# CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT MATRIX

## SUBJECT: COMMUNICATIONS

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<tr>
<th>ISSUE OR PROJECT</th>
<th>RECOMMENDATIONS &amp; OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>Three recommendations that could make an impact on any project or plan Chinook undertakes.</td>
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<td>Individuals</td>
<td>o Utilize the Volunteer Survey sheets that were filled out during each session and start tapping some shoulders. It is easier to ask someone to jump into a project when they have already indicated their interest.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gov’t Agencies - Fed/state</td>
<td>o Participate in MEDA. The Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) is an association of economic development professionals. MEDA is made up of lead economic developers, business specialists, government employees, and staff members of affiliated non-profit organizations which promote and foster economic development activities in Montana. MEDA, a non-profit organization, is high on networking and mutual assistance that would be of benefit to Chinook. Learn more about MEDA by visiting their website at <a href="http://www.medamembers.org/">http://www.medamembers.org/</a>.</td>
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<td>Cellphone coverage</td>
<td>Web: <a href="http://www.heartlandinstitute.com">http://www.heartlandinstitute.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional and Collaborative Communications</td>
<td>o Do utilize your nearby economic development assets. MT Department of Commerce Regional Development Officer, Randy Hanson, is an incredible resource for topics all across the board in the economic development field. Your local MSU Extension agent and your RC&amp;D are also excellent resources.</td>
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Contact: Randy Hanson, MT DOC/RDO Box 311 Havre, MT 59501 Phone: 406.262.9579 Fax: 406.262.9581 Email: hanson@ibic4.ibic.org
### Improve communication within community groups

It became obvious during the Listening Sessions that many of the community groups and organizations did not know what the other groups in town were doing. With both human and financial resources always scarce, it is essential that communication be improved.

### Communication between various government agencies

Chinook, as well as many other communities, find themselves working with several government agencies. Before long, progress is fractured because of a lack of communication among all of the groups.

#### Recommendations:
- Glean the email addresses from the many Volunteer Survey sheets (filled out during the Resource Team Assessment) and create a listserve with these addresses as well as other community leader’s email. There are free programs available for this purpose that are very user friendly. I recommend Yahoo. Visit [http://groups.yahoo.com](http://groups.yahoo.com) for easy directions to begin a group. Use this listserve to share information and updates in Chinook. This would also be a great way to promote a community website.
- Newsletter – create a brief newsletter (nothing fancy) that is simply a fact sheet of events, programs, projects and activities going on in Chinook. Submit it to the area newspaper on a weekly or monthly basis.
- Make better use of the whiteboard posted in the newspaper office by posting a person’s phone number on the board. If they spot their phone number (because they have come in to check the news posted on the board) they receive a prize from a local merchant. Well….it’s an idea. ;-)

Recommendation: Contact Larry Mires of the Ft. Peck Interpretive Center as he has expertise in pulling together various government agencies to accomplish successful projects. Larry wrote:

“Each regulatory agency has its own prescribed “mission statement” by which it is to operate under as directed by congress. They do a very good job of staying within those confines. The agencies were established to work for the citizens, even though sometimes we may feel that is not what is actually happening. If you examine each carefully, you will find that they are all going in the same direction, just some are taking different roads to get there. The solution is to get everyone on the same road or track. It is also important to get a consensus on issues and a solution to those issues. It is important to keep in mind that in dealing with any agency/organization – negative comments receive negative responses! Keep a positive attitude.

#### Contact:

Larry Mires  
Email - 2LMIRES@NEMONTEL.NET  
17 Robertson Court  
Glasgow, MT 59230  
Phone 406-263-8403 (cell)
and outlook and work within the various agencies mission statements so that a win-win solution can be achieved. Build a positive working relationship with all the agencies.”
CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT

MATRIX

SUBJECT: YOUTH

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| Youth            | Recommendations: The students mentioned a need to improve school spirit, a need to revive the community and a need for “something to do.” Perhaps with a little creative thinking, we can come up with some activities that would handle all three of these needs.  
- The students said their Student Council has ideas of things to do, but when approached by the administration of the school, their ideas are rejected. I would suggest asking an impartial mediator/facilitator to step in to pave the way for improved communications. Your local MSU Extension agent is experienced in facilitating, as well as, I am sure, are other community leaders. The important thing is for both sides to agree on the facilitator – and go forward from there. Chances are, it will only take one or two meetings to get things rolling again.  
- Havre has a very active Boys and Girls Club that may be willing to form a satellite group in Chinook. Havre also has a leadership training course for young people that may be helpful as well.  
- Nothing builds school/community spirit like a project – a project that involves youngsters as well as oldsters. Here are some projects to consider: |
|                  |                                                                           |
| Something to do  |                                                                           |
| It was a pleasure to visit with Chinook’s youth. |

Contact: Debbie Vandeberg  
Executive Director Havre Area Chamber of Commerce  
Phone: 265-4383  
Email: havremt@mtintouch.net
Youth Center

Meeting with the high school students provided valuable insight to the town’s problems. The youth identified that there was no entertainment, no jobs and no future opportunities. Most of them stated they couldn’t wait to graduate and go somewhere else. The youth of your community are one of the most overlooked assets of Chinook.

- Take another look at a youth center. It appears to be a difficult project because the facility must be appealing to teens, affordable, somewhat supervised and attract a healthy mix of the entire youth population – ranging from school athletes, intellectuals, privileged as well as the underprivileged student. In my search for answers, I came across a wonderful website sponsored by the National Youth Employment Coalition. NYEC is a non-partisan national organization dedicated to promoting policies and initiatives that help youth succeed in becoming lifelong learners, productive workers and self-sufficient citizens. The program has a special section called “Youth Zone” and gives practical advice and examples of youth center projects: “Whether you have a youth center, are planning to start one or want ideas on how to enhance your employment program to effectively engage youth, check out the resources on this page for examples of programs already out there, resources for planning and information on how to serve youth.”

The high school kids said they needed a recreation center or somewhere to hang out. Put the students in charge of this problem. Create a group within the high school and have them explore methods to fund and build a center.

Visit the website at http://www.nyec.org/Jettcon2001/designguide.htm and receive information on:
- Examples of Youth Centers/Programs
- Examples of Programs Using Technology Tools for Planning
- Tools for Assessment and Improvement
- Resources on Youth Development
- Resources on Afterschool/Out-of-School Programming
- Tools for Planning
- Tools for Assessment & Improvement
- Resources on Youth Development
- Resources on Afterschool/Out-of-School Programming
| Youth Leadership | Training young people to become involved in the community now lays the foundation for them to **become leaders in the future**. Including youth in the community's decision-making processes helps limit their potential to become community problems. The Innovation Center has a Youth Development program designed to build equal partnerships between youth and adults. They have a Tool Kit for a nominal price that helps create community change. The web site is [www.innovationcenter.org](http://www.innovationcenter.org).

