# BIG SANDY RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT MATRIX

## SUBJECT: AGRICULTURE

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| AGRICULTURE Issues: Transportation, Marketing, Value adding, Ag-Tourism, and Financial support of young farmers. | Recommendations:  
- Look at possibility of forming a coop with area farmers and ranchers to start their own small railroad business to get products to and from the main line on the railroad if the present Railroad Company removes their service to the community.  
- Local Ag community may look into starting a coop trucking company to haul products to and from Big Sandy to other railroad loading sites.  
- Work with area State Legislators and Federal Legislators to accomplish getting road paved between Big Sandy and Winifred.  
- Take advantage of quality and abundance of grain produced. Develop relationships with flourmills and specialty companies like Pasta Montana.  
- I heard people express their concern that the local elevators may close. They might explore opening an elevator that is a coop and market high quality commodities to companies on the West and East coast.  
- Organic market is growing at a steady rate each year; producers need to take advantage of this market too. | Resources:  
- Department of transportation  
[http://www.mdt.state.mt.us/planning/]  
- Montana Department of Agriculture  
[http://agr.state.mt.us/programs/add/add.shtml]  
- Montana Department of Commerce:  
[http://commerce.state.mt.us/brd/brd_home.html]  
[http://commerce.state.mt.us/cdd/cdd_home.html]  
- Mel Schulz  
Schulz Grain  
PO Box 2961  
Great Falls, MT 59403  
1-800-486-8898  
- Brent Poppe  
Bureau Chief, Ag Marketing and Business Development  
Montana Department of Agriculture  
PO Box 200201  
Helena, MT 59620  
406-444-2402  
- North Star Consulting Group  
Doug Fletcher  
201 South Wallace Avenue, Suite 2A  
Bozeman, MT 59715 |
advantage of these new markets. There are mills around Montana working with organic products and Big Sandy has some organic producers. There may be an opportunity for these producers to get together and develop an organic business.

- Internet is an excellent marketing tool. Build a web page; let people know what you have and where you are located. This is an excellent opportunity to get some Ag tourism going in that area. People from the city would love to help with some fencing that may need to be done, move cattle or some other project that they have never been exposed to in agriculture.

- Area farmers currently have the ability and growing conditions for growing oilseeds and various wheat crops. The possibility of bringing in a company or someone in the area starting a business in alternative fuels or a flourmill. In this case it would be worthwhile to do a feasibility study.

- Area farmers need access to various resources to maintain their farming operation. Local businesses need to be competitive and find ways to keep them buying local and not out of town. This maybe a possibility to do a joint venture or partnership in a business.

- Pursue development of more reliable source of water, Tiber Dam project. Water is the lifeblood of any community and you have the opportunity to capitalize on this project. This will increase irrigated acres, which will lead to alternative crops that cannot be grown otherwise.

- Organic products

- Retaining youth in agriculture was
**Issue: Transportation of Product and Railway**

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 and the transportation of product. As this is a common need and problem – what a great opportunity for collaboration to address this need.

**Recommendation:**
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 Big Sandy and surrounding 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.

John made it clear that he is not the point of contact for complaints regarding grain rates or service problems. He said that you could speak with your local train masters regarding local issues and/or write to this address (see right).

**Resources:**
- BNSF
  - VP of Ag Products
  - P.O. Box 961051
  - Ft. Worth, TX 76161-0051
- 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: john.karl@bnsf.com
  - Web: http://www.bnsf.com

**Recommended Resources:**
For additional information and ideas, please visit the web site or contact the individual.
- [http://www.montanamarketmanger.org](http://www.montanamarketmanger.org)
- [http://www.montana.edu/extensionecon/Marketing/agmarketing.html](http://www.montana.edu/extensionecon/Marketing/agmarketing.html)
- [http://ampe.montan.edu](http://ampe.montan.edu)

**Issue: Marketing**

Marketing of agriculture products is a concern to rural Montana and Big Sandy has additional limitations due to location. Improving the marketing plan of producers can be improved through the education of the producer.

**Recommendations:**
Market Manager Program is offered for individuals who want to increase their knowledge in the area of marketing of products. This program has been offered as a course and there is also a simulated game that can be done through the web site to increase your skills. The web site reports that Big Sandy has two marketing clubs. My questions are – are they active? if so does the group have goals and are they working towards those goals?

**Recommended Resources:**
- [http://www.montanamarketmanger.org](http://www.montanamarketmanger.org)
- [http://www.montana.edu/extensionecon/Marketing/agmarketing.html](http://www.montana.edu/extensionecon/Marketing/agmarketing.html)
- [http://ampe.montan.edu](http://ampe.montan.edu)

Bear Paw Development Corporation, Tracey Jette, phone: 406-265-9226
### Issue: Value Added Product

Agriculture producers only receive a small portion of the retail price of a product. Some individuals are interested in retailing to the customer; much research needs to be done if you are considering this endeavor.

**Recommendations:**
Montana State University Extension has been involved with some projects concerning value added. A video has been produced and is available through Extension Publications and can be ordered through the local extension office for $24.95 or the website. This video lists other resources that are available.

Several producers may be interested in combining their efforts to form a co-op. The Montana Cooperative Development Center is located at MSU-Northern in Havre.

**Resource** for additional information – visit web site or contact the center.
- [http://www.montana.edu/extensionnutrition/resourceguide](http://www.montana.edu/extensionnutrition/resourceguide)
- [http://www.montana.edu/publications](http://www.montana.edu/publications)
- Montana Cooperative Development Center
  - 406-265-3771

### Issue: Ag Tourism

The people of Big Sandy repeatedly said that Agriculture is a growing concern: CRP has reduced volume and farmers must look to diversify within or from Agriculture. They cited a problem that farmers are also limited on

**Recommendations:**
Activities designed to attract visitors and generate supplemental income for farmers and ranchers range from conducting tours and selling products directly from the farm to operating a bed and breakfast, allowing horseback riding, Dude Ranches (cattle branding) or holding festivals, Shakespeare in the Parks, or other regional events on the land.

**Contacts:**
- Mr. David Sharpe, Montana State University Extension Service, Office of Community Development, 106 Taylor Hall, Bozeman, MT 59717, (406) 994-2962
- Montana Department of Commerce, 301 S. Park Ave, Helena, MT 59601, (406) 841-2700 or [http://commerce.state.mt.us/](http://commerce.state.mt.us/)

**Resources:**
- [http://www.montana.edu/wwwrde/](http://www.montana.edu/wwwrde/)
  - Community Tourism Assessment Handbook
what they can grow, there’s a lack of irrigation (water) and future transportation issues that would negatively impact Agriculture are looming.

Several states have asked themselves the same questions as the residents of Big Sandy “How do we diversity from Agriculture to utilize our farms and ranches for other purposes? Possibly, tourism?” Big Sandy farmers and ranchers have a lot of unique types of farming and ranching that’s really quite interesting to people, especially people from more urban and metropolitan areas. Big Sandy farmers and ranchers could start showing off their products and services through tourism-related activities. This is called “Ag-tourism”.

Other states that have embarked on the Ag-Tourism concept, indicate that the key stipulation is that tourism-related activities must be secondary to farming. It has to be a working farm or agricultural concern that encourages access to visitors—it cannot be a bed and breakfast with a cow out front. That’s not agricultural tourism.

The residents of Big Sandy need to “think out of the box” to examine if Ag-Tourism will work for them. Initial steps are:

- Create a committee that will explore Ag-Tourism. Be sure to include interested parties from both sides, i.e., farmers, ranchers, Chamber of Commerce, etc., and don’t forget to include youth to get an idea of what would appeal to the younger generation.
- Committee members should take an inventory of what products, experiences and services the area farms and ranches have to offer the public at large. Including:
  - Land Resources: What deeded, leased, state/federal properties do we have, etc?
  - Climate: How will climate affect what types of activities you might provide?
  - Developments and Improvements (buildings, facilities, corrals, etc.)
  - Attractions: What do we have that would be attractive to visitors? (streams, wildlife, fishing, livestock, points of interest)

A great place to start - lots of information about assessing your assets, conducting farm and ranch tours, safety and risk management, etc.

http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/factsheets.html
http://www.msue.msu.edu/valueadded/ag_tourism1.htm
http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/docs/agritourhandbook.html

Agitourism and Nature Tourism in California – A handbook to help farmers and ranchers 1) to determine their tourism potential and 2) walk through the steps of establishing a tourism enterprise. It is also a resource for people working with California ranchers and farmers. Written specifically for California, but may be adaptable to Montana.
- Operations & management strengths: Who in the community possess marketing, organizational, historian skills? (see results from community assessment)
- Activities: Compile a list of activities that you already do within the community or on your operation that would appeal to the general public.
- Assess what is lacking in your community: gas stations, hotel rooms, shopping, etc., and how you will deal with these challenges when people visit the community (alternative solutions)
  ➢ A good practice is to research what other communities are doing and determine what is adaptable to Big Sandy (see Resource List).
  ➢ Contact the Montana Department of Commerce – The Department of Commerce has indicated in its 2002-2007 Strategic Plan that expanding Ag-Tourism in the State of Montana is a priority. Inquire if there will be a team that will examine Ag-Tourism in the state and ask if a representative from Big Sandy can be a member of the team.

Some ideas:
  ➢ Start a “Visit Big Sandy’s Farms and Ranches” Campaign
    o Farmer’s Markets
    o Tours of farms and ranches (seasonal)
    o Provide experiences
Residents of Big Sandy are concerned about the decline of the Agricultural Industry in the region and the future [negative] impact this will have on the community. Farmers and ranchers would like to instill in their sons and daughters the values, importance, and pride they have of farming and ranching. Keeping young people in farming and ranching is a “big” concern.

