

RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

For

LIVINGSTON, MONTANA

April 11 - 12, 2012

In Partnership with: City of Livingston, Northern Rocky Mountain Economic Development District, Triple Divide Consulting, Snowy Mountain Development Corp., CTA Architects Engineers, Montana World Trade Center, Montana Department of Commerce, Montana Economic Developers Association and the people of Livingston.

INTRODUCTION

It was a privilege for the Livingston Resource Team to spend two days in your community. Thank you for your hospitality, your time, and for sharing with the team the vision you have for Livingston.

Before digging in to the report itself, I would like to thank Montana Department of Commerce (MDOC) for its support of the Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA). It is a partnership between MDOC and MEDA that makes Resource Team projects available across the state.

Special thanks are due to Ed Meece, City of Livingston. Ed served as the champion behind this project and will continue to be involved with the process through activities detailed in this report. In addition, the Livingston Resource Team Assessment could not have happened without the initiative and support of the Northern Rocky Mountain Economic Development District.

In addition, I applaud each and every team member that dedicated hours of work and travel in order to participate on the team: Dick King, Triple Divide Consulting; Kathie Bailey, Snowy Mountain Development Corporation, Ken Richardson, CTA Architects Engineers, Geoff Sutton, Montana World Trade Center, and Karyl Tobel, Montana Department of Commerce.

Each team member's contact information is provided in the following report. Please feel free to call on any of us for additional information or support. It would be our pleasure!

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

Gloria O'Rourke
Team Coordinator, MEDA

PROCESS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THIS REPORT

According to Montana Department of Commerce program requirements, Resource Team Assessments are to be approved through the community's Certified Regional Development Corporation (CRDC). As a CRDC for Park County was recently formed, the board of Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) approved the project. The City of Livingston and the Northern Rocky Mountain Economic Development District served as the *local* Resource Team coordinators for the project. Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) provided staff support for the coordination of a resource team to assist Livingston in evaluating its assets and challenges and in developing suggestions for improving the environment, social and economic future of the area.

Ed Meece, City of Livingston, served as the local contact and local team leader for the project. Under his direction an agenda was developed, logistics arranged, as well as budgeting and publicity for the assessment. Resource team members were selected to visit, interview citizens, businesses and community leaders to develop options for projects for Livingston. The team members were carefully selected based on their fields of expertise that local officials indicated would be needed to respond to the problem or project areas identified.

The Resource Team interviewed and received written comments from over 65 people during April 11 – 12, 2012. All notes from all listening sessions as well as those submitted via email or handwritten are included in this report. The team was available for listening to the following groups: Arts and Culture, Tourism, Education and Workforce, City and County Commissioners, Downtown, Non-Profit, Health Care, Economic Development Recruitment, Agriculture and Entrepreneurship and Small Business.

Each participant was asked to respond to three questions designed to begin communication and discussion and to serve as a basis for developing recommendations in this report. The three questions were:

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

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

A preliminary oral report and a summary of group recommendations were presented to the people of Livingston the evening of April 12th.

Following the oral report, this formal written report was prepared and is presented to the people of Livingston. The report is available on the MEDA website at <http://www.medamembers.org/resourceteams.html> A Town Hall Meeting is planned for Monday, June 4th at 7:00pm. The purpose of the meeting will be to briefly review the report, identify projects and set priorities for action.

**LIVINGSTON RESOURCE TEAM
ASSESSMENT
LIVINGSTON, MONTANA**

April 11 – 12, 2012



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LIVINGSTON RESOURCE TEAM AGENDA

Most Listening Sessions held at the Park County Public Library, 228 W. Callender

April 11th

- 1:00 PM -- Community Tour 1 PM (leaving from Murray Hotel)
- 2:30 PM – **Session # 1: Art/Culture**
- 3:30 PM – **Session #2: Tourism**
- 4:30 PM – **Session #3: Education/Workforce**
- 5:15 PM – Dinner & Evening (MEDA on their own)

April 12th

- 8:00 AM – Breakfast w/ City and County Commissioners & local NRMEDD Board Members
- 9:15 AM – **Session #4: Downtown**
- 10:30 AM – **Session #5: Non-Profit**
- 11:15 AM – **Session #6: Health Care**
- 12:15 AM – LUNCH BREAK – Teen Room – MEDA team + Pam, David, Bob, Ed
- 1:15 PM – **Session #7: Eco. Dev. Recruitment**
- 2:15 PM – **Session #8: Agriculture**
- 3:15 PM – **Session #9: Entrepreneurship/Small Business**
- 5:30 PM – **DINNER** – will be delivered to team, so they assemble their findings
- 7:00 PM – “Community Conversation” – City/County Building – Community Room

LIVINGSTON RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT – MAIN ISSUES

The following list is a summary of main topics and issues that result from the Livingston Resource Team listening to the communities address strengths, challenges and their vision for the community of Livingston. This list serves as the outline for this Resource Team Assessment Report. The team plans to return to facilitate a town meeting to prioritize projects and ideas on Monday, June 4th.

MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM

ISSUES:

- ✘ **Become a destination point promoting longer stays from visitors.**
- ✘ **Vacation packages – including Livingston businesses and neighboring communities.**
- ✘ **Take advantage of the historic gateway opportunities.**
- ✘ **Mapping, branding, signage**
- ✘ **Division between those who benefit from tourism and those who don't.**
- ✘ **Showcase arts, history, agriculture, culture, etc.**

MAIN TOPIC: LEADERSHIP

ISSUES:

- ✘ **Leadership program for the community; engage the youth and younger adults - mentoring**
- ✘ **Volunteerism – tap the uninvolved**
- ✘ **Reinforce cohesiveness in the community**
- ✘ **Cohesiveness with the city and county**

MAIN TOPIC: VIBRANT LIVINGSTON

ISSUES:

- ✘ **Evening Gallery events in sync with stores staying open evening hours: provide incentives**
- ✘ **Downtown parking**
- ✘ **Directive signage, historic downtown Livingston**
- ✘ **Farmer's Market & other promotional activities**
- ✘ **Maintain a unique experience**
- ✘ **Consistent look and feel beyond downtown**

MAIN TOPIC: TRANSPORTATION

ISSUES:

- ✘ **Lack of public transportation**
- ✘ **Need for transportation to Yellowstone**
- ✘ **Transportation to Bozeman**
- ✘ **Walkable community - improved sidewalks**
- ✘ **Trail system linked east to west**
- ✘ **Parking for recreation vehicles for both summer and winter activities**

MAIN TOPIC: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ISSUES:

- ✘ **Workforce development – fill the technical skills gaps**
- ✘ **Redevelopment of rail yard**

- ✘ Recognize/develop Strategic Plan
- ✘ What will be done, by whom and when
- ✘ Analyze local capacity to fund projects
- ✘ Make best use of assets
- ✘ Utilize workforce training funds
- ✘ New development opportunities east and west end of town.
- ✘ New medical campus huge asset for economic development and redevelopment opportunities.

MAIN TOPIC: EDUCATION

ISSUES:

- ✘ Local jobs that require technical skills, vo-tech training
- ✘ Utilize two year program – MSU?
- ✘ Life skills and soft skills training
- ✘ Strengthen and expand adult education program
- ✘ After school activities for elementary aged students

LIVINGSTON RESOURCE TEAM REPORTS

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INTRODUCTION:

The people of Livingston are proud of their historic community, friendly citizens, excellent theaters, beautiful art museums, great dining, and seasonal visitors - all with good reason. The charming, historic railroad town harbors a beautiful downtown with period architecture, antique signage, boutiques, gourmet eating, and unique lodging. The city is the Gateway to Yellowstone Park and Paradise Valley, is easily accessible from the freeway, and offers year-round access to outdoor activities.

While driving back to Helena I asked a few people in Bozeman what *they* thought of Livingston and this is what they said:

“Livingston is a place I run to, to get away from it all, relax and have fun. There are a few great shops downtown that I always go to.”

“Livingston does a lot in the summertime and has a great rodeo.”

“The bistro on 2nd has had national attention and is a great place to eat.”

A citizen of Livingston said it best, “It’s where you choose to be.”

MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM

ISSUE: ATTRACTION, ORGANIZATON, ACCOMMODATIONS

Attendants at the public meeting on tourism gave detailed input on the city’s challenges attracting tourism. There were numerous items mentioned that the city needs to develop including:

- Lack of communication between local groups and organizations,
- Branding – there have been some efforts but nothing is final,
- City has great access to outdoors activities and National Park,
- Need for an economic development director,
- Need for better accommodations,
- Need for vacation packages,
- Need for a positive local attitude towards attracting tourism.

Recommendations:

Lack of communication, facilitation among groups, and cohesiveness for downtown businesses stresses the need for a locally-based economic development director, or local development staff person. There needs to be points of contact that businesses and the city can rely on to facilitate meetings, coordinate priorities, and assist with the solicitation of funding to carry-out locally selected projects.