**The Youth Leadership Initiative** is a program administered by the school that focuses on civic education. The program is administered by a teacher and is free to all participating schools. The web site is [www.youthleadership.net](http://www.youthleadership.net).

**The 4-H Program has a module called Personal Development and Leadership.** With the active program already in existence in Chinook, this is an ideal way to get started on developing future leaders. The web site is [www.fourhcouncil.edu/programs](http://www.fourhcouncil.edu/programs).

Havre, Billings and Kalispell all have successful leadership programs in the high school. Havre's program includes community service, job shadowing, skills and other topics that educate the youth on issues and government. In some communities, a student representative is present at city council meetings and Chamber of Commerce meetings. While participation is voluntary, teachers encourage students and often give extra credit for attendance. |
| **CONTACT:** | Havre: Debbie Vandeberg  
Executive Director,  
Havre Area Chamber of Commerce  
Phone: 265-8853  
Email: havremt@mtintouch.net  
Kalispell: Shawn Lowney  
Youth Leadership Flathead  
Kalispell Chamber of Commerce  
Phone: 758-2803  
Billings: Charlene Zaske  
Leadership Billings  
Billings Area Chamber  
Phone: 245-4111 |
Another way to challenge the older students is through a Youth Entrepreneurial Program. Some communities start these programs at an elementary school level and continue on through high school. In Cherokee, Iowa, a culinary arts class in the high school acts as a caterer for community events. The students contract jobs for local businesses and events. They are responsible for purchasing, planning, cooking and delivering meals and are paid for their services. Many schools have business clubs offering school supplies and snacks through a storefront at the local school. A sixth-grader from Anniston, Alabama, participated in a school sponsored entrepreneurship program and turned a beading hobby into a lucrative jewelry business.

Addressing the student’s complaints of “nothing to do” requires a different approach. One program successful in providing activities for young people is Boys and Girls Club of America. The main requirements to start a Boys and Girls Club of America are a handicapped accessible location and the first year of operating capital in the bank. The organization does not have to have a dedicated building. Kalispell operates their program out of the school. The first year’s operating capital would include salary for a full-time or part-time director and program expenses. Havre used a grant from the Montana Board of Crime Control to form their club. Exploring a partnership with the Havre organization may prove a viable option and reduce the amount necessary to hire a full-time employee.

The Twenty-First Century grant program is available to schools through the Office of Public Instruction and offers funding for after-school programs. The school can design a program that includes tutoring, homework

Contact: John S. Oliphant
Regional Service Director
Phone: (972) 690-1393
joliphant@Bgca.org

Robyn Morris
Help Committee
Boys & Girls Club
305 Third Avenue
Havre, MT 59501
Phone: (406) 265-6206

Contact: Gary Pfister
Office of Public Instruction
1227 11th Avenue 1st Floor
Helena, MT 59620
Skateboard Park

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jane Thom</td>
<td>(406) 444-2562</td>
<td><a href="mailto:janiethom@yahoo.com">janiethom@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randy Lilge</td>
<td>447-8462</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rlilge@ci.helena.mt.us">rlilge@ci.helena.mt.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleen McCarthy</td>
<td>406.442-7970</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rick Harbin</td>
<td>748.3326</td>
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# CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT MATRIX

## SUBJECT: NATURAL RESOURCES

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<td>Natural Resources</td>
<td>WATER: Closely tied to agriculture, water is the lifeblood of any community. The entire community of Chinook appeared to have at least a basic understanding of the water supply system, which was very encouraging. On the other hand, it was discouraging to learn of some of the major issues with the siphons, and the decades-old water delivery system. Unfortunately I have little to offer in the way of exactly how to achieve the results necessary to upgrade this system, but in my opinion this needs to be <strong>the number 1 issue</strong> in setting priorities for the long-term viability of the community. Because of the nature of the project, and the fact that the water is used for both agricultural and municipal purposes in numerous communities up and down the Milk River, any attempts to find a way to address this issue should probably not be limited to Chinook.</td>
<td>Contacts: John Tubbs Bureau Chief, Resource Development Department of Natural Resources and Conservation 1625 11th Ave Helena, MT 59620-1601 (406) 444-6687</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>o Natural Gas</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pat Riley Irrigation Development Officer 1371 Rimtop Drive Billings, MT 59105 (406) 247-4404</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>o Monument (Choteau, Blaine, Fergus, Phillips Counties)</td>
<td>WATER: Closely tied to agriculture, water is the lifeblood of any community. The entire community of Chinook appeared to have at least a basic understanding of the water supply system, which was very encouraging. On the other hand, it was discouraging to learn of some of the major issues with the siphons, and the decades-old water delivery system. Unfortunately I have little to offer in the way of exactly how to achieve the results necessary to upgrade this system, but in my opinion this needs to be <strong>the number 1 issue</strong> in setting priorities for the long-term viability of the community. Because of the nature of the project, and the fact that the water is used for both agricultural and municipal purposes in numerous communities up and down the Milk River, any attempts to find a way to address this issue should probably not be limited to Chinook.</td>
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<td>o Irrigation and municipal water project</td>
<td>Recommendation: The Department of Commerce has a planning grant available every year. Hiring an engineer to start providing a direction may be a useful starting point. USDA has a rural utilities program specialist that is very knowledgeable about the Milk River project. The staff at Bear Paw Development is an excellent resource for suggestions on water resource development.</td>
<td>Pat Riley Irrigation Development Officer 1371 Rimtop Drive Billings, MT 59105 (406) 247-4404</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>o Flood dike protection</td>
<td></td>
<td>Contact: Mitch Copp USDA Rural Development Director, Rural Utilities Service PO Box 850</td>
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and complicated process
and the longer
communities wait to
explore alternatives, the
most costly the fixes
become.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bozeman, MT  59715  Phone:  (406) 585-2520</th>
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| Randy Hanson  
  Regional Development Officer  
  Montana Department of Commerce  
  48 Second Avenue; Room 211  
  Havre, MT  59501  Phone:  (406) 262-9579 |
# CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT MATRIX

