Car wash.
- Infrastructure needed to support these ideas, water, hit and miss. People who have good water don't want to pay for city water. Long-term survival depends on infrastructure. Need incentives, tax incentives, or community sponsored resources, business planning and resources, need. Lot of us not business people. More resources for small businesses, keep running and efficient.
- Ditto, sidewalks.
- Need little more growth, to support existing businesses. Retain and make better. Need to be less short-sighted.
- Rec. center would be wonderful, but if operate one year on grant, then what. Funding is a real issue. For seniors, for youth. Everything costs money, everyone wants but no resources.
- Garage Theater, if lose 4 years of motivation, we've lost huge asset. Were producing 3-4 productions per year, drawing many youth in all Central MT, stagecraft, music support, lot from local people. Hope to find some way to reactivate before dies. (Musical director and voice teacher moved). Also issue about founder support.
- Develop value-added businesses, butcher, micro-brewery, jerky.
- (no water for micro-brewery), need to have upfront capital.
- Swimming pool, needs repairs, don't want to lose. Other funding needed besides donations.
- Library on solid-footing, 501c3 status,
- Ditto, walking trail, fitness center
- Ditto, library – tourism, sr. care, healthcare, preventative care, come here; affordable housing, youth area, multi-purpose space, summer farmer's market, (traffic to Glacier, Ackley Lake) promote our gym at school, more concessions and traveling events, sidewalks, tap into our youth – youth member on city board?
- Ditto on teenagers youth center; car wash; Hobson new water system.
- Tourism, \$, we could generate lot of money, get website up. Keep in town, need motel (Eddie's Corner, but can house few people). Encourage Eddie's Corner to expand motel accommodation.
- Ditto sidewalk to school.
- Ditto, combining moore/hobson schools in next 2-5 years; hobson community center
- Ditto, medical facility in next 2-5 years, for elderly and children especially.
- Hear quite often, Eddies Corner, looking for partner, carwash and motel expansion. We have location and land. IN 20 years, like to see big trees at Ackley Lake. (wonderful resource, but it's a prairie reservoir).
- Questions: library, in Anaconda, got under someone else's 501c3. That's not problem, women's club owns building, decision needs to be made, who runs it. Title to who?

## **Session 9 Business, Finances, in Stanford**

### *Problems:*

- dwindling economic base
- ditto, declining population
- ditto
- ditto
- community pride,
- child care, Stanford

- ditto all of this, leadership knowledge needed, more professional knowledge
- CRP takes young people off the ground and families away, and communities suffer.
- Change attitude, need to welcome people and be kind to neighbors, change negatives to positives.
- Lack of attractions to bring people here, can't buy 10 acres and a house, nothing in between a house in town and farm.
- When people die there is no one to take their place, an aging community.
- No jobs, school population dwindling, next cut is people which hurts the community.
- Water for light industry or some businesses, not enough water, ditto on a lot of things the others said, complacency and hostility, reluctance to listen to new comers.
- Drought, lower commodity prices, statewide.
- Lack of diversified economy
- Abandoned homes, probably 20, possibility of them becoming meth labs
- Drug problem surmised but not documented. Insurance won't insure rentals because of potential for meth labs.
- Maintenance people at school have found evidence in the school of drug problems.
- When the bank built in Lewistown, we lost some Hobson trade because they now go to Lewistown instead of coming here.
- Physician Assistant, medical services
- We have a 'quiet' opportunity here.
- Unique businesses, no chain food places. Small town customer service. If there is an emergency you can get hold of the owner of the store and they'll open up for you.
- The major challenge is maintaining enough population and economic base, so that we don't lose our school system, business district, and government offices.
- Water, jobs workers, retirement
- Complacency and lack of initiative plus hostility to changes of the status quo on the part of people in official positions. Reluctance to listen to the ideas of relative newcomers.

