2012-2017

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Sweetgrass Development
North Central Montana Economic Development District

Sweetgrass Development
521 1st Avenue NW
Great Falls, MT 59404
406-727-5173 Office
www.sweetgrassdevelopment.org
November 28, 2011

Robert Olson
Regional Director
U.S. Department of Commerce
EDA Denver Regional Office
410 17th Street, Suite 250
Denver, Colorado 80202-4454

Dear Mr. Olson:

I am honored to express my support for the continuing regional economic development efforts of the North Central Montana Economic Development District, better known as Sweetgrass Development.

Updating the Comprehensive Development Strategy (CEDS) for the five counties of Cascade, Glacier, Pondera, Teton and Toole will help this region approach economic development with a guiding document that reflects a unified approach to creating healthy and vibrant communities. I appreciate their efforts to assist the counties and citizens within their area.

Once again, I wholeheartedly support this economic planning development project and hope that others do as well. I look forward to the benefits that rural Montanans have to gain from their efforts. Thanks you for your consideration of this worthwhile endeavor and please feel free to contact my office if I can ever be of assistance.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
November 28, 2011

Robert Olson
Regional Director
U.S. Department of Commerce
EDA Denver Regional Office
410 17th Street, Suite 250
Denver, Colorado 80202-4454

Dear Mr. Olson:

It is with pleasure that I write in support of the continuing regional economic development efforts of the North Central Montana Economic Development District, also known as Sweetgrass Development.

Updating the Comprehensive Development Strategy (CEDS) for the five counties of Cascade, Glacier, Pondera, Teton and Toole will help this region approach economic development with a guiding document that reflects a unified approach to creating healthy and vibrant communities. I appreciate their efforts to assist the counties and citizens within their area. I look forward to the benefits that rural Montanans have to gain from their efforts.

Thank you for your consideration of this application. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide additional information.

Sincerely,

Jon Tester
United States Senator
December 1, 2011

Robert Olson
Regional Director
U.S. Department of Commerce
EDA Denver Regional Office
410 17th Street, Suite 250
Denver, Colorado 80202-4454

Dear Mr. Olson:

I am writing today to express my support for the continuing regional economic development efforts of the North Central Montana Economic Development District, better known as Sweetgrass Development.

Updating the Comprehensive Development Strategy (C BDS) for the five counties of Cascade, Glacier, Pondera, Teton and Toole will help this region approach economic development with a guiding document that reflects a unified approach to creating healthy and vibrant communities. I appreciate their efforts to assist the counties and citizens within their area.

I strongly support this economic planning development project and encourage others to do the same. I look forward to the benefits that rural Montanans have to gain from their efforts. Thank you for your consideration of this worthwhile endeavor and please feel free to contact my office if I can ever be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Denny Rehberg
Montana’s Congressman
November 29, 2011

Robert Olson
Regional Director
U.S. Department of Commerce
EDA Denver Regional Office
410 17th Street, Suite 250
Denver, Colorado 80202-4454

Dear Mr. Olson:

Under Governor Schweitzer's direction, the Governor's Office of Economic Development has been working to stimulate economic development across the State of Montana while at the same time improving infrastructure, providing jobs and enhancing the quality of life in our state.

As Chief Business Development Officer for the State of Montana, I write to express my support for the continuing regional economic development efforts of the North Central Montana Economic Development District, also known as Sweetgrass Development.

Updating the Comprehensive Development Strategy (CEDS) for the five counties of Cascade, Glacier, Pondera, Teton and Toole that Sweetgrass Development serves will help this region approach economic development with a guiding document that reflects a unified approach to creating healthy and vibrant communities. This effort to assist the counties and citizens within their area is a worthy project. I look forward to the benefits that rural Montanans have to gain from their efforts.

The Governor's Office of Economic Development supports the mission of the North Central Montana Economic Development District. We urge you to give it every consideration. Please feel free to contact our office with any questions.

Best regards,

Evan Barrett
Chief Business Development Officer
November 29, 2011

Robert Olson
Regional Director
U.S. Department of Commerce
EDA Denver Regional Office
410 17th Street, Suite 250
Denver, Colorado 80202-4454

Dear Mr. Olson:

I am writing today on behalf of the leadership of Montana Economic Developers Association to express our support for the continuing regional economic development efforts of the North Central Montana Economic Development District, better known as Sweetgrass Development.

No doubt, updating the Comprehensive Development Strategy (CEDS) for the five counties of Cascade, Glacier, Pondera, Teton and Toole will help this region approach economic development with a guiding document that reflects a unified approach to creating healthy and vibrant communities. MEDA appreciates their efforts to assist the counties and citizens within their area and contribute to the overall economy of Montana.

I look forward to the benefits that rural Montanans have to gain from the efforts of Sweetgrass Development. Thank you for your consideration of this worthwhile endeavor and please feel free to contact my office if I can provide additional information.

Sincerely,

Gloria O’Rourke
Secretary
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Executive Summary

A CEDS is a document and planning process developed with broad participation that addresses economic problems and potential for an area. Underlying the research and recommendations in this document is a philosophy, based on a growing body of literature on economic development, which states that successful approaches to prosperity, focus on creating conditions in which entrepreneurship will succeed. This involves capitalizing on existing assets, cultivating innovation and economic diversity, supporting long-term social capital, and catalyzing regional partnerships.

The principle strengths of the region are: a relatively high education rate and above average earnings per job and per capita income. The region is economically diverse, has a low unemployment rate and a willing workforce. There is a metropolitan area within the Sweetgrass region, which is reasonably accessible to most communities. Road and rail transportation is adequate. There also exists a high quality of life in the Sweetgrass region, which citizens value and wish to protect. There are identifiable local businesses that can act as models of success and a high level of locally invested citizens eager to contribute to a prosperous future.

The weaknesses of the region are: an overall increase in the unemployment rate from 1990 to 2010 (between 2005 and 2010 the region witnessed the largest spike on average in the unemployment rate). In most counties, with the exception of Cascade and Teton, there is too much reliance on relatively lower wage tourism-related service sectors and not enough growth in the high-wage services, such as information, financial, and health services. In spite of good highways, three of the five counties (those with the lowest wage service industries), are isolated from major population centers and therefore cannot readily access a commercial airport. Agriculture, historically the most important industry, has not generated new jobs or income in recent years. Many counties within the region are experiencing high rates of drug use and an outflow of youth to more urban areas. Some communities do not have a skilled workforce able to compete for higher wage jobs.

The Sweetgrass region as a whole will benefit from economic diversification, which will provide greater resilience for communities and a broader array of opportunities to individuals. Exploring high-wage service sectors and value-added agriculture should be a significant component of this diversification. It is equally important to develop a set of financial tools and resources for entrepreneurs in the region. Job training, as well as advanced educational opportunities, will be crucial to retaining area youth and positioning the region’s labor force to compete successfully in higher wage enterprises.

This CEDS document outlines a plan of action that capitalizes on the region’s strengths (i.e. trades on its competitive advantage) and addresses its weaknesses. It presents a region-wide plan, as well as county-by-county plans, with specific action items. We believe that if the underlying conditions of the region are re-examined, in light of competitive strengths and
emerging market opportunities, investors and entrepreneurs will apply their resources and skills to increase prosperity in the region.

Who Are We
Sweetgrass Development is a private, non-profit corporation created in 2004 to support economic development in the counties of Glacier, Cascade, Pondera, Teton and Toole, as well as the Blackfeet Nation. We are a diverse area that includes a large metropolitan area, many small towns, rural farming areas, several Hutterite Colonies and the Blackfeet Reservation.

The Role of Sweetgrass Development
The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) certified Sweetgrass Development, as the North Central Montana Economic Development District. We offer a variety of economic and community development services, small business technical assistance including start up and planning, grant writing and administration, and business recruitment and retention.

Our goal is to help the governments and citizens in each county and the Blackfeet Nation achieve their economic goals while preserving their distinct cultures and way of life.

We envision economically healthy, thriving communities that provide family wage jobs through a blend of a diversified agricultural economies (with emphasis on value-added enterprises), a public transportation system to link communities, improved infrastructure, expanded retail opportunities, improved marketing, promotion and coordination of regional tourism, as well as attracting outside investment for projects and activities with regional impact.

Sweetgrass Development works closely with the local economic development organizations within each community, including but not limited to Great Falls Development Authority, Teton Community Development Corporation, Pondera Regional Port Authority, Browning Community Development Corporation, Glacier County Regional Port Authority and the Port of Northern Montana, located in Shelby.

Our North Central Montana area consists of extensively diverse counties including Cascade, Glacier, Pondera, Teton and Toole. We have Glacier National Park, guest ranches, numerous lakes, rivers and streams for fishing, the Lewis and Clark trail including Camp Disappointment and the Two Medicine Fight Site, dinosaur digs, several museums, as well as many local fairs and celebrations.

Great Falls lies in Cascade County, the third largest city in Montana and is the major metropolitan city in our area. The western art capital of the world! Great Falls offers an abundance of cultural activities including ten museums and interpretive centers, a robust symphony, outdoor recreation, rodeos, concerts and more. This family friendly city has everything you would need to live and work here. Great Falls is home to Malstrom Air Force Base, has an international airport, and is connected to the major interstates and highways.
Glacier County contains the county seat, Cut Bank, as well as the Blackfeet Reservation. The Blackfeet Reservation, home of the Blackfeet Nation, is located on the East side of Glacier National Park. They have many attractions and activities including North American Indian Days as well as the Museum of the Plains Indian, which features the historical arts and crafts of local Tribes, and the Blackfeet Heritage Center and Art Gallery that also houses a baby tyrannosaur!

Cut Bank, offers fishing, hiking, big game hunting, camping, Lewis and Clark sites, shopping, farmer’s markets in the summer and many community activities.

A few miles off of I-15, history abounds in the small town of Valier in Pondera County. Originally a 200,000-acre ranch, Valier is now home to Lake Frances, a premier recreation site that offers camping, world class Walleye fishing, and boat docks to allow access for an abundant supply of water sports. Hunting, ice fishing, and snowmobiling are also popular activities in the area. Valier is also on the way to the Lewis and Clark, Two Medicine Fight Sight, as well as Glacier National Park.

Also in Pondera County lies the city of Conrad, in the heart of the Golden Triangle. Conrad is located on the historical "Whoop-Up Trail", which was a trading route running to Canada in the 1800’s. The Pondera County Court House is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Shelby, located in Toole County, hosted the famous Dempsey-Gibbons 1923 Fight. Shelby is your “crossroads to fun” located at the crossroads of I-15 Highway 2. Shelby is the gateway to Glacier National Park as well as the Great Northwest.

Staff and Board

Staff
Executive Director
Sarah Converse

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Great Falls, MT 59404
406-727-5173 Office
406-454-6903 Fax
www.sweetgrassdevelopment.org

Office Hours: 8:00-5:00 Monday-Friday
Email: sgdevelopment@bresnan.net
**Board**

**CRDC Board Membership Roster**

1. Government Representatives (51-65%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lillian Alfson</td>
<td>Town of Fairfield</td>
<td>Mayor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Briggs</td>
<td>Cascade County</td>
<td>Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry Bonderud</td>
<td>City of Shelby</td>
<td>Mayor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynthia Johnson</td>
<td>Pondera County</td>
<td>Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon Augare</td>
<td>Blackfeet Tribal Business Council</td>
<td>Elected Tribal Councilman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Hodgkiss</td>
<td>Teton County</td>
<td>Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorette Carter</td>
<td>City of Shelby</td>
<td>City Development Coord.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony Sitzmann</td>
<td>Glacier County</td>
<td>Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deb Brandon</td>
<td>Toole County</td>
<td>Econ. Develop. Director</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Non-Government Representatives (35-49%)

A. Private Sector Representatives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Company/Enterprise</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Llew Jones</td>
<td>Pure Bliss Cycle Cut</td>
<td>Owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doug Embody</td>
<td>Bank Villas Liberty</td>
<td>Manage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Shevlin</td>
<td>Safes of Conrad</td>
<td>r CEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheryl Curry</td>
<td>Curry Cattle</td>
<td>Owner</td>
</tr>
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</table>

B. Stakeholder Organization Representatives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Position</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steve Malicott</td>
<td>Gt. Falls Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lanni Klasner</td>
<td>MSU-COT</td>
<td>Dir. Outreach and Mktng</td>
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3. At-Large Representatives (0-14%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Area of Interest</th>
<th>Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jason Gibson</td>
<td>Teton Banks</td>
<td>Loan Analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russ Wahl</td>
<td>Wahl Farms</td>
<td>Owner/Operator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Calculations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Government Representatives (51-65%)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Non-Government Representatives (35-49%)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Private Sector Representatives (at least 1)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Stakeholder Organization Representatives (at least 1)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>3. At-Large Representatives (0-14%)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Board Membership</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
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### Strategy Committee Roster

#### 1. Private Sector Representatives (At least 51%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lyle Hodgkiss</td>
<td>Citizens State Bank</td>
<td>Senior Loan Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Shevlin</td>
<td>Liberty Safes</td>
<td>CEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William McCauley</td>
<td>Cut Bank Building Service</td>
<td>Owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry Bonderud</td>
<td>Privately Owned Optometry</td>
<td>Optometrist/Owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Briggs</td>
<td>Briggs Computers</td>
<td>CEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold Olsen</td>
<td>Olsen Drug</td>
<td>Owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron Rides at the Door</td>
<td>Door Farms</td>
<td>Owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendy Judisch</td>
<td>Judisch Spraying Service</td>
<td>Co-owner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2. Representatives of other economic interests (No more than 49%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brian Crawford</td>
<td>Blackfeet Tribe</td>
<td>Deputy Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon Augare</td>
<td>State of Montana</td>
<td>Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Ober</td>
<td>Toole County</td>
<td>Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeanne Schoonover</td>
<td>City of Dutton</td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corlene Martin</td>
<td>City of Choteau</td>
<td>Council Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonnie Field</td>
<td>PRPA</td>
<td>Board Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brett Doney</td>
<td>Great Falls Dev. Authority</td>
<td>President</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Calculations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector Representatives (At least 51%)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representatives of other Economic Interests (No more than 49%)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Committee Membership</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Vision and Mission

#### Vision

Our goal is to help the governments and citizens in each county and the Blackfeet Nation achieve their economic goals while preserving their distinct cultures and way of life.

The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) certified Sweetgrass Development, as the North Central Montana Economic Development District. We offer a variety of economic and community development services, small business technical assistance including start up and planning, grant writing and administration, and business recruitment and retention.

#### Mission

We envision economically healthy, thriving communities that provide family wage jobs through a blend of a diversified agricultural economies (with emphasis on value-added enterprises), a public transportation system to link communities, improved infrastructure, expanded retail opportunities, improved marketing, promotion and coordination of regional tourism, as well as attracting outside investment for projects and activities with regional impact.
History

Federal Background

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) recognizes the effectiveness of regional economic development efforts in rural areas of the United States. During the 1960s and 1970s, EDA formed regional organizations called Economic Development Districts (EDD). The Districts often encompassed several rural counties. The most familiar EDD in Montana is Bear Paw Development Corporation located in the north central portion of the state. Bear Paw Development Corporation serves the counties of Hill, Blaine, Phillips, Choteau and Liberty. Bear Paw was officially recognized as an EDD on March 22, 1969. The five counties of Cascade, Glacier, Pondera, Teton and Toole, also formed an Economic Development District during the 1970s. The EDD was called The Golden Triangle. It did not enjoy the success of Bear Paw Development Corporation and became defunct during the 1980s. The North Central Montana Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D), another federal program sponsored through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Natural Resource and Conservation Service (NRCS), also recognized the effectiveness of regionalization. The RC&D formed its own, larger district. The RC&D district includes the five counties of Bear Paw Development Corporation as well as Cascade, Glacier, Pondera, Teton and Toole counties. The RC&D provides technical assistance in grant writing, planning and other community development projects that have more of a land conservation focus. The RC&D wrote the application for the western five counties of the RC&D district (Cascade, Glacier, Pondera, Teton and Toole) to once again form an Economic Development District. In early 2004, the new North Central Montana Economic Development District received notification from the EDA of official recognition and began doing business as Sweetgrass Development.

The benefits for the five counties of the new EDD include:
1. Participation in EDA and state funding programs;
2. Reduced dollar match for grant programs;
3. Inclusion in the area-wide CEDS document; and
4. Networking with other communities in the region.

State Background

The economic downturn experienced in Montana during the 1990s caused State Government also to assess “best practices” among economic development efforts, one of them being an increased interest in regionalization. As a result, the State of Montana developed the Certified Regional Development Corporation Program. In the late 1980s, the State of Montana put together a program called “Certified Communities.” The goal of Certified Communities was to better equip cities and towns to meet the needs of expanding or relocating business and industry. Each Certified Community was asked to complete a community profile. The community profile contained demographic information and potential industrial site data. The Certified Community program operated for more than 12 years without state funding. In 2000, the Montana State Legislature appropriated $425,000 for the program. A formula using population, counties and cities served as well as square miles was developed to divide the money among the recognized certified communities. There were approximately 40 qualified communities in the first year. In the second year, the number almost doubled. In 2003, the State of Montana underwent a budget crisis and the money was returned to the General Fund. With the intervention of Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA), the program was salvaged, but with major changes. Individual communities would no longer receive funds. Rather, the money would go to Certified Regional Development Corporations.
Corporations (CRDC), throughout the state. The CRDC would provide four major services:

1. Small business technical assistance;
2. Revolving loan fund program;
3. Planning; and
4. Grant writing and administration.
And, to a lesser degree:
5. Business recruitment; and

In May and June of 2004, twelve applications were submitted and accepted. Sweetgrass Development was among those accepted. Other local development organizations exist within the region as partners to Sweetgrass Development. These include:

**Development Organizations in the Region**

**Cascade County:**
- Great Falls Development Authority (GFDA)
- High Plains Financial

**Glacier County:**
- Browning Community Development Corporation
- GAIN Development, Inc. (Glacier Action and Involvement Now)

**Pondera County:**
- Pondera Regional Port Authority (PRPA)
- Valier Area Development Corporation

**Teton County:**
- Teton County Development Corporation (TCDC)

**Toole County:**
- City of Shelby Community Economic Development Director
- Northern Express Transportation Authority (NETA)
- Toole County Economic Development

**Regional Organizations:**
- North Central Montana RC&D
- Sweetgrass Development
Analysis of the Region and It’s Economy

This section of the CEDS document begins with an overview of the region as a whole. In order to plan and develop strategies, we must first assess the current state of this region.

- Geography
- Population and Culture
- Poverty and Income
- Business Overview/Workforce Development
- Education
- Housing
- Health and Social Services
- Natural Resources and Energy Development
- Infrastructure and Transportation
- Environment
- Regional Clusters
Geography

As the ground gains elevation heading to the west, farms give way to ranches. Further west, the mountains rise up suddenly. This place, where ranch country meets the mountains, is referred to by Montanans with pride as the Rocky Mountain Front (or simply, The Front). The Front stretches approximately 110 miles in Montana. There is a high level of species and wildlife diversity due to the dramatic range of habitat; from foothills and grasslands to high elevation alpine meadows and tundra.

The Rocky Mountain Front is also home to a third of all plant life found in Montana. These native plant and animal populations are generally intact since human settlement has been low impact and based principally on grazings.

The Rocky Mountain Front is nationally recognized for its mega fauna, such as the grizzly bear, Canadian lynx, gray wolf and bighorn sheep, and its big game animals: elk, moose, mountain goat, mule deer, antelope and white-tail deer. The Front is the last place in the lower 48 states where grizzly bears travel from the mountains to the prairies, and it is not unusual to see grizzly bears in and around the town of Choteau. For these reasons, this area is world-renowned among tourists, hunters and anglers.
The Marias River system runs throughout the Sweetgrass region. The Marias River is a tributary of the Missouri River and is approximately 210 mi (338 km) long. The headwaters of the Marias, Cut Bank Creek and the Two Medicine River flow out of the Rocky Mountain Front through the Blackfeet Indian Reservation and come together near the border of Glacier County. The Teton River joins the Marias River after coming from the Rocky Mountain Front through foothills and farmland. The Teton River passes south of the community of Choteau and its major tributaries are Muddy Creek, Deep Creek and McDonald Creek. The Milk River is also a major river in the Sweetgrass region. Like the Teton, it begins in the Rocky Mountain Front, and flows through parts of Glacier and Toole Counties.

**Federal Public Lands**
Much of the land on the western edge of the Sweetgrass region is primarily public land, managed by the U.S.D.A. Forest Service and the U.S. National Park Service. These public lands contain approximately 1.5 million acres in congressionally designated Wilderness that includes the Bob Marshall, Great Bear and Scapegoat Wilderness areas.

**Government Lands**
It also includes Glacier National Park, the Lewis and Clark National Forest and a small but important strip of land (because of potential energy development) managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Glacier National Park borders Waterton Lakes National Park in Canada and the two were designated as the world's first International Peace Park in 1932. In 1995, Glacier National Park and Waterton Lakes Park were designated as a Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage Site.

Conservation groups, such as The Nature Conservancy and the Boone and Crockett Club, also manage private wildlife reserves in the area.

The Rocky Mountain Front is also part of what geologists call the Montana Thrust Belt, a formation that contains potentially recoverable oil and gas. The potential to develop this resource has long been a source of political tension in the region. Efforts to protect the Rocky Mountain Front date back to 1947, when the Montana state legislature designated the Sun River Game Preserve. The Bob Marshall Wilderness was created by Congress in 1964. It was later expanded and today covers over a million acres. But even in this Wilderness there was potential for development, so in 1983 an emergency withdrawal was executed by Congress to prevent oil and gas leasing. To prevent drilling in the Badger-Two Medicine
area of the Front the Blackfeet Tribal Council passed a resolution declaring the area sacred tribal ground. By 1978 the Great Bear Wilderness was designated, creating further protection to the Front. In 1993, and again in 1996, the Department of the Interior established a moratorium on oil and gas development in the Badger-Two Medicine area. In 1997 the Lewis and Clark National Forest issued a decision to reject all attempts at oil and gas leasing on Forest lands for established a moratorium on oil and gas development in the Badger-Two Medicine area. In 1997 the Lewis and Clark National Forest issued a decision to reject all attempts at oil and gas leasing on Forest lands for 10 to 15 years. By 2001 this was extended to disallow all hard rock mining on the same Forest for 20 years.

The pitched battles between protection for the Rocky Mountain Front from energy development and the opening of the Front for development continue today. Most recently, in 2004, the BLM began a review process as part of the development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to explore the possibility of leasing drilling permits for natural gas development in the Blackleaf area (a strip of BLM land northwest of Choteau, nestled between ranch land and National Forest land). Based on public feedback, in October 2004 the BLM decided to suspend drilling proposals in the Blackleaf area.
Population and Culture

There were 112,276 people living in the Sweetgrass region in 2010, and the population has slightly declined since 2000, whereas Montana's population as a whole has increased. This region has slightly more people who are over 65, three times as many American Indian people, fewer high school and college graduates, than Montana State has on average.