## SUBJECT: TRANSPORTATION

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<tr>
<td><strong>Transportation:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Getting Product to Market:</strong> I have had the privilege of participating in almost all of the Resource Teams held along the Hi-Line. Over and over, a problem or issue expressed by every community has been issues with the BNSF RailRoad.</td>
<td>BNSF VP of Ag Products P.O. Box 961051 Ft. Worth, TX 76161-0051</td>
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<td><strong>Recommendation:</strong> Bring the Hi-Line communities together for a workshop with John Karl. I spoke with John Karl, Manager of Economic Development for this region for BNSF. He said that he would be happy to come to a workshop organized by the Hi-Line communities to discuss ways to foster economic growth utilizing BNSF transportation. He would be interested in a positive dialogue as to how groups can work together, broaden the agriculture base, and provide product diversity.</td>
<td>John Karl, Manager Economic Development Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway 2454 Occidental Ave.; Suite 1-A Seattle, WA 98134 Ph: 206.625.6176 Fx: 206.625.6471 Email: <a href="mailto:john.karl@bnsf.com">john.karl@bnsf.com</a> Web: <a href="https://www.bnsf.com">https://www.bnsf.com</a></td>
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<td><strong>Public Transportation</strong> I had a wonderful discussion with David Jacobs of the MT Department of Transportation. After</td>
<td><strong>Recommendations:</strong> There are two grant programs that would be applicable to Chinook’s needs. The grants, one Federal and one State, compliment each other beautifully. The Federal grant provides equipment only while the State grant provides operational funding.</td>
<td>David Jacobs Montana Department of Transportation 2701 Prospect Ave. P.O. Box 201001 Helena, MT 59620-1001</td>
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explaining to David the need in Chinook for transportation within communities as well as between communities, David offered the following (see right):

| The Federal Grant, referred to as Section 5310 program, provides funds for strictly capital assistance, i.e., purchasing a vehicle for the elderly and disabled. For example, a Senior Citizen Center could apply each year for capital assistance – funded at an 80% federal 20% local match. A group can apply for a bus, van, whatever the transportation need may be. The 2001 Legislature voted in a new state transit program called TRANSADE – which stands for Transportation Assistance for the Disabled and Elderly. This program provides operating assistance in the form of state money to agencies that are providing services for the elderly and disabled. A community/county now has the option of applying for Federal funds for equipment and for state funds for operating costs of that equipment.

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

David further explained that MT Department of Transportation holds grant application workshops in the fall – usually in October. Notice of the workshops is sent to every Senior Citizen Center in the state – or just call David to get placed on the mailing list. |
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<tr>
<td>ph: 406/444-6120</td>
<td>fax: 406/444-7671</td>
<td>E-Mail: <a href="mailto:dajacobs@state.mt.us">dajacobs@state.mt.us</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tod Schoenrock</td>
<td>Community Transportation Association of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>1341 G St NW, 10th Floor, Washington DC 20005</td>
<td>Phone Tod: 202.624.1736</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:schoenrock@ctaa.org">schoenrock@ctaa.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fax: 202.737.9197</td>
<td>Web: <a href="http://www.ctaa.org">http://www.ctaa.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Montana Transit Association</td>
<td>President Steve Earle</td>
<td>406.543.8386</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:tearle@mountainline.com">tearle@mountainline.com</a></td>
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## CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT

### MATRIX

**SUBJECT: HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

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| Health and Wellness | Adequate health care is essential to sustain a community. It can also be a major economic development tool as increased health care services can result in numerous spin-off business opportunities.  
USDA-RD Community Facilities Program includes a CF Guaranteed Loan Program, CF Direct Loan Program and a small CF Grant program. It is possible to utilize funds from all three programs along with funds from other sources to complete the financing package for a particular community facility project. Eligible uses of funds include construction or expansion of facilities, purchase of land or major equipment, and payment of reasonable professional fees associated with the project. Examples of eligible projects include:  
* Health Care – clinics, nursing homes, assisted living centers  
* Cultural – museums, theatres  
* Public Safety – child and adult care centers, libraries, community centers, senior centers, youth centers, municipal buildings  
* Educational – public schools  
* Transportation – bridges, airports, sidewalks, street improvements | See info at the left. | |
| Health and Wellness | USDA-Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grant Program is designed to specifically meet the educational and health requirements of rural communities. Eligible uses of funds include equipment for distance learning classrooms and equipment for telemedicine programs. This technology allows smaller clinics to interact with health care specialists located elsewhere in the state or in the nation. Eligible applicants include hospitals, health care clinics, educational institutions, libraries, etc. Regulations and applications are available at: [www.rurdev.usda.gov](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov) | | |
USDA-Rural Economic Development Loan Program provides zero interest loans to electric and telephone utilities financed by the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) to promote sustainable rural economic development and job creation projects. The RUS utility is required to re-lend, at zero percent interest, the loan proceeds to an eligible third-party recipient for economic development projects. Examples include business expansions, business startups, community facilities, medical facilities and equipment, educational facilities and equipment and infrastructure necessary for economic development and job creation. More information is available at: www.rurdev.usda.gov.

USDA-Rural Economic Development Grant Program is designed to establish a revolving loan fund and it requires the RUS utility to contribute to the fund an amount equal to 20% of the grant proceeds. Eligible third-party uses of funds include seed money for revolving loan funds to finance community facilities and infrastructure, project feasibility studies/technical assistance, and the establishment of business incubators. More information is available at: www.rurdev.usda.gov.

Community Development Block Grant - Public Facilities Program – CDBG funds are used in combination with other federal, state, or local funds to make basic community infrastructure improvements, such as water and sewer facilities, affordable to low and moderate income families. Public facility projects can also include facilities designed for use predominately by persons of low and moderate income such as nursing homes, senior centers, Head Start centers or mental health centers. A county or city government can apply for CDBG funds on behalf of an area agency on aging or a hospital association. More information about all CDBG programs is available on their website: http://commerce.state.mt.us.

Montana Board of Investments INTERCAP Loan Program – This program lends low cost money to Montana local governments and state agencies for a variety of purposes. Eligible projects include new or used equipment of all kinds, real property improvements, interim financing for construction, preliminary engineering and grant writing work. The variable interest rate on this program changes every February but presently stands at 3.15%. More information is available on their website: http://www.investmentmt.com.

