

RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

for

MINERAL COUNTY, MONTANA

August 12 – 13, 2003

**In partnership with
Montana Department of Commerce, Montana Economic Developers Association
(MEDA), Bear Paw Development Corporation, Montana Community Development
Corporation, USFS Lolo National Forest, Real World Development and the people
of Mineral County.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Having lived in Montana all my life, I visited Mineral County only once, and that was for a funeral held in Superior. During that first brief visit, however, I was in awe of the beauty of the area and the unusual layout of the community. I was curious as to how the community survived and what made it “tick”. It was my privilege to take part in the Mineral County Resource Team Assessment and learn about this incredible area of Montana. It is obvious that in working together as a community, there is nothing to stop Mineral County from fulfilling its wishes and dreams for the future.

Before digging in to the report itself, I would like to give recognition to Montana Department of Commerce (MDOC) and MEDA – Montana Economic Developers Association. MDOC sponsors Resource Team Assessments across the state. MEDA provides the contractual services that make Resource Teams possible. You can join MEDA and become a part of this economic development network at <http://www.medamembers.org>.

Special thanks are due Shawna Hudson of the Mineral County Chamber of Commerce who served as the spark plug behind this entire project. More thanks are extended to the US Forest Service for providing funding, the Lolo National Forest group, the Mineral County Community Foundation (Pat Hayes), MSU Extension (Kevin Chamberlain), and Mayor Hendrick. In addition, I applaud each and every team member that dedicated hours of work and travel in order to participate on the team: Steve Grover of Montana Community Development Corp.; Eric Hanson, MT Department of Commerce; Tracey Jette, Bear Paw Development; and Myrt Webb of Real World Development. 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 Mineral County Resource Team Assessment was truly a team effort on the local level. The welcome and participation from each and every community involved was proof of the incredible people that live in your county. Special thanks to Alberton, St. Regis and DeBorgia for our welcome and all that you shared with the team.

The stage is now set for Mineral County’s future. 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 and/or county 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!

Be sure to attend the follow-up Town Meeting to be held in a few weeks!

Gloria O’Rourke
MEDA

PROCESS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THIS REPORT

Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) provided staff support for the coordination of a resource team to assist Mineral County in evaluating the county's assets and liabilities and in developing suggestions for improving the environment, social and economic future of the area.

Shawna Hudson of Mineral County Chamber of Commerce served as the community contact and local team leader for the project. Shawna took the lead in agenda development, logistics, budgeting and publicity for the assessment. Resource team members were selected to visit, interview citizens, business and community leaders; and develop a plan of recommended action for the city. The team members were carefully selected based on their fields of expertise that Mineral County officials indicated would be needed to respond to the problem areas identified.

The Resource Team toured the county and interviewed approximately 80 people over a two-day period from August 12 – 13th. The team interviewed representatives from the following segments of Mineral County: the people of Alberton, the people of St. Regis, the people of DeBorgia and the West End, the people of Superior, TriCon Timber Mill employees and staff as well as the USFS Ranger Station.

Each participant was asked to respond to three questions designed to begin communications and discussion and to serve as a basis for developing the action plan. The three questions were:

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

Upon completion of the interviews, the team met to compare notes and share comments following the two days of intense study. 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 a final report to Mineral County.

A preliminary oral report and a summary of group recommendations was presented to the people of Mineral County on August 13th.

Following the oral report, this formal written report was prepared and is presented to Mineral County. Copies will be made available in print and electronically. The report is available on the MEDA website at <http://www.medamembers.org>. A meeting is being planned for the near future to review the report with the people of Mineral County and to set priorities and initiate action plans.

**MINERAL COUNTY RESOURCE TEAM
AUGUST 12TH – 13TH, 2003**

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Email: erjhanson@centurytel.net
Web: <http://www.discoveringmontana.com>

Mineral County Team Member: Tracey Jette
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Ph: 406.265.9226 Fx: 406.265.5602
Email: tjette@bearpaw.org
Web: <http://www.bearpaw.org>

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Web: <http://www.medamembers.org>

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Email: myrtwebb@centurytel.net

Schedule for Mineral County RTA

August 12th – 13, 2003

Local Coordinator: Shawna Hudson, Mineral County Chamber of Commerce (822-4891)

Tue. August 12th

- 9:00 - 10:30 Working breakfast - Team Meeting and Orientation, Durango's Restaurant
- 10:30 - 11:30 Travel to and Morning tour of east end of county (Tarkio, Lozeau, Fish Creek, and Alberton) ---- it is 35 miles to Alberton
- 11:45 - 1:00pm Lunch at Alberton Senior Center & Listening Session with the seniors
- 1:00 - 2:30pm Alberton Town meeting starts at 1 pm at the Alberton Senior Center
- 2:30 - 3:30pm Tour of the Bark Plant, Pellet Mill, Hospital, Old School
- 3:30 – 4:30 Forest Service Ranger Station for tour and Listening Session
- 4:30 - 6:45pm Check in at motel (Budget Host Big Sky across from Durango's)
- 7:00 - 9:00pm Dinner & listening session at 7 pm at Superior Civic Center hosted by Mineral County Community Foundation -- guest list to include Vision Planning Board members and key players in Mineral County

Wed. August 13th

- 7:30 – 7:45am Travel time to Regis (13 miles) -- road construction it only takes me 5 minutes to drive if everyone closes their eyes :)
- 7:45 - 8:45am Breakfast at Huckleberry Brother's in St. Regis
- 9:00 - 10:30am St. Regis Town Meeting at the St. Regis School cafeteria hosted by the St. Regis Community Council and St Regis Resort Area Board
- 10:30 - 11:30am Tour of St. Regis -- TriCon Timber Mill, KOA, VIC, Trestle Creek Golf Course
- 11:30am - 1:00pm Travel time to West End (30 miles) and tour (Haugan, Saltese, DeBorgia, Henderson)
- 1:00 - 2:30pm Break West End Town Meeting and lunch at 1 pm at the Old DeBorgia 1908 Schoolhouse, hosted by the Happy Homemakers and Lincoln Silver \$
- 2:30 - 4:30 Team Work Session to identify main issues and prep for Town Meeting
- 4:30 -6:00 Break
- 6:00- 7:00 Dinner with chamber at the Superior Senior Center/Civic Center
- 7:00 - 8:30 Superior Town Meeting at 7 pm at the Superior Senior Center/Civic Center

**MINERAL COUNTY MAIN ISSUES
MINERAL COUNTY RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT
AUGUST 12 – 13, 2003**

Note: These main issues, identified by the people of Mineral County, serve as the framework for the Team's report.

LAND USE

- **Smart Growth on 8% of the land**
- **Water/Sewer**

LAW ENFORCEMENT

- **Budget/Funding**

COMMUNITY

- **County-Wide Communication**
- **Local Capacity**
- **Gov't Agencies**
- **Sense of Community**
- **Clean Up**
- **Leadership**
- **Appearance/Town Character**
- **Activities for Youth**
- **Medical**
- **Transportation for Senior Citizens**

EDUCATION

- **Basic**
- **Continuing Ed**
- **Adult**
- **Business**

HOUSING

- **Rental**
- **Affordable Housing**
- **Livable Housing**

NATURAL RESOURCES

- **Focus on areas you can impact such as Hiawatha Trail, Urban Interface, Gorge, etc.**

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- **Lack of Sustainable Jobs**
- **Diversification**
- **Retention vs Attraction**
- **Value-Added**
- **Light Manufacturing**

TOURISM

- **Scenic Byway**
- **Hiawatha Trail**
- **Signage**
- **Lack of East End Visitor Center**

Resource Team Assessment Report

for the



August 12 - 13, 2003

Report by:

Eric Hanson

Regional Development Officer

MT Department of Commerce

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Web: <http://www.discoveringmontana.com>

In August a team of professionals from economic development and government fields traveled to Mineral County to assist the local population with issues that concern the area. It was the RTA team's job to listen and understand the demographics, the culture, and the economy of Mineral County. The team member reports are for the purpose of assisting Mineral County through ideas, suggestions, possible solutions and resources to a certain problems and problems within the County.

The framework and issues regarding Mineral County are the following:

1. Land use
2. Law Enforcement
3. Community
4. Education
5. Housing
6. Natural Resources
7. Business Development

The team found many sub-categories under each main issue that included but not limited to:

- A. Growth Policies
- B. Water/Sewer

- C. Budgets
- D. Youth activities
- E. Rental/Housing
- F. Urban Interface
- G. National Forest Policy
- H. Diversification of the economy
- I. Tourism
- J. And many others

This document will try to address the concerns of Mineral County residents and provide feedback that the local government, businesses, and civic leaders can use to target some common goals and improve the County as a whole.

Issue: Land-Use

Mineral County, geographically, is long, narrow, rural, and has very little private land. With only 8-10% of the total county available as a tax base and development, Mineral County will have to have a strong and fair growth plan. The term "fair" may not include everyone in County but it should the have majority agreeing on land-use. Mineral County will have to make the best use of what is there. There will have to area(s) set aside for industrial/manufacturing developing such as a business park/industrial area preferably by a rail site or an exit off I-90.

Other areas/districts such as housing, business, and even tourism need be considered. Structures and business that already have a presence may need to grand fathered into the new policies. Mineral County is at the point to where it is going to grow and people will need infrastructure services. This will cost both the county and the taxpayers more money up front but the tax base will increase for the County, which in turn can help will other infrastructure needs.

Smart growth and/or a growth policy, (to which Pat Hayes has donated a lot of his time) is currently the most important issue for the County. What is planned for the future will affect commerce, business development, housing, the local economy, and how decisions are made for future growth. As a whole the residents of Mineral County wanted to control growth even though the "Z word" (zoning) scares the local population about too much control. The County will have to find a medium that works. With growth and zoning the County will have to capitalize on the resources the area does provide and base growth policy on them. The assets of Mineral County include I-90 running through the entire county, being in the middle of two large urban areas (Missoula and Spokane/Cour'de Alene), excellent fiber for technology, and great recreational opportunities. With these resources there will be a need for more sewer and water projects.