This region has a high population of Blackfeet American Indians as well as numerous Hutterite colonies. In the community meeting summaries, there is a general consensus that there is a strong sense of community and a proud 'small town' and rural culture in this region. It was also noted in the community meetings, the development and stratification of ‘aging’ communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People QuickFacts</th>
<th>Cascade County</th>
<th>Glacier County</th>
<th>Pondera County</th>
<th>Teton County</th>
<th>Toole County</th>
<th>Sweetgrass Region</th>
<th>Montana State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population, 2010</td>
<td>81,327</td>
<td>13,399</td>
<td>6,153</td>
<td>6,073</td>
<td>5,324</td>
<td>112,276</td>
<td>989,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population, % change, 2000 to 2010</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>-4.2%</td>
<td>-5.8%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>-1.3%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population, 2000</td>
<td>80,357</td>
<td>13,246</td>
<td>6,424</td>
<td>6,445</td>
<td>5,267</td>
<td>111,739</td>
<td>902,190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons under 5 years old, %, 2009</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons under 18 years old, %, 2009</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons 65 years old and over, %, 2009</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>15.48%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female persons, %, 2009</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
<td>50.7%</td>
<td>51.2%</td>
<td>46.6%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Black persons, %, 2010 (a)         | 1.2%           | 0.1%           | 0.1%           | 0.0%         | 0.5%         | 0.4%              | 0.4%         |
| American Indian and Alaska Native persons, %, 2010 (a) | 4.3%           | 65.6%          | 14.5%          | 1.4%         | 4.5%         | 18.1%             | 6.3%         |
| Persons reporting 2+ races, %, 2010 | 3.6%           | 2.8%           | 2.4%           | 1.9%         | 1.9%         | 2.5%              | 2.5%         |
| Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, %, 2010 (b) | 3.3%           | 1.8%           | 1.4%           | 1.3%         | 2.4%         | 2.0%              | 2.9%         |
| White persons not Hispanic, persons, 2010 | 87.4%          | 30.7%          | 82.2%          | 95.4%        | 90.4%        | 77.2%             | 87.8%        |

| Language other than English spoken at home, % age 5+, 2005-2009 | 4.9% | 11.1% | 10.6% | 7.7% | 11.7% | 9.2% | 4.7% |
| High school graduates, % of persons age 25+, 2005-2009 | 90.9% | 79.8% | 88.1% | 86.9% | 86.2% | 86.4% | 90.4% |
| Bachelor's degree or higher, % of persons age 25+, 2005-2009 | 23.3% | 17.5% | 20.7% | 20.4% | 20.1% | 20.4% | 27.0% |
| Veterans, 2005-2009 | 11,525 | 913 | 517 | 732 | 617 | 14,304 | 100,259 |
| Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16+, 2005-2009 | 15.1 | 11.4 | 16.1 | 18.2 | 16.7 | 15.5 | 17.3 |

(US Census Bureau State & County QuickFacts)
The Sweetgrass Region faces a similar problem that the majority of rural Montana faces: a **declining youth and rising senior population**. This imbalance can result in many things such as: a declining tax-base, a declining workforce, a declining population, and seniors leaving their community for health and living assistance.

However, this can also be viewed as an opportunity if maximized. There are opportunities to build geographically and culturally applicable elderly care, senior recreation, and assisted living facilities. Through developing more jobs in the health and elderly care industries, youth may have more opportunities for jobs locally.

### Population Shift in the Sweetgrass Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cascade County</th>
<th>Glacier County</th>
<th>Pondera County</th>
<th>Teton County</th>
<th>Toole County</th>
<th>Sweetgrass Region</th>
<th>Montana State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population under 24 years</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population over 65 years</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Projections)

| 2015       | 17.6           | 10.6           | 18.9           | 20.8         | 13.9         | 16               | 14.8         |
| 2020       | 19.8           | 19.1           | 17.9           | 22           | 21.4         | 16               | 14.8         |
| 2025       | 22.2           | 23.7           | 20.8           | 24           | 25           | 26               | 16           |

(US Census Bureau State & County QuickFacts) (Department of Public Health and Human Services) **Aging Population in the Sweetgrass Region**

(Department of Public Health and Human Services)
The Blackfeet Tribe

Part of what are now Glacier and Pondera counties were set aside as the Blackfeet Indian Reservation by the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851 – a treaty signing where Blackfeet tribal members were not present. In 1896, the Blackfeet ceded the western portion of their reservation, which eventually became Glacier National Park.

In 1907 the Allotment Act allocated 302 acres to every tribal member. Some land was reserved for town sites (Browning and Babb) and the remainder was sold to white settlers. Tribal members were allowed to patent their land, though many did not understand the patenting process, and sold their land for very low prices.

By 1934 the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) allowed the tribe to form their own system of government, which resulted in, among others, the creation of the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council.

The Blackfeet Nation adds a rich history and cultural diversity to the region. As with many tribes, a revitalization of tribal traditions and customs grew in the late twentieth century with education initiatives leading the way. The Blackfeet’s Algonquian language and their traditional cultural values are taught today through various programs. Strengthening the sense of community through a continued identification with their heritage is one goal of these programs (The Blackfeet Tribe, 2007-2008).

Tribal enrolled members currently living on the Blackfeet Reservation is 9,088. Only 57% of enrolled Blackfeet are living on or adjacent to the Blackfeet Reservation. (The Blackfeet Tribe, 2007-2008).

Education levels are low on the reservation compared to the national average. In 1992 Browning High school conducted a study of students enrolled as freshmen in 1985 to discover how many in that class had finished high school. Only 47% had graduated and 2% were unaccounted for. Furthermore, at a time when many reservation schools were reporting decreases in dropout rates, the Browning School District reported a dropout rate slightly over 50%. The Blackfeet Community College, founded in 1976, is an asset to the community and provides educational opportunities/guidance for the residents of the Blackfeet Reservation (The Blackfeet Tribe, 2007-2008).

Job opportunities on the reservation are limited. Unemployment rates are 70% or more. Relatively few (10% or less) of the reservation population engage in farming as an occupation. Unemployment has increased with the growth in population, a trend that contrasts with the population loss in other areas near the Blackfeet Reservation. The result is large families living in poverty on the reservation due to the lack of jobs. On the reservation more than a third of the families are living in poverty as defined by federal income guidelines. (The Blackfeet Tribe, 2007-2008).

The Blackfeet Tribe has many natural resources which present many opportunities such as tourism, oil and gas, minerals, and wind energy. The Blackfeet Indian Reservation is considered as the windiest large contiguous land area in the four state Pacific Northwest Region.
Hutterite Colonies

Montana is home to about 4,000 Hutterites and the Sweetgrass region is home to a number of Hutterite colonies. There are at least 20 colonies in the region.

Hutterites are members of a Christian denomination that live in “colonies,” where property is commonly owned by the church and basic necessities are provided through a communal system of welfare. The colonies function as efficient, industrial agricultural operations. Each colony consists of a population of less than 200 individuals. The predominant language spoken in the colonies is a German dialect, although Hutterites are bilingual. Three distinct groups of Hutterites exist in Montana: the Schmiedeleut, Darisusleut and Lehrerleut.

Although Hutterites live in close-knit communities, they do interact with the outside world to buy farm inputs such as fertilizer and equipment, and to sell farm products. In most of the colonies in Montana children leave school at the age of 15 to work on the farm operations of the colony. Hutterites are known for being religiously devoted, hard working and productive: 39 Hutterite colonies in Montana produce 60 percent of the state’s pork, 50 percent of its eggs, and 17 percent of its milk (Morton, 2010).
It was mentioned in each community meeting that poverty, low wages, unemployment, and/or low income are issues that are very prevalent in the towns and communities and in this region.

All of the counties in this region are above the State-wide poverty level (with Cascade County just barely above it by .1% and Teton County above it by .3%). Glacier County and the Blackfeet tribe witness the highest level of poverty in the region, with 30.5%, which is double the State-wide average.

In the community meetings it appeared that there is an overarching need for higher paying jobs, more jobs, more diversified local jobs, and a higher minimum wage.

The percentage of children in poverty in Glacier and Pondera Counties are slightly above the average rate of poverty in each county. It appears that the rate of child poverty in the Counties of Glacier, Cascade and Pondera have gone up slightly since 2000, and the Counties of Toole and Teton have remained at about the same level since 2000.
The unemployment rate in this region is relatively average in comparison with the State. Cascade and Pondera’s unemployment rates are somewhat high, and Glacier’s unemployment rate is very high.

The community meetings did not discuss unemployment rate too much, except for the town of Browning in Glacier County, and the town of Shelby in Toole County. Browning has had a lot of difficulty with the high rate of unemployment, whereas Toole discussed how they felt they had low unemployment due to the diversification of industries and natural resources.

![Unemployment Rate Map](Montana.gov)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Labor Force</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>CASCADE</td>
<td>40712</td>
<td>38236</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>CASCADE</td>
<td>38526</td>
<td>37146</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>CASCADE</td>
<td>38328</td>
<td>36440</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>CASCADE</td>
<td>37259</td>
<td>35396</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>CASCADE</td>
<td>36433</td>
<td>34440</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>GLACIER</td>
<td>5895</td>
<td>5297</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>GLACIER</td>
<td>5766</td>
<td>5388</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>GLACIER</td>
<td>5716</td>
<td>5254</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>GLACIER</td>
<td>5620</td>
<td>4853</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>GLACIER</td>
<td>5417</td>
<td>4773</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>PONDERA</td>
<td>2505</td>
<td>2340</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>PONDERA</td>
<td>2689</td>
<td>2574</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>PONDERA</td>
<td>2982</td>
<td>2840</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>PONDERA</td>
<td>3042</td>
<td>2920</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>PONDERA</td>
<td>2992</td>
<td>2878</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>TETON</td>
<td>2974</td>
<td>2800</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>TETON</td>
<td>2976</td>
<td>2884</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>TETON</td>
<td>2981</td>
<td>2850</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>TETON</td>
<td>3034</td>
<td>2939</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>TETON</td>
<td>3004</td>
<td>2914</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>TOOLE</td>
<td>2448</td>
<td>2333</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>TOOLE</td>
<td>2512</td>
<td>2440</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>TOOLE</td>
<td>2529</td>
<td>2426</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>TOOLE</td>
<td>2811</td>
<td>2672</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>TOOLE</td>
<td>2677</td>
<td>2594</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>SG Region</td>
<td>10906.8</td>
<td>10206.6</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>SG Region</td>
<td>10493.8</td>
<td>10086.4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>SG Region</td>
<td>10507.2</td>
<td>9962</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>SG Region</td>
<td>10353.2</td>
<td>9756</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>SG Region</td>
<td>10104.6</td>
<td>9519.8</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Montana Department of Labor and Industry)
The *income* level in this region is somewhat lower than the state average. In 2009 Median Household Income in the Sweetgrass Region was over $6,000 dollars less than what the Montana Median Household Income was. However, since 2005, Personal Income has increased slightly in the region.

There was some feedback during the community meetings regarding income. In Chotoeau, people are concerned that the younger generation is not volunteering as much due to limited income and time constraints due to work.

Due to high cost of living both mothers and fathers have to work at least full-time, and often have multiple jobs in order to make a liveable income.

People in Conrad feel the strain and challenge of keeping youth in the community. One obstacle is the on-average lower wages in rural areas vs. cities, as well as limited job opportunities.

People in Cut Bank would like to see the median household income meet the state average.

---

**Sweetgrass region – Household Breakdown and income – 2005-2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income QuickFacts</th>
<th>Cascade County</th>
<th>Glacier County</th>
<th>Pondera County</th>
<th>Teton County</th>
<th>Toole County</th>
<th>Sweetgrass Region</th>
<th>Montana</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Households, 2005-2009</td>
<td>32,508</td>
<td>4,300</td>
<td>2,459</td>
<td>2,465</td>
<td>1,933</td>
<td>43,665</td>
<td>372,947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons per household, 2005-2009</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median household income, 2009</td>
<td>$40,434</td>
<td>$29,941</td>
<td>$34,813</td>
<td>$36,834</td>
<td>$37,238</td>
<td>35,852</td>
<td>$42,222</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(U.S Census Bureau)

---

**Sweetgrass Region – Per Capita Personal Income – 2005-2009**

(Bureau of Economic Analysis)
The graph to the right illustrates that government, services, and retail trade are the **industries** that contribute to the highest personal income level in the Sweetgrass Region. Income has almost doubled in the Retail Industry from 1970 to 2000.

The chart below reviews the percent of total of personal income in non-labor income in the Sweetgrass Region compared to the United States. Non-labor income includes: Dividends, Interest and Rent, and Transfer Payments (payments from governments to individuals, age-related, including Medicare, disability insurance payments, and retirements) (Praxis, Strategy Group). This region’s population receives more non-labor income than the United States Average.
In 2000 there was a disparity of income between sexes. Men on average earned approximately $7,100 more than women did in the Sweetgrass region. However, in the state average, men earned around $10,000 dollars more than women, which was less of a disparity than the state average in 2000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Cascade</th>
<th>Glacier</th>
<th>Pondera</th>
<th>Teton</th>
<th>Toole</th>
<th>SG Region</th>
<th>Montana</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>209,700</td>
<td>230,036</td>
<td>193,141</td>
<td>183,89</td>
<td>191,41</td>
<td>201,70</td>
<td>20,914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>289,933</td>
<td>274,455</td>
<td>271,258</td>
<td>257,94</td>
<td>272,84</td>
<td>273,28</td>
<td>30,503</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*$7,158 difference between male and female income in the Sweetgrass Region in 2000 (U.S Census Bureau)

In 2010 there was a disparity in incomes between average individual earnings between heterosexual and homosexual individuals. Men in same-sex relationships earned on average over $18,000 dollars less than heterosexual men. Women in same sex-couples earned $4,800 dollars more on average than married couples.

Income for Same-Sex couples and Heterosexual married Couples

(The Williams Institute)
Business Overview and Workforce Development

The region faced a decline in the number of business establishments in Glacier, Toole, Cascade and Pondera Counties between 2000 and 2008. However there was an overall increase of jobs in the region, which could symbolize a decline in smaller business establishments and a hiring increase with larger business establishments.

Overall this region has a higher percentage of American Indian owned firms in 2007, and a slightly lower percentage of women-owned firms than the state average.

Some of this CEDS economic and industry analysis was developed by the Praxis Strategy Group. This was done through a Department of Defense, Office of Economic Adjustment grant to Cascade County. The basis of the grant to was assess economic diversification of the region. These statistics were products of the Defense Diversification Project.

In January of 2007, the U.S. Air Force announced plans to deactivate the 564th Missile Squadron from its mission on Malmstrom Air Force Base. The Defense Diversification Project was designed to see what impacts this deactivation would have on the region.

Percent Change in Number of Business Establishments Between 2000 and 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income QuickFacts</th>
<th>Cascade County</th>
<th>Glacier County</th>
<th>Pondera County</th>
<th>Teton County</th>
<th>Toole County</th>
<th>Sweetgrass Region</th>
<th>Montana</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of firms, 2007</td>
<td>7,266</td>
<td>968</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>1,024</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>10,253</td>
<td>114,439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native owned firms, percent, 2007</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>12.9%*</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women-owned firms, percent, 2007</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
<td>22.35*</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturers shipments, 2007 ($1000)</td>
<td>670,881</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>670,881</td>
<td>10,638,145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant wholesaler sales, 2007 ($1000)</td>
<td>672,008</td>
<td>125,194</td>
<td>46,119</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>96,316</td>
<td>939,647</td>
<td>8,202,782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail sales, 2007 ($1000)</td>
<td>1,302,292</td>
<td>106,256</td>
<td>64,672</td>
<td>43,930</td>
<td>54,824</td>
<td>1,571,974</td>
<td>14,686,854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail sales per capita, 2007</td>
<td>$15,924</td>
<td>$7,956</td>
<td>$10,886</td>
<td>$7,130</td>
<td>$10,989</td>
<td>$10,577</td>
<td>$15,343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and food services sales, 2007 ($1000)</td>
<td>174,295</td>
<td>37,613</td>
<td>4,191</td>
<td>2,987</td>
<td>10,602</td>
<td>229,688</td>
<td>2,079,426</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Average/Total does not include those counties with insufficient data

(Montana.gov)
From 2002 to 2008 the Sweetgrass region added just more than 4,400 jobs, a 7% growth rate. The regional economy is heavily focused on agriculture, mining, utilities, entertainment & recreation, accommodation & food services, and government & military.

The construction (heavy construction and specialty contractors – involved in renewable energy areas) and administrative services (primarily NEW, D.A. Davidson, Centene) accounted for nearly 2,200 new jobs. Largest losses came in the insurance carriers and processing sectors.

The region’s heavy focus on natural resources, government and military, and leisure and hospitality comes at the expense of manufacturing and high-end service industries.

Sweetgrass region holds more than 75% less employment in manufacturing, 46% less employment in professional and business services, and 69% less employment in management companies than national “norm” levels. Adding jobs to bring these industries closer to balance presents a growth opportunity for the region. (Praxis, Strategy Group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting</td>
<td>3,996</td>
<td>3,844</td>
<td>(152)</td>
<td>-3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>(23)</td>
<td>-6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>3,403</td>
<td>4,539</td>
<td>1,136</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>1,313</td>
<td>1,290</td>
<td>(23)</td>
<td>-1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>1,994</td>
<td>2,189</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>8,120</td>
<td>8,403</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and warehousing</td>
<td>2,189</td>
<td>2,171</td>
<td>(18)</td>
<td>-0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>1,170</td>
<td>1,136</td>
<td>(34)</td>
<td>-2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and insurance</td>
<td>3,380</td>
<td>2,801</td>
<td>(579)</td>
<td>-17.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate and rental and leasing</td>
<td>1,639</td>
<td>2,030</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and technical services</td>
<td>2,393</td>
<td>2,489</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of companies and enterprises</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>95.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative and waste services</td>
<td>1,853</td>
<td>2,876</td>
<td>1,023</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational services</td>
<td>897</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>(65)</td>
<td>-7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care and social assistance</td>
<td>7,567</td>
<td>7,713</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, entertainment, and recreation</td>
<td>1,577</td>
<td>1,807</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and food services</td>
<td>5,052</td>
<td>5,457</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services, except public administration</td>
<td>3,075</td>
<td>3,693</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>12,787</td>
<td>13,310</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Praxis, Strategy Group)
The Sweet Grass region currently holds more than 5 times more military jobs as a share of total jobs than a “typical” economy. Other highly concentrated occupations include management (agricultural managers and farm operators), sales, administrative support, general farming occupations, and installation and maintenance occupations (especially vehicle and aircraft mechanics, such as AvMax, CableTech and International Truck Bodies). Compared to the rest of the nation, the region lacks computer and mathematics occupations, architects and engineers, and to a lesser extent business and financial occupations and science related occupations. (Praxis, Strategy Group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATION</th>
<th>2003 Jobs</th>
<th>2008 Jobs</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>% Change</th>
<th>2007 Median Hourly Earnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management occupations</td>
<td>6,136</td>
<td>6,748</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>$15.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and financial operations</td>
<td>2,635</td>
<td>2,862</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>$18.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer/math science</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>$19.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture and engineering</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>$23.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life, physical, and social science</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>649</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>$24.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community and social services</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>879</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>$15.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal occupations</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>-15</td>
<td>-3%</td>
<td>$23.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, training, and library</td>
<td>3,436</td>
<td>3,846</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>$18.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media</td>
<td>1,610</td>
<td>1,775</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>$10.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations</td>
<td>2,868</td>
<td>2,965</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>$37.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare support</td>
<td>1,643</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>$11.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective service</td>
<td>929</td>
<td>1,069</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>$19.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food preparation and serving related occupations</td>
<td>4,885</td>
<td>5,322</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>$7.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bldg /grounds clean and maint</td>
<td>2,681</td>
<td>3,026</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>$8.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal care and service</td>
<td>2,369</td>
<td>2,697</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>$7.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales &amp; related occupations</td>
<td>8,150</td>
<td>8,994</td>
<td>844</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>$11.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office &amp; administrative support</td>
<td>8,294</td>
<td>9,025</td>
<td>731</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>$12.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming, fishing, and forestry</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>$10.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction and extraction</td>
<td>3,297</td>
<td>4,238</td>
<td>941</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>$17.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations</td>
<td>2,726</td>
<td>3,071</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>$16.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production occupations</td>
<td>1,572</td>
<td>1,713</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>$13.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and material moving occupations</td>
<td>3,450</td>
<td>3,629</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>$14.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Occupations</td>
<td>4,185</td>
<td>4,019</td>
<td>-166</td>
<td>-4%</td>
<td>$15.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Praxis, Strategy Group)
Regional Industry Clusters

An ‘Industry Cluster’ is a group of establishments located geographically in close proximity to one another, have similar inputs or outputs, and/or are a supplier or customer to one another.

Clusters often help to increase economic diversity within a region, as well as help in small business development and local employment.

When industries that support each other are located in the same region, this often; decreases transportation costs, increases face-to-face interaction amongst local stakeholders which often creates a platform for innovation within that industry, provides a stronger local network and need for local companies and entrepreneurship, and often creates jobs.

We, as a region, can better identify what new businesses may find success through becoming part of a growing cluster, or to better analyze why a cluster is declining.

A growing energy cluster has led the way in the Sweet Grass region, focusing on wind-generated electricity and hydro. While the region’s agribusiness sector has shown a slight decline, this growth trajectory is significantly ahead of the national agribusiness sector, indicating a source of strength for the region.

Other highly competitive sectors include defense & security (CBP & the Shelby Correctional Facility), forest & wood products, and chemicals & chemical products. (Praxis, Strategy Group )

Sweetgrass Region Cluster Shifts, 2002-2008
The far right column of Table 3 shows each cluster’s Location Quotient, a measure of the size of the local cluster compared to the rest of the nation. A LQ of 1.0 indicates a cluster the same proportion as the rest of the nation. For instance the LQ of 2.36 for the agribusiness sector indicates that the share of jobs in agribusiness in the Sweet Grass Region is more than two times larger than the rest of the nation, while a LQ of 0.30 in the Information Technology & telecommunications cluster indicates its share of jobs is 70% lower than the national norm.

A high-value manufacturing cluster (ITB, AvMax, CableTech, value added food manufacturers) seem to be emerging in the region. Note that each shows an extremely low LQ, indicating it is just a blip on the regional economic radar. Considering the presence of some mechanical and technical acumen in the region, the emergence of these clusters could be a chance to build higher value manufacturing from scratch. Health care is included in the biomedical and biotechnical cluster. (Praxis, Strategy Group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Cluster Shifts: 2002 - 2008</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Earnings per Worker</th>
<th>Growth</th>
<th>Growth %</th>
<th>Current LQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Energy (Fossil &amp; Renewable)</td>
<td>2,970</td>
<td>$57958</td>
<td>809</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense &amp; Security</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>$32898</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Entertainment, Recreation &amp; Visitor Industries</td>
<td>3,095</td>
<td>$17125</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biomedical/Biotechnical (Life Sciences)</td>
<td>4,571</td>
<td>$40983</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest &amp; Wood Products</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>$32261</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemicals &amp; Chemical Based Products</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>$51972</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer &amp; Electronic Product Manufacturing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>$37720</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>233%</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinery Manufacturing</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>$74887</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Equipment Manufacturing</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>$41370</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>$29579</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>$88950</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(1%)</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Materials</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>$56611</td>
<td>(24)</td>
<td>(13%)</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apparel &amp; Textiles</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>$31648</td>
<td>(84)</td>
<td>(46%)</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation &amp; Logistics</td>
<td>1,709</td>
<td>$58258</td>
<td>(95)</td>
<td>(6%)</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agribusiness, Food Processing &amp; Technology</td>
<td>4,873</td>
<td>$28522</td>
<td>(97)</td>
<td>(2%)</td>
<td>2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology &amp; Telecommunications</td>
<td>944</td>
<td>$49159</td>
<td>(123)</td>
<td>(13%)</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing &amp; Publishing</td>
<td>787</td>
<td>$39571</td>
<td>(131)</td>
<td>(17%)</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education &amp; Knowledge Creation</td>
<td>1,006</td>
<td>$25228</td>
<td>(222)</td>
<td>(22%)</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business &amp; Financial Services</td>
<td>4,755</td>
<td>$47674</td>
<td>(591)</td>
<td>(12%)</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Praxis, Strategy Group)
Base analysis shows which groups of industries drive a region’s economy, or bring in the most dollars from outside the area instead of circulating dollars already present in the region.