### **Strengths:**

- Good businesses, and good schools, great grant programs for graduating seniors.
- People work for a goal, ie. Playground equipment at school.
- Good recreational opportunities, close to mountains, hunting, fishing campgrounds, and businesses for sale here in town.
- Paved runway, maintained airport, fair amount of traffic.
- Ditto, airport on highway next to a small community.
- Tourist that wants a nice safe vacation, this is the place to go. Quiet ambiance. Need a big sign that says "gateway to national monument"
- We're on a dividing road between Fort Benton, Lewistown, Great Falls. Far enough away from Eddy's Corner, Good gas station, good road to get there.
- Size of the community, no traffic lights, get around, parking. Also, caring community. Everybody gets together and celebrates birthdays, etc. History of this area, old Yogo town, could make a nice driving tour, make this place a destination.
- Federal, state and county offices here. Need to fight everyday to keep our county offices here.

- Activity at the airport because of Forest Service.
- Ditto with county seat.
- This county is blessed with some of the better artists in the state. Need a brochure on the artists of the area, promoting them.
- Ditto, family standpoint quality of life, business standpoint support from other businesses.
- Businesses support other businesses, kept us in business.
- Land available for manufacturing
- Great city council, working on infrastructure, vision for the future, independence of people is a negative and positive. Businesses compliment each other well. Businesses bring income into the community. Need to define community.
- Land commercial, residential as well as ag
- Comfortable place to live.
- Good people, rural life

*Projects:*

- New water system adequate year round.
- Streets need improvements, looks abandoned with these streets.
- Entice a manufacturing company with available housing and school system, that would employ 5 – 10 people, also have railroad.
- Utilize the train as an opportunity. Fertilizer plant uses train, cant' get freight here, however.
- Agriculture community to produce a finished product, value-added. Market the home grown things, brewer's thrive why not beef or wheat.
- Banking from all over Chouteau county, etc. but they want something to eat and do while here. Need some kind of industry that employs more than the bank which employs 14.
- Added value for ag products.
- Montana made commodity.
- Un-inhabitable buildings need to be cleaned up.
- Maybe we could cut some grass, we need to do something rather than just sit back and complain.
- Even if they are inhabitable, we could go one step further. The community could paint or fix up rather than just by the landowner.
- People grasping some opportunity, people need to jump in and do more. Times it is difficult to find employees.
- Fitness building or health center, place to exercise.
- Promote advertise what a great place to retire, solitude, no traffic, pleasant,
- Our community park is old and dangerous, would like to see an investment in our kids, especially little kids.
- Nice swimming pool, keep it there.
- Some businesses failed because they didn't know how to run a business, so need some way to mentor them.
- Ditto, address the gym floor in 5 years.
- Major town clean-up, including resurfacing the streets
- Attract a few families who want to live in a comfortable place

- Inspect and assess the empty buildings in town, see if they are not worth bringing up to a decent level. If not, & the owners won't cooperate, have them condemned and removed. The vacant lots are worth more potential to buyers than cruddy eyesores.
- Mt. Dept. of Commerce - Have a website that lists assets specifically by county and region, along with the names of people to contact who would like to work with the businesses. A fee would make the people with real estate subscribers to a frequently updated list of who or what businesses had inquired so we could initiate contact.
- County wide school
- Clean industry
- New streets

### **Session 10 - Stanford – Federal and State Agencies**

#### *Problems:*

- Local jobs
- Ditto, getting newcomers to come in.
- Ditto
- We don't involve people by asking them to do projects, we're not asking them to participate everybody. Not enough tasking in the community.
- Ditto
- Declining population, number of people available to do volunteerism in the community.
- Need new families with kids to keep schools open.

#### *Strengths:*

- Natural resources
- People in the community, there values
- Ditto, utilizing renewable resources
- Community welcoming to us. Transportation, but need to draw into town. Campgrounds, parks, forest, pool. Highway traffic don't see this unless they come into town.
- Best climates in the country. Don't have mosquitos and bugs, cools off at nights in the summer, always have a breeze.
- Clean air, need windmills
- By far the most welcoming community.
- Recreational opportunities, campgrounds close and well maintained.
- Old Judith Ranger station has historical opportunities, Yogo Mine, "What the Hay" contest.
- Ditto
- Wide open spaces
- No subdivisions everywhere,
- Newspaper, highlight events, students

#### *Projects:*

- Business, there are businesses that would fit with this community and natural resources. Business that would employ 10-15.
- Clean up abandoned and dilapidated buildings.
- Clean air, clean water, keep soils, through the construction of a bio-mass generator.