Resources:

RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE RESOURCES

USDA Rural Development

Rural Utilities Service 406-585-2520
P.O. Box 850, Bozeman, MT 59771 406-585-2565 FAX
Mitchel R. Copp, Program Director
[Mitchel.Coi\)p6@mt.usda.gov](mailto:Mitchel.Coi)p6@mt.usda.gov) www.rurdev.usda.ciovlmt

USDA Rural Development

Rural Utilities Service (Distance Learning; Telemedicine; Broadband) 406-388-2494 PhFAX
1645 Regal Drive, Belgrade, MT 59714 800-383-7353 Voicemail Kim
Jacobs, General Field Representative
keacobs@cbrus.usda.gov

Commerce Department 406-841-2704
301 S. Park, P.O. Box 200501, Helena, MT 59620 406-841-2701 FAX
Mark Simonich, Director
www.commerce.state.mt.us

Community Development Division 406-841-2772
P.O. Box 200523, Helena, MT 59620 406-841-2771 FAX
Newell Anderson, Administrator neanderson@state.mt.us

Community Development Bureau 406-841-2776
Dave Cole, Bureau Chief
dacole@state.mt.us

Community Development Block Grant Program (CD) 406-841-2777
Gus Byrom, Program Manager gbyrom@state.mt.us

Community Technical Assistance Program (CTA) 406-841-2783
Gavin Anderson, Program Manager gavina@state.mt.us

Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP) 406-841-2785
Jim Edgcomb, Program Manager edqcomb@state.mt.us

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation 406-444-2074
1625 11 th Avenue, P.O. Box 201601, Helena, MT 59620 406-444-2684 FAX
Bud Clinch, Director
bclinch@state.mt.us www.dnrc.state.mt.us

Conservation and Resource Development Division 406-444-6671
P.O. Box 201601, Helena, MT 59620 406-444-2684 FAX

Ray Beck, Administrator
rbeck@state.mt.us

Loan & Financial Management Bureau 406-444-6689
Anna Miller, Financial Advisor
annam@state.mt.us

Resource Development Bureau 406-444-6687
John Tubbs, Bureau Chief
Robert Fischer, Civil Engineer 406-444-6688
rfischer@state.mt.us

Montana Department of Environmental Quality406-444-2544
1520 East Sixth Avenue, P.O. Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620 406-444-4386 FAX

Jan Sensibaugh, Director
sensibaugh@state.mt.us www.deg.state.mt.us

Technical and Financial Assistance Bureau406-444-6697
P.O. Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620 406-444-4386 FAX

State Revolving Fund
Mark Smith, Drinking Water 406-444-5325
marks@state.mt.us

Todd Teegarden, Water Pollution Control406-444-5324
tteegarden@state.mt.us

Midwest Assistance Program
www.map-inc.orci

Bill Leonard, Rural Development Specialist 406-863-4900
P.O. Box 1456, Whitefish, MT 59937

Judy Sass, Rural Development Specialist 406-273-0410
P.O. Box 516, Florence, MT 59833

Paul Torok, Rural Development Specialist 406-449-0332
P.O. Box 54, Helena, MT 59624

Montana Association of Water and Sewer Systems 406-273-3197 Ph & FAX
P.O. Box 1336, Lolo, MT 59847

Jeff McCleary, Executive Secretary

Montana Rural Water 406-454-1151
925 7th Avenue S., Great Falls, MT 59405 406-454-3116 FAX

Donna Wadsworth
Executive Director
www.mrws.org

Nick Clos, Waste Water Technician406-458-0490
Bill O'Connell, Ground Water Technician406-782-6166
Shelley M. Nollan, Program Specialist406-262-9809
Harry Whalen, Water Circuit Rider406-745-3376
Craig Pagel, Water Circuit Rider406-454-1151
Laura Nicolai, Solid Waste Technician 406-362-4313

Water Resource Center - MSU 406-994-6690
Huffman Building, MSU, Bozeman, MT 59717
Gretchen Rupp, Director

Brownfields:

Brownfields are: abandoned, idled or under-used industrial and commercial sites where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. The Brownfields Program is grant-funded program for clean up of contaminated sites and it can also create a revolving loan fund.

For information check out: www.epa.gov/brownfields
www.hud.gov
www.mtrdp.org/brownfields

Publications available from the Montana Department of Commerce:

- Montana's Annexation & Planning Statutes --- 13th addition, Sept 1999
- Montana's Subdivision & Surveying Laws & Regulations --- 18th addition 3/2000
- Montana's Growth Policy Resource Book --- June 2000
- Montana Capital Improvement Plans
- CDBG Guidelines - 2002-2003 – Public Facilities Projects
- 2002-2003 – Housing Projects
- 2002-2003 – Economic Development Projects
- Building it Right – A public facilities construction administration manual --- Nov 2000

- County Bridge & Road Capital Improvement Planning and Financing manual --- Jan 2001
- Montana Consolidated Plan / Annual Action Plan --- April 2002 – March 2003
- Montana HOME investment Partnership Program (HOME) application guidelines
- Energy conservation & Housing Rehabilitation under the HOME program

See attachment A1 titled – Financial Assistance Programs Funding Water, Waster Water, and Solid Waster Projects in Montana

Issue: Law Enforcement

In each town visited, the issue of Law enforcement came up. Many of the residents of Mineral County did not feel safe and thought that they are not protected. It sounds like the County has worked hard on this issue submitting in grants, federal requests, and restructuring the budget. This problem goes back to the fact that the County has a very small tax-base and a very large geographic area. There could be more efforts to have a crime stoppers program in certain areas of the county and there could also be more volunteers for deputy sheriffs. Training could be provided from the local staff and surrounding area.

Drug problems in County seem to be a big problem since I-90 runs through the entire county. Community leaders may want to try to work with the DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) and also the Forest Service Law enforcement division. With homeland security issues the Forest Service Law Enforcement division has a substantial budget and is one of the growing sectors of jobs within the federal government. Coordination must happen between all the levels of law enforcement and is crucial for the entire county. Communication with all agencies and some sort of protocol should be established for all types of situations from a lost hiker to a drug bust on the freeway.

Resources:

<http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/>

<http://www.policecenter.com/>

<http://www.ncjrs.org/fedgrant.html>

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/>

<http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/Default.asp?Item=884>

<http://www.grants.gov/law.html>

Please see other resources from other RTA reports

Issue: Education

Education is a problem in many areas in Montana. In Mineral County things is not that much different, however opinions are. In one town meeting, people spoke about how great the education is and in a separate town meeting others complained about the poor quality of education. Adult education was also a concern for many people from continuing education to classes for skill improvement.

From an outsider's point of view there are three high schools for a county with 3800 people. People from Alberton go to school in Frenchtown and people from DeBorgia go to school in Superior. There is an outlying problem with many of the teachers leaving after only a couple of years. Having inconsistency in education hurts a school district, causes local political problems, and impacts the students from Kindergarten up.

Some schools in the county have double grades while other schools have very nice facilities and up-date-technology. With such a diversification between schools there seems to be a waste of resources and costs. It would make sense for Mineral County to have one high school and one - two middle schools and one - two elementary schools. Classes would not have double grades and good teachers may stay longer.

Adult Education needs to be extended in Mineral County. There seems to be a demand but for how many? The University of Montana is very close and could do outreach courses in the County. In order to have adult education there should be a designated place and should also have a focus or goal. Should the county have more basic adult education or have more classes based on tourism, business, and marketing? The Small Business Center and the Montana Department of Commerce sponsor a NX Level Course for start-up and existing businesses. This class would be great way to spawn some entrepreneurship in the area.

Resources:

<http://www.ed.gov/>

<http://www.nwlincs.org/mtlincs/>

<http://www.education-world.com/vocational/administration/index.shtml>

<http://www.dhttp://www.doleta.gov/whatsnew/WIA%20INCENTIVE%20AWARDS%20-%20FINAL%20-%202005-14-03.cfmoleta.gov/whats>

Please see other resources from other RTA reports

Issue: Housing

A housing shortage in the County is predominant in most people’s minds. Problems from low-income housing to regular middle class housing need to be in the growth plan. There needs to be areas designated for housing from low-income, housing for the elderly, and the remodeling of existing structures. Local HRDC’s in Missoula have programs such as the reserve equity (for remodeling), and first time homebuyers program. During the growth plan stage it may be a good idea to find a good ethical developer from Missoula or from Western Montana to get ideas on a win-win situation. Housing grants are primarily focused on low-income and do not reflect the middle class. If a developer can come in and work with the County then new subdivisions can be developed and help the tax base for the County and local town.

Rentals are a problem all over Montana, and in Mineral County it is a huge problem. Rentals are a catch 22 for many people and have a negative stigma. It will take a group of rental property owners to get together advertise rentals and maybe find the true demand for rentals in the area. Are there people with summer cabins that would rent them out in the fall through spring? Can any new rentals be build that would cash flow for the owner? Are there developers who would utilize the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program?

Resources:

HOUSING & COMMUNITY FACILITIES RESOURCES

USDA Rural Development

Rural Housing Service 406-585-2515
P.O. Box 850, Bozeman, MT 59771 406-585-2565 FAX
Deborah Choriton, Program Director
Deborah.Choriton@mt.usda.gov
www.rurdev.usda.ciov/mt

Commerce Department 406-841-2704
301 S. Park, P.O. Box 200501, Helena, MT 59620 406-841-2701 FAX
www.commerce.state.mt.us

Community Development Division
Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) 406-841-2777
P.O. Box 200523, Helena, MT 59620 406-841-2771 FAX
Gus Byrom, Program Manager
gbyrom@state.mt.us

Housing Division 406-841-2844
P.O. Box 200528, Helena, MT 59620 406-841-2841 FAX

Bruce Brensdal, Division Administrator
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Horne Investment Partnerships Program (HOME)

Box 200528, Helena, MT 59620
Connie Onstad, Program Manager

406-841-2819
406-841-2841 FAX
constad@state.mt.us

Board of Housing - Single Family

P.O. Box 200528, Helena, MT 59620
Bob Morgan, Program Manager

..... 406-841-2849
406-841-2841 FAX
bmorgan@state.mt.us

Board of Housing - Multi-Family

P.O. Box 200528, Helena, MT 59620-0528
Mat Rude, Multi-Family Program Manager
marude@state.mt.us

..... 406-841-2845
406-841-2841 FAX

Section 8 - Project Based

P.O. Box 200548, Helena, MT 59620
Dave Parker, Program Manager
dparker@state.mt.us

..... 406-841-2801
406-841-2810 FAX

Section 8 - Tenant Based

P.O. Box 200545, Helena, MT 59620-0545
Pat Birnie, Administrative Assistant
pbirnie@state.mt.us

..... 406-841-2830
406-841-2810 FAX

Fannie Mae

828 Great Northern, 2nd Floor, Helena, MT 59601
Maureen Rude, Director
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..... 406-449-7490
406-495-9613 FAX

Mary Lou Affieck, Senior Deputy Director
404 N. 31st St., Suite, 220, Billings, MT 59101
mary-iou-affieck@fanniemae.com
www.fannierna.com

..... 406-259-7059
406-259-7077 FAX

U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development

www.hud.gov/local/hei/index.html

Community Builder

7 West 6th Ave., Helena, MT 59601

..... 406-449-5050
406-449-5052 FAX

Tom Friesen, Community Builder
[Tom Friesen@hud.gov](mailto:Tom.Friesen@hud.gov)

..... 406-449-5050

Larry Gallagher, Community Builder

..... 406-449-5040

[Lawrence Gallagher@hud.gov](mailto:Lawrence.Gallagher@hud.gov)

Faith Ballenger, Associate Community Builder

..... 406-449-5042

[Faith A. Sallenger6a@hud.gov](mailto:Faith.A.Sallenger6a@hud.gov)

Lyle Konkol, Associate Community Builder406-449-5050

[Lyle Konkol@hud.gov](mailto:Lyle.Konkol@hud.gov)

Federal Housing Administration 406-449-5046
7 West 6th Ave., Helena, MT 59601 406-449-5052 FAX
Don Smith, Marketing & Outreach Specialist
DonSmith@hud.gov

Montana Continuum of Care Coalition406-586-1572
3001 Westridge Drive, Bozeman, MT 59715 406-522-8232 FAX
Bob Buzzas, Director

Montana Migrant and Seasonal Farm workers Council, Inc 406-248-3149
3318 3rd Ave. N., Suite 100, Billings, MT 59101 406-245-6636 FAX
Maria Stephens, Executive Director

Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc406-761-5861
509 First Avenue South, Great Falls, MT 59401 406-761-5852 FAX
Shelia Rice, Executive Director
nhs@montana.com
www.nhscif.org

Rocky Mountain Development Council406-447-1680
201 South Last Chance Gulch, Helena, MT 59624 406-447-1629 FAX
Gene Leuwer, Executive Director
hrc@rmdc.mt.net
www.rmdc.net

Department of Public Health & Human Services
www.dphhs.state.mt.us

Intergovernmental Human Services Bureau406-447-4260
Emergency Shelter Grants Program/Weatherization/ 406-444-2547 FAX
Low Income Energy Assistance Program
1400 Carter Drive Helena, MT 59620

Department of Veterans Affairs 1-888-349-7541
VA Regional Loan Center
Box 25126, Denver, CO 80225
www.homeloans.va.gov

Issue: Natural Resources

Natural Resources can be broken down into two different categories: (1) political; and (2) a resource for recreation and tourism. Unfortunately in Mineral County and the entire western United States both categories are making national headlines and falling into the court system. Mineral County has more recreational opportunity than most other areas in Montana. Mineral County also has a huge amount of forestland that can be utilized as a resource, burned, or just left alone. On the positive side politically, it seems that the current administration wants to push the urban interface for fire protection and help with logging and forest stewardship. In order for Mineral County to have a political voice there needs to be a council put together with common goals. This group will need to find other like communities in Montana and the United States to create a bigger voice in Washington and Helena. Other rural areas will have to unite to save employment rural areas and work with their local congressional delegation.