Government supports 32% of the jobs and 40% of the earnings in the region. Note that government supports a higher share of earnings than jobs, indicating that a large share of high-paying jobs in the region depend on government.

Base analysis includes ripple effects caused by workers in an industry spending money in the regional economy. So while the manufacturing sector in the area may only have 1,300 employees under direct payroll, the sector supports nearly 4,500 jobs in the Sweetgrass Region. If the entire manufacturing sector were to go away, it would take with it 7% of all jobs and 8% of earnings. (Praxis, Strategy Group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Income</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Earnings(K)</th>
<th>Jobs %</th>
<th>Earnings %</th>
<th>EPW(K)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>21,192</td>
<td>$1,015,360</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>$48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>8,628</td>
<td>$287,545</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>$33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents’ Outside Income</td>
<td>7,783</td>
<td>$227,841</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>$29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors</td>
<td>6,573</td>
<td>$155,529</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>$24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>4,537</td>
<td>$119,119</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>$26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>4,478</td>
<td>$191,226</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>$43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>3,707</td>
<td>$164,315</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>$44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>3,454</td>
<td>$138,012</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>$40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exogenous Investment</td>
<td>2,418</td>
<td>$85,783</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>$35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>1,854</td>
<td>$78,518</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>$42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>998</td>
<td>$34,822</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>$35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>$9,005</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>$42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Praxis, Strategy Group)

*The data for the regional cluster and baseline assessment were developed by the Great Falls Development Authority (GFDA) with assistance from the Praxis Strategy Group. These statistics were products of the Defense Diversification Project and are based on the CEDS strategy that true diversity will come from building on the region’s overall competitive strengths, but realizing that weakness must be mitigated or turned into strength.

In January of 2007, the U.S. Air Force announced plans to deactivate the 564th Missile Squadron from its mission on Malmstrom Air Force Base. The decision was made final and publicly announced on July 2, 2007 and was estimated to take a full two years to complete. Recognizing the need to do advance planning with regard to the economic impacts to the affected counties, Cascade County, with assistance from the Great Falls Development Authority, requested assistance from the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) a field office for the Secretary of Defense in early 2007. The information in the Defense Diversification Project has been invaluable to the Sweetgrass region, not only to better understand the implications of the deactivation of the 564th Missile Squadron from Great Falls area, but also for the invaluable information developed.
Agriculture

This region, with the exception of Great Falls, is predominantly rural and has a large amount of land dedicated to agriculture; ranching, farming and businesses supporting the agriculture industry. 3.5% of employment is based on farming.

In national volatile economic climates, agriculture economies have a tendency to produce lower income than manufacturing or natural resource development, but these economies are often relatively more stable in regards to national economic fluctuations and boom/bust economies.

The cash receipts from crops and livestock and products have gone up since the 1970’s. The primary agriculture businesses in this region are based on oilseed and grain farming, other crop farming, and beef and cattle ranching.

---

### Personal Income from Farm Employment, 2009
(Thousands of 2010 $s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cascade County, MT</th>
<th>Glacier County, MT</th>
<th>Pondera County, MT</th>
<th>Teton County, MT</th>
<th>Toole County, MT</th>
<th>Montana</th>
<th>County Region</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Earnings by Place of Work ($1000)</td>
<td>2,167,170</td>
<td>254,476</td>
<td>102,513</td>
<td>118,438</td>
<td>140,538</td>
<td>23,167,108</td>
<td>2,783,135</td>
<td>8,955,678,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Earnings</td>
<td>9,720</td>
<td>24,445</td>
<td>21,369</td>
<td>23,775</td>
<td>17,481</td>
<td>317,513</td>
<td>96,790</td>
<td>69,627,466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Proprietors' Income</td>
<td>2,669</td>
<td>19,754</td>
<td>16,767</td>
<td>18,228</td>
<td>14,712</td>
<td>70,845</td>
<td>72,130</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Farm Earnings</td>
<td>2,157,450</td>
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<td>81,144</td>
<td>94,663</td>
<td>123,057</td>
<td>22,849,595</td>
<td>2,686,345</td>
<td>8,886,050,804</td>
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</table>

**Percent of Total**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Farm Employment</th>
<th>Farm Proprietors Employment</th>
<th>Non-Farm Employment</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>99.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>90.4%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>20.8%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>15.4%</td>
<td>79.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>87.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>98.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>96.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>99.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Praxis, Strategy Group)
### Number of Farms by Type, 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cascade County, MT</th>
<th>Glacier County, MT</th>
<th>Pondera County, MT</th>
<th>Teton County, MT</th>
<th>Toole County, MT</th>
<th>Montana</th>
<th>County Region</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Farms</td>
<td>1,112</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>29,524</td>
<td>3,477</td>
<td>2,204,792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oilseed &amp; Grain Farming</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>4,197</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>338,237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable &amp; Melon Farming</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>40,589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit &amp; Nut Tree Farming</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>98,281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenhouse, Nursery, etc.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>54,889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Crop Farming</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>7,867</td>
<td>977</td>
<td>519,893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef Cattle Ranch. &amp; Farm.</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>9,804</td>
<td>981</td>
<td>656,475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle Feedlots</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>31,065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy Cattle &amp; Milk Prod.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>57,318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hog &amp; Pig Farming</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30,546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry &amp; Egg Production</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>64,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep &amp; Goat Farming</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>67,254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Aquaculture &amp; Other Animal Prod.</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5,294</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>245,675</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Percent of Total

<p>| | | | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oilseed &amp; Grain Farming</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>40.2%</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable &amp; Melon Farming</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit &amp; Nut Tree Farming</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenhouse, Nursery, etc.</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Crop Farming</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef Cattle Ranch. &amp; Farm.</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle Feedlots</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy Cattle &amp; Milk Prod.</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hog &amp; Pig Farming</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry &amp; Egg Production</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep &amp; Goat Farming</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquaculture &amp; Other Prod.</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Natural Resources and Energy

The Sweetgrass region is well positioned to capitalize on the growing needs for domestic energy sources such as renewable energy sources including wind and hydroelectric based power and petroleum based by products including the full range of fuel products. The energy sector is a major component of the regional economy and is growing both as a revenue generator and employee base. Increasingly, the development of power (of all kinds) serves as a buffer in the recent economic downturn.

Transmission is often the key to harnessing the power of wind in the generation of electricity. The Sweetgrass region is well positioned to capitalize on new infrastructure to provide electricity to a growing market for passive energy. The Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. (MATL) line is a proposed 300-megawatt (MW), 230-kilovolt (KV) electrical transmission line allowing the movement of power between Alberta and Montana. Once completed, the 214-mile line will tie into the Alberta grid at a (new substation located nine miles northeast of the city of Lethbridge. The line will run approximately 81 miles south to the US/Canada border at a point west of the Sweetgrass/Coutts border crossing. From there, it will run a further 133 miles south to terminate at NorthWestern Energy’s Great Falls substation which is located just north of Great Falls, Montana.

An additional substation will be built at approximately the halfway point of the transmission line, just north of the Marias River near Cut Bank, Montana. This substation will provide a mid-point disconnect to the line and power factor support as well as a convenient interconnection point for wind farms in the area.

NaturEner USA-owned Glacier Wind Farm completed the 106.5-megawatt first phase of the 210-megawatt Glacier Wind Farm in Glacier and Toole counties north of Great Falls, and it began selling the power to a California utility. Construction of the second phase, which calls for 103.5 megawatts and 71 additional turbines will be completed, as additional transmission is available. (Praxis, Strategy Group)
While coal-fired power plants account for two-thirds of State electricity generation, hydroelectric power is a major player in the energy field and accounts for most of the remainder produced in the state. Montana is among the leading hydroelectric power producers in the United States, and seven of the State’s 10 largest generating plants run on hydroelectric power. Five hydroelectric facilities are located within the region (Cascade County) and account for approximately 225 megawatts of electricity.

These plants include:

- **Black Eagle Dam** is a three-unit hydroelectric plant at Black Eagle Falls on the Missouri River, about two miles downstream from Great Falls, Mont. The units have a total generating capacity of 21 megawatts.

- **Cochrane Dam** is a three-unit hydroelectric plant on the Missouri River, about eight miles downstream from Great Falls, Mont. The units have a total generating capacity of 60 megawatts.

- **Ryan Dam** is a six-unit hydroelectric plant on the Missouri River, about 10 miles downstream from Great Falls, Mont. The units have a total generating capacity of 60 megawatts.

- **Morony Dam** is a two-unit hydroelectric plant on the Missouri River, about 15 miles northeast of Great Falls, Mont. The units have a total generating capacity of 48 megawatts.

- **Rainbow Dam** is an eight-unit hydroelectric plant on the Missouri River, about six miles northeast of Great Falls, Mont. The units have a total generating capacity of 36 megawatts. Once the current updates have been completed, the new powerhouse with one turbine will produce 62-megawatts.

- **Cochrane Dam** is a three-unit hydroelectric plant on the Missouri River, about eight miles downstream from Great Falls, Mont. The units have a total generating capacity of 60 megawatts.
Montana Refining owns and operates the 9,500 barrel per day complex heavy oil refinery in Great Falls. The refinery makes a full range of fuel products, including various grades of gasoline, diesel, jet fuel and distillates. Heavy crude oil processed at the refinery is also well suited to the production of high-grade asphalt products. Montana Refining Company, Inc. (“MRCI”), is a major supplier of paving grade asphalt, modified polymer grades and asphalt emulsions for road construction. Products are marketed to retailers located in

Montana and in neighboring states and in Southern Alberta. The refinery is well served by regional truck and rail transport. This company is major component of the regional economy. (Praxis, Strategy Group)
Tourism in this region has added 996 new jobs in this region between 1998-2009. This industry, from eco-tourism to service stations have potential to continue to grow and increase, giving opportunity to highlight some of the beautiful scenery and cultures.

More and more tourists are looking for tourism opportunities, recreation, and places to stay through internet searches. The more this region is able to market tourism opportunities online, may enhance its already developing industry.

Employment in Travel & Tourism, 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Employment in Travel &amp; Tourism</th>
<th>Non-Travel &amp; Tourism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Private Employment</td>
<td>29,975</td>
<td>2,013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel &amp; Tourism Related</td>
<td>6,151</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>1,038</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gasoline Stations</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing &amp; Accessory Stores</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc. Store Retailers</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passenger Transportation</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Transportation</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic &amp; Sightseeing Transport</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Entertainment, &amp; Recreation</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing Arts &amp; Spectator Sports</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museums, Parks, &amp; Historic Sites</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amusement, Gambling, &amp; Rec.</td>
<td>773</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation &amp; Food</td>
<td>4,189</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Services &amp; Drinking Places</td>
<td>3,488</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Travel &amp; Tourism</td>
<td>23,824</td>
<td>1,642</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Percent of Total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Domestic</th>
<th>Foreign</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travel &amp; Tourism Related</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gasoline Stations</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing &amp; Accessory Stores</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc. Store Retailers</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passenger Transportation</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Transportation</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic &amp; Sightseeing Transport</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Entertainment, &amp; Recreation</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing Arts &amp; Spectator Sports</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museums, Parks, &amp; Historic Sites</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amusement, Gambling, &amp; Rec.</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation &amp; Food</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Services &amp; Drinking Places</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Praxis, Strategy Group)
Both the Fishing Access Sites and the State Parks Visitation saw an increase between 2007/2008 and 2009. Region 4 (which the Sweetgrass region is part of), saw a non-resident economic impact of $11.7 million in 2009.

In the CEDS 2011 community meetings, the Town of Fairfield felt that they were not maximising tourism industry opportunities. The Great Falls community meeting highlighted the participant’s desire to see how the investments made in tourism have helped the local economy. They were also concerned that if Great Falls became a “Tourism City” they would see an increase in fast food employment for example, which might not be the type of growth they want.

Looking into different types of tourism opportunities, such as eco/agri-tourism, may play an important role in strategically enhancing not only the tourism industry but also the local quality of life. The meeting in Cut Bank highlighted the importance of Amtrak on seasonal tourism, and if Amtrak is not running, tourism will be down.

---

**Figure 1: Nonresident Economic Impact - Industry Output by Region**

---

**Table 20: Fishing Access Sites Estimated Use by Region, 2007-2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of FAS</th>
<th>2007 Visits</th>
<th>2008 Visits</th>
<th>2009 Visits</th>
<th>2009 % MT Residents</th>
<th>2009 % Camping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Kalispell</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>516,290</td>
<td>430,077</td>
<td>428,717</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Missoula</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>748,527</td>
<td>858,493</td>
<td>971,187</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Bozeman</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>1,247,255</td>
<td>1,358,678</td>
<td>1,426,686</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Great Falls</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>224,183</td>
<td>208,967</td>
<td>209,176</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Billings</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>511,920</td>
<td>470,680</td>
<td>855,146</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Glasgow</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>106,680</td>
<td>109,082</td>
<td>129,086</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Miles City</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>189,583</td>
<td>383,339</td>
<td>336,166</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 332, 3,544,344, 3,807,296, 4,356,167, 70%, 6%

Source: Montana State Parks.

---

**Table 19: State Parks Visitation Estimates: 3-Year Trends**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region &amp; FWP Office Location</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2008-09 % change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Kalispell Area</td>
<td>358,046</td>
<td>391,037</td>
<td>417,993</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Missoula Area</td>
<td>173,908</td>
<td>174,105</td>
<td>194,048</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Bozeman Area</td>
<td>326,814</td>
<td>287,417</td>
<td>317,934</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Great Falls Area</td>
<td>355,415</td>
<td>354,650</td>
<td>373,473</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Billings Area</td>
<td>400,033</td>
<td>352,383</td>
<td>398,691</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Glasgow Area</td>
<td>5,491</td>
<td>6,210</td>
<td>4,568</td>
<td>-27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Miles City Area</td>
<td>205,858</td>
<td>163,558</td>
<td>227,704</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 1,916,843, 1,815,828, 2,031,121, 12%

Source: Montana State Parks.
Education

In this region, the counties of Glacier, Toole, and Teton had lower high school graduation rates than the state, with Glacier County having the highest rate of students who did not graduate high school.

All of the Counties in this region have a lower percentage of college graduates than the State.

During the CEDS 2011 community meetings education was brought up numerous times.

Choteau feels they have a quality education system, which includes the benefit of a low teacher to student ratio. However they would like to see a two-year technical college to enhance knowledge and local workforce in trades, technology and communication.

Great Falls feels like there are ample educational opportunities to enhance knowledge and workforce. From a trade school to two four-year university options, the local educational opportunities are there and draw students in, not only from the region but state-wide.

Conrad would like to see a higher high-school enrolment, and perhaps some opportunity to encourage border patrol training in trade schools.

Browning and the Blackfeet Tribe have been working on increasing cultural-based education including local language and history to increase local and youth knowledge of the Blackfeet culture and heritage.

Percent with 9th to 12th Grade Education, No Diploma

Percent with Bachelor’s Degree or Higher

(Montana.gov)  (Montana.gov)
This region is home to the University of Great Falls and the Montana State University (Great Falls) College of Technology, both located in Great Falls. Troy State and Embry Riddle have locations on the Air Force base. Located in Browning, there is the Blackfeet Community College providing various continuing educational opportunities.

The graph below highlights the accreditation status of the schools in each county.

**Accreditation Status of the Schools in Sweetgrass Region**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Accreditation Status:</th>
<th>Accreditation Status:</th>
<th>Accreditation Status:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>Regular with</td>
<td>Deficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Advice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cascade</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glacier</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pondera</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teton</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toole</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2016-2017 Accreditation Status Recommendation

**Definitions and Explanation of Report Notations**

Summary of Basic Accreditation Criteria (Reference: Montana School Accreditation Standards and Procedures Manual, Appendix E)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regular or Regular with Deviations</th>
<th>Advice</th>
<th>Deficiency with Assistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applicable accreditation standards are met</td>
<td>Missassigned teacher – third occurrence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed staff is appropriately endorsed and assigned</td>
<td>Non-endorsed administrators – first occurrence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School programs and resources are adequate</td>
<td>Library and/or guidance services not present – first occurrence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory student achievement is demonstrated</td>
<td>Minimum programs are not offered – first occurrence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School meets the regular accreditation standards with only minor deviations – Regular with Deviations</td>
<td>Non-endorsed counselors/librarians – second occurrence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School meets the regular accreditation standards with only minor deviations – Regular with Deviations</td>
<td>Continuing deviations for three (3) consecutive years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete reports – first occurrence</td>
<td>Incomplete reports – second occurrence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved variance(s) not followed – first occurrence</td>
<td>Approved variance(s) not followed – second occurrence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Montana Office of Public Instruction)
Housing

In the CEDS 2011 Community meetings, housing was brought to attention numerous times. Various concerns from quality of housing, access to affordable housing, limited housing options, lack of senior living and assisted living options, and lack of land available for development.

Attendees at the community meeting in Choteau felt there was no accessible land to develop on and limited housing available. There is also limited quality housing in Choteau. For industries developing in this area, or for firms wanting to re-locate to Choteau, both quality housing and workforce housing will need to increase.

In Fairfield there is a lot of affordable housing available to purchase or rent, not a limited quality housing supply. The town also has limited housing to support any new workforce or industry. There are also no senior housing options. Both senior and workforce housing could create job opportunities if maximized.

The town meeting in Great Falls discussed that there was a lot of affordable housing opportunities, especially for an urban area.

Conrad faces a lot of sub-standard housing and a need for rental housing. Some housing needs to be renovated, others need to be demolished. In Shelby there is a small market for affordable housing and a need for improved housing. In Browning there is little housing opportunity for affordable quality housing. Most of the land and housing is owned by the Blackfeet Tribe, which limits the ability for loans due to lack of personal collateral. Cut Bank is seeing an insufficient housing market due to oil and border patrol workers.

### Occupied Housing 2009

(See attached image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic Area</th>
<th>Housing Unit Estimates</th>
<th>Housing Unit Estimates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July 1, 2009</td>
<td>July 1, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>441,279</td>
<td>440,049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cascade County</td>
<td>36,526</td>
<td>36,417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glacier County</td>
<td>5,226</td>
<td>5,239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pondera County</td>
<td>2,809</td>
<td>2,616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teton County</td>
<td>2,911</td>
<td>2,917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toole County</td>
<td>2,577</td>
<td>2,283</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(U.S Census Bureau)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>% of Single Family Units</th>
<th>Median Value of Owner-Occupied Housing</th>
<th>Crowded Housing Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cascade</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>$117,113</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glacier</td>
<td>71.2</td>
<td>$77,118</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pondera</td>
<td>76.1</td>
<td>$89,274</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teton</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>$94,593</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toole</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>$76,865</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(U.S Census Bureau)
Health and Social Services

Health and Healthcare
Cascade County has Benefis, the Great Falls Clinic and Center for Mental Health providing the community and region with outstanding primary and tertiary care, a critical component in a growing and thriving economy. The Pondera Medical Center, located in Conrad, is a 20 bed acute care facility, with an extended care 59-bed capacity. The Northern Rockies Medical Center and Nursing Home, which has 20 beds, and over 30 registered nurses, is located in Cut Bank. Browning is home to the Blackfeet Hospital, which has 25 beds and is operated by Public Health Service Indian Service. The Teton Medical Center, also located in Choteau is a 10-bed critical care hospital, with a 36-bed extended care capability. The Marias Medical Center, located in Shelby, provides primary, long-term, assisted living and care services to residents throughout the county. Marias Medical Center offers a 25 bed critical access hospital with nursery, maternity rooms, and ICU, as well as a 53-bed nursing facility that provides rehabilitation and restorative care.

Teton County had highest rate of people both uninsured and underinsured in the region, and also compared to the State.

Teton County was also the only county in the region that was not considered an area with low healthcare and dental providers.

Sweetgrass Region, on average, had a lower rate of alcohol use, suicide, domestic abuse rate, and sexual offense than the state-wide average. However the region had a higher rate of tobacco use, obesity, diabetes prevalence, stroke prevalence, rate of heart attacks, child mortality, % of motor vehicle accidents with the presence of alcohol, and a higher homicide rate than the rest of the state.

Generally there no major comments regarding health and healthcare during the CEDS 2011 Community Meetings.

Social Services
During the CEDS 2011 Community meetings, the high poverty rate and high unemployment rate showed a strain on the social services offered.

People in Choteau noted that were fewer social services that reached the West side of the community, which more isolated, beyond the interstate. Also, with an increase and potential increase in industry and workers, the need for social services will increase as well.

Percent Uninsured and Underinsured - 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Percent uninsured - under age 65</th>
<th>Percent uninsured - under age 19</th>
<th>Percent uninsured - under age 65</th>
<th>Percent uninsured - under age 19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cascade</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glacier</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pondera</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teton</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toole</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cascade</td>
<td>Glacier</td>
<td>Pondera</td>
<td>Teton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco Use (County Total)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>35.75%</td>
<td>22.2*</td>
<td>22.2*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Drinking</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.20%</td>
<td>5.2*</td>
<td>5.2*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Leisure Time/Physical Activity</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27.30%</td>
<td>23.6*</td>
<td>23.6*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obesity</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>31.90%</td>
<td>26.3*</td>
<td>26.3*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stroke Prevalence</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.20%</td>
<td>2.9*</td>
<td>2.9*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes Prevalence</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>9.60%</td>
<td>7.5*</td>
<td>7.5*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnosed with a Heart attack</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.50%</td>
<td>4.4*</td>
<td>4.4*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental health Professional</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortage Area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary health care Prof.</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortage Area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant Mortality rate</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>6.10%</td>
<td>6.8*</td>
<td>6.8*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrance into Pre-NatalCare in 1st Trimester (percent of liver births)</td>
<td>90.7</td>
<td>72.10%</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>77.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>child Mortality (1-14 yrs, rate per 100,000)</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>62.80%</td>
<td>28.3*</td>
<td>28.3*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking During pregnancy (% per live births)</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>20.40%</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>9.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Age at Death</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of motor vehicle crashes involving alcohol</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>21.40%</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All cancers mortality rate per 100,000</td>
<td>204.1</td>
<td>165.80%</td>
<td>269.5</td>
<td>231.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unintentional injury death rate per 100,000</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>101.60%</td>
<td>114.5</td>
<td>59.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cerebrovascular Disease including stroke mortality rate per 100,000</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>50.80%</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>52.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes Mellitis rates</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>43.30%</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>56.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic Lower Resp. Disease mortality rate per 100,000</td>
<td>72.6</td>
<td>43.30%</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart Disease mortality rate per 100,000</td>
<td>288.2</td>
<td>216.60%</td>
<td>225.7</td>
<td>234.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homicide rate per 100,000</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>11.90%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide rate per 100,000</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>25.40%</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-year domestic abuse rate</td>
<td>470.1</td>
<td>491.70%</td>
<td>293.3</td>
<td>188.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-yr rate of sex-offenses per 100,000</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>42.00%</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-yr rate of rape per 100,000</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>19.80%</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*County Info unavailable, so Regional 2 (North central) statistics were used.
Like the rest of Montana, one of the challenges for the Sweetgrass region is a high degree of isolation from major metropolitan areas and the trade opportunities they offer. A business owner in the area, wanting to see customers or suppliers, or transport a product, would have to drive a long distance. The closest large metropolitan area to Great Falls, for example, is Calgary – a five hour drive. The map below shows illustrates the degree of isolation of the Sweetgrass region from large metropolitan areas.