- Agriculture going down hill, too many corporations buying farms, need to get people on the land. The town used to be full of people.
- Four-lane highway.
- Programs to help farmers in times of drought.
- Bring other businesses in because farmers and ranchers may not always be there, utilize the airport more, utilize resources more.
- Get behind the promoters of the wind turbines in Judith Basin area.
- I'd like to see the projects implemented, fill one of the businesses downtown.
- DNRC programs including risk ratings of subdivisions and housing in wildland interface areas to help landowners assess and mitigate problems. Additional grants will be available to clean-up undergrowth and mitigate situations. Bio-mass and co-generation could be a viable project for these grant funds. Severe fires are extremely devastating and we want to prevent them by mitigating circumstances now. Contact local fire chief or county fire warden for more information about the "home audit" program. "Fuels for schools" may also be a source of grant funds.
- DNRC programs include a program to help private landowners manage their timber stands on their land with possible timber sales. This service provides a non-business perspective for landowners to utilize when making management issues. There is a cost-share program to remove fuels and a defensible space program. Forest land enhancement program has funds available for cost-share projects, mainly thinning projects, help landowners set up contracts, and cost-share to reduce fuels. There is lots of timber that isn't merchantable and needs to be removed. It's all chippable material for a bio-mass

## **Session 11 –Stanford High School Students**

### *Problems:*

- Streets aren't cleaned off
- Job problems,
- Ditto
- Not enough budget for schools, county
- Jobs,
- Drugs
- Not a lot of opportunities in classes, advanced placement, etc.
- Snow plow
- Drugs
- Attitudes of community,
- Streets need repair work
- Not enough for kids to do, no place to hang out or go
- Funding for extr-curricular activities
- Ditto
- Roads are horrible
- Jobs
- No industry that will bring in families
- Not enough high paid salaries, teachers salaries
- Nothing to do after school, or summer jobs, ways to earn college funds
- Weather droughts, ag economy

- No future here
- Resources, not a lot of shopping opportunities, school supplies, etc.
- Population going down
- Law enforcement, picking on kids ignore adults. Ignore DUI's but pick on kids.
- Nothing to do here, no money, can't make a living.
- If you're not in sports there isn't anything to do.
- Have to drive to Lewistown to go to a movie, or bowling
- People do daycare, but not a real center
- Rivalry with Hobson
- Would like to come back to Stanford if there was jobs
- There is nothing to draw us back to Stanford, no work, no demand for us to come back
- Community likes the small town and doesn't want to grow
- Marijuana problem but not meth.

*Assets:*

- No crime, don't have to worry about mugging, don't have to lock doors
- Good environment to grow up in
- Know everybody
- Friends
- Natural resources, recreation
- No threats about living here
- No rush hour, can cruise the drag
- School and community pride
- No crime
- Likes that the cops don't follow him for doing drugs
- Fresh air
- Smaller classrooms so students get more individual attention
- Scholarship program for college
- Everybody has a chance to be involved in extr-curricular activities
- Good place to raise a family
- Everybody knows everybody
- Teachers
- Get an opportunity to do many things in school, community service, etc.
- Variety of extra-curricular
- Everybody knows each other
- Families here, extended family
- Recreation
- No bad areas of town
- Wildlife, hunting, and fishing
- Opportunities here that large town kids don't have, drive around earlier aged, etc.

*Projects:*

- Youth center, indoor pool, bowling, snowboarding, weight machine, indoor track, indoor skate park, paintball,
- That the school is still here
- New bleachers in the gym
- Video
- Fast food restaurant
- Make sure the town is not a ghost town
- Baseball leagues, youth and adult, softball tournaments
- Golf course
- Movie theatre
- Streets fixed
- Job opportunities
- Sidewalks and sewers fixed (sewer just fixed)
- Just some sidewalks in the areas that don't have sidewalks
- Less houses for sale
- Less abandoned houses, or fix the houses (paint, cut grass)
- Interested in starting businesses within the school to earn wages.