**Issue: Drugs and Alcohol**
It seems that every community has a problem.

**Recommendation:** For underage drinking/drugs, visit the excellent Youth Change website at http://www.youthchr.com. It is “Your Problem-Kid Problem-Solver.” In addition, to support and encourage more work to be done in the Chinook area on
with drugs and alcohol to some extent. At right are two resources that may be helpful:

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<th>prevention, the following was taken from a government website:</th>
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<td>• Substance abuse prevention programs reduce rates of substance use</td>
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<td>• Youth already using cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana significantly reduced their use of substances after joining a prevention program</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Gender plays an important role in risk, protection, and substance use</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Family, peers, school, and community can all protect against substance use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Science-based program components produce consistent and lasting reductions in substance use</td>
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To summarize: Communities with more opportunities for participation in prevention programs positively impact substance use by youth. More information is available at [http://www.health.org/govpubs/FO36/overview.asp](http://www.health.org/govpubs/FO36/overview.asp)

Finally, the National Governors Association has compiled “best practices” information on dealing with the issue of substance abuse. Strategies other states are using to combat this problem include:

| • Coordinating stakeholder resources to create and sustain effective substance-abuse policies; |
| • Building public awareness about the chronic nature of chemical dependency and the societal benefits of treatment; |
| • Implementing cost-effective programs to prevent, reduce, or minimize the incidence of drug and alcohol abuse and its negative consequences; |
| • Encouraging private insurers to offer adequate coverage for treatment of chemical dependency; |
| • Leveraging federal funds to expand coverage for substance-abuse treatment services; and |
| • Requiring effective and sustainable treatment alternatives as part of sentencing for chemically dependent offenders. |

Visit:
Let me just start by saying, “Yes, I am biased.” Agriculture is the basis for the Montana economy, and working for the Montana Department of Agriculture, I have seen the impacts, and believe strongly in the potential that basis still holds. Several comments were made by participants indicating their recognition of agriculture as the basis for the Chinook economy. This was usually followed by one of two comments. **Find a way to bolster the local agricultural economy, or find a way to diversify and base your economy on something else.** In this section, I will attempt to focus on the first option.

Before jumping into specific topics and action items, I would like to make a few personal observations. Please remember these are only observations, and that they are most likely based on an incomplete understanding of the history and current situation of Chinook. However, it is my hope that these comments will serve to create proactive discussion about the future of Chinook, and all that it has to offer.

Chinook seems to have been “born” under a special blessing that has resulted in outsiders committing significant resources to the development of this community. The effects of the Sweet legacy are seen throughout the community, and have provided for a beautiful community with the infrastructure and aesthetic value around which true growth can occur. And as it was explained to me, the sugar beet plant of days gone by was a development project spear-headed by the Mormon church to provide a

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<td>o Ethanol</td>
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<td>o Value added ag</td>
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<td>o products, i.e.,</td>
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<td>Harvest Montana</td>
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<td>Flax</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Identify product, opportunity for that product and marketing of that product</td>
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Livelihood for settlers of the area. The pictures in the basement of your museum spoke to the success of this endeavor. However, I believe a major philosophical difference exists between these two development approaches. Looking back at the development of the sugar beet processing facility, an industry grew up around that facility that allowed for the profitable and successful growth of a prosperous community based around individual profitability. In this environment, we see a growing community, with expanding population, services, etc. Meanwhile, during the social development projects utilizing the Sweet investments, we see a beautiful community with much to offer, slowly losing population, and individuals are struggling to maintain their economic viability. It is in the midst of this environment the community of Chinook must now set priorities for moving ahead. I would suggest that your own history makes a case for developing an economy or industry around which the community can grow, rather than developing your community and hoping industries will move in to be a part of your beautiful community.

**ORGANIC**: Several comments were made on the value of projects such as the local organic flax product. Whether or not you personally agree with the organic concept, organic products have proven to be highly valuable niche products in the past, and consumer demographics suggest it is only going to grow. Growing something in a certified organic manner is only a small portion of the challenge however. Most producers find that capitalizing on that high-end niche takes a very focused and concerted effort to get the product in front of the right consumers. The marketing costs and challenges are most often the deciding factor in the success of a rural organic food product.

For information on what it takes to become certified organic:
Doug Crabtree
Organic Certification Specialist
Montana Department of Agriculture
PO Box 200201
Helena MT 59620-0201
(406) 444-2944

To visit with other entities who are marketing organic flax and/or flax-seed products:
David Olen
Timeless Seeds
PO Box 881
Conrad MT 59425
(406) 271-5770
Bio-Fuels
Ethanol has received a lot of attention in the media and throughout agricultural discussions in Montana lately, and that attention is well warranted. Yet despite ongoing efforts from numerous groups across the state, ethanol production in Montana has repeatedly been delayed by financing concerns, despite the current favorable state tax laws for ethanol development. Ethanol production is reportedly less efficient with wheat or barley than with corn, and wheat and barley are what is readily available in most of Montana.

BIO-FUELS: Recent reports have indicated that the only way to profitably operate an ethanol plant in Montana is by including a cattle-feeding industry in the same business, to utilize the efficiencies of by-products and local resources. The other thing to remember is that ethanol production requires large amounts of water. In order to secure such a business for the Chinook area, any Milk River project concerns would probably have to be addressed first.

Biodiesel may be an alternative project that warrants investigation. One advantage to this concept is the fact that individual producers could simply get involved with an existing statewide project, rather than try to develop the entire business. Sustainable Systems, LLC is currently marketing a biodiesel product under the name of Montana Biodiesel, and is partnering with a cooperative (Peaks and Prairies Oilseed Producers) of oilseed producers to develop the feedstock supply. There are still great challenges that exist for this project, but with the irrigation resources, growing conditions, and proximity to other producers already involved in this project, it may be well worth the time to investigate.

Bio Fuels Contacts:
Shirley Ball
Ethanol Producers and Consumers
Ball Rd
Nashua, MT 59248
(406) 785-3722

Paul Miller
Sustainable Systems, LLC
PMB 1005
91 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812
(406) 243-4269

Steve Simonson
Peaks and Prairies Oilseed Producers
6107 Highway 200
Thompson Falls, MT 59873
(406) 827-3074

For the latest research and technical information regarding production and scientific research:
Duane Johnson, Ph.D.
Northwestern Agricultural Research Center

Jim Schaefeer
Montana Amber (not organic certified)
PO Box 1271
Baker MT 59313
(406) 778-3224
MISC: One individual brought up a concept based on the successes of a local youth’s project. Reportedly this individual had developed quite a business in raising rabbits. However, due to the remote location of the market for processing these rabbits, the endeavor was eventually shut down.

The idea was thrown out for consideration, that it may be possible to develop a local processing industry if enough people got into the rabbit business to form an economy of scale. Although this may sound ridiculous, it may be the kind of “outside-the-box” thinking that will be necessary to develop an economic base for Chinook. Once again, as in the organics concept, I would warn that finding the market would be the biggest impediment to such a project, but that does not mean it has no value to research. Various government assistance programs are available, especially for something that is done as a cooperative effort. Issue: Poor market returns on conventional crops have led to the increasing incidence of productive acres being put into CRP. The result has been devastating to rural economy as no agricultural services, parts, supplies, etc. are required to leave productive land dormant. Crops that would return a better profit to agricultural producers would allow those who have chosen agriculture as a career and a way of life for their family, to remain on the land and sustain a quickly disappearing lifestyle.

The following contacts may be valuable for almost any agricultural development, including the organic and bio-fuel concepts.