Tourism is an industry that Mineral County can benefit from with hiking trails, hunting, fishing, biking, motorcycle riding and other activities. The problem that arises is finding what areas can be used for each recreational hobby. The natural resources of the area can help the tourism industry but the local population needs to figure out how to capitalize on it so the economy is not so seasonal. Mineral County needs to focus on the areas that they can improve on and have an impact to the local economy. The Hiawatha Trail, The Alberton Gorge, the endless mountain lakes and mountain peaks to climb are local attractions that can be marketed as destination areas. The Mineral County Chamber of Commerce has put together a great brochure about the County. That brochure is a great first step in the process.

With a lack of sustainable jobs and lawsuits over access to lands for both timber harvest and different types recreation, rural economies may be left with nothing but gas stations and hotels. There has to be happy medium that both sides can agree on or no one will win.

Resources:

CTAP/TOURSIM

Community Tourism Assessment Program

Montana Department of Commerce/Travel Montana manages the (CTAP) Community Tourism Assessment Program and the (TIIP) Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program. Both programs work with local entities to develop their Tourism industry.

CTAP communities in the area that have received funding are:

\$ 15,000 CTAP grant to Libby was awarded in April, 1996, the Libby Area Chamber of Commerce used its CTAP funds to convert a portion of a "new" city hall building into a meeting and convention facility.

2002 – 2003 – Eureka, St. Ignatius and Sanders County are the three communities participating in the CTAP process.

Resources for Natural Resource Issues:

Craig Rawlings
Montana Community Development Center
Small Wood Enterprise Agent
110 East Broadway, 2nd Floor
Missoula, MT 59802
406-728-9234 ext. 203
crawlings@mtcdc.org

Margie Ewing
Program Manager – Natural Resource Issues
F.S. State & Private Forestry
U.S.F.S. Region 1
P.O. Box 7669
Missoula, MT 59807
406-329-3539
mewing@fs.fed.us

Congressional List:

Name: **United States Senator – Max Baucus**
Contact Name: **Jim Foley, Chief of Staff**
Address: **211 North Higgins, Suite 102, Missoula, MT 59802**
Phone: **406.329.3123**
E-mail: **jim-foley@baucus.senate.gov**
Service Area: **Missoula, Ravalli, Mineral, and Sanders Counties**

Available Loan Programs: **N/A**

Information: **Work in special issue areas and are a liaison for the Senator. A Field Representative takes input on Legislative issues and keeps the Senator aware of what is happening in Montana. They perform casework helping constituents working with other government agencies working with issues such as energy, natural resources, and business, Social Security, Veteran's Affairs etc.**

Name: **United States Senator – Conrad Burns**
Contact Name: **Erin Ballas**
Address: **P.O. Box 7729 & Federal Building 200 E. Broadway, Missoula, MT 59807**
Phone: **406.329.3528**

E-mail: erin_ballas@burns.senate.gov & julie_altemus@burns.senate.gov

Service Area: **Missoula, Ravalli, Mineral, and Sanders Counties**

Available Loan Programs: **N/A**

Information: **Work in special issue areas and are a liaison for the Senator. A Field Representative takes input on Legislative issues and keeps the Senator aware of what is happening in Montana. They perform casework helping constituents working with other government agencies working with issues such as energy, environmental, labor, natural resources, business, health, Social Security etc.**

Name: **United States Congressman – Dennis Rehberg**

Contact Name: **Teri Dinnell, Keli McQuiston, & Tom Schultz**

Address: **200 East Broadway #104, Missoula, MT 59807**

Phone: **406.543.9550**

E-mail: teri.dinnell@mail.house.gov, keli.mcquiston@mail.house.gov, & tom.schultz@mail.house.gov

Information: **Work in special issue areas and are a liaison for the Congressman. The field offices take input on Legislative issues and keep the Congressman aware of what is happening in Montana. They perform casework helping constituents working with other government agencies working with issues such as energy, natural resources, business, transportation, banking, agriculture etc.**

Issue: Business Development

Business development is a challenge in Mineral County but the geographic location could be capitalized on. With I-90 and rail running through the center of the county transportation costs are low. Mineral County has the following assets for business development and business retention:

1. Fiber and T1 lines for technology based companies
2. I-90 and Montana Rail-Link
3. Scenery/Quality of living
4. Location between to large urban/population centers
5. Strong economic development volunteers

During the town meetings there were discussions about business recruitment and retention. Recruitment does cost a lot of money on a national scale, but there could be a focus on companies from Missoula and Spokane. Missoula's real-estate costs are soaring and this could benefit Mineral County. There could be opportunities for companies wanting to expand into Mineral County. These companies could be looking for a certain type of work force and work ethic. Retention is also very important for Mineral County. It is much easier to keep the

companies that are already in the area and to help them grow than to recruit new companies. There are probably companies in Mineral County that have potential or are selling a product or service out the area. Perhaps a business survey and local imitative should be put together on how some these local businesses can grow. A committee could be put together to focus each month on a different types of businesses such as manufacturing (value-added and light manufacturing), retail and service. This effort could help diversifying the community and the economy. Groups such as the County Community Foundation and the Small Business Development Centers do an excellent job assisting business looking for financing, marketing, and business development.

RESOURCES: BUSINESS & COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Montana Department of Commerce

P.O. Box 200501, Helena, MT 59620

Mark Simonich, Director www.commerce.state.mt.us

Board of Investments

P.O. Box 200126, Helena, MT 59620

Carroll South, Executive Director www.investmentmt.com

Business Resources Division

P.O. Box 200505, Helena, MT 59620 Andy Poole, Division Administrator

406-841-2707

406-841-2711 FAX

apoole@state.mt.us

Regional Development Bureau

P.O. Box 200505, Helena, MT 59620 Gary Morehouse, Bureau Chief

406-841-2732

406-841-2711 FAX

qmorehouse@state.mt-us

Trade & International Relations Bureau Montana

Department of Commerce

P.O. Box 200505, Helena, MT 59620

Mark Bisom, Bureau Chief

406-841-2752

406-841-2711 FAX

mbisom@state.mt.us

BUSINESS & COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

USDA Rural Development

Rural Business/Cooperative Service.

P.O. Box 850, Bozeman, MT 59771 John D.
Guthmiller, Program Director
www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt

406-585-2540
406-585-2565 FAX
John.Guthmiller@mt.usda.gov

Montana Department of Commerce

Made in Montana406-841-2756
Montana Department of Commerce 406-841-2711 FAX

P.O. Box 200505, Helena, MT 59620
Rebecca Baumann, Program Coordinator
www.madeinmontanausa.com

Micro Business Finance 406-841-2751
Montana Department of Commerce 406-841-2711 FAX

P.O. Box 200505, Helena, MT 59620
Janice Wannebo, Program Specialist

Small Business Administration406-441-1081
10 West 15th St., Suite 1100, Helena, MT 59626 406-441-1090 FAX
Michelle Johnston, District Director www.sba.gov/mt

Small Business Development Centers

www.sba.gov/mt/lmtsbdhc.html

Helena - Lead Office

Department of Commerce 406-841-2746
P.O. Box 200505, Helena, MT 59620 406-841-2711 FAX
Ann Desch, Bureau Chief
adesch@state.mt.us

Missoula

Montana Community Development Corporation 406-728-9234
103 East Main, Missoula, MT 59802 406-542-6671 FAX
Steve Grover, Director
mcdc@mtcdc.org

BUSINESS & COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

Cooperative Development Assistance

Mission Mountain Market 406-676-0676
A Project of Lake County Community Development Corporation 406-676-5902 FAX
P.O. Box 722, Ronan, MT 59864
Jan Tusick, Ag & Coop Development Specialist
www.mtmountainmarke

Montana Cooperative Development Center 406-265-3771
207 Brockmann Center, P.O. Box 7751, Havre, MT 59501 406-265-3776 FAX
Ty Duncan, Center Director mcdc@msun.edu
www.mcdc.coop

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economic Development Administration
John Rogers, Economic Development Representative
P.O. Box 578
Helena, MT 59620
406-449-5380
406-449-5381 FAX

Issue: Tourism and Town Character Appearance:

The issue of tourism has been previously stated (in the Natural Resources section) and is by far one of the top concerns for Mineral County. Tourism assets such as the Scenic Byway, Hiawatha Trail, and the Clark Fork River give Mineral County character. There is a lack of good signage to use these assets and there is not a visitor center on the east side of the County. The visitor center on the west end of the county is a great facility but its location is off the beaten path and probably gets missed by potential tourists.

As with anything a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis should be done to look at what Mineral County has for motels, campgrounds, boat launch sites, trail head signs, *etc.* The Montana Department of Commerce Promotions Division has a program called the Community Tourism Assessment Program (CTAP) to help an area figure out if tourism is right for them. There are also grants for brick and mortar structures related to tourism under the Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program and special event grant programs under the SEGP program.

Town Appearance:

With Tourism being a main theme, there needs to be a way to draw people off the interstate to shop in the towns. A town theme or character such as ones in the Whitefish downtown or in Bigfork let people stroll, shop, drink and eat. A town such as Superior and Alberton could use the historical theme with the current architecture. The river could also be utilized as a draw. The key is to advertise that theme and keep the advertising consistent with the theme. Travel Montana may be able to help and give ideas. There are planning grants available through the Montana Department of Commerce Business Resource Division. The grants are competitive but each town could use the funds for a feasibility study on what would work.

Resources:

Marketing and Training Assistance:

Community Assessment Tourism (CTAP mentioned above)

Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program - for brick and mortar projects related to tourism

Special Events Grants Program

This program will help market events or start new ones to have people come to the area.

Contact: Victor Bjornberg

406-841-2795

victor@visitmt.com

Planning Grant funds from the Montana Department of Commerce Business Resource Division

Contact: Eric Hanson

406-257-2259

erjhanson@centurytel.net

Listed here are Montana firms in advertising and public relations

Ad Scripts, Inc., Advertising & Public Relations

% Kathryn D. Hubbell, APR

Box 8168, 700 Simons Dr

Missoula, Mt 59807

406-728-4595

adscript@montana.com or www.adscript.com

Advantage One Marketing LLC

% Michael Utter, President

210 Cirque Dr.

Bozeman, Mt 59718

406-587-5779

michael@advantageone.com

Applied Communications
% Kathleen McMahon, President
2732 Evergreen
Great Falls, Mt 59406
406-452-9780
kmcmahon@initco.net or www.appcom.net

Marketing Works
% Leesa Nopper, President
3175 Fieldstone
Bozeman, Mt 59715
406-539-3499
lnopper@attglobal.net

Munson Consulting
% Vicki Munson, President
8505 East Shore Route
Polson, Mt 59860
406-887-2126
vmunson@cyberport.net

Ripple Marketing LLC
% Kitch Walker, President
Box 10221, 2245 West Koch, Suite C
Bozeman, Mt 59719
406-585-8168
kitch@ripplemarketing.com or www.ripplemarketing.com

Wendt Kochman
% Carl Kochman, President
615 2nd Ave. N.
Great Falls, Mt 59401
406-454-8500
ckachman@wedntkochman.com or www.wedntkochman.com

Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program

TIIP grant awards in the area:

2001 - \$ 30,000 Northwest Montana Historical Society / Central School Museum Timber Products Industry History Exhibit, Kalispell.