The nearest large commercial trading centers, with populations over 200,000, are: Calgary, Alberta to the north via Interstate Highway 15 (322 miles from Great Falls); Spokane, Washington to the west via Highway 2 or I-15 and I-90 (400 miles) and Seattle (679 miles); Minneapolis, Minnesota to the east via I-15 and I-90 (972 miles). Markets to the south are: Boise, Idaho via I-15 and I-84 (637 miles); Salt Lake City, Utah via I-15 (570 miles); and Denver, Colorado via I-15, I-90 and I-25 (772 miles).

While Montana is sparsely populated, with fewer than a million people total and approximately six people per square mile, there are several major population centers accessible to the Sweetgrass area via roads and highways. The state’s largest city is Billings (population 89,847), 220 miles from Great Falls. The next largest is Missoula (population 57,053), 160 miles from Great Falls. Great Falls, with 56,690 people is the third largest city in the state. The fourth largest is Bozeman (population 30,753) is 190 miles from Great Falls.
Airports
Because the population of the Sweetgrass region is small, (approximately 110,000) efforts at improving job opportunities must focus on maintaining and improving the ways business owners can connect with suppliers and customers outside the region. Besides road travel, this can be accomplished via air travel.

The map below shows in red a one-hour’s drive time (on existing roads and assuming adherence to existing speed limits) to commercial airports with daily service to major hubs and metropolitan areas. A cut-off of 25,000 enplanements (passenger loadings) per year was used as the cutoff point to identify commercial airports.

Three out of the five counties (Glacier, Toole and Pondera) in the Sweetgrass region are rural and isolated, far from cities and from commercial airports that can readily transport people to large population centers. Cascade and Teton counties, in contrast, have the majority of their population within an hour’s drive to the Great Falls airport. The implications are that for Glacier, Toole and Pondera counties the prospects of attracting “footloose entrepreneurs” – people who work in the knowledge-based sectors and can work almost everywhere, as long as they stay connected, is limited.

For Great Falls, and the towns of Fairfield and to a lesser extent Choteau, this form of economic development is a more likely option.
Rail
The map below shows the various railways connecting the Sweetgrass area to other population centers. Used largely for the shipping of locally produced grain, these railroad connections are vital to agriculture in the region. Of particular note are the communities where both highways and railroads intersect; Great Falls and Shelby. For Shelby, where every day thousands of railcars and semi trucks pass through, a successful transportation hub has been developed that has helped diversify the economy beyond its historical dependence on agriculture and petroleum.

All of the communities that comment on transportation, felt that transportation was generally a positive thing that impacts their communities. It was mentioned however, that the cost of transportation, given the rural nature and geographical span of Montana limits manufacturing and some business opportunities for larger-scale trade.
Disaster and Emergency Preparedness

Sweetgrass Region is covered by The Montana Disaster and Emergency Service District Section 2. Each of the Counties in the region has a disaster and emergency preparedness plan in place which covers natural disasters to terrorism and violence.

Natural Disasters
Natural disasters can be a large financial burden on individuals and communities. This region faces potential landslide, wind, hail, tornado, winter, flood, and wildfire threat. State and national agencies, FEMA, and the SBA are some sources of funds to assist with natural disaster cleanup/assistance.

Winter weather can be severe, and can lead to power outages, avalanches, frozen/bursting pipes, and ice jams. Great Falls once went from -32°F to +15°F in 7 minutes, a national record (Montana Department of Military Affairs). No zoning or subdivision regulations across the State address winter storms. Montana snow is generally dry and snow loads do not threaten roof collapse in most areas. However, the northwestern portion of the State where snow contains greater moisture content should consider building regulations that require a stricter design standard for flat roofs to ensure they can support maximum snow loads.

The western part of the region faces higher threats of landslides and forest fires (Montana Department of Military Affairs) due to the mountain range and forests that border it.

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) data for fire starts from 1981 through 2010 show 48 percent of wildfires were started by lightning and 52 percent were human caused. Sources of human caused fires include debris burns (14 percent); campfires (11 percent); equipment caused fires (4 percent); and railroad starts (4 percent) (Montana Department of Military Affairs).
Wind, Hail, and Tornado damage occurs mostly in the summer months. In Montana, most of the tornadoes occur in June, followed closely by the month of July. The SHELDUS data shows that between 1960 and 2009, District 2 and 4 counties have had the most fatalities and the second and third highest level of property loss, respectively.

Electric utilities in Montana are usually the first entities to experience loss from severe summer weather events. Losses to local electric utilities can be expensive to replace and put a major burden on other emergency services during these critical times by not having electricity available.

Population Density and Wind, Hail, Tornado Damage - 2010

Flooding, ice jams, and dam failure have caused great damage in this region. Damages resulting from ice jams can affect roads, bridges, buildings, and homes, and can cost the affected community thousands to millions of dollars. In most instances, ice jams result in highly localized, yet serious damages, which makes it difficult to obtain the type of disaster assistance available for large-scale flooding events.

In January 1974, Lincoln, Sanders, Flathead, Glacier, Mineral, Missoula and Deer Lodge counties were hit by flood waters which caused approximately $16 million worth of damage to Forest Service roads, bridges, and facilities, and private property. These same counties suffered flood related losses again in June 1975, totaling nearly $35 million.

The most damaging flood in the Missouri River Basin occurred in June 1964. The principal rivers involved were the Dearborn, Sun, Teton and Marias. The event was initiated by 8 to 10 inches of rain over three days on a deeper-than-average snow pack. All counties situated along the Continental Divide were affected to some degree. However, the greatest damage was received by the City of Great Falls. This disaster resulted in the loss of 30 lives and an estimated $55 million in damages, with the greatest damage in the city of Great Falls. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has since completed a $12 million flood control levee along the north bank of the Sun River near Great Falls, which protects over 500 homes and businesses.

Flood Hazard Area from HAZUS Analysis of 100-Year Flood Event (FEMA, 2010c)
Flash flooding is also common along drainages in Lincoln, Sanders, Flathead, Glacier, Mineral, Missoula and Deer Lodge Counties during the summer storm season.

The most ice jams reported for one river have occurred on the Missouri River, with 157 events, followed by the Yellowstone with 106, and the Milk River with 103 events.

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is the primary insurer for flood insurance in the United States. Currently, there are 130 Montana communities that participate in the NFIP. Of these, 50 have no special flood hazard or are minimally flood prone (FEMA, 2010a). Great Falls was on the list of the top 10 communities with the highest flood insurance claims with the amount of $115,684.

Vulnerability to dam failure is compounded by differences in the dam inundation areas versus the 100-year floodplain. Floodplain development, in most cases, is regulated, whereas dam inundation areas are not. Extreme rain and snow melt events can exceed the flood storage capacity of even large reservoirs. At such times, the excess water that passes over the spillway (the primary purpose of which is to protect the dam) may cause damages downstream that approach those damages that would have occurred had the flood control dam not been built. In addition, the failure of a dam can produce extreme, rapid flood damages outside the 100-year or even 500-year floodplains.

Numerous factors contribute to determining dam vulnerability including: design standards; construction, operation and maintenance; intense rainfall or prolonged flood conditions; and/or earthquakes. The vulnerability of property and population downstream of dams is related to construction in inundation areas. However the only non-Federal dam in this region that needs any updates or further analysis (as stated in the 2010 Update of the State of Montana’s Hazard and Mitigation Plan) is the Eureka Dam in Teton County (data is needed for seepage and outlet).

**Terrorism and Violence**

According to the 2007 updated State of Montana Multi Hazard Mitigation Plan (Montana Department of Military Affairs), the greatest of violence or terrorism in this region would be considered hate groups in Montana, still active in 2005. The Aryan Nation Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in Great Falls have been noted as a hate-based group who are not known to have caused any violence in 2005, however a future incident cannot be ruled out. Montana also has a long international border with Canada, and must be particularly sensitive to the challenges and vulnerabilities associated with it (Montana Department of Military Affairs).

**Toxic Release Inventory for Montana Facilities - 2009**

The only two toxic release facilities in this region (Montana Department of Military Affairs) are the US Air Force Malmstrom, AFB MT and the Montana Refining Company, Inc. in Great Falls. The US Air Force Malmstrom, AFB MT has disposed lead compounds (total off and on site disposal is 4,10 lbs). The Montana Refining Company, Inc. has disposed of ammonia, benzene, glycol ethers, cumene, cyclohexane, ethylbenzene, ethylene, hydrogen fluoride, lead, mercury, n-hexane, naphthalene, polycyclic aromatic compounds (PAH’s), propylene, toluene, and xylene (on and off site disposal of 196,041 pounds).

**Toxic Spills**

Also, as discussed in the environmental section of this document, there is a threat for toxic spills and chemical-related
disasters. Cascade County was noted to have had 6 transportation-based hazardous spills and 17 fixed facility-based spills (as noted in the 2007 State of Montana Multi Hazard Mitigation Plan).

There are approximately 61 miles of interstate, 118 miles of pipeline and 196 miles of rail in Cascade County alone, which marks it as the 2nd highest Composite Risk Index (50.68) in the State, just following Yellowstone County. This, as well as the location of an oil refinery in Great Falls, enhances the need to take these things into consideration for mitigation of future spills, and also for more pro-active planning.
Environment

This environment section is designed to be helpful in giving a background, or environmental “base” to illustrate the various vulnerable environmental areas or specific concerns. This will help with business development to provide knowledge as to where sensitive areas are, and to provide locations of areas that are recommended/required to be cleaned before development occurs. It can be a challenge to balance environmental needs and future development, therefore this CEDS proposes goals to help find that balance.

This region is home to a vast amount of diverse species, natural habitat, and landscape.

### Endangered/Threatened Species - 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County/Scientific Name</th>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CASCADE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropus sphenacus</td>
<td>Sprague’s Pipit</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulo gulo intensus</td>
<td>Wolverine</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GLACIER</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ursus arctos horribilis</td>
<td>Grizzly Bear</td>
<td>LT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynx canadensis</td>
<td>Canada Lynx</td>
<td>LT, CH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solenodon paradoxus</td>
<td>Bull Trout</td>
<td>LT, CH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leptota immitus</td>
<td>Meltwater Leptota</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropus sphenacus</td>
<td>Sprague’s Pipit</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulo gulo intensus</td>
<td>Wolverine</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PONDERA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charadrius melodus</td>
<td>Piping Plover</td>
<td>LT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ursus arctos horribilis</td>
<td>Grizzly Bear</td>
<td>LT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynx canadensis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anthropus sphenacus</td>
<td>Sprague’s Pipit</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulo gulo intensus</td>
<td>Wolverine</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TETON</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ursus arctos horribilis</td>
<td>Grizzly Bear</td>
<td>LT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynx canadensis</td>
<td>Canada Lynx</td>
<td>LT, CH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropus sphenacus</td>
<td>Sprague’s Pipit</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulo gulo intensus</td>
<td>Wolverine</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOOLE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mustela nigriceps</td>
<td>Black-footed Ferret</td>
<td>LE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropus sphenacus</td>
<td>Sprague’s Pipit</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C = Candidate
LT = Listed Threatened
LE = Listed Endangered
P = Proposed

PCH = Proposed Critical Habitat
CH = Designated Critical Habitat
XN = Experimental non-essential population
(Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks)
The CRP contracts last 10 to 15 years. According to the USDA’s Farm Service Agency in 1997, the Sweetgrass Region had cumulatively over 393,000 acres enrolled in the CRP program, with the largest amount in Toole County.


The Great Bear wilderness and Bob Marshall Wilderness are maintained by the Forest Service as National Wilderness Areas.

Under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, there are a few rivers in this region that are designated: Badger Creek, North and Birtch Creek, Birch North Fork in Pondera County, and Smith River in Cascade County.

### Watershed Areas

The Sweetgrass Development Region falls into **two state watershed areas**, the Upper and Lower Missouri watersheds. The Missouri River, stretches of which are nationally designated as a Wild and Scenic River, runs through this area. There are nearly 230 miles of the Missouri within Cascade County, on which many of the state parks and recreation areas are situated. The major rivers and shorelines in the Sweetgrass region are listed below, although none of them are designated Wild and Scenic Rivers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>RIVER/SHORELINE</th>
<th>MILES WITHIN COUNTY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cascade</td>
<td>Missouri River</td>
<td>230 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belt Creek</td>
<td>85 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Smith River</td>
<td>62 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sun River</td>
<td>62 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teton</td>
<td>Teton River</td>
<td>168 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Muddy Creek</td>
<td>95 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pondera</td>
<td>Pondera Creek</td>
<td>65 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Birch Creek</td>
<td>60 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glacier</td>
<td>Cut Bank Creek</td>
<td>144 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Milk River</td>
<td>87 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two Medicine</td>
<td>65 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toole</td>
<td>Marias River</td>
<td>98 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lake Elwell (Tiber Reservoir)</td>
<td>77 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Willow Creek</td>
<td>77 miles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks)

### Rivers in the Sweetgrass Region

#### Air Quality

The Air Quality Program in Cascade County is under contract with the State of Montana Department of Environmental Quality. Cascade County Health Department continuously monitors the air for carbon monoxide and particulate matter 2.5 microns or less or PM 2.5. This site is located at Overlook Park on Tenth Avenue South. The PM 2.5 information is displayed on “TODAY’S AIR” on the Cascade County Health Department’s website (Cascade County Health Department).

There are currently no non-attainment areas in this region. The only non-attainment area located in this region was in Great Falls, however that was redesignated in 2002. (Environmental Protection Agency)

#### Brownfield sites

Brownfield sites are abandoned or unused industrial sites such as unused gas stations, mills, and wrecking sites. This region could benefit greatly from brownfield redevelopments, opening up the potential for available land, and mitigating environmental effects. Funding for brownfield assessment and redevelopment is a challenge, but progress is being made.

The charts below shows how many active underground tank leaks there are in each county that rate medium to high priority...
levels. This report is a list of leaking underground storage tank records found in the search area from the Petroleum Release Section, Remediation Division, Montana DEQ, last updated 9/26/2011. Many leaking tanks and other brownfield sites have been cleaned and many cases are in the process of closing.

Below is a chart with the number of Meth Contaminated Properties in the region. This is type of brownfield due to the difficulty and expense of cleaning the property and disposing of material.

| Leaking underground Storage Tanks – Medium and High Priority Levels 2010 |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cascade Glacier Pondera Teton Toole | 92 | 11 | 22 | 14 |
| Meth Contaminated Properties - 2011 |  |
| Cascade Glacier Pondera Teton Toole | 36 | 2 | 2 | 3 |

There is a threat of toxic spills and chemical-related disasters which would have an environmental impact as well as an economic one. Cascade County has had 6 transportation-based hazardous spills and 17 fixed facility-based spills (as noted in the 2007 State of Montana Multi Hazard Mitigation Plan).

Cut Bank Oil seep
The site is located southwest of the town of Cut Bank Montana, just west of a residence at 404 Mountain View Boulevard. It consists of a steep cliff face that is composed of inter-bedded sandstones, shaley siltstones, and shale. Near the top of the cliff, water and black oil are seeping from the sandstones and shaley siltstones. The water-oil was flowing down rills from small basin areas and coalescing into one stream that enters the River.

In March of 2004, Maxium drilled and cored ten borings which were later converted to monitoring wells. No free oil was noted. Since shortly after the oil seepage stopped, two Glacier County firemen have been doing daily checks for seepage and cleaning the debris from the tanks (mostly caving of cliff material filling the tanks). That is to continue until an AOC is signed and goes into effect.

| Table 3.3.4-7 | Counties with High or Moderate Hazardous Material Composite Index |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| County | Spills | Generators LQG | TR1 | Interstate | Miles Pipeline | Rail | Haz Mat Comp Risk Index |
| Yellowstone | 8 | 84 | 6 | 16 | 95 | 332 | 168 | 95.05 |
| Cascade | 6 | 17 | 3 | 4 | 61 | 118 | 196 | 50.68 |
| Missoula | 3 | 17 | 5 | 8 | 55 | 49 | 190 | 49.41 |
| Gallatin | 3 | 84 | 4 | 4 | 44 | 41 | 213 | 41.63 |
| Lewis and Clark | 2 | 16 | 2 | 5 | 50 | 44 | 104 | 31.27 |

(Montana Department of Military Affairs)
Consent (AOC) for removal activities to replace the UAO that is in effect. A draft has been written and will be finalized soon. The AOC to be signed by Conoco Phillips Company will require them to maintain oversight and exercise their plan to contain and dispose of any seeping oil.

The only key issue remaining is to obtain a signed AOC from Conoco Phillips Company.

(Cut Bank XL Spill)

A production piping release of 15 – 20 barrels of oil occurred sometime during the afternoon on Tuesday, July 11, along Cut Bank Creek, near Cut Bank, Montana, about 30 miles south of the Canadian border in northwest Montana. The oil fields, leased by FX Drilling Company, Salt Lake City, Utah, are on Blackfeet tribal lands.

Oil flowed from the point of release entering Cut Bank Creek, a tributary of the Missouri River. Cleanup efforts involved the use of absorbent boom, and pads were applied in areas of oil pooling. Hard boom was placed at the point of entry to Cut Bank Creek and a retention berm was constructed up gradient to capture any further releases.

(Cut Bank XL Spill)

Seville Colony Pesticide Site
An EPA FIFRA Inspection and subsequent CID investigation on April 19 and 21, 2011, showed that Seville Colony had misapplied the pesticide known as “Petersen’s Pocket Gopher Killer III.” This pesticide consists of strychnine mixed with oats.

All drums were picked up on June 23, 2011, and will be transported to a RCRA hazardous waste facility.

The ERRS contractor used a trailer-mounted HEPA vacuum unit to remove the strychnine-containing oats from the locations marked by the assessment teams.

(Superfund Montana Cleanup Sites)

According the Environmental Protection Agency Montana Superfund Cleanup Sites, the Sweetgrass Region has three superfund cleanup site locations.

Site Type: Final NPL
City: Black Eagle/Great Falls
County: Cascade
Street Address: River Road North, 1 mile E. of 15th Street
ZIP Code: 59414
EPA ID: MTD093291599
SSID: 0819
Site Aliases: AMC Great Falls Refinery, Anaconda Copper & Zinc Refinery
Congressional District: 2

The site is a former metals refinery adjacent to the unincorporated community of Black Eagle along the Missouri River in Cascade County, Montana. The City of Great Falls is located across the Missouri River from the site.

Operations began in 1893 when ore from mines in Butte, Montana was concentrated, smelted, and refined. The property was acquired by Anaconda Copper Mining Company in 1910. The plant began closure in 1973. ARCo has conducted minor cleanup of the former facility, and the site has never been under an approved cleanup program with the EPA or state. Only a recycling facility and golf course currently remain on site.

Potential Impacts on Surrounding Community/Environment
EPA 2007 and 2008 soil studies of residential yards in Black Eagle found approximately 45 percent of the yards sampled were elevated in lead, arsenic or both. Gardening is a popular activity in the community. Residents reported that some of their housing was constructed using materials from the site. In
2004, the Missouri River was found to be contaminated from dumping and on-site runoff. These wastes are widespread and have been identified in the river at Ft. Benton, 34 miles downstream from the site. The Missouri River is a fishery and the fish are consumed by residents.

Cleanup Process
EPA has completed and released results of the Black Eagle Railroad Bed Subsurface Investigation. The Data Summary Report with all the tables and figures is available at the Information Repository at the Black Eagle Community Center. The main report, containing the data summary, is available in the Site Documents section below.

Updated July 2011
A Community Involvement Plan (CIP) has been prepared for the community affected by the former ACM Smelter and Refinery site. The CIP guides EPA's and DEQ's communications and interactions with the community as part of the Superfund process. A hard copy of the plan is available for reading at the Black Eagle Community Center along with other ACM site documents.

On March 10, 2011 EPA, with support from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, announced the addition of the Anaconda Copper Mining Co. (ACM) Smelter and Refinery site in Cascade County, Montana, to the National Priorities List of Superfund sites.

Congressional District: At Large

The Barker Hughesville Mining District is primarily in Cascade County with a portion in Judith Basin county. Galena Creek flows through the district. The community of Monarch is located about 15 miles away.

Because of the contamination and risks to public health and the environment, EPA proposed the site for the National Priorities List (NPL) for Superfund cleanup in December 2000. On September 13, 2001, the site was listed as a Final NPL site in the Federal Register.

Site Risk
There are approximately forty-six abandoned mines in the BH District. Sixteen have been identified as water contamination sources because of their proximity to surface streams. These abandoned mines and associated contamination are dispersed throughout the Galena Creek and upper Dry Fork watersheds.

Metals and arsenic contamination of soils, groundwater, and surface water have been documented in several studies conducted at the site since 1990. Galena Creek flows through the Barker Hughesville site. There is no fishery or aquatic insect life in Galena Creek because of the impact of mining wastes. There is a fishery in the upper reach of Dry Fork of Belt Creek; however, it is severely impacted by Galena Creek in its lower reach.

Cleanup Progress
U.S. Forest Service and EPA signed an Action Memorandum for one portion of the site, called the Block P Mill Tailings Deposit. The Action Memorandum required the Doe Run Co. of St. Joseph, Missouri, to consolidate and cap the tailings. Extensive work was
completed by the Doe Run Co. in 2004 and 2005, with oversight by the U.S. Forest Service. The longer-term Remedial Program plans to begin the Remedial Investigation sampling to determine the nature and extent of contamination at orphan mines site-wide.

EPA entered into an Administrative Order on Consent (AOC) with the Doe Run Resources Corporation to prepare the EE/CA. Following the public comment period, EPA will issue an Action Memorandum describing the cleanup, and the Doe Run Company has agreed to implement the cleanup. Some of the cleanup action will begin in the fall. 

Site Type: Final NPL  
City: Neihart  
County: Cascade  
ZIP Code: 59465  
EPA ID: MT0001096353  
Site ID: 0801507  
SSID: 089X  
Congressional District: At Large

The Carpenter Snow Creek site is located in Cascade County, near the town of Neihart, in the Little Belt Mountains southeast of Great Falls, Montana. The site is in an historic mining district, and due to the impact of mining activities, groundwater, soils and some streams are contaminated with heavy metals and arsenic. The Carpenter Snow Creek Mining District (CSC District) Superfund site is located adjacent to and includes the town of Neihart.

Site Risk  
Approximately 96 abandoned mines have been identified in the Carpenter Snow Creek Mining District, and at least 21 of these have been identified as probable sources of contamination to surface water. There are documented impacts from mining waste to soil, surface water and stream sediments in Carpenter Creek, Snow Creek, and Belt Creek.

Cleanup Progress  
EPA has sampled residential soils throughout Neihart. The northern part of Neihart shows higher levels of lead and arsenic in soils than the area south of the Community Center. In 2004, EPA conducted a cleanup of lead-contaminated soils near two historic mills within Neihart.

Updated March 2011  
EPA will conduct remedial design in 2011 for the Neihart cleanup action, working with each property owner to design yard-by-yard cleanup plans. A repository for disposal of contaminated soils will be selected and designed.

The pace of studies of the Carpenter and Snow creeks watersheds (water quality and sediment, waste volume estimates, ecological risk assessment, etc.) will increase over the next two to three years, as well, with sampling events scheduled for June 2011 and October 2011.  

(Environmental protection Agency)
County Profiles

The following county profiles will go into more detailed information about each county in the Sweetgrass Region. The region has many overarching strengths and weaknesses, but as individual counties, they embody a more diverse range of cultural, economic, socio-demographic, and infrastructure assets and needs.

