

# **RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT REPORT**

**for**

## **WEST YELLOWSTONE, MONTANA**

**MAY 12 - 13, 2004**

**In partnership with  
Montana Department of Commerce, Montana Economic Developers Association,  
Montana USDA/Rural Development, University of Montana – Missoula, Nez Perce  
National Historical Park, Gallatin National Forest, Northern Rocky RC&D, and  
the people of West Yellowstone.**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I was impressed with West Yellowstone long before arriving for the assessment. Several weeks prior to the assessment, I was sent information for the team regarding West Yellowstone's planning, current activities, vision, goals, etc., and was in awe of all that you already have in place. My main concern was that the West Yellowstone Resource Team Assessment assist you in moving full steam ahead – continuing to build on the momentum that already exists. Josh Kellar, Fred Rice and Frank Walker provided excellent information that allowed the team to hit the ground running upon arrival in West Yellowstone. It was a privilege to spend two days in your community, listening to your ideas, challenges and dreams for the future.

What the team heard over and over, is that West Yellowstone needs to build a sustainable, year round economy. This report will explore ideas, issues and resources to assist in finding answers to West Yellowstone's needs.

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

Special thanks are due Fred Rice, Operations Manager for the City of West Yellowstone and Marysue Costello of West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce. Fred and Marysue served as the spark plugs behind this project and encouraged across-the-board community involvement. Special thanks are also due Joshua Kellar of Northern Rocky Mountain RC&D for providing support and technical assistance to West Yellowstone. In addition, I applaud each and every team member that dedicated hours of work and travel in order to participate on the team: Gus Byrom, CDBG Program Manager for Montana Department of Commerce; Marna Daley, Planning/Writer Editor for Gallatin National Forest; Dr. Doug Eury, Supervisor of the Nez Perce National Historical Park and last but not least, Dr. Tony Rudbach, Vice President for Research and Economic Development for the University of Montana, Missoula. Each team member's contact information is provided in the following report. Please feel free to call on any of us for additional information or support. It would be our pleasure!

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

Be sure to attend the prioritizing Town Meeting in West Yellowstone on Thursday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>. On behalf of the team, thank you.

Gloria O'Rourke  
MEDA

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

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

Fred Rice, Operations Manager for the City of West Yellowstone and Marysue Costello served as the local contacts and local team leaders for the project. Joshua Kellar of Northern Rocky Mountain RC&D provided technical assistance. Fred and Marysue 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 West Yellowstone officials indicated would be needed to respond to the problem areas identified.

The Resource Team interviewed over 100 people during May 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. The team was available for listening to the following 16 groups: Senior Citizens; Students and Teachers; Local Officials and Citizen Boards; Steering Committee and EDA Grant Advisory Committee; Service Workers and Renters; Hebgen Basin and Island Park Residents; Business Professionals, Suppliers, Accountants, Hair Dressers; YNP, Gallatin National Forest, Federal and State Employees; Non-Profit Agencies and West Yellowstone Community Foundation, YHC; Non-Motorized Recreation Interests; Fishing Guides, Bike Shops, Cross Country Skiing; Motorized Transportation Interests and Snowmobile Operators; Small Business Operators, Stand Alone Restaurants, Small Motels, and Main Street Businesses; General Session; Resort Operators and Combined Lodging and Restaurant Facilities; and Health Care Professionals.

Each participant was asked to respond to three questions designed to begin communications and discussion and to serve as a basis for developing a plan of action. The three questions were:

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

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

A preliminary oral report and a summary of group recommendations were presented to the people of West Yellowstone the evening of May 13<sup>th</sup>.

Following the oral report, this formal written report was prepared and is presented to West Yellowstone. Copies will be made available in print and electronically. The report is available on the MEDA website at <http://www.medamembers.org>. Click on the Resource Team Link and scroll down the page. A return visit is planned to West Yellowstone on June 3<sup>rd</sup> to review the report and to set priorities and initiate action plans in the community.

**WEST YELLOWSTONE, MONTANA  
RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT  
MAY 12 – 13, 2004**

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<b>Wednesday, May 12</b>	<b>Event/Group</b>
11:00 am	ESB 10 S. Faithful Team meet and orientation
12:00 pm	Bear's Den 15 N. Electric Lunch at Senior Center seniors
1:00 pm	Tour of Town
2:30 pm	West Yellowstone School 416 N Geyser school students
3:30 pm	West Yellowstone School 416 N Geyser administrators, teachers
4: 30 pm	ESB 10 S. Faithful local officials, citizen boards
6:00 pm	TBA steering committee/EDA grant advisory committee
7:30 pm	ESB 10 S. Faithful service workers, renters
8:30 pm	ESB 10 S. Faithful Hebgen Basin/Island Park residents

<b>Thursday, May 13</b>	<b>Event/Group</b>
7:00 am	ESB 10 S. Faithful business professionals, suppliers, accountants, hair dressers
8:00 am	ESB 10 S. Faithful YNP, Gallatin National Forest, federal and state employees
9:30 am	ESB 10 S. Faithful Non-profit agencies: West Yellowstone Community Found, YHC
10:30 am	ESB 10 S. Faithful Non-motorized recreation interests: fishing guides, bike shops, cross country skiing
11:30 pm	ESB 10 S. Faithful Motorized transportation interests: snowmobile operators
12:30 pm	ESB/TBA small business operators: stand-alone restaurants, small motels, main street businesses
1:30 pm	ESB 10 S. Faithful general: people who do not feel comfortable in any of the other groups
2:30 pm	ESB 10 S. Faithful Resort operators: combined lodging and restaurant facilities
3:30 pm	ESB 10 S. Faithful Health care professionals
4:30 pm	Running Bear Dinner, team prep
7:30 pm	Court Chambers 220 Yellowstone Ave Town Meeting

## **WEST YELLOWSTONE RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT MAIN ISSUES**

**The following Main Issues are a summary of what was heard during 16 Listening Sessions throughout the May 12 – 13, 2004 West Yellowstone Resource Team Assessment. This list serves as the outline for the team's written report.**

### **MAIN TOPIC: ECONOMY**

- **ISSUE: EXPANSION**
  - Off season catalog workforce
  - Phone in call center
  - Light industry
  
- **ISSUE: DIVERSIFICATION**
  - Year round economy
  - Address shoulder seasons
  - Outdoor recreational opportunities for all – fair balance
  - Indoor recreation opportunities for residents and visitors
  - Develop Historic District and Western Heritage Arts Center

### **MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY**

- **ISSUE: EDUCATION**
  - Higher ed opportunities
  - Cultural diversification in the schools – arts, music, language
  - Teacher health insurance
  - Electives & Jr. High sports
  - School budget – funding
  
- **ISSUE: COMMUNICATION**
  - Within the community
  - National and global media
  - Yellowstone National Park – West gate access info
  
- **ISSUE: YOUTH**
  - Day Care
  - After school activities- and summer activities
  
- **ISSUE: CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES**
  - Western Heritage Arts Center

### **MAIN TOPIC: HIGH SPEED INTERNET ACCESS**

- **ISSUE: TELEMEDICINE**
- **ISSUE: COMMUNITY MARKETING**
- **ISSUE: EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES**

- K-12 and Higher Ed
- ISSUE: NATURAL RESOURCE TRAINING
- ISSUE: HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY TRAINING
- ISSUE: COMMUNICATIONS RELATED INDUSTRY

**MAIN TOPIC: WORKFORCE**

- ISSUE: AVAILABILITY
- ISSUE: STABILITY
- ISSUE: TRAINING
- ISSUE: HOUSING FOR WORKFORCE

**MAIN TOPIC: YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK**

- ISSUE: WEST GATE OPENING POLICY
- ISSUE: TOWN AND NATIONAL PARK SERVICE COMMUNICATION
- ISSUE: TIMELY PERMITTING DECISIONS
- ISSUE: INSTABILITY AND UNCERTAINTY REGARDING SNOWMOBILE USE IN THE PARK
- ISSUE: ACCOMMODATING A VARIETY OF OUTDOOR RECREATION USES AND AT THE SAME TIME PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE PARK.

**MAIN TOPIC: TRANSPORTATION**

- ISSUE: RAILROAD LINKAGE WITH ASHTON
- ISSUE: COORDINATION WITH GATEWAY COMMUNITIES
- ISSUE: AIRPORT
  - Expansion
  - Ownership
  - Year round access and more flights
- ISSUE: BETTER PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION TO BOZEMAN
  - Coordination with Dept. of Transportation
- ISSUE: SAFETY OF RECREATIONISTS (BRIDGES AND BIKEWAYS)
- ISSUE: COORDINATION WITH GALLATIN NATIONAL FOREST – ONGOING

**MAIN TOPIC: LAND USE**

- ISSUE: LAND ACQUISITION – POTENTIAL USFS FOUR YEAR WINDOW (2008 DEADLINE)
- ISSUE: MIXED USES (ZONING)
- ISSUE: HISTORIC DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT (INCLUDES UP DINING HALL RENOVATION)
- ISSUE: GOLF COURSE
- ISSUE: ROOM FOR AFFORDABLE WORKFORCE HOUSING
- ISSUE: EVENT CENTER

**MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM**

- ISSUE: MARKETING

- Cooperative effort
- Community identity
- **FULL SPECTRUM OF OPPORTUNITIES PROMOTED – BOTH IN THE PARK AND OUTSIDE OF THE PARK**
  - Fishing, biking, cross country skiing, etc.
  - Community image
    - Common architectural theme
    - Beautification
    - Clean up

**MAIN TOPIC: SENIORS**

- ISSUE: CONSTRUCTION OF SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER
- ISSUE: IN-HOME HEALTH CARE
- ISSUE: NURSING HOME AND ASSISTED LIVING

# WEST YELLOWSTONE RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

**Report by: Dr. Tony Rudbach**  
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## **MAIN TOPIC: ECONOMY**

### **ISSUE: EXPANSION AND DIVERSIFICATION**

At most of the listening sessions, comments were made which referenced high fluctuations in West's economy during the year. Summer was best, winter was lower, but second, and the shoulder seasons were the worst. This cycling impacted work force and infrastructure in the town, including schools, healthcare and other essential services. The obvious reason for the economic fluctuation is reliance on tourism.

The key to economic expansion and reducing seasonal cycling is to grow employment opportunities for the winter and shoulder seasons. This can be accomplished by making novel uses of the traditional resources of West Yellowstone and/or creating jobs in fields unrelated to tourism. An issue with this latter approach is that it will alter the character of your town and you must reach agreement on this issue.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Use available space in the schools and off-season housing for new economic opportunities.
  - a. Create a music institute (a boarding school) for gifted high school students. Available space in the high school would provide usual education and some special dormitory-like facilities and practice rooms could be created in available motel space.
  - b. Create a Nordic training center (boarding school) for high school-aged athletes.
  - c. Create a Nordic training center for adult athletes. For both "B" and "C" USOC support might be sought or corporate sponsorships.
  - d. Start a community-based hand craft Christmas store (similar to the one at 9-mile (outside Missoula). Manufacture items in local shops during off-seasons and sell in Christmas shop in West Yellowstone during December and wholesale to other outlets.
  - e. Recruit an artists colony/coop to create and sell locally. In the autumn, hold a western art sale (with outsider artists) similar to the C. M. Russell auction in Great Falls. This would tie-in with the Western Heritage Arts Center.

### **Resources:**

Space is available in schools, motels, and railroad dining room. Dorms created for the school year could be used for seasonal workers. For many of the "Christmas Store" crafts, home or small shops could be used. An artists' coop, might require a separate building. Federal grants are available for community construction related to economic development.

## **MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY**

### **ISSUES: EDUCATION**

Another universal set of topics in the listening sessions dealt with the West Yellowstone Community. Education, communication, youth issues, and cultural issues were all mentioned.

Education:

1. Need local access to higher education.
2. K-12 schools need arts, music, languages and other electives in addition to Jr. High School sports.
3. Lower enrollment in schools has caused budget problems, leading to #2, above, and reduced benefits for teachers.

Communication: Need to open communication channels within the West community and to outside agencies and media outlets.

Youth: Day care and after school activities.

Cultural Opportunities:

Currently, the MUS Board of Regents, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, and the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity are studying "Initiatives" for educational outreach within the State and to use MUS resources to assist economic growth. Immediate contact should be made with OCHE to get West's needs addressed and MSU and UM should be approached directly to seek assistance.

The path to increasing school funding and solution of the problems with the additional dollars is to increase enrollment. In order to do this, West must grow its permanent population or import students. Some solutions are suggested throughout this report.

### **Recommendations:**

Communication: A small local committee needs to be formed to recommend solutions to West's internal communication gaps. This group could also create a vehicle to get necessary and accurate information to State, region, national and global outlets; the key is to have a single small group take responsibility for this.

Youth: Most of these issues can be addressed with money. There are federal, State and private foundation sources of funds available through grants. The Research Administration Offices at UM and MSU can assist in locating funding sources and in preparing grant applications.

Cultural Opportunities: These need money and community participation. The first step would be to

survey West to see if there is sufficient local support for expansion of performances, etc. in the off-seasons. One low cost way to test for levels of support would be to bring in performing groups from Bozeman and Missoula; see what the attendance is before expanding the project.

**Resources:**

Use your universities and colleges as sources of performers. Also, there are groups throughout the State that would come to West to perform for the cost of transportation, a meal and a night in a motel. I, personally, could arrange for a couple of these.

**MAIN TOPIC: HIGH SPEED INTERNET ACCESS**

**ISSUE: ADEQUATE ACCESS TO THE INTERNET**

The team understood that there is little or no high-speed Internet access in West Yellowstone. Adequate Internet access is needed in a variety of venues to bring West into the 21st century. The Clinic could offer better health care through telemedicine. All aspects of education (including distance education and training) now use the Internet, and the Internet is essential for effective marketing of West Yellowstone.

**Recommendations:**

It appears that Qwest and one other entity were the only Internet Service Providers for West. The Qwest representative told me that they were bringing DSL into West along with T1 capabilities. This needs to be followed up on with a high priority. Again, a committee should do this. If it appears that Qwest is not responding to community needs in a timely fashion, get the Montana Public Service Commission involved.

**Resources:**

Use your State and federal agencies and contacts to bring sufficient pressure to get the needed service as rapidly as possible.

**MAIN TOPIC: WORKFORCE**

**ISSUE: SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE**

The increased workforce requirement during the Summer will be an on-going problem, even with solutions provided for stabilizing fluctuations in the economy.

**Recommendations:**

Recruit college students, nation-wide. They need to be supplied with low-cost, dormitory-type housing and reasonably-priced cafeteria-type meals. This housing could be low-cost, summer camp-like. If land could be found, the construction and maintenance costs could be covered by bonds, serviced by revenues from the rent. Maybe, some portions of these buildings could be insulated for year-round use and be used during the off-season as artists coops or Christmas craft manufacturing.

**Resources:**

For this topic, and for several of the others, it is obvious that a coordinated plan needs to be created to make the best, most cost-effective use of community resources.

**MAIN TOPIC: YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK****ISSUE: IMPROVED RELATIONSHIP(S)**

West Yellowstone exists because of the Park. A close relationship between the Park and the community needs to be nurtured.

Most of the issues relating to interactions between West and the Park relate to communications: West Gate opening policy; permitting decisions; snowmobile uses; multiple use; etc.