**Issue: Financial and mentor support of young potential farmers**

I spoke with Scott Kulbeck with the Montana Farm Bureau Federation’s Young Farmers and Ranchers program. Scott, from Big Sandy himself, said that Big Sandy is already participating in the program because of the efforts of Melissa and Thad Willis. However, Scott indicated that more volunteers from the area to promote and recruit for the program is needed. In addition, Scott indicated that there is financial and mentor support for young potential farmers from the MFBF YF&R program by way of scholarships for young people. In fact, at the upcoming Leadership Campout in July, participants can win cash for their local programs. In addition, communities can apply for mini-grants from the Montana Farm Bureau Federation in the amount of $250.00, which can be used as seed money to establish a program or to expand existing programs. I recommend that farmers, ranchers and other individuals in Big Sandy become more involved with the MFBF Young Farmers and Ranchers program and encourage their children to be

**Recommendations:**

- branding cattle, picking crops, sowing crops, etc.
- Show Off “Big Bud”
- Better Promote Natural Tourist Attractions found in the Area.
- Partner with outlying communities including Rocky Boy’s Reservation to promote an expanded area.

**Resources:**

- **Ben & Jerry’s Foundation** looks to support groups who are working to help themselves, help their own communities, and help others like themselves through self-empowering, community organizing efforts. Ben & Jerry’s Foundation 30 Community Drive So. Burlington, VT 05403-6828 Access guidelines and application at: [http://www.benjerry.com/foundation/index.html](http://www.benjerry.com/foundation/index.html)

- **Monsanto Company** and the **American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture** have announced details behind the fifth annual Commitment to Agriculture Scholarship Program. In order to be eligible for one of the awards, the student applicant must come from a farm family and plan to pursue a career in the field of agriculture. One-time awards of $1,500 will be made to 100 high school seniors chosen by an impartial selection committee of agricultural educators and industry leaders. The scholarship program is offered by Monsanto in association with the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture, and is open to high school seniors from all 50 states. Access details on line at: [http://www.mfbf.org/newnews/monsanto.html](http://www.mfbf.org/newnews/monsanto.html)
### Issue: Diversifying and Crop Options

**Recommendation:**
There seems to be some diversity in your area with the possibility of pursuing new businesses such as lumber, fertilizer plant, value-added products, etc. The community suggested forming Co-op/s and a Bio-diesel Manufacturing Plant that could take advantage of the “new” markets available along with forming programs for the young farmers to get involved in agriculture.

The **Montana Farm Bureau Foundation** has established a program to provide grants of up to $200 for use in educational forums or activities promoting agriculture. Grants are available under two different areas. The first will provide funding and is available for classroom projects in the grades Kindergarten – Grade 12. The second will provide financial assistance for programs or projects to those organizations or groups not directly affiliated with classroom activities. Extra-curricular organizations, groups and clubs fall under the second category. Access information on the web at: [http://www.mfbf.org/newnews/mini%20grants.html](http://www.mfbf.org/newnews/mini%20grants.html) or contact Diana Alkire at dianaa@mfbf.org or 406-587-3153.

**Contacts:**
**Montana Farm Bureau Federation**, Young Farmers and Ranchers Program, for more information call Scott Kulbeck at 1-888-532-6601.

**Resources:**
The following resources can provide a variety of information in agriculture--
Agricultural Marketing and Business Development Bureau Montana Department of Agriculture Livestock Bldg, 303 N. Roberts Helena, MT 59601 (406) 444-2402 [www.agr.state.mt.us](http://www.agr.state.mt.us)
## BIG SANDY RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT MATRIX

### SUBJECT: TOURISM

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<td>Issues: Tourism Promotion</td>
<td><strong>Recommendations:</strong> Big Sandy and the surrounding area are drenched in history at all levels (local, state and national), have many area attractions that are jewels of history, and there is a community proud of its heritage that wants to share it with others. The problem with tourism, is mainly promotion – how to draw in the region. This team would also be responsible for developing partnerships with local, state and national organizations to promote the region’s attractions as well as seek funding to support area attractions, build the capacity of area attractions, and promote area attractions. Possible partnerships include: Rocky Boy’s Reservation, Russell Country, Travel Montana,  &lt;br&gt;  In- and out-of-state travelers to Montana are normally looking for vacation opportunities that are: adventurous, educational, unique, and more often than not, are something connected to the outdoors. The community of Big Sandy and surrounding area are perfect for this type of traveler. The following is a list of just a few attractions, natural resources, and linkages that could be promoted in Choteau County:  &lt;br&gt;  - Lewis and Clark  &lt;br&gt;  - Trail/Wagon Rides/Campouts  &lt;br&gt;  - Tie into State Bicentennial activities  &lt;br&gt;  - Native American History (w/Rocky Boy’s Reservation)  &lt;br&gt;  - Flora and Fauna  &lt;br&gt;  - The Monument</td>
<td><strong>Contact Information:</strong> Vicki Munson Munson Consulting 8505 East Shore Route Polson, MT 59860 Phone: (406) 887-2126 Fax: (406) 887-2128 Email: <a href="mailto:vmunson@cyberport.net">vmunson@cyberport.net</a> Victor Bjornberg Tourism Development Coordinator Travel Montana Montana Department of Commerce P.O. Box 20053 Helena, MT 59620-0533 Phone: 444-2654 Email: <a href="mailto:victor@visitmt.com">victor@visitmt.com</a> Website: <a href="http://www.travelmontana.state.mt.us">http://www.travelmontana.state.mt.us</a> Melody Bentz Director, Grants and Sponsored Activities Montana State University-Northern P.O. Box 7751 Havre, MT 59501 Phone: 265-3526 Fax: 265-3596 Email: <a href="mailto:mbentz@msun.edu">mbentz@msun.edu</a> Russell Country</td>
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Agriculture
• Working Farm Adventures
• Big Bud
• White Rocks
• Upper Missouri River
  • Canoe/Rafting Trips
  • River Hikes/Camping

There are probably other tourism assets that should be added to the aforementioned list. It is imperative that the people who step forward to work with the Chamber address tourism issues and work together to promote what they have to potential visitors and build local, state, and national partnerships.

Development of a Chamber of Commerce [Big Sandy] website that establishes linkages at all levels is vital to the success of tourism promotion. If the community of Big Sandy lacks the expertise to develop a website, it is suggested that the Chamber of Commerce contact Montana State University-Northern’s Grants Department. The Grants Department will make an attempt to connect the Chamber with individuals at Northern who can help develop a website and/or promotional materials. Once regional promotional materials are developed, these, and other promotional materials should be displayed and made available at locations throughout the city including stores, restaurants, bank, etc. Most importantly, a display should be placed at the rest area on Hwy 87, which is a high-traffic location.

To increase promotion of area attractions, it is recommended that Big Sandy call the Malmstrom Air Force Base Public Relations Office to inquire if an events flyer could be regularly distributed with their weekly newspaper “The Warrior”. Many businesses and non-profits take advantage of advertising or placing flyers in the base newspaper. As an individual who once worked at Malmstrom, I know that Air Force and family members alike look forward to reading this publication every week.
Issue: One item that may help improve the economy of the Big Sandy community.

Recommendations: Revive or start a tourism effort through the Chamber of Commerce. Work on signage, brochures, a visitors center or stop, update the chamber website and start the coordination of tourism, events and activities in the community. Big Sandy is the gateway into the all the benefits for tourism on the Missouri River (Wild and Scenic) and they’re a number of other rich local tourism attractions. Everyone in Big Sandy should know what the museum hours are and where people can go to get

Recommended Resources: (Some, there are many)
TIIP: Non-profit organizations or communities with a tourism-related "brick-n- mortar project" needing funding should pick up a 2003 TIIP Grant Application. TIIP-Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program-is a Montana Commerce Department, Travel Montana program that helps fund tourism-related projects that develop new attractions in Montana. preserve or restore
more information about all the great things to do around the area. Put on workshops for local people to learn about and how to do bed and breakfasts, be a guide, offer farm tours and the like. Start an annual fair, parade, riding event or other activity.

Randy Lilge, Director of Parks and Recreation
316 North Park Avenue
Helena, MT 59623
(406) 447-8462
E-mail: rlije@ci.helena.mt.us
State of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
Web: http://fwp.state.mt.us/parks

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

important heritage and cultural sites and properties, add new or update existing equipment for tourism related facilities and other physical tourism projects. Since its creation in 1995, TIIP Grants have invested over $1.66 million in to 35 Montana tourism projects valued at more than $21 million.

CTAP: Montana communities interested in assessing the current role tourism plays in their local economic and social activity as well as planning for tourism's future in their area are invited to apply for the 2003-2004 session of the Community Tourism Assessment Program (CTAP).
CTAP is a 9-month community "self help" process facilitated by the Department of Commerce, Travel Montana and MSU Extension with assistance from UM's Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research. Local action committees work with the facilitators to analyze their current inventory of attractions and facilities, resident attitudes toward tourism, current visitor profiles, and identification of tourism projects that would benefit the area. Since 1993, 33 Montana communities have been involved in the process. Three communities are selected to participate in each session of CTAP. Applications for both TIIP grants and CTAP participation are available electronically at http://www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/OURPROGRAMS/TourismDevEd.htm. For hard copies contact Victor Bjornberg, 406-841-2795, victor@visitmt.com. Deadline for applications is August 1, 2003. Website: http://travelmontana.state.mt.us

The Land and Conservation Fund administered by the State of Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks offers
## Issue:
Promoting the Big Sandy area with the use of the Internet, putting up signage, and advertising the local attractions such as the museum, old jail and natural attractions.

After touring the local area of Big Sandy it is my feeling that you have a lot of things already there and that people touring the area would like to see. What needs to be accomplished is to get the people traveling.