1999 - \$ 20,361 Friends of Savenac – Historic Savenac Nursery Infrastructure Restoration, Haugan.

Cultural Tourism Corridors, then you should contact Mark Martin, Missoula Cultural Council, 721-9602 or mcc@bigsky.net

Issue: Community as a Whole

1. Communication – This was a problem countywide, with local groups and government agencies local, state, and federal. With the lack of communication, frustration was predominant in all the town meetings. In order to have better communication there has to be strong leadership with a core group of people who will get all vested parties involved depending on the issue. MSU has a leadership program and can help facilitate some of the communication problems.
2. No Sense of Community – St. Regis and Alberton seemed to lack a sense of community, from what people stated in the town meetings. However, in Superior there seemed to be a strong sense of community.

In order for Mineral County to grow communication and a sense of community must be created.

3. Youth Activities – in every town meeting there was a worry that there was not enough to do for the younger crowd. Assuming that the younger crowd means middle school and high school, this is the hardest group to find activities. Are there after school clubs ranging from an outdoor recreation club to a chess club? Are there active church youth groups? Are there after school real business intern programs with local businesses within the county?

Not really knowing what is already in place, it makes it difficult to give any ideas to the community. In every small town kids complain about not having anything to do.

4. Transportation/Medical – This issue centered more on the elderly population and the bus schedule. The hospital had staff turnover with nurses, but this is a national problem. Based on the population size, the medical facilities are more than adequate and an asset to the local community. If the hospital needs help with compliance issues there are many federal programs through HUD and Rural Development that may help.

Resources:

Individual communities have also set up Leadership training through their Chambers to address local issues. Contact the Chambers in Missoula, Great Falls and Billings to learn more about their programs. Set up a steering committee that puts together a community leadership-training program for the community that would be open to anyone within driving distance.

Montana Leadership Development Association can be contacted at:

MLDA
% Henry Nagamori, President
Box 146
Loma, Mt 59460
406-622-5356

MLDA
% Gloria Gregg, Executive Secretary
250 Reid Hall, MSU-Bozeman
Bozeman, Mt 59717

End of report...

Attachment: A1 – Financial Assistance Programs Funding Water, Wastewater, and Solid Waster Projects in Montana

Attachment: A2 - Northwest Montana Area Economic Development Agencies

As a group we appreciated the hospitality of the people from Mineral County and hope that some of the above ideas can be implemented. These issues cannot be fixed overnight but are challenges for the long run and future of Mineral County. Just restating the issues are not going to help the County but following-up on the progress and demonstrating a solution to the problem can. If there are any questions please feel free to contact any one of the RTA members.

Eric Hanson – 257-2259
Tracey Jette – 265-4945
Steve Grover – 728-9234
Gloria O'Rourke – 563-5259
Myrt Webb – 892- 4684

Mineral County Resource Team Assessment Report

Report by:
Tracey Jette, Director
Small Business Development Center
Bear Paw Development Corporation
PO Box 170, 48 Second Ave, Suite 202
Havre, Montana 59501
(406) 265-4945
tjette@bearpaw.org
www.bearpaw.org

I would like to begin by thanking Mineral County for your hospitality and generosity during my visit. This was the first time that I have had the opportunity to spend any time in your community. I was immediately struck by the passion that residents of all areas of the county have about their particular location and the firm vision that you have for your communities.

I am more than willing to assist your communities in any way that I can, to help you achieve the goals you have set and look forward to the opportunity to spend some time exploring the sites that we only had time to pass by during our assessment.

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY

Issue: County-Wide Communication

Recommendation:

In my opinion, one of the first things to be implemented in Mineral County is to establish local committees to address the needs of each section of the county. These local committees can serve as the local point of contact for all of the projects suggested in the remainder of my report.

County-wide communication was a subject that came to light at every listening session that was held. As we learned during our two day visit, Mineral County has three distinct “sections” that each have their own unique issues to address. There is a strong sense of community that can be built upon by establishing a core group of individuals (Community Development Committee) in each area that will be the driving force on issues specific to their area. While this needs to be a locally driven effort, it may be more practical for a county-wide organization such as the Chamber of Commerce or the Development Organization to coordinate these meetings. Committee members should include representatives of local government, businesses, tourism, health care, education and youth.

There are also some common threads that run through all of the communities that can be addressed on a county-wide basis. The local groups should gather as a county-wide group at least quarterly to work on those topics that are issues for the entire county as well as discussing projects that each area is working on.

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY

Issue: Local Capacity

Recommendation:

It is essential that there be one point of contact on economic development issues in the county. This organization will be the initial point of contact for business relocation requests, grant opportunities, business expansion strategies, community planning and general community development. The organization needs to be staffed by a full-time paid employee, not volunteer and not part-time. Understand that in making this commitment you will have to allocate local funding for the operation of the organization. No state or federal funding is available to support the operational expenses of such an organization.

An example of such an organization is PhillCo Economic Growth Council in Malta.

Anne Boothe, Executive Director

(406) 654-1776

phillco@ttc-cmc.net

Resources:

Heartland Center

info@heartlandcenter.info

www.heartlandcenter.info

941 "O" Street, Suite 920

Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

(800) 927-1115

The Heartland Center for Leadership Development is an independent, nonprofit organization developing local leadership that responds to the challenges of the future. Activities focus on leadership training, citizen participation, community planning, facilitation, evaluation, and curriculum development. Programs and publications stress the critical role played by local leadership as communities and organizations build capacity for sustainable development. Each year the Heartland Center works with people from approximately 300 communities, and is recognized internationally as an innovator of creative strategies for community revitalization.

Annual Northwest Economic Development Games

<http://www.oted.wa.gov/ed/cea/education/>

A weeklong course for those new in economic development. This course will teach you the basics; experts and professionals are brought in to share their knowledge with the students. Also, it's taught in a

very fun environment, never a dull moment!

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY

Issue: Beautification

Recommendation:

A simple program such as “A Day of Caring” or “Community Beautification Day” could be established and coordinated by a committee of members of the Chamber of Commerce. Teams of individuals can be assigned to different sections of the community to pick up litter or complete a beautification project. Trash bins can be strategically placed in three or four locations. In Havre, our organizing committee provides a coupon, to be used at a local business, for every bag of trash that is brought to a trash bin site. There is also a community barbeque held for all of the participants.

Resource:

Kim Cripps, Committee chair
Havre Montana Realty
302 – 4th Street
Havre, MT 59501
(406) 265-4353

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY

Issue: Activities for Youth

Recommendation:

Youth activities were another topic that was repeated at nearly every listening session. One idea would be to develop a program such as Leadership High School (LHS). LHS is a leadership/educational program designed for incoming high school juniors to develop their leadership skills, and provide an opportunity to learn first hand about the importance of being involved in their community, how their community operates and an appreciation for what businesses, organizations and individuals, through volunteering, contribute to their communities.

This program has been established in both Havre and Great Falls and is coordinated by their respective Chambers of Commerce in cooperation with the local school system.

For further details contact:

Debbie Vandenberg, Executive Director
Havre Area Chamber of Commerce
518 First Street
Havre, MT 59501
(406) 265-4348
www.havremt.com

A second idea might be to establish a Boys & Girls Club or youth center where students can go after school and during the summer months.

In every community, boys and girls are left to find their own recreation and companionship in the streets. An increasing number of children are at home with no adult care or supervision. Young people need to know that someone cares about them. Boys & Girls Clubs offer that and more. Club programs and services promote and enhance the development of boys and girls by instilling a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging and influence. Boys & Girls Clubs are a safe place to learn and grow -- all while having fun. It is truly The Positive Place For Kids.

www.bgca.org

Resources:

Youth in Action/Community Service Grant support ongoing community service programs or to stimulate new and creative youth-led community service programs.

<http://www.grants.n4h.org>

Youth Development, Education, and Social Entrepreneurship Program Grants The foundation's goal is to empower poor and at-risk youth to become productive citizens, and looks primarily to preventative programs to accomplish this goal.

<http://www.jenesis.org>

NYDIC, The National Youth Development Information Center, is a project of the The National Assembly through its affinity group, the National Collaboration for Youth. NYDIC provides practice-related information about youth development to national and local youth-serving organizations at low cost or no cost. Youth grant opportunities can be found at <http://www.nydic.org/nydic/funding.html>

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Issue: Retention vs. Attraction

Recommendations:

Business recruitment is an expensive and time-consuming undertaking. One way to do business recruitment is to target former residents of Mineral County who have relocated out of state. There are a number of Montanans who have moved out of state to find better employment opportunities and are seeking a way to move back to Montana. One resource that is available to you is the Come Home Montana project of the Montana Jobs Network. Visitors to the site can view a list of community Assets, Challenges, and their Vision for the future to assist them in making a decision to return to their community, start a business or participate in an existing Montana business or organization. Visit <http://www.comehomemontana.org>.

I would also suggest that you focus on the talents and opportunities that already exist in your area. Growing and sustaining multiple small businesses will produce a greater return on your investment as well as diversifying your economy. There are a multitude of services available through Steve Grover at

the Small Business Development Center in Missoula as well as Eric Hanson the Montana Department of Commerce's Regional Development Officer for Northwest Montana.

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Issue: Tourism

Recommendations:

Mineral County is rich in tourism and recreational opportunities. The Hiawatha Trail is one project that is currently in development and may need further community support. It is important for there to be one point of contact for the project that will develop leads and drive the process.

A second project is the development of a Scenic Byway that will attract travelers off of I-90 and on to the back roads of the county. Further information can be found at

<http://www.byways.org/community/program>.

Signage – State and Federal regulation for the placement of signs along Montana's roads and highways are based on the Highway Beautification Act of 1965. This act prohibits the placement of "promotional" signage on rural highways. Promotional is defined as signage that promotes a business. In my preliminary research, I think that Mineral County and each of the communities would be able to erect signage that indicates tourist attractions. Contact Pat Hurley at the Montana Department of Transportation for more clarification on this issue phurley@state.mt.us.

Resources:

<http://www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/OURPROGRAMS/TourismDevEd.htm>

Travel Montana's Community Tourism Assessment Program (CTAP) is designed to help communities interested in tourism as an economic and/or social improvement tool to analyze and develop an appropriate plan of action. CTAP is a community "self help" program provided as a cooperative project of MSU Extension, Travel Montana, and UM's University Travel Research Program. Each year, three rural communities are accepted into the nine-month program through a competitive application process.

The Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program (TIIP) invests a portion of Travel Montana's "bed tax" funding into new tourism-related infrastructure products, the enhancement of existing tourism facilities, and the preservation of Montana's historical and cultural treasures.

The purpose of the Special Events Grant Program (SEGP) is to create and sustain economic development through the creation and/or substantial enhancement of an annual, on-going event.

Travel Montana's SUPERHOST Program provides affordable customer service training education to managers and front-line employees of businesses and organizations across Montana.

MINERAL COUNTY RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

Report by:

Myrt Webb

Real World Development

POB 2925 Columbia Falls, MT 59912

406.892.4684

myrtwebb@centurytel.net

MAIN ISSUE: LAND USE

General:

A county has several key components. There are the people that inhabit and visit; things, like buildings and vehicles; and the land area within the county's political boundaries. People and things change, sometimes rapidly and in unexpected directions. The land area does not. The 1222 square miles that encompass Mineral County, the mountains and rivers within that area will remain constant. How this area is used and managed has a very significant effect on the people and things that comprise the economic activity of the region.