**Recommendations:**

The best way to have meaningful communications with the Park and influence over policies is to have a small influential committee represent West Yellowstone. This committee could take its directions from community input at public meetings, personnel recommendations, and surveys. But the committee would be charged with diplomatically dealing and negotiating with the Park, the Park Service and with your Senators and Congressman in Washington, DC. This committee would be a "point of contact" for communications from the Park and would establish rapport with the responsible federal officials to discuss and negotiate issues between West and the Park.

**Resources:**

West Yellowstone has the people to serve on such a committee. Essential is selection of a group of people with community spirit and diplomacy. Probably, some funding for travel would be needed.

**MAIN TOPIC: TRANSPORTATION****ISSUES:**

- 1. Rebuilding the railroad to Ashton.**
- 2. Coordination with Gateway Communities.**
- 3. Airport.**
- 4. Public transportation to Bozeman.**
- 5. Bridges and Bikeways.**
- 6. Gallatin National Forest.**

**Recommendations:**

1. The financial realities of rebuilding a rail line to Ashton are insurmountable; I would recommend that no resources be used for this project.
2. The Western Transportation Institute at MSU could assist in planning and implementation of this program.

3. Regarding the airport, there are three separate issues.

A. Expansion: See the land acquisition topic. Also, a general aviation facility, with a fixed-base operation, could be an economic boon for West Yellowstone. After the land acquisition is completed, the other parts need to be explored.

B. Ownership: Unless the airport can be expanded, with more space and more flights, I am not sure that West or Gallatin wants to take ownership and financial responsibility for the airport. First see what happens with issues A. and C. and then decide about transferring ownership.

C. Year round access and more flights: West should look into having an "essential air" designation for the community. Currently, Big Sky Airlines has this for Montana. More flights per day, during the summer season, is a financial decision based on passenger loads. Maybe a summer survey of tourists could be used to convince an airline to try to add more flights per day. Year-round air service and the increased airport maintenance costs, are partly a financial decision and partly based on community need - i.e., emergency transportation. If the airport had a general aviation facility, this would also be taken into account. This is a long-term project, which will involve numerous discussions with State and federal agencies and with airlines. Form a committee of interested parties and charge them with obtaining necessary information and contacts.

4. Better transportation to Bozeman would be most easily negotiated directly with a private carrier. Success of the negotiation would depend on predicted ridership. If the service would not be self-supporting, then subsidies need to be sought from State, federal or local sources. A survey would be an appropriate mechanism to assess need, predict ridership, and to estimate how much people would pay for a round trip ticket. Do not forget that the bus could also be used for small packages, to deliver prescriptions to West, and to transport daily newspapers and magazines.
5. Planning and design of bridges should be discussed with the MDoT Planning group (Sandra Straehl 444-7692) or the Bridge Bureau (Joe Kolman - 444-6260).

**Resources:**

An 8300 ft runway is a wonderful community resource, and expansion of its use should be closely examined.

**MAIN TOPIC: LAND USE**

**ISSUE: LAND ACQUISITION**

The land-locked character of West Yellowstone and uses of available and acquired land was a prevailing theme.

1. Land acquisition: Before 2008 certain lands can be purchased at fair market value from the Forest Service. West needs to address this opportunity immediately and aggressively

2. With the potential growth and diversification of West Yellowstone, land planning and zoning are issues. These include preservation of the historic district, planning a "community theme" for the tourist areas, and location of light industries.
3. Land for a golf course, workforce housing (dorms, apartments and single family units).

**Recommendations:**

1. Immediately, form a committee to plan for land acquisition. Prepare plats of land desired for acquisition. These should be listed in order of priorities, depending on available funding. Land at the airport should be included, in addition to recreational land and right-of-ways. Sources of funds should be explored - bonds, grants, leasebacks, etc.
2. If it has not already been done, legal authority for planning and zoning should be established (community and/or county levels). Then plans should be created and presented to the public for debate and discussion. Lands to be acquired should be covered by this process. Finally, appropriate and legally enforceable rules should be established.
3. Land for special uses will fall into place with successful completion of #1 and #2, above.

**Resources:**

The Forest Service program to allow West Yellowstone to acquire land until 2008 is an opportunity, which may not be repeated in the immediate future; it needs to be pursued. There are many sources of funds available to acquire these lands, depending on their ultimate uses. Possibly, outside assistance should be sought in identifying and applying for the funds.

**MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM**

**ISSUES:**

Tourism is West Yellowstone's economic mainstay:

1. How to best market the community.
2. Should a theme or community identity be created? Enhance the community image.
3. Promote tourist activities both inside and outside of the Park.

**Recommendations:**

1. Use a commercially generated web site to promote the entire spectrum of activities available in the community. All interested businesses would subscribe to and financially support this web site. Professional design would ensure that West's web site came up when people were searching for activities and facilities available in the community. Individual businesses would control their own sites, accessed by links from the home page.
2. Seasonal activities inside and outside of the Park, a calendar of events, current weather information, and Park information (openings and closings) would be available on the continuously updated home page.

3. Many people felt that a "theme" or character should be created for West Yellowstone. Choice of a theme needs to be debated. Again, money would be well spent to obtain input of an outside consultant on this topic. Related to this is a need to generally beautify and clean up the community, so that tourists remember "good" images. The Chamber of Commerce could organize this on a voluntary basis.

**Resources:**

West Yellowstone is small enough and sufficiently isolated that a unique identity, promoted by aggressive marketing, could be created. This could be fishing, the Park, railroad, an art and cultural motif, Santa's village, etc.

**MAIN TOPIC: HEALTH CARE AND SENIOR CITIZENS**

**ISSUES:**

A growing senior citizen population in West Yellowstone has created some new issues for the community

1. Construction of a senior citizens center.
2. In-home health care.
3. Nursing home and assisted living.

**Recommendations:**

1. For a community the size of West Yellowstone, public use facilities like a senior center, a cultural performance/convention center, etc. should be combined into multiple use facilities. Once land is available, construction funds can be obtained from federal, State and private sources. These applications require detailed plans for design and use of the facilities. A group of seniors should start meeting with other community organizations, which are interested in a cooperative project. Ultimately, the conception of a multi-use facility can be created, which will determine land requirements and potential funding sources.
2. In-home health care: This should be part of a comprehensive health care plan for the community (see that Topic).
3. Nursing home and assisted living: If there is sufficient demand and land is available, existing companies might be interested in constructing and running such facilities. Another approach that some communities have taken is to establish non-profit corporations to create and operate these centers, which are funded by a combination of bonds, public and private grants. Communities like Hamilton and Kalispell have taken both approaches and an interested group from West Yellowstone should 1) survey the needs and interest in the community and 2) visit some examples of what other communities have done to research the options available.

**Resources:**

The existing senior organization could take the lead in this effort. Land requirements for the facility need to be communicated to the group addressing that issue.

## **MAIN TOPIC: HEALTH CARE**

### **ISSUE: MEETING THE NEEDS**

1. The small year-round population cannot support a dentist, an optometrist, a full-time doctor, a pharmacy, or an over-night care facility.
2. During the summer, when the combined population of the community and the Park increase 10-fold, there is a need for on-site critical care and routine medical treatments for the workers and tourists.

### **Recommendations:**

A solution to both of these issues is to explore the possibility of establishing a relationship with a clinic or hospital in the region. This medical corporation would provide physicians to West Yellowstone for non-emergency care once a week, or twice a month (depending on the need in the specialty). Also, they would provide full-time staff for the clinic, on a rotating basis, during the "peak" seasons. Summer, apartment-style, housing would have to be available for the clinic's staff. (Many physicians and other medical staff would consider a two-week rotation in West Yellowstone a summer vacation.)

Funds for construction of adequate facilities and purchase of necessary equipment could be raised from within the community, requested from the Park Service, provided by the contracted medical group, and requested in grant applications.

During the summer, a small pharmacy could be run by the clinic. In the off-seasons, prescriptions would be called-in to Bozeman and returned to West Yellowstone by bus.

If a dental and/or an optometric office could be equipped in the clinic, routinely scheduled visits could cover most routine care situations.

### **Resources:**

There is an existing medical care facility, which might be upgraded for this program. The excellent emergency care provided by the fire department and the current clinic staff could be coordinated with the expanded program.

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**Introduction:**

It was a privilege to spend two days in West Yellowstone and listen to the people of West Yellowstone share their thoughts, challenges and dreams. Yes, there are challenges in West Yellowstone, but working with your most valuable asset (the people) it is only a matter of time before these challenges are turned into opportunities.

**MAIN TOPIC: WHAT WILL MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE?**

**ISSUE: OVERALL SUCCESS FOR WEST YELLOWSTONE'S FUTURE**

It is obvious that West Yellowstone stands at a turning point. Something(s) must be done - or life as you know it will be drastically changed in your wonderful community. What can you do to make sure you succeed? How can you be assured of progress?

**Recommendations:**

It is going to take work to make the difference. Positive change will happen if you work together, all pulling in the same direction. Yet, as you pull together, it is essential that you have the right people at the table...people that can pull strings, people that have deep pockets (\$\$\$!), people that have legislative power and the ears of our government agencies.

**I strongly recommend** you pull together the various groups that are working on current issues (the historic district, the Western Heritage project, housing, etc)and invite the people in the list below to join you once per month, for a roll-up-the-sleeves group meeting. Be sure to include the local volunteers that are digging in on various projects - everyone needs to be at this table. Then...invite the **\*\*key\*\*** agency players, **\*\*key\*\*** government officials so that you will be talking to the people with authority to put in motion all that has been happening on the ground level.

This meeting is one that should happen come rain or shine, sleet, snow or hail. Even use the telephone conference format if necessary, but face to face is always best. (See the reference below for free teleconferencing.) I would suggest the following - maybe you can think of more - but these agencies need to be aware on a monthly basis of your efforts. They in turn need to report back to you what progress has been made on behalf of West Yellowstone. **We all need to be held accountable.**

## Resources:

Along with your local officials and project go-getters (Fred, Marysue, Paul and Jeff pop first to mind) include:

1. Larry Watson, Grants Administrator Gallatin County. (He is a project and financial "whiz" and should be at the table.) 406.582.3192 email: [lwatson@co.gallatin.mt.us](mailto:lwatson@co.gallatin.mt.us) Gallatin County Commissioners as well as the Gallatin County Planner should be at the table.
2. Mark Evans and Tracey Jette of Gallatin Development Corporation. GDC has access to programs and funding sources for projects of interest to West Yellowstone. Address: 222 E. Main St.; Ste 102, Bozeman. Phone: 406.587.3113 email: [botmlne@bozeman.org](mailto:botmlne@bozeman.org) or [mevans@bozeman.org](mailto:mevans@bozeman.org)
3. Terry Dimock, MT Dept. of Commerce Regional Development Officer. Terry is a "mover and shaker" with experience across the board playing field. Ph: 406.841.2737 email: [tdimock@state.mt.us](mailto:tdimock@state.mt.us)
4. USDA/Rural Development representatives. Contact Brenda Sorensen and she will put you in touch with the Bozeman area representatives. It has been said that USDA/RD has all of the programs needed to build a community. So if it is housing, business, community buildings, cooperatives, etc., give Brenda a call at 406.585.2580. email: [brenda.sorensen@mt.usda.gov](mailto:brenda.sorensen@mt.usda.gov). Address: 900 Technology Blvd, Bozeman.
5. Travel Montana. Carol Crockett can be reached at 406.841.2796 or email: [ccrockett@state.mt.us](mailto:ccrockett@state.mt.us)
6. Congressional representatives simply must be at the table. Conrad Burns Bozeman Office: 406.586.4450. Max Baucus Bozeman Office: 406.586.6704. Jeff Garrard (Rep. Denny Rehberg) phone: 406.443.7878.
7. Gallatin National Forest. Marna Daley was an incredible asset during the assessment. As there are lots of forest issues, representation must be at the table. Contact Marna at 406.587.6735. email: [mdaley@fs.fed.us](mailto:mdaley@fs.fed.us). Marna will know who should also be at the table.
8. National Park Service. It was obvious that communication (as well as relationships) need improvement with the community of West Yellowstone. The message the team heard was that it is a two-way street in that YNP would like West Yellowstone to hear their concerns now and then, too. Make sure Frank Walker is at the table (ph: 307.344.2803 and/or John Keck - head of MT/WY National Parks. Contact John at 307.775.6102 or email [john\\_keck@nps.gov](mailto:john_keck@nps.gov)).
9. HUD - for both it's housing grants/programs and for funding available for land purchases. Contact Larry Gallagher at 406.447.1480 or email: [lawrence\\_gallagher@hud.gov](mailto:lawrence_gallagher@hud.gov)
10. Representatives from the Higher Education Institutions. Tony Rudbach would be my

first choice! Ph: 406.243.2148 email: trltd@aol.com Also - Rick Williams of the MSU Extension office is an incredible resource. If he can't assist you, he will know who can. Contact Rick at 406.994.7311. email: rickw@montana.edu

## **MAIN TOPIC: EDUCATION**

### **ISSUE: SCHOOL FUNDING**

Whether or not the theory of trickle-down-economy is true, the fact is that West Yellowstone's school children are being affected by the loss of income into the community economy. My sister-in-law faced a budget crisis with the private school her children attend in Salt Lake City. A unique program called Children's Heroes turned the school around.

#### **Recommendations:**

While fairly new to Montana, other states have been using a unique education fund raising approach that involves shopping at local merchants. The program is called Children's Heroes and brings schools, consumers and merchants together to raise funds for schools and youth organizations. Children's Heroes offers an opportunity for these organizations to earn additional fundraising dollars by providing a program that is easy to implement. It is based on families shopping at local stores and buying products, which are a part of the family's weekly budget. A percentage of each purchase is rebated to the participating school or youth nonprofit group of their choice.

There are several options so that you can select what is best for your community and situation. The organization in charge of the project receives a quarterly rebate check sent directly to the organization, generated from rebates earned each time parents shop at participating merchants. Children's Heroes provides the tools necessary to generate program awareness including necessary reports to track school rebates.

What is unique about this program is it is not event based but rather an ongoing fundraiser - with no door-to-door sales. In addition, once you contact Children's Heroes, staff will assist you in getting the process started in your school and community. Children's Heroes has the technology in place to allow merchants to set the percentage of fundraising rebates based on how many times a customer shops, or the dollar amount they spend. Each time an enrolled card is used at a participating merchant, a rebate is generated for the organization of their choice. The first year of the program, 100 participating families purchasing \$100 a month could raise \$7,200 for your school. By year two or three, your group could raise over \$45,000 a year and within five years up to \$200,000 a year.

#### **Resources:**

Children's Heroes

3676 West California Ave., Bldg. D

Salt Lake City, UT 84104

Web: <http://www.childrens-heroes.com>

Enrollment: 1.866.the-hero (843.4376)

Customer service: 1.866.hero.sos (437.6767). Chris O'Rourke (organized program in a private school)

For Chris's contact info, please go through Gloria at 406.563.5259 or email [gloria@medamembers.org](mailto:gloria@medamembers.org)

## **MAIN TOPIC: SCHOOL FUNDING**

### **ISSUE: JUNIOR HIGH SPORTS PROGRAM**

Due to a drop in funding, the junior high sports program was either reduced or eliminated from the school budget.

#### **Recommendation:**

It is my absolute pleasure to "introduce" you to Jeff Flatness and his project called G.I.F.T. I recently met Jeff and learned that the GIFT program has been ongoing for some time. GIFT stands for Gaming Industry Friends To Society and is a foundation that allows the industry to give back to communities and families in need in Gallatin County. When I told Jeff about the cut in the Junior High sports program, he said to be sure to write to him for an application. The process is easy – just send a letter requesting an application, fill out the simple form and return it to Jeff. A committee reviews the applications and awards funding based on need. Jeff assured me that GIFT would be very interested in helping West Yellowstone and he will be looking for your application. GIFT would not meet the entire need (local fund raising is always encouraged) but would serve as a partner in this effort.