Contacts:
Brent Poppe
Bureau Chief, Ag Marketing and Business Development
Montana Department of Agriculture
303 N Roberts
PO Box 200201
Helena, MT 59620-0201
(406) 444-2402

Mark Lindberg
Energy & Agriculture Specialist
Economic Opportunity Office, Office of the Governor
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620-0801
(406) 444-9757

Tyler Duncan
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Alternative Crops</th>
<th>Recommendation: Investigate the possibility of alternative crops i.e. lentils, dry peas, etc. that would be suitable for the soils in Northern Montana. Cooperation with the Burlington Northern Santa Fee line in establishing a market and transport of product, possibly overseas market.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Value Added Ag</td>
<td>Area producers need to consider projects that will add value to their agricultural products. Establishment of cooperatives can limit the risk for an individual producer by involving other producers with similar products or ideas. Ty Duncan at the Cooperative Development Center in Havre @ 265-3771 or Bill Barr, USDA’s Cooperative Development Specialist in Bozeman (585-2545) are great resources. Jan Tusick at Mission Mountain Marketing Cooperative Development Center in Ronan is a great resource for forming food processing cooperatives and for providing assistance with bringing food products to market. She can help with packaging, marketing, bar-coding, calculating recipes exponentially, etc.</td>
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Montana Cooperative Development Center  
MSU-Northern  
210A Brockman Center  
PO Box 7751  
Havre, MT 59501  
(406) 265-3771

Bill Barr  
Cooperative Development Specialist  
USDA Rural Development  
Rural Business and Cooperative Service  
PO Box 850  
900 Technology Blvd, Suite B  
Bozeman, MT 59771  
(406) 585-2545

Bear Paw Development  
cerickson@bearpaw.org  
Havre, MT
It is always better to build on what you do best rather than tirelessly recruiting new businesses to town!

The State’s Growth Through Agriculture program can provide assistance with marketing, etc., for new and/or expanding agricultural businesses. Contact Quinn Holzer at the Montana Department of Agriculture (444-2402).

Many locally-produced agricultural products could be marketed to a much larger area with some technical assistance such as that available from USDA’s RBEG program or the Growth through Agriculture program. These products include venison, beef, grains, hides, etc. In addition to developing markets, resources are available to add value to these products. Examples are hay cubing, flax seed oil and/or flax cloth production facilities, bio-diesel or ethanol production facilities, etc. There are also alternative crops that can be considered with the irrigation opportunities in the Chinook area. Potatoes and onions are becoming a major crop in western North Dakota. Contact the MSU Extension office in your area. Production of these crops could result in a variety of value-added production facilities and opportunities.
# CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT MATRIX

## SUBJECT: TOURISM

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<th>ISSUE OR PROJECT</th>
<th>RECOMMENDATIONS &amp; OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tourism</strong></td>
<td><strong>MUSEUMS:</strong> Thank-you for the tour of your existing museum facilities and the developing wildlife museum. You have a museum to rival that of anything in the largest communities in the state. I would suggest these are once again great community and social developments, but I would question the economic impact without taking away from the importance of such institutions in any way. It seems that the museum is most often visited by those who have already stopped in Chinook for some other reason (beyond just stopping to fill up a fuel tank, which does not bring them into the community far enough to recognize the assets Chinook has to offer), rather than people stopping to see the community and then benefiting Chinook in some other way. The following website is a paper underscoring the importance of studying the economic impact of museums. You will see that this site is targeted toward urban development, but I would suggest that if urban museums are having a difficult time economically justifying their museums, that the issue is multiplied in rural areas. <a href="http://www.vcu.edu/cppweb/urban/aam%2002%20handout.pdf">http://www.vcu.edu/cppweb/urban/aam%2002%20handout.pdf</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>o Marketing area as a place to live</td>
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<td>o Battlefield development and visitor center</td>
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<td>o Highway 2 beautification, utilization, destination into Chinook</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Hunting, fishing, etc.</td>
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<td>o Wildlife Museum</td>
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<td>o Mosquito reduction</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hunting/Fishing/Recreation</strong></td>
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<td><strong>HUNTING/FISHING/RECREATION:</strong> I was a little disappointed not to have heard more from the local individuals who are already capitalizing on this opportunity. As a result, I don’t know a lot about</td>
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what is being done, but I do know that everyone seems to want to hunt the Milk River Valley, and we heard from numerous individuals for whom that was an important consideration in their decision to live in Chinook. For individuals interested in pursuing opportunities, the following contact may be of assistance.

An area of tourism often overlooked is hunting. The Milk River Drainage and other areas surrounding Chinook provide a unique opportunity to attract more hunters to the area. Dillon has an average of 30,000 hunters in the area during the four month fall season. Imagine what half of those would do for Chinook! In looking through the brochure racks around town, I failed to see anything touting the great hunting in the area. Developing maps with landowner information or contact information would be a wonderful starting point in attracting hunters.

Chief Joseph Battle Site

Probably the most-often repeated project that was brought up in almost every community meeting was the desire to develop a visitor center at the Chief Joseph Battle Site.

CHIEF JOSEPH BATTLE SITE: There seemed to be very little common knowledge as to the status of such a project. We heard widely varying reports on why the project had not been moved forward, and there seemed to be no common understanding of what had been proposed to date. In light of the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial, and the exceedingly large number of tourists we are reportedly going to witness in the next five years, this is a project that needs to be given high priority. Achieving successful completion of this project ten years down the road would still be beneficial, but the major opportunity that currently exists will have been missed. The first step in this process needs to involve the entire community, so that everyone can be on the same page, all concerns can be addressed, and a comprehensive project plan can be established.

It may be possible to tie this natural tourism draw to agricultural and existing business ventures. The Undaunted Stewardship program rolled out by the Montana Stockgrowers Association and Montana State

Contact: Judy Siring
Dillon Chamber of Commerce
Dillon, MT 59725
Phone: (406)683-5511
chamber@bmt.net

Contacts:
Victor Bjornberg
Travel Montana/Montana Department of Commerce
PO Box 200533
Helena, MT 59620-0533
(406) 444-4366

Steve Pilcher
Montana Stockgrowers Association
420 N California St
Helena, MT 59601
(406) 442-3420
Gene Surber
Natural Resource Specialist
University is targeting these very types of opportunities to tie together historical events with an opportunity to discuss the agricultural stewardship that has allowed open lands and pristine historical sites to continue to exist in the west. The following are a few websites with information on the Undaunted Stewardship program.

http://www.mtbeef.org/Naturalresources/undauntedstewardship.htm
http://www.rangemagazine.com/stories/fall02/undaunted.htm
http://www.montana.edu/news/1019741778.html

Behind Yellowstone and Glacier Parks, the third most popular attraction in Montana is the Little Bighorn National Monument. **Developing the Chief Joseph Battlefield** could very well create one of the most significant tourism impacts to the area. A beginning place may be contacting congressional offices and lobbying to have funds appropriated to complete the Visitor’s Center. Special and celebrational events structured around the Battlefield may bring recognition and with it, visitors. The average out-of-state tourist in Montana is upper middle-class and usually returns to Montana at least twice. Well-promoted special events have the benefit of drawing visitors from the urban areas of Montana.