In the past land use management has not been an important issue. The county is large in relation to its population even considering that 85% of the area is under the control of the US Forest Service. Until recently the county has been relatively isolated from large population centers that might use the county as a bedroom community. This situation is changing. The rapid growth of Missoula and Coeur d' Alene, together with the construction of I90, has put the county in the path of future rapid population growth.

The citizens can feel the pressure building. They are concerned that unmanaged growth will end the essential character of Mineral County that they value and want to preserve for the future. It is possible to accommodate growth and keep the essential character of the county intact. But, it cannot be done without appropriate land use policies that must be completed before the pressure of growth increases. Once rapid growth starts the ability to enact suitable land use policies is greatly curtailed.

Good businesses, the kind that create well paying jobs and benefits, are attracted to communities that know how they want to develop and have enacted the appropriate land use measures.

Issue: Lack of Private Land

The county has a relatively small amount of private land for development. A reasonable estimate would be that only 10% of the county's total land area is private. While the amount of private land is limited so is the population. The county has a population of less than 4000 and a workforce of less than 2000. An employer who created only 50 family wage jobs would have an important positive effect on the local economy. Ten percent of the county's land area, 122 square miles, may not seem very significant but it is large enough to hold over 300 towns the size of Superior.

Recommendation:

Do not use the small amount of private land as a reason for the area's slow economy.

Issue: County Growth Plan

The county has started the process to complete a growth plan. This plan, which takes the place of former master plans, is intended to give general guidance on how the county will develop its private land space. It is important that the plan include input from all sectors of the population and provide enough guidance to form the basis for enforceable land use policies.

Recommendations:

- Use a mail survey to gain input from all interested residents.
- Once the main issues are determined, conduct an information campaign to educate the residents.
- Conduct public meetings to gather further information before the first draft is complete.
- Insure the plan meets state requirements.

Recommended Resources:

<http://www.sustainable.doe.gov/landuse/luintro.shtml>
<http://www.planning.org/growingsmart/pdf/montana.pdf>
<http://www.keysurvey.com/?source=adwords>
<http://co.ravalli.mt.us/growth/section51.htm>

Issue: What Should be Enforceable?

A growth policy must lead to enforceable standards that have the support of the community. It is critical that the standards emphasize the protection of public infrastructure, especially roads, and the preservation of sensitive areas. Density standards for housing, rather than minimum lot size, will encourage the preservation of open space and utilize public infrastructure more efficiently.

Recommendations:

Insure that the initial land use standards have the following:

- Setbacks to public rights of way
- Access to public roads
- Setbacks to key public facilities (water/sewer plants, airports)
- Setbacks to sensitive areas (rivers/streams, lakes)
- Density standards for residential growth

Recommended Resources:

http://www.rdc.bc.ca/planning/bylaws/1460/Bylaw_1460_Part8.pdf

<http://www.co.ouray.co.us/landuse/landusecode02.htm>

Issue: How can Land Use Standards be Developed?

There are many ways to develop land use standards. The most often used method is to complete county wide zoning. Another method, popular in Montana, is to use neighborhood plans that develop standards for separate areas. A typical neighborhood plan would include:

- A land use history of the neighborhood area
- A map and description of the present land use
- Important public services in the neighborhood area
- Costs (taxes) used to support public services
- Future land use
- How the neighborhood plan will guide future growth

Recommendation:

Use neighborhood plans, consistent with the county growth policy, to guide future land use.

Recommended Resources:

Copies of example neighborhood plans are available for purchase at the Flathead County Planning Office (406.751.8200).

<http://co.ravalli.mt.us/growth/section51.htm>

Issue: What Additional Resources do we Need?

Land use policy, and the implantation of that policy, is a complex process with far reaching effects and many times not reversible. New growth often means new infrastructure and/or the increased use of present facilities. The county's decision makers and interested citizens need expert technical advice that represents the public interest.

Recommendation:

- Form a county GIS capability. Effective land use policy is not possible without accurate, up to date maps and databases.
- Hire a county engineer to provide technical advice concerning the effect growth has on infrastructure. The county engineer should offer assistance to all public entities in the county. To prevent a conflict of interest, it is important that this person not be involved with any projects in the county.

Recommend Resources:

<http://www.engcen.com/>

<http://www.the-office.com/engineers/eng-mt.htm>

<http://www.gis.com/>

<http://www.geo.ed.ac.uk/agidict/welcome.html>

MAIN ISSUE: LAW ENFORCEMENT

In a recent talk at Northwestern University's Institute for Policy Research, John McKnight stated "...most superintendents of police departments now emphasize the importance of local citizen organizations, block watches, and community policing. They are clear that the police and the criminal justice system are extremely limited, at best, in their capacity to deliver safety, security..." More simply put; there is unlikely to be enough police to give citizen's the security they would like to have. This certainly applies to Mineral County. The county has limited funds to support a small number of officers in a relatively large area. In addition, the county sheriff provides the only county law enforcement since the cities contract with the sheriff. The answer to the citizen's concern about community safety is not more officers, because there can never be enough.

Mineral County has a critical section of homeland infrastructure that is important to the entire nation- Interstate 90(I90). While the sheriff's department has identified possible targets that might be attacked on I90, it is important that the entire county be able to react effectively if something unexpected happens.

The efficiency of a county's law enforcement efforts, the security of it communities and the general preparedness for unforeseen events are an important matters to many businesses.

Issue: Lack of Sheriff Presence in the Community

The best security for an area is an alert citizenry that is intolerant of crime. Citizen's, who know and assist each other, notice quickly when something is not right and may indicate criminal activity. Community policing techniques, such block watch, are designed to give better overall security to neighborhoods and make the police more effective by giving law enforcement accurate and timely information. The history of community policing efforts show clearly that they work. For community policing to be effective it needs the support and active participation of the county sheriff.

Recommendation:

Start community policing programs in county areas where citizens indicate a desire for more security.

Recommended Resources:

- <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/>
- <http://www.policing.com/>
- <http://www.concentric.net/~dwoods/>

Issue: Emergency Preparedness

It is important that the county be able to react effectively to unforeseen events and emergencies that have become more and more likely in today’s world. This preparedness involves much more than just police and fire agencies. It also includes community employees who operate critical infrastructure, the forest service and private utility agencies such as telephone and power.

Recommendation:

Activate and exercise the county EOC at least twice a year. Insure that key communication nets are fully worked out.

Recommend Resources:

- http://www.csulb.edu/misc/epi/Emergency_Operations_Plan/Emergency%20Operations/eoc.htm
- <http://www.davislogic.com/command.htm>
- <http://www.emergency-planning.com/>

MAIN ISSUE: COMMUNITY

Issue: Community Appearance

Several comments were made concerning the unattractive appearance of properties in the community. Uncut weeds, trash, junk cars were all examples of conditions that degraded the appearance of the community’s neighborhoods.

Recommendations:

Enact decay ordinances. A properly drafted decay ordinance will enable the local government to correct the conditions and bill the land owner for the costs.

Incorporated communities are better able to pass and enforce decay ordinances. The St Regis area needs to consider incorporation if they want to improve the appearance of their community.

Recommended Resources:

http://www.co.missoula.mt.us/EnvHealth/Community%20Decay/resolution_no.htm
<http://data.opi.state.mt.us/bills/mca/7/5/7-5-2111.htm>
http://data.opi.state.mt.us/bills/mca_toc/7.htm

Issue: Traumatic Death Rate

The examination of recent health statistics, reveal that the county has a very high death rate due to traumatic injury. The traumatic death rate for the state is 63.7 per 100,000 residents. For Mineral County it is 105.3. This may adversely affect insurance rates for businesses.

Recommendation:

In partnership with county health providers, conduct a survey to determine the primary sources of this adverse situation. Once the source(s) are determined, create a public health program to reduce the hazards causing the deaths.

Recommended Resources:

<http://www.dphhs.state.mt.us/hpsd/pubheal/healplan/profiles/mineral.pdf>
<http://www.dphhs.state.mt.us/>

MAIN ISSUE: EDUCATION

Issue: Day Care Availability

Businesses are interested in the educational resources of a community from day care through post graduate university studies. During the session in Alberton a comment was made concerning the lack of day care for pre school children.

Recommendation:

The county should do a survey of day care facilities to determine if the lack of affordable daycare is an issue with young families.

Recommended Resources:

<http://www.daycareproviders.com/>
<http://www.daycarestarterkit.com/adw1.php>

MAIN ISSUE: HOUSING

General:

During the listening sessions the lack of housing was a consistent issue. While some housing is available to purchase, good quality rentals are in very short supply. The quality of housing was also an issue. In many cases young professionals, such as new teachers, are forced to live in substandard isolated “trailer houses.” When new housing is created, it is often a manufactured home using a well and septic tank.

Mineral County is likely to see increasing population pressure in the next 5-10 years. It is uncertain if this pressure will come from relatively affluent households seeking second homes or lower income households from nearby areas like Flathead and Ravalli seeking lower living costs.

The 2000 Census shows that Mineral County is a “net outflow” area. There are more people who work in the county but live outside the county than the opposite. When people work in one place and live in another the likelihood is that a lot of the income they earn in one county is spent in the county in which they reside. This situation may indicate that many of the people who reside in other counties, but work in Mineral County, may choose to reside in Mineral County if adequate housing were available. This would decrease the outflow of income to outside areas and improve the business of local firms that provide goods and services. A good example of what may be possible is with the contract nurses employed by the county hospital at Superior. Presently this hospital contracts 60% of its nursing staff. Nurses are paid better than the county average and presently most of this income is spent outside the county. If good housing were available some of these well paid professionals may choose to live and spend more of their income in Mineral County.

During a brief “windshield” survey of several county neighborhoods I identified 30% of the housing as having visible defects. This is well above the average for most communities(10%) that I have surveyed.

Housing and land use policy are closely related. Appropriate land use policy can encourage the construction of good quality housing near population centers that have services. This will preserve the county’s open space and save public resources that might be spent on supporting isolated development.

Good housing and attractive neighborhoods are important criteria for any business that desires to locate or expand in the county.

Issue: Housing Needs

The first step in improving the county’s housing is to determine what type of housing is required. There are several general types from public supported high-density apartments to market rate low-density single family dwellings. It is important to determine what segment of the population needs what type of housing.

Recommendation:

Complete a housing needs survey that includes residents and employees in the county. The survey should be comprehensive and include the wants of elderly and disabled citizens.

Recommended Resources:

- http://commerce.state.mt.us/Housing/Hous_Home.html
- http://www.commerce.state.mt.us/CDD/CDD_Pubs_ComNeeds.html
- http://www.ci.great-falls.mt.us/people_offices/cdev/cdbg/housingneeds.pdf

Issue: Housing Assistance

Once a community determines its housing needs, assistance in planning and constructing the housing is available.

Recommendation:

When the needs survey is complete, a housing plan should be completed. The housing plan will provide the basis for obtaining financial assistance to build the affordable housing needed by the county.

Recommended Resources:

- http://commerce.state.mt.us/CDD/CDD_Home.html
- http://www.commerce.state.mt.us/Housing/Hous_Prog_BHB.html

Issue: Housing Quality

If the quality of county housing is substandard this can have a significant detrimental effect on new business that needs employees to move to the area.

Recommendation:

A survey of housing quality should be conducted by trained observers who frequent neighborhoods. Meter readers and similar workers can be quickly trained to rate housing conditions without disturbing residents.

If the quality of county housing is substandard, the creation of a county building code program should be considered. Building inspection programs are self-supporting and will not adversely affect present local government budgets.