#### **Resource:**

GIFT  
C/o Jeff Flatness  
525 E. Curtis  
Bozeman, MT 59715

## **MAIN TOPIC: HIGH SPEED INTERNET**

### **ISSUE: UNDERSTAND THE NEED AND USE WHAT YOU HAVE**

I believe it is essential for West Yellowstone business owners and citizens in general to realize the importance of providing internet access to tourists and local businesses. The great news is you already have "it"! West Yellowstone does indeed have high speed internet access.

During the listening sessions, there seemed to be confusion and lots of unanswered questions regarding just what West Yellowstone has for internet service. Most alarming to me was that not many business owners were aware of the critical need for internet access to be available in their hotels, businesses, etc. There is obviously a communication gap between your local provider and potential customers. There is also a communication gap between customers coming to West Yellowstone and business owners who are not aware that customers very much expect this service.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. Business owners must educate themselves as to the need for hotels, motels,

restaurants, etc., to provide high speed internet access to their customers. If you are unsure of the need, have a short check-off survey available to your guests as they come in for lodging. When guests register over the phone, ask them how critical it is to them to have high speed access available.

2. I had a lengthy conversation with Jeff Watson of West Yellowstone Web Works. He (and I) are puzzled as to why people do not take advantage of his high speed wireless business. DSL is not coming to West Yellowstone any time soon. There is simply not a large enough customer base for Qwest to make a profit. The wireless service offered by Web Works is faster than DSL anyway!

Thinking perhaps cost is the factor for not accessing the wireless service provided by Web Works, Jeff provided the following information. To have, say, the Days Inn provide high speed access to each and every customer spending the night, it would cost \$300 per month. Regarding set up costs, the Days Inn might need as many as 4 radios at a cost of \$139.00 each. An antennae is about \$90 and there is a cost for installing coaxial cable. Still, it is very do-able. And...would draw more tourists and especially...entrepreneurs, to your community.

As for individual homes going wireless, the cost is easier to figure. A radio is \$90, an antennae if needed (\$79), coaxial cable (\$28 on average) and installation of \$65. You then pay \$65 per month for the high speed access. This \$65 fee may seem high to you, but don't forget you lose the \$39 phone line bill as well as the \$22 you are paying for dial-up. So..your high speed internet is costing about \$10 per month, after installation.

3. Use this wonderful asset to lure "Lone Eagles". Lone Eagles is a name given to entrepreneurs that can basically live anywhere - as they conduct their business online. A high speed connection is critical.
4. The town/city offices of West Yellowstone need to use this high-speed access opportunity. The Web Works could "link" all of the city employees via a computer network that would improve communication and efficiency throughout the community.
5. Read the brief report below and learn from the success of Jefferson County.

Jefferson Broadband – High-Speed Internet for Jefferson County  
Background: Many portions of Jefferson County have no access to high-speed internet and must rely on dial-up internet connections. Many of the existing dial-up connections run at a very low speed and don't adequately support business operations that rely on internet. The lack of affordable high-speed internet service is also a business detractor as new businesses look at relocating or expanding their business in these rural areas of Jefferson County. Coordination with private internet providers to located to these rural areas and provide high-speed internet was unsuccessful due to the low population numbers resulting in low profitability. Satellite connections are available in these areas but are cost prohibitive to small businesses. The option of a business purchasing a T-1 line was also a costly option and not feasible in most cases.

Telecommunications Team: As a result of this challenge the Jefferson Local Development Corporation (JLDC) organized a Telecommunications Team in 2002 to study and solve this business detractor dilemma. Individuals with an interest in high-speed internet and with a technical background in this area were asked to join the team.

The team met monthly and discussed various options and research on the problem. They contacted other rural areas that had implemented high-speed internet in their communities and conducted on-site visits to see how operations were run. A professional white paper was developed on the implementation and cost requirements of a possible high-speed internet solution within Jefferson County.

A key component to implementation was the available access to an existing T-1 line in the areas requiring the service. Two of the team members were business owners who had existing T-1 connections for their business and were willing to share their line to get this project operational. The equipment cost estimate was around \$36,000 and the JLDC was approached to fund the initial cost to get the system operational. A grant was awarded to the Telecommunications Team and implementation of the project began in Whitehall in 2003. The team evolved into a separate non-profit corporation called Jefferson Broadband with its own governing board of directors.

Current Situation: Jefferson Broadband utilized the availability of existing T-1 lines and current wireless technology to start the system in Whitehall/Cardwell and expand to around 20 customers. They have expanded into the Boulder area and service around 17 customers. Expansion has also been into the northern part of Madison County in the Harrison and the Waterloo area. The project has been a great success and the implementation of high-speed wireless has enhanced existing business operations. Businesses that previously only had access to low dial-up speeds have commented that tasks that took hours to complete before now take only minutes. The time saved by having high-speed internet is also a great cost savings and is helping to improve business productivity. Things like inventory management, application processing, dispatch procedures, and information research are a few of the areas that have seen improvement. Another area that is benefiting from the high-speed access is the school system in Harrison and the local library and sheriff office in Whitehall. A Qwest grant through MEDA has also allowed Jefferson Broadband to expand operations into Basin and is currently testing high-speed internet service to the school and will eventually offer services to area businesses.

Conclusion: The project is a success story that would not have been possible without the synergy of a dedicated group of volunteers who wanted to see high-speed internet implemented in the rural areas of Jefferson County. The on-going support of these individuals as directors of Jefferson Broadband has been a key ingredient to sustainment of the operation and continued growth of the business. A few news articles are attached that further tell the story about how dedicated individuals working toward a common goal can be successful in overcoming obstacles.

**Resources:**

Jefferson Local Development was instrumental in obtaining high speed access to several communities and schools in their area. Talk with Tom Harrington about how they went about it. Using this resource you already have is critical to the future of West Yellowstone.

Tom Harrington  
Jefferson Local Development  
P.O. Box 1079  
Whitehall, MT 59759  
Ph: 406.287.3282  
[acscm@montana.edu](mailto:acscm@montana.edu)

## **MAIN TOPIC: TRANSPORTATION**

### **ISSUE: RAILROAD LINK WITH ASHTON**

In nearly every listening session, the involvement of the railroad and its place in West Yellowstone's history was mentioned. There is a great interest in restoring the train track from Ashton to West Yellowstone. This transport would serve as a tourism tool, perhaps as a dinner train, historic tour, etc.

#### **Recommendations:**

I spoke with Reeve Geary of Staubach Global Services for BNSF Economic Development in Seattle. Reeve explained that track is usually put in at \$75 - \$100 per foot. With this figure, 25 miles of track equates to 132,000 feet or over \$13 million dollars! Wow! It would appear that the cost factor is extremely prohibitive. Reeve did give me the contact information for several rail contractors that could provide you with additional information. (See below.)

A question for you to consider: could an off-road connection be made between Ashton and West Yellowstone without using rail? What about a stagecoach type scenario or snow coaches in winter? An alternative mode of transportation would allow you to go forward with the tourist attraction idea between the communities, but..with a less expensive mode of transport. What about a bike relay in summertime?

Yes, the cost is staggering for rail to return to West/Ashton, but..where there is a will there is often a way. In connection with the Western Heritage Art Center vision, some investigative work has already been done on this topic. There may be an opportunity for the rail project to be funded with one or two large private donations. Another reason to whole-heartedly support the Western Heritage project!

#### **Resources:**

A. Reeve Geary  
Staubach Global Services for  
BNSF Economic Development  
2454 Occidental Ave. S  
Suite 1-A  
Seattle, Washington 98134  
reeve.geary@bnsf.com  
P - 206.625.6355  
C - 206.369.8246  
F - 206.625.6471

BNSF offers the following links as an informational service to our customers. These links should not be considered a recommendation or referral by BNSF to a specific contractor. These links are to serve only as a resource (i.e. Yellow Pages) for the customer in locating a contractor. It is the responsibility of the customer to decide on which contractor to use.

For Railroad Track Construction:  
<http://www.thebluebook.com/cl/all3450.htm>

For Engineering Consultants:  
<http://www.thebluebook.com/cl/all1750.htm>

BNSF Industry Track Standards are available online at:  
<http://www.bnsf.com/business/econdev/assets/pdf/industrytrackstds.pdf>

## **MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY**

### **ISSUE: THE UNINSURED**

West Yellowstone is a part of the ever-growing population of the uninsured. Facing this situation myself in a few months, I have been investigating options for low-cost health insurance.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. I recently learned of an innovate program that began with the Dillon/Beaverhead Chamber of Commerce. Realizing that the business members of the chamber were struggling with heal insurance issues, the chamber worked long and hard to develop a group policy. The only criteria is that you are (or become) a member of the chamber. With the successful program in Dillon, the Montana State Chamber of Commerce office is following the model and other chambers around the state are following Dillon's example.
2. Recently, a program called Cover the Uninsured was launched in the U.S. Visit this website <http://covertheuninsuredweek.org/individuals/> for free low-cost insurance for children, low cost primary health care, state and national programs, lower prescription drug costs and pharmaceutical assistance.

#### **Resources:**

Dillon/Beaverhead County Chamber of Commerce  
Judy Siring  
P.O. Box 425  
Dillon, MT 59725  
Ph: 406.683.5511  
[chamber@bmt.net](mailto:chamber@bmt.net)  
<http://covertheuninsuredweek.org/individuals/>

## **MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY**

### **ISSUE: INDOOR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES – i.e., INDOOR POOL**

Young, old and everyone in-between mentioned the need for more indoor recreational activities. Most often, the comments centered around the wish for an indoor pool.

**Recommendations:**

The desire for an indoor community pool is on the wish list of many Montana communities. The project is expensive and grant funding hard to find.

It dawned on me as I was walking by the beautiful pool (complete with water slide) at the Days Inn that there must be several indoor pools in West Yellowstone! Has anyone attempted to put together a cooperative? Perhaps working through the local church leadership or active youth group leadership, several of the pools in town could be put to use during the shoulder seasons. Cost, adult supervision, rules, liability and regulations would be worked out ahead of time.

**Resources:**

Lodging owners with indoor pools

Local youth group leadership

**MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY**

**MAIN ISSUE: COMMUNICATION WITH YNP AND OTHER GATEWAY COMMUNITIES**

Believe it or not, West Yellowstone is not the only Gateway Community that struggles with the Main Issues identified in this report. And....someone is actually doing something about the common problems gateway communities share.

**Recommendation:**

I hope this will be a new resource to you. If not, I apologize and encourage you to use this resource even more!

**Mark your calendars for July 8<sup>th</sup> and plan to join an interactive satellite television broadcast titled “Gateway Communities: Keys to Success”.**

**Gateway Communities: Keys To Success**

*An Interactive Television Broadcast*

**Thursday, July 8, 2004 from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. ET**

*Gateway Communities: Keys to Success* is an interactive television broadcast featuring **Edward T. McMahon, Vice-President of The Conservation Fund**, a nationally-known speaker on gateway communities and sustainable development. The workshop is one in a series of Gateway Community workshops offered through the Conservation Leadership Network.

The 3-hour broadcast will focus on a wide **array of issues influencing gateway communities and their neighboring public lands, as well as tools for creating sustainable communities, while preserving community character**. Case studies showcasing successful gateway community partnerships will be used to illustrate these “keys to success”, including a virtual mini-field trip to Zion National Park and the town of Springdale, Utah.

During the workshop, participants will have an opportunity to interact with Mr. McMahon and with participants from other gateway communities via phone, fax, or email.

**Gateway Communities** are communities that border on America's public lands. Public lands are national and state parks, wildlife refuges, national historic parks, national forests, national monuments, wilderness areas, and national marine sanctuaries. "Good workshop which stressed compatibility issues rather than pitting development against the environment. It made me think about my own approach to such issues."

-Arlington, VA

**This workshop will cover the following topics:**

- \_\_\_ What are key issues that influence gateway communities and public lands, including new growth and development, land protection, and transportation;
- \_\_\_ How to use your community's natural, cultural and economic assets to preserve community character and the environment;and
- \_\_\_ How to promote good development and sustainable tourism.

**Who Should Attend?**

Community leaders, planning commissioners, public land managers, concerned citizens, local business owners, elected officials, and others interested in identifying issues and tools for successful gateway community/public land partnerships. There will be opportunities during and after the broadcast for participants to discuss key issues facing their own communities, and build alliances with other community members to plan next steps for addressing these issues.

**Resources:**

**For more information** on setting up a downlink site or being a site coordinator, go to <http://www.conservationfund.org/?article=2484> Workshop Registration will be available via the web by May 15, 2004. Contact Margarita Carey at margarita\_carey@fws.gov for more information

**MAIN TOPIC: WORKFORCE**

**ISSUES: Availability, Stability and Training**

The availability, stability, training and housing for workforce are major issues for the community of West Yellowstone.

**Recommendations:**

**Availability and Stability:** I spoke with Julie Foster, Executive Director of Montana Jobs Network, and asked her for ideas on the West Yellowstone workforce situation. She suggested the following:

Consider a Worker Cooperative. A Worker Cooperative is not a union, nor is it a collective. *A Worker Cooperative is a business owned by the workers of a business.* The owners are the employees in which members pool their labor force. Benefits are shared in proportion to the number of hours worked.

To be a member/owner of the worker cooperative a worker generally will:

- \* Be a worker in the business
- \* Invest in the coop by purchasing an equity share

\* Other criteria as established by the board and members.

Members share in the business risk as well as receiving a share of profits. Members govern the cooperative; one member = one vote. Worker Cooperatives are formed when workers feel traditional options for employment are unsatisfactory, based on work environment, pay or benefit, career potential or job openings.

Less workers could accomplish the same work if labor was pooled. An increase in productivity would increase wage and benefits. The question must be asked: What other skills do these workers have or could gain which would enable their worker cooperative to provide labor via contract to other local businesses providing year round employment opportunities? I.e., housecleaning, handy-man, light construction, health care for the elderly, etc. What about local or county government contracts or cleaning city buildings? Make a list of all skills needed or used locally. Develop the worker cooperative to deliver as many from the list as possible. Also, consider serving other nearby communities in shoulder seasons.

*Training - Employers:* Perhaps some work needs to be done in training employers on how to sustain their workforce. Al Jones, Regional Development Officer for Montana Department of Commerce recently shared with me the following:

Points from Tom Willmarth, Human Resource Mgr for the City of Great Falls (a great speaker on the coming skilled worker shortages and on the need for treating workers like more than an interchangeable set of hands to obvious tasks...)

Gallup survey showed employees with an above average attitude towards their work will generate 38% higher customer satisfaction scores, 22% higher productivity, and 27% higher profits. So 22% and 27% would be the actual immediate cost of "My way or the highway" management by blustering about. It's a big reflection of untrained managers who just don't think about what they do, how they do it, or what it's impact really is. (A Swiss study found aggressive, high pressure, "kick butt and take names" managers got about 15-30% poorer results than the "soft-headed" supportive managers at the same tasks and profit centers. So it looks like a hatchetman mostly carves away profits, not fat.)

USC's Center for Effective Organizations found that companies that used employee involvement practices had a 66% higher return on sales, 20% higher return on investment, and 13% higher return on equity.