Prospera Business Network is the designated Certified Regional Development Corporation (CRDC) for the Livingston and Park County region. As Prospera staff is located in Bozeman, one option would be to have Prospera staff presence in Park County, even if only on a part-time basis; and/or have a city/county employee that can devote his/her duties to economic development activities.

It was stated numerous times that the city needs branding, and a local interested party has worked on a branding project. As a panel listener, a final determination of what the city wants to be branded as was not clear. Hiring a professional consultant to work with the city and local economic development staff would facilitate those discussions and put in place a proper branding plan. The cities of Great Falls and Helena have completed branding efforts with follow-through erecting street banners, marketing plans, promotional materials, and airport advertising.

Once the city has made a final determination on what its brand is, it can really run with its branding and promote itself to surrounding communities, regional airports, magazines, and through other nation promotional means. The Montana Department of Commerce (MDOC) has funding sources to assist with branding planning efforts to allow the city to hire a well trained consultant that specializes in community branding through the Community Development Block Grant – Economic Development (CDBG-ED) Program and the Big Sky Trust Fund (BSTF) Program. Promoting tourism to neighboring communities is a wonderful idea as they offer a consistent supply of potential tourists that only need to travel a short distance to experience the uniqueness of Livingston. The MDOC Office of Tourism also has grants and technical assistance for local promotional activities through its Special Events Grant Program (SEGP).

Having a clear brand, and local development leadership, would help attract more choices for accommodations and conference locations, help retain tourist and local dollars, increase the chance for outside investment, and facilitate development of unique offerings such as the historical underground.

Recommended Resources:

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MAIN TOPIC: LEADERSHIP

ISSUE: VOLUNTEERISM, PARTICIPATION AND MENTORING

Several comments were made on volunteerism and the need for additional community involvement including:

- Volunteers help with everything and get volunteer burn-out,
- Hard to find new volunteers,
- Need for mentoring,
- Keeping youth in Livingston.

Recommendation:

It's a common thread among our cities and towns that there are a handful of energetic and passionate people who volunteer their precious time to help with causes they believe in. Volunteers hold jobs, raise families, and have life have obligations, in addition to working long and hard hours to help local and national causes to better our world. They are natural leaders, and are a group that rarely hears "thank you" or receives recognition for all that they do. Finding additional people to help with local objectives can be a challenge.

The Heartland Center for Leadership Development offers training for local development officials and volunteers to learn practical, hands-on learning and networking, on leadership and community development. Heartland offers a couple of reasonably priced courses to help communities capitalize on local assets, learn from other communities how to promote tourism and business development, and how to be competitive for local and outside dollars. The courses are “Helping Small Towns Succeed”, and “Home Town Competitiveness”. I would encourage attendance at one or both of these courses as they offer substantive and useful information that would assist the city expand its social capital, and further its economic development efforts. Courses are offered in regions and are well attended.

The city’s youth is a potential source for additional volunteers. It was stated that the high school requires students to complete a minimum number of hours of community service before they can graduate – a wonderful idea which exposes them to jobs and activities they may not otherwise experience. It was unclear if there was a local program coordinated with or without the school system where students could be mentored. Mentoring could be related to volunteerism, career exploration, and business development. I was told that students run the local theater which is an excellent example of promoting, mentoring, and capitalizing on local talent – providing for longevity of local business and increases the likelihood that youth with a vested interest in their community will stay for the long-run.

Keeping youth in Livingston includes activities and entertainment sources that will satisfy their need for variety, keep them safe, and allow for families to keep track of their where-about. Allowing youth to have a say in what they want their community to offer, keeping them in the decision making process, and enabling them to help facilitate plans will ensure personal volunteerism, commitment, and help build community roots. Communities have enhanced their local offerings to include skate board parks, after school youth centers, community gardens, community centers, indoor pools, and other types of youth-attracting amenities. Funding for amenities can be raised through local fundraising activities or through public and private foundations. The Grant Service Center through Montana State University/Billings offers information on potential funding sources.

Recommended Resources:

Heartland Center for Leadership Development
3110 N. 40th Street, Suite A
Lincoln, NE 68504
PH: 1-800-927-1115
Email: info@heartlandcenter.info
Website: www.heartlandcenter.info/contact.htm

Grant Service Center
Grants and Sponsored Programs
1500 University Drive
Billings, MT 59101
PH: 1-406-657-2011

Email: webmaster@msubillings.edu

Website: www.msubillings.edu/grants/opportunities.htm

MAIN TOPIC: VIBRANT LIVINGSTON

ISSUES: REVITALIZATION AND MARKETING

Residents of Livingston consistently voiced pride in their local art galleries, historic downtown, preservation of local assets, and potential development of un-tapped resources. Several people voiced concern regarding:

- Need for historic and directive signage,
- Extending downtown boundaries to include consistent infrastructure enhancements,
- Need evening and downtown activities,
- Maintain the city's uniqueness.

Recommendation:

It was stated that the city has completed a downtown revitalization study and there are plans in place for aesthetic improvements to the business development district. One citizen mentioned it would be beneficial if the boundaries of the downtown could be extended so that there would be a consistent appearance throughout the area which would allow the downtown to appear more attractive. The Montana Department of Transportation has funding available to assist with the purchase of historical street lighting, signage, sidewalk and curb repair through its Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP). The City of Lewistown worked on a CTEP project for its downtown which included sidewalks, curbing, store fronts, and historical lighting. Kathie Bailey was a Resource Team Assessment member and will provide contact information under her narrative and should be used as a valuable resource when considering the CTEP program.

There are several downtown development groups in the city. I asked a handful of residents if downtown businesses do joint gift certificates, and offer other promotional items. The answer was yes. Other ways to attract more people to the downtown area to shop and eat are to coordinate extended shop hours with art walks, sidewalk sales, block parties, Christmas strolls, and other promotional efforts. The city could develop a business promotion where people have to visit a selected set of businesses (which all have open houses at the same time, with drawings), receive stickers for each visit, and turn in completed sticker books for entries into a downtown gift certificate or other type of reward. Advertising should extend beyond the city and county to bring in more visitors – which would be an opportunity for packaging weekend get-aways for hotels, meals, and sites. The city has an active Chamber of Commerce and members who should work with the city and local development staff to plan and implement promotional activities.

My conversations with people outside of Livingston led me to believe non-residents see the city has a lot of activities in the warmer months that attract people to Livingston. Winter activities need to be developed and expanded to bring more people into the city. Part of the branding, marketing, and promotional activities should include winter attractions. The MDOC has program resources that can provide financing for a professional consultant to create a marketing

plan for the city once branding has been completed, and staff for technical assistance on marketing plans. The CDBG-ED and BSTF programs can assist with the development of marketing plans and other related studies.

Resources:

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MAIN TOPIC: TRANSPORTATION

ISSUES

Transportation issues regarding the need for transportation improvements included:

- Need for more public transportation options,
- Need for tour buses or shuttles to and from Yellowstone Park,
- Need for pedestrian routes and trail systems,
- Need for parking –especially for large vehicles.

Recommendation:

On transportation I recommend that the city do a transportation study which addresses each of these issues, provides recommendations for traffic flow, potential bike and walking trails, possible bus system, public restrooms, and locate areas for parking improvements. A complete study will address potential funding sources and time lines. The City of Whitefish completed a similar study which provided a structure for enhancing traffic to downtown Whitefish and promotion of tourism. The CDBG-ED and BSTF programs can assist with grant funding for this study.

Resources:

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MAIN TOPIC: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ISSUE: WORKFORCE AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Session participants made many positive comments about their community and why it should attract and maintain area businesses such as the wonderful location, quality of life, nice local shopping, good housing stock, strong commitment from core businesses, proximity to a national park, and access to good healthcare. Some the challenges noted were the need for:

- Workforce development and life skills,
- Need for new business development,
- Development opportunities for planned medical campus,
- Potential energy development.

Recommendation:

The MDOC offers assistance to businesses that need workforce development by training existing and new employees. Programs can help with formalized training through colleges and universities, and also provide for on-the-job-training. Funding applied for is dependent upon the amount of training cost per employee, number of employees needing training, and wages and benefits offered at the end of the training period. The BSTF and CDBG-ED Programs have grants for job training. Businesses can request up to \$5,000 per employee, with a maximum of \$400,000 per local government request for the CDBG-ED program. Both programs can be applied to if there is a need to train existing and new employees.

There are several resources at the MDOC for grants and loans to businesses for real property acquisition, working capital needs, infrastructure improvements, and equipment purchases. The BSTF and CDBG-ED programs both provide funding for these activities. In addition to these programs the MDOC offers low interest loans from the Wood Product Revolving Loan Fund which makes loans to primary sector businesses (more than 50% of sales are made outside of Montana).

