

## **The Wyoming Rural Development Council**

The Wyoming Rural Development Council is a collaborative public/private partnership that brings together six partner groups: local/regional government, state government, federal government, tribal government, non-profit organizations, and private sector individuals and organizations.

WRDC is governed by a Board of Directors representing the six partner groups. The Board as well as the Council membership has established the following goals for the WRDC:

- ❑ Assist rural communities in visioning and strategic planning
- ❑ Serve as a resource for assisting communities in finding and obtaining grants for rural projects
- ❑ Serve and be recognized as a neutral forum for identification and resolution of multi-jurisdictional issues.
- ❑ Promote, through education, the understanding of the needs, values and contributions of rural communities.

The Council seeks to assist rural Wyoming communities with their needs and development efforts by matching the technical and financial resources of federal, state and local governments and the private sector with local development efforts.

If you would like more information about the Wyoming Rural Development Council and how you may benefit as a member, contact:

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**October 25, 2011**

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## **Process for the Development of this Report**

The Wyoming Rural Development Council (WRDC) has provided a resource team to assist Boulder, Wyoming in evaluating the community's assets and liabilities and in developing suggestions for saving the Boulder Community Center, formally the Boulder School.

Boulder requested a community assessment from the Wyoming Rural Development Council through the Boulder Community Center Committee. Kathy Sandmeier served as the community contact. This was a "mini" assessment with a focus on the Community Center. .

The Resource Team conducted the assessment on October 25, 2011 at the Boulder School. Thirty-eight (38) individuals participated in the assessment and we received 18 written comments. Participants were asked to respond to three questions designed to begin communication and discussion and to serve as a basis for developing the action plan. The three questions were:

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

Upon completion of the evening meeting, the team met to compare notes and share comments. The team then agreed that each team member would carefully analyze what was said, synthesize what they heard with their knowledge of programs and resources, prepare their notes and suggestions, and forward these items to be combined into WRDC's final report to Boulder.

## **Executive Review**

What an enjoyable experience we had at the Boulder assessment! Through the attendance at the assessment and the passionate remarks, it was definitely obvious that everyone in the community cares deeply for the Boulder (School) Community Center. You have many good memories of the facility and want very much for your children and grandchildren to experience the same.

You have what you need to make this project successful and save the School. You have good leadership and definitely passion and drive to make this happen. It is my hope that the ideas in our report will give you some direction to move forward. We have focused our reports on the School with ideas for preservation, rehabilitation, use of the facility and continued operation. I hope you will take these ideas as suggestions and know that if we can help you move forward on any of the recommendation, we are happy to do that.

Thank you very much for your hospitality. The food was excellent and we enjoyed the company! We look forward to working with you in the near future.

Sincerely,

**Mary Randolph**  
**Team Leader**

# Resource Team Members Community Assessment Boulder, Wyoming October 25, 2011



## **Team Leader**

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## **Community Contact:**

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## **RESOURCE TEAM REPORTS**

### **Recommendations submitted by Resource Team Members**

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I want to thank the Boulder Community Center group and the community members that participated in the assessment. Not only was it interesting to learn about your community, but I want to thank you for your honesty, your passion and your drive to protect what is so important to you. We hope our recommendations will help you to save the Boulder School!

#### **ISSUE: REHAB THE BOULDER SCHOOL**

**Challenge:** Structural improvement to the facility

**Solution #1:** You all shared a laundry list of improvements needed for the building both structurally and to make it a useable facility for a variety of events. You have recently applied for a HAAF (Historic Architecture Assistance Fund) and have been approved for that grant. That will give you a good structural assessment of the project as well as estimated costs. In addition, Elaina Zempel has been working with you on a Wyoming Business Council grant. In addition, I recommend you apply to have the building put on the National Register for Historic Places and Brian Beadles in his report will give you the necessary information.

**Solution #2:** Another idea I would offer is to utilize the “This Place Matters” program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP). In this program, you take a picture of the building with lots of people from the community and post it on the NTHP website. This will give recognition to people interested in preservation that you have a site in Boulder, Wyoming that is worth saving. You will be on the preservation map! I have attached the sign that you can use or you can create your own. The web site to check out the program is:

<http://www.preservationnation.org/take-action/this-place-matters/>



An example!

## **ISSUE: VOLUNTEERS**

I mentioned to you at the meeting that most of our rural Wyoming communities suffer from “STP”, the same ten people. It is very difficult to get volunteers especially younger people because their lives are so very busy.