## Recommendations:
- One attraction that you already have in the area is the world’s biggest tractor. I think that it would be a good investment for the community to work a deal with the owners of the tractor to bring it closer to town. Find a way to have the people traveling through the area stop and spend more time in the community, rather than have them drive way out in the country to see the tractor. I think that you could set up a deal where you could take tourists for a short ride in the tractor and charge for doing so. The owners of the tractor could be paid either with money the tractor generates or the use of some other tractor so they can continue to farm, so long as they stand to gain something for the use of the tractor.

## Resources:
- Montana Department of Commerce
  - [http://travelmontana.state.mt.us/](http://travelmontana.state.mt.us/)
- Janet Smith Farm Loan Manager
  - [http://www.vcu.edu/cppweb/urban/aam%2002%20handout.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/cppweb/urban/aam%2002%20handout.pdf)
  - 12 3rd Street NW, Suite 300
  - MT West Bank Building
  - Great Falls, Mt 59404
  - 406-727-7580

Several groups, in conjunction with Downtown Revitalization and overall community Beautification, mentioned trees. If tree planting is a priority, you should investigate these potential funding sources:
- The U.S. Forest Service has a very small grant program for community trees.
  - Contact: Glen Roloff
  - North Central RC&D. The National Carbon Offset Coalition is developing potential sites for community forestry projects, utilizing carbon credits. Larry Van Rinsum with NCOC is another contact, (406)261-7094

Grants that can be used for outdoor recreational facilities. A copy of the grant guidelines and application form can be secured at: [http://fwp.state.mt.us/parks](http://fwp.state.mt.us/parks).
Issue: Promote Recreational Opportunities
Prior to coming to Big Sandy, I visited your website and gave it a little test. I sent a message to the email listed on the page to let them know I would be coming to Big Sandy and would look forward to

Recommendation:
I mention this because it is critical for any community, especially one that has as much to offer as Big Sandy, have an active and viable web presence. You are off to a great start with your website – now expand on it and link, link, link with surrounding communities and areas.

I want to make sure you are aware of scenic loops that are being formed and encourage you to form a “loop” or join an existing loop. To save you from reading my feeble description of what this entails, it would be best for you to

Contact:
Gordon Hollingshead
Montana Recreation Connection
P.O. Box 9
Clinton, MT 59825
Ph: 406.825.3187
Email: gordonh@blackfoot.net
Web: http://www.mtadventure.com

In addition, Joni Stewart, Executive Director of GAIN in Cut Bank, wrote the following for the

through the area to stop and spend some time in the area.

• Incorporate the Big Bud tractor with the local museum. You have one of the best museums I have ever been in for a rural community and this would encourage people to spend a little more time in the area.
• Certainly one thing a tourist will always need is fuel. Exploring the option of investing in a gas station that is readily visible will always slow some people down and stop in the area. This is a place where you could put out a lot of literature about the area.
• I heard from several people that CRP has hurt the local economy. Here is an opportunity for people to organize some kind of game bird hunting. I would recommend talking with your local FSA (Farm Service Agency) office to find out when you can and cannot hunt and what mode of transportation is allowed.
• Setting up local farmers market is another way to stop tourists. This would be an opportunity for people to take advantage of the organic crops that are grown in the area. Could also incorporate distributing information about the area to people who stop. Take advantage of the natural attractions in the area such as the Missouri River and the White Rocks.
receiving their answers to the team’s three questions. The “test” was to see if anyone would actually reply to my email. To my delight, a high school student named Skyler (called “Bob” by his classmates) responded to my note.

**Issue: Promote Scenic Attractions**

People seem to be passing by without stopping. They must not know what your community has to offer. Could the issue be “Welcome” signage? The success of many small communities depend on the quality of the visit of those description of what this entails, it would be best for you to visit the following websites: http://www.montanascenicloop.com and http://www.montanatrails.org. Gordon Hollingshead of Montana Recreation Connection is the coordinator behind these projects. Gordon specializes in web marketing and web development.

**Recommendation:**

The SUPERHOST! Program may help. Montana has an easy to understand customer service training program in place to help attract visitors. It is designed to create understanding of Montana’s travel industry and to enhance the level of customer service provided. The program is designed to encourage visitors to stay longer, tell all of their friends and relatives about the wonderful people and great experiences they found here and hopefully make plans to return year after year. This program is ready to educate Chinook Resource Team Assessment:

“A pilot program called Hands of Harvest is working to develop cultural tourism loop tours. 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.”

Contact: Joni Stewart
GAIN, Inc.
PO Box 1329
Cut Bank, MT 59427
Phone: (406) 8873-2337
gain@northerntel.net

**Contact:**

SUPERHOST! Seminars are available by contacting--

Jeri Mae Rowley – Statewide Coordinator
SUPERHOST!
Flathead Valley Community College
777 Grandview
Kalispell, MT 59901
E-mail: superhost@fvcc.edu

I also think that utilizing your rest stop there in
<table>
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<th>Issue: Other Tourism--Lewis and Clark Bicentennial</th>
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<td>The community of Big Sandy should capitalize</td>
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<td>Big Sandy might want to look at promoting this area to “couples” that may want to spend a romantic evening, weekend, or week out under the stars along the beautiful Missouri River. The community must keep in mind, when promoting to a vast audience, any challenges that may arise</td>
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<th>town is a vital!!</th>
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<td>Let people know what you have to offer. Put up a sign with the name of the businesses and what they offer. (Have Ice-Cream? … I’ll stop if I know its there!)</td>
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<th>Promote your Local/Scenic attractions!</th>
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<tr>
<td>When is the Museum open? Everyone in town should know the hours of operation.</td>
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| There was much talk about the natural resources and scenic attractions in the area… White Rocks, Missouri River, Monument, etc … perhaps you should look into creating biking and/or hiking trails as well as outdoor adventures for visitors. |

| The Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks as a recreational Trails Grant Application that can be used for a lot of different types of trails (rural and back country, non-motorized, multiple use and so on) You can contact them at www.fwp.state.mt.us |

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<td>Recreational Trails, Inc</td>
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<td>P O Box 553</td>
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<tr>
<td>Great Falls, MT 59403</td>
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<tr>
<td>(406) 761-4966</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:trailsrus@in-tech.com">trailsrus@in-tech.com</a></td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Contact Information:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clint Blackwood, Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana Lewis &amp; Clark Bicentennial Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.O. Box 201203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helena, MT 59620-1203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(406) 443-2109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
on this Signature Event by partnering with other communities. Big Sandy is in the heart of an area that contains a spectacular array of biological, geological, and historical objects of interest including the Upper Missouri River National Monument and the White Cliffs. The area has remained largely unchanged in the nearly 200 years since Meriwether Lewis and William Clark traveled through it on their epic journey. In 1806 Meriwether Lewis wrote of the White Cliffs area, "the hills and river cliffs which we passed today exhibit a most romantic appearance."

<table>
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<th>Issue: Signage</th>
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<th>Recommendation:</th>
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Residents of Big Sandy indicated at several sessions that there is a problem with being able to put signage on Hwy 87 because state regulations do not permit it. Residents would like to erect signage, e.g., a billboard at the North and South ends of town that would encourage visitors to stop. This would hopefully encourage visitors to shop at the local stores, take in local attractions, or pick up information about what Big Sandy has to offer and possibly stop back at a later date.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Contact Information:</th>
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Rich Munger  
HELENA - RIGHT OF WAY  
PO Box 201001  
2701 Prospect Ave.  
Helena, MT 59620-1001  
Phone Number: (406) 444-7603  
Email: [munger@state.mt.us](mailto:munger@state.mt.us)  
Or  
(406) 841-4004 (fax)  
email: [blackwood@state.mt.us](mailto:blackwood@state.mt.us)
stop back at a later date.

I called the Montana Department of Transportation and spoke with Mr. Rich Munger in the Helena Right of Way Office about the concerns the residents of Big Sandy have regarding the inability to place signs (billboard) along Hwy 87. Rich explained to me that federal and state regulations for the placement of signs along Montana’s roads and highways are based on the Highway Beautification Act of 1965 when Lady Bird Johnson wanted to implement an Act that would keep signage from defacing the natural beauty of rural areas. In brief, this Act, together with the regulations prohibits the placement of “promotional” signage on rural Highways. The key word I found out in my conversation with Rich is “promotional”. Promotional is defined as signage that promotes a business – such as Shop at IGA, turn right at the next intersection or that promotes drinking Coca-Cola.

However, the regulation would not prohibit Big Sandy from placing a billboard as you enter from the North and South that says (something like this):

**“Welcome to Big Sandy – See the Beauty that Lewis & Clark Saw”**

Home of the Upper Missouri River National Monument and the Enchanting White Cliffs
Information available at the Big Sandy Rest Area Kiosk Ahead

Rich will be retiring soon, but suggested that the community of Big Sandy call him (is he is still working), or his successor, Pat Hurley, to discuss what kind of sign/billboard you would like to post and where it would be posted. He or Pat will come to Big Sandy to discuss this matter with you further. He doesn’t foresee a problem with a similar sign as described above, as long as there is no promotional information on the sign, besides promoting area attractions and asking individuals to stop and rest a

Pat Hurley
HELENA - RIGHT OF WAY
PO Box 201001
2701 Prospect Ave.
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Phone Number: (406) 444-6068
Email: phurley@state.mt.us
Issue: Promoting recreational opportunities and scenic attractions

while.

**Recommendations:**
This section includes all other areas under tourism. I would suggest to businesses that they work with the Missouri River Canoe Co. as they appear to have a stable clientele. Suggestions may be to have coupons available to all rafters that would offer a small item to get them into your store; you want foot traffic into the businesses, or have Big Sandy as a stopping spot for all canoe participants for 30 minutes. This will give the participants an opportunity to stretch their legs and to visit a business or two.