Recommend Resources:

- <http://www.schmoke.com/statecode.htm>
- http://www.ibhs.org/building_codes/commercial_bldg_codes.asp?state=20

MAIN ISSUE: NATURAL RESOURCES

Issue: Alternate Uses

Tricon Timber, Inc is considering the use of biomass to fuel power generation. This would provide reliable power for the mill and an alternate revenue source as unused power could be sold back to the power grid. Power generation equipment has very high initial capital costs. It is unlikely that Tricon can install biomass generation equipment without public financial support.

Biomass power generation can use the slash from logging that is now unused or burned.

Recommendation:

If requested, assist Tricon with gaining the financial support needed to install biomass power generation equipment.

Recommended Resources:

Biomass Fuel Power Plant Feasibility Study(December 2001), available from the Flathead County Economic Development Authority(406.257.7711).

<http://www.metla.fi/julkaisut/index-en.htm>

<http://www.finbioenergy.fi/benet/english/Default.htm>

MAIN ISSUE: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Issue: Retention vs. Attraction

Mineral County has had some significant changes to its workforce and the way residents earn income. Census data shows that during the period 1970-2000 wage and salary income fell 7% while proprietor income rose 7%. During the period 1990-2000 35 new firms were formed in the county. Of these new firms, 27 had employees of 4 or less. It is apparent that as the large resource dependent firms closed and laid off employees many of those employees stayed in the area and survived by starting local small businesses. The entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in Mineral County and needs to be supported and encouraged as this spirit is the best hope for future job growth. Businesses that have been started in the county are much more likely to stay and create more jobs than a business that has been recruited.

Recommendation:

Provide assistance in providing low interest loans for new or expanding local business. If the community does not have a revolving loan fund, establish one.

Provide training in business planning, finance and management for residents starting new businesses.

Recommended Resources:

<http://www.seda.sk.ca/pres/BRE.ppt>
http://wdnonline.org/why_washington/busRetExpan.htm
<http://www.mtfinanceonline.com/rlf.html>
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/dma/16.html>

Issue: Marketing Tourist Attractions

Mineral County has two destination quality tourist attractions: the Alberton Gorge for river recreation and the Hiawatha Trail for bicyclists. Both of these resources will attract affluent users who may be the source of new businesses and jobs.

Recommendations:

The Mineral County Chamber of Commerce has developed an excellent brochure that highlights the recreational assets of the area. This brochure needs to be the basis for a county tourism website.

Complete a brochure that emphasizes the positive business environment of the county. Link this brochure with the tourism website and make it available at accommodation and food service establishments frequented by affluent visitors.

Recommend Resources:

<http://www.developreneurs.com/all/MT/Missoula.html>
<http://travelmontana.state.mt.us/>

For state resources contact Victor Bjornberg(Dept of Commerce)
vbjornberg@state.mt.us

Report by:
Steve Grover
Director, Small Business Development Center
Montana Community Development Corporation
110 East Broadway, 2nd Floor
Missoula, MT 59802
sgrover@mtcdc.org
www.mtcddc.org

MAIN TOPIC: LAND USE

Issue: Smart growth on 8% of land

Growth was a major concern at all of the listening sessions. Mineral County has a unique opportunity with vast natural resources, “scenery”, and a rural lifestyle that is just in the process of being discovered.

Recommendations:

It is critical that the citizens of Mineral County take a proactive approach to their land-use planning immediately. The window of opportunity for the current residents to have a say in “how and what” is developed is very narrow. They must balance their desire to “protect what is theirs” with the need to stimulate economic growth in the county. There is plenty of land available to allow sustainable development if it is handled appropriately. The majority of the land in the county is not likely to be developed because of the government ownership. This should be considered an advantage for two reasons: First, it allows the planning to be focused on the relatively small amount of property that is available to be developed (they do not have to try and manage the entire land mass); second, the reality that the majority of the land will not be developed allows the county to be more proactive in allowing development on the property that is available.

Resources:

1. The fact that Myrt Webb was on the assessment team is a “huge” advantage. He is a great resource – use him.
2. Research areas with similar land ownership percentages in other parts of the Northwest or US and see what they have done. Take advantage of what has been done well, avoid what didn’t work.
 - a. <http://www.landdevelopmenttoday.com/>
 - b. <http://www.smartgrowth.org/library/ldrlist.asp?res=1280>
 - c. <http://www.sosnc.org/development/>

MAIN TOPIC: LAW ENFORCEMENT

Issue: Budget / Funding

Lack of visible law enforcement was another major concern voiced across the county. Law enforcement appears to be understaffed, under-trained, and lacks adequate funding.

Recommendations:

The county needs to look at how law enforcement is currently funded and find ways to increase the funding. Take advantage of the fact that the citizens are concerned about this issue and may be willing to support specific tax-funding for law enforcement. Make sure there is very clear communication regarding how the additional funding will be used and make sure results are achieved and communicated. Set realistic expectations with the citizens regarding the level of law enforcement that can be provided in relation to the amount of funding they are willing to support.

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY

Issue: County-wide communication/Government Agencies/Leadership

Mineral County is a long, narrow county with the “metropolitan” issues of being next to Missoula on the East end, the “Rural” issues of the West end, and the problem of the two main communities, Superior and St. Regis, sitting in the middle.

Recommendations:

There appears to be a need for strong leadership and consensus-building at the county level. The East end is going to have to come to grips with being Missoula’s neighbor and figure out how to build a mutually-beneficial relationship. The West end is Idaho’s neighbor and needs to nurture that relationship. However, this dichotomy does not have to divide the county. Acceptance that the issues at each end of the county affect the entire county is critical, they can’t just be the “other” guys problem. “The people” were mentioned as one of the best assets at every listening session, and we met many proactive, hard-working, positive people everywhere we went. The county leadership needs to take the initiative to pull together these people who are willing to focus on the positive possibilities for the county and take action. It appears there have been several “studies” conducted (Overall Economic Development Plan, 1993, Consulting Analysis Prepared for the Mineral County Chamber of Commerce, 2002, etc.) The reports I read appeared to have good ideas, many of which were talked about as “potential” projects during our assessment. “Someone” needs to take these ideas that have community support and move them forward.

MAIN TOPIC: EDUCATION

Issue: Basic (k-12)

The high schools are some of the nicer facilities I have seen for rural communities. We did not hear any specific issues with the k-8 grade, other than possible difficulties retaining teachers. There did appear to be issues with the lack of variety of course offerings and lack of teacher retention at the high school level.

Recommendation

Mineral County is suffering economically and there are not any quick fixes that are going to change that in the near future. During tough economic times, tough decisions have to be made. There are many valid arguments against school consolidation. However, it appears the school programs at the high school level are suffering as a result of trying to keep three high schools open for a small and declining population. The county may want to focus the funding and resources on the one location that can be

fully utilized. Location, adequate space, and condition of facilities should all be taken into consideration in making this selection. One of the major objections voiced against consolidation would be the loss of “competition” and community spirit. The quality of the students education needs to be the priority. Perhaps less rivalry between the communities is one thing that could move the county as a whole toward working together. Perhaps one of the existing buildings could be used as the business incubator site that was another need identified for the county.

Resources

Other communities/counties have had to address the issue of consolidation. Find out if any have done it well and borrow from their experience.

<http://gateway.library.uiuc.edu/schoolreform/sconsol.htm>

http://www.ericfacility.net/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed384484.html

<http://www.ruraledu.org>

Issue: Continuing/Adult/Business Education

More opportunities for Continuing Education and specifically business education were another need that came up several times.

Recommendation

Mineral County has excellent facilities available for continuing education, including computer labs with high speed internet access and A/V equipment for distance learning programs. It appears the county has been very successful at raising money for educational equipment. Now the focus needs to be on finding programs, which will allow the equipment to be fully utilized. Both public and private training resources in Missoula should be pursued to determine what programs they may be willing to offer either live on-site in the community or via A/V links. The Small Business Development Center is also very interested in providing business training in the county.

Resources

University of Montana Continuing Education – Sharon Alexander, Dean – (406) 243-2900

<http://www.umt.edu/casserv/nwa2000/st%5Ffinal/st2%5F981.htm>

Dickinson Lifelong Learning Center – (406) 549-8765

<http://www.montana.com/dllc/>

MCDC Small Business Development Center – Steve Grover – (406) 728-9234 ext 206

<http://www.mtcdc.org/sbdc.html>

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Issue: Lack of Sustainable Jobs/Diversification/Retention vs. Attraction/Value Added/Light Manufacturing

Recommendation

Decisions regarding issues discussed above including land use, communication/leadership, and education all have a major impact on the ability to retain good businesses as well as attracting new ones. Existing businesses need to know they are important to the community and have their support or they will look for opportunities to move on. If new businesses are going to be pursued, include the existing

businesses in the process – look to bring in new businesses, which provide growth opportunities for the existing businesses as well. The current trends in forest management indicate there will be an abundant timber supply for the local mill, but some adaptation is going to be necessary to utilize the supply. Tricon appears to be proactive in pursuing methods to take advantage of these opportunities. One phase for business recruitment needs to be focused on looking at industries/businesses that will complement the changes under consideration at Tricon.

Missoula is not a business-friendly community, especially to the manufacturing and “traditional” industries. Look for opportunities to recruit businesses in these industries to move to Mineral County. You do not have to become a “bedroom” community for Missoula – bring the businesses to Mineral County.

Mineral County also has the majority of the resources that high-tech companies are looking for – reasonable access to transportation relative to the “quality of life” factors available, high-speed internet access (may need to be improved but the “pipe” is there), premium access to recreational opportunities, local basic health care available with major medical within a reasonable distance, close proximity to a university community, etc. Facilities may be a negative factor currently, but one of the high schools could be a major facility if consolidation occurs.

Resources:

First, I would like to offer the services of the Small Business Development Center. I have a sincere interest in helping Mineral County develop the business opportunities with currently exist as well as searching for new opportunities to bring to the area.

Second, here are some of the websites I refer to a lot.

<http://bizmt.com/bizassist/locate.asp>

http://commerce.state.mt.us/BRD/BRD_Home.html

<http://www.business.umt.edu/busresources/businesslinks/>

<http://www.business.gov/busadv/maincat.cfm?catid=18>

Report by:
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118 E. Seventh St.; Suite 2A
Anaconda, MT 59711
Ph: 406.563.5259 Fx: 406.563.5476
Email: gloria@medamembers.org
Web: <http://www.medamembers.org>

Eric, Tracey, Myrt and Steve did a terrific job thoroughly covering the Main Issues that the people of Mineral County shared during our team Listening Sessions. I have only a few resources to add.

Overall:

Montana USDA/Rural Development has basically every program available to build a community from the ground up. The mission of USDA/RD is to "Improve the Quality of Life for Rural Montana". Contact Brenda Sorensen at 406.585.2580 and she will direct your call.

The web site for all of the programs available is www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt . The programs available include:

Business Programs

Business & Industry Guaranteed Loan Program (B&I)
Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program (RBEG)
Rural Business Opportunity Grant Program (RBOG)
Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant Program (REDLG)
Business Intermediary Relending Program (IRP)

Cooperative Programs

Rural Cooperative Development Grant Program (RCDG)
Cooperative Stock Purchase Program
Cooperative Services Technical Assistance

Single Family Housing Programs

Guaranteed Loan Program
502 Direct Loan Program
504 Home Improvement Loan and Grant Program

Multi Family Housing Programs

515 Direct Loan Program
538 Guaranteed Loan Program
533 Housing Preservation Grant Program
514/516 Farm Labor Housing Loan & Grant Program
Mutual Self-Help Housing Technical Assistance Grant Program

Community Facilities Programs

Guaranteed Loan Program

Direct Loan and Grant Program

Utilities Programs

Water & Environmental Programs

Distance Learning & Telemedicine Programs

MAIN ISSUE: LAW ENFORCEMENT

As county resources and staff are currently stretched to meet community needs, it is time for the people of Mineral County to do what they can to improve law enforcement efforts.