Community CEDS meetings were held in the summer of 2011 to get feedback from community members on various strengths, weaknesses, and concerns they have in their community. This is a key element in developing the CEDS, as it includes the perspectives of local citizens, businesses, organizations, and government entities.

The CEDS Committee helped to develop these individual summaries.

Comments and feedback from these meetings will be discussed in the following section, and to find the notes from the meetings, please see Attachment B.
Cascade County

Photos from the Great Falls Visitor Information Center

**Population**
Cascade County had a population of 81,327 in 2010, with a population percent change of 1.2% from 2000. It is the most populous in the Sweegrass Region. Great Falls, the County seat, is the state’s third largest city with a 2009 population of 59,366. Other communities in the county include: Belt, Cascade, Milligan, Monarch, Newhart, Sun River and Ulm.

Cascade County in 2010 had a relatively low level of diversity, with the 89.2% Caucasian, 1.2% African American, 4.3% American Indian, and 3.3 Latin American. Between 2005-2009 2% of people were foreign born.

Between 2005-2009 90.9% of the population were high school graduates, 23.3% had earned a bachelors degree or higher, and 11,525% of the population were veterans.

**Geography**
The County is approximately 2,698.16 square miles and in 2010 there were 30.1 persons per square mile. The County is bordered on the west by the Rocky Mountains, to the southeast by the Little Belt and Highwood Mountains, and by the Hi-line area to the North.

**Industry and Economy**
Cascade County and Great Falls are home to several large companies that capitalize on the County and Great Falls location, work force and high quality of life including: Centene, National Electronic Warranty (NEW) and D.A. Davidson.

Smaller high tech companies that are utilizing the unique skills sets and training provided the local work force include AvMax and CableTech; two companies that provide advanced manufacturing solutions for Defense and major corporate customers focusing on aviation and aerospace.

The county and Great Falls are also home to service industries, and acts as a hub for many other communities and small towns in and out of this region.

In 2009 there were 2,498 private nonfarm establishments and 7,266 firms in 2007. Women-owned firms made up 25.1%, and American Indian firms made up 2.6%.

**Industry**
From 2002 to 2008 Cascade County added just more than 4,556 jobs, a 10% growth rate. Compared to the rest of the nation, the regional economy is heavily focused towards trade, transportation and utilities (over 20% of total jobs); government (18.8%); education and health services (15.1%); leisure and hospitality (10.8%) and financial activities (9.1%). These five industry groups account for roughly three-quarters of all business activity in the county (Defense diversification Project).
The construction industry sector includes heavy construction and specialty contractors – many involved in new home construction and renewable energy construction and development such as Sletten Construction. Professional and business services, including D.A. Davidson, Centene and N.E.W. accounted for roughly 2,078 new jobs in the past six years and over 45 percent of the total growth in the county. Government (641 new jobs) and leisure and hospitality (over 500 new jobs) saw significant growth over the past six years as well, suggesting both new and expanding growth industries within Cascade County (Defense diversification Project).

**Housing**
In 2010 there were 37,276 housing units in the County and the homeownership rate was at 67.5%. The median value of owner-occupied housing between 2005-2009 was $135,800. There were 2.45 persons per household. The average per capita income in 2009 was $22,585, and the median household income was $40,434. In 2009 there were 15.1% of people below the poverty line.

**Healthcare**
The county has a vibrant health care community, with Benefis, the Great Falls Clinic and Center for Mental Health providing the community and region with outstanding primary and tertiary care, a critical component in a growing and thriving economy.

Cascade County has a city-county joint health department and a Community Health Care Center dedicated to “the prevention of disease, promotion of good health practices and protection of the environment, delivered with respect, for every person in Cascade County through efficient and effective use of resources.” The CHCD provides basic health and dental services, especially for citizens with limited insurance and incomes. The five areas that the Cascade City-County Health Dept focuses on are:

- Community and Family
- Communicable Disease Prevention
- Health Promotion/Chronic Disease Prevention
- Environmental Health
- Public Health

The health department include services such as Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Day Care Services, WIC, Food Safety and Public Water Safety Inspections, Junk Vehicle Removal, Subdivision Review and Emergency Response.

**Education**
The County is also home to the MSU-Great Falls College of Technology and the University of Great Falls, providing the community and region with a key ingredient to a trained and skilled workforce. The College of Technology is a major community and business partner providing just in time, leading edge training and skills enhancement focused on particular workforce training needs from private industry within the County and region.

**Transportation**
The Great Falls International Airport provides daily flights in and out of the region, as well as a railway (primarily for shipping goods), and an interstate and county highway system.

**Culture and Recreation**
In Cascade County there are various recreational, cultural and entertainment opportunities. Great Falls is host to many museums and cultural attractions, including the C.M. Russell Museum and Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center. Entertainment venues include the Mansfield Center, located in the Civic Center and the Montana ExpoPark, which covers more than 130 acres. The Park is owned by the County and
hosts the Montana State Fair, Montana Pro Rodeo Circuit Finals, livestock and equestrian shows, as well as weddings, craft and trade shows, sporting events and other activities.

There are 15 sites in Cascade County registered in the National Register of Historic Places, including various homesteads, the Fort Shaw Historic District and Cemetery, and the Great Falls Historic Railroad District. Within Cascade County there are numerous city, state and federal parks as well; such as Cow Island and Slaughter River Recreation Areas, both managed by the Bureau of Land Management, which host outdoor recreation. Other parks, such as the Riverside Railyard Skate Park, with 27,000 41 feet of full bowls, curves, spines and rails, cater to a different crowd.

Recreation in Great Falls is also widely varied; from the after-school and child oriented activities at the Community Recreation Center, to the River’s Edge Trail, public swimming pools, golf courses, and national forest. Approximately 4 miles outside of Great Falls is the Great Springs State Park, where day-use visitors picnic by the Missouri River, visit the fish hatchery and visitor center, take walks and use various fishing accesses along the Missouri. Also in Cascade County visitors would find Sluice Boxes, Smith River-Camp Baker, Tower Rock and First People’s Buffalo Jump State Park. Each of these parks offers various recreational opportunities, including floating, fishing, camping, wildlife viewing and walks through historic mines, or bison kill sites. All of the recreational and historic areas in this county create economic opportunities, both seasonal and year-round for the tourism industry.

Environment
There are three Environmental Protection Agency Superfund sites in Cascade County. Carpenter-Snow Creek site is located near the town of Neihart in the Little Belt Mountains southeast of Great Falls. The site is an historic mining district, and includes approximately 96 abandoned mines, 21 of which are probable sources of contamination to surface water.

Due to the heavy impact of mining activities in the area, groundwater, soils and some streams are contaminated with heavy metals and arsenic. Although contaminant levels in the nearby surface water, such as Belt Creek, Carpenter Creek and Snow Creek, are not above standards considered unhealthy for aquatic life or safe recreational use, concentrations of lead and arsenic are above screening levels in some residential areas. The Barker-Hughesville site is located in Cascade and Judith Basin Counties. This site is also in a historic mining district and affects the area’s groundwater, soils and surface water, which are now contaminated with heavy metals and arsenic. The greatest concern is dissolved zinc. At this site, Galena Creek is one of the most impacted surface streams. There is no fishery or aquatic insect life in Galena Creek because of the impact of mining wastes.

Cascade County is home to 296 abandoned mine sites. These are all located within the Belt, Smith and Upper Missouri watersheds. The county also houses 42 Montana Department of Environmental Quality Remediation Response sites. These include abandoned rail yards with buried fuel tanks, waste tailing sites, wood processing plants, an active herbicide plant, active Air National Guard and Army National Guard, and Army Reserve Units, inactive landfills, oil refineries and leaking sewage sites.

There are 11 landfills in Cascade County, only one of which is open to the public. There are also a number of private conservation easements—accounting for
22,280 acres. In addition the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department manages 2,434 acres of conservation easements on private lands. These easements account for 1.4 percent of the acreage in the county.

**Energy**
Cascade County is well positioned to meet growing needs for domestic energy including renewable energy sources including wind and hydro-electric based power and petroleum based by products including the full range of fuel products. The energy sector is a major component of the County’s economy.

Transmission is seen as the major factor for capitalizing on generation of electricity and Cascade County is well positioned to capitalize on new infrastructure to provide electricity to a growing market for renewable energy. The proposed Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. line is a 300-megawatt (MW), 230-kilovolt (KV) electrical transmission line allowing the movement of power between Alberta and Montana. Once completed, the 214-mile line will tie into the Alberta grid and will run approximately 81 miles south to the US/Canada border. From there, it will run a further 133 miles south to terminate at NorthWestern Energy’s Great Falls substation which is located just north of Great Falls, Montana (Praxis, Strategy Group ).

While coal-fired power plants account for two-thirds of State electricity generation, hydroelectric power is a major player in the energy field and accounts for most of the remainder produced in the state. Montana is among the leading hydroelectric power producers in the United States, and seven of the State’s 10 largest generating plants run on hydroelectric power. Five hydroelectric facilities are located within Cascade County and account for approximately 225 megawatts of electricity. These plants include:

- **Black Eagle Dam** is a three-unit hydroelectric plant at Black Eagle Falls on the Missouri River, about two miles downstream from Great Falls, Mont. The units have a total generating capacity of 21 megawatts.
- **Rainbow Dam** is an eight-unit hydroelectric plant on the Missouri River, about six miles northeast of Great Falls, Mont. The units have a total generating capacity of 36 megawatts. Once the current updates have been completed, the new powerhouse with one turbine will produce 62-megawatts.
- **Cochrane Dam** is a three-unit hydroelectric plant on the Missouri River, about eight miles downstream from Great Falls, Mont. The units have a total generating capacity of 60 megawatts.
- **Ryan Dam** is a six-unit hydroelectric plant on the Missouri River, about 10 miles downstream from Great Falls, Mont. The units have a total generating capacity of 60 megawatts.
- **Morony Dam** is a two-unit hydroelectric plant on the Missouri River, about 15 miles northeast of Great Falls, Mont. The units have a total generating capacity of 48 megawatts.

The Montana Refining Company owns and operates the 9,500 barrel per day complex heavy oil refinery in Great Falls. The refinery makes a full range of fuel products, including various grades of gasoline, diesel, jet fuel and distillates. Heavy crude oil processed at the refinery is also well suited to the production of high-grade asphalt products. Montana Refining Company, Inc. (“MRCI”), is a major supplier of paving grade asphalt, modified polymer grades and asphalt emulsions for road construction. Products are marketed to retailers located in Montana and in neighboring states and in Southern Alberta. The refinery is well served by regional intermodal transportation infrastructure. The company is major component of the regional economy (Praxis, Strategy Group ).
Glacier County

Photos from the Official Site of the Town of Browning

Population
Glacier County had a population of 13,399 in 2010, with a population percent change of 1.1% between 2000 and 2010. It is home to the Blackfeet Nation, and 65.6% of the population are American Indian, 31.1% Caucasian, and 1.8% Latin American. The incorporated portion of Browning at 1,400 does not reflect their population of 7,000 in the community and is largely representative of the Blackfeet Tribe on a part of their ancestral homeland dating back over 5,000 years (Glacier County). Between 2005-2010 1.4% of people were foreign born.

In 2009, 79.8% of the population graduated high school and 17.5% earned a bachelor’s degree or higher. There were 913 veterans in 2009.

Geography
In 2010 the land area in square miles was 2,995.94, and there were 4.5 persons per square mile. The majority of Glacier County lies within the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, with the Blackfeet tribal headquarters located in the city of Browning.

Other cities and towns in Glacier County include Babb, East Glacier Park, Santa Rita, and St. Mary. Glacier County is also home to five active Hutterite colonies.

Cut Bank, the county seat has all the businesses you would expect to find in any of Montana’s smaller towns, including a hospital and a clinic. It also has an historic airport with regional and international connections to larger airports (Glacier County). To the west of the Blackfeet Reservation lies Glacier National Park, one of Montana’s major tourism destinations. The western edge of Glacier County makes up almost half of the park, and contains St. Mary Lake, Going-To-The-Sun Road (a national historic landmark), and Mt. Cleveland, Glacier Park’s highest peak.

Industry and Economy
On June 1st, 2006, Glacier County and the cities of Cut Bank and Browning established the Glacier County Regional Port Authority, a quasi-governmental entity whose purpose is to promote economic development in the region. The establishment of a Port Authority can allow access to money that is not otherwise available to specific communities within Glacier County.

In 2009 there were 248 private nonfarm establishments, and in 2007 there were 968 firms. 26.2% of firms were owned by American Indians, and 32.5% were owned by women.

Glacier County has seen a 10% increase in jobs from 2003 to 2008. The Government sector saw the most new jobs created (217)
and realized a 10% increase overall. The industry with the highest growth in the 5-year period was Construction with a 48% increase, adding 124 new jobs in Glacier County – due in part to major construction on the Glacier Wind Farm. Other areas of significant growth include: Trade, transportation and utilities (13%); Education and health services (15%); and Leisure and hospitality (9%) and other services (16%) tapping into the close access to Glacier National Park and other natural amenities available within the County. Of note is the decline of two industries within the County including manufacturing and financial activities. These two industries saw a total net job loss of 28 jobs, suggesting there may be some trade and service leakage to other areas. While representing less than 5% of total jobs created, these losses are not insignificant and may represent future areas for growth based on expertise of downsized workforce.

**Energy**

The county is home to a large and growing wind farm that is providing both jobs and revenue to the local communities and economy. A major component to capitalizing on wind-generated electricity is transmission, and Glacier County is well positioned to tap into the new infrastructure to provide electricity to a growing market for renewable energy. The Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. line is a 300-megawatt (MW), 230- kilovolt (KV) electrical transmission line allowing the movement of power between Alberta and Montana. The 214-mile line will tie into the Alberta grid at a (new substation located nine miles northeast of the city of Lethbridge. The line will run approximately 81 miles south to the US/Canada border at a point west of the Sweetgrass/Coutts border crossing.

**The Blackfeet Indian Reservation**

The Blackfeet Indian Tribe was organized in 1935 under the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA). It exists both as a sovereign political entity and a business corporation. The Blackfeet Tribal Business Council is the duly elected body empowered to handle and discharge the business of the Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. BTBC derives its organizational and management identity primarily on historical relationships and treaties with the United States Government, the Constitution, Corporate Charter and its Tribal constituency. Further obligation is derived from a mandate to address general and special needs of the Blackfeet Tribe, including the uniqueness of the Blackfeet Indian Nation.

The Blackfeet Tribal Business Council encourages maximum usage of tribal member’s abilities and potential through the preservation and protection of tribal traditions, culture and history. The Blackfeet Tribal Business Council also supports the positive growth of each individual in their preparation to contribute in the future human and natural resource development of the Blackfeet Nation (Blackfeet Tribe CEDS, 2007).

**Land**

The Blackfeet reservation currently includes several types of land ownership. Of the total 1,525,671 acres (2,384 miles), 650,558 acres (1,016 miles) are held in trust by the BIA for enrolled tribal members, 311,324 acres (486 miles) are held directly by the Tribe, 8,292 acres (12 miles) are Government Reserve, mostly irrigation projects and the Cut Bank Boarding School Reserve and Timber Reserve is 25,671 acres (40 miles). The remaining 529,826 acres (828 miles) are Fee land which is taxable and may be privately owned by the tribe, tribe members or non-tribe members. (Blackfeet Tribe CEDS, 2007)

**Housing**

Nearly 50% of existing homes are substandard. Many families suffer
overcrowding and the vast majority of those families in need do not have the resources to help themselves. The Blackfeet Tribal Business Council recognizes the extreme need for homes and continues to seek ways to remedy the situation. It is also recognized that providing homes will not by itself solve the economic/social problems associated with low income housing. Lack of decent good paying jobs jeopardizes the efforts to fix other social issues and problems. (Blackfeet Tribe CEDS, 2007)

Industry and Economy
The Blackfeet Reservation is one of the most economically distressed areas of the country with per-capita income levels less than one-half the national average and unemployment among tribal members in excess of 50%. The Blackfeet Tribe is working with a number of potential developers on tribal initiatives that could create as many as three hundred (300) new jobs when fully developed. The proximity of the Blackfeet Reservation to Glacier National Park provides a natural attraction for tourist industry upon which the tribe can capitalize for economic development and job creation for Tribal members.
In the recent past, the Blackfeet Tribe has had several economic studies completed for pursuing new business ventures to provide employment on the Blackfeet Reservation. These studies have concentrated on the potential for the Blackfeet Tribe to pursue economic ventures to capture the 1.5 million tourists who drive through the Blackfeet Reservation. The lack of an adequate water supply in all of the Reservation communities has served as a major impediment. As this new water system becomes operational in all the Blackfeet Reservation communities, these feasibility studies that have identified new ventures can begin to bear fruit as commercial development enterprises can be assured of an adequate water system that will support continued growth.

The economy of this area is currently dominated by seasonal jobs and revenue to the communities on the Blackfeet Reservation through employment associated with wildland fires. In addition, the regional agriculture economy offers few employment opportunities for tribal members.

A 2004 study conducted by CFED, a non-profit organization dedicated to expanding economic opportunity, explores native entrepreneurship in rural communities. The study emphasizes the importance of cultural context, education and training assistance, policy development, access to markets and native networking to the success of native entrepreneurship. The study also finds that in order for native entrepreneurship to flourish, businesses need to be community-driven, regionally oriented, and supported by public policy.

Entrepreneurship and small business development hold promise as strategies to alleviate poverty and increase economic opportunity. To succeed in a Native American context support for entrepreneurship must emphasize the role of community and cooperation, as well as tribal, family, and group relationships. An entrepreneurship strategy should therefore account for individual initiative that will benefit the entire community.

The American Indian Business Leaders organization describes the difference in native and non-native business models, explaining the need to merge the less materially-driven, contentment-oriented, group-focused, and relationship-based native model with the assertive, competitive and achievement oriented non-native model. However, there is a growing market for non-hierarchical economic development and entrepreneurial
approaches that often mix local economies and local resources with online marketing strategies and websites that encourage local and small-scale markets. With the use of broadband technologies and internet awareness and education, the merge of American Indian culturally appropriate business and the online market could merge in a way that enhances a more holistic approach to business and entrepreneurship practices.

Access to capital and access to markets can also prevent native business from flourishing. The CFED study notes that there is an absence of affordable capital in many native communities, often due to a lack of competitive interest rates, a refusal to make loans, or financial institutions which simply do not offer start-up businesses loans. Trust land (which cannot be used by tribes for mortgages or leased without the approval of the Secretary of the Interior) makes the lending process complicated for tribal members. Although they are growing, there is also a lack of alternative financing options for rural tribes, such as community development loan funds, venture capital funds and credit unions.

**Other characteristics of Glacier County (Health, Housing, Public Safety, Education and Schools, Environmental Issues):** Glacier County Health Department provides various health services to its residents. These include: WIC (Women, Children and Infants); a training and aid services for mothers and their children, TLC, Inc; a series of educational services that promote a chemical free lifestyle; as well as SAR (Search and Rescue) and EMS (Emergency Medical Services), both of which are focused on emergency health situations. The Northern Rockies Medical Center and Nursing Home, which has 20 beds, and over 30 registered nurses, is located in Cut Bank. Browning is home to the Blackfeet Hospital, which has 25 beds and is operated by Indian Health Services.

In Browning there is also the Blackfeet Tribal Health Department, whose mission is; “... to improve the quality of health care systems and evaluate the health status of the Blackfeet people to the highest possible level.” The Blackfeet Tribal Health Department administers 638 health contracts, acts as a liaison between Blackfeet Tribal Health and Indian Health Services, serves as a mediator for health complaints, and coordinates utilization of health services among other activities. In addition, there is Senior Assisted Housing and Low Income Housing available in the town of Cut Bank.

In 2010 there were 5,348 housing units and the ownership rate was 62% in 2009. The median value of owner-occupied units in 2009 was $76,900, and 3.1 persons per household.

The per capita money income in 2009 was 16,904 and the median household income in 2009 and $16,904. In 2009 30.5% of the population was living below the poverty level.

The Blackfeet Community College, located in Browning, is a public two-year tribally controlled community college located on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. The BCC was established through a Tribal Charter in 1974. In 1994, BCC was granted “Land Grant” status. The goal of the Blackfeet Community College is to provide post-secondary and higher educational services to the Blackfeet Nation and surrounding communities.

**Recreation and Tourism**
Within Glacier County there are various places to visit and recreate. Cut Bank has 4 public parks, a public swimming pool, library, three local museums and a national historical site. The Museum of the Plains
Indian, founded in 1941 to promote contemporary Indian arts, is operated by the Northern Plains Indian Crafts Association, an independently owned and operated Indian business. The Lodgepole Gallery and Tipi Village provides a variety of activities for tourists: from herbal and nature walks that describe traditional Blackfeet activities and guided hunting and fishing and horseback riding to overnight stay in tepees. Guided tours to interesting cultural spots, like Head-Smashed in Buffalo Jump are also available.

The Glacier County Historical Society Museum, incorporated in 1980, houses collections from life in Glacier County from ages past. The purpose of the Society is to provide the people of Glacier with an appreciation of their heritage and methods for preserving their history.

In Browning, at the heart of the Blackfeet Reservation, there are also various cultural and recreational activities available. Browning is known as the last encampment of "The Lords of the Great Plains", or the Blackfeet Indian Tribe. Browning and its environs are well known for the assortment of opportunities they offer to outdoor recreationalists. Hunting and fishing, golf, camping, hiking, rodeos, and two annual native celebrations occur during the summer and fall seasons; while in the winter tourists can enjoy snowmobiling, ice fishing, and cross-country skiing.

Browning also boasts a world class Indian museum and heritage center. There is a large new casino located next to a new fairground, race track and Indian camp area that hosts an annual Indian celebration and pow-wow. Many events center on this area during the summer months. Blackfeet Tribal fishing and recreational permits, along with guide and tour services to blue ribbon trout fishing and other recreational opportunities can be found here.

East Glacier Park, a small winter community grows in the summer with many visitors and the summer help from all parts of the globe that meet the needs of the larger population. It is the site of the largest of Glacier Park's historic hotels and fleet of "red buses". There is a very beautiful and challenging nine hole golf course, campgrounds, trail rides, boat rides, native interpretive tours and other recreational activities located at this stop on the railroad.

Saint Mary's, another small winter community that grows with the influx of many summer visitors is located at the east entrance of Glacier Park and provides access to Goint-to-the-Sun Highway. The highway is a national landmark and crosses over the Rocky Mountains at an elevation of over 7,000 feet. The two large lakes in the Saint Mary's valley offer boat tours and fine fishing. There are many recreational opportunities both inside Glacier Park and outside the park in this area.

Environment

Glacier County is also home to Glacier National Park. The Park, managed by the National Park Service, has over a thousand camping areas for visitors. Biking, boating, backpacking, horseback riding, skiing, fishing and hiking are all activities that go on during the course of the year at Glacier National Park. In addition, in 1932 Glacier and Waterton Lakes National Park, in Canada, were designated Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park. They were both designated Biosphere Reserves in 1976 and World Heritage sites in 1995. These designations recognize the uniqueness of the region: a place where ecological diversity of international importance exists, but where humans co-exist with the natural landscape and there is support from local and national governments to manage the areas to the best possible benefit of human and the environment. A Biosphere Reserve is designated by UNESCO.
In Montana, wolves have re-established themselves as lower elevation and closer to human habitat than other states. Wolves are opportunistic carnivores. The first den of grey wolves documented in over 50 years was found in Glacier National Park in 1986. Since that time they have been reintroduced in several areas in the state and have reached population target. The wolf population is managed jointly by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department under the Montana Gray Wolf Conservation and Management Plan.