Regardless of the projects upon which Chinook chooses to focus, it’s probably a good idea to keep not only your local legislators apprised of the situation, but also your statewide Congressmen.
Marketing the Area Chinook and surrounding Blaine County, although rich in resources and history have not been able to market these attractive assets sufficiently enough to inject needed tourism dollars to bolster the local economy and encourage growth in this sector. The Bears Paw Battlefield, Blaine County Museum and soon to be completed Wildlife Museum are significant tourism sites and were acknowledged at every session as being under utilized and in the case of the Battlefield, underdeveloped.

Recommendation: Does Burma Shave or Wall Drug mean anything to you? If it doesn’t you are not as old as I am. Two-lane highway signage, such as these two examples, can inspire creative mental activity, curiosity and anticipation. Repetition is the key and these signs started tickling your brain long before you had the chance to just pass by and wish later that you had stopped:

http://www.outwestnewspaper.com/burmashave.html
http://www.two-lane.com/burmashave.html
http://www.walldrug.com/signs.html

Local Cowboy Poets, Slogan Contest
Montana Department of Transportation – District Office, Michael Johnson, mijohnson@state.mt.us

Great Falls Office
113 3rd St N
Great Falls, MT 59401
(406) 761-1574

Representative Denny Rehberg
Great Falls Office
105 Smelter Ave NE, Ste 16
Great Falls, MT 59404
(406) 454-1066
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Signage</th>
<th>Promotion</th>
<th>Agra Tourism</th>
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<td>Signage: There is a Highway Beautification Act that limits the signage however the MDT person in Billings tells me that he believes that refers to commercial and not community ads. I would recommend clever signs beginning no closer than 50 miles in all directions and continuing intermittently until arrival in Chinook. That allows about 45 minutes to peak their curiosity and interest (and time for the kids to nag them about stopping to see the huge moose). I think this can be a short-term goal to begin to catch some of those Glacier and Lewis and Clark visitors to Northern Montana.</td>
<td>The historical and archeological assets of Montana are some of the strongest opportunities for tourism in the Northern portion of the state. Specialty tour loops showcasing the Old West Heritage could distinguish Chinook as a vacation destination. Partnering with the Phillips County Museum, Fort Peck Interpretive Center, Daniels County Historical Museum would give maximum promotion to all involved and would fit in with the North Continental Divide Scenic Route. The following might be lodging and event options in vacation packages marketed with the Museum Circuit. Internet is perhaps the least expensive and offers the broadest coverage.</td>
<td>Agra-tourism is a fast growing factor in value-added agriculture. Working guest ranches, Bed and Breakfast on the farm, Tipi Camp lodging, etc. all lend themselves to getting people to Chinook for an extended stay. o Agra-tourism is a fast growing factor in value-added agriculture. Working guest ranches, Bed and Breakfast on the farm, Tipi Camp lodging, etc. all lend themselves to getting people to Chinook for an extended stay. <a href="http://www.lonespurspur.com">http://www.lonespurspur.com</a> <a href="http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/agritour.html">http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/agritour.html</a> <a href="http://www.aginnovationcenter.org/resources/agritourism.shtml">http://www.aginnovationcenter.org/resources/agritourism.shtml</a> o Renovation of a historic home or hotel, complete with Old West experience, clothing, dining, transportation, etc. o Special promotions, such as Mystery Weekends, with advertising would draw participants as part of a vacation package and attract the folks in Chinook and surrounding area for a weekend of intrigue. That would address the &quot;nothing to</td>
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**Murder Mystery Weekend**: [http://www.murdermysteryweekend.com/?source=overture](http://www.murdermysteryweekend.com/?source=overture); [http://www.loganberryinn.com/murder.html](http://www.loganberryinn.com/murder.html) **Battlefield Grant Program** [http://www2.cr.nps.gov/abpp/funding.htm](http://www2.cr.nps.gov/abpp/funding.htm)
In General

for a weekend of intrigue. That would address the “nothing to do” problem for the locals, also.

Chinook has the potential to become a tourist destination. In addition to the natural resources of the area that can be promoted, the historical significance of the Battlefield can also be a major draw. Some projects need to be developed and promoted within the next two years in order to capitalize on the Lewis & Clark influx. The travel industry has still not recovered from the 9/11 tragedy but most experts predict an increase in domestic travel. Most tourists come to Montana to ski, hunt, fish, visit national parks and battlefields, and visit family and friends. Future tourists are projected to be older, traveling in motor homes, and needing entertainment and services. Any traffic generated by the Lewis & Clark bi-centennial must be capitalized on since it will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience for many of these tourists and a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for communities along the L&C trail.

Travel Montana – Community Tourism Assessment Program (CTAP)

This nine-month program is designed to help rural communities capitalize on tourism as an economic and/or social improvement tool. CTAP is a community “self-help program provided as a cooperative project of MSU Extension Service, Travel Montana, and the U of M’s Travel Research Program. Each year, three communities are accepted into the CTAP program through a competitive application process. Contact Anna Marie Moe, Travel Montana @ 406-444-2654.

Travel Montana – Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program (TIIP)

This program invests a portion of Travel Montana’s bed-tax funding into new tourism-related infrastructure projects or the enhancement of existing tourism facilities including projects that preserve Montana’s historical or cultural treasures. The primary goal of TIIP is to create or improve attractions and services that will entice visitors to spend more time and money in Montana’s communities (and therefore increase bed-

Other potential funding sources for arts, culture, museum, performing arts projects:

Baker Foundation (R.C.)
Brach Foundation (Helen)
c/o Frank L. Scott, Chairman
c/o Raymond Simon, President
P.O. Box 6150
55 West Wacker Drive, Suite 701
Orange, CA 92863-6150
Chicago, IL 60601
Phone: 714-750-8987
Phone: 312-372-4417

Bair Family Trust (Charles M.)
Kongsgaard-Goldman Foundation
c/o First Trust Company
c/o Martha Kongsgaard, President
ATTN: Beverly Jensen, Admin Sec
1932 First Avenue, Suite 602
Box 3168, Portland, OR 97208-3168
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: 506-657-8124
Phone: 206-448-1874

Microsoft Corp Contributions Program
Harriman Foundation (Gladys & Roland)
1 Microsoft Way
c/o William F. Hibbard, Secretary
Redmond, WA 98052-6399
63 Wall Street, Suite 3101
Phone: 425-936-8080
Mosquito Reduction

Tax revenues for future TIIP grants. Since 1995, TIIP has invested nearly $1.5 million of bed-tax funds into 22 communities throughout the state.