There was some interest in ag-tourism and it appeared that there may be several folks participating in this activity, if it works for you continue. A survey done by the University of Montana found that there are only 1-2% of the people that are interested in a farm or ranch tour. The greatest interest is in open spaces and wildlife, which Big Sandy has available. There are several resources available to you to explore, one is just currently being produced. The one video that is available is called “Fun on the Farm: Starting a Farm and Ranch Recreation Business”. The video includes operations of a bed and breakfast, dude ranches, working guest ranches and cattle drives. It also addresses licensing and health requirements. Order the video for $14.95 through your local extension office or the website. The new video that is being worked on examines nature-based tours. One thing to think about is the transportation issue. Tourists may come in on the train or fly, how do they get to Big Sandy and around the community? One thing I learned when I was there was that a person can drive to the white rocks, not everybody wants to take a canoe or raft down the river, are you or do you want to market this drive.

Dave Sharpe, Extension Community Development Specialist, has worked with both of these videos and provides training.

Big Sandy does have a website; I would suggest improving it to strengthen what the community has to offer the tourist

**Recommended Resources:**
For additional information and ideas, please visit the web site or contact the individual.
Dave Sharpe, Extension Community Development Specialist, [dsharpe@montana.edu](mailto:dsharpe@montana.edu) or
Phone 406-994-2962
http://www.montana.edu/publications
that is coming through. I would think that those individuals that are using the Missouri River Canoe Co. have searched your site to see what else they can do while there, did they learn what other activities are in the area?
## BIG SANDY RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT MATRIX

### SUBJECT: ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH

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<tr>
<th>ISSUE OR PROJECT</th>
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<th>RESOURCES</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
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| Issue: Summer and after-school activities for kids | The issue kept coming up about whether a Youth Center would be beneficial for the community. There was some contradictory information: parents and some adults indicated that they thought that kids would not use a Youth Center if it were available. Yet, when the panel met with youth from the school, a large majority of students indicated that if a Youth Center were available, they would, in fact, use it. I personally feel that the residents of Big Sandy should have a youth center that would provide an alternative safe and fun place for their kids to gather and socialize. The center should incorporate activities that include sports, indoor recreation, cultural programs, access to technology, and outdoor activities. Big Sandy residents should form a committee of people who share a passion to serve and preserve the youth of their community. The committee must also, of course, include children of all ages for input as to what kinds of activities, equipment, and programs will be provided out of the Youth Center. The committee must realize that they will not be only building a youth center, but building their community. It is recommended that the committee embark first on a fact-finding mission by investigating the needs of the youth and the community, meeting with other youth centers, and gathering feedback from other groups. | Funding Resources: Qwest Communications  
Mr. Rick Hays  
Helena, Montana 59601  
(406) 441-7700  
Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation  
Lawrence R. Simkins, President  
P.O. Box 16630  
Missoula, Montana 59808-6630  
(406) 523-1300  
[http://www.washcorp.com/Foundation](http://www.washcorp.com/Foundation)  
National Endowment for the Arts  
Learning in the Arts for Children  
Nancy Hanks Center  
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20506-0001  
Land and Water Conservation Fund  
Parks Division  
Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
P.O. Box 200701 |
asking questions such as:

- What strengths and problems are our young people facing, growing up in challenged rural communities?
- What kinds of school, community, family, and recreational environments can best support the development of our youth?
- What types of activities/programs do our youth want available in the community? In a Youth Center?
- What type of facility? Do we renovate and existing building, or build new?
- Who? How will we staff the building?
- What are the total costs associated with these projects?

Printed Resources:
Invest in the future! Involve young people in planning. Learn how to design charrettes, starting with workshops and ending with lessons learned. This book explores various approaches to involving youth in schools, museums, and citizen groups. It's a complete guide to successful community charrettes for younger participants. (K-8)

Title: Youth Participation in Community Planning; Publisher: APA Planning Advisory Service 1999; ISBN: 1-884829-32-5. Today's youth, raised in an era of tremendous change, have an unprecedented opportunity to shape the future of their communities. As they realize their potential to make a difference, more and more young people are making positive contributions to their neighborhoods. Explores how communities have involved children in planning. Several case studies demonstrate how various communities have encouraged young people to solve problems, voice their opinions, and make a difference. Explains how to create effective youth-based initiatives that train young people to identify social, community, or policy concerns, devise solutions, and hone the skills they need to effect change. It details the essential elements of developing a youth involvement project—organizational structure, required resources, suggested activities, and hoped-for accomplishments—as well as some of the potential stumbling blocks. A great resource for developing planning programs that benefit communities and engage a new generation.
Recommendations:
Several groups (adults and kids) made comment that they would like to see more cultural events/programs for the kids of Big Sandy. Over and over we heard about the musical, theatrical and artistic talents of community residents, both young and old. It is encouraged that the community focus on nurturing their own and their children’s talents.

Begin by finding out who in the community is interested in starting cultural programs in the community (may find information from asset mapping survey). This group of individuals should come together to form a group that will focus on starting cultural programs in Big Sandy. It is recommended that the group poll the community, not only those who are interested in performing or being involved, but find out what kind of events (all) residents would attend or enjoy if performances were planned for the public. The group should then brainstorm ideas and do research (on the web or by calling MCH or MAC) to find out what other rural communities have done -- what they have been successful at. Next, contact that group to see if they are willing to talk face to face about their organization: How they got started? Where they receive(d) funding (fundraisers, grants, etc.)? What events do they deliver to their community? Fundraising is at the heart of every issue so the group will most assuredly have to start small. If theatrical performances are on the agenda, contact groups such as the Montana Actors Theater in Havre to see if you can borrow costumes, sets, scripts, and other items. Also talk with MAT if they would

Contact:
Montana Actors Theater  
Mr. Jay Pyette  
265-8183 (home)  
265-6732 (work HPS)  
Email: montanaactors@yahoo.com

Funding Resources:
Montana Arts Council  
PO Box 202201  
Helena MT 59620-2201  
406/444-6430  
http://www.art.state.mt.us/

Montana Committee for the Humanities  
311 Brantly Hall  
The University of Montana  
Missoula, MT 59812-7848  
telephone (406)-243-6022  
toll-free in Montana (800)-624-6001  
lastbest@selway.umt.edu  
http://www.humanities-mt.org/

National Endowment for the Humanities  
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington DC 20506  
http://www.neh.gov/grants/grantsbydivision.html
Issue: After School Programs and Youth Involvement
The youth of Big Sandy are the heart of Big Sandy. In addition, no doubt some of these young people will be the future leaders of Big Sandy. Get the students involved in the community – most of the time, they only need to be asked and mentor the Big Sandy group to lend their expertise that would provide theatrical experience to those in Big Sandy.

Why expose youth to culture? To: give young people healthy activities as alternatives to getting into trouble, instill a sense of identity, increase their skills and abilities and to increase their self-esteem. All of these objectives are achieved through culture as the main teaching instrument in youth programs and services.

Some cultural program ideas are:
- Music workshops and seminars
- Cultural summer camps focusing on music, drama or local history
- Form a community band, drama troop, or arts group
- Partner with Rocky Boy’s to explore Native American Culture
- Visiting Artist/Historian Series (school year)
- Shakespeare in the Park

Recommendation:
In my search for answers dealing with youth development, 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 projects: “Whether you have a youth center or want ideas on how to enhance your employment program to effectively

Visit the website at [http://www.nyec.org/Jettcon2001/designguide.htm](http://www.nyec.org/Jettcon2001/designguide.htm) and receive information on:
- Examples of Youth Centers/Programs
- Examples of Programs Using Technology Tools for Planning
- Resources on Youth Development
- Tools for Assessment and Improvement
- Resources on Afterschool/Out-of-School Programming
given a job to do.

**Issue: Activities for Kids/Youth Involvement in Community Decisions**
There was much discussion about “nothing for the youth to do”.

**Recommendation:**
One thing that I heard was that the youths would like a “Cosmic Bowling Night”. This could be easily accomplished by utilizing the local bowling alley. My suggestion would be to schedule a night (once a month or every other Friday or Saturday) and close the bowling to anyone over the age of 18. I would lock the door that separates the bar and bowling alley, charge admission ($5 or so) for anyone who enters the bowling alley (give them a stamp on their hand or something) let the kids bring in the CD’s of their choice, sell pop and pizza and charge a flat rate of $ to who ever wants to bowl.

On those particular nights I would not allow anyone under 21 into the bar side either. (I did hear a few comments about how some adults do not like being in the bar drinking when there are kids in there playing pool etc.) This way you would have 1 or 2 nights a month were everyone would get what they are requesting!

There was also talk about a paint-ball park, mini-golf course and an activity center. The kids suggested a “center” should be a place to hang out, play pool, do homework (need computers), listen to music etc. They would like it to be set up more like a “Club” then a teen-center.