Development of industrial parks, identifying potential new business development, feasibility studies, downtown revitalization studies, preliminary engineering and architectural studies, and other studies and plans can be partially financed with grants from the CDBG-ED and BSTF programs. A study could include identification of potential office spaces, locations for business development, or cluster development. One citizen mentioned the reuse of a rail yard building for wind turbine repair. Grants can be applied for to do a feasibility study to see if this would be a good option for the city. Both programs can be applied to at the same time to assure greater grant participation on more expensive economic development documents. Applications to both programs are accepted on an open-cycle basis depending on funding availability.

Economic development studies related to energy development, assessments, surveys, and such can be funded through the CDBG-ED and BSTF programs. The MDOC has an Energy Division that can provide technical assistance to communities considering energy development.

Potential, new, and existing businesses can find a plethora of information on the MDOC's website for the Montana Finance Information Center. Sources of information include where to go to set-up a new business; financing from federal, state and local resources; links to the MDOC's housing and public facilities programs, Census and Economic Information Center, International Trade, Research and Commercialization Grants, technical assistance from the Energy Division, and other useful information.

Resources:

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MAIN TOPIC: EDUCATION

ISSUE: The community expressed a need for adult education, life skills training, business development, and vocational training.

Recommendation:

The city needs coordination with the university system. Does Livingston have a business incubator where start-up businesses can utilize low-cost space while they grow their businesses? An incubator can provide low cost access to business equipment and resources for a specific length of time at which point, the business can “graduate” and operate on its own. The City of Hamilton has a successful incubator in place and works through the University of Montana.

Does the city have a community kitchen where businesses can develop their products, learn about state promotional programs, develop product labels, and learn marketing? Lake County Community Corporation operates the Mission Mountain Cooperative Development Center where small businesses can manufacture their products, learn about the free Made in Montana Program, develop labels, and access free marketing advice. This Center also works through the university system.

Feasibility of starting an incubator, a community kitchen, or other types of business development tools can be financed through the BSTF or CDBG-ED programs.

Getting youth and adult citizens involved in volunteerism, mentoring programs, and community goal development, will help teach life skills, encourage commitment, promote business development, attract tourism, and make Livingston an even better place to live and work.

On the job training or formalized training expenses can be accessed through the CDBG-ED and BSTF programs for businesses that need to create new positions, or need to train their staff to maintain their businesses.

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CONCLUSION:

The City of Livingston has many advantages over communities with fewer resources. It has a multitude of educated business owners, united community commitment to maintaining the city's unique qualities, a large number of non-profit organizations, multiple business development groups, and devoted volunteers. With leadership from the city, local development staff, and professional consultants experienced in branding and marketing, Livingston could easily become a destination for other Montanans and visitors from other states year-round.

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MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM

ISSUES:

- ✘ **Become a destination point promoting longer stays from visitors.**
- ✘ **Vacation packages – including Livingston businesses and neighboring communities.**
- ✘ **Take advantage of the historic gateway opportunities.**

Recommendations:

Livingston's strength lies in its location to Yellowstone National Park and Interstate 90. Community members have identified the strengths and weaknesses associated with the current situation. All that remains is to agree on the action plan and implement it. There are many resources that can help you accomplish this implementation plan such as the following:

Yellowstone Country's Marketing Plan:

http://travelmontana.mt.gov/marketingplan/Region_CVB/Yellowstone/yellowstone_mp.asp

Yellowstone Country's website: <http://yellowstonecountry.net/>

Yellowstone Country is designed to market your region yet if you check out the website you see very few places to see and visit within the Livingston community. Each of your 14 galleries, theatres and museums should be linked to this website or featured on the site. Fine dining such as that at the Murray should be highlighted on the website. The County Commissioners appoint representation on this board and if you have a recommendation for those positions, you should contact them about that representation. This board receives a portion of the Montana bed tax paid by hotels and motels in your community and usually have grants available for marketing efforts.

Resources:

Prospera Business Network

2015 Charlotte Street, Suite #1

Bozeman, MT 59718

406.587.3113

<https://www.prosperabusinessnetwork.org/>

<http://businessresources.mt.gov/CRDC/default.mcp>

Certified Regional Development Corporation's (CRDC's) are able to apply for planning funds through the Big Sky Trust Fund category II. These funds could help with planning efforts such as developing a community marketing or branding plan. Prospera is your community CRDC and should be consulted if interested in developing one of these plans.

MAIN TOPIC: LEADERSHIP

ISSUES: Leadership program for the community; engage the youth and younger adults - mentoring

Recommendations:

Many communities have patterned a community leadership program after the “Leadership Montana” program. The Leadership Helena Committee assists local leaders to learn more about the diversity and opportunities in the Helena area and encourages their involvement in community and Chamber activities. Class members learn from speakers who are experts in their fields as well as taking several tours of community, government, business and non-profit organizations. Junior Leadership Helena is an extension of the adult Leadership Program and is formatted to enable high school juniors the opportunity to enhance their leadership skills. Leadership programs such as this could encourage young members of the community to step forward into leadership positions, increase volunteerism, and reinforce cohesiveness within the community.

Resources:

Some websites to check out on this type of program are as follows:

<http://www.leadershipmontana.org/>

<http://www.bozemanchamber.com/about/programs.asp>

<http://www.helenachamber.com/aboutthechamber/committees.htm>

<http://www.missoulachamber.com/cwt/external/wcpages2/wcdirectory/directory.aspx?action=afflistodemp&affcode=lm%2024>

ISSUE: VOLUNTEERISM – Tap the uninvolved

Recommendations:

THE ASK – The greatest words of wisdom I can impart to you regarding increasing volunteerism and building a cohesive community is “the ask”. Many times, we just simply need to ask to get others engaged in the community, volunteering and supporting community goals. One on one personal contact and asking for another to join in your efforts is an extremely powerful tool that is much underutilized.

Resources:

Recently, I read about a Volunteer Network/Bank that offered people to trade skills in return for earning credit of hours to cash in for work that they needed.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time_Banking or <http://timebanks.org/> The program required a “bank” organization which could be ran by a volunteer or check out the TimeBanks USA organization. It works like this: I babysit for you for four (4) hours and bank my four (4) hours; then I use my four (4) hours by having someone clean my house for two (2) hours and someone painting my garage for two (2) hours; then those that painted or cleaned my house used their hours to help with carpooling, or raking their lawn, or baking cookies for a school bake sale and so on and so on. It takes a large network of people wanting to trade services to make it work, but I think it is a unique idea that could work and might increase volunteerism within the

community. Seniors could be a prime group to use and provide these services as they have a wealth of skills gained over a lifetime experience and great needs as their health and physical condition deteriorates.

ISSUE: COHESIVENESS IN THE COMMUNITY

Recommendations and Resources:

Central Montana has a *Human Services Coalition* that meets monthly. Approximately 30 human service and non-profit organizations meet to share what they are doing. The coalition is not an action group or accomplishes anything other than to market programs, projects and events amongst each other and learn about opportunities to collaborate. The coalition has been functioning for nearly 20 years with little community publicity or acknowledgement. The monthly meeting is held over the noon hour and a half. Each month a different agency hosts the event by sending out reminders to the groups and taking minutes for the meeting. Everyone brings a sack lunch and the meeting consists of everyone having about 3 minutes to tell the others what is going on in their agency and to share handouts of activities. It keeps everyone in the “loop” and helps build cohesion and consensus in the community.

MAIN TOPIC: TRANSPORTATION

ISSUES:

- ✘ **Lack of public transportation**
- ✘ **Need for transportation to Yellowstone**
- ✘ **Transportation to Bozeman**
- ✘ **Walkable community - improved sidewalks**
- ✘ **Trail system linked east to west**
- ✘ **Parking for recreation vehicles for both summer and winter activities**

Recommendations and Resources:

There are many transportation issues that need to be investigated further to determine if they require legislative changes, have permitting issues, or can be effectively implemented with resources. A 20-year community transportation plan needs to be developed that will establish a master plan with projects prioritized and funding sources identified. The Big Sky Trust Fund Category II planning grant through the local CRDC (Prospera Business Network) or the Montana Department of Transportation might be resources to assist in this planning endeavor. Livingston as a community would certainly have an immediate economic benefit and connection to the Yellowstone National Park if transportation infrastructure between the Park and City could be facilitated. Near-term projects such as identifying year-round parking areas within the community for large vehicles should be immediately identified. Programs such as the Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) and Safe Routes to Schools may help with parking or sidewalk or trail development. The Montana Conservation Corp <http://www.mtcorps.org/mcc-projects> has provided an affordable labor pool for trail development within other communities of the state.