The best way to stop mosquitoes from breeding is to regularly remove all man-made potential sources of stagnant water, because mosquitoes can potentially breed in any stagnant puddle that lasts more than four days.

Drain any water-holding containers, including discarded tires. Drill holes in the bottom of containers that are left outdoors. Clean clogged roof gutters regularly. Turn over plastic wading pools or wheelbarrows when not in use and do not allow water to stagnate in bird baths. Clean and chlorinate swimming pools or hot tubs that are not in use and be aware that mosquitoes can breed in the water that collects on pool and tub covers. Aerate ornamental pools and use landscaping to eliminate standing water that collects on your property. Thoroughly clean livestock watering troughs monthly.

Beautification

Extensive cleanup needs to be done in this area. Removal of old signs and cleaning up the industrial areas along the railroad tracks may divert some of the traffic traveling down Highway 2 into Chinook. City ordinances are often in place to address abandoned (empty) buildings and properties. The Visitor’s Center is not very visible to a traveler going thirty-five miles per hour down Highway 2. Signs announcing the Center at the edges of town may catch a few travelers. The commercial business district is not easy to access off the highway because it is not well marked. Better signage may attract travelers into the town. The Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) offered through the Department of Transportation may help alleviate some of the unsightly areas. CTEP money is available to all counties and cities. Chinook has used some of the funding for sidewalk projects. Perhaps a future CTEP project could include landscaping or pocket parks for areas along Highway 2 and Main Street.
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<tr>
<th>Cultural Tourism Loop</th>
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<td><strong>A pilot program called Hands of Harvest is working to develop cultural tourism loop tours.</strong> Cultural tourism is a method used to highlight visitor opportunities that are unique to the area. The group is identifying artists, craftsmen, museums and other unique opportunities for visitors. In the fall of 2003, the group will print a guidebook with maps of the loops. Applicants can be listed for a yearly charge of $25. The Blaine County Museum is included but no other applicants from Chinook are listed. This program provides low-cost and widespread advertising and works to draw people from the urban areas into the rural areas.</td>
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# CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT MATRIX

## SUBJECT: BUSINESS

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<td><strong>Business</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>General Observations</td>
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<td>o Buy local, shop local</td>
<td>It is in the midst of this environment (see column at left) the community of Chinook must now set priorities for moving ahead. I would suggest that your own history makes a case for developing an economy or industry around which the community can grow, rather than developing your community and hoping industries will move in to be a part of your beautiful community. The resource assessment for the town of Chinook revealed that the community has many strengths and assets for a community of its size. The weaknesses are the lack of small business development and youth activities. As Gloria stated at the Town Meeting at the conclusion of the assessment, “Chinook must invest in Chinook” to slow the population decline and provide some economic stability. Capitalizing on the existing natural resources and tourism opportunities can result in small business opportunities for local entrepreneurs willing to make the effort or existing businesses to expand. <strong>Marketing what Chinook has to offer to residents east of you is essential in stopping the caravan of shoppers on their way to spend their money in Havre or Great Falls.</strong> Business planning and grant writing are hard work and success depends on team work. Chinook has access to grant writers at Bear Paw Development but it isn’t likely that they have the time or the resources to do all of the work for you. Chinook should consider developing a list of individuals or a local team of people to write funding proposals for BPD’s review, concurrence and support. These people should be given the opportunity to attend training seminars and workshops. <strong>The Montana Economic Developers Association</strong></td>
<td><strong>SMALL BUSINESS FINANCING:</strong> Resources include:</td>
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<td><strong>Montana Department of Commerce @ <a href="http://commerce.mt.gov">http://commerce.mt.gov</a></strong> or 406-444-3494</td>
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<td><strong>Business Development:</strong> Economic Development Division 406-444-3797 Manufacturing Extension Center 406-994-3812</td>
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<td><strong>Minority Opportunities:</strong> Disadvantaged Business and Women Business Procurement Assistance 406-444-6337</td>
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Before jumping into specific topics and action items, I would like to make a few personal observations. Please remember these are only observations, and that they are most likely based on an incomplete understanding of the history and current situation of Chinook. However, it is my hope that these comments will serve...
to create proactive discussion about the future of Chinook, and all that it has to offer.

Chinook seems to have been “born” under a special blessing that has resulted in outsiders committing significant resources to the development of this community. The effects of the Sweet legacy are seen throughout the community, and have provided for a beautiful community with the infrastructure and aesthetic value around which true growth can occur. And as it was explained to me, the sugar beet plant of days gone by was a development project spear-headed by the Mormon church to provide a livelihood for settlers of the area. The pictures in the basement of your museum spoke to the success of this endeavor. However, I believe a major philosophical difference exists between these two development approaches. Looking back at the

(MEDA) has some funding for this type of training. MSU-Northern occasionally holds grant writing workshops that are affordable and very helpful to both the novice and seasoned grant writer. There are many other sources for this type of leadership development training. This type of investment in yourselves and in your community can result in considerable amounts of personal development and networking opportunities in addition to potential funding for local projects.

Grant administration is also time consuming and complex. It would be cost-effective to rely on BDP and their extensive experience is administering and accounting for grant funds.

A terrific resource for all communities and businesses in Montana is the Montana Finance Information Center website which is hosted by the Montana Department of Commerce. This site provides a summary of information for the most significant financing resources available from state, federal and local sources. The purpose of the website is to assist Montana businesses and communities to achieve economic prosperity. The website address is http://mtfinanceonline.com. Topics and/or links include business finance, public infrastructure, housing, tax incentives, local development tribal resources, and technical assistance.

Another good resource for projects of any type is Randy Hansen, Regional Development Officer, Montana Dept of Commerce, Havre @ 262-9579.

The Community Development Block Grant-Economic Development (CDBG-ED) program can be used for a variety of planning activities, including the initial planning necessary to develop a CDBG-ED project, or to prepare an economic development strategy, capital improvement plan or similar planning efforts needed to help communities meet critical needs. The planning grants have a $15,000 limit and local government must provide a dollar-for-dollar match. The next application cycle opens in June, 2004 which would allow adequate time to conduct public meetings, prepare an application, document the benefit to low-to-moderate income residents, etc.
development of the sugar beet processing facility, an industry grew up around that facility that allowed for the profitable and successful growth of a prosperous community based around individual profitability. In this environment, we see a growing community, with expanding population, services, etc. Meanwhile, during the social development projects utilizing the Sweet investments, we see a beautiful community with much to offer, slowly losing population, and individuals are struggling to maintain their economic viability.