*Training - Employees:* "Soft skills" training is becoming more easily available - and at a reasonable cost. Contact Julie Foster (see info below) regarding an online curriculum that trains both managers and employees. The cost has in the past been \$25 per "seat" - and can often be sponsored by a local bank, business, etc. If all of the hotel/motel owners got together to provide this training for their staff - costs would diminish dramatically. Give Julie a call and she will give you additional details on this training. Let's hope never again will Glenn Loomis ask for a round steak and be told the restaurant only has oblong steak. :-)

### **Resources:**

Josh Kellar of Northern Rocky Mountain RC&D is the technical advisor in your area for Montana Cooperative Development Center. Forming cooperatives of all kinds is their specialty! Grants, technical assistance for obtaining funds is available.

Josh Kellar  
Northern Rocky Mtn RC&D  
406.522.4029  
email: Joshua.Kellar@mt.usda.gov

Ty Duncan; Cheryl MacArthur  
MT Cooperative Development Cr.  
P.O. Box 3027  
Great Falls, MT 59403  
Ph: 406.268.2644  
email: cheryl@mcdc.coop  
<http://www.mcdc.coop>.Julie Foster, Executive Director

Montana Jobs Network  
4655 Watt Lane  
Stevensville, MT 59870  
Ph: 406.777.7185  
jmfoster@montana-jobs.net  
<http://www.montana-jobs.net>

Bill Barr  
USDA/RD Cooperative Specialist  
406.585.2545 (Bozeman)  
email: Bill.Barr@mt.usda.gov

## **MAIN TOPIC: HEALTH CARE**

### **ISSUE: SUSTAINING AND IMPROVING SERVICES**

The need for health care is one of West Yellowstone's most intriguing problems. The thousands of tourists expect (or don't even give it a thought) that health care and emergency services are handily available. If West Yellowstone sustained the summer population year round, that might be a possibility. But..the shoulder seasons hit and the medical expense cannot sustain the cost.

#### **Recommendation:**

I recently learned of a new program (new to Montana) called Rural Health Works.

“The purpose of Rural Health Works is to provide a process by which community residents can evaluate their health system. The process leads to increased use and expansion of health services and ensures the existence of health services. Rural Health Works engages community residents in local health care decision-making by showing them the importance of the health care sector to their local economy. The hard facts are illustrated with locally specific numbers and are the key to obtaining local participation. Rural Health Works teaches the process to state professionals so they can employ the process in their rural communities. “

As I understand it, under this program, West Yellowstone's current healthcare resources would be analyzed. Based on this information and a ton of other data (participants are trained in using the software) options would be plugged in to determine just what the community could support – and how – and how the medical asset would stimulate economic development in the community. For example, a small community I recently worked with is considering the purchase of a kidney dialysis machine – which is very expensive. They were not certain if the customer base would support the cost. One purpose of Rural Health Works is to determine if indeed the equipment could be sustained.

**Resources:**

Visit the Rural Health Works website at: <http://www.ruralhealthworks.org/GenInfo/aboutUs.asp> and contact me if you would like to consider this option. I feel this process would be a perfect fit with the overall community assessment work we do. We will learn of the process together!

Gloria O'Rourke

Ph: 406.563.5259

Email [gloria@medamembers.org](mailto:gloria@medamembers.org)

**Report by: Marna Daley**  
**Planning/Writer, Editor**  
**Gallatin National Forest**  
**P.O. Box 130**  
**Bozeman, MT 59771**  
**Phone: 406.587.6735 Fax: 406.587.6758**  
**Email: mdaley@fs.fed.us**  
**Web: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin/>**

**MAIN TOPIC: ECONOMY**

**MAIN ISSUE: DIVERSIFICATION – FAIR BALANCE**

Members of the community expressed concerns that economic diversification needs to include providing outdoor recreational opportunities for all uses. They would like to see the community balance marketing dollars between all uses.

**Recommendations:**

The community may consider actively marketing opportunities for motorized and non-motorized summer and winter recreation, in addition to those activities historically marketed. To maximize the marketing's cost effectiveness, businesses may consider working cooperatively, instead of each business doing its own marketing. Consider marketing "adventure opportunities". For example, consider working cooperatively to offer a guided horseback trip with a guided fly fishing trip.

Keep working with the Forest Service and the Park Service to ensure motorized and non-motorized uses continue being offered on public lands. The community may want to continue their involvement with the Gallatin Forest's Travel Planning project, to help determine recreation uses on the Gallatin Forest for the next 10-15 years. The community should continue its trail-grooming program as this provides multi-use opportunities and is a big attractant for visitors.

**Resources:**

For information on the Gallatin Forest's Travel Plan project: Steve Christiansen, Gallatin National Forest Supervisor's Office, Bozeman, Montana – 406-587-6750  
[schristiansen@fs.fed.us](mailto:schristiansen@fs.fed.us).

Rural Community Assistance (RCA) Grants may be able to provide some financial marketing assistance. 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, forestry related industry, or dependence on National Forest or Grassland resources.

National Fire Plan Economic Action (NFP-EA) funds are also available to communities for utilization of small diameter material produced as a result of wildland hazardous fuels

reduction and other forest health related activities. Point of contact for this area is Frank Preite, at [fpreite@fs.fed.us](mailto:fpreite@fs.fed.us) or (406) 587-6757.

Another great resource opportunity is a government grant. **Grants.gov** allows organizations to electronically find and apply for competitive grant opportunities from Federal grant-making agencies. Grants.gov is THE single access point for over 900 grant programs offered by the 26 Federal grant-making agencies. <http://www.grants.gov>

## **MAIN TOPIC: TRANSPORTATION**

### **ISSUE: RAILROAD LINKAGE WITH ASHTON**

People expressed interest in changing the flavor or face of the West Yellowstone community to incorporate the city's history by bringing back the railroad. Suggestions included re-facing storefronts to resemble something from the railroad era where staff would wear railroad type uniforms. To make this suggestion reality the railroad tracks between West Yellowstone with Ashton, Idaho would have to be re-built. The Assessment Team heard many times that the railroad bed is in tact, for the most part, and is located primarily on lands managed by the Forest Service.

#### **Recommendation:**

If the community chooses to move forward with linking West Yellowstone and Ashton via railroad then close coordination with the Forest Service will be important during all levels of project development (Gallatin and Caribou/Targhee National Forests). The community or business running and maintaining the railroad would need to develop a proposal to bring to the Forest Service addressing their desire for a special use permit or easement that would allow the development and use of the affected portions of public land.

The Forests would then need to conduct environmental analysis and enter consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (the area is considered Management Situation One grizzly bear habitat) to determine the impacts and effects of such a proposal and whether or not those effects were acceptable or could be mitigated.

Obtaining rights of access across any private lands would be necessary.

Coordination with Ashton and communities in-between would be necessary to determine interest in and facilities available for developing the railroad connection. Parking and depot facilities in Ashton would need to be developed if none currently exist. West Yellowstone and/or the business interested in developing the railroad may want to conduct interest or viability surveys to determine how many people would consider using the railroad. Depending on the results of the survey, West Yellowstone may be able to use the information to attract potential developers. A poll company, such as Gallup, may be able to assist in this analysis. The Montana Poll may also be of assistance to determine public opinion and interest in this project.

The community may need to determine the need for increased public and private transportation. Park tours, such as bus tours, may become more popular as people come into West Yellowstone on the train instead of in private vehicles. Shuttles to and from the railroad depot may also be in demand.

The community may also consider incorporating the railroad history associated with Harriman State Park, previously known as the Railroad Ranch. Consider contacting other communities that have developed this type of train to gather more information. These other communities include Lewistown, Montana; Redmond and/or Prineville, Oregon (the train connects these communities).

**Resources:**

Hebgen Lake Ranger District, Gallatin National Forest, West Yellowstone, Montana (406-823-6961): <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin>

Gallatin National Forest Lands Department, Bozeman, Montana (406-587-6701).

USDA Forest Service Region 1 Regional Office Lands Department, Missoula, Montana (406) 329-3451, <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1>

USDA Forest Service Region 4 Regional Office Lands Department, Ogden, Utah 801-625-5150, <http://www.fs.fed.us/r4>.

For information about Ashton: <http://www.ashtonidaho.com>

For information about Fremont County: <http://www.co.fremont.id.us>

For State of Idaho information: <http://www.accessidaho.org>

Caribou-Targhee National Forest Information: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/caribou-targhee>  
Supervisors Office, 1405 Hollipark Drive, Idaho Falls, Idaho 83403, Supervisor: Jerry Reese (208) 524-7500.

Ashton Ranger District, 30 South Highway 20-191, P.O. Box 858, Aston, Idaho 83420 (208) 652-7442

Island Park Ranger District, 3726 Highway 20, Island Park, Idaho 83429, (208) 558-7301

Harriman State Park Information: 3489 E. Highway 20 (20 miles north of Ashton), 3489 Green Canyon Road, Island Park, ID 83429, 208-558-7368.  
<http://www.idahoparks.org/parks/harriman.html>

For information about The Montana Poll:

<http://www.bber.umt.edu/surveyresearch/montanapoll>

Montana Department of Transportation <http://www.mdt.state.mt.us>

Idaho Department of Transportation <http://www.itd.idaho.gov>

## **MAIN TOPIC: TRANSPORTATION**

### **ISSUE: AIRPORT**

Community members expressed desires to expand the airport, in size and season, to make West Yellowstone more accessible. Few commercial flights are currently servicing this airport. The airport is on public land that the United States has deeded to the State of Montana Department of Transportation – Aeronautics Division. The deed restrictions are very specific as to what commercial enterprises will and won't be allowed.

#### **Recommendations:**

Prior to considering projects that may require changes to the deed, the community may want to discuss the idea of 4-season access with the airlines currently flying into West Yellowstone to determine interest and viability.

The community may want to work with Big Sky to discuss opportunities for cooperation and combined marketing strategies. The community may want to address the availability of public transportation and/or opportunities for car rentals prior to determining what level of increased air service to provide.

It is important that the community review the deed between the United States and the State of Montana Department of Transportation – Aeronautics Division prior to determining what levels and types of air service to provide and commercial opportunities to pursue.

#### **Resources:**

Montana Department of Transportation – Aeronautics Division  
(<http://www.mdt.state.mt.us/aeronautics>).

Gallatin National Forest Lands Department, Bozeman, Montana (406-587-6701).

Gallatin National Forest, Hebgen Lake Ranger District, West Yellowstone, Montana - Bill Queen, District Ranger (406-823-6961). <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin>

## **MAIN TOPIC: LAND USE**

### **ISSUE: LAND ACQUISITION**

The livelihood of the West Yellowstone community continues to be intimately tied to recreation and commercial opportunities within and around Yellowstone National Park. There are few businesses that are not connected or affected by the Park. While the

tourism-based economy must continue being nurtured, opportunities for economic diversification should be explored. In order for this diversification to happen, the land-locked community should consider opportunities for expansion.

The Gallatin National Forest and Yellowstone National Park surround the West Yellowstone community. This severely limits the community's opportunities for expansion to accommodate housing needs and private enterprise. In addition, the high cost of land and/or homes in the area makes it difficult for families to find and afford adequate housing. This discourages families from moving into the community and causes families to leave, as they can't afford to live in West Yellowstone.

**Recommendations:**

The Gallatin National Forest has the authority to sell or exchange National Forest System around and within the West Yellowstone community. These lands would be sold at or above fair market value. This authority was given to the Gallatin Forest through Public Law 108-108 (H.R. 2691-71), section 333. There are approximately 81 acres specifically mentioned in the law that would be available for sale and/or exchange. **The Forest will have this authority only until 2008.**

To explore the possibility of purchasing land from the Forest Service the community should continue working with the Hebgen Lake Ranger District. The community would need to update their Master Development Plan and determine which parcels of land would best meet their needs and desires for expansion, and address potential uses allowed on those lands.

The Forest Service also has other authorities to exchange land, such as the process used by the community to obtain the Madison Addition. The community may want to pursue this option.

**Resources:**

For information on the land sale authority please see the H.R. 2691-71 / Public Law 108-108, section 333. ([http://www.cfo.doe.gov/budget/billrept/fy04/interior\\_pl\\_108-108.pdf](http://www.cfo.doe.gov/budget/billrept/fy04/interior_pl_108-108.pdf))

For information on the land appraisal and exchange process please see Forest Service Manual, Series 5400: Landownership (<http://www.fs.fed.us/im/directives/dughtml/fsm5000.html>)

Gallatin National Forest, Hebgen Lake Ranger District, West Yellowstone, Montana - Bill Queen, District Ranger (406-823-6961). <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin>

Gallatin National Forest Lands Department - Gallatin Forest Supervisor's Office, Bozeman, Montana - (406-587-6701)

## **MAIN TOPIC: LAND USE**

### **ISSUE: GOLF COURSE**

Some members of the community discussed the need/desire for a golf course. A golf course would attract visitors who may otherwise travel through West Yellowstone without stopping and spending time (and money) in the community.

#### **Recommendations:**

Prior to determining appropriate uses of the small amount of available land, the community may want to explore the viability of investing in a golf course with a limited season of use and competition with those located at Big Sky, Ashton, and Rexburg. The community may consider designing the course to incorporate a summer community activity/fitness trail that would utilize the cart paths. A golf course may also help meet the desires of West Yellowstone's youth for a variety of summer recreational opportunities.

There may be an opportunity to develop and market a winter carnival where the golf course would "house" ice sculptures and other family events. The carnival could take place during the January/February shoulder season.

If the community chooses to move forward with the golf course, consideration may be given to developing a community/activity center next to the course to utilize a single parking area. Also consider constructing a park, with play equipment and a baseball field and volleyball court (sand) again utilizing the same parking lot while working to meet the desires of West Yellowstone's younger population.

During the winter the path system could provide additional ski and snowshoe opportunities. Please refer to the land acquisition discussion.

## **MAIN TOPIC: LAND USE**

### **ISSUE: ROOM FOR AFFORDABLE WORKFORCE HOUSING**

Members of the community expressed the need for affordable workforce housing, particularly to house a seasonal workforce. Currently, there is little land to develop and existing housing is prohibitively expensive.

#### **Recommendation:**

If the community chooses to move forward with purchasing land, consideration might be given to developing low income and workforce housing on a portion of it.

Prior to determining whether or not to pursue the purchase of land the community may consider defining what the need for affordable housing is.

**Resources:**

Please refer to the land acquisition discussion.

**MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY****ISSUE: CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The Assessment Team heard many times that the community has a need for cultural diversification, including opportunities for art, music, and language. People also expressed their desire and support for the Western Heritage Arts Center being pioneered by Jeff Carter.

**Recommendations:**

The Western Heritage Arts Center would benefit the community economically while satisfying the need for cultural diversification. Jeff and the community may consider discussing partnerships with Yellowstone National Park and the Gallatin National Forest. Big Fork Playhouse Performing Arts Center, Butte Center for the Performing Arts, or the Myrna Loy Center may be able to offer suggestions and assistance with seeking local, state, and federal funding.

The community, when updating their Master Development Plan, may consider appropriating an area for the Western Heritage Arts Center.

Consider writing progress articles for Montana's State of the Arts newspaper to "spread the word" about the Arts Center and solicit financial and other support.

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the Forest Service (FS) offer a special grant program that supports arts-based rural community development projects. The purpose of these grants is to help grantees demonstrate the importance and value of the arts in rural economic diversification and cultural resource conservation in forest and/or natural resource dependent areas. Through shared projects, this partnership has improved federal and state efforts to support sustainable, community-based activities.