## **Listening Session 12, Senior Citizens in Stanford**

### *Problems:*

- Couldn't think of anything negative!
- Ditto
- Need sidewalks
- Poor streets
- Empty houses – need to bring the people in
- Need jobs for young people
- Lost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of our businesses since 1962
- Abandoned and neglected homes of absentee owners – a menace
- Poor, neglected look when come into town
- Crumbling old buildings – need to be taken down
- Need zoning laws in place – some teeth to back-up community standards

### *Assets:*

- Can retire here inexpensively
- Can't shovel my own sidewalks – neighbors already will have done it
- Friendly
- Love it here – made more friends in a month here than living years elsewhere
- Ambulance
- Judith Basin Van – to take us to GF for doctors or shopping – as needed; sometimes serves Hobson and Geysers too
- Safe community
- Medical clinic is wonderful – nurse practitioner is terrific
- Wonderful library

- Wonderful museum
- Swimming pool
- Human services provided two days a week (welfare, etc.)
- Food pantry
- SAVES – Lewistown based – domestic violence program
- Churches all work together – pray for rain
- Meals delivered when someone is ill
- Hutterite Colony

*Projects:*

- Movie theater
- Zoning in place
- Restaurant that is open at night (seating outside of bar)
- Wind generation
- Landing strip better used
- Signage – divert traffic going to Ft. Benton for Bicentennial – let people know what we have
- Signage that would list our businesses, services and attraction

**Listening Session No. 13**

**Seniors, Businesses in Geyser**

*Projects:*

- Possibly expand manufacturing group to include this area. (Lewistown group may need to bring others in.)
- Geyser continue on course, school improvements, water, sewer, structures that need to be removed.
- BNSF strong line through here, need to utilize more
- Transportation, rail or highway, use more
- Bentanite (?), to the north, could be mined. Possible commodity.
- Raynesford: interest golf course
- Car wash
- Interest in putting in a museum.
- Ditto, improve water system
- Grocery store
- Ditto, improve highway
- Swimming pool
- Small industry
- Possible coal mining (used to)
- Recreation center needed (youth were meeting in community hall, games, etc. Went up the road to old garage, carpeted, painted. Family had to see the building. Things all stored in hall, homes, churches, etc.) Plan to add on to community hall. (will be volunteer labor, fundraising) Preschool would also relocate there and expand with daycare. Also used for after-school activities – homework help, etc. Rent would be paid for private use.
- Ditto, water. (can't attract people or business without it). No water source right here, would have to pipe.

- Facility for elderly, so don't have to move from Geysers.
- Idea to consolidate school with Raynesford. (Raynesford wants to keep their school).

*Assets:*

- Transportation, on major highway.
- Cooperative people (i.e. young people fixed up community hall).
- Community-minded
- Boutique selling milk, essentials, to help community since grocery closed.
- Ditto, Geysers has strongest sense of community spirit
- Strong infrastructure, looks like will get stronger
- Raynesford: school, bus service to surrounding area, 2 service station (convenience store and farm supplies), junction of highway, bars, nice area, good game hunting, bird hunting, ranches lease land to hunting.
- School – projection steady for 3 years, drop after that.
- Local benefactor, scholarship fund in Geysers
- Community hall the largest and nicest in the county (used for big events for 200 plus people)
- Ditto, school, with new gym
- Community supports youth
- Location for recreation: Highwood and Little Belts Mountains
- Ditto, school. High ratings, students going to for higher ed, few dropouts, award in 1989.
- Law abiding.
- Ditto, volunteers.
- Senior center, mostly volunteer labor
- Youth, would like to come back
- Ditto, community hall.
- Ditto, location.
- Ditto, school
- Ditto, people

*Projects:*

- Possibly expand manufacturing group to include this area. (Lewistown group may need to bring others in.)
- Geysers continue on course, school improvements, water, sewer, structures that need to be removed.
- BNSF strong line through here, need to utilize more
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