Recommendation:

Begin a two-fold effort to reduce crime and improve safety in Mineral County communities. Chances are you have heard of these resources before – Crimestoppers and Neighborhood Watch.

The Crimestoppers program involves three groups: communities, media and police.

Community: Citizens are responsible for forming a Crime Stoppers non-profit corporation, whose directors establish policy, determine amount and method of reward payments, work closely with the police and the media and generally oversee the program. The directors are also responsible for fund raising, and all volunteer service. Tax money is not sought.

Media: Crime Stoppers methods, objectives, successes and phone numbers are publicized on a regular basis by the media. An unsolved "Crime of the Week" is given special treatment with details published in newspapers, on radio and in certain cases a re-enactment on television.

Police: A special Crime Stoppers phone with a well publicized number is provided to the community. Callers are assigned a special Code number and NEVER give their names. If, after the investigation, the information leads to an arrest, the caller is entitled to a reward.

For over 30 years, the Neighborhood Watch Program has provided Americans a unique safety infrastructure that brings together local officials, law enforcement and citizens for the protection of communities.

The Neighborhood Watch program is a favorite of mine – I was the block coordinator for our neighborhood when I lived in Billings. I can attest to the fact that once the program is set up in a neighborhood, it works!

Resources:

Complete information on how to begin a Crimestopper program is: <http://www.c-s-i.org/index2.html>

All you need to know about beginning a Neighborhood Watch program is found at:

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

MAIN ISSUE: COMMUNITY

Issue: Sense of Community and Volunteerism

Recommendation:

One way to develop a better sense of community is to encourage volunteers to step up and become involved in community projects. Do use the Volunteer Survey Information Sheets that were collected during the assessment to tap shoulders and ASK for assistance. More often than not, people would volunteer – but they have not been asked.

Another important issue is to encourage the volunteers you currently have:

1. Ask first if they'd like to be publicly acknowledged, then include them in an event
2. Send a letter to their supervisor at work...tell the manager how much you appreciate their hard work and special qualities.
3. Write an article in your newsletter
4. Have a board or staff member call them to advise them of how much they are appreciated
5. Send a visitor with a flower
6. Have a board member or other special person invite them to an executive lunch in a special place
7. Invite them to a special event or dinner...and honor them there
8. Write an article about their work in your neighborhood or city newspaper
9. Call them to talk and get their ideas
10. Give them more responsibility - but watch for burnout!

Resource:

A terrific website for recognizing volunteers is

<http://www.baudville.com>

Issue: Support Volunteer efforts through Faith-based Opportunities

Mineral County should tap into a relatively new source of funding that could ease the load on volunteers. For example, Superior has an all-volunteer run food bank. Tap into Faith Based funding to assist with the work you are already doing. Also, investigate faith-based funding for providing child care, transportation or many other services that may be lacking in Mineral County.

Recommendation:

More and more communities are learning how to tap into Faith Based fund to create programs that meet specific community needs. I have listed two sources below – one Montana based and the other in Washington, DC. The following restrictions do apply: *Compassion Capital Funds cannot be used for direct services to needy individuals or families nor to replace/supplant existing funding available for similar activities. Funds cannot be used to support 'inherently religious' activities and/or practices such as religious instruction, worship, prayer or any form of proselytization nor can they be used to purchase any religious or scriptural materials.*

Faith and Communities Engaged in Service (FACES)

FACES helps national service grantees and programs to reach out to these organizations and assists such organizations in learning about opportunities available through the Corporation.

Resources:

[Colleen Minson](#)

[Sarita Hill Coletrane](#)

1000 Connecticut Avenue, NW

13th Floor

Washington, DC 20036

800-355-1200

faces@ncpc.org

<http://nsrc.etr.org/article/view/236/1/10/>

Montana Faith Based Cooperative:

The Montana Faith-Health Cooperative was officially formed in June of 2001, and planning, development and implementation of the state-wide collaborative effort is being directed by a [Steering Committee](#) consisting of representatives from the faith community and health care establishment. One project of the Montana Faith-Health Cooperative is the [Montana Faith-Health Demonstration Project](#), funded through the [Compassion Capital Fund](#) (see [Restrictions](#) below), [Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#). The overarching goal of the project is to provide technical assistance and sub-awards to assist Faith-Based and Community-Based Organizations in the delivery of health and [social services](#) to poor and needy individuals and families. In addition to making sub-awards, the Montana Faith-Health Demonstration Project will be providing funds to support the following ongoing programs: Parish Nurse training and Congregational Health Ministry training through the Parish Nurse Center, Carroll College; continuing education through the Northern Rockies Institute of Theology; and prisoner-community re-entry through Teach, Encourage, Assist and Model (T.E.A.M.) Mentoring, Inc.

Additional information about the Montana Faith-Health Cooperative can be found at <http://faithhealthcoop.montana.edu/aboutus.html>.

Issue: Medical

Recommendation:

Utilizing retired medical practitioners, a cooperative business can be formed to deliver in-home medical services in rural areas. The training and resources were provided by the “home” medical facility or hospital which contracted the cooperative to deliver services on an out patient basis, services which could otherwise not have been provided. If a group is interested in forming such a business, or in learning more about how it works, assistance with implementing this model can be provided. See Bill Barr’s contact information below.

Also, I would suggest becoming a part of an organization called Partners for Health. They provide a newsletter that is full of resources, grant information, partnership ideas, etc. At the very least, visit their website at <http://ruralhealth.montana.edu>.

Resources:

Contact Bill Barr, USDA-Rural Development, Cooperative Development Specialist, 406-585-2545.

Partners for Health Newsletter
MT Office of Rural Health
MSU-Bozeman
P.O. Box 170540
Bozeman, MT 59717-0540
Ph: 406.994.5553
Email: dyoung@montana.edu
<http://ruralhealth.montana.edu>

Issue: Transportation for Senior Citizens

There are two grant programs that would be applicable to Mineral County's needs. The grants, one Federal and one State, compliment each other beautifully. The Federal grant provides equipment only while the State grant provides operational funding.

The Federal Grant, referred to as Section 5310 program, provides funds for strictly capital assistance, i.e., purchasing a vehicle for the elderly and disabled. For example, a Senior Citizen Center could apply each year for capital assistance – funded at an 80% federal 20% local match. A group can apply for a bus, van, whatever the transportation need may be.

The 2001 Legislature voted in a new state transit program called TRANSADE – which stands for Transportation Assistance for the Disabled and Elderly. This program provides operating assistance in the form of state money to agencies that are providing services for the elderly and disabled. A community/county now has the option of applying for Federal funds for equipment and for state funds for operating costs of that equipment.

The vehicle could be used to transport youth or non-elderly or non-disabled passengers if additional seats are available. You must first make sure to give preference to serving the elderly and disabled.

MT Department of Transportation holds grant application workshops in the fall – usually in October. Applications are usually due in February. Notice of the workshops is sent to every Senior Citizen Center in the state – or just call David Jacobs to get placed on the mailing list.

Resource:

David Jacobs
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Ave.
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
ph: 406/444-6120

fax: 406/444-7671
E-Mail: dajacobs@state.mt.us

Tod Schoenrock
Community Transportation Association of America
1341 G St NW, 10th Floor, Washington DC 20005
Phone Tod: 202.624.1736
Email: schoenrock@ctaa.org
Fax: 202.737.9197
Web: <http://www.ctaa.org>

Montana Transit Association
President Steve Earle
406.543.8386
Searle@mountainline.com

MAIN ISSUE: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

In General:

Participate in MEDA. The Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) is an association of economic development professionals. MEDA is made up of lead economic developers, business specialists, government employees, and staff members of affiliated non-profit organizations which promote and foster economic development activities in Montana. MEDA, a non-profit organization, is high on networking and mutual assistance that would be of benefit to Mineral County. Learn more about MEDA by visiting their website at <http://www.medamembers.org/>.

Issue: Value-Added Products Ag and Forest

Recommendation:

One of the Montana Department of Agriculture's most unique financial assistance programs is the Growth Through Agriculture program. Growth Through Agriculture was established to strengthen and diversify Montana's agricultural industry through activities promoting private-public sector partnerships to assist in the development and commercialization of new agricultural products and processes. The intent is to create jobs and expand agricultural business opportunities.

For value-added forest service products contact Craig Rawlins. For commercial food service products contact Mission Mountain Market. See contact information below.

Resources:

Quinn Holzer
Montana Department of Agriculture
P.O. Box 200201
Helena, Montana 59620-0201

(406) 444-2402
(406) 444-9442 fax

Craig Rawlings
Montana Community Development Center
Small Wood Enterprise Agent
110 East Broadway, 2nd Floor
Missoula, MT 59802
406-728-9234 ext. 203
crawlings@mtcdc.org

Mission Mountain Market
(406) 676-0676 or email: info@mt-missionmtmrkt.com
web: <http://www.mt-missionmtmrkt.com/>

Issue: Buy Local, Shop Local

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

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

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

60 mile jaunt = 120 miles @ .501= \$60 cost so if they really saved 20% shopping there on everything (very unlikely), they have to buy \$300 worth of stuff or about a full week's after tax wages for the average Montanan. Just a thought, since penny-pinchers tend to be penny-wise, pound-foolish. It's also why the large discount stores have far higher net profit rates than average retail stores (see www.chainstoreage.com for the breakdown by store type.)”

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

Resource:
www.chainstoreage.com

MINERAL COUNTY CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS LISTENING SESSION NOTES

MINERAL COUNTY RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT August 12 – 13, 2003

ALBERTON – SENIOR CITIZENS – CHALLENGES

- Security with the influx of people – Law Enforcement
- More people moving in and needing basic services (Zoning Issues)
- Needs road paved - Petty Creek Rd.
- Residents of Western Missoula County utilize services in Mineral County but do not provide \$\$
- Distance and lack of transportation to Dr. & Shopping
- Mineral Co. Commissioners need to meet with Missoula Co. Comm. to see how they can work together

ALBERTON TOWN MEETING – CHALLENGES

- Uncontrolled Growth
- Change in attitude about growth – i.e., no one can tell me what to do
- Wildlife – protect it as we grow
- Work together as a county to help individual communities
- Not enough for kids to do – not in any of the Mineral County towns
- Transition some from logging income
- Kids are leaving the state
- Tourism needs to be encouraged
- County is losing population – and migration is younger people leaving, older people moving in
- Lack of communication between government agencies, chamber of commerce, other organizations, etc.
- “Citizenship requirement” – that you have to live here a certain number of years before you have a voice
- Only about 8% is actually private land in the county
- Don’t want to become a bedroom community
- Child care

SUPERIOR TOWN MEETING – CHALLENGES

- Keep logging going
- Communication – need improved between different groups and organizations
- Better housing
- Better jobs
- Employment to retain your young people
- Limited land development – little private property
- More jobs – better pay
- Depressed area – people have lost a lot of hope
- Something for the kids to do

- Lack of youth activities
- Broaden our focus – too worried about demise of logging and mining – need to change!
- Maintain local control
- Lack of employment opportunities for our young families
- Lack of access to natural resources
- Kids need sense of ownership for the community
- Young people leaving because no job opportunities – low pay
- Problems with county government – lack of leadership or pulling together of the county
- Ditto
- Better control of public lands
- Better access to broadband
- Apathy
- Transient population that is disconnected from the town
- Creative leadership
- Unemployment
- Federal over-control
- Single teachers – don't stay because lack of housing and no single social life
- Presence of law enforcement is not felt in any community – not enough help, can't be everywhere