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) supports the performing, literary, and visual arts. These include arts in education, the folk and traditional arts, community-based arts (often reflective of a specific ethnic group), exhibitions including or about the arts, and design arts such as historic preservation, planning, and landscape architecture.

**Resources:**

For information about the Myrna Loy Center: <http://www.myrnaloycenter.com>

For information about the Big Fork Playhouse Performing Arts Center:  
<http://www.bigforksummerplayhouse.com>

For information about the Butte Center for the Performing Arts: <http://www.buttearts.org>

State of Montana Arts Council and the State of the Arts newspaper:  
<http://www.art.state.mt.us>.

The document “The Role of Community-Based Creative Enterprises (Nonprofit Arts Organizations) in Montana’s Economy”, prepared by ARTSMARKET, Bozeman, Montana, may provide useful information to determine how arts and cultural programs benefit the state’s economy. [www.artsmarket.com](http://www.artsmarket.com)

**Report by: Gus Byrom**  
**CDBG Program Manager**  
**MDOC/Community Development Division**  
**301 S. Park**  
**Helena, MT 59620**  
**Phone: 406.841-2777 Fax: 406.841.2771**  
**Email: gbyrom@state.mt.us**  
**[http://www.commerce.state.mt.us/CDD/CDD\\_CDBG.html](http://www.commerce.state.mt.us/CDD/CDD_CDBG.html)**

I wish to express my sincere gratitude for allowing me to serve as a member of the community Resource Team Assessment to assist the Town of West Yellowstone. I was deeply impressed with the deep level of commitment to the community expressed by all those residents who gave up their time to meet with us. People were very caring, compassionate, and eager to attempt to make progress on the several challenges currently facing the West Yellowstone community.

#### **MAIN TOPIC: YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK**

#### **ISSUE: TOWN AND NATIONAL PARK SERVICE COMMUNICATION**

The issue of communication between the National Park Service and the town was brought up repeatedly during our Resource Team Assessment (RTA) meetings. Outdoor recreational service providers repeatedly expressed frustration at the lack of communication between the National Park Service and community regarding recreational use policies within the park and its effect on “West Gate” entrance recreational users. It was recognized that the 2003/2004 winter with the conflicting court decisions regarding snowmobile use in the park created tremendous stress on the West Yellowstone community. At the same time hope was expressed that better communication between all parties can hopefully avoid a repetition of the serious problems, which occurred this last winter.

Similar to Dr. Tony Rudbach’s recommendation, the town should establish a committee comprised of town officials, National Park Service representative, Gallatin National Forest Service representative, Board of County Commissioners’ representative, and Chamber of Commerce representative that meet regularly informally on an on-going basis to maintain communication between all parties. This group would not have decision-making responsibilities. It would exist solely for the purpose of maintaining communication. The group should be informal – with no structured bylaws or complex inter-agency agreements – just meet together regularly and talk! Of course, meetings must be advertised and the press always welcome. A brief agenda could be prepared beforehand so folks know what issues may be discussed. Meetings could be limited to an “informal lunch” or evening get-together every other month or more often, if necessary.

Several years ago, the town of Roundup, Montana, established a TAT (Topics About Town) Committee, that met regularly to provide a forum for communication among the school district and city and county officials within the Roundup community. This committee forum at Roundup still meets and keeps the

lines of community communication open. Feel free to discuss the Roundup TAT Committee process with the following individuals:

**Resources:**

Ellen Lee, City Clerk  
City of Roundup  
34 – 3rd Avenue West  
PO Box 660  
Roundup, MT 59072  
Ph:(406) 323-2804

Monty Sealey, Resource Conservation  
& Development Director  
34 – 3rd Avenue West  
Roundup, MT 59072  
Ph: (406) 323-2804

**MAIN TOPIC: LAND USE**

The opportunity for acquisition of additional Forest Service property, generally located west of the community, was repeatedly mentioned during the team assessment meetings.

**ISSUE: LAND ACQUISITION**

Land Acquisition – Potential USFS Four-Year Window (2008 Deadline/Room For Affordable Work Force Housing)

The opportunity to acquire additional Forest Service lands, immediately west and contiguous to the town, represents a tremendous opportunity to meet some of the town’s greatest needs and lay the foundation for the security of the town’s economic base and related supporting infrastructure and community facilities and services for decades to come.

**Recommendations:**

The community could consider establishing a Community Development Corporation, 501(c)(3) organization that would basically operate the newly acquired properties as a non-profit organization operating under the authority of the Town of West Yellowstone. If necessary, the Community Development Corporation could be responsible for not only managing the newly acquired lands, but also developing a time installment payment system to provide reimbursement to the Forest Service for payment since apparently the enabling legislation currently requires payment based upon fair market value.

The Community Development Corporation could explore the feasibility of constructing worker housing rental units and perhaps even some single-family owned units, though the land itself would remain in land trust ownership. A market study would have to be conducted to determine the number of rental units the town could support and sustain. Because of the unique rental needs and seasonality of the West

Yellowstone worker population, utilizing the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program or the HOME Program of the Montana Department of Commerce to provide infrastructure dollars or direct housing construction dollars, may be problematic due to the requirement of CDBG and HOME to assist low and moderate income persons. However, these options should not be discounted.

The town may wish to seek independent and conventional bank financing to operate the affordable housing development. If Montana Department of Commerce HOME dollars were used for construction, or if Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds were used to provide infrastructure, it would be necessary to insure that units were occupied by low and moderate income persons. At present these income limits for Gallatin County households are as follows: 1 – person \$31,350; 2-person \$35,850; 3-person \$40,300; 4-person \$44,800; 5-person \$48,400; 6-person \$51,950; 7-person \$55,550; and 8-person \$59,150.

In addition, the West Yellowstone Foundation could work in cooperation with the Community Development Corporation to establish the Western Heritage Center and the joint multiple-use community center, that could possibly incorporate a needed senior center, indoor swimming pool, and other related indoor community facilities.

**Resources:**

Caren Roberty  
Human Resource Development Council, District IX  
32 South Tracy Avenue  
Bozeman, MT 59715  
Ph.: (406) 587-4486

Mitchell Copp  
USDA Rural Development  
PO Box 850  
900 Technology Blvd.  
Bozeman, MT 59771  
Ph: (406) 585-2580  
Fax: (406) 585-2565  
TDD: (406) 585-2562  
Website: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt>

USDA Rural Development in Bozeman could also be a major funding participant, offering a low interest loan for construction of community facilities or a guaranteed bank loan.

Gus Byrom, Program Manager  
Community Development Block Grant Program  
Department of Commerce  
301 S. Park – PO Box 200523  
Helena MT 59620-0523  
Ph: (406) 841-2777  
Fax: (406) 841-2771  
E-mail: [gbyrom@state.mt.us](mailto:gbyrom@state.mt.us)  
Website: [http://commerce.state.mt.us/CDD/CDD\\_CDBG.html](http://commerce.state.mt.us/CDD/CDD_CDBG.html)

Julie Flynn, Program Manager  
HOME Program  
Department of Commerce  
301 S. Park – PO Box 200528  
Helena MT 59620-0528  
Ph: (406) 841-2818  
Fax:(406) 841-2821  
E-mail: juflynn@state.mt.us  
Website: [http://housing.state.mt.us/Hous\\_Prog\\_HOME.html](http://housing.state.mt.us/Hous_Prog_HOME.html)

## **MAIN TOPIC: LAND USE**

### **ISSUE: COMMON ARCHITECTURAL THEME**

The need for an enhanced image of community identity, including exploration of the concept of promoting a common architectural theme, was mentioned several times during the Resource Team Assessment meetings on May 12 and 13. Other than deciding upon what common theme to encourage, the other principle issue involved is whether or not to establish the architectural standards as general community guidelines to be followed more or less on an “honor system” basis, or whether the architectural standards should be incorporated as an amendment to the town’s city zoning ordinance, possibly as an overlay district that would affect the underlying zones.

#### **Recommendations:**

There are several examples West Yellowstone could look to in terms of promoting a common architectural theme. The town could explore the concept of “parkitecture”, which emphasizes the common architectural themes used within the national parks located in the western United States. Probably the most famous example is the Old Faithful Inn designed by architect Robert Reamer, constructed in 1903 and 1904, noted as a prime example of the “rustic” architectural style. Several examples already exist within the community of West Yellowstone, including the Eagle’s Store and the Madison Hotel.

Another example could be to build upon the architectural style of Herbert Maier who designed the Madison Trailside Museum within the park located at the junction of the Gibbon and Firehole Rivers where presently a museum and bookstore is located. Herbert Maier was instrumental in developing many of the architectural standards that were prepared in many of the national parks within the United States. Herbert Maier also designed the Norris Geyser Basin Trailside Museum (1929).

Another option is to encourage future community architectural design compatible with the Union Pacific Train Depot and Dining Hall (Oregon Shortline Railroad). Other community examples to explore include the historic district in Santa Fe, New Mexico; Charleston, South Carolina; and the City of Bozeman’s architectural design standards.

In Santa Fe, New Mexico, the architectural standards are enforced by a historic district, which serves as

a zoning district “overlying” the underlying general zoning districts. The historic district is administered by an historic design review board, which makes and develops recommendations to the local governing body. The historic design review board would be responsible for developing specific design standards, usually including signage. The design standards would address height, roof pitch, scale, materials, and any other important locally developed design factors.

**Resources:**

Design Review by Mark Hinshaw – PAS Report Number 454 – © Copyright February 1995 by the American Planning Association, 1313 East 60th Street, Chicago, IL 60637

Saving Face: How Corporate Franchise Design Can Respect Community Character by Ronald Lee Fleming. PAS Report Number 503/504 – © Copyright February 2002 by the American Planning Association, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Suite #1600, Chicago, IL 60603 and the Townscape Institute, 8 Lowell Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

**MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY**

**ISSUE: SENIOR CITIZEN’S CENTER**

The establishment of a permanent senior citizen’s center was mentioned repeatedly throughout the Resource Team Assessment meetings. It was also mentioned that perhaps the senior center could be developed in conjunction with the construction of a multi-purpose community center that would combine the functions of the senior center, indoor swimming pool, other indoor recreational activities, and perhaps linked with the Western Heritage Arts Center. Financing will be a major issue in development of the senior center.

**Recommendations:**

The town has already submitted an application to the Montana Department of Commerce to prepare a preliminary architectural report examining the feasibility of construction of a senior citizens center. The principle funding sources available that could assist the town are the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), which can provide up to \$500,000 in grant funds to construct a senior citizen center. Emphasis is placed upon assisting those senior citizen centers that are coordinated with the Area Councils on Aging and provide a wide array of senior citizen services, including health care screening, Meals on Wheels Program, tax counseling, etc. Applications are due in May of each year. Generally, application workshops are held by the CDBG Program in three or four locations throughout the state in the fall and the spring. For more information, please contact my office at (406) 841-2777. The other possible funding source is obtaining a low interest loan from USDA Rural Development.

**Resources:**

Mitchell Copp,  
USDA Rural Development  
P.O. Box 850  
900 Technology Blvd.

Bozeman, MT 59771  
(406) 585-2520

**MAIN TOPIC: HISTORIC DISTRICT**

**ISSUE: UNION PACIFIC DINING HALL**

Renovation and community use of the Union Pacific Dining Hall was mentioned frequently during the Resource Team Assessment meetings. Renovation of the Union Pacific Dining Hall will not only involve the development of a plan for re-construction financing, but also include preparation of a business plan to guarantee proper operation and maintenance (including heating, electrical costs, etc.), and payment of debt if loans are incurred for restoration. In other words, the new facility must "cash flow" unless a subsidy is provided to underwrite operating costs.

**Recommendations:**

The Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) of the Montana Department of Transportation is a natural funding source for the renovation. Funding is approximately 87% CTEP grant and 13% local. Historic facilities associated with transportation are an eligible category of assistance. Due to the major costs likely to be anticipated as a result of rehabilitation, in addition to the Montana Dept. of Transportation, it would be important to coordinate any plans for restoration with the Gallatin County Grants Office, as well as the National Park Service and Gallatin National Forest.

**Resources:**

Larry Watson, Grants Administrator  
Gallatin County  
311 W. Main St.  
Bozeman, Mt 59715-4576  
Ph.: (406) 582-3096

Kevin Malone,  
Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP)  
Montana Department of Transportation  
2701 Prospect Avenue  
P.O. Box 201001  
Helena, Mt 59620  
Ph.: (406) 444-9457

Report by: Dr. Doug Eury  
Supervisor  
Nez Perce National Historical Park  
39063 U.S. Highway 95  
Spalding, ID 83540-9715  
Phone: 208.843.2261 x 111  
Email: doug\_eury@nps.gov  
Web: <http://www.nps.gov>

**MAIN TOPIC: ECONOMY**

**ISSUE: DIVERSIFICATION**

At many of the sessions there were comments about the need to diversify the economy beyond the reliance on Yellowstone National Park for the community business life. While some effort has been made to bring in additional tourist related activities the community has not successfully looked beyond being a service-oriented community.

Since the community was founded as the gateway to Yellowstone National Park and with the name "West Yellowstone," it is and always will be inextricably linked to the park.

**Recommendations:**

Rather than spending a lot of energy on diversification, which is likely to not produce major additions because of the isolated location, efforts should be made to maximize the role of West Yellowstone's history. The historic district includes buildings (such as the dining hall) that are not being used to their fullest potential. Efforts should begin to add to the museum and market the district as some of the oldest buildings related to the park. The Western Heritage Arts Center project has the potential to expand the season and could serve as a link to the historic district. Finally, since "Old Faithful" is the internationally recognized symbol of Yellowstone, the fact of West Yellowstone being the closest entrance to Old Faithful could be highlighted in marketing efforts. "Old Faithful just \_\_\_ minutes from West Yellowstone!!"

**MAIN TOPIC: ECONOMY**

**ISSUE: HISTORIC DISTRICT**

**Resources:**

Funding for development of the historic district could be solicited from corporate sponsors, federal grant programs and railroad enthusiasts (since the district was related to the railroad connection to the park.) The State Historic Preservation Office is one source of information on grant programs. Also the NPS Intermountain Regional Office in Denver is a source of information on cost share grants.

## **MAIN TOPIC: WORKFORCE**

### **ISSUES: RECRUITING, TRAINING, HOUSING**

Problems with the workforce were repeatedly raised at the sessions. The difficulty of recruiting, training, housing and retaining were most often mentioned.

The seasonal nature of the economy and the fluctuating workforce make it difficult to provide year round steady employment. Having consistency of employees is also difficult because of inadequate or sub standard housing. Employees are often trained and then lost to another local business or to an outside area.

#### **Recommendations:**

With the ever increasing, younger retiree population, an effort could be made to increasingly recruit from this population for more employees. Since many retirees have some retirement income the opportunity to work a few months out of the year would be a source of supplemental income. Many retirees seek out short-term volunteer work and having the opportunity to live near Yellowstone and also have some income would, for many be an added attraction. Also once trained they would be less likely to move to another local employer for a few more dollars per hour. Many retirees have travel trailers/motor homes and so could provide their own housing if hook-ups were available. They also have a history of work experience that can be a plus in many jobs.

#### **Resources:**

Recruitment efforts could be targeted to groups such as AARP, RSVP, Good Sam Club, AAA, and other retiree organizations and publications.