Again, the USDA-Rural Economic Development Loan program can provide funds to an eligible RUS telephone or electric utility for the creation of a revolving loan fund for small businesses.

Other USDA programs for small businesses include:

- **Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) program** finances and/or facilitates development of private business enterprises. The grant funds can only be used for technical assistance such as business planning, feasibility studies, and training to enable small, emerging, private businesses to get started or to expand. The grant funds cannot be passed thru to the business. Some examples of the use of this program include: travel and related expenses for participation in trade shows where products are displayed and marketed to a wide audience, technical assistance such as business and financial planning, etc.

- **Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG) program** promotes sustainable economic development in rural communities. Eligible uses include economic development planning, leadership development training, establishment of business support centers, and a variety of other technical assistance uses.

- **Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan (B&I) program** bolsters the existing private credit structure through the guarantee of quality business loans. Guaranteed loans can be made for working capital, machinery & equipment, and real estate acquisition or improvements. Loans up to $5 million can receive an 80% guarantee from USDA. This is by far, the largest business financing tool for USDA and Montana consistently ranks if the top four states in the nation in utilization of this program. However, it is underutilized in eastern Montana.

- **Rural Cooperative Development Grant (RCDG) program** establishes and operates centers for cooperative development. There is a Cooperative Development Center at MSU-Northern in Havre which
Buy Local Shop Local can be a great tool for the Chinook area. The CDC is charged with the responsibility of improving the economic condition of rural areas by developing new cooperatives and improving the operations of existing cooperatives. They will provide technical assistance, research and educational services, advisory services and recommendations for improving management and/or processes. Cooperatives aren’t limited to agricultural businesses. They can be anything from an arts & crafts marketing cooperative to food processing cooperative. Contact Ty Duncan the Havre CDC at 265-3771 or Bill Barr, Cooperative Development Specialist for USDA in Bozeman at 585-2545.

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

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

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

60 mile jaunt = 120 miles @ .501= $60 cost so if they really saved 20% shopping there on everything (very unlikely), they have to buy $300 worth of stuff or about a full week’s after tax wages for the average Montanan. Just a thought since penny-pinchers tend to be

Resource: www.chainstoreage.com
Growing Your Own Business

often be penny-wise, pound-foolish. It's also why the large discount stores have far higher net profit rates than average retail stores (see www.chainstoreage.com for the breakdown by store type.)"

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

“Buy Local” programs are difficult to implement in smaller areas. Many urban areas have marketing campaigns stressing the benefits of buying locally. A community wide campaign educating shoppers on the benefits of buying locally would help stop the disposable income leakage. A large local employer in one small Montana community paid its employees with $2 bills and asked them to pay their bills and buy groceries with them. In return, merchants reported to the employer how many bills they received back. Some Chambers offer interest-free loans at Christmas time and provide scrip money that can only be spent at local businesses. Program providing bonus points (similar to S & H green stamps) have proved successful in some areas. If one dollar of a paycheck is spent at the local grocery store, and the grocer spends the same dollar at the hardware store, and the hardware store buys a prescription at the local pharmacy, that dollar has now multiplied by two the impact on the community. Educating citizens on the multiplier effect of money would provide a good start.

Most economic development organizations would agree that the potential of recruiting new businesses into a community is an expensive and difficult task. The new trend for communities with limited resources is “growing your own” businesses. Chinook already has an agricultural base with which they could look to expand. The flax seed business, a commercial kitchen and a rabbit farm are all businesses that have the potential to create a more stable
business environment.

**The Heartland Center for Leadership** has a worksheet to rate the ways your town helps to identify, support and nurture entrepreneurs. Rate the following statements to determine what your community offers to create new ventures.

**SCALE:** 1 – Not at all 2 3 – Somewhat 4 5 – Very strong

- Community clubs or school activities promote entrepreneurship.
- A Chamber of Commerce or Development Corporation helps local businesses get started and support existing business expansion.
- Public recognition or acknowledgment for business achievement.
- A program to identify and recognize entrepreneurs in the area.
- Inter-generational mentoring by business owners and managers.
- Internship opportunities for local youth and young adults returning from college.
- Networks linking entrepreneurs to capital, new employees, and strategic partners.
- An environment that supports young people who are starting new businesses.
- Entrepreneurial education as part of the K – 12 curriculum.
- Business incubator with low-cost or shared office space, services or equipment.
- An information resource center or person to help entrepreneurs develop their enterprise.
- Access to affordable and professional legal, accounting and consulting services.
- Participation in a business expansion and retention program.
- Access to financing resources supporting start-ups and expansions.
- Locally available entrepreneurship training.
- A micro-enterprise development program.

If you have a low score, growing your own businesses will be
Local Clothing Store

At every listening session, people commented on the lack of a local clothing store. Both Malta and Plentywood created cooperative clothing stores. Colstrip is in the process of developing a cooperative clothing store called “Got Socks?”. MSU-Northern has a Cooperative Development Center and can advise the community on the feasibility of starting a clothing store.

Another method to address the lack of underwear in Chinook is convincing one of the local merchants to carry a limited selection of clothing. The difficult part is convincing shoppers to buy locally!

Recommendation: A quick inventory is made of vacant commercial storefronts, preferably on “Main Street”, for the purpose of identifying spots that could be temporary business locations. Screen local entrepreneurs, especially those who are currently operating out of their homes, about setting up temporarily in the downtown spaces i.e. during the tourist season. Building owners could be screened to

Empty Storefronts

Empty storefronts on Main Street. (1) Gives Chinook the austere look of a dying town when in fact the

difficult. The higher you score, the more businesses you can create. Tracy Jette, Small Business Development Coordinator for Bear Paw Development, is one of the best resources available to entrepreneurs in your area.

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heart of the community is strong and resilient. The effect produced by these vacancies, in itself produces negativity. (2) Lack of shopping opportunities for locals and visitors reduces loyalty to local business and exports revenue from the community. (3) Summer jobs, part-time jobs for youth are minimal because of skeleton workforce in barely surviving businesses.

| see who would be willing to lease, hopefully at a reduced rate for the summer . . . in a sense, “Main Street” would become a business incubator. Prospective businesses – farmers markets, quilting, art shows, crafts, second hand clothing, dance classes, children’s workshops, community meeting room with daycare provided (youth jobs). This would be a good opportunity for prospective downtown proprietors to “test the waters” and perhaps relieve the burden of a vacant building for the owner and the biggest benefit would be an improved attitude in the townspeople and perhaps a new sense of loyalty to shop locally. And remember the road goes both ways to Havre, why not recruit some shopping! |