**Solution:** I also manage the Wyoming Main Street program, which is very much a volunteer driven organization. One of the aspects of volunteering we have found is that younger people do not have the time to devote to committees. Attending meetings frequently just does not work for their busy lives. One of the ideas that have been working of many of our communities is to have very project specific things for younger volunteers to work on and not expect them to attend meetings, etc. Maybe it is a party, or a clean-up day. They know exactly what they have to do and when they have to do it. Many times you can give them the project and let them run with it. Be sure to thank your volunteers and recognize your volunteers so they know their efforts are appreciated.

## **ISSUE: FUNDING FOR THE COMMUNITY CENTER**

One of the ideas that were presented at the meeting was creating an endowment for the center.

**Solution #1:** I would recommend that you have Press Stephen’s from the Foundation for the Episcopal Diocese visit with your board on creating an endowment and fundraising. Press is great on raising money and will share with you many tips on getting it done. If you do create an endowment or do any fundraising, one of your former residents is very interested in assisting, whether through a donation or assisting with raising funds from businesses and organizations. Keep us informed of your progress so I can pass the information on!

### **Resource:**

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**Solution #2:** In the future, you will more than likely need to continually seek grants for your events and operations. Wyoming Rural Development Council (WRDC) sponsors an annual grant writing course that is outstanding. People that have attended say it is the best training they have ever attended. WRDC also provides scholarships to attend. (It is costly, \$850.00 for a 40 hour course). The course is usually held in October and we will have scholarships available in August. You can contact Jo Ferguson anytime and she will put you on the list to receive information about the course and scholarship.

**Resource and contact for scholarship:**

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**ISSUE: SIGNATURE EVENT**

Another idea that was suggested at the meeting was for the Community Center to have a signature event to help with funding efforts.

**Solution #1:** Once again I refer to the Main Street program and have a couple of ideas. Most of the Wyoming Main Street communities host a signature event annually. Evanston has a “Renewal Ball” the first Saturday of June every year for 30 years. Dubois hosts the “Day of the Cowboy” the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in July. Every one of our Main Street managers would be happy to talk to you about their events, how they set them up and share ideas with you. On the Wyoming Main Street web site you can find contact information for any of our managers.

**Resource:**

<http://www.wyomingbusiness.org/program/main-street-communities/3445>

**Solution #2:** Another opportunity for someone in the community would be to attend the National Main Street conference. I know you are probably thinking, “We don’t have a Main Street” and you are right. However, the conference is also about preservation, event planning, and fund raising. For the past 6 years, the Wyoming Main Street program has sponsored a “pre-trip”. We fly to the convention city a few days in advance, rent a bus and tour 3-4 Main Street communities in that state. We talk about fund raising, partnerships, preservation, restoration or building, etc. Last year we took 57 people from Wyoming to Iowa. For 2012, the conference is held in Baltimore, MD. We will begin our pre-trip March 27, 2012. The Wyoming Main Street program offers scholarships to non-main street communities to attend the pre-trip/conference. A great opportunity!

**Resource:**

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**Theme:** Preserving the historic school building.

**Challenge:** The historic school building is the figurative center of the community. The building has several issues that need to be addressed in order to make its continued use feasible, while maintaining its historic integrity.

**Solution:** The Boulder Community Citizens Center received a Historic Architecture Assistance Fund (HAAF) grant to address energy efficiency, which was identified as a key issue in maintaining year-round use of the building. The report generated from this grant is expected to provide recommendations on insulation and improving the performance of the windows. In order to maintain the historic integrity of the building, it is preferable to retain and repair the historic windows. Caulking and reglazing the windows, as well as adding interior storm windows, are cost effective ways of improving the thermal qualities of windows. If it is not feasible to retain the historic windows, then any replacement should mimic the appearance of the historic windows. Replacement windows should have true divided lights and be the same size and configuration as the originals. Close inspection of other material issues will need to be done as funding permits, including inspection of plumbing and electrical systems.

Memories created in the building are very dear to current and former residents of Boulder. Therefore it is very important to maintain the historic character of the building. The historic materials and sense of space within the building are an important aspect of that character. Changes to the building should be done in a way that protects these historic materials and spaces as much as possible.

The Boulder School should be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. While the listing does not place restrictions on the use or potential changes to the building, it does provide an added sense of prestige. Listing on the National Register can be advantageous for marketing the property. During the assessment it was stated that the community center has to compete with other like facilities in the region. Listing in the National Register can help to differentiate the property from these other centers. Likewise it can also help the property stand out in the eyes of potential financial donors.