MAIN TOPIC: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ISSUES:

- ✦ Recognize/develop Strategic Plan**
- ✦ Make best use of assets**
- ✦ Utilize workforce training funds**
- ✦ New development opportunities east and west end of town.**
- ✦ New medical campus huge asset for economic development and redevelopment**

Recommendations and Resources:

Livingston has a core group of manufacturers such as Printingforless which might be interested in expanding their business or encouraging other manufacturers to the cluster through the use of a local manufacturing alliance similar to the one in central Montana/Lewistown. The Montana Manufacturing Extension Center (MMEC) can be helpful in working with these manufacturers. Members of the Central Montana Manufacturing Alliance (CMMA) in Lewistown are willing to assist manufacturers in other parts of the state develop an alliance similar to the group in Lewistown. The CMMA has been in existence nearly ten years and manufacturers have found a way to work together on projects, discuss common concerns and marketing methods, capitalize on private resources within the community, and expand operations through local networking. <http://www.mtmanufacturingcenter.com/>

Livingston is unique in its depth of economic development resources and expertise. The numerous economic development agencies could collaborate together, market services collaboratively, determine separation of duties and align resources to have a tremendous impact on this area. Collectively they could share in securing regional resources such as the site selector program (GCS research, Bryan Ralston, 405-532-3254, bralston@gcs-research.com ; www.GCS-RESEARCH.com) currently being used by other economic development organizations in the state. Each agency could serve as the greatest referral system for the other agencies. If these agencies could meet occasionally and share information about projects they are working on, coordinate some community planning efforts and build a cohesive group, nothing could stop this formidable group. A list of those agencies may include:

Livingston Job Service, Northern Rocky Mountain Economic Development District, Prospera Business network, Northern Rocky Mountain EDD Board, Business Expansion and Retention (BEAR) committee, Main Street Program, City, County, Chamber of Commerce, Food Bank, Western Sustainable Systems, MSU-Bozeman Outreach, Community Foundation, Business Improvement District, Urban Renewal Area, School District and others I may be forgetting to mention.

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A. INTRODUCTION

MEDA's Community Assessment Team listened to about 60 people during a day and a half of meetings. Participants identified six broad issues:

- Tourism and the need to promote the community as a destination.
- The need to involve more of the community as volunteer leaders, including serving as board members for the many non-profit organizations that are serving Livingston and the surrounding area.
- Promoting a vibrant community. This would include continued emphasis on revitalization of the downtown business district and developing a "brand" to market the community to visitors.
- Improving transportation options for residents and visitors. Development of a public transit option for tourists to visit Yellowstone National Park was one proposal that many participants in the assessment process mentioned. Another example would be expanding the existing transit service between Livingston and Bozeman. Participants also highlighted the importance of walking and bike trails that would connect the community.
- Economic development was a key issue. Many pointed to the need to have a single point of contact for businesses considering relocation to the area. The pending lawsuit with BNSF regarding contamination of the rail yard and adjacent property was a huge cloud that made discussion of economic development opportunities difficult. The settlement that was announced on May 9th, however, offers hope that this impediment will be gone in a couple of years. Other economic development issues included relocation of the hospital, workforce training and the need to establish a community college, increasing tourism especially during the winter, and recruitment of new businesses to the industrial tax increment district that currently has one occupant (the very successful Printing for Less).
- Another significant issue identified during the assessment process was education. The local school district has strong community support, but declining enrollment is creating financial Another significant issue identified during the assessment process was education. The local school district has strong community support, but declining

enrollment is creating financial hardship. The assessment team also received numerous comments regarding the need for post-secondary vocational and technical training.

These issues are significant and the other members of the MEDA assessment team address them in their reports, along with recommendations and possible resources. Although this writer could do likewise, it seems to me that one member of the team should address the broader issue of how the community can come together, continue the assessment process, stimulate public involvement in that process, and produce a comprehensive needs assessment that can be used to prepare a strategic plan identifying specific actions and assigning responsibility. The many economic and community development activities already underway in the community are impressive, but participants also made it clear that the community needs more focus on its greatest priorities, more involvement of its citizens in the process of determining those needs and priorities, and more resources to accomplish important tasks identified in the strategic plan. The plan would be a living tool that would prioritize goals and ensure accountability for years to come. The development of a good strategic plan for the community would be a major undertaking but given the many opportunities that were identified in MEDA's assessment project, the effort would be worthwhile and could be the catalyst for increased community involvement. The people of Livingston are clearly proud of their community and despite the economic setbacks that have impacted the community, one of the participants summed up the attitude of many residents with the statement that Livingston is a "where you want to be kind of place."

This report will include a brief summary of Livingston's history and its current situation, an outline of what participants in the MEDA assessment believe is working well in their community and what is not working so well, and a sample of projects and initiatives that could be included in a strategic plan. Finally, the report will briefly describe the steps that need to be taken if the community decides to launch a comprehensive needs assessment resulting in a strategic plan that would guide its efforts for community and economic development for many years.

B. MONTANA'S FIRST TOURIST DESTINATION

One need only stop at the depot building in Livingston, which now is home to the Depot Center, to understand the significant role that the community played as the gateway to Yellowstone National Park. The Depot is home to a museum and also to arts and cultural activities that celebrate this heritage. The construction of the historic depot building triggered development of one of the greatest downtowns in all of Montana. The community is indeed fortunate that most of this development still exists. Historic Livingston is an appealing place for tourists, visitors and residents.

The community's relationship with the railroad has a long history. In addition to being Montana's first tourist destination, Livingston has also been home to a large number of railroad workers, many of whom were employed at a locomotive repair and maintenance facility. Employment at the rail yard peaked in the 1950's with about 1,100 jobs. The shop complex, which includes an active rail yard, is approximately two miles long and one-half mile wide, and

includes locomotive and rail car [repair](#) and maintenance shops. Montana Rail Link (MRL) is the current rail yard operator. These facilities have been closed for several years, and the loss of good paying jobs has prevented the community from growing. In 2006, Park County's workforce numbered about 9,300 workers. By 2011, that number had declined by 13 percent to approximately 8,100. The community has also seen declines in school enrollment and population, as well as jobs.¹

C. "THINGS ARE STARTING TO HAPPEN"

Despite the economic hardship caused the closure of the railroad's repair and maintenance facility, Livingston has persevered. It is home to a vibrant arts and culture community, including a local theatre group, fourteen art galleries, and two museums. Livingston still draws many tourists, especially in the summer. Many people who attended the meetings with MEDA's assessment team emphasized that tourism, in the words of one participant, "is our best opportunity for jobs." The importance of the downtown cannot be emphasized enough and redevelopment and revitalization activity is gaining momentum with the recent establishment of a Business Improvement District and an Urban Renewal District, both in the downtown area. After a couple of years when no increment was available for investment in improvements, the URD is now generating positive capital that is being directed to key infrastructure improvements, such as curbs, sidewalks and street.

The lawsuit with Burlington Northern Santa Fe regarding the environmental cleanup has been a negative factor for several years, however. This cloud has been lifted by the recently announced settlement. Given the fact that the community has remained a vibrant place despite the loss of railroad jobs and the Super Fund designation prompted a local businessman to remark at one of the MEDA assessment meetings that "things are starting to happen."

¹ In 2011, per capita income in the U.S. was \$41,663. At \$36,573, Montana's per capita income was 88% of the nation's and Park County, at \$33,428, was 80%. For the same year, the average wage per job in Montana was \$33,918, but only \$29,652 in Park County. Personal income in Park County declined from \$570 million in 2008 to \$535 million in 2010. Sources: Montana Census and Economic Information Center (www.ceic.mt.gov) and the American Community Survey (<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>).

D. WHAT IS WORKING WELL IN LIVINGSTON?

The following is an abbreviated list of what participants in the assessment meetings believe is working well in their community:

- Livingston is home to a large and diversified arts and culture community that includes a community foundation, a local theatre group, the Yellowstone Gateway Museum and the Depot Center, as well as numerous art galleries and restaurants located in the downtown area. A local farmers market has been established and is expanding every year. The community is also home to numerous festivals and art events. All this activity creates an energy that many other communities can only wish for.
- The City of Livingston is well managed and doing an excellent job maintaining and improving essential infrastructure systems (such as its wastewater treatment plant). The City has established a good working relationship with the Montana Department of Transportation, and the Department will be spending \$14 million on improvements in the community this year and next. The City is working to expand its network of walking and bike trails, which are popular. The Business Improvement District is providing services to make the downtown more attractive and the Urban Renewal District is funding bricks and mortar projects and making the downtown more appealing to walkers. Although the City is “lean” financially, it is clearly doing as much as possible to make the community an attractive place for arts and cultural organizations as well as businesses.
- Livingston is blessed to have, in the words of several residents, “excellent health care.” Community Health Partners, which provides service to everyone regardless of the ability to pay, has its headquarters in Livingston and operates similar facilities in Bozeman and Belgrade. Livingston Memorial Hospital provides employment for 320 residents of the area and is looking to build a new facility west of town. The community also has three retail pharmacies. Health care providers report that they are able to attract and retain quality medical staff, due in part to the quality of life in Livingston. They also stated that a collaborative working relationship has been established that ensures the best quality of care for patients from Livingston and Park County.
- Printing for Less is a home grown company that now employs more than 100 workers. The company is located in an industrial tax increment district that has an additional 70 acres available for light industrial, high tech, and other development. The City has 40 more acres adjacent to the TIF district that could also be used to attract new companies to the area.
- Livingston is home to many non-profit organizations that, despite the competition for funding that is a common occurrence in every community, work together and support each other.