The community may want to organize a Task Force to facilitate the development of such a venture. I feel the teens need to be involved in the development. They can research the funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible resources available:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director of Parks and Recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>316 North Park Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helena, MT 59623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTN: Randy Lilge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(406) 447-8462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue: Youth involvement in community decisions</td>
</tr>
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**Recommendations:**
- The youth of your community hold and are the future. They would like to see more things for them to do in Big Sandy. They are interested in a youth center, they would like more access to the schools resources, indoor mini-golf (one of the old vacant buildings) and many other good ideas. Most of all they said they wanted to be a part of helping put these together and were interested and willing to work and help |

**Recommended Resources:**
- Invite and allow the local students and youth to participate in your meetings. Allow them to have a representative on the local chamber of commerce, town council etc. |

| Issue: Summer and After School Care for Children | You have the beginnings of a summer program already with the pool. You are working at enclosing the pool so that it can be year around, a great idea. The pool can also work as a place for teens for pool parties in the summer with music and food. Another thought may be to hire a person part-time in the summer to develop a summer recreation program for youth. You could offer some things that may be economically self-sufficient like tennis lessons, golf lessons, basketball or volleyball. Hire local high school students that have excelled in these sports. You may want to try an activity twice a week for the younger children; it may be games or a craft. I don’t thing people want the activities free but the city could provide the funding for the person to manage |

**Recommended Resources:**
| **Issue: Youth Involvement in Community Decisions** | the program. You have some resourceful youth in your community that may be willing to come in to teach a skill, especially those youth involved with 4-H as they have a great curriculum. After school programs provide a safe place for children, especially if parents are working outside the family home and are not available to the children. I would thing that there are parents that may be working in Havre and thus the children are home longer in the evening by themselves. In other communities service groups have taken on the project of after school care and small communities have even done their own Boys and Girls Clubs or become a satellite of an established program. The program does not have to be everyday but could be 2-3 times a week. There has been grant dollars available from the Montana Board of Crime Control. This could be a way to use space in your school. |
| **Recommendations:** | There were some volunteers from the youth to become involved with city government. Now the leaders of the community need to step forward to invite the youth and to value their input. Several communities have conducted a program that would be called Leadership Big Sandy. Havre has been participating and it was based off a program in Great Falls. Selected juniors in high school participate and learn more about their community, activities are held on a monthly basis. Youth would learn how the town and community function. |
| **Recommended Resources:** | For additional information and ideas, please contact the individual listed. Debbie Vandeberg, Havre Area Chamber of Commerce, 406-265-4383. |

**Issue: Support of Church Activities to Continue**

| **Recommendations:** | They youth in Big Sandy were happy with the |
activities that have been happening at the local churches, please continue. During the summer there is a break, maybe each church would like to take a month and do one activity for the youth, this keeps them connected and are in a safe and supportive environment.
# BIG SANDY RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT MATRIX

## SUBJECT: BUSINESS AND OPPORTUNITIES

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| One big issue: This may be the key to everything that a community needs to form the backbone of a healthy place to live. Good jobs and opportunity. | **Recommendations:** There were some good ideas discussed during our time in Big Sandy. A few items that I think would be doable and were discussed are: Start a pharmacy (either in the hospital or a business downtown). A gas station to stop some of the cars that just pass through town. Expand the hospital related services and recruit more RN’s and staff. Expand Big Sandy Activities. Tourism development. Recruit a local area veterinarian. Look into supporting ag related businesses like bio-diesel and new and different crops. Start a local cattle finishing business and sell the meat through the local restaurants and bed and breakfasts. Real estate business selling homes in Big Sandy over the internet. Find a way to support local businesses. The chamber of commerce could put on an annual business support/appreciation dinner. At the dinner items could be discussed on what is needed to improve business in town. Cheer on and provide what support they can to the existing and new business owners. What products do locals need but cannot find to buy? And many items like this. It was mentioned at a session that the community wants donations from the businesses but that is the only time they come into the store. | **Recommended Resources:** (A few below, there are many)  
Attn: John Rogers, Regional Director  
Edrmteda@aol.com  
P.O. Box 10074  
Helena, MT 59626  
Phone: (406) 441-1175  
FAX: (406) 441-1176  
John Guthmiller  
Ph: 406-585-2540  
USDA-Rural Development  
PO Box 850  
900 Technology Blvd., Suite B  
Bozeman, MT 59771  
Brent Poppe, Mike Sullivan and Sam Antonick  
Montana Department of Agriculture  
Livestock Building  
303 North Roberts  
P.O. Box 200201  
Helena, MT 59620-0201  
Ph: 444-2402 |
**Issue: Gas Station**
The issue was raised frequently that Big Sandy does not have a full service gas station.

**Recommendation:**
To make sure the community would be able to support this kind of business, I would first suggest conducting a feasibility study. Bear Paw Development could assist with this process.

I was fortunate enough to speak with Dan Keanneally, an owner of the www.agr.state.mt.us

**Havre SCORE**
Barry Remus, Co-Chair
Gus Korb, Co-Chair
518 1st Street, Box 308
Havre MT 59501
Phone: (406) 265-4383
Fax: (406) 265-7548
E-mail: remo55@mtintouch.net or korbg@nmclites.edu

**Great Falls SCORE**
Tom Thomas
710 1st Avenue North
P.O. Box 2127
Great Falls MT 59403-0117
Phone: (406) 761-4434
Fax: (406) 761-6129
E-mail: ththomas@imt.net

Montana Super Host Training
Debbie Donovan
(406) 228-8221

Your local extension Agent has many items they can help with.

**For more information contact:**
Email: townpump@townpump.com
Web: http://www.townpump.com
Issue: Mutual Support Between Business and Community
If the community of Big Sandy wants to see more and stronger businesses in their town, the people of Big Sandy must support current businesses. In the same manner, the local business owner should be willing to provide service, reasonably convenient hours and be active in the Town Pump enterprise. He listened patiently as I explained the situation in Big Sandy and then spoke quite frankly as to the obstacles.

Dan described the process as an evolution that has been going on for years. Towns like Big Sandy have been losing their gas stations because the margin for profit in petroleum is slim, plus the cost for installation of equipment is more and more expensive. Dan said that Federal and State regulations require ultra expensive piping, equipment, venting, etc… This high cost demands high volume, which does not exist in the Big Sandy area.

Dan also mentioned the problem of a mobile society – that people shop in other areas – and get their gas where they shop. He said it simply boils down to economics.

Dan recommended that Big Sandy not focus their efforts at this time on opening a gas station – that the probability for success is very small. He said to put the town’s efforts in other areas – and perhaps one day, a gas station will follow.

Recommendation:
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.

Resource:
www.chainstoreage.com

The town of Anaconda has formed a local group to promote support of local businesses. For information on how it functions contact:
Anaconda Chamber of Commerce
306 E. Park Ave.
Anaconda, MT 59711
Ph: 406.563.2400
Mutual Support Between Business and Community
Supporting of existing businesses is a major concern. Stressing the importance of buying locally is critical in any small community. Maybe the local businesses could print up a coupon or button, which when shown would give a 5% discount on a certain day of the month. This would need to be supported by all local businesses.

Issue: Business Recruitment
Many who have worked in economic development far longer than I would agree that the idea of finding that one big company to move

Recommendation:
I heard over and over how supportive the community is when someone is in need. The business owners know that the agricultural community is hurting financially; this then affects the business community. Do you rely on each other? The business community does want to support youth and other activities but those asking for the financial support also need to support the businesses. Realize that you need each other, buy at home. It is not cheaper to go out of town when you consider your time, fuel, meals and other extras that you purchase when you go for one item.

Recommendation:
A recent report put out by the Sonoran Institute states that small towns in Wyoming, Montana and Idaho can achieve economic success by providing good schools, fast Internet service, flight connections to major cities and access to outdoor places that are protected. The report points out a few key common elements for communities that are doing well despite tough times elsewhere:
- Educated local workforce
- High-tech infrastructure in place

Resource:
### Issue: Options Other than Ag

Ray Rasker of the Sonoran Institute said, “People always ask me what the biggest industry is going to be, and I always say small businesses. That’s where all of the jobs are coming from.”

- Quality of life amenities such as decent schools, public libraries, a friendly downtown, preservation of open spaces and plenty of places for outdoor recreation.
- Access to airports

Ray Rasker also states that successful communities do not actively seek a specific industry but create an atmosphere that is attractive to people looking for a great place to live and where they can do business. “The new way (of thinking) is to position yourself to allow the market to work on its own. Think what our entrepreneurs need – and then work on those things.”

Montana Jobs Network has been awarded $5,000 through the Qwest / MEDA (Montana Economic Developers Association) Building A Better Economy Grant for the Come Home project. Montana Jobs Network is a non-profit Internet based talent portal. Its mission in part is to help keep those educated in Montana here and help to bring back those alums that wish to return.

Out migration of many Montana communities, lack of new business types to off-set the decline of an agricultural economy, a 7 year drought, and low commodity prices have led to severe economic downturn for some areas. Most young people leave their community believing they cannot stay or return due to the lack of opportunity. Alums and entrepreneurs that would like to come into the communities have no invitations. Community resources and assets are unsung outside the general locale. Although access to sometimes very high end telecommunications exists, the technology is not used to its highest potential.

Big Sandy is one of the “chosen” communities to take advantage of this project! Working together using advanced telecommunications and technology, invitations will be presented to entrepreneurs that would enjoy doing business in Montana.

A solution to the out-migration problem is to retain young people.

### Resources:

The site at [http://www.montana-jobs.net/comehome](http://www.montana-jobs.net/comehome) will be operational on June 30th.
regain some of those that have left, attract other entrepreneurs into town and create diversity in people and economies. The MEDA/Qwest grant will fund Internet forums and a database that contains each community’s Assets, Challenges and Vision as identified during the resource team sessions. The "Come Home" project will provide an invitation and information to those the communities must attract.

Forums will allow community members to communicate easily with entrepreneurs that have left in earlier years and now would like to come home as well as new professionals that would like to explore the possibility of locating to one of these Montana towns. Entrepreneurs wishing to enter a community will receive a good idea of what assets and challenges they will be working with from viewing the information in the database. By reviewing the community vision new business owners will know where they "fit". Questions and other issues can be partially worked out on the forums which will allow many people to communicate on an issue at the same time. The forum tool is a bit like being able to call a town meeting any time you need one with no travel cost or scheduling problems.