## **WHAT WAS SAID IN THE INTERVIEWS**

The Resource Team spent an evening interviewing the local residents to hear what they had to say. Those being interviewed were asked to answer three questions:

- ✓ What are the major problems/challenges in the community?
- ✓ What are the major strengths/assets of the community?
- ✓ What projects would you like to see implemented in your community in the next two, five, ten, or twenty years?

Listed below, without comment, is what was heard from those who volunteered to be interviewed.

### **Boulder Community Assessment: Problems and Challenges**

- Community Center problem – volunteers, enough to actively show up and do what needs to be done.
- Trying to keep things to as close to as they are now, ditto, ditto
- Keeping the personality of the community - rural and close-knit, ditto
- More community events
- Maintaining the custom and culture of the community
- As a mother, grandmother – distance we have to go to go outside of the community making it important to have a community center. Ditto, ditto.
- Change in demographic, new folks without ties. Challenge to make them to have the same ownership.
- Maintain the culture while incorporating the new people. Ditto, ditto.
- Tremendous amount of time to make a living – not time to community participation.
- New faces in community, clear to Pole Creek. Everything in Pinedale, try to pull them back to Boulder.
- A lot of Pinedale people
- Not a lot organized in Boulder.
- Getting new people involved and to blend in. Ditto.
- Moved here in 1995. It is involvement, getting people involved, everyone is busy.
- Just getting the people involved. Willing to do anything to help support it.
- Need for more volunteers, hard to get young people to do their part.
- Carry on the traditions.
- More opportunity for youth.
- Change is impossible to do anything about, so challenge to create a place for establish a sense of community.
- Lack of youth focused events, shut off their technology.
- School was focal point, lost it, need one place to come back to.
- Get things because cost prohibitive to heat the building. Memberships, rentals used for expenses.
- Running the center in the winter, unpaid time, 2 hrs/day per event.
- Keeping up the yards in the summer months.

- Our facilities are not user friendly, takes a lot of volunteer work to make an event happen.
- Grew up in Boulder, live in Pinedale. Snow removal for parking for events.
- Keeping up with maintenance, falling into Matt and Kathy's lap. 4-5 volunteers full-time.
- Country problem – lack of creativity to construct something that serves our needs. Over building. Ditto.
- Building 20-30 yrs ago, cattlemen used to have banquets. Upgrade to bring in some income. Other places in better shape, this one needs to be upgraded so it can compete.
- Craft fairs – keeping the building warm enough to operate. Only coffee or cocoa because electricity will only allow one at a time. Ditto.
- Need upgrade with efficiencies and easier to use. Character of the building with 8 acres makes for some unique things. Only going to get worse with time. Ditto.
- Problems with upgrade. Upgrades will be major problem. Foundation and attic issues.
- New to community, outlying area. Love the place. Special people in this part of WY. Live at Boulder Lake. Like to see it left alone just like it is. Ditto.
- Came to support and would like to meet new people.
- 35 yrs but only know a few people. Preserve the live and let live attitude.
- Boulder Lake is part of the community. Boulder proper is friendly, little community. This building needs some changes, new people do not appreciate what it takes to heat the building. Upgrade it until we can use it in the winter time until it does not take so much money to bring the temperature up to where it is usable. Ultimately, to do more events here.
- Get the community back to do what we used to do here.
- Structural issues and insulation.
- Efficient windows, floor, plumbing, heating.
- Crawl space CREEPY
- Broadband internet services, getting left behind.
- Extending that sense of community.

### **Boulder Community Assessment: Assets**

- Amazing people, history of a wonderful culture and environment. So much talent, kind and welcoming. A lot of things can be done with and in the building/property.
- Pinedale resident but grew in Boulder. Stories that I hear bring family, community and friends together. Like to see it continue. Memories.
- Rural community, school is focal point. Ditto.
- Building itself, even with challenges, given to us by the school districts. Great memories, focal point and a shame to lose it.
- Family has been involved with building since 50's.
- Strong community, there for each other. Need to instill that in younger generation. When it comes to something major, friends and neighbors, cross-generational.
- Babies w/o family but we have family now. Community served as family.