## **MAIN TOPIC: YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK**

### **ISSUES: (MULTIPLE)**

A variety of issues were discussed in relation to Yellowstone National Park. Uncertain policies on snowmobile use, need for communication between the town and park, the need to protect the park resources while accommodating a variety of uses were some of the topics discussed.

Over the past few years one of the most contentious issues has been the snowmobile policy at Yellowstone. Departmental policies and subsequent court actions beyond local control have made it difficult to plan for the upcoming seasons. Also with increased park costs and limited budget increases maintaining park services and resource protection at historic levels is a challenge.

#### **Recommendations:**

Maintain active communication with the Park officials. Work with the Park and Chamber of Commerce and other agencies on the expanded visitor center in West Yellowstone to promote activities in West Yellowstone that can attract visitors from the Park. Try to determine what activities in Park are most popular and which the park is being stretched to provide and then determine if these needs could be met in town.

The Grizzly Discovery Center is a good example of the way the town can complement the Park's programs of education about wildlife.

**Resources:**

Yellowstone National Park, West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce and National and regional tourism publications.

**WEST YELLOWSTONE RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT  
LISTENING SESSION NOTES  
May 12 – 13, 2004**

The following comments were recorded as a result of 16 Listening Sessions held by the West Yellowstone Resource Team. The people of West Yellowstone shared their thoughts regarding the Challenges, Strengths and Projects of their community.

**Orientation notes: Misc. Challenges**

- Problems are not problems – just slight impediments.
- We need ideas to offset the ups and downs dependent on the park gates being open and closed.
- Few roadblocks – surrounded by federal land – either national park or forest service – makes it more difficult. Not impossible. Driven value of the land out the window.
- Affordable housing – but two competing markets for affordable housing – one is from California-type-incomes, others for lower income people.
- Struggle for the workforce to find affordable housing.
- No residential workforce – either vacationers or business owners. Hard to find workers.
- Ups and downs of Yellowstone Park affect us immediately.
- Critical to maintain access to forest areas
- Takes Vision, takes Passion, takes money.
- Ideas need to work together skiing, snow shoeing cross country skiing,
- Need financial support for shoulder seasons – year-round economy.

**SENIOR CITIZENS - CHALLENGES**

- Would like a community center where it can be used for more than a senior center that could be incorporated and benefit the schools.
- Ditto on community center.
- Ditto on community center.
- Employee housing – need low to moderate income rentals.
- Have low-income housing that remains partially empty. Facility is mostly empty because students can't qualify to use it.
- In home services (health services).
- Ditto on in home health care services
- Senior daycare center would be nice.
- Need to diversify economy. Senior center is one way to address this problem by offering a place to amuse, interest and care for seniors visiting the area.
- Affordable housing and child care for working moms.
- Ditto on employee housing.
- Paying taxes for affordable housing that is setting empty because of student restrictions.
- Need ability to develop more of a base/year round community rather than a seasonal community. This is affected by affordable housing
- Offer a tax break to appeal to clean industry.

## **SCHOOL STUDENTS – CHALLENGES**

- Not enough to do for young people
- Ditto's by everyone in the room
- Snowmobile problems- people trying to close it down
- Ditto
- Get back Junior High Sports
- Cuts are due to funding
- Hard to make a living here – don't feel can come back after college and get a good job
- Lots of computer problems –
- Poor internet access – all on dial up
- Poorer teams because no junior high sports

## **TEACHERS/ADMINISTRATORS – CHALLENGES**

- Economy is a paramount issue with the park situation, loss of jobs and how to deal with that down the road
- Isolation – long way to larger cities. No alternative schools, Bozeman is too far.
- Cultural isolation – kids don't get exposed to different occupations
- Mental health care, dental, pharmacy
- No dentists, no doctors
- Seasonal work force and good housing for them
- Economic situation – major controversy over snow mobile issue. We were left hanging at the last minute by the federal courts. Affects our school system.
- Cost of gas, groceries, essentials
- Housing – it is expensive.
- Seasonal workers – don't have a place to live – other than substandard housing. Charged a great deal for living in that substandard housing
- Some seasonal workers live in the woods.
- No decent rentals
- People that have second homes here drive up the costs of land, housing for local people
- School children that live in that substandard housing are challenged
- Cheapest lot found was \$42,000
- RV spots – charged \$300/month for an RV spot.
- Housing problem attributes a lot to the transient problem
- Low wages
- Limited job market
- Insurance – can't afford insurance here – health insurance

## **LOCAL OFFICIALS, CITIZEN BOARDS - CHALLENGES**

- Need to become stable – working on the whim of the courts – need to diversify and no longer be just a tourist town. Or..need to be a tourist town besides the park to offer our visitors
- Need affordable housing
- Parents are working two or more jobs – which leaves kids unattended – must break the chain somewhere

- Permitting for motorized vehicles
- No stability affects the schools, too.
- West Yellowstone gate is not open all of the time. Mammoth is open year round to Cooke City. The gate is closed at the highway.
- Need motorcycle endorsement to drive a 4 wheel atv. Must get certified on motorcycle to drive atv.
- Identity crisis – not sure of who/what we are. Moving in a different direction.
- Have a visual identity crisis – don't want to look like a truck stop.
- Organizational problems in moving forward – we talk and argue but do not move forward.
- Let go of the past.
- Meet expectations of the tourism industry – if we attract them, we need to provide basic services. Yet, need to scale down in the off season.
- Fire coverage with the park and structural coverage
- How do you sustain housing when people don't work year round
- Increasing aging/elderly population in town – don't have services.
- Founding fathers did a lot for our town – and they need medical services now
- Last Settler's Syndrome – after I have my home, you need to close the door on others.

#### **STEERING COMMITTEE/EDA GRANT COMMITTEE - CHALLENGES**

- We sit surrounded by contested lands and terrain.
- Transportation – air, public, i.e. – no way to fly into West Yellowstone and be dropped into West National Park unless you have a tour arranged.
- Need medical attention within the “golden hour” – can't get anywhere in a car within an hour.
- Providing health care for aging population
- Year round employment
- Boils down to how do we go forward with our ideas an vision....do we go regionalized or with our own local economic development person
- In grant data, our seasonal workers don't fit into the data – until recently. Now can demonstrate need.
- “We are just fine here, we don't need any help from anyone” mentality
- To get licenses you have to drive 90 miles to Bozeman.
- Airport building not weatherized
- Down 28% on our trail counters this past winter

#### **SERVICE WORKERS AND RENTERS – CHALLENGES**

- Economy has gone straight down in the past two years
- Families struggle to be able to afford to have two children in day care.
- State froze money for low income day care support – so state assistance agency had to get tough on which families qualify for child care support
- People do not work full time and/or year round
- Increased alcoholism, people don't pay bills at the end of the season
- Lots of stress in town due to uncertainty
- Concern for the school closing or quality of drop in educational quality
- Everything seems stretched to the limit to most people

- Churches in town are having financial problems
- Uncertainty is the biggest concern – the winter was such a shock and we dealt with ups and downs and ping pong effect
- Concerns for school – cutting jr. high sports program due to enrollment drop
- Affordable housing is a problem – especially living in town
- Expensive to live here
- Domestic violence is on the rise

## **HEBGEN BASIN/ISLAND PARK RESIDENTS – CHALLENGES**

- Bi-polar town – people love the area and don't want a lot of new people; but the small size limits us economically.
- Overly dependent on park service
- People have not encouraged tourists to come in and stay in West Yellowstone
- Ability to attract folks to move here – wage structure is poor, but need to attract young people here.
- We don't market ourselves as a community with something to offer- we just serve as a gateway to Yellowstone
- Town fathers influenced how the resort tax is spent – why are bicycles not taxed and other things are?
- Nothing done to have people relocate here and/or move here
- Some of the major players in town own the economy – influence it for their own interests
- Almost impossible to raise a family here
- People need to look much farther ahead and prepare for closures, fires, etc.
- Diversity has not been explored enough here
- Landlocked
- Probably summer traffic is going to be limited at the park sometime in the future – we need to prepare for it

## ***BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS, SUPPLIERS, ACCOUNTANTS, HAIR DRESSERS – CHALLENGES***

- *Keep 12 month economic viability in the seasonal cycles*
- *Have a steady economy*
- *Very little diversification in the economy*
- *Surrounded by government land –limits expansion*
- *Remote – socially, professionally, medically, legally, etc.*
- *Zoning – need reasonable land for business to expand*
- *Beautification – need to spruce up the area and stroes*
- *Need to work on our buildings in the off seasons to prepare for our communities*
- *Be more receptive to visitors off season*
- *We are not working together – division between snow mobilers and skiers*
- *Make this a place you can stay and raise a family – increase programs, etc., for family lifestyle*
- *People are not able to stay here*

- *Lack community cohesiveness – we are divided – don't believe in this or that – need to focus on things we can work on as a community*
- *We are a small community yet we are a big community.*
- *Businesses are not pulling for each other – no marketing campaign*
- *No major marketing push for some time*
- *Uncertainty and the communication to get park conditions out*
- *Attraction for drifters*
- *School is losing students – will affect funding*
- *Where is funding going to come from?*
- *Be more available to each other – for trickle down support*

*YNP, GALLATIN NATIONAL FOREST, FEDERAL AND STATE EMPLOYEES*

#### *CHALLENGES*

- *Tourism is only industry*
- *Town is landlocked – surrounded by federal land.*
- *Year-round access by car only – no year-round air service.*
- *Highway 191 between Big Sky and West Yellowstone doesn't encourage tourist traffic.*
- *Tough climate*
- *Community does not work that well together – have to wait for a crisis*
- *No real leaders – people that jump out and take control*
- *Remote location – hard to maintain quality workforce*
- *Seem unable to get through federal red tape*
- *Medical services – could be improved*
- *Bison issue – we don't need the negative press*
- *Need leaders – community doesn't work together*
- *Lots of ideas – but then people get negative, don't reset goals*
- *Need to be able to execute plans*
- *Don't have core amenities that will keep people here*
- *Leadership power structure – need to break from where they have been and move forward*
- *Won't move forward until a decision is made on winter use of Yellowstone*
- *Current leadership unwilling to give up focus on snowmobiles until they have no choice*
- *Leadership is fighting, conservationists are fighting, hard to move beyond gridlock until court decision has been resolved.*

#### *NON PROFIT AGENCIES, WEST YELLOWSTONE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION AND YHC - CHALLENGES*

- Geographically isolated
- Land locked
- How we perceive ourselves – town does not have a true identity
- Communications between people
- Lines drawn between people

- Similar problems to other towns
- Lack of identity
- Lack of civic leadership so the non-profits stepped up
- Transportation – how do we move people, whether public, private, throughout the park. We can be the center of it.
- Poverty rate is nearly twice the state rate
- Education level in base employees is not at the high school level
- Children do not have parents at home when they come home from school
- For a town our size, have high rate of crime – the size of big cities. Rank 4<sup>th</sup> per capita in the state
- Meth and Ecstasy problem
- High rate of domestic violence
- Parents have to take a day off of work to get medical services in Bozeman
- Down to two flights a day for the airport
- Resurfacing runway this summer – will cause a hardship
- When West's economy is down, non-profit funds are down
- Affordable housing
- Prices here are high
- Remove our image of nothing but rubber tomahawks and tee shirts
- At the whim of park rules

### **NON MOTORIZED RECREATION INTERESTS, FISHING GUIDES, BIKE SHOPS, CROSS COUNTRY SKIING – CHALLENGES**

- Need an identity – lived off the park and we need to become our own community.
- Economics all based on the park
- Town has not promoted fishing – lots of snowmobiling, etc., but...not fishing
- Fragmented community – hotels, snowmobiles and small businesses...Small businesses seem to be second fiddle – need to promote all businesses as a whole
- Nothing in park opens for fishing until Memorial Day
- Bikers fight the weather in the shoulder season – reached our max of 300 available to get into the park for the past three years. June – July – August not a good time to be on a bike in the park
- Some bike trails are now busier with atv's – hard to ride a bike on atv trail.
- Getting the word out – can ask people around town and local people don't even know when the park is open - or where to find an answer!
- Communication is a problem – volley ball tournament came to town – restaurants didn't know to stay open
- Yellowstone closes – should never close more than three or four days
- Small voter base to influence federal, state funding
- Couldn't afford to expand our cemetery – land too high

### **MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION; SNOWMOBILE OPERATORS – CHALLENGES**

- Negative press has hurt us – kills tourism

- Court rulings have hurt us as well
- Unable to forecast
- Negative publicity – and the perception that the park is closed
- Unguided access into the park
- Need another driving force, in addition to snowmobile business, to have other recreation money making activities
- Lack of communication with other business groups in town
- Uncertainty is the problem.
- Can't switch a snowmobile person into a snow-coach riding person...studies have been done that show this.
- If had oodles of snow coaches to meet the needs of winter snowmobilers, where would we store them? Only use for 90 days.
- Majority of people do not want guided access.
- If we go to snow coaches only in the wintertime – there are only a few licenses for this. Develop the red bus, \$175,000 per unit, concern it will go to a federal thing. Individuals can't afford it. Too few owners, won't expand the economic base.
- Slowcoaches can't get you everywhere you want to go.
- Not mechanically sound – if break down – may not get it out until spring.
- Imagine 200 slowcoaches trying to get in to the park at one day – couldn't do it on one road. Snowmobiles scatter and disburse.
- Had to place winter ads and snowmobile purchases for this winter already
- How do we make our payments and adjust to the unknowns pending
- Shot ourselves in the foot with allowing too much traffic into the park
- Constant division lines between snowmobilers, skiers, bikers, etc.
- Why was our airport busier 15 years ago than it is today?
- Ski resort
- Tourism college

### **SMALL BUSINESS OPERATORS; STAND ALONE RESTAURANTS, SMALL MOTELS, MAIN STREET BUSINESSES - CHALLENGES**

- Balance deficit with winter business in the community – impacted the entire community
- Airport – put emphasis on trying to get it established year round
- Need diversification to adapt to the loss in winter business
- Had a work force – now people are leaving, talking about leaving after the summer season
- Negative publicity – hurts us
- Fire season on top of tough winter, will be devastating
- Publicity – nationally our image is tarnished and people changed their destination.
- A town that operates five or six months of the year, but have to pay 12 months of bills.
- Ditto all of the above
- So dependent on Yellowstone – fire or snowmobile issue hurts deeply
- Bigger image problem that needs to be addressed – and information going out is anti-snowmobiling.
- We are perceived as not caring about the environment

- 90% of info coming from park service itself
- Ditto all of the above
- Interim – what are we going to do in the meantime? Still have debt load to pay in the short term..
- Ditto all of the above

### **GENERAL PUBLIC – CHALLENGES**

- Trying to make a living – year round.
- Conflicts between the environmental interests and snowmobile interests.
- Business being very tourist related – need diversity.
- Lack of cultural enrichment for kids. The boredom that can lead to kids to unsavory abuse.
- School – lack of funding, lost jr.high sports program.
- Youth in the area are not being enriched – had a lot of expelled kids because of disorderly conduct. Limited amount of opportunities for kids and continue to loose ground. Kids have no where to go.
- Need more counseling for families, not just children to stop cycle.
- Drug abuse is a problem within the community.
- Communities has to pay more attention to new technology
- Communication is lacking – all kinds
- Concern regarding kids –
- Beautification
- Some parents want to shoot the messengers when their kids are in trouble
- People have blinders on – only pay attention to what their own business is doing – don't listen to what other people have to offer. Snowmobile crisis has caused this.
- Park vs West Yellowstone mentality
- Snowmobiling was so dominant for awhile