The Come Home project will kick-off with the following communities, Cutbank, Conrad, Forsyth, Polson, Liberty County, Rocky Boy, Judith Basin, Big Sandy, and Harlem. Other contributors to the success of the project are First Interstate Bank, Montana Associated Technology Roundtables, Pioneer Entrepreneurs and RightNow Technologies.

**Recommendation:**
Don’t miss this opportunity! Participate in the series of workshops that will take place to teach community members the basics of using the forums and database. Meet in Chester at the Wired Inn, July 14th, 7:00pm.

**Recommendation:**
Outreach for a Pharmacist (and a drug store) should be done. This may help to keep the people of Big Sandy in the community and not

**RESOURCES:** USDA, Rural Development – Rural Business &
Issue: Variety Store
The residents of Big Sandy would like to have a store that would provide more shopping opportunities for clothes, shoes, toys, appliances, etc. Currently, there are many craft-type stores and gift shops, but the community is lacking in a variety-type store. Residents must now drive North to Havre (about ½ hour) or South to Great Falls (nearly 2 hours) in order to have, primarily, more choices in clothing and household items.

Recommendation:
Several years ago, the City of Malta identified an almost identical problem – minimal shopping opportunities for clothing, shoes, etc. A group of concerned residents came together and came up with a solution to form a cooperative that would invest in and establish a Variety Store – Family Matters, Inc. The project has been a HUGE success for Malta. The residents of Big Sandy could follow this same model. There is a store front available right on Hwy 87 (former IGA) that would be a perfect location for a store of this kind. It is strongly recommended that those interested in establishing a Variety Store in Big Sandy contact individuals who worked on the Family Matters project in Malta.

Contact:
Malta Area Chamber of Commerce
Mrs. Anne Boothe
PO Box 1420
Malta, MT 59538
Telephone/Fax - (406) 654-1776
Email: malta@ttc-cmc.net

Family Matters, Inc.
(406) 654-1900
## Issue: Veterinarian

**Recommendation:**
It is recommended that concerned residents of Big Sandy should contact Veterinarians in outlying communities to see if they would consider establishing a part-time practice in Big Sandy, e.g., one day a week, twice a month, etc. It is suggested that the schedule remain somewhat constant such as every Wednesday, the second and fourth Thursday of every month, etc. This type of model has been tried in other rural communities and has worked very well. It not only has worked for veterinarian services, but dentistry, medical, and even insurance sales.

To attract a Veterinarian to “try out” this model, it may be worthwhile for the City, businesses or individuals to offer reduced rent options, free lunches, paid mileage, free fill up at the gas station, etc. (on a 6-month or 1-year trial basis). If this arrangement proves successful and the need is there, it may turn into a more permanent situation.

## Issue: Pharmacist

**Recommendations:**
The City of Big Sandy has an overwhelming obstacle – it is geographically separated from many services that it needs. The residents of Big Sandy have a big challenge ahead to overcome this obstacle, step by step. Besides other services mentioned, residents would also like to see a Drug Store with a full- or part-time pharmacist. In this instance, distance is an obstacle especially for aging residents who have little or no access to transportation, or who must wait on transportation opportunities to get to Havre or Great Falls to fill prescriptions.

The residents of Big Sandy could use the same model described above (Veterinarian Services) to bring a Pharmacist to the area. Residents could check with K-Mart, Wall-Mart or other large chain stores and speak with Pharmacists to see if any of them are currently working on a part-time basis. If so, are they interested in expanding their practice to serve the community of Big Sandy, regularly.

The second option could be to attract a pharmacist to the community on a full-time basis by offering free housing or other “perks”. During

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Contacts:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anderson Family Pharmacy</td>
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</table>
401 15th Ave S #208  
Great Falls, MT 59405  
(406) 761-8781 |
| Apothecary Drug Store |  |
20 3rd St. North  
Great Falls, MT 59401  
(406) 454-2399 |
| Clinic United Drugs |  |
1400 29th St South  
PO Box 7213  
Great Falls, MT 59405  
(406) 771-3399 |
on a full-time basis by offering free housing or other “perks”. During talks with the panel, residents also expressed concern about the many houses that have been left empty and are rapidly deteriorating throughout the city. City officials should speak with owners to see if any of them are willing to donate (as a tax right off) their houses to the city – to provide “free” housing for individuals that are interested in moving to the community to provide much-needed services. Houses and yards could then be “spruced up” as a community project with the help of donations of time, money, services and products.

A third option would be to set up an independent pharmacy. This would entail advertising nationally for a independent pharmacist interested in moving to a rural town in Montana or contacting an established independent pharmacist (in Montana) to see if they would consider expanding their services to Big Sandy. A list of independent pharmacies in Montana is provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pharmacy Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A and C Drug Corporation</td>
<td>523 N Higgins P O Box 7966 Missoula, MT 59802 (406) 721-6640</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden City Pharmacy</td>
<td>700 W Kent Missoula, MT 59801 (406) 549-898</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## SUBJECT: BEAUTIFICATION

### BEAUTIFICATION

**In General**
- City clean up
- Trees
- Store fronts
- Theme for downtown area – or gimmick
- Abandoned vehicles and houses

**Recommendation:** The residents of Big Sandy are proud of their city. However, Big Sandy is dealing with many infrastructure and aesthetic issues. Sidewalks and streets are below par, and in some instances, sidewalks are dangerous to walk on; there are many unpaved streets within the city, creating a dusty/dirty environment; cosmetically, there are few trees, store fronts need painting, abandoned cars and other unsightly items are scattered about and the city needs general sprucing up. Here are some ideas:

- Implement a city beautification campaign – “Green it UP & Clean it UP” (suggested theme)
- Form a Downtown Beautification Committee or Neighborhood Revitalization Committee that will develop beautification and clean up action plans
  - Assess areas most in need of beautification & clean up
  - Map out a planting plan; create a spruce up plan
  - Review the asset mapping results and identify those individuals that have the skills you need: gardeners, carpenters, painters, etc.
  - Develop a list of supplies and items that are needed to carry out each plan

### Resources

**Contacts:**
- National Youth Service Day (Montana Contact)
  Mary Asbach
  Governor’s Office of Community Service/AmeriCorps
  444-9655
  [http://www.ysa.org/nysd/index.cfm](http://www.ysa.org/nysd/index.cfm)
- Montana Landscape and Nursery Association, Inc.
  President, Mike Hiel, CPP
  Gardenwerks
  PO Box 1235
  Helena, MT 59624
  Office: 406-442-5008
  FAX: 406-443-4565
  grdnwrks@mt.net

**Funding Resources:**
- State Farm Foundation
  Pacific Northwest Zone
  1000 Wilmington Drive
  Dupont, WA 98327
  (253) 912-7000
o Have a Spring fundraiser, solicit donations or exchange product
o Find a nursery or landscape grower that you can exchange locally grown products for their seedlings, trees, shrubs and flowers (bartering)
o Develop a timeline for completion of each project or activity and continual beautification efforts
o Form a youth group that is interested in helping address the needs of the community a becoming a part of National Youth Service Day activities.

What is National Youth Service Day? National Youth Service Day has three primary goals: (1) to mobilize youth to identify and address the needs of their communities through service; (2) to recruits the next generation of volunteers; and (3) to educate the public about the year-round contributions of young people as community leaders. Community projects are organized by communities, schools, and local organizations. NYSD project include: help for the homeless, help for senior citizens, school activities, neighborhood enhancements, help for those with special needs, politics and government and the environment.

In Montana, National Youth Service Day activities have taken place in Billings, Bozeman, Browning, Butte, Great Falls, Havre, Helena, Kalispell, and Missoula, through the support of the Governor’s Office of Community Service and the coordination of AmeriCorps members and youth organizations statewide. In 2002, over 300 Montana youth were engaged in projects on National Youth Service Day, ranging from planting evergreens in Kalispell, to cleaning up a baseball field in White Sulphur Springs. I recommend that Big Sandy contact the Governor’s Office of Community Service to see how Big Sandy youth can take part in the activities of this very worthwhile organization.

| AT&T Cares Youth Service Action Fund |
| Toyasha Albert, grants manager |
| Youth Service America |
| 1101 15th Street, NW, Suite 200 |
| Washington, DC 20005-5002 |
| (fax) 202-296-4030 |
| email: atccares@YSA.org |

| AT&T Foundation |
| (General Grants) |
| AT&T Public Relations |
| Contributions Coordinator |
| 1875 Lawrence Street |
| Suite 750 |
| Denver, CO 80202 |
| [http://www.at.com/foundation/programs/community.html](http://www.at.com/foundation/programs/community.html) |

<p>| Nike Youth Action Awards |
| Global Community Affairs |
| Nike, Inc. |
| PO Box 4027 |
| Beaverton, OR 97076 USA |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sidewalks and Streets</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recommendation:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>For maintenance and beautification of sidewalks and streets, residents are encouraged to initiate an Adopt-a-Sidewalk/Street campaign to remove weeds, trash, junk and in the winter – snow removal. In the summer, the City could initiate a “Lawn of the Month” or in the downtown area “Business of the Month” contest with prizes awarded to winners that have been donated from the area businesses/tourist attractions, such as dinner for two, gift certificates, a canoe ride down the Missouri, etc. Winners could be showcased on the Chamber’s website and/or in the local newspaper. A traveling trophy in the form of plaques that can be hung outside the business or prominently placed on the winner’s lawn could be awarded. It is suggested that this could be a program of the Big Sandy Chamber of Commerce, who would be responsible for getting a (different) group together each month to judge entries. This is a very inexpensive program that wouldn’t take a lot of effort to coordinate – but it could have a very positive and great impact on the appearance of the community and pride of Big Sandy’s citizens.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Resources: USDA, Rural Development – Rural Utilities Service</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P O Box 850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bozeman, MT 59771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTN: Mitch Copp, Program Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Mitchel.copp@mt.usda.gov">Mitchel.copp@mt.usda.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(406) 585-2529</td>
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<tr>
<th>Treasure State Endowment Program</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jim Edgcomb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.O. Box 200523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helena, MT 59620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph: 406.841-2785</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Contact: Dale Longfellow, Mayor of Hobson</th>
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</table>
Many communities are struggling to deal with the issue of blight, abandoned homes, neglected yards and basic junk and clutter.