- 4-H, Christmas programs, roller skating, let next generation enjoy that in a safer, smaller community.
- People, especially Larry. Mayor of Boulder.
- People, ditto.
- Availability of Center to members and non-members.
- Great friends.
- Community, community center - just need to put it to better use. Ditto.
- People in room tonight are major asset. Multi-generations here. Historical significance to the building.
- Grandchildren are the sixth generation in this community.
- Wedding parties, funerals...would be hard to leave the community to schedule those events.
- Sense of community. Ditto.
- They haven't run me out – Mayor.
- Older people in the restoration of this building, so younger kids can see where it came from.
- Boulder Lake – flooding problems, amazing the way the community worked together, 2800 sand bags. Well run operation.
- Love the neighbors. Don't know if we have been accepted but we are working on it. Ditto.
- Like Boulder. It offers something for everyone.
- Ranching, neighbors getting together for branding. Volunteered. Easter egg hunt, baskets like crazy-huge. It was sweet.
- Close-knit community. Focus on this community center, most people coming in are from small towns. Would welcome this building, this building was part of getting to know people.
- Huge asset to have this many people in this building tonight. Couldn't get this many people together in Pinedale unless they were pissed about something.
- There is no other place like it in the area. Family events, kids can run and play safely, BBQ, room for parking, camper for bride to dress, gym for dancing, classrooms, bar in its own room, kids room, atmosphere w/ ranching community. Functional now but needs work to stay functional. Adequate for large groups. Not efficient. Not fancy, feels usable, invited. Fits into rural culture, bring in hay bales. Important assets when you try to compare it with other things in this county.
- If there were a natural disaster, would be a baseline.
- Three elected officials here tonite, voting precinct headquarters.
- Voting, grazing, water, homeowner, banquets, family reunions, auctions, craft fairs.
- The school because of nearby store, restaurant, motel and post office
- Because of the size of the building and the land surrounding the building, “there is no other place like the Boulder community Center” in this area.
- The school – it is functional but not too fancy
- Historical aspect of the Community Center: it was the community school
- The Boulder School – many reasons it is important ranging from its history, current use and future potential. It creates a unique atmosphere that no other facility in Sublette County can provide.

- Old school house (now the Boulder Community Center) – in old ranching communities, the schoolhouse was that center of the community. It literally and figurative was from the time of the one room log schoolhouses. They measured the distance from all the ranch houses and put the school in the middle.

### **Boulder Community Assessment: Projects**

- Building and the grounds.
- Ditto.
- Energy efficient, usable building.
- Endowment for good social events. Ditto. Double Ditto.
- Boulder Lake Road paved. Ditto.
- Keep our post office. Ditto.
- More community events for teenagers. Ditto. Ditto.
- Increase in number of volunteers, fire department and community center. Ditto. Ditto. Ditto. Ditto. Ditto.
- Kathy and John Ditto. Just because we have a board, does not mean they are the entire volunteer corp.
- Yoga classes in community Center.
- Boulder aquatic center.
- Part-time paid employee, open, heated 24/7.

### **Boulder Community Assessment: specific comments regarding Boulder Community Center (School)**

#### **WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE IN BUILDING?**

- Needs heat
- Better windows, wiring, insulation, doors
- Structural integrity with same look
- Handicap accessible, ditto.
- Kitchen commercial, caterer friendly.
- Sprinkler. 10,000 gal cistern, diesel pump, air system (compressed air) one place heated or underground.
- Dance floor stabilized, frost heaves in the winter
- Fully rewired from power pole to last outlet, brought up to code, more outlets
- Running water in the bar area
- New siding that does not need to be painted.
- Park with trees, equipment.
- Horseshoe pit.

- New heating system
- Generator
- Horseshoe pits for tournaments
- Acoustics (wired for pa)
- Handicapped bathroom
- Bus barn/garage – maybe storage? With connecting door.
- Heat and water are the 1<sup>st</sup> priorities
- Sign on the highway directing to the center
- Stage should stay
- Bathrooms updated
- During major renovations, an opportunity would present itself to refurbish the attached, but dirt floored bus barn as well as the furnace room with interior access. Would provide storage for tables, chairs, etc.

### **POTENTIAL USES OF BUILDING?**

- Wedding
- Funerals
- Classes
- Signature event
- Craft fairs
- Movie nights
- Emergency shelter
- Meeting for organizations
- Holiday parties, Halloween
- Youth activities
- Dances
- Voting
- Grazing association meetings
- Water association meetings
- Home owner association meetings
- Banquets
- Family affairs: weddings; family reunions
- Events: Easter, Summer picnics, Halloween, Christmas, New Year
- Auctions, craft fairs carnivals.
- Logical base of Emergency Center in case of a Natural Disaster situation in the Boulder area
- Child care facility
- Elementary school again
- Dances

- Separate room for adult beverages
- Brew fest and bands
- Corporate retreats/meetings
- School activities
- Social hall
- Watch rodeos, football, et.
- Fund raising events such as: chili cook off; Dutch oven cook off; bbq cook-off, 4-H achievement dinner

# **APPENDIX**