### **RESORT OPERATORS, COMBINED LODGING AND RESTAURANT FACILITIES – CHALLENGES**

- Have a tendency to allow the park to do our marketing for us
- Waste disposal – so expensive to dispose of things, people dump in the forest. No landfill, just a transfer station. Five hours to county landfill
- Poor winter season puts more pressure to make it in the summer
- Reliance on tourism
- Short season makes it tough
- Difficult employee base
- No middle class housing
- We don't work well together regarding our staff – should share it instead of stealing each other's workers
- Don't want a cookie-cutter looking town

### **HEALTH CARE - CHALLENGES**

- Urgent care, family medicine and emergency medicine –low on paramedics
- Urgent care and family medicine – we have mixed in the clinic

- We need a dentist
- Insurance – many transients that can't afford any insurance at all, few businesses that can afford good insurance for their employees
- Wages – lower income as far as providing health care for people without insurance
- Medical care seems to be cheaper than Bozeman here – we are an under resourced area (rank a 4 – which is the worst case)
- Tough to deal with the traveling public – heart attacks, emergency care, etc.
- We get people that wait until they are in a tragic emergency state because they can't afford a visit pre-emergency
- Elderly care facility – nothing here to even stay over night. 12 hours is pushing it
- People want to retire here – but we don't have health care capacity
- Young families – if they come here – will want a solid school
- Medicare payments don't bring enough to support facilities
- Ability to step up for influx of people
- Can't even have specialists regularly scheduled – because it is hit and miss
- Public education so that the community knows what limited care we can provide in emergency services

#### **WEST YELLOWSTONE RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT**

##### **Orientation notes - Misc. STRENGTHS:**

- Resort Sales Tax – paid by the visitor to come here
- Forest Service has a new authority – expires in 2008. FS can sell land to the town of West Yellowstone. New authority would allow town to buy and sell it to the Western Art Center...
- Rethinking that maybe snowmobiles can stay....
- Excellent place to live and visit

##### **SENIOR CITIZENS – STRENGTHS**

- Town has grown and improved over last 30 years. Has a good water system. Have a good city infrastructure.
- Gift of Union Pacific to city (city property) – potential of what is there was first viewed when area was made into a historic district. Yellowstone Historic Center has worked to return the museum as the depot and work to bring people to the historic district.
- Town/area has a lot of wonderful people and diversification in talents and abilities. Not sure town is pulling from these resources.
- Close proximity to YNP and outdoor opportunities offered. Good destination for tourists and outdoorsmen.
- Ditto the proximity to YNP.
- With FS and Park Service next door a good partnership has evolved.
- Town has public works, public safety, and police departments and is getting “professionals” to work here. Experienced and professional public workforce. The quality of care is much better than what they had before.
- Ditto on YNP and FS proximity.

- People are an asset – people pull together and support one another.
- Library is an asset.
- Streets and roads are an asset.
- Medical clinic
- Good school system.
- Have own town government and not “stepchild” to Gallatin County.
- Galavan Bus operated by West Yellowstone Foundation – used primarily by seniors and others which serves a real need in the community. Bus is very important to disabled people.
- Ditto on people being an asset. People of the town make this a great place to live.
- Consolidate emergency services to provide seamless care throughout the area (system that coordinates with FS and YNP). Area encompasses up to Idaho state line and Hebgen Lake.

### **SCHOOL STUDENTS - STRENGTHS**

- Great skiing trails
- Two atmospheres – winter and then the summer – two totally different experiences.
- Clean town
- Good to make money in – get tourists
- Great outdoor recreation, love to camp, fish, hike
- Jobs! Have summer jobs.
- Everyone knows each other
- Everyone gets along
- We know our teachers, have one on one time
- School building is great
- Teachers – have same one four or five years – can be a challenge, too.
- Elementary kids do highway clean up

### **TEACHERS/ADMINISTRATORS – STRENGTHS**

- All teachers live within 10 – 20 miles of West Yellowstone
- Excellent THREE season economy with 2 million visitors
- Ready access to outdoor recreation
- Excellent ski trails
- School – newer building and well run
- Airport – could be stronger
- Great community programs for kids – kids club, Yellowstone foundation
- Bus - the Galavan – runs folks to Bozeman twice a week, funded by the foundation
- Highly educated creative minds in this community
- Size – can be a weakness, too but – not crowded
- Thankful for some snowmobile access to the park
- Gateway community to the park is a strength
- More ethnic diversity than other schools
- Fine police force, also EMS crew, fire department
- Amazing what the staff can do for one student – small size is a plus
- Kids can be on sports teams
- Helping Hands – works with community members to assist in basic life skills

- Have big brothers and sisters

### **LOCAL OFFICIALS, CITIZEN BOARDS - STRENGTHS**

- Bozeman economic group has been helpful to us.
- Surrounded by some of the most beautiful country in the U.S.
- Access to property that is actually fairly high priced real estate that the town owns. It could be developed in the context agreed upon.
- Fire and ambulance has combined; working well but face budget constraints
- Families choose to live here because it is a small town, good place to raise families.
- Historic setting of the town is important and a useful tool.
- Great water – some of the best any where. Inexpensive, too.
- New physical therapist in town
- Stable health clinic

### **STEERING COMMITTEE/EDA GRANT COMMITTEE - STRENGTHS**

- Helicopter transport for medical emergencies
- Applied for EDA grant for \$80,000 – to develop CEDS for Gardiner and Cooke City – and West – Gateway community CEDS.
- The planning and visioning work already in progress- data, plans in place help us be competitive with grants, loans, federal programs
- Surrounded by federal land – a strength as well as a problem
- Contested lands – people will do anything to stay here
- Could (and have in the past) bring charters and large aircraft into our airport
- The people – that is our number one strength
- Resort tax is a definite strength – use it for leverage
- Resort tax – is a month-to-month barometer as to how business is going in the area

### **SERVICE WORKERS AND RENTERS – STRENGTHS**

- Child care center – Little Geyser’s Child Care Center
- Very generous people in this town
- New babies being born – but if we don’t have jobs for people - won’t stay
- 0 to 6 Coalition through Helping Hands – work with children who have witnessed violence in the home; counselor comes to town weekly; classes on divorce and behavior problems
- Community Protestant Church children’s program
- Churches work well together when there is a family in need
- People are trying to brain storm and pull together
- The park and location of West Yellowstone
- It is beautiful here – can walk a little ways and you are in the woods
- Infrastructure has grown – police, fire, and city services
- Not seen a mass exodus of people leaving – even though they are hurting
- Leaders like Fred Rice that had foresight to know changes where in the wind and reduced the budget accordingly
- You can have a say in this town – can speak at School Board meetings, council meetings, etc.

## **HEBGEN BASIN/ISLAND PARK RESIDENTS – STRENGTHS**

- Benefits of a small community
- People can get involved and make a difference – need to be politically astute
- Petty feuds are swept away if a project needs to get done or a need has come up
- West Yellowstone Ski Education Foundation
- Cross country ski trail – can ski right from your motel room to the trail
- [www.rendevouskitrails.com](http://www.rendevouskitrails.com) website
- The people are our strength – they are loyal and love this area
- People are kind and generous
- Race series throughout the year for our ski trails
- Hold one or two national ski events each year
- 2<sup>nd</sup> largest biathlon trail in the US

## **BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS, SUPPLIERS, ACCOUNTANTS, HAIR DRESSERS – STRENGTHS**

- We are small – so you know your neighbor
- Offer a unique visit to tourists
- Look at the people at this table – we are willing to make things work
- Giving community – time, money, volunteers
- Can count on this community
- Natural surroundings
- Some cohesiveness in spite of lack of cohesiveness
- Wonderful lifestyle
- Safe at night
- Many attractive features
- Surrounded by miles of forest
- History – too much is forgotten
- Wonderful school, considering tough state funding
- Do well with our basic courses in the school
- Proximity to the park is our biggest asset
- Tax structure – couldn't get better
- 90% of city services are underwritten or supported by the resort tax
- Infrastructure is good
- For people who can afford it, - real estate is available

## **YNP, GALLATIN NATIONAL FOREST, FEDERAL AND STATE EMPLOYEES – STRENGTHS**

- Good water – infrastructure is pretty good, too
- Streets, water sewer are good
- Location – next to YNP
- Working relationship the community has with the forest service
- Resort tax – that is what paved the streets, put in sidewalks, water, etc.
- Montana delegation is on board

- Gallatin forest is in the middle of a forest travel plan process
- Public lands, wood, water, fish, wildlife and scenery
- Outdoor recreation opportunities – hunting, fishing, horseback riding – is year round
- Land acquisition available to the community to 2008
- Nordic trail system
- Dog sledding

## **NON PROFIT AGENCIES, WEST YELLOWSTONE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION AND YHC – STRENGTHS**

- Helping Hands
- Helping Hands Youth Justice Council
- Western Heritage Art Center vision
- Yellowstone Historic Center
- West Yellowstone Foundation
- After school program
- Big Brothers and Big Sisters
- West Yellowstone United Women
- Ski Foundation
- Resort tax is helping our image and infrastructure
- Local newspaper
- Utilize the non-profit sector to make changes
- Non-profit sector has driven the town for the past few years
- Natural gateway to the park – we can be the center
- Very caring community
- If you are in need, someone is available to help you
- Wages are not all that bad – compared to Bozeman and/or WalMart
- Town has changed and improved – sidewalks, stop lights, full of people that care
- Very diverse community – just have to promote it
- People are determined to tackle problems at the table.
- People willing to invest in our children, people and community
- We have the people power and personal investment to make West Yellowstone work. Balances somewhat other problems.
  - West is not a town, it is a community.
  - Jeff Carter’s project is spectacular
  - Historic Center project is amazing, too.
  - Portico Group coming
  - Fred is the only cohesive leadership that we have had

## **NON MOTORIZED RECREATION INTERESTS, FISHING GUIDES, BIKE SHOPS, CROSS COUNTRY SKIING – STRENGTHS**

- School put on volleyball tournament last year – not enough places to eat
- The people
- Natural resources – the forest, park, recreational opportunities are endless

- Historical aspects – but somewhat ignored
- Best centrally located area to fish in the country – lakes, rivers, streams, Idaho, Montana and the park
- Federation of Fly Fisherman coming this summer the last two weeks of August. Group may come back every two years.

### **MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION; SNOWMOBILE OPERATORS – STRENGTHS**

- This is my home. Grandkids help stuff brochures – three generations.
- Resilient community
- When chips down, even competitors are getting together
- Yellowstone is the magnet; West Yellowstone is the door
- People can learn to come alive again
- Great place to raise your family

### **SMALL BUSINESS OPERATORS; STAND ALONE RESTAURANTS, SMALL MOTELS, MAIN STREET BUSINESSES – STRENGTHS**

- Day trippers
- People and their willingness to work together and help each other
- Never met someone who was not willing to help
- Environment and where we live – live and play
- Gorgeous place to live – so much to do outdoors
- Fishing, hiking, biking, snowmobiling, the park, etc.
- Shocked at the number of people that return year after year
- 78% of people that come to Montana have been here before
- Museum and historic district – huge asset
- Discovery center
- Imax
- Playmill Theater
- Great shopping
- Rodeo – 4<sup>th</sup> year
- Already set up to handle lots of people – could be ready year round
- Great school system
- People who are set up to go year round – let's use it.
- Diverse shops
- We are a big little town.
- Ditto all of the above
- People who live and work here – we struggle to be here, we want to be here
- Airport

### **GENERAL PUBLIC – STRENGTHS**

- Some cooperation between same-businesses
- Some people are now coming around and saying there is room for skiers, snow mobiles, cross country, snow coaches, etc.
- Some folks are advertising all aspects of activities in West Yellowstone

- Tight knit community
- Even with our strong opinions, we still like each other.
- Diversity is a strength
- We are the central gateway community
- We are family.
- Our chamber goes beyond what a normal chamber does!

### **RESORT OPERATORS, COMBINED LODGING AND RESTAURANT FACILITIES – STRENGTHS**

- Can spend a day here on horseback, another day fishing, another day biking, etc.
- Great bike trails
- Do appreciate the company housing that is available.
- Fresh air, wonderful fishing, nice spring, nice fall, - people are here because they want to be here
  - Police here to a wonderful job, as do our city fathers.
  - Good people here.
  - Great place to raise your kids
  - Old west feel – almost a western theme

### **HEALTH CARE – STRENGTHS**

- Compared to a few years ago, our health care services have improved a lot.
- Have potential to grow – have a lot of strengths here
- Have older adults here asking how to help
- Ability to step up when the influx comes in – it is a challenge, it is hard, but we do it.
- Very hard working people here
- People want to live here – so they take a cut in wages – grateful to have a chiropractor
- Very dedicated health care workers

## **WEST YELLOWSTONE RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT**

**Orientation notes: Misc. Notes**

### **PROJECTS**

- Golf Course
- Library and Senior Citizens Center
- Whole strip of land that came from union pacific railroad..and to become showcase of our future.
- Western Art Center – Jeff Carter
- Takes Vision, takes Passion, takes Money.
- Shoulder season – use high speed access for catalog sales
- Forest service designate areas more clearly as to forest use in forest areas.
- Year round sustainable economy.

### **SENIOR CITIZENS –PROJECTS**

- Federal government need to not make West Yellowstone and the park a political football.
- Cardiac-rehab physical therapy set-up – perhaps in the new Senior Citizen’s Center
- Senior Citizens Center with a bunch of dittos.
- Daycare Center.
- YMCA/Boys and Girls club for kids to go to after school.
- Community swimming pool.
- Ice skating rink in the wintertime that would provide for hockey or ice shows and curling.
- An area for music festival or events center.
- Western Heritage Art Center which includes a performing arts center.
- Currently have a good trauma clinic but need adequate medical facilities. Clinic services more than is readily apparent to visitors.
- Need to know that people can get prescriptions filled and not have to go to Bozeman or somewhere else for medicine. Need facilities to take care of sick people.
- Within the community need to build pride in who we are and what we represent. Build our own identify or sense of community. Sense of community will pull residents together to develop identity or town pride.
- Ditto to Western Heritage Arts Center (Jeff and Lisa Carter).
- Light, clean industry to employ people without having to rely on weather.
- Fast internet provider (DSL) to attract industry.
- Ditto on the need to have something more than urgent care medical facility.

### **SCHOOL STUDENTS - PROJECTS**

- Bowling alley
- Community swimming pool
- Skateboard park
- Home Economic class
- Lots of dittos
- Summer time sport activities – summer basketball camp, football, etc.
- Mini-camps – to get in shape for the fall
- Baseball program in the summer
- Public swimming pool – year round – indoor
- Summer basketball team
- Clean up area truck stop on the way out of town - disgusting
- Need soccer league, baseball, softball – used to have 8 teams in town sponsored by businesses – adults, too.
- Light industry, high speed infrastructure, etc., to create more jobs and different jobs
- Rather have a swimming pool instead of skating rink
- Have concerts in the summer – play at the city park
- Higher ed opportunities so that we could stay here and go to college, too
- Summer courses for college credit – may be here now
- College prep course – and assistance
- Counselor for high school instead of K-12

#### **TEACHERS/ADMINISTRATORS - PROJECTS**

- Explore airport land, other ways to create more land. Trade it.
- Airport – if money put into expanding flights, airlines, etc., would help our economy
- People fly into Bozeman, rent a car to get here – and then are surprised there is an airport here
- Western Heritage Art Center – would be great. Would compensate for not relying on the park so much. Performing arts, music, etc.
- Community Center
- Address limited indoor recreation options
- Building at cross country ski trail head is in the works
- Indoor running track, pool, - again, more indoor recreation.
- More access to technology – library doesn't have enough computers
- Do have T1 line to the school
- If things are well planned, the people would be open for changes
- Have a forest service option right now to sell forest land – up to year 2008
- Change is inevitable – but with planning we can choose the direction.
- Enough money to revamp dining hall – about on last legs without upkeep funds
- Must find a way to endure the winter – need a 4 season economy – summer is at capacity.
- Creative thoughts for anticipating a short summer season due to fire situation
- Create more higher ed opportunities
- Offered adult ed class in Spanish and GED. Have had computer, etc., but don't have the numbers. Do surveys every three years to determine what people want and who will teach.