Glacier County has nine abandoned mine sites, six of which are within the Cut Bank watershed, and three of which are in the Milk River Headwaters area. There are also 16 Montana Department of Environmental Quality Remediation Response sites.

Although some of them are related to crude oil releases and spills, others have to do with wood processing in the county as well as inactive defense facilities. There are 162 miles of crude oil pipeline within Glacier owned by four companies.

There are 7 landfills and, at present, all are closed. The conservation easements within Glacier County account for 0.2 percent of the acreage: 4,396 acres are managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and 509 acres are under private easement.

The bald eagle population in Montana and Glacier County has improved in recent years, due in large part to The Montana Bald Eagle Management Plan. This plan is implemented by the Montana Bald Eagle Working Group, which is made up of representatives from federal and state agencies, tribes, universities, conservation groups and private industries.

The grizzly bears are adaptable omnivores and range through meadows, seeps, riparian zones, mixed shrub fields as well as closed and open timber. The bear population is managed by limiting interactions between bears and humans and protecting and expanding habitat.

The Canada lynx ranges throughout the seasons, following prey. Lynx are sparsely populated and are currently not hunted because of their threatened status. On federal lands in the area, the Canada Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy manages critical habitat and lynx population.

Bull trout are found in large river drainages and are both migratory and resident in particular streams for their entire lives.

Migratory individuals can move great distances (up to 156 miles) among all types of surface water, while stream-resident bull trout migrate within tributary stream networks for spawning purposes only. Open migratory corridors, among tributary streams, and larger rivers and lake systems are critical for maintaining bull trout populations.
Pondera County

Photos from the Pondera County Website

Population
In 2010 the population of Pondera County was 6,153, and the percent change between 2000 and 2010 was -4.2%. Pondera County is not diverse, but has a strong American Indian presence and culture, with 82.7% of the population Caucasian, 14.5% American Indian, and 1.4% Latin American.

In 2009, 88.1% of the population had graduated high school, and 20.7% had graduated with a bachelor’s degree or higher. There were 517 veterans in 2009.

Geography
Pondera County is 1,622.86 square miles, and in 2010 had a population base of 3.8 persons per square mile.

Pondera County is located in a region of North Central Montana known as the Golden Triangle. The western portion of Pondera County contains part of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. The only other incorporated municipality in the County is Valier. Unincorporated municipalities include Brady, Dupuyer, Heart Butte and Ledger. Pondera County is also home to several Hutterite Colonies: Birch Creek Colony, Kingsbury Colony, Miami Colony and Pondera Colony.

Industry and Economy
Agriculture is the largest income-producing segment of the Pondera County economy. Most farms are family-owned and above average size compared to the Montana Average. Crops include wheat, barley, hay and livestock. Agriculture is the reason for two processing plants (barley and mustard seed), for agricultural-related transportation employment (grain elevators), and implement dealers, and indirectly responsible for a portion of other economic sectors, such as health care, retail, etc.

Although there are several large employers in the County, including Pondera Medical Center, small businesses and oil and natural gas producers make up the majority of employers. There are several manufacturing plants located north and east of Conrad. Approximately fifteen percent (15%) of the total work force in the County is employed by state and local government.

In 2009 there were 180 private nonfarm establishments which was a decrease from 496 establishments in 2007. 6.5% of these firms were women owned.

The main development organization for the County is the Pondera Regional Port Authority. The Port Authority was created to stimulate and develop commerce, create opportunities for employment, and work towards the advancement of general welfare and prosperity within Pondera County. The Port works cooperatively with the City of Conrad, the Town of Valier and the County providing business technical
assistance, as well as business relocation, expansion and financial assistance within the County.

Three highways cross Pondera County. US Highway 89 runs north/south in the western end of the County and I-15 runs north/south in the eastern end. State Highway 44 connects US 89 and I-15 and runs through Valier. Burlington Northern Santa Fe is the only railroad in the County and runs north and south through Conrad from Great Falls to the Canadian border at Sweetgrass with a spur running west to Valier to serve the area agriculture. BNSF is a class I railway meaning it is the largest class of railway in terms of operating revenues.

Pondera County owns and operates the Conrad Airport which is located 1 mile west of the city and has a 4,601 ft asphalt runway in good condition. The county also owns the Valier airport which has three turf runways and is located on the edge of the town. Major pipelines are owned by Conoco – Phillips and Front Range crude oil as well as North West Energy gas pipeline. Many small gas and oil pipelines serve the area producers and traverse the area.

Health
Pondera County Health Department provides a variety of professional health services that promote and maintain individual, group and community health. These programs include WIC, a Home Visit Program and the Health Nurse, a trained professional who provides school visits, immunizations and is responsible for public inquiries about health issues. The Sanitarian also provides Pondera County with community health services, including the Communicable Disease Program, the Junk Vehicle Program, Food and Consumer Safety, and overseeing the Department of Environmental Quality regulations.

The Pondera Medical Center, located in Conrad, is a 20 bed acute care facility, with an extended care 59-bed capacity. The Center provides durable medical equipment service and oxygen service. There are five physicians on staff and additional visiting specialists. Pondera Medical center manages two ambulances in Conrad and one in Valier.

Education
Pondera County has the presence of the Montana State University Extension Service which provides school enrichment programs in four specific areas: Family and Consumer Science, Agriculture, Youth Development and Community and Economic Development. The Extension Service also works with youth in the 4-H Program.

Housing
In 2010 there were 2,659 housing units in the county, with a homeownership rate of 66.9%. The median value of owner-occupied housing units in 2009 was $85,500. The per-capita money income in 2009 was $18,431, and the median household income was $34,813.

Recreation
There are abundant outdoor recreational activities available in Pondera County. The county is home to a diverse fishery featuring brook, rainbow and west coast cutthroat in the county streams. Lake Frances at Valier is noted for walleye, perch and northern pike.

Hunting for deer and antelope as well as pheasant, upland or migratory game birds is available in Pondera County.

There are three historical markers in the county. MT 008 is the location that marks a spot where Captain Merriweather Lewis and his team of explorers had a violent encounter with local Piegans. MT 071 marks Dupuyer, the oldest town between Fort Benton and the Rockies. MT 072 identifies Chief Mountain, or NINA-STA-QUAY. It is a
revered Blackfeet landmark, and the Old North Trail, used by Northwest Plains Indians for many years.

Environment
There are 19 abandoned mine sites in Pondera County, most of which are in the Two Medicine Creek watershed, and some of which are in the Marias River watershed. There are also 11 Montana Department of Environmental Quality Remediation Response sites, five of which are related to crude oil spills or releases from refineries. One company owns 83 miles of crude oil pipeline in the county.

Although there were at one time seven open landfills in the county, only one is now operational. Additionally, there are 10,086 acres in the county protected by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conservation easements, and 2,261 acres of privately held conservation easements.
Teton County

Population
Teton County had a population 6,073 in 2010, with a population percent change of -5.8 between 2000 and 2010. This was the most extreme decrease in population within the Sweetgrass Region. There is very little diversity in this County with 96.3% of the population Caucasian, 1.4% American Indian, and 1.3% Latin American.

Geography
Teton County is located in north central Montana with the western border being the Rocky Mountain Front and the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area and the eastern border being the rolling prairie east of I-15. The County has an estimated 6,025 residents (2008). Teton County is made up of several small communities including Choteau (the county seat), Bynum, Dutton, Fairfield, Pendroy and Power.

Industry and Economy
The primary industry sectors in Teton County include Agriculture; Trade Transportation and Utilities; Healthcare and Social Assistance; Construction; and Government. Agriculture by far has the biggest impact with almost 650 jobs within the County in 2008. Outside of agriculture government (499 jobs) healthcare and social assistance (400 jobs) and construction (362 jobs) are major industry employers.

Losses in retail trade, finance and insurance and educational services suggests trade leakage within the county – perhaps to suggesting the strength of Great Falls as a primary trade and retail center or hub. Areas of growth (as a percentage) include reaction and accommodation and food services showing the growing strength of the county as tourist attraction or outdoor recreational destination, capitalizing on the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area and close access to Glacier National Park.

In 2009 there were 189 private nonfarm establishments, and 1,024 total number of firms. There was insufficient current data in regard to minority-owned firms.

Agriculture within Teton County accounts for 31% of total jobs and only 25% of the total earnings within the County. Visitors services and related jobs account for 11% of all jobs but only 5% of all earnings, again, related directly to earning and wage potential.

The Greenfields Irrigation District Headquarters with its 83,000 acre irrigation project and its lifeline Gibson Dam, Willow Creek Reservoir and Pishkun Reservoir has made Teton County a more stable area for people to want to live and work. The Town of Fairfield is sustained more by basic Agriculture with the presence of Anheuser Busch large storage bins that house the country’s best malting barley. BNSF Railroad has kept its presence in Teton County through transportation of the malting barley...
to their breweries. Teton County has a large presence of family ranches that extend throughout the western portion of the County, they produce a lot of beef and a tremendous amount of some of the best prairie hay as well as the alfalfa which is raised in the irrigated areas.

3 Rivers Communications located in the Town of Fairfield as well as Teton County presents the latest technologies for home based businesses to stay in contact with the outside world. People can live in small communities, enjoy country life and still make a living. Local telecommunications enhance local businesses, provide a platform for home businesses and entrepreneurs as well as offer an essential service to new businesses.

Health
Teton County Health Department is located in the county seat of Choteau and runs various public health services. These include WIC, immunization services, tobacco programs and public health and safety education.

The Teton Medical Center, also located in Choteau is a 10-bed critical care hospital, with a 36-bed extended care capability. The Medical Center provides radiology, rehabilitation services, extended living, preventative health care and nursing home services as well.

The Teton Nursing Home offers the following:
1. Physical Therapy
2. Occupational Therapy
3. Alzheimer Care
4. Five Meal Plan
5. Respite Care
6. Nursing Rehabilitation
7. Short and Long Term Care
8. Adult Day Care
9. Speech Therapy

In the last couple of years the medical services in Teton County have improved so that people in Fairfield and Choteau can receive care at home and travel for more extensive services to Great Falls.

Housing
Although there are facilities for housing seniors and elder care, there appear to be no low-income housing efforts or programs in Teton County.

In 2010 there were 2,892 housing units, a homeownership rate of 75%, and 2.42 persons per household in 2009. The median value of owner-occupied housing units in 2009 was $121,100 dollars. The per-capita income in 2009 was $20,544 and the median household income in 2009 was $36,834. 15.3% of people lived below the poverty level in 2009.

Fairfield has the potential of several possibilities for annexations of subdivisions. The economy down turn brought some of these possibilities to a standstill but there is evidence as the economy picks up projects are beginning to be revisited throughout Teton County.

Recreation and Tourism
Visitors to Teton County can find a number of recreational activities. There are various hotels and inns, wildlife areas managed for hunting and bird watching, local parks and campgrounds, and a local Old Trail Museum. The Museum provides educational opportunities on the Montana Dinosaur Trail, which consists of a state-wide series of exhibits, field digs and educational programs.

Choteau promotes its hiking, wildlife watching, nature hikes and hunting access in to Rocky Mountain Front. In 1947, local elected officials consolidated the entire County, all 1,468,160 acres, into the Teton County Conservation District. The
Conservation District provides programs in erosion control, water conservation, soil fertility management and proper land use. In addition, the District has memoranda of understanding signed with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Extension Service to provide assistance in carrying out sound soil and water conservation programs.

Environment
The communities of Fairfield and Choteau have been designated as part of Northern Flyway because of Freezout Lake. Each year the number of photographers coming to the area to photograph the migration increases. Spring and fall bring migrations of Canada Grey Geese, Snow Geese, and Tundra Swans as well as Pelicans. There is a large influx of ardent bird hunters to Freezout in the fall. The local farm fields offer the migratory birds. The local farm fields offer the migratory birds a good place to feed and rest in the Lake before their long journey.

Teton County has two abandoned mine sites, both of which drain into the Teton River watershed. There are four Montana DEQ Remediation Response sites, including agricultural run-off and improper permitting. There are 33 miles of crude oil pipeline in the county, belonging to one company. There are no open landfills, but a closed one in each of the towns of Choteau, Dutton and Fairfield. The USFWS and NRCS manage 9,486 acres of conservation easements in the county, and there are 32,084 acres under private management.

Also in Teton County are congressionally designated Wilderness areas, Bureau of Land Management Special Designation areas, and Research Natural Areas, all of which are in federal ownership. The Wilderness areas constitute eight percent of the Teton County area, or 117,641 acres.

The BLM Special Designation areas, which may be Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Outstanding Natural Areas, or Primitive Areas and Wild Horse Ranges, make up 0.9 percent of Teton County area, or just over 13,000 acres. There are 1,791 acres designated as Research Natural Areas.
Toole County

Population
In 2010 there were 5,324 people living in Toole County - a population percent change of 1.1% between 2000 and 2010. There is little diversity within this county, with 92% Caucasian, 4.5% American Indian, and 2.4% Latin American origin.

Geography
The incorporated city of Shelby, population 3,376, serves as the county seat. Other cities and towns in Toole County include Ethridge, Galata, Kevin, Oilmont, Sunburst, and Sweetgrass. Situated in northern Montana, the Canadian line is Toole County’s northern boundary, with the Marias River flowing along a major portion of its southern boundary.

Toole County is made up of 1,915.65 square miles and has a population base of 2.8 persons per square mile.

Industry and Economy
Mining, Agriculture, Utilities, and Transportation and Warehousing are competitively positioned for growth and new business opportunities. These capitalize on the County’s geographic location (major rail service, east/west & north/south highways, on Canadian border, access to raw materials) as well as a skilled and or knowledgeable workforce.

In 2009 there were 196 private nonfarm establishments and 499 farms. There were 25.3% of women owned farms and 8.4% American Indian owned farms.

The top private employer in Toole County, employing 160 people, is the Crossroads Correctional Facility, located in Shelby. Opened in September, 1999, Crossroads is the first private adult correctional center in the state of Montana. Crossroads is the only adult institution in the Montana Prison System that has achieved both the ACA (American Correctional Association) and NCCCHC (National Commission on Correctional Health Care) accreditation. Operated by Corrections Corporation of America, the facility has 560 beds under contract to the State of Montana and 96 beds contracted to the U.S. Marshall Service.

Wind power in Toole County is a growing industry. With a total of 210 megawatts, Glacier Wind Farm, constructed and operated by NaturEner USA in 2009, became the largest wind energy project in Montana to date. 100 of the 140 towers are located within Toole County. The Rim Rock Wind Farm, to be built and operated by NaturEner USA, will be located approximately 25 miles north of the Glacier Wind Farm. Approximately 90% of the Rim Rock Wind Farm will be located in Toole County. When complete, the Rim Rock project is projected to be a 309 megawatt wind farm. Phase One construction, which will result in 189 megawatts of power, should be operational by the end of 2012.
Toole County is still producing both oil and gas after the first discovery 86 years ago. Unlike many oilfields, drilling a well in Toole County is cost efficient; oil, when discovered, is often found in formations only 1,500-1,800 feet under the ground.

Carbon storage, also known as carbon sequestration, is the capture and storage of CO2 gas that would otherwise be emitted into the atmosphere. The Big Sky Carbon Sequestration Partnership, a $67 million, eight-year project that will involve permitting, injecting and monitoring one million tons of carbon dioxide (CO2) into deep porous rock formations, will occur near Shelby, Kevin and Sunburst, all Toole County communities. The project site will be located at Kevin Dome, a geologic feature that extends 700 square miles underground and has trapped naturally occurring carbon dioxide (CO2) for millions of years. The overall goal of the project is to demonstrate that CO2 can be stored safely and viably in regional geologic formation. Local Montana companies will be hired for the project permitting, site development, well drilling and operations work.

Health
Healthcare plays a significant role within Toole County providing a critical component to the overall landscape in retaining existing and attracting new businesses. The Toole County Health Department, Marias Medical Center, Marias Healthcare Services, Inc., and Marias Heritage Center, as well as dentists and doctors of optometry, offer the region primary and extended care.

The Toole County Health Department offers immunizations; home visits for pregnant women, postpartum women, and newborns to five year olds to help with breastfeeding, developmental screenings, anticipatory guidance for safety, child rearing and nutrition; tobacco cessation and support; WIC; the Cancer Control Program which offers cancer prevention and screening education to the public, as well as, a screening program that assists with breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer screenings; school screening services; public health emergency planning; communicable disease surveillance and follow up; and education on a variety of health topics.

The Marias Medical Center, located in Shelby, provides primary, long-term, assisted living and care services to residents throughout the county. Marias Medical Center offers a 25 bed critical access hospital with nursery, maternity rooms, and ICU, as well as a 53-bed nursing facility that provides rehabilitation and restorative care. In addition to radiology, surgery and acute care, the Center provides comprehensive inpatient and outpatient medical digital imaging services Marias Medical Center also has an extensive rehabilitation department which includes physical, occupational and speech therapy services.

Marias Heritage Center (MHC) is a 38 apartment retirement and state licensed assisted living facility. Studio, one, and two bedroom apartments are available with all apartments offering a private bathroom and shower. The director is a registered nurse and the facility is staffed around the clock. MHC offers a variety of levels of assistance, including medication management.

Marias Healthcare Services Inc (MHSI) is a Federally Qualified Health Center look alike, providing primary care, obstetrics, geriatrics, pediatric, preventive, dentistry and full scope of medicine for patients. Staffed by five physicians, a dentist, and multiple nursing and support staff, MHSI offers a sliding fee schedule for low income families and accepts all patients regardless of ability to pay. The clinic is a private non-profit corporation owned by the citizens of Toole County. The operations are overseen by a volunteer board of community members.
Housing
In 2010 there were a total of 2,336 housing units with a homeownership rate of 66.9%. The median value of owner-occupied housing units in 2009 was $88,900 dollars, with 2.3 persons per households.

The per capita income in 2009 was $19,271 dollars and the median household income was $37,238 dollars in 2009. There were 16.5% of people living below the poverty level in Toole County in 2009.

Recreation and Tourism
The Shelby Chamber of Commerce is active in promoting the region’s natural amenities and tourist activities. Among these are boating and fishing around Lake Elwell and the Marias River, golf at the Marias Valley Golf and Country Club, and hiking along the Roadrunner Recreation Trail and through the area’s natural sandstone formations at ‘Little Jerusalem’, west of Sunburst. The Marias River State Park and Wildlife Management Area provides general recreation, hunting and Marias River access for floating.

Toole County is also home to the Marias Museum of History and Art, which has collections including artefacts from Native American culture, gold mining, homesteading and agriculture. Shelby houses a community recreation center, which is outfitted for indoor recreation: a kid’s game room, 2 racquetball courts, basketball court, 2 work-out rooms, a weight room, and aerobic and personal training classes. Shelby and Sunburst also have seasonal public swimming pools and outdoor wading pools. Shelby has 7 public parks for picnicking and recreation as well as a 5.06 mile recreation trail. Aronow Park includes tennis courts, horseshoe pits and an outdoor volleyball court. The park also offers ice skating in winter months. The Lake Sheloole Park & Campgrounds includes baseball fields and camping sites.

Williamson Park, 7 miles south of Shelby has camping sites available with no amenities. Shelby also has a very historic past in hosting the World Heavyweight Championship Fight of 1923.

Education
Toole County is home to three elementary schools and two high schools providing the students of Toole County with a balanced educational and social foundation to build upon as they grow and mature.

Environment
Shelby was selected to receive a 2005 and 2009 EPA Brownfields cleanup grant. The 2005 funding from the Environmental Protection Agency was to address the lead-based paint and asbestos contamination in Historic Shelby High. Remediation has been completed and the City is continuing pursuing funding opportunities for renovation and revitalization of the building for a multi-faceted community learning center. The 2009 funding was awarded for addressing hazardous petroleum substances at the former Shelby Petroleum Refinery east of Shelby. Grant monies were also awarded through the Department of Natural Resources Renewable Resource Development Grant Program for remediation at this site. Work continues to address this site.

9,251 acres of Toole County are currently under a federal Fish and Wildlife Service conservation easement. There is also one open landfill, the Shelby Landfill, a Class II Landfill. There are 71 miles of crude oil pipelines in the county.

Public Safety
The U.S. Border Patrol maintains a large presence in Toole County with stations located in Shelby and Sunburst. The U.S. Border Patrol is responsible for the enforcement of criminal laws and other
provisions under the auspices of the Immigration and Nationality Act, along with directing and implementing programs related to the prevention of illegal entry of terrorists and terrorist’s weapons of mass destruction into the United States. The U.S. Border Patrol continues its efforts to control Montana’s borders by maintaining and expanding a strong enforcement posture, including sufficient flexibility to address dynamic enforcement challenges, which is critical to bringing operational control to our Nation’s borders.

The Sweetgrass/Coutts Canadian-U.S. border facility located on Interstate 15 in north Toole County was dedicated on September 15, 2004. The unique facility is shared between U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). It is the largest shared facility of its kind on the northern border. This shared port of entry has its roots in the Canada-United States Shared Border Accord. The Accord, signed in 1995, promotes efficiency in operating a shared border and encourages creation of a border that protects the safety of citizens from both countries, while facilitating legitimate travel and trade between them.

CBP and CBSA moved into the 100,000 square-foot shared port in the fall of 2003. The facility includes a three-level main building, housing CBSA and CBP primary inspection lanes and port offices. Separate cargo processing and examination facilities, secondary vehicle inspection buildings, a firing range and armory, gamma x-ray technology, hazmat areas, and outbound inspection booths are located on either side of the border. Lunchroom facilities, locker rooms, exercise room, and conference rooms are shared by both staffs. CBP employees at Sweetgrass reside in Toole, Glacier, and Pondera counties.

The facilities are 24/7 commercial operations, allowing commercial merchandise and passenger traffic to flow around the clock, 365 days a year. According to Fiscal Year 2010 CBP data:

- Almost 300,000 cars, carrying 597,000 people entered the U.S. through the Sweetgrass Port of Entry between October 1, 2009 and September 30, 2010.
- 122,000 Commercial trucks arrived, and
- 300 buses carrying 8400 persons entered during the same time period.

Today, Sweetgrass/Coutts is very different than the original border crossing in 1890. The original port had one building at a railway area and a white line drawn between the two countries. Now, with six lanes going north into Canada and 5 lanes coming south into the U.S., the port has the highest traffic volume in the state of Montana.

Transportation
Shelby is located at the crossroads of US-2 and Interstate 15 on the CANAMEX corridor, a 1,504-mile corridor that connects Edmonton to Mexico City. Shelby is a hub station for Amtrak’s Empire Builder. Regional bus service from the Canadian border to Great Falls and from Shelby to Kalispell is headquartered in Shelby. Toole County is also home to the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe Rail Intermodal Terminal and is the northernmost inland Port Authority serving the U.S., Canada and Mexico. The Port of Northern Montana, located east of Shelby, offers the following services:

- Immediate access to worldwide Custom Brokerages
- Booking capabilities for major steamship companies
- Break-bulk
- Pick and Pack
- Consolidation / Distribution
- Rail Car Transloading
- 110 Car Shuttle Facility
- Storage Facilities
- Lumber Transload
- Palletized Product Transloading
- Rail Car Transloading
- Bulk Rail Car Transloading
The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy updates socio-economic and environmental data, but it also reassesses each community and county, as well as projects, through doing a series of community meetings. By obtaining the perspectives of local people and incorporating updated data, a vision has been prepared which will guide the goals and objectives for this 5-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

Sweetgrass Development Vision

Our purpose is to help the governments and citizens in each County and the Blackfeet Reservation achieve their economic goals while preserving their distinct cultures and way of life.