- One of the community's most unique non-profit organizations is the Western Sustainability Exchange, which promotes the consumption of local agricultural products and, since 2002, has sponsored the Livingston Farmers' Market.
- With regard to education and workforce training, many positive comments were made during the assessment meetings regarding the local school district. The community also has an adult education program and is working with Gallatin College at Montana State University to establish a vocational and technical training program that would enhance the skill level of the local workforce.
- Another positive is Prospera, which provides financial and technical assistance services to communities in Park and Gallatin Counties. The non-profit development organization is based in Bozeman, and recently help fund a building renovation project in Livingston's downtown. The borrower, a specialty bakery and deli, will be a positive addition to the community and will create several new jobs for residents of the community. The relationship with Prospera has the potential of helping other businesses in the community secure needed financing for expansion and job creation.
- In addition to the resources and assistance that Prospera can bring to Livingston, the community is also served by the Northern Rocky Mountain Economic Development District. NRMEDD is currently completing a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Gallatin and Park Counties.

E. WHAT IS NOT WORKING SO WELL IN LIVINGSTON?

Clearly, Livingston has a lot going for it. Despite its struggles to provide good jobs for residents in the wake of the closure of the railroad's car and locomotive maintenance facility, the community has achieved progress. But, as with any community, there are obstacles to overcome and problems to solve. The following list is a summary of comments from participants in the MEDA assessment meetings regarding what is not working well in the community:

- Although tourism clearly is important to the community, there are issues that prevent Livingston from realizing the full economic benefit of this industry. Examples cited by participants in the assessment process included a lack of quality lodging facilities, shortage of parking, especially for RVs and boats, the negative attitude of some residents toward the industry, the need to pull traffic off the Interstate into the community, a weak marketing effort, and need for transit options to the Northern Entrance to Yellowstone National Park.
- Arts and culture is a strong component of community life in Livingston, but the competition for funding support often weakens efforts to build collaboration and communication between organizations.
- There are also several organizations that represent small businesses in the community and their efforts to improve the business climate are also hampered by competition for resources.

- With regard to the community's workforce, several participants expressed concern regarding the high number of low paying jobs² and the lack of a community college that would provide vocational and technical training. Some employers pointed to a poor work ethic as a problem when they hire new people, and also cited the need for post-secondary training and education.
- Although many residents commute to Bozeman for employment, the lack of a transit system between the two communities is a problem for some workers.
- Everyone expressed strong support for the community's primary and secondary schools, but also noted that the dropout rate is too high and that enrollment is declining, causing financial concerns.
- As stated earlier, residents of Livingston are proud of their health care system. But, several participants in the assessment process highlighted the lack of pediatric care and mental health services. They also noted that the community has an aging population, which will require more health services, and that these services need, to the maximum extent possible, to be provided locally. Another problem involves the construction of a new facility for Livingston Memorial Hospital. Several issues have delayed the project, including flood plain questions and possible contamination from the rail yard. The project is crucial to the hospital and its ability to provide quality care (the current facility, built with Hill-Burton funding in the 1950's, is inadequate and does not have sufficient room for expansion).
- Several concerns were also expressed regarding the community's economic development needs. Although growth of the tourism industry would create jobs, most of those would be pay low wages. In the opinion of many, the community needs to also create good paying jobs for its residents as well as promote tourism. Several comments were also made regarding the need for a central point of contact to respond to inquiries from businesses interested in moving to the area.

F. SOME IDEAS OF WHAT COULD BE DONE

The MEDA assessment team heard many suggestions and ideas regarding actions the community could undertake to address what's not working well in the community. The following list is a brief summary of the many specific ideas that participants offered during the assessment meetings:

- To promote Livingston as a destination for **tourists and visitors**, the community needs to develop a unique and distinctive brand and use that to provide consistency to marketing efforts, including signage.

² The need to create jobs was a common theme for many. This viewpoint is supported by economic data. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, total employment in Park County in 2007 was 10,125. This fell 9% to 9,236 in 2010 (www.bea.gov).

- The visitors center needs to increase staffing, which should include a representative of the Park Service.
- The community should seek an increase in funding from the bed tax to support its marketing campaign (Livingston lodging facilities collect about \$120,000 in bed tax annually but get back only \$8,000).
- Steps need to be taken to improve cooperation between organizations and build greater cohesiveness in the community regarding its efforts to improve the economy and help businesses create quality jobs.
- The community should work with Gallatin College and develop a physical presence in Livingston. This could be done in cooperation with the Food Pantry and that organization's effort to develop a commercial kitchen.
- The City should continue its efforts to make Livingston a more attractive place, and these efforts need to be supported by the Business Improvement District and the Urban Renewal District.
- Develop methods to encourage occupancy of second floors in downtown buildings.
- Strengthen the community's economic development effort.
- To the extent possible, accelerate implementation of the downtown revitalization plan, including upgrades of curbs and gutters.
- Preserve and redevelop underground Livingston.
- Encourage Livingston businesses to become members of Prospera.
- Oversee the environmental cleanup of the rail yard and adjacent property, complete an assessment of the condition of existing buildings that were used for rail car and locomotive maintenance and repair, and develop a marketing plan for these facilities that will be targeted to companies that could use these structures and create quality jobs in the manufacturing and light industrial sectors.

The above list would be much longer if it included all the suggestions and ideas that were proposed during the MEDA assessment process. It is clear, however, that the community has no shortage of opportunities. To convert potential into reality, however, requires a well planned, organized and accountable community effort. The assessment process highlighted many positive aspects of the community, as well as several hurdles that will need to be addressed. This writer highly recommends that the community use the reports generated by the MEDA assessment team as the first step toward development of a comprehensive needs assessment and strategic plan that will guide the community for years to come, assign responsibility, track progress, and that can be updated on a regular basis.

G. THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Many communities, regions and even states have prepared strategic plans to guide their economic development efforts. A good process involves preparation of a comprehensive needs assessment that would include extensive research and public involvement. This process would require 3-5 months to complete and would be followed by development of a plan to identify priorities, set time lines, and determine who will be doing what. The strategic plan would require about two months to complete if the needs assessment process is high quality. A consultant should be hired to work with the community on the needs assessment and strategic plan. Selection of the consultant would be based on qualifications, availability, and cost. For planning purposes, a cost estimate of \$35,000 is recommended.

But, hiring a consultant does not in itself ensure a quality strategic planning process that produces a plan that has true community support and ownership. If Livingston decides to embark on this route, a steering committee should be created. The committee would have representatives of all sectors of the community and would not only oversee the planning process but also assume responsibility for implementation and reporting progress on a regular basis. Accountability is key to successful implementation of a community economic development strategic plan.

Potential funding sources for the community needs assessment and strategic plan include the Montana Big Sky Trust Fund (Category II planning grants), the Montana Community Development Block Grant Program (Planning Grant Program), and the U.S. Economic Development Administration (Planning and Local Technical Assistance programs).

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MAIN TOPIC: LEADERSHIP

Issue: Leadership Programs

What we heard: The Livingston community currently does not have a structured Leadership Program. The desire is to engage both the youth and younger adults. This includes mentoring by long time community leaders.

Recommendations: Model a Livingston Leadership Class after one or more tried and true applications.

Example 1 – Leadership Bozeman 24

From their website: How does a community ensure that its future will wind up in the hands of people who can maximize it's assets and minimize it problems? Leadership Bozeman was created by the Bozeman Area Chamber of Commerce in 1987 to develop informed, vigorous, skilled and effective leaders for involvement in all facets of the community, public and private. This eight month class consists of one full day per month where the participants learn about a different aspect of the community each month, enabling them to participate and serve in their community as an informed business member. Selection begins in July, and the classes run August through May.

Recommended Resources:

Please contact the Chamber at 406-586-5421, for more information.

Leadership Bozeman 24 Program Coordinators are Nicole Evelyn and Daryl Schliem, BACC

Comment: Having been through Leadership programs in three different communities, ranging from 500,000 to 50,000, one principal holds true. After spending the better part of a year with your classmates you become a fraternal group. The level of trust is elevated, communication is easily facilitated, and having a list of “go-to” people makes projects easier to tackle.

Example 2 – Leadership CDA Committee

Mission Statement: To identify citizens of the area who have demonstrated the potential for leadership; to provide Information which will develop knowledge and understanding of our community, its complexities and its potential; to create an opportunity for participants to meet

and exchange ideas with current community/area leaders; to motivate participants to pursue leadership roles in the community; and to provide participants an opportunity to network and discuss issues in an informal and learning environment.