ST. REGIS – CHALLENGES

- Appearance to outsiders – we get a lot of traffic but we need to beautify area
- Lack of land availability – a portion of land is not set aside for economic development
- Need onsite training for job skills – i.e. Job Service come here to provide training
- Absentee owners of property do not take care of property
- County's design – one end next to Missoula – next in the woods – two different worlds
- Make people aware of the tourism opportunities here
- Lack of economic opportunity causes a sense of hopelessness – even in the schools
- Jobs are not attractive and we face a lot of social problems – poverty, dysfunctional families, lack of community attachment
- Hard to promote education when it is not woven into the community fabric
- Too much of a focus on tourism – hard to have ownership in the community – lots of minimum wage
- Do not have year round income – need a base
- East end – some jobs, Superior has government jobs, St. Regis has tourism, need a way for Mineral County to combine and promote its activities. Each little community needs to promote each other
- How to make a living here! – Extremely hard!
- 30% of school kids move each year – very transient
- Law Enforcement – six deputies – with high rate of crime per capita – very small budget
- Social problems and some meth labs

ST. REGIS – TriCon

- Jobs! Lack of jobs leads to poor tax base, poor quality of living, etc.
- Great uncertainty regarding the timber industry – will we be able to survive
- Don't see younger people entering the logging/timber/mill industry – too risky, too expensive
- Wages for loggers have not increased in years – and costs for logging keep going up
- Media – does not tell the “healthy forest” story
- Politics

De BORGIA – CHALLENGES

- Saltese – Interstate took all usable area for sewer system
- More communication with the West End of the county
- Families, relationships & religion – build a building and congregation
- Youth need to have options and recreation
- Weeds
- Law enforcement – not enough visibility, crimes not investigated
- Reserve officers are not being utilized
- Zoning – how development affects the stream
- Forest health – fuel mitigation
- St. Regis grade school funding, no foreign language
- Sierra Club not allowing access to natural resources
- Lack of housing – no rental housing available

MINERAL COUNTY STRENGTHS AND ASSETS LISTENING SESSION NOTES

COUNTY RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT ALBERTON – SENIOR CITIZENS – STRENGTHS

- People – thoughtful & welcoming
- Country living
- Quiet
- Beautiful scenery
- Like one big family
- Churches
- Senior Center
- School – high test scores
- Proximity to amenities in Missoula
- Potential for handling the growth that will come before it comes
- People have the desire to do something different and resolving situations on their own
- Partnership between Senior Center and school
- Freeway E & W

ALBERTON TOWN MEETING – STRENGTHS

- Mineral County is an open slate for development – we can make things happen and cause them to happen wisely
- People with talent and varied backgrounds
- Tourism – have great opportunities (but must be developed carefully)
- Clark Fork River and people coming to hunt and fish
- Three church council – Parish Council
- American Legion
- Good newspaper that is distributed across the county
- Alberton Museum and Railroad memorabilia car – need volunteer staff, though
- Alberton Hotel – bed and breakfast
- Mullan Trail
- Long narrow valley – assists in cheaper infrastructure
- Interstate and Railroad location
- Alberton Bookstore
- Beauty, rural area, open spaces, quiet

SUPERIOR TOWN MEETING – STRENGTHS

- Small amount of private land is good in some aspects
- Recreation opportunities
- Ditto

- Beauty of the land, fishing, hunting, natural resources
- Easy drive to Missoula
- Core of a workforce
- Many caring people that care about the town
- Ditto
- Great natural resources
- Ditto
- Antique Car Show
- Easy access off of the freeway
- People that live here are wonderful
- River and the freeway
- Ditto, ditto, ditto
- Hospital
- Clinic
- Existing businesses
- Alberton Gorge
- Community is always behind the kids
- A lot of individualism
- We are unique – a unique small town
- Movie house
- Route of Hiawatha – over 20,000 visitors per year
- Recreation – Hiawatha Trail
- Two golf courses
- Small town – live here by choice –
- People can work together
- Lion’s Club
- Friendly people
- Willingness to grow
- I-90
- County Airport – received grant
- Fiber Optic lines
- Blackfoot Telephone has been a good partner

ST. REGIS - STRENGTHS

- People are great
- VIC in ST. Regis – Visitors info center – welcome 9,000 people per year
- Always hear “this is beautiful and I want to live here.”
- 4th of July
- Flea Market
- Maintaining school population
- Beauty of the area

- School has T-1 line
- School here is terrific-perhaps best in the district
- School is a great asset
- Good sewer system
- Access to I-90 is great – need to take advantage of it
- Current infrastructure projects – resort district working with DOT to put in curbs and gutters
- Businesses in the resort district very supportive
- Resort district businesses have agreed to do a “facelift”
- The school – services have been compared to private schools – low teacher/student ratio; half of the budget is funded by grants
- Great technology tools available in the school – lots of computers including a business lab
- Science lab in the school is terrific
- Superior and St Regis schools are working together to provide services
- Teens at Risk program
- Long Distance Learning Site – thru FVCC –portable – can go to any room
- Blackfoot Telephone
- Two Churches
- St. Regis Community Council
- St. Regis Community Center
- Volunteer fire department
- Visitor information center
- Full time mental health worker for the county
- JP takes in more tickets than most counties
- Beautiful campgrounds – some private ones off the beaten path
- St. Regis Community Park – 13 acre park
- Revolving Loan Fund – being used – more funding is still available

ST. REGIS – TRI-CON - STRENGTHS

- People try to hang on and stay here – they like the community, want to raise their kids here
- Every day we are in business is a positive day – through management and hard work
- Terrific well trained workforce, good work ethic
- Small diameter utilization – willing to change to stay competitive
- Highway corridor and rail
- 5 million acres of forest timber
- Good school systems in the county
- Older folks are moving in
- We add to the timber value of private property in the area
- Employ truck drivers, service providers, (80 people mill has a multiplier of 250-300 people.)

De BORGIA – STRENGTHS

- I-90 access – supplies and tourism
- Natural resources and access to forest
- Lifestyle
- Recreational aspects
- People & volunteerism

MINERAL COUNTY PROJECTS LISTENING SESSION NOTES

MINERAL COUNTY RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT August 12 – 13, 2003

ALBERTON – SENIOR CITIZENS - PROJECTS

- Growth is coming and we need to be prepared for it
- Expanded Senior Center
- Medical Clinic
- Town police force
- Small businesses – manufacturing and retail
- Cemetery
- Golf Course
- Swimming Pool
- Skating rink
- Infrastructure that keeps up with growth
- Care giver assistance for those with at-home care of elderly
- Activities for kids
- Agency on Aging – Rural issues are different than the urban issues
- Road from Petty Cr. To fire station fixed
- Mineral County extended up Petty Cr road
- Kayakers and canoeing development with recreation

ALBERTON TOWN MEETING – PROJECTS

- Expand the current chamber newsletter
- Tap the talents that exist here
- Improve communications for meetings and projects via advertising
- Need to coordinate volunteer efforts
- More and better paid staff for the chamber and/or economic development group
- Walking trail – with historic pictures along the trail with an explanation
- Beautiful park – develop it a bit – swing sets would be nice
- Spend extra money to promote Alberton
- Beautification
- An Espresso shop
- Food service to the rafters/catering business
- Tourist information center – perhaps by the museum
- One More Day – a plan to get people to stay one more day – by coordinating existing services
- Better display and distribute current Mineral County Chamber brochure
- More permanent and varied industry or business – not based on lumber and timber – good wages and insurance
- Tap into local talent to create new businesses and jobs
- Provide education and improve job skills
- Keep our kids by providing them a place to make a living

- Develop own GIS shop in our county – is beginning now
- Take advantage of Healthy Forest initiatives
- Larger more affordable grocery store – but not toooooo large
- Gas station – and other basic needs stores (pizza parlor)
- More community pride and beautification
- Community center with ping pong table or pool table – place for kids to gather on a small scale

SUPERIOR TOWN MEETING – PROJECTS

- 8 to 10% growth with new jobs related to natural resources
- Adult Ed up and running strong
- Air conditioned place where more than 100 people can sit down
- Beautification of town and in each town in the county
- More for the kids to do
- Ditto growth – would like to see smart growth
- More small businesses opening up
- Get entrepreneurs together so that businesses can open
- Sustainable infrastructure
- Less mandates
- Recoup the hopping town of the 70's with decent waged jobs
- Attract more bikers – create businesses that support bikers
- Exercise facility with indoor pool
- Place where kids could train and exercise besides the high school
- More diversification in business so town is not dependent on one or two
- Stay a small town – but have a great quality of life
- Natural Resource extraction plan created by the local people that improves the forest health and reduces the fire risk
- More new blood in government – more excited about improving things
- Evolve culture from tobacco and beer into the arts, etc .
- Beautification – immediately do something – litter and weeds
- More jobs – diversification
- Education facility – small branch of university or continuing ed
- Route of Hiawatha utilized and expanded and extended to St. Regis
- Bike path from Missoula to Idaho
- Improve community pride
- Adult education
- Better and more available housing

ST. REGIS PROJECTS

- Community Center finished
- New businesses encouraged to come in – not blocked out
- Ditto

- Perhaps consider a tax increment finance district
- Recreation – fully develop Route of Hiawatha
- Better quality housing –
- Updating infrastructure of streets, etc.
- Get people to stay a few days longer
- Industry developed -
- Jobs – other than tourism – to help the tax base, the community, etc.
- Ditto – industry not related to woods products – have the entire infrastructure in place!
- Incorporate the community
- More funding for the Law Enforcement budget – grant programs
- Complete website for the county – have businesses link to it
- More utilization of forest campgrounds and private campgrounds
- Marketing – get the county brochure out and about even more
- Improve St. Regis Community Park – utilize it
- Sustain current businesses – in the entire county
- Use business classes that are provided to improve local and new businesses
- Hire a half-time MSU Extension person to assist in that busy office
- An economic development entity that will be a larger voice to attract business here
- An improved private/public partnership that works together to build economic development

ST. REGIS – TRI CON

- Educate the public and schools about healthy forests and possibly tour a burned forest for a reality check
- Compliment other area businesses – work together
- Open the federal forests more for timber access – must work with federal officials and our congressional delegation
- Continue to upgrade equipment – more modernize
- Workshops for small loggers and small contractors on how to put together a bid
- Diversify our products – increase value added
- Compete in the world market
- Environmentalist stance softens to allow thinning of forests
- Far improved Forest Management
- Logging contractors update their equipment and have access to financing and consistent contracts
- BioMass – but building of power plant is very expensive – tax credits are available, a by-product is produced
- Explore subsidizing equipment with other producers on small sales
- Flexible manufacturing facility so that you can shift product depending on the market

DeBORGIA – PROJECTS

- More law enforcement visibility in the area – sub-station in area
- Education level of children raised

- Weeds mowed
- Housing for people
- Focus on the strengths & build them to drive good growth management
- Chamber of commerce to produce marketing materials to track tourists in the area
- Multi-use trail from DeBorgia to Superior
- Sewer line in Saltese
- Whole of Mineral County can come together and support each other
- Chamber involvement from the entire county
- Community Foundation networking with the entire county
- Local group that deals with local issues to be the liaison to the county wide organizations
- Basic services with paid staff
- Medical services – clinic
- Mixed usage of trails by utilizing the older roads that are no longer in use
- Consolidation of High Schools to provide more opportunities with a greater population of students
- Tevis cup activity from mountains to Missoula (endurance horse ride)