CEDS Community Meetings 2011

There were 7 community meetings involving the communities of Choteau, Fairfield, Great Falls, Conrad, Shelby, Browning, and Cut Bank. The summaries of each meeting can be found in Appendix B. These meetings played a key role in the development of the following Vision, Goals and Objectives, as well as the Action Plan.

The Vision stated below was developed from strengths, weaknesses, and proposed projects that the communities expressed at the meetings. Each community had individual needs and assets, but as a region, the communities and counties face similar issues, which are represented in a solution-based vision:

**Vision of the 2012-2017 CEDS**

The Vision of the Sweetgrass Development CEDS Document for the next five years is as follows:

1. The region will have a diversified age population with services, recreational, economic opportunities to support the populace and be a destination for young and old.

2. The region will contain unique and individualized communities with updated infrastructure, adequate and affordable housing, a strong business presence and vibrant economy, with flexibility for continued growth and expansion.

3. The region will serve as a corridor to Glacier National Park providing leisure activities for locals as well as visitors.

4. The development within the region will connect citizens and visitors worldwide through technology and infrastructure.

5. Preserve the local heritage and improve the quality of life while protecting the environment.
Following the vision and using the information from the community meetings and through the updated background data, our goals and objectives are outlined below. An action plan will be developed to directly address these goals and objectives.

**Vision 1: The region will have a diversified age population with services, recreational, economic opportunities to support the populace and serve as a destination for young and old.**

**Goal 1: Work to develop a community supportive of aging adults and a senior community through creating projects that focus on additional services, enhanced accessibility, recreation and health.**

- **Objective 1:** Strengthen healthcare offerings within each community. Work with facilities to assist in creating cooperative partnerships within the region as well as state.
- **Objective 2:** Incorporate more incentive-based volunteer opportunities and mentor opportunities in schools.
- **Objective 3:** Assist with local and regional transportation efforts.

**Vision 2: The region will contain unique and individualized communities with updated infrastructure, adequate and affordable housing, a strong business presence and vibrant economy, with flexibility for continued growth and expansion.**

**Goal 1: Develop County or Regional Housing task force(s) to develop a process to increase housing quality and affordability for funding to finish**

- **Objective 1:** Network with local stakeholders to begin this dialogue and develop a regional housing needs list.
- **Objective 2:** Identify grants to enhance current housing to allow for elderly accessibility, and possibly group housing.
- **Objective 3:** Look into organizations such as ‘Youth Build’ or ‘Habitat for Humanity’ that would not only provide senior housing improvements, but also train youth in the process.

**Goal 2: Strengthen, support, and promote the local/regional economy. Provide more diversified economic opportunities which encourage youth to stay or come back to the communities.**

- **Objective 1:** Develop better local lending and financing opportunities for local business development and entrepreneurship.
- **Objective 2:** Actively work with banks, financial institutions, and political representatives to support creative local entrepreneurship.
Objective 3: Provide business technical assistance and training.

Objective 4: Assist with grant research for individual business development and expansion.

Objective 5: Provide information to local EDO’s, Chambers and business organizations regarding programs offered and business development training opportunities.

Goal 4: Increase value-added agriculture and local agriculture development opportunities in the region.

Objective 1: Network with universities and industries to promote researching crop variety and innovative agriculture potential in the region.

Objective 2: Promote value-added agriculture business incentives and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Objective 3: Assist in providing educational information to producers for diversification.

Goal 5: Provide information and assistance for energy development within the region.

Objective 1: Provide information on area development for communities. Assist with infrastructure, educational, safety and business development needs.

Objective 2: Provide information regarding development within the region to promote communications between public and private entities and take a proactive stance regarding possible conflict or issues.

Vision 3: The region will serve as a corridor to Glacier National Park providing leisure activities for locals as well as visitors.

Goal 1: Strengthen the main streets and downtowns.

Objective 1: Promoting “shop local” campaigns.

Objective 2: Help finance ‘Complete Streets,’ ‘Healthy Communities,’ and ‘Vibrant Main Streets,” as well as any other applicable programs.

Objective 3: Research additional grant opportunities.

Goal 2: Promote visitation, participation and tourism within the region.

Objective 1: Work with local and regional tourism entities and participate in trainings and programs offered on a regional and state-wide level.

Objective 2: Assist other transportation and public service entities on promotion of the region.

Objective 3: Enhance online promotion of local to regional tourism opportunities. Network with local/regional/state tourism bureaus to identify ways to promote opportunities online.
Objective 4: Find financial/local educational support to help develop an outreach program for tourism opportunities.

Vision 4: The development within the region will connect citizens and visitors worldwide through technology and infrastructure.

Goal 1: Assist with the financing and development of private, public and non-profit sector infrastructure projects to support economic growth and maintain quality of life issues throughout the region.

  Objective 1: Develop an infrastructure needs list
  Objective 2: Research grants and funding opportunities

Goal 2: Assist with development of local and regional transportation networks.

  Objective 1: Work with local, regional and state entities to create and strengthen the transportation network within the region.
  Objective 2: Support state and federal funding programs and incentives for regional transportation networks.

Goal 3: Increase broadband opportunities and capabilities within the region

  Objective 1: Assist in creating a regional Broadband Task Force to work with the State program
  Objective 2: Work with local colleges and universities to promote and find funding for distance learning and adult education and to expand capabilities and usage.
  Objective 3: Work with healthcare facilities to improve tele-health offerings and updated communication networks works for Electron Heath Records (EHR).
  Objective 4: Work with local governments and communications co-ops and service providers to assess the local need.

Vision 5: Preserve the local heritage and improve the quality of life while protecting the environment.

Goal 1: Continue to develop a balance between business and environment through the continued development of renewable and sustainable energies and through clean-up of identified areas to develop more usable land.

  Objective 1: Assess local brownfield sites and develop/enhance partnerships to fund cleanup. Work to develop a brownfields coalition to identify the local issues and find adequate funding for brownfield assessment, cleanup, and disposal.
  Objective 2: Work with local Small Business Development Centers and Chambers of Commerce to identify potential local renewable and sustainable businesses for those locations.
  Objective 3: Work with financing institutions to find funding strategies for redeveloped areas.
Objective 4: Network and connect local entrepreneurs, colleges, students, etc. to begin to develop business ideas and strategies.
Action Plan

The action plan is directed by the vision, goals, and objectives. It is designed as a tool for this region to prioritize projects/tasks that need to be accomplished. It specifies the area involved, tasks to be implemented, a brief implementation plan, responsible parties, funding sources, expected results, performance measures, priority level, and schedule.
## ACTION PLAN

These are the projects for the 2012 through 2017 CEDS and will be revised on a yearly basis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Level</th>
<th>1= Very High</th>
<th>2= High</th>
<th>3= Medium</th>
<th>4= Low</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>County</strong></td>
<td><strong>Task to be Implemented</strong></td>
<td><strong>Implementation Plan</strong></td>
<td><strong>Responsible Parties</strong></td>
<td><strong>Funding Sources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>Work to develop a community supportive of aging adults and a senior community through creating projects that focus on additional services, enhanced accessibility, recreation and health</td>
<td>Work with facilities to assist in creating cooperative partnerships within the regions and state</td>
<td>NCMEDD Staff</td>
<td>EDA Private Entities</td>
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<td>Incorporate more incentive-based volunteer opportunities and mentor opportunities in schools.</td>
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<td>Assist with local and regional transportation efforts.</td>
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<td>Additional volunteer opportunities will be provided within each area.</td>
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<td>Demographics of the region will show the changes to the tax base. The population is aging, but the income levels will show more affluent retirees.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glacier, Toole, Pondera and Teton Counties</td>
<td>Develop County or Regional Housing task force(s) to develop a process to increase housing quality and affordability.</td>
<td>Network with local stakeholders to begin this dialogue and develop a regional housing needs list.</td>
<td>Identify grants to enhance current housing to allow for elderly accessibility, and possibly group housing.</td>
<td>Work with organizations such as „Youth Build” or „Habitat for Humanity” that would not only provide senior housing improvements, but also train youth in the process.</td>
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<td>All</td>
<td>Strengthen, support, and promote the local/regional economy. Provide more diversified economic opportunities, which encourage youth to stay or come back to the communities.</td>
<td>Develop better local lending and financing opportunities for local business development and entrepreneurship.</td>
<td>Actively work with banks, financial institutions, and political representatives to support creative local entrepreneurship.</td>
<td>Provide business technical assistance and training.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td>All</td>
<td>Increase value-added agriculture and local agriculture development opportunities in the region.</td>
<td>Network with universities and industries to promote researching crop variety and innovative agriculture potential in the region.</td>
<td>Promote value-added agriculture business incentives and entrepreneurship opportunities.</td>
<td>Continue to provide grant assistance and development of industrial parks.</td>
<td>Measured by the additional funding for agriculture and by products.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>Provide information and assistance for energy development within the region.</td>
<td>Provide information on area development for communities. Assist with infrastructure, educational, safety and business development needs.</td>
<td>Assist in providing educational information to producers for diversification.</td>
<td>Increased tax base within the region.</td>
<td>Increased oil and gas leasing within the area, quantifiable by the numbers of permits granted.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>Strengthen the main streets and downtowns.</td>
<td>Promoting “shop local” campaigns.</td>
<td>NCMEDD Staff</td>
<td>Local funds EDA</td>
<td>Provide information regarding trainings and educational opportunities for projects.</td>
<td>Have staff and/or board members attending conferences to assist in project development.</td>
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<td>Help finance „Complete Streets,” „Healthy Communities,” and „Vibrant Main Streets” as well as any other applicable programs.</td>
<td>Research additional grant opportunities.</td>
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<td>Submit applications to programs to assist in revitalization.</td>
<td>Funding received for projects.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provide listing of opportunities on the website.</td>
<td>Attend local and state trainings on Tourism.</td>
<td>State NCMEDD Staff</td>
<td>Local State EDA</td>
<td>Provide information regarding tourism based opportunities.</td>
<td>Attend local and state trainings on Tourism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>Promote visitation, participation and tourism within the region.</td>
<td>Work with local and regional tourism entities and participate in trainings and programs offered on a regional and state-wide level.</td>
<td>State NCMEDD Staff</td>
<td>Local State EDA</td>
<td>Conduct meetings within the region for additional visitor attraction.</td>
<td>Work with airports, bus services and other transportation entities to promote the area.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Assist other transportation and public service entities on promotion of the region.</td>
<td>Enhance online promotion of local to regional tourism opportunities. Network with local/regional/state tourism bureaus to identify ways to promote opportunities online.</td>
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<td>Provide to the public information regarding events and attractions within the region.</td>
<td>Include additional sites and links on the Sweetgrass Development Site.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Find financial/local educational support to help develop an outreach program for tourism opportunities.</td>
<td>Provide visitor training and information to local tourism entities.</td>
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<td>Assist with social media and Superhost training.</td>
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<td>All</td>
<td>Assist with the financing and development of private, public and non-profit sector infrastructure projects to support economic growth and maintain quality of life issues throughout the region.</td>
<td>Develop an infrastructure needs list.</td>
<td>NCMEDD Staff</td>
<td>EDA</td>
<td>Work with communities on an ongoing basis to assist with projects.</td>
<td>Create a list for each community within the region.</td>
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<td>All</td>
<td>Assist with development of local and regional transportation networks.</td>
<td>Research grants and funding opportunities.</td>
<td>NCMEDD Staff</td>
<td>EDA Local funding</td>
<td>Provide grant information and writing assistance for any projects that may be eligible.</td>
<td>Obtain funding for infrastructure projects in the form of grants.</td>
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<td>Work with local, regional and state entities to create and strengthen the transportation network within the region.</td>
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<td>Provide ongoing information regarding funding opportunities. Provide additional routes to the larger cities throughout the region.</td>
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<td>Support state and federal funding programs and incentives for regional transportation networks.</td>
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<td>Provide funding research and assistance for transportation needs.</td>
<td>Assist in obtaining additional vehicles and servicing all of the counties within the region.</td>
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<td>Assist with obtaining private buy-in to the transportation network.</td>
<td>Work to have public/private partnerships in the region, measurable by funding levels Increase ridership</td>
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<td>Review transportation programs on a regular basis.</td>
<td>Apply for additional regional transportation monies as they become available.</td>
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<td>Number</td>
<td>Task Description</td>
<td>Responsible Party</td>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Additional Information</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Increase broadband opportunities and capabilities within the region</td>
<td>NCMEDD Staff</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Have an identified roster with contact information.</td>
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<td>Assist in creating a regional Broadband Task Force to work with the State program.</td>
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<td>Work with local colleges and universities to promote and find funding for distance learning and adult education and to expand capabilities and usage.</td>
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<td>Work with healthcare facilities to improve telehealth offerings and updated communication networks works for Electron Heath Records (EHR).</td>
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<td>Work with local governments and communications co-ops and service providers to assess the local need.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Coordinate a regional task force of public and private entities to identify areas of need.</td>
<td>State Funding</td>
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<td>Obtain funding to increase broadband infrastructure.</td>
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<td>Research and apply for additional funding to assist in providing access across the region.</td>
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<td>Coordinate to ensure that infrastructure plans include communication lines.</td>
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<td>Provide information regarding educational opportunities via distance learning.</td>
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<td>Assist private business with coordination of training assistance and increased learning opportunities.</td>
<td>Private funding</td>
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<td>Quantifiable, the cost of access will diminish.</td>
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<td>All</td>
<td>Continue to develop a balance between business and environment through the continued development of renewable and sustainable energies, and through clean-up of identified areas to develop more usable land.</td>
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<td>Assess local brownfield sites and develop/enhance partnerships to fund cleanup. Work to develop a brownfields coalition to identify the local issues and find adequate funding for brownfield assessment, cleanup, and disposal.</td>
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<td>Work with local EDOs and Chambers of Commerce to identify potential local renewable and sustainable businesses for those locations.</td>
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<td>Work with financing institutions to find funding strategies for redeveloped areas.</td>
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<td>Network and connect local entrepreneurs, colleges, students, etc. to begin to develop business ideas and strategies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCMEDD staff</td>
<td>Identify projects and assist with applications.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDA Other identified funding opportunities</td>
<td>Funding obtained for projects.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination in each area identified issues and utilize the environmental standards for each project.</td>
<td>Provide program information on the website for public usage.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Educate local entities on the environmental processes and changes in regulations</td>
<td>Create a regional “wish list” of identified clean up projects.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Appendix

Appendix A: Structure Maps

Appendix B: Community Profiles
Appendix A
Condition of Structures

The following Condition of Structures Maps are included for the communities of Browning, Choteau, Conrad, Cut Bank, Fairfield, Great Falls, and Shelby.

Structure maps can be helpful in assessing neighborhoods, potential development/redevelopment sites, needs for revitalization, and potential hazardous areas.
Map created by the
Community Technical Assistance Program
Montana Department of Commerce
301 South Park Ave
Helena, MT 59620
406-841-2396

Condition of Structures
Shelby, Montana
Data Source: Montana Department of Revenue, 2008

Condition of Structures
Per Parcel
- Unsoud
- Very Poor
- Poor
- Fair
- Average
- Good
- Unknown
Condition of Structures Per Parcel

- Unsound
- Very Poor
- Poor
- Fair
- Average
- Good
- Unknown

Map created by the Community Technical Assistance Program
Montana Department of Commerce
301 South Park Ave
Helena, MT 59620
406-441-4288

Condition of Structures
Fairfield, Montana
Condition of Structures

Per Parcel

Unsound
VeryPoor
Poor
Fair
Average
Good
Unknown

Map created by the Community Technical Assistance Program
Montana Department of Commerce
301 South Park Ave
Helena, MT 59620
406-441-2304

Data Source: Montana Department of Revenue, 2008
Condition of Structures
Per Parcel

- Unsound
- Very Poor
- Poor
- Fair
- Average
- Good
- Unknown

Map created by the:
Community Technical Assistance Program
Montana Department of Commerce
301 South Park Ave
Helena, MT 59620
406-841-2598

Data Source: Montana Department of Revenue, 2008
Approximate Municipal Boundary

Condition of Structures

Per Parcel
- Unsound
- Very Poor
- Poor
- Fair
- Average
- Good
- Unknown

Map created by the:
Community Technical Assistance Program
Montana Department of Commerce
301 South Park Ave
Helena, MT 59620
406-841-2394

Data Source: Montana Department of Revenue, 2008
Condition of Structures Per Parcel

- Unsound
- Very Poor
- Poor
- Fair
- Average
- Good
- Unknown

Map created by the:

Community Technical Assistance
Montana Department of Commerce
301 South Park Ave
Helena, MT 59620
406-841-2598

Data Source: Montana Department of Revenue, 2008
Appendix B
Community Meeting Notes

Appendix B is all of the CEDS community meeting notes from Choteau, Fairfield, Great Falls, Conrad, Shelby, Browning, and Cut Bank that were completed in the summer of 2011.
**Choteau Notes 1hr 23 min**

**Positive**

- Residents see being on I-15 as a means of transportation and shipping
- The Train that comes to the area is also a great transportation asset but it has limited operation times at the moment
- They have an excellent school system that is comparable to a larger school’s education standards but has small classroom sizes
- There is a low cost of living, making the area feasible for those looking to move There is a great available workforce; many are leaving for oil jobs that pay well but could lead to permanent relocation.
- Property is affordable with homes selling from $30,000 to $40,000
- There are vary unique businesses in the area that build community character
- The main street and neighborhoods have detailed landscaping that makes the area inviting for visitors.
- There is a healthy economy with strong agricultural economy; still with modern equipment efficiency, farms and ranches are not producing as many jobs as they once were.
- There is a strong sense of community were people can pull together and work toward common goals that are beneficial for everyone.
- The community has the ability to pull in over 10,000 people for the round up weekend and other large events.
- If a project is taken on it is done and done right.

**Challenges**

- There is small individual initiative, but there is little town wide excitement.
- They need further funding for infrastructure, specifically water and sewer There are polarizing philosophies with those who don’t want change at all and those who see the need for further improvement.
- Fairfield is becoming an aging community, where Dutton has become the primary school in the county.
- There has to be community cosmetics to further enhance the business community.
- There is some isolation to the West side of the county with fewer services reaching the county beyond the interstate.
- The rail system is sporadic, that is currently only coming for grain purposes.
- There is a lack of good paying jobs and limited help for business owners who are looking for a specific skill set.
- There currently is no available land to develop, and limited housing available (Dutton specific). They would like to repair 30 homes with the CDBG grant
- There is a need for new business and jobs
- The housing that is does not meet middle class standards; those homes that are available are great opportunities for welfare families
- The medical systems are struggling and in need of financial help
- The status quo is everything is fine

Where does the community see themselves in the future? Quality of life

- Would like to see all community members with a job with $15 --$16 per hour wages
- Every families has a nice 3---4 bedroom house

Healthcare
There is an affordable health insurance or the medical facilities are able to function efficiently so health cost is lowered.

There will be a stable medical facility (currently the hospital has to give back $450,000 back to Medicaid/Medicare)

Business Community
- Industrial: The community can fabricate mega loads (could put a strain on the facilities). With more families moving in there would be a greater need for housing, medical facilities, public services, and the sheriffs department.
- Dutton needs a grocery store (Could be a potential for a coop store)
- The community has gone from variety of three to four businesses to just one (There is high cost for equipment)
- A couple of businesses have burned down and were not rebuilt (EPA wont allow the meat market to rebuild and the Pellet plant didn’t have insurance)

Individuals future
- CRP is for retirees and active farmers are saying no
- Kids are leaving, even family farms no longer need a large workforce creating less jobs.
- Currently the available workforce is: Hands on
- There is more room for technological jobs; creating room for a two year tech school, further education equals higher paying jobs.

Bridging the GAP
- Long time residents from 50---80 feel everything is fine there is no need for change
- Anything in the 40 mile radius of Great Falls is in danger of becoming a bedroom community.
- The populations have stayed fairly stable
- There are professionals to low income families living in the areas that want their kids to live in a small community. With the cost of living often both the mother and father need to work.

Need for More housing
- There is no room for more housing growth potential in Fairfield with the water situation. When the straight lining ditches the aquifers shrunk.
- With the aging population there is a need for smaller condo living.
- Mainly just grain is shipped on the train in Chouteau; it is a low speed rail with improvements needed.
- The communities have slow Internet connections. Currently Dutton is Quest’s HUB zone.
- There are very limited retail businesses with Great Falls being so close to the towns. Younger groups are not volunteering (needed for: Fire department and EMS). Through out the county they are seeing a declining civic engagement with limited time and income barriers.
- There currently is sufficient childcare in Choteau it is limited for ages four and under in Dutton.
- The school system in general is above the state average and has huge community support. It is not hard to pass mill levy’s and bonds in the area for the school system. There has been a split feelings when it comes to environmental issues with little money to support either side.
### Fairfield 1hr 49min

#### Positives
- Strong Employer Base
- Close a proximity to the city, the wild and ranching and farming.
- Have a strong agricultural base
- Great location
- Easy to motivate community members (have a we can do it our selves go to attitude)
- Excellent schools and school system
- Great Quality of life
- Has a good philosophy to promote local jobs to the community
- Positive sense of community (go get them attitude)
- Social infrastructure (community comes together)
- Civic organizations work together
- Will be upgrading water and pumps
- Has a unique downtown area with lots of potential and is very inviting

#### Challenges
- Affordable Housing (lots of houses for sale but they are either old, high priced or small)
- A diversified growing business base is needed.
- A greater need for good paying jobs exists
- The town doesn’t have the housing available to support new jobs
  - (housing is $150,000 To $40,000 a building site is $30,000)
  - There are no rentals available currently
- Senior housing currently doesn’t exist
- There is a disconnect between communities each community is set on preserving themselves, they have trouble asking and knowing where to turn for help.
- There is a dependence on Main stay business
- Community member can come together but there needs to be a spark to set the fire
- Better infrastructure is needed including water management
- The town is looking at a levy to get new streets
- The cost of living
  - School enrollment is low

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Where does the community see themselves in the future? Quality of life
- High paying jobs that meet the states average wage ($36,000 to #38,000 a year), with a distribution of wages for community members of all skill sets
- Looking at the possibility that Great Falls is the place to work and has the jobs, but Fairfield is where to find the quality of life.
- Currently even if individuals don’t have the money to pay for the lunch at school they are.
- They would like to see an assessment on the housing, wages and medical the exists and what would have to be developed to sustain population growth.

#### Jobs
- Possible small to midsize manufacturing jobs
- Currently everyone is going to where the jobs are (the oil fields) and college students usually can’t come back with the employment opportunities unbalanced or nonexistent.
There is a lack of goods and services that can be a potential job creator, but it is hard to create retail jobs with Great Falls being so close.

Currently the Chamber of Commerce is looking at Great Falls families and what it would look like if they lived in Fairfield and work in Great Falls. Then they are looking at what businesses there should be to support these “bed room” families. Such businesses should mentioned were; plumbers, electricians, veterinarians, etc. They would like to see more sole proprietor businesses that can offer intern and apprentice.

The community would like to see Fairfield become the place for the geoworker where Fairfield can offer the quality of life

- The community would like to be able to support two to three small manufacturing companies
- There was mention to have promotional taxes (track inter airport transport and shipping). They can look at being a site to ship in and manufacture items that would pose a threat in a larger city.
- Fairfield would be a great place to have a manufacturing company with a workforce that has good work ethics and wages and benefits that are currently lower than national averages.
- The residents would also like to see a community college that is technical based. The tech or university can train residents to do specialized jobs in the manufacturing company or other local jobs.
- There has to be a buy into the community
- There was a suggestion to build a large warehouse to hold common items for businesses, that way they could save on some transportation costs by just buying in bulk.