Recommended Resources:

Contact: Brenda Young
Program & Events Manager, CdA Chamber
P: 208.415.0110
E: Brenda@CdAChamber.com

Comment: This example from Idaho shows a monthly commitment to keeping their leadership exchanging ideas and accomplishments. I can say from experience that Coeur d' Alene has one of the strongest leadership organizations going. This enthusiasm allowed the Coeur d' Alene community to be awarded the Kroc Center-CdA <http://www.kroccda.org/sports.html> , a multi-million dollar facility they can all be proud of.

Example 3 – Leadership Montana

Mission Statement - As Montana looks to the future, we face a changing and challenging economy, ever more complex issues regarding the health and security of our people, our management of natural resources. We see an increasing need for our communities, our businesses and our government to be partners for a strong, growing Montana.

Progress depends on developing a sustainable core of committed leaders who understand these issues, are willing to listen to and learn from each other, celebrate cultural diversity and diverse opinions, and demonstrate a passion for the Last Best Place.

<http://www.leadershipmontana.org/site/home/>

Recommended Resources:

Leadership Montana

c/o Montana State University Billings
1500 University Dr, McDonald Hall #140
PO Box 1373
Billings, Montana 59103-1373
406-896-5877 (office)
MTleaders@leadershipmontana.org

Mary Hernandez

Interim Executive Director
Ph. 406-690-2967 (cell)
mhernandez@msubillings.edu

Comment: The program, Leadership Montana, will connect Livingston's leadership to a much broader network of like-minded Montanan's. Again, the nine month time commitment and state wide travel help to reinforce the bonds within each graduating class.

Example 4 – Montana Youth Leadership Forum

Description - MYLF (pronounced “my life”) is a unique career and leadership training program for high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors with disabilities. By serving as delegates from their communities at a 5-day intensive training, youth with disabilities will cultivate leadership, citizenship, and social skills.

Mission - To identify students with disabilities who have exhibited leadership skills and equip them with additional training so that they may become leaders by example.

www.montanaylf.com

Recommended Resources:

MYLF Program Director

June Hermanson, M.S. Education, B.A. Social Work

1617 Euclid Suite 1

Helena, MT 59601

(406)442-2576 Voice/TDD mylfjune@bresnan.net

Comment: While not familiar with this Leadership Forum (MYLF) it presents a unique opportunity to the community to engage a wider range of leadership styles and engage youth, one of the desired requests.

ISSUE: VOLUNTEERISM

What we heard: Repeatedly, the attendees from Livingston said that one of the greatest treasures is in the people of their community: individuals who are willing to step up and volunteer. The problem is that the same small group of people is doing a bulk of the work. This can lead to brain drain and burn-out on projects.

Recommendations:

Volunteerism – taping the new leadership recruits. Feed off the recommendations in the Leadership Programs (above). Typically these are new faces, already committed to seeing a better community and State emerge from their efforts. Leadership programs tend to invigorate and energize their graduates to jump in as volunteers. Move quickly to engage them in community projects, recruiting, etc.

Volunteerism – “in the moment” recognition and reward. What we call the “wooden nickel” program within our company – if a co-worker or manager sees someone going above and beyond the call of duty – they can immediately reward them with a wooden nickel. This wooden nickel can be turned in for a gift card (range from \$25- \$50) to be used however they like. This “reward program” could be started by your Chamber of Commerce. The wooden nickel and gift card can be custom designed (branded) to raise awareness for good deeds done in the community. Individual business can purchase the nickels and gift cards from the Chamber, and have them on hand for “in the moment” recognition/rewards.

While not aware of any community currently doing this, it would be a fantastic pilot project for your community to launch. Visualize the lucky recipient using their gift card for a nice meal, and the restaurant sees “that gift card” and offers up free desert as a further thank you!

Volunteerism – keeping the momentum going. We all know that volunteers are the life and heart of a community. Here are some ideas for preventing the dreaded Volunteer Burn-Out:

Ask first if they'd like to be publicly acknowledged, then include them in a “recognition event”:

1. Send a letter to their supervisor at work...tell the manager how much you appreciate their hard work and special qualities.
2. Write a short recognition piece in your organizations newsletter, blog, or other social media.
3. Have your board or a staff member call, letting them how much they are appreciated.
4. Send a visitor with a flower.
5. Have a board member or other special person invite them to an executive lunch in a special place.
6. Invite them to a special event or dinner...and honor them there.
7. Write an article about their work in your local or city newspaper. Ask a reporter to interview them.
8. Call them to talk and get their ideas.
9. Reward them with a wooden nickel!
10. Give them more responsibility - but watch for burnout!

Recommended Resources:

For additional information and ideas, please visit the following websites on finding and keeping volunteers:

<http://www.cristina.org/guide/volgui2.html>

International – Australia:

<http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au>

ISSUE: COMMUNITY COHESIVENESS

What we heard: A desire to reinforce the cohesiveness within the community. The benefits of having many stakeholders engaged in building the assets of the community – including individuals, organized groups, non- profits, businesses, city government, county government, even State and Federal agencies.

Recommendations:

Being nimble and quick to act – another community in the state has assembled a trusted “swat team” for business recruitment. The “swat team” consists of people with individual skill sets and access to specific resources depending on the need. Examples include a Senator staff person, a city representative, a site manager for an available real estate park, a commercial

realtor, members from the A/E/C industry, a financing and grant specialist, and a member of the local economic development organization. This core group can reach out into their respective business groups to quickly find what is needed to answer inquiries. The group agrees to quick bag lunch meetings for mobilization, updates and follow through.

Communication leads to cohesiveness - the simple principle that if we are communicating, and often, we are more likely to exchange, understand, and adjust to multiple points of view. A community that communicates with each other, will find common ground, issues to rally around, and solidify objectives to attain. A cohesive community leads to successful projects.

Example – please look at the Coeur d’ Alene Chamber website (below). They have included stakeholders from affiliate organizations, including contracting management services when needed. Affiliate organizations include the Arts and Culture Alliance, the Downtown Association, the North Idaho Centennial Trail Foundation (a pedestrian & cycling trail organization), and the Convention and Visitor Bureau. These groups work together to improve the visitor experience on multiple levels, from biking, to theater, to shopping and beyond.

Recommended Resources:

<http://cdachamber.com/your-chamber/about-the-chamber/>

Comment: What we heard – the community perceived City and County government were working well together on such topics as solid waste management, recycling programs, and extending city services into previous county territory. There was a general perception that the City was making good strides leading community projects. Generally, a positive and hopeful attitude is held about moving forward.

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MAIN TOPIC: THE ARTS AND CULTURE

ISSUE: The arts and culture are too seasonal, and sometimes they create a polarized community.

How can the arts increase visitation to Livingston and benefit the whole community?

Recommendations and Resources:

Livingston is really one of the gems of the visual arts sector. Home to 14 galleries, it's known as an "ARTS COMMUNITY". Combined with its strong theatre, writers and museum culture, it certainly qualifies as a creative community. This quality of life asset is in itself is a strong recruiting tool for professionals and new industry to locate in Livingston.

1. Integrate the arts community in recruiting new businesses to create more local buying power.
2. Find ways to work together to promote all of the businesses.
3. Better signage and promotions with other communities to attract visitors off I- 90.
4. Continue to upgrade the historic downtown infrastructure.
5. Find ways to work more closely with the Montana Arts Council, and Travel Montana.
6. Have a cross medium arts festival with guest artists from out of town where cowboys and anglers mix with painters and actors.

MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM

ISSUE: MARKETING LIVINGSTON

How does Livingston wish to market itself? What is the image that will attract visitors to stay longer? What are its infrastructure needs?

Recommendations and Resources:

1. Any marketing plan should be inclusive, utilizing all of the community's assets.
2. Create unique winter packages which include spa, hotel, restaurant, meet an artist, go snowmobiling in Yellowstone, ski trips, and theatre tickets etc.
3. A tour bus company or some sort of public transportation is needed. Montana Department of Transportation can help.

4. Distribute coupon books with discounts at local businesses to encourage longer stay.
Example: Buy two get a third night free with a dinner special.
5. Clean up the entrances to the town. Right now it doesn't reflect the treasure to be found in Livingston.

MAIN TOPIC: NON-PROFITS

ISSUE: STRENGTHENING OF NON-PROFITS

Recommendations:

1. Co-op services such as accounting, bookkeeping and janitorial to save money on overhead.
2. Write grants cooperatively. Funding agencies are looking for more bang for their bucks.

MAIN TOPIC: VOLUNTEERISM

ISSUE: RECRUIT AND RETAIN

How do you retain and recruit volunteers to support your community?

Recommendations and Resources:

1. Something I did in my business was to review donation requests once a month with my staff. I would let staff members pick what they wanted to donate, to as long as they would be involved in some way as a volunteer in that organization.
2. Host a Volunteer Training Day where all the non-profits get together to educate the community about who they are and what opportunities are available to community members.
3. Promote philanthropy by explaining the benefits to the donor and the community. Be prepared and look and act professionally.
4. Have a clear vision of your goals and mission. Strategic planning is a must. It helps with fund-raising and when asking someone to volunteer for your organization. Don't waste volunteers time by not having tasks clearly defined.
5. Do nice things for your donors, so they know they're appreciated.