**Issue: Abandoned Vehicles and Houses**
It was noted that Big Sandy has homes that are either abandoned or no longer cared for.

Dale Longfellow, Mayor of Hobson, made this problem a priority for the people of Hobson and worked to establish a Decay Ordinance. As a result, beautification is happening in Hobson. Dale is now very experienced in this area and would be glad to tell other communities/counties how to get the job done. Baker, Montana, is another community that has had great success in this area.

**Recommendation:**
Please note the information above to deal with this issue. In addition, perhaps Big Sandy could take on these homes and/or areas as an “adoption” process. For maintenance and beautification purposes, initiate an Adopt-A-Sidewalk/Street/House campaign to remove weeds, trash and in winter - snow. The program can be patterned after Neighborhood Watch where one person per block or block area is the coordinator. To encourage interest and participation, a contest can be held every month with a photo of the project and the volunteer placed in the local newspaper. Businesses could also get involved with a Business of the Month beautification award. A little effort and pride will cause a ripple effect and increase pride community-wide.

**Recommendation:**
The downtown area needs to be spruced up. This would be a great way to advertise the beauty of your community as well as making the locals feel good about your town. Maybe a “VOLUNTEER FOR YOUR TOWN DAY” could be started. This would be a great way for the whole community to be involved. (Maybe have a Street Dance that evening, as noted under the Community Section!)

Fund-raising and marketing are key elements to initiating downtown improvements. Promote events that bring people
**Issue: Beautification**

to downtown.

**Recommendations:**
We all know that as we drive into a new area the visual impact will make us feel welcome or to keep driving. There were some concerns about the physical appearance of Big Sandy. One comment that was heard several times were that people stopped at the old grocery store on hwy 87, can you take the sign down? There is a community visioning project that can be done through MSU Extension and MSU School of Architecture. The project involves community members examining the town and deciding what they would like to do. Students from the school of architecture work on ideas that you may have and give their input.

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<tr>
<th>Resources available:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Montana Community Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>101 N Last Chance Gulch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helena, MT 59620</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MT Dept of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1424 Ninth Ave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helena, MT 59620</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATTN: Gus Byrom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(406) 444-2488</td>
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**Recommended Resources:**
For additional information and ideas, please contact the individual listed.
Dave Sharpe, Extension Community Development Specialist, [dsharpe@montana.edu](mailto:dsharpe@montana.edu)
Phone 406-994-2962
# Big Sandy Resource Team Assessment Matrix

## Subject: Infrastructure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue or Project</th>
<th>Recommendations &amp; Objectives</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Timing</th>
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</table>
| Infrastructure   | **Recommendations:** The Water problem needs to be solved. Your active town council appears to be working on this. The community needs to be educated on rural water districts. The benefits are great to a community and to the livestock growers. Just about every rural water district formed has found the benefits are bigger than the costs. The costs are not very much more than what they had to pay prior to the district being formed. Streets and sidewalks improved, lots and buildings need to be torn down and cleaned up. This typically and mainly requires local effort to make improvements. | **Recommended Resources:**  
- [www.mainst.org/](http://www.mainst.org/) The National Main Street Center  
  1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
  Washington, DC 20036  
  e-mail: mainst@nthp.org  
  Phone: (202) 588-6219  
  FAX: (202) 588-6050  
- Larry Gallagher, Community Builder  
  U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
  Power Block Building  
  7 West Sixth Avenue, Level 1  
  Helena, MT 59601  
  Ph: (406) 449-5040  
  E-Mail: Lawrence_Gallagher@hud.gov  
- Mountain/Plains Regional Office  
  Main Street Program  
  National Trust for Historic Preservation  
  910 16th Street, Suite 1100  
  Denver, Colorado 80202  
  Ph. 303-623-1504, FAX 303-623-1508, e-mail: [www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org) | **Resources** |
Sue Gantz, Deborah Chorlton and Mitch Copp
Ph: 406-585-2515
USDA-Rural Development
PO Box 850
900 Technology Blvd., Suite B
Bozeman, MT 59771

Connie Onstad, Program Manager
Community Development Block Grant – HOME Program
P. O. Box 200545
Helena, MT 59620-0545
(406) 841-2819

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

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

Gus Byrom
CDBG for Public Facilities and Housing
P. O. Box 200523
Helena, MT 59620-0523
(406) 841-2777

Newell Anderson, Coal Board
Department of Commerce
PO Box 200501
Helena, MT 59620
| Phone: 405-841-2772  
Fax: 406-841-2771 |
|---|
| Jim Edcomb, Program Manager Treasure State  
Endowment Program  
Department of Commerce  
PO Box 200501  
Helena, MT 59620  
Phone: 406-841-2785  
Fax: 406-841-2771 |
| Todd Teegarden, Pollution Control State RLF Program  
Department of Enviro. Quality  
PO Box 200901  
Helena, MT 59620  
Phone: 406-444-5324 |
| John Tubbs, Chief  
Resource Development Bureau  
DNRC  
PO Box 2001601  
Helena, MT 59620 |
| Geri Burton, Bond Program Officer  
Board of Investments  
PO Box 200545  
Helena, MT 59620  
Phone: 406-444-1365  
Fax: 406-449-6579 |
| Mike Davis, CTEP Coordinator  
Community Transportation Enhancement Program  
Montana Department of Transportation  
PO Box 201001  
2701 Prospect Avenue  
Helena, MT 59620-1001 |
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<tr>
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<th>406-444-4383</th>
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<td>Email: <a href="mailto:mdavis@state.mt.us">mdavis@state.mt.us</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.mdt.state.mt.us/planning/ctep/">http://www.mdt.state.mt.us/planning/ctep/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### COMMUNITY ISSUE: Animal Control
Several times, the issue of the need for better animal control was raised.

**Recommendation:**
As budget dollars are tight everywhere, it may be necessary for a community to take paws into their own hands. 😊

**Recommendations:**
The following information is from Tom Kaiserski of Beartooth RC&D.

*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

### COMMUNITY ISSUE: Mosquito Control
The issue of mosquito control and the debate these little bugs caused on our tour had the entire team smiling. Some residents said that there was no mosquito problem at all – that people should expect to wear bug spray and at times, long pants and long sleeved shirts. It was obvious that to enjoy the beauties of Big Sandy, one might have to swat a bug or two. Other residents said mosquitoes

**Recommendation:**
Visit this website and discover what “One Person Can Do” to assist with animal control and animal issues in Big Sandy. [http://www.bestfriends.org/nmhp/oneperson.html](http://www.bestfriends.org/nmhp/oneperson.html)

**Resource:**
were a terrible problem, and definitely hinder tourism in the area.

**Issue: Volunteerism**
Big Sandy does have a core of volunteers. It is important to prevent burnout and seek new volunteers for fresh ideas and energy.

*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.*

**Recommendation:**
Do use the Asset Mapping results – what an incredible tool for Big Sandy! To make sure that the data is used, perhaps one or two people should be appointed to be volunteer or asset coordinators for various projects. The important thing is that shoulders are tapped and the human resources are utilized.

In addition, here are some pointers to encourage volunteers and to prevent burnout:

1. Ask first if they’d like to be publicly acknowledged, then include them in an event
2. Send a letter to their supervisor at work…tell the manager how much you appreciate their hard work and special qualities.
3. Write an article in your newsletter
4. Have a board or staff member call them to advise them of how much they are appreciated
5. Send a visitor with a flower
6. Have a board member or other special person invite them to an executive lunch in a special place
7. Invite them to a special event or dinner…and honor them there
8. Write an article about their work in your neighborhood or city newspaper
9. Call them to talk and get their ideas
Issue: Housing… empty and many! A need for assisted living as an expansion of the nursing home was discussed along with affordable homes to purchase. A need to rehabilitate existing older homes was also mentioned, as well as vacant homes and sub-standard housing.

Recommendation:
There are several loan and grant programs available for purchasing existing homes, and rehab of owner occupied homes and rentals.