Consistent medical care (currently residents depend on 1 part time practitioner)
They would like to see the town plack have the ability to sustain reasonable growth

There would be optic fiber to every home creating a community that not only has the latest technology, but has access to current technology.

Currently they are not taking advantage of the potential tourism
- They are simply not tapping into the cars that are traveling through to other surrounding communities
- There is some traffic that goes through Fairfield to a close ski resort and Glacier National Park

Bridging the Gap
There are no existing networks to see the businesses and funding from other partners (The community is Hugely Independent)
- The community would like to better access such organizations as SweetGrass Development to see what funding is available and how they might tap into it to reach their goals.
- The community is also full of great driving forces, still there are few combined efforts.
- Fairfield is a farming community with the attitude to just help and do it.

How can Fairfield “Cluster”
- First they would like to see where everyone is heading and see what personal networks exist, and what national networks can be tapped into.

Potential for out growth (What Space is available for Growth?)
- Fairfield is land locked with large farming land
- Services would have to be upgraded
Another key to bridging the gap is to promote local businesses
- There has to be an increase in local purchases (finding the purchases)
- There is a potential to sell and market local businesses on the Internet.
- There was a suggestion to look at the bench towns around Fairfield and see what they are doing the is successful or not working.
- The community is also ready to look at what they can do; how can Fairfield be seen as a town that thinks out of the box. (They suggested developing a bird watching component)
- They understand that they don't have to focus on the tourism, but they would like to capture some of the tourism business.
- Locals businesses have room to expand and diversify
  1. This could be done through employee management training
  2. There is lack of funding and funding that can be obtained has extensive regulations to go through once the funding is received.

Current businesses are stuck on routine (there is no risky thinking that would have the business owner try more or less to create a more successful business.)
- They would like to see some risk management training through focus groups and surveys
  3. Specifically they suggested asking lenders and seeing what is going on with businesses.
- They are a sales and service culture.
- There can be additional coaching on what is Fairfield and how will it meet your needs
  3. They suggested promoting Fairfield with a just stop and see message

There has to be funding for senior housing
- This could create additional jobs through building housing and senior care
- A basic workforce housing could also be create at the same time
Great Falls 1 Hr 19 min

Positives

There has been a diversification study
There is a stable economy
They are in a good position for agro
growth and expansion.
There is a nice diversification of
existing jobs available
They believe they are in a position
where they can comfortably move
into both the energy and
environmental field of study and
work.
They have airport, water way and
train transportation available to them
There is an existing college and tech
school that can provide education
and training
The existing housing is very
affordable
There is a good quality of life and
good living in the city
There are an abundance of resources
that are cheap in cost and easy to
develop.
They are surrounded by accessible
land that can be used for
development.
They have a great list of available
natural resources
Education is accessible
There are young and innovative
employees.

Challenges

There is a need for greater access
to capital for both individuals and
agencies (Individual business
opportunities have to go to banks
that are removed from the
community)
There is a need for further
infrastructure development (the
airport and other communities)
Existing technology can be improved
for facilities and business growth They
would like to identify incentives for
investing in the green technology To
aid in business growth they need
available capital and risk
management training.
Communities are seeing an aging
population but there is still a steady
but slow growth.
The government is slow and not
flexible
They want to see the city go from the
old casino town to a young vibrant
community.
There is slow change and growth with
a large resistant’s to change.
Currently they have a limited
economic base that is not prone to
taking chances.
There is a definite lack of local
venture capital and local banking
decisions.
There is an over dependency on the
military (They would like to see more
diverse economy jobs)
The economy would currently crash
without the military base (if they were
to move today)
Any venture capital that is applied
for has to go to a centralized office
for a decision there is no longer a
local answer from a local decision

Where does the community see
themselves in the future?
Quality of Job
- They would like to see a higher average wage (specifically they would like to be one of the top 4 wage earning cities in Montana)
- There are some states with the same industry but higher per capita
- There will be a diversified employer base with high wages for both laborer and academics
- The community has to embrace technology (it is hard to get the state to embrace what is different, the example given was manually tagging wolves when there is an existing unmanned helicopter that will go out and give an accurate count of wolves in a pack)
- The community will become open to an alternative way of doing jobs (embracing technology that can create a more productive and efficient employee).
- Currently environmental concerns see manufacturing as evil (the smoke stacks have an environmental damaging effect)
- They would like to see commercial manufacturing as well as lighter industrial manufacturing, but there is resistance to this idea.
- Currently the East side of town is a booming energy centralized community with agriculture, aerospace, manufacturing, and technology. Where as the West side of the town is mainly retired residents
- Currently the agricultural industry is not engaged with the conversation regarding technology advancements. With the industry were it is today there is a skill set available that would not need lot of money to move forward.

The Top Five employers will be privately owned companies

Bridging the Gap
Currently there is an issue with taking chances and a fear of risk, so business owners are effectively weighing the pros and cons of any business risk before making a decision.
- One solution given was to make leadership prove they have the ability to make the most logical beneficial risk.

Creating new businesses
- They would like to see a vibrant sustainable community for current residents and to attract more people to the area (they want to build on infrastructure and transportation to reach this goal)
- There is currently a lack of resources (their priority will be to build what will have the greatest bang for their buck).
- There was also mention that the city did not have to focus on growth (they have put large amounts of money toward the city and it has not guaranteed growth) maybe they can look at how the investments have helped with tourism and what that could mean for the region. They did state they currently have more park per capita (I didn’t get if it was state wide or regionally)
- If they wanted to become a tourism city it would mean jobs at fast food places and clerks (this might not be the workforce investment they want).
- FORWARD THINKING is the key

Manufacturing
- With the military and educational opportunities in Great Falls there is a educated and skill workforce that is viable.
- There are few jobs available
- Potential employees are being found to be over qualified but are in the area because they want to live here.
- BARRIER: there is a strong group of people in the area that don’t want any change at all.
The people are against the direct effect not the projects that are proposed. They would like to see how you can get through tough regulations.

The city currently has turf over the city and is not working on water growth. They said this could be due to an over complication of development with city leaders being constrained.

They are seeing better partnerships between the city and the county. They are looking at a situation where the county will bring in the water to the city giving them three contracts and creating a public utility district (Black eagle, air force, etc). In this case the city is really looking at the loss and recovery. (Right now the city is proposing that the individual person develops and builds in a development area, but the city will own the property once they are done.)

There are currently no ventures groups (The GFTA is the local Angel group, who is seeing proposals come in but no private funding has jumped at the ideas).

The Top 5 Employers

Currently the economy can’t support one big company

Great Fall’s economy is a service sector; they would like to see it transition to a manufacturing

They could look at possibilities such as a build industry cluster that consists of private groups with similar industries

They would like to identify those that are there and those that are not (What would clusters across the region look like)

Partnering to make sure economic investments can come together to build private, state, and federal funding.
Conrad 2hr 13 min

Positives

- There is a strong well supported agriculture community
- Pondera Port Authority has some business growth opportunities available
- There are opportunities for higher education among the students in the public school system (good education in the public schools) and they are fairly close to a university.
- They are virtually ready to start putting money into the community.
- There are projects that are shovel ready
- There is a good economy for farming and cropping businesses around the community. Many residents feel this is their biggest contribution to the community.
- With Lake Frances so close there is a good supply of water. With the past year there is an increase in water, which is a great positive. The lake is also an asset to farmers and is a great place for recreation.
- With the moisture and commodity money the region has seen a good profit for their grain goods.
- There is a strong can do attitude throughout the community.
- Community members are engaged with fundraisers.
- They had great waterfall this last year.
- Compared to the last three years the community has seen a good business sale increase.
- They have a diverse economy base with oil production, dry land that is irrigated, and farming and ranching.
- There is some manufacturing in the area and a potential for growth in this industry.

Challenges

- They feel they have good leadership who have the tools they need to achieve goals and results for the community.
- There is an open and aggressive development attitude where they know they can ask for help and they can get community members together to reach common goals.
- Strike Rust?
- The infrastructure poses a problem to both industry and population growth. There has to be a greater infrastructure.
- They feel they need more of a labor base
- The school needs a gym that can support a larger population base for tournaments.
- They want to reduce the number of jobs that are going to outside people. This means they need a greater skilled workforce that includes people who can work with sheet metal, flight line tractors and more.
- They have an aging population and they understand that they need to have jobs that youth want and are capable of working to keep them in the region.
- There is a mono economy that is basically depended on agriculture and it needs to be more diverse.
- The community is seeing that there are no middle to high end projects in the area; the have a variety of low end property that can be looked at as blight. People are seeing they can’t get homes because their income is too high.
- There is limited money available for those who are looking at opening, sustaining, or expanding a small business.
They see a need for more money to build on infrastructure (specifically the streets in Valier). They are seeing population shrinkage with a population that is 65 and older; they can continually gaining retirees, and it has become a big deal when there are three additional students in the school. The population seems to be coming from the west were they are able to sell a house for half a million dollars and by one in Conrad for $30,000. They are buying up all the vacant lots and there is some unknown person who is supposed to develop them for residential use.

Where does the community see themselves in the future?

Specific Goals

- Have completed the south overpass
- Have water and sewer developed
- Create greater employment opportunities
  - There is an opened opportunities for industrial companies to come in to develop the workforce.

The want to have younger families living in the area, they need a younger demographic.
  - They would like to see a high school enrollment, and possibly have the capabilities to bring in boarder patrols for education in a two--year tech school.
  - They want to be able to bring kids back to the area, before they retire, to be able to offer well paying jobs. They want an income bracket of about $40,000 and up to keep families in the area.

Agricultural economy
  - They want to have the jobs; they already have the value added opportunities
  - Right now it is hard to get hired men who are looking at the oil fields for a greater opportunity
  - There needs to be diversified agricultural projects and support for them to feel comfortable with the possible change.
  - They currently don't have but would like a farm and Ranch store that can supply needed goods beyond what a hardware store can supply (tractor or alike parts, horse tackle, ect).

Bridging the Gap

They don’t have the sewer and water infrastructure outside of Conrad.

- Valier has maxed out their utility (water and sewer) capabilities
- There is a need for a better--qualified workforce. Right now they don’t have a skilled labor force or any bodies that are willing to work
  - Once new people come in with a job the often stay
  - With the current poverty level there is a low cost of living and a low property value.

There are restrictive government programs that are tightly budgeted and often have permitting restrictions. For example they didn’t know how to deal with state plasma art so they went to another location. There are “can’t do it attitudes” There are the engaged and the not so engaged community members. They would like to see more sleeping rooms.

They want more market assets such as a golf course

Public fundraising can be used to build assets such as a library or senior citizen center and so forth.
Funding

- They are not able to fit the state's ideal projects mold.
- Ambiguity is also stopping growth.
- They can see such potentials as attracting a satellite technological facility.
- Residents are moving to be closer to Great Falls and are looking at the low housing availability and cheaper prices.
- They feel that the youth would come back if there were jobs available, so they would like to bring back such services businesses as doctors, construction and lawyers.
- They need a home-grown financing source; without it, the state has been stagnant in the small community and they are looking to organizations such as Sweet Grass Development to look at a regional bank.

Housing

- Right now they have substandard housing and are seeing middle-income families are looking to pay about $100,000. There is low standard housing available at $30,000 where owners would be faced with some; sewer problems, bad roof and such.
- They would like to see some rental apartments and
- There are some homes that could rebound with a proper renovation and others need to be knocked down.
Shelby 1 Hr 01 Min

Positives
- The have a diverse economy with micro diversity in agriculture, oil, gas, and transportation. There is also a good employer base with the government, public service and a private prison.
- There is a great transportation network with the interstate BNSF, and the international border having a close proximity.
- There is a strength between the government entities where there is a can do attitude. They have the risk taker mix that allows them to move forward with projects that are turned away from other regions.
- Government entities try to help and be active leaders in both Shelby as well as the other towns in the area.
- Has GREAT risk takers, who have been given all of the lessons that say they can do ... (it, this, and more) There was mention of an employer (Gil Sulmont) who offers transportation both to and from work (He might be in the energy field) creating a list of good employers who wants to remove the barriers their employees are faced with.
- There are several economic diversities; with the Port Authority, as well as the Town and County having their own Economic development arms. These entities are also great assets to one another and can work along the same path moving with that can do attitude.
- Their location is a positive located on the US board and I-15 and four cross roads. (The border patrol also is living and residing in the area, sending their kids to school there and attending the community events)

Sunburst now has an economic development group. They are also working on their infrastructure by paving and chip coating sheets on the roads.
- There is a proactive leadership; they understand that the government has to be on board first, and then everything (directive) is sent from the top on down.
- They are ready with a bigger development infrastructure
- Strong community leaders
- Transportation
- Economic leaders are a strength; they are working on funding infrastructure growth and are planning to up projects in the area.
- There are historical buildings that can bee seen as attractions to the area.
- They have a community garden and a sustainable number of people who get involved with community projects/events.
- They have great events that are well attended and often draw people into the area.
- Development has been huge; and has been able to offer urban services in a small town

Challenges
- The water system in Keivin needs to be further developed
- There is a housing shortage
- There is a limited workforce and in many cases the employers are finding they have employees who are from other counties. (Example the prison has 60% Shelby, 20% Glacier and 20% Pondera workers). They have the jobs with mid size to large companies, but they don’t have the workforce to fill these positions.
- They are still in need for more funding. The funding team is
continually searching and on the travel trail to see what other funding they can secure.

There is a low unemployment rate; they feel everyone who wants to work has a job. This also leads to a lack of workforce numbers.

There was a mention “federal funding has dried up”

They want higher paying job opportunities with wages that are from $8.50 to $16.00 now.

Residents would like to see higher paying jobs with benefits

Currently they are working with conservative businesses; they are not interested in accommodating the customer’s needs beyond what they are doing now. (Example: Staying opened beyond five to serve the working population better or opening on weekends)

Retail businesses in general are struggling; they mentioned that the businesses are not reaching other counties. They would like to see more

businesses create business and not just do business. (Missing Businesses: Sporting goods, family Style restaurants, and hardware stores)

They are loosing business being only 90 miles from Great Falls

There is a small market for affordable rentals (housing)

There is no customs check at the boarder, which could be a huge issue. There is no structured distance learning opportunities or WiFi in Shelby.

There is no connectivity between the public services (I did not get if this was with in cities or between cities)

They would like to create a inter---mobile HUB

They see a need for more hotels and over night accommodations

They have some blight that has to be removed

There is a need for a better pedestrian friendly downtown; more benches, lighting and landscaping. And then some

POSITIVE
Transportation
Economic Diversity
Community leadership
Community Involvement

NEGATIVE
Housing
Workforce
Wages
Funding
The need to grow and expand specialty stores

Where does the community see themselves in the future?

Inter---Mobile for the whole region (this could more the community into a more technical region for the youth)

It would be the same diverse community

- Healthy
- Good Energy
- Parks
- Diverse employers
- They would like to sustain a 1% population growth

There would be greater available and affordable housing
They want to have better wages (livable)

Creating Business
- Shops open all year and booming
- There is a walking and buzzing traffic
- They would like to have an enhanced pedestrian infrastructure
- Their historic buildings will be enhanced and a tourist stop
- They ventured the idea of having a historic pathway (you pick up a recorded tour and drive to the different sites)
- Mentioned: Dil Sands can created Economic development. Workers can put them together in Shelby and than transport them out.
- They would like to be seen as the destination for tourist

They would like to have a technical school or learning center to encourage employee advancement and or hiring.
- They would like to look at bringing in a company that will train their employees.
- The center will also have commercial drivers licenses, certified mechanic, a certified water operator.

Bridging the Gap
Create a long term plan
- They are looking for a selection plan
- With a good long term plan they will be able to better determine not just what businesses that they want to set up; they will also determine what benefits they want these businesses to have. (Right now they suggested jobs with $16.50 wages plus benefits.
- They would like to see those who build the community have a living wage of about $60 Thousand a year so they can have a good living.
- This will also better set the stage for economic development
- They would like to sustain their local economic development entities (This would include funding and resources to nurture and expand these entities)
- They want to know how they can help economic development corporations and businesses create business.

They would like to Foster energy development
They want to bring local kids home to work with a good job (They want a happening town) This way both the retiree and kids can help grow the town.

Housing Development
- They would defiantly want to expand their housing
- They want to be able to meet local trades such as electricians, plumbers, and more

They want to have a local lender
- They are seeing that banks are in the area to take deposits.
- There is one family owned bank (1st State Bank) but they don’t do usury
- Their Wells Fargo is now a Wachovia and they wont do less than $5 million dollar loans
- They would like to see a revolving loan fund developed
- Bear Paw Credit Union is currently lending in Sunburst
Browning 1Hr 9 Min

Positives

- Blackfeet Community College provides an opportunity to prepare for college and get technical and associates degrees.
- The college wants to become more, with goals that work toward four-year degrees. They would also like to expand on their nursing, renewable energy, and technical fields.
- There are jobs in the oil and gas, and construction fields; as well as agriculture seasonal tourism, and a huge part in government. (Creating diverse industries)
- The community has begun in the last ten or more years, to recapture their cultural sense of belief.
- The museum has showcased the areas Native history. North American Indian Days showcases a small part of the modern Native American.
- Other communities are becoming more aware of Natives and their culture. With Natives moving into mainstream society and better education there is better exposure to the culture.
- The governments are beginning to work together.
- There is a greater public participation (There is a greater voice to what the public wants)
- There has been a revived interest in Community Development at the tribal level. (More money could be put toward community development)
- There is greater community and infrastructure investment (example: the new water system will open up greater land base, and the new high school)
- Location is a positive; being located on Hwy 89 and 2, plus the Canadian Boarder and Glacier National Park proximity.
- There is an available workforce (BCC can graduate students, Economic Development organizations can train employees, there are incentives for hiring Native employees)
- There is a large human resource available.

Challenges

- Located in a remote area with a minimum of 100 miles to the nearest urban setting.
- There is limited Housing, and the housing in the area is low quality.
- There is bureaucratic issues with a lot of red tape (specifically to land) There are blight areas that need to be taken care of but there are few resources to develop the areas both owned by the tribe or private owners. There isn’t the same collateral available to community members as those in mainstream society. (Land and housing is majority tribal owned)
- There is a lack of a financial district with only one financial institution in town and limited financial tools. There is no local bank; the bank is based out of a board that is primarily focused in Denver.
- There is a definite unemployment issue with BIA reporting a 62% unemployment rate, and the census showing that area has an unemployment rate four times the state average. (This creates a strain on the community as well as the social services in the area)
- The law enforcement and other agencies have a difficult time determining who has jurisdiction and who should be enforcing codes created by the different governments.
- There is a high poverty rate that has continued over generations.
- There is a limited skilled workforce
Where does the community see themselves in the future?

- There will be a balanced public and private business communities
- There will be a thriving main street
  - The town front should be inviting and revived
  - The blight will be addressed and older buildings will be renovated
  - The zoning codes will be clarified between governments and will be enforced

- Agencies will have full continuity
  - There will be code and resolution compliance between all governments and community members

- The poverty rate will be reduced to the state average or lower
  - Residents will be able to live comfortably and obtain state average wages
  - Clear steps out of poverty will be developed and resources will be made available (A plan will be created to see the best places to leverage money will be)
  - There will be a marketing cooperative to promote local products (Agriculture, beef, art, etc)
  - Possible hands on interpretative center.

- There will be an increased cooperative between county, federal, tribal, and city on a regular bases.
  - A clear plan and needs assessment can show governments the best place to leverage their money.
  - It was suggested to have a talking circle and to keep it going
  - Trade workers (carpenters, welders, etc) can come together to create one company that can secure federal or state contracts with a mobile crew.

- Small businesses will be able to flourish
  - Could there be room for an incubator locally
  - The US’s largest employer is individuals it will be the same on the reservation
Positives

With the Blackfeet Tribe there is a steady flow of money into the community. There is a varying oil and gas industry, that both offers employment as well as a high tax base. They are bringing jobs as well as potential for growth into the community.

There are always steady agricultural jobs available.

There is a good tax base with; gas, product monument, and business property taxes.

With the fairly recent wind energy industry there came a good tax base and stability of energy.

Transportation with; the railroad, Highway 89 Highway 2 and the airport, is defiantly a positive for the community.

The hospital now has a critical access status and a long--term care unit.

There are also three clinics in Cut Bank; the veteran’s clinic, Medicine springs hospital and Glacier County hospital.

The people involved in the city are a great asset, they provide good infrastructure, a higher tax base and welfare monies.

The chamber of commerce and local business community are involved and actively trying to create business.

They are working on getting tourism dollars, and have found hosting tournaments locally is one way to get large groups of people in the area. (MNA is looking at the hotel rooms that are available in each region bidding on tournaments)

The proximity to Glacier National Park was a positive, and locals seen that without the Amtrak during the season the tourism travel was down about 30%.

Oil workers, boarder patrol employees, homeland security teams and more people moving into Cut Bank are filling housing. There is one person building homes and apartments.

The Canadian Boarder is seen as a positive (the exchange rate is key)

Charlie’s pizza brought a following when it moved to Cut Bank, now there are new people driving from Lethbridge.

With homeland security in the area, professional positions are created.

There are more small businesses being developed.

Businesses are able to compete with Great Falls based on customer service.

There is a very active and drive with in the groups around town; they are not currently combining efforts though.

Challenges

There is an aging population

The area is in a very rural and remote location.

The weather can provide a large challenge.

Housing has become an issue

There is a large group of people who are very resistant to change. The group would like to show them that change is not necessarily a bad thing. There is personal jealousy where success is seen as a threat. (This can be seen when looking at the Reservation and Cut Bank)

The young populations are leaving Cut Bank, but staying in Browning. (Browning: people living in poverty often seen those within their group or circle as
assets; but when someone in their group leaves they can see it as losing an asset).

People can be holding other people down; “So they put blinders as to what they could be”

The communities are losing small businesses with the lending industry changing so dramatically. There are no capital investments from outside banks. (Local banks are very conservative; the number one lender does not make loans outside of agriculture loans. Other loans don’t fit the banks model)

Bureaucracy has created frustrated business people.
It has been difficult to keep the population’s dollar local. (They would like to create a “Shop/Play/Stay local campaign)

It is difficult to engage community groups (the chamber can get to the right people); There is a lack of comprehensive coordination between groups.

The city has an aging infrastructure and there are no funds to renovate and update.

When the national unemployment rate rose (10%) The county’s stayed steady. There was also new jobs entering the area which helped to keep it steady.

They would like to launch a campaign to capture funds from the aging population (Think of your county as an inheritor.) This came about as the group seen the money going to children who lived in areas such as Minneapolis.

They would like to see a retiree residence in the area.

Opportunities

Independent Retirement Center
- There was mention of a situation where retired residence lived upstairs and there was a business (restaurant) down stairs that the residents could uses as well as the general public.
- They seen where retirees could move into an assisted living center than transition to the long-term care center at the hospital.

The airport will be developed further
- They plan to have a staging area for: travel, training, Amtrak, and the boarder portal.

New Grocery store
- There was a URM study that showed the North side of the tracks, once the overpass was complete, would be a great place for a large grocery store.

There will be a strong vibrant divers downtown business community
- They want to better utilize their infrastructure, by getting rid of blight and building new businesses.
- They would like to work on utilizing an extra refinery, they could use the bad water right on the railroad, which would mean some light industrial work.

There will be a sufficient and stable housing market
- They would also like to see a sustainable household income that meets the states average.
References


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