MAIN TOPIC: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ISSUE: MARKETING AND BUSINESS RECRUITMENT

Recommendations:

1. Rail? Art? Recreation? Livingston isn't one thing or idea. All aspects have value and should be used as recruiting tools.
2. Creative communities attract creative people and companies.

3. Recreation located nearby is a quality of life asset.
4. The Rail yards and the Historic downtown add a sense of community and the history of where Livingston comes from.
5. Use web-based technology to create a one stop information site that includes realtors, businesses, art, city-county government, recreation, any incentive programs available to new companies.
6. Local jobs help all parts of the economy and benefit the diverse interests of the community

Resources:

- Montana Arts Council //art.mt.gov email mac@mt.gov
- Travel Montana www.visitmt.com/
- The NGA center for best practices issues briefs “The role of the Arts in Economic Development” (June 2001); “The Impact of Arts Education on Workforce Preparation” (May 2002) and “How States are using Arts and Culture to Strengthen their Global Trade Development” (May 2003); Contact Pual Kalomiris 202 624 5379.
- Montana Industry Cluster Analysis, Montana Governor’s Office of Economic Development, May 2003. Contact Jackie Williams, 406 444 5634

LIVINGSTON RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT - STRENGTHS
APRIL 11 – 12, 2012

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR STRENGTHS AND ASSETS OF LIVINGSTON?

The Arts and Culture

- Fascinating history
- Connection with Yellowstone National Park
- Community itself – the people, including longtime families and newcomers
- Cultural center; 14 galleries in town
- Huge base of artists
- **Community that accepts quirky artist's.**
- Friendly – Montana is friendly but Livingston especially so.
- Two museums
- Two community theaters
- Hunting, fishing, recreation
- Tourism
- Summerfest
- Many buildings on the National Historic Register
- Community Theater Center
- The Depot Center -
- **Biggest asset is location, location and location.**
- Architecture is pleasant.
- Location!
- **Best managed city in Montana.**
- Great downtown.
- Yellowstone Bus Service
- Urban Renewal
- Business Improvement District (BID)

Tourism

- Railroad and mountains
- The Depot
- A very diverse community – agriculture, tourism, the arts, business and industry, etc.
- Small, but not too small
- Arts and Culture grown tremendously
- Wonderful restaurants
- The view, our size, arts and culture

- The river
- Nearness to the park
- Designated wilderness areas
- Great climate for entrepreneurs – they choose Livingston
- Keeping of the downtown architecture
- The people – the old timers and the new comers.
- Streetscape – fantastic
- Livingston Chamber
- Tourists love the look of Livingston
- Natural gas, wind energy,
- Rail yard
- Dan Bailey’s Fly Shop
- Dog sledding

Education and Workforce

- Wind energy
- Access to rail
- Educated workforce
- Business classes in the school system
- Web based learning
- People here are very resourceful
- BEAR Team – Business Expansion and Retention
- Closeness to Bozeman and MSU –access to resources.
- Great opportunities to conduct structured on-the-job training
- Adult Education program – offer pc classes, etc. Very active, very strong.
- School system is top notch.
- City’s internship program.
- Sports program
- Performing arts groups
- State of the Art track and field in the works
- Big offerings for a small school district – do a lot with what we have.
- Coordinate with city and school efforts – in good communication
- 1500 students
- Park County Community Foundation – brings groups together
- Online programs offered by MSU
- Streamline bus system that travels one route per day to MSU from Livingston
- School bond issues never been turned down.

- Food pantry – building and expanding the program.
- Re-use of school buildings.

COMMISSIONERS, NRMEDD, PROSPERA

- Two theaters, art galleries, writers
- Things are starting to happen here.
- Our students can go anywhere in the world.
- Great city manager, great department heads; people work hard and lean.
- Utilize technology before decisions are made.
- Strive to be transparent.
- Great relationship with Prospera.
- Prospera Revolving Loan Fund

DOWNTOWN

- Great location
- Railroad is a great asset.
- BID URA – great to have some funds to work with.
- Walkable downtown
- The people of Livingston – especially the people of downtown Livingston as they are personally and professionally invested.
- Coffee shops add vitality and friendly quality to our community.
- Vision Livingston striving to bring groups together.

NONPROFITS

- Intact community – we have a center, a functional downtown, not spread out like Bozeman.
- **Abundance of services in Park County – health care, youth, pantry, -- program for almost everything and everyone if they are interested.**
- **It is a “where you want to be” kind of place.**
- Eclectic community – great depth of skills.
- Best place to network.
- Generous giving people live here.
- Great people – but also have some negative people.
- Soup kitchen and community garden
- Soccer Association, Baseball Association

HEALTHCARE

- Good solid practitioners.
- Community Health Partners

- Medical, dental education programs – excellent model
- Can do attitude of the people here
- Great attributes to attract professionals here
- Local hospital
- Good working knowledge of each other
- Location – close to interstate and can access specialty care in Bozeman and Billings.
- Diversity and variety of healthcare services here.
- Can recruit quality healthcare professionals here.
- Ditto collaborative relationships
- Also collaborate with smaller communities such as Big Timber and White Sulpher Springs
- Positive community
- Hospital is largest employer in Park County
- Workout opportunities in the area

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECRUITMENT

- City government
- Quality of life
- Infrastructure is good for a town our size
- Workforce
- Strong commitment from a core group of leaders
- Rail yard – potential
- Ditto all of the above.
- Housing stock is good
- Near to Yellowstone National Park
- Good government here
- Inviting quality of life
- BEAR Business Expansion and Retention Program
- Good health care
- Livingston Farmer's Market
- Western Sustainability Exchange
- Very unique place that we live – people care to make it special
- Farm and ranch heritage
- Tourism, activities, hunting, fishing, park
- Great community feel
- Montana has a good small business survival rate compared to other states.
- Poetry in the Windows

- Off grade rail crossing in progress

AGRICULTURE, ENTREPRENEURS, SMALL BUSINESS

- Access to internet, airport, high speed communications
- Ditto all of the above
- Decided to have my business here because of closeness to Yellowstone Park.
- Buy local ingredients for restaurant
- Sign of a successful rancher is having a wife that works in town.
- Scenery, outdoor activities
- Size of our town – not too small, not too big
- Arts and Culture
- Ability to make change in a small community is quicker.
- Tons of resources and opportunities here.
- Summer youth program strives to schedule summer youth events
- Have an outdoor pool
- Civic Center
- Small town with people that look out for each other

LIVINGSTON RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT - CHALLENGES

APRIL 11 – 12, 2012

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES IN LIVINGSTON?

The Arts and Culture

- Capture the people coming through.
- Failure to let people know what exists here: theaters, museums, art galleries
- Communication among groups in town
- The wind!
- Empty hotels in the winter; full in the summer.
- **Coordination between retail and art, i.e. – hold art walks then the stores are not open.**
- Ditto
- Better promotion, especially regarding the historic downtown aspects of Livingston.
- Resistance to promoting Livingston; polarized community.
- Very small middle class.
- Cost of doing business is high in Livingston – high water, sewer, business rates.
- Need to better promote our tourism attractions.
- Had a development organization; need to rebuild trust.
- Too many war paths – the pie is only so big; lack of partnerships and pulling together.
- Livingston doesn't sell itself as a whole.
- No "mapping" for our community – if someone pulls off, there is no further direction of where to go, RV parking, etc.
- We do not use Cooke City as an asset.
- Have not publicized ourselves as a theater town.
- Some competition with Bozeman for tourism dollars.
- Concern for retail when new water pipes go in and block traffic.

Tourism

- Rail yard law suit to clean up rail yard
- Lack of better accommodations – need better hotels
- Some people are anti-tourism, especially when large events come to town, i.e., 4th of July
- Ditto
- **How do we grow and keep the unique character of Livingston?**

- Get everyone to work together to keep tourists here.
- Providing more parking without hurting the historic aspects – provide shuttles?
- Parking problems – ditto
- Need more public transportation, including improved taxi services
- Keeping tourists in town
- Shops that do not stay open in evening hours
- Need more lodging
- **Keeping youth here is a challenge – they need more opportunities**
- **Transportation – we have people that come on a bus to see Yellowstone – no bus to run from Livingston to the Park. \$80 by taxi one way.**
- Better communication from the city to activities that would affect downtown businesses.
- Difficult to keep workers – even with benefits.

Education and Workforce

- Low paying jobs – minimum wage jobs, seasonal jobs
- People seem to have lots of education or little education – seems to be a big education gap.
- Closeness to Bozeman – a challenge and a strength
- Limited vocational or technical classes here
- People do not know how to sell themselves – we have highly educated people in Livingston, but they do not sell themselves.
- Create opportunities for when our kids want to come back to Livingston – that livable wage jobs will be here.
- Many employees (young and not-so-young) do not have good work skills – need interpersonal skills in the high school level.
- Business climate survey indicated poor workforce ethics is a big issue.
- Our viability is based on student population – when enrollment goes down, funding goes down. Robust curriculum is at risk should enrollment go down.