#### **LOCAL OFFICIALS, CITIZEN BOARDS – PROJECTS**

- Promote the history of the area more – utilize it
- Get the train back – have one train car and some track now
- Western Heritage Art Museum Center – very important project
- Senior Citizens Center – should be happening in the next 2 years
- New store fronts – new town theme
- FEMA application in for fire equipment – have ten multistory buildings – 866 rooms above the second story
- New fire station – built in the theme of the old town. Conceptual drawings are done, and we have the property.
- Have Montana State Fallen Fire Fighters Memorial to West Yellowstone
- Events center – generate new money to town
- New town hall
- Maintain and repair our historical district, i.e., dining hall
- Low to medium income housing – not just rental but something to buy and take pride in.
- Golf Course
- Rodeo grounds – inside the event center – which is connected to the Western Heritage Art Center
- Complete the trail (hiking and biking) has not been finished.
- Health services – develop long term elderly care, in home care
- Nursing home – help the community realize the need. When a loved one needs long term care, the entire family is uprooted.
- Home health care – has been tried in the past but didn't last.
- New physical therapist in town; need cardiac rehab
- Grow, but keep character (as the character evolves)

#### **STEERING COMMITTEE/EDA GRANT COMMITTEE – PROJECTS**

- Hire a professional to move our visions forward –one project at a time
- Explore options with the forest and state to have alternatives to drive 90 miles to get licensed for atv use
- Get serious about the airport – consider fixed wing emergency transport and other options
- Consider an Airport Authority
- Charter operation for the airport
- Forest Service leniency so that a hanger could be a possibility
- Encourage more visits from the Gallatin County Commissioners
- College that can draw people in here for classes.
- Utilize Shared Leadership of Montana
- Trail expansion for cross country skiing, walking,
- Snowmobile access
- Gallatin National Travel Plan
- Expansion of trails – keep trying to extend.
- Bridge replacement projects are scheduled- need to work them to our benefit
- Bike trails – non motorized access
- Grailing Creek Bridge expansion and replacement of highway – so would like a nice parking area as well. With facilities (toilet, etc.) Need dollar match.

- Outfitter permits – additional – for national forests
- Address water control on the Madison River – need to identify water – and water usage issues – work them out.
- Yellow bus tour district – 13 counties in three states involved. (Issue, too, of who would buy the snow coaches) Marketing of it, too.
- Complete snow coach surveys to get a grasp of costs
- Market West Yellowstone and other gate communities for winter
- Organize cross country people
- Optimize the reconstruction at the west gate – and be ready to reach the visitors
- Resort taxes used for marketing – and the chamber?

#### **SERVICE WORKERS AND RENTERS - PROJECTS**

- Clean industry; light industry
- Access to higher education
- Helping Hands may offer child care classes via video conference here
- City departments are all running very tight – need to stabilize these before we move forward; need to cover the basics first

#### **HEBGEN BASIN/ISLAND PARK RESIDENTS - PROJECTS**

- Have room for lots more people on our ski trails. Push them!
- Spruce up, clean up, establish a theme to diminish the gateway syndrome
- Get the message out – go to the park for a day, spend a week in West Yellowstone
- Return a train to West Yellowstone
- Need more options to get people to stay in our community
- Market, market, market
- Innovate thinking how to “bleed” a tourist differently ☺
- Create a Nordic training center here
- Complete master plan for the ski trails
- NASA connection and sports medicine could be the link to a Nordic training center
- Improve winter access – via air
- Improve medical access – need to have a doctor and overnight beds in a medical facility
- Do a marketing network to nest on some ads for snowmobiling to include cross country skiing
- There is a lot of crossover of the needs for the skiing community and well as the snowmobile community
- Establish a snow shoe trail

#### **BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS, SUPPLIERS, ACCOUNTANTS, HAIR DRESSERS – PROJECTS**

- Work on businesses, sprucing up when off season
- Community center
- Hiking/biking trails
- Do have activities outside of work – indoor – swimming pool

- Serve those that live here year-round – provide good life for them
- Work with the park to have the gate open
- Advertise/Market that the park is open to non-motorized traffic to remove the dips from our economy – advertise those activities
- Utilize the history of the area
- A transportation district – could be a tool to get back railroad, too -
- Alternative fuel – look into that
- Market and package tourism
- Link the school aged children to the transportation district
- Cultural community center
- Hockey rink/skating rink
- Winter festival – to bring everyone here and celebrate where we live, and winter
- Railway brought back – day trip to Ashton and back,
- Green belt around this town – could walk, pedal, etc, around in summer, ski around in winter. Wide enough that both walkers and bikers can be on it at the same time
- Mass mailings for people with the crew that is laid off – during holiday season
- Perhaps get a hot water facility open for in the winter
- Light manufacturing of snowmobile accessories
- Hear marketing over and over and over – we all do our own – which is ridiculous get together!
- Have a cooperative marketing person for West Yellowstone

### **YNP, Gallatin National Forest, Federal and State Employees – PROJECTS**

- Winter festival or carnival
- Have satellite parking and separate areas for snowmobilers so that non-snowmobilers feel welcome as well
- Have plowed sidewalks like every other community has – make it open to everyone
- See a change in leadership with a different attitude
- Set goals based on data and statistics, not what money is being made by a single group
- Cultural events
- Need to draw young professionals to this town
- Medical assistance improved
- Utilize free opportunities for marketing the area
- Film festival
- Recruit new volunteers – same people seem to be involved in event planning
- Atmosphere that welcomes everyone
- History – utilize what is here
- Music – bring back the jazz!
- Keep museum open year round- will be expensive, but worth it
- Turn dining hall into community facility and/or film festival area
- Play on what we have outside of the park!
- Train route restored – dining car
- Use those yellow buses to bring folks to West.
- Develop action plan that is widely adopted – must include residential benefit

- City/County airport authority investigated
- Highway improvement plan – 5 years down the road
- Transportation improvement plan – developed and approved by Dept of Transportation in Idaho, Montana as well as federal highway folks
- Destination events/places for West Yellowstone. Art Center, dining hall, something people come specifically to see

### **NON PROFIT AGENCIES, WEST YELLOWSTONE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION AND YHC – PROJECTS**

- Optimize our outdoor activities – beyond the park
- Look at education as an opportunity in this community – two year, perhaps four year. Tie in our resources with that education
- Utilize our natural gateway to provide transportation throughout the park
- Need to get more people here so that we can continue to fund our non-profits – whether snowmobiles or not – need to get the economy on track.
- Use Western Heritage Art Center to bring a new dimension to West. – Performing arts, historical aspects, music, western American culture, etc. Use this to drive economic issues; bring jazz back
- Recapture what we were becoming in WWII
- Promote our diversity
- Portico group will assist with the museum destination project
- Senior Center
- Create an identity for the community – will help everyone
- Improve leadership capacity of the town
- Extend the seasons – so non profits and for profits gain
- Tap into internationals during the shoulder season – using the Western Heritage Art Center
- Lodging and Learning – a wintertime activity – to bring people in to ski and learn during winter months. Concentrate on shoulder seasons.
- Find funding to hire someone to coordinate education aspects during the shoulder season. Lodging and Learning.
- Airport must be open year round – many people will not drive on the roads we have to get here
- Railroad come back – could be tremendous asset (like Durango/Silverton situation)
- Narrow gage track between here and Ashton – the owner of Rarus could make it happen
- Western Heritage Art Center simply has to happen
- Clinic is excellent – but if have major heart attack here, you are dead. Need sufficient health care to deal with most everything.
- Continue to support Fred as he strives to serve as the core for many directions that could be taken.

### **NON MOTORIZED RECREATION INTERESTS, FISHING GUIDES, BIKE SHOPS, CROSS COUNTRY SKIING – PROJECTS**

- Promote fishing as a community!
- Talk with fisheries to open Madison (FWP) and Firehole (Park Service) for fishing prior to Memorial Day
- Promote biking opportunities

- Promote activities for year round traffic!
- In November – go right to track vehicles...why not open it!
- If we didn't have to tell people Yellowstone is closed (especially Old Faithful corridor) – we would have no problem in our shoulder season
- Explore definition of “open” and “closed” for the park – get the word out accordingly
- Historic District supported
- Put together an advertising plan that will cover all the bases
- Coop started with winter concessionaires in West Yellowstone – generating a lot of money and cooperation for marketing. Same could be done with fishing group, bikers, cross country skiers, etc.
- We all have to work together – snowmobilers, skiers, fisherman, etc.
- Finish the railroad/historic district (struggle to obtain federal state funds because of our low voter population)
- Support local basic services, don't go to Idaho, Bozeman, etc.
- Light industry to have a steady economic base
- Zoning is a problem – need more space for business but land is too high
- Increase base population of West to 1 – 2,000 people.
- Need airport open year round
- Finish historic district
- Need visitor center expanded
- Grizzly bear center expanded
- Kennel – people have no place to put their dogs, pets, while in the park
- Clean up trailer homes and clean up other areas as well
- Nicer looking employee housing
- Clean up main corridors coming into town
- More flowers!
- Create our community identity
- Bring in unbiased professional marketing person
- Need more light industry – not service jobs
- Create more activities to encourage people to stay an extra day – and more
- Have plowed streets and SIDEWALKS in town
- Western Heritage Arts Center
- Bicycle Pedestrian paths – interpretive trails
- Frisbee golf course with baskets
- Tennis courts
- Marketing strategy with professional assistance

### **MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION; SNOWMOBILE OPERATORS – PROJECTS**

- Need to offer unguided access to the park – easiest fix for the winter economy
- Add other economic engines besides snowmobile
- Must keep snowmobiles in the park – no other way to keep that number of people in the park. Just too many numbers would drop, if we remove snowmobiles. Snow coach business alone cannot do it. Can't meet the need of the people to go into the park.

- Some kind of economic sustainability
- Need to diversify winter use
- Marketing coop being formed – for common purpose on how to use the resources responsibly here Tread Lightly
- Bowling alley, recreational activities – but who will build one when there is no future for six months out of the year?
- Resource Team can make recommendations to Greater Yellowstone Coalition that economy depends on winter snowmobile use. AND..we are happy to use the quieter cleaner machines.
- Education – it is okay to have cars on the road in summer, but not clean snowmobiles? Get the word out!
- MT Dept of Transportation – currently meeting with them regarding bridge replacements. Tear out bridge – asked for pedestrian lanes on both sides or leave one existing bridge for snowmobiles. Consider the area they are building roads and bridges. **Need it for safety of the public – recreationist must be considered in that traffic.**
- Let's work together so we can build on each other
- Golf Course

### **SMALL BUSINESS OPERATORS; STAND ALONE RESTAURANTS, SMALL MOTELS, MAIN STREET BUSINESSES – PROJECTS**

- Simply have to improve our publicity and news coverage
- Need year round draw so we can pay our bills 12 months out of the year
- Do get Western Heritage Art Center in place
- Activity Center – rodeos, fairs, concerts
- Good to have activity in the evenings
- Western Cultural Arts Center!!!! Been researched for over seven years.
- Activities Center – where we can plan events around.
- Rodeo – started three years ago – keep it going late in summer
- Golf course
- Ditto rodeo, golf course
- Historic buildings – vital to preserve those buildings
- Dining lodge used more – small concerts in the summer
- Train tracks restored between West and Ashton
- Address the snowmobile issue – convince them to go with unguided access – not just the 8 contractors allowed to go in right now
- Town go year round - plow park? So be it.
- Western Heritage Center – great idea for long term goal
- Ditto – advocate of having snowmobiles in the park – can be done environmentally safe
- Plow the park!
- Ditto
- Build a low cost multiple use center. Have city donate the land. Slab floor with heat, metal building – so could have floating walls for convention, etc. Should be private to keep costs down. We spend \$55,000 per year on a tent for the expo – could use that for a downpayment on a building.
- Take percentage (perhaps 1%) of resort tax and put together an economic development program. Put a committee together with people from West Yellowstone.

- Dining hall open
- Facility – to have functions. Have rooms and food – just need a place!
- Need to have facility for large conventions.
- Critical to have airport open.
- Summer rec program run out of dining hall – should be changed to a different location – perhaps the school?

### **GENERAL PUBLIC - PROJECTS**

- Enhance town to attract tourists more.
- Think of the kids!
- Can co-exist together
- Community center would be a place for families and tourists to take their kids.
- Inter-twine various groups together
- Pull together when there is NOT a crisis
- Need new \$\$\$\$ - perhaps Montana tours?
- Consider Railroad theme – based on our history
  - Consistent railroad theme in every business, whether engine stripes, lights, colors or hats
  - Sounds of whistles through the community, etc.
  - Whatever business you have can be incorporated with a little creativity
- Sign ordinance to prevent eye pollution
- Train tracks
- Doctor, pharmacist and clinic to stay permanent
- Consider purchasing the airport
- Community Center – do it! I.e, no place for a tumbling class
- Focus on the kids!
- Community center and Senior Citizen center could be on common ground – a great partnership
- Have railroad go around the town – tell our stories along the way
- Ski resort – have lots of back country
- Street festivals, city park used – filled with live music, farmer’s market, craft festival
- Dog sled races

### **RESORT OPERATORS, COMBINED LODGING AND RESTAURANT FACILITIES – PROJECTS**

- Inform people of other activities so they stay longer than one or two nights – horseback riding, fishing, hiking, biking, etc.
- Affordable remedy for waste disposal
- Recycle program (do have someone that picks up cardboard)
- Promote that the more favorable trails are OUTSIDE of the Park
- Package advertise that there are things to do other than go to the Park
- Need advertisement and promotion for West Yellowstone activities

- Get more people organized to do things – coordinate special events, i.e., spring bicycle race, - same people try to do things.
- We compete with Las Vegas, Disneyland – that do massive advertising – need to have funds from resort tax to advertise the area.
- Waste disposal – make more convenient and less expensive
- Golf course
- Have an airport fly-in

## **HEALTH CARE – PROJECTS**

- Elderly acute care facility
- Dental care
- Tele-medicine – xrays, etc., look into
- High speed internet
- Advance life support on the ambulance 24/7
- Educate our local leaders on what we can do as “basic” care providers – can only do minimum services such as provide oxygen and transport.
- Wonderful to have a small hospital here.
- Geriatrics center – either walk in or long term
- Ambulatory clinic – with an overnight stay – two or three beds
- Need more public relations and public education – so the public does not assume they have emergency care to the nth degree.
- Educate the public so they can determine what kind of care they are willing to pay for.
- More Mental Health support for mentally ill

## **MISC. COMMENTS –**

- Utilize dining hall for senior center and community center
- Local people don’t even know what is available here
- Photo schools to be brought in for students of photography
- Guest satisfaction is the key – if they are satisfied they will come back