10. Give them more responsibility - but watch for burnout!

Resources:
USDA, Rural Development (RD) has a loan and grant home improvement program for very low-income homeowners that occupy the property. The max loan amount is $20,000 with an interest rate of 1.00% for up to 20 years. (Other regulations and restrictions may apply)

Contact for Choteau County:
USDA, Rural Development
12 3rd Street, NW / Suite 300
Great Falls, MT 59404
ATTN: Cindy Stene
(406) 727-7580

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

Issue: More Community Wide Activities

Recommendations:
Your community both young and old has enjoyed the activities that have been done in Big Sandy. There is some concern that there are a few that volunteer, many are willing to open their pocket books but giving of your time is also needed. I have mentioned previously the churches may want to rotate sponsored activities during the summer. Civic organizations may want to sponsor one type of social activity in Big Sandy a year they become an annual event. Ideas may be
a barn dance in the fall, a snowball dance in the winter or maybe a cultural event every summer. Bring your community in to support each other emotionally. The listening sessions brought out that there is a lot of great musical talent, maybe a talent show or a summer band in the park.
**BIG SANDY RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT**
**MATRIX**

**SUBJECT: EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES & ACTIVITIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUE OR PROJECT</th>
<th>RECOMMENDATIONS &amp; OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES</strong></td>
<td><strong>Recommendations:</strong> It became obvious that there is a rift in the community between those that home school their children and those that utilize the public school system. I was especially surprised to hear the public school students vocalize this rift, demonstrating that they have feelings involved in this issue as well. As we all know, conflicts that are not addressed only worsen. Use this opportunity (the resource team process) to take steps to resolve this conflict. It will only worsen and damage the children and community of Big Sandy. The truth is, the home school curriculum has something to offer to the public school system and the public school system has something to offer the home school curriculum. Why not take the best of both worlds and enhance the education of the students in Big Sandy? I strongly recommend contacting a trained facilitator that is outside of the area to begin the conflict resolution process. I have two recommendations for you – one is the utilizing the Montana Consensus Council. Their whole purpose is to resolve conflict. On a more personal level, I would recommend to you my husband, Mike O’Rourke. Mike has the perfect background to address this issue. He is the County Superintendent of Schools for Anaconda/Deer Lodge County and <strong>Contact:</strong> Mike O’Rourke, LCPC Sunrise Family Counseling 118 E. Seventh St.; Suite 2A Anaconda, MT 59711 Ph: 406.563.9178 Email: <a href="mailto:morourke52@aol.com">morourke52@aol.com</a> Matthew J. McKinney, Ph.D. Executive Director Montana Consensus Council Office of the Governor State Capital Helena, MT 59620 Phone: (406) 444-2075 Fax: (406) 444-5529 Email: <a href="mailto:mmckinney@state.mt.us">mmckinney@state.mt.us</a></td>
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taught in Montana schools for 15 years. Mike is also a minister and has served a congregation in Anaconda for the past 13 years. Finally, he is an LCPC -- Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor and operates Sunrise Family Counseling. He is trained in facilitating and the conflict management process.

I spoke with Mike about the problem in Big Sandy – and he is willing to waive any fees and provide whatever help he can in building a solution.

**Recommendations:**
You have many talents and human resources in your community. There is great interest in the arts. I would suggest that the public school and home school organization work together to bring guests in that can benefit all the children of the community. One of you may not have the financial resources but together it may be possible.

The community is divided by the beliefs of children attending public school or to be home schooled. The youth in the high school are very aware of this division, either from parents or school personnel. This division will continue to pull your community apart until it is resolved. This division comes down to money due to funding formula from the state; the parents of the home school parents pay the same taxes as everyone else. Money breaks up many relationships, including communities, churches and marriages. You have a wonderful community do not let this issue break up Big Sandy. Think creatively, it is up to each school district how they handle home school children using the public school formal teaching and extra curricular activities. Be innovative and it may become a win – win situation for all the children of Big Sandy. I would suggest an outside mediator that would assist in this situation.

I would recommend that the community start having a meeting (it could be the existing town meeting or the chamber or whomever) where the community keeps up on what all is going on and what is being done around the community.

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**One big issue:** Public School and Home School.

**Recommendations:**
This was the toughest area of our time in Big Sandy. My opinion is that the

**Recommended Resources:**
There are resources available to
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Issue: Advanced Placement/Updated Curriculum and Books</th>
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<tr>
<td>The only communication challenge that I saw during my time in Big Sandy. The entire community needs to do better in being more understanding and informed on this issue.</td>
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</table>

School Superintendent must take the first step and meet with a group or individually a number of the home school parents. There must be a way that resources can be shared and benefits for both can be enjoyed. From these meetings and cooperation the community will hopefully see a good example being set and some results. If nothing else, bringing in educational opportunities that both types of students can benefit from; example may be some type of a music session that is open to all. We must be more open and understanding of each position. The fact is that some people are going to want to home school their children. We cannot allow for this decision to cause for community unrest. The decision on how to educate your children is a personal, sometimes religious, choice that all parents must make. We must respect this decision and work to find common areas to support one another.

**Recommendations:**
I am not sure if the decrease in advanced placement classes is due to enrollment or instructors. If it is due to enrollment you may be able to combine with another school to offer a class, for example Box Elder. They may have four students and Big Sandy six, work together to form a class that could be offered. Have you explored idea of distance learning to work with another school that has a program?

The youth commented that they were using the same texts that their parents used, updated texts would be beneficial. There are some subjects that do not change, but history is one that is being made daily and to occasionally update would be good. The students may want to head up a fundraiser to assist with the purchase of new text, give them the ownership in the project.

---

Matthew J. McKinney, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Montana Consensus Council
Office of the Governor
State Capital
Helena, MT 59620
Phone: (406) 444-2075
Fax: (406) 444-5529
Email: mmckinney@state.mt.us
# BIG SANDY RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT MATRIX

## SUBJECT: SENIOR CITIZENS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUE OR PROJECT</th>
<th>RECOMMENDATIONS &amp; OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Issues:</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Transportation for daily events and health services</td>
<td><strong>Recommendations:</strong> It does seem that there is already a good relationship between Seniors and Big Sandy Activities. Big Sandy Activities is fortunate to have vehicles for transporting its clients. Perhaps agreements could be reached that would enhance both Senior Citizens and the clients of Big Sandy Activities in sharing these transportation resources.</td>
<td>Contact: Partners for Health Newsletter MT Office of Rural Health MSU-Bozeman P.O. Box 170540 Bozeman, MT 59717-0540 Ph: 406.994.5553 Email: <a href="mailto:dyoung@montana.edu">dyoung@montana.edu</a> <a href="http://ruralhealth.montana.edu">http://ruralhealth.montana.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>o Explore retirement community options</td>
<td>For other issues related to Senior Citizens, I would suggest becoming a part of an organization called Partners for Health. They provide a newsletter that is full of resources, grant information, partnership ideas, etc. At the very least, visit their website at <a href="http://ruralhealth.montana.edu">http://ruralhealth.montana.edu</a>.</td>
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<td>o And Assisted Living</td>
<td><strong>Recommendations:</strong> Different individuals thought that Big Sandy should explore the possibility of promoting Big Sandy as a retirement community. Think this idea through, what is your goal, to fill the empty houses or to bring revenue to the town? Promoting the retirement community could be part of an overall plan, but maybe not the only plan. Research the idea of assisted living facilities; it is nice to keep the seniors in the community where their families are located. What buildings are available that could be used?</td>
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<td>Issue: Retirement Community/Assisted Living</td>
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<td>Issue: Transportation for Daily Events and Health Services</td>
<td>Recommendations: Big Sandy does have a van for the seniors, I heard seniors stating that they would like some organized trips. Explore the idea with them to determine what they would like; it may be just a trip down to the Missouri or to the neighboring town for their celebrations in the summer.</td>
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### BIG SANDY RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT

#### MATRIX

**SUBJECT: MISC. TOPICS**

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<th>ISSUE OR PROJECT</th>
<th>RECOMMENDATIONS &amp; OBJECTIVES</th>
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| Issue: Grant Writing | **Recommendations:** Montana State University-Northern annually holds grant writing workshops geared towards the “novice” grant writer. The Grants and Sponsored Activities Office plans to hold another workshop in August/September 2003 and recommends that one or several individuals from Big Sandy attend this workshop. The cost of the workshop is nominal, but has proven to be very beneficial to those who have attended in the past. Northern will also be hosting workshops to help communities launch major capital-giving campaigns, start a community foundation and organize a variety of fundraisers: from golf tournaments to auctions. Big Sandy should take advantage of each of these training opportunities as well as the great number of on-line tutorials or printed resources that can be accessed on the web or in the local library. In addition, the Montana State University-Northern Vande Bogart Library has a great number of grant writing books currently on its shelves.  

**Recommendation:** One general suggestion, given the great way your community raises money to support the community, is that you may want to consider forming a ‘foundation’ for the community. That way, excess funds raised and other donations can go into the foundation, the donors can receive tax benefits and there would be some money always available to support the community. One resource to help in this area is the Montana Community Foundation. They can be reached at 406-444- |

| Resources: | Montana State University-Northern  
Grants and Sponsored Activities Website  
[http://www.msun.edu/alumfnd/grants](http://www.msun.edu/alumfnd/grants)  
Proposal Writing Short Course  
[http://fdncenter.org/learn/shortcourse/prop1.html](http://fdncenter.org/learn/shortcourse/prop1.html)  
Funding Opportunities  
Federal/State/Private/Corporate  
[http://www.msun.edu/alumfnd/grants/page7.html](http://www.msun.edu/alumfnd/grants/page7.html) |

<p>| Project: Establish a Foundation | | | |</p>
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<th>Issue: Where to find help</th>
<th>Community Foundation. They can be reached at 406-443-8313.</th>
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<td><strong>Recommendations:</strong></td>
<td>There are many places to find resources and assistance. There are thousands and thousands of places to look for grants and funding assistance. I would recommend that the first place to start (the very first thing to do with anything) is to look close to home. The best place to start to find help for whatever you need will probably lie with the following: (These resources, if they are not able to help will know who can.)</td>
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<td><strong>Recommended Resources:</strong></td>
<td>Contact the USDA Rural Development Office at 406-585-2540 and ask for a copy of their resource book: Montana State and Tribal Resource Directory (they update it about once a year). This book is a great resource for the people of Montana. A must have for community and economy development efforts in my opinion. Also (besides your chamber of commerce and local leaders) keep these people busy helping you: Bear Paw Development Corp. Tracy Jette, Paul Tuss, Craig Erickson and crew Ryan Bldg, 48 2nd Avenue Havre, MT 59501 Ph.: 406-265-9226 <a href="http://www.bearpaw.org">www.bearpaw.org</a> Montana Department of Commerce Helena Offices: 406-841-2730 <a href="http://www.commerce.state.mt.us">www.commerce.state.mt.us</a> YOUR LOCAL CONTACT: Randy Hanson 48 2nd Street, Room 211 Havre, MT 59501 Ph.: 406-262-9579</td>
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