COMMISSIONERS, NRMEDD, PROSPERA

- Encourage high school students to finish high school and go on from there, whether in a trade or degree program.
- Trained workforce.
- Improve communication with the people of Livingston; at times, costs/taxes simply must go up. If not now, when?
- People are discouraged about the political process overall.
- Do not have an economic development department.

- Fight for dollars among Livingston’s nonprofits.
- Annexation issues

DOWNTOWN

- Signage, i.e., Original Gateway to Yellowstone National Park, Business Corridor signs
- More research on signage – from MDOT – Livingston isn’t represented, but rather Butte, when leaving Billings.
- Need to work as a more cohesive community.
- Getting new faces in the mix to drive our goals and objectives forward – how to prevent burnout.

NONPROFITS

- The negative people seem to have a loud voice.
- Generational poverty – not unique to Livingston
- Mental health care – needs not met.
- Poor people need transportation – lots of decisions are made without thinking about this – from adults to children.
- Philanthropy has been tough the last few years mostly due to the national economy, but felt locally as well.
- If look at all of Park County, we are hindered in getting state money – do too well to qualify for funds. Good and bad problem.
- Nonprofits coordinate well, but not so great when involving adult services funded by private dollars.
- Need to be more parent friendly – scheduling to accommodate for working parents, i.e., parent teacher conferences.
- Level of need that is not being met – Livingston lacks capacity to meet some needs.
- Do not have many corporations to request funds from.
- More volunteers needed. Those currently volunteering don’t have the time to add more.

HEALTHCARE

- Lacking a pediatrician here – gap in care.
- School enrollment is tending to decline; population is aging.
- Ditto pediatrician need.
- Higher than the average uncollectable claims.
- Hospital built in 1940’s – it is “tired.” People associate “old building” with lack of quality care.
- Dealing with flood plain issues, funding, to build new hospital.

- Work hard to bring specialty care – but sometimes demographics do not support it even on a monthly visiting basis.
- If new hospital is built, provide transportation to the new location.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECRUITMENT

- Depressed real estate
- People struggle to make a living here.
- Finding quality employees – and non-seasonal workers
- Skills gaps – technical as well as life skills gaps
- Lack of pride in the community; lack of confidence
- Service pay jobs – household income is low
- Clean up of rail yard
- Sometimes hard to find a location for a business to land itself
- Who are we – Rail? Art? Recreation?
- Businesses often reluctant to seek assistance – then it is too late.
- Access to supply chain is challenging at times.
- Do have good collaboration – but not consistent.
- Inconsistent access to internet
- Diversity of people- when come together behavior becomes more adversarial; but can work and get the job done.
- Limited resources to deal with the bigger issue – we are a small local government and no one has the time or expertise to pull together resources to recruit or respond to businesses interested in Livingston.
- Resistance to change

AGRICULTURE, ENTREPRENEURS, SMALL BUSINESS

- We are close to Bozeman – is a strength and a challenge. Do not want to become a bedroom community.
- More diversity of local businesses.
- Negative association with rail yard and clean up.
- Perception that the education system here is not progressive.
- Ditto all of the above.
- Rail yard – is a strength, is a challenge, is a project – an answer to all three questions today.
- Montana’s refusal for tip credit for minimum wage employees.
- Seasonality – consistent business levels.
- Unsupervised children after school hours and in the summer

LIVINGSTON RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT - PROJECTS

APRIL 11 – 12, 2012

What projects would you like to see accomplished in Livingston in the next two, five, ten, and twenty years?

The Arts and Culture

- Get people off the interstate to come in; they are driving right by us!
- Make the holes in the net smaller so people will stop.
- **The wind blew you in: now stay!**
- Convention center
- How do we better serve the tourists?
- Collaborate with Cooke City to improve winter tourism.
- Utilize the people from Bozeman – pull them in from over the hill.
- Bus service from Bozeman to Livingston for special events or tourism
- Infrastructure – where do we want to go with the infrastructure we have? Hotels?
- Passenger Train Service
- More outdoor art projects
- Use historic preservation as the basis of tourism
- More trees to break up flat open spaces.
- Organize museums between Billings and Cardwell with a brochure to encourage people to stop.
- Promote as a destination city –
- Sign on both ends of town that designate the business route.
- Receive more Travel Montana funds.
- Bring rail from Havre, Great Falls, Helena, Livingston as a way to get to Yellowstone Park.
- Promote Livingston as a ski area.....26 miles from Bridger.
- Get involved with things already established and proven successful, i.e., Main Street USA, Montana Tourism Association, Yellowstone Country Tourism
- City started over a decade ago replacing water/sewer lines...reach downtown soon. Massive project. Will involve new curbs, and sidewalks, new cast iron streetlights.

Tourism

- Need the groups in town to come together; starting a branding project through the Livingston Chamber.
- Better signage – for parking,

- Ways to keep our youth here
- Recruit more bus tours here – encourage them to stop downtown
- Build packages with Yellowstone Park businesses
- Re-invigorate Main Street
- Seek grants and funding to support the entire area
- We have the location, need cooperation amongst us.
- Realize the new avenues – businesses need to learn to adapt to the new technology and new marketing.
- Good chamber membership but people are busy with family and running their business.
- Across from Depot – use land for a rest area
- RV parking near Depot
- Contact station similar to West Yellowstone – have chamber co-housed with a similar opportunity.
- Capitalize on the tournaments that come to town.

Education and Workforce

- Build a community college in Livingston
- Working to be more inclusive of home schoolers – currently active in improving communications.
- Continue city beautification – inviting, nice parks, dining, appearance, etc.
- City, county and school district – need to work on what we have and make them better. Pool resources together.
- Extend and strengthen partnership with MSU to make sure people are trained and educated for future needs.
- Gallatin College program is open to working with Livingston – the college is expanding now, so seize the opportunity.
- Work with Gallatin College for workforce needs.
- Manufacturing or utilization of wind energy, i.e., repairing wind turbines.
- More opportunities for kids not going to college.

COMMISSIONERS, NRMEDD, PROSPERA

- Economic development efforts strengthened.
- Increase our base - More Printing for Less type businesses.
- Build and improve relationship between Park County and the City of Livingston.
- Support for Local Option Sales Tax in Montana

DOWNTOWN

- Develop the upstairs level of many of our buildings.
- Promote this is a walkable community
- Improve signage “mapping”
- Making Livingston a destination – get off the interstate.
- Lobbying to be Montana Cowboy Hall of Fame location.
- Beatification and overall branding to extend the main street look throughout Livingston.
- Continue implementing downtown revitalization plan – but speed up the process!
- Continue curb and gutter upgrades.

NONPROFITS

- Find funds to pay volunteers.
- Plug in and engage people that are not yet engaged.
- Cultivate leadership development.
- Recycling – create incentives to recycle
- Capital campaign underway for a new food pantry - will contain a commercial kitchen for entrepreneurs. Will engage people from Gallatin College as well for food management, culinary arts, etc.
- Community pool
- Get more people to work like the nonprofits – work with nothing and create tremendous good.

HEALTHCARE

- Build a new hospital; provide improved onsite and more aesthetic surroundings.
- Provide better access for those that severely need health care but are not able to receive it.
- Literacy problems addressed.
- Ditto need for new hospital.
- Ditto need for new hospital.
- Shared electronic community medical records
- Mental Health needs addressed
- Ditto new hospital; excited for the benefits that would be available to the community.
New opportunity to utilize empty hospital building once new one is built. Perhaps assisted living?

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECRUITMENT

- Food pantry and the commercial kitchen plus training program
- Goal: Create 50 jobs that pay more than \$15 per hour – would have huge impact.
- Support the city in taking a lead role in economic development.
- Fill the work skills gap, i.e., life skills and computer skills; bring training to Livingston
- Warehouse of resources for someone to learn about how to start a business
- Collaborate on the existing business surveys to determine what would work here.
- Film making
- Green and clean energy jobs
- Light manufacturing jobs

AGRICULTURE, ENTREPRENEURS, SMALL BUSINESS

- Continue work on Livingston Growth Policy
- Work harder with all groups pulling together – Gallery Association, City, Chamber, etc.
- Towns that don't grow – die. Keep us growing.
- Railroad Yard and Preservation of historic buildings – turn into economic development
- Facility for swimming pool in winter
- Indoor skatepark
- Produce what we need for this town to produce local products
- Improve our trail system
- Energy production and energy conservation job opportunities
- Provide activities for kids after school that don't have anywhere to go
- An indoor pool
- Ditto – but we need the money to pay for a pool
- Capitalize more on tourism
- Sustainable energy – green jobs
- Tech school to teach trades
- Bike path to Livingston, Yellowstone Park – no car needed.