

THE WYOMING RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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

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

- ❑ Assist rural communities in visioning and strategic planning
- ❑ Serve as a resource for assisting communities in finding and obtaining grants for rural projects
- ❑ Serve and be recognized as a neutral forum for identification and resolution of multi-jurisdictional issues.

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

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

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Wyoming Rural Development Council
2219 Carey Ave.
Cheyenne, WY 82002
307-777-6430
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October 2-3, 2000

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PROCESS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS REPORT

The Wyoming Rural Development Council (WRDC) has provided a resource team to assist the Town of Saratoga, Wyoming in evaluating the community assets and liabilities and in developing suggestions for improving the environment, social and economic future of Saratoga.

The Town of Saratoga, the Saratoga/Plate Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Carbon County Economic Development Corporation requested a community assessment from the Wyoming Rural Development Council. Julie Evans and Bill Farr served as the community contacts and took the lead in agenda development, logistics 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 Douglas officials indicated would be needed to respond to the problem areas identified.

The Resource Team toured the city and interviewed approximately 85 people over a two-day period from October 2-3, 2000. The team interviewed representatives from the following segments of the Saratoga community: banking, financial, construction, realtors, churches, city, county, law enforcement, education, agriculture, land management agencies, senior citizens, healthcare, utilities, communications, civic clubs, youth, retail, tourism, extraction and timber industries. Many of these people had reviewed the questions with their respective businesses or organizations and were representing many people at the listening sessions. Each participant was asked to respond to three questions designed to begin communication and discussion and to serve as a basis for developing the action plan. The three questions were:

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

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 WRDC's final report to Saratoga.

The oral report was presented to the people of Saratoga on October 2 and many of the citizens of Saratoga who participated in the interviews were in attendance.

Following the oral report, a formal written report was prepared and presented to the Saratoga/Plate Valley Chamber of Commerce.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The elements are all here for Saratoga to have a successful future. To become a growing, vibrant community takes only a few people willing to roll up their sleeves and go to work. Once this nucleus begins to exert effort, it will begin to show some successes. Then this nucleus needs to expand to include more and more of the community until the entire community is involved. But the work is not on big jobs, it is on small ones that can be achieved quickly. The big ones come later after Saratoga has seen the results of the smaller and sees that it can accomplish things.

There are a number of short-term, accomplishable recommendations that the review team has provided. The most important thing is to get the entire community involved in trying to find ways to accomplish its goals. A few celebrations at the successful conclusion of an activity which has involved a large number of citizens will lead to a feeling of accomplishment that will carry over into other activities. Look through the short-term suggestions, pick out one that you know you can do, and get started!

Each of you individually must decide what it is that you want to do-what kind of project you want to tackle. There are enough tasks for everyone. Each small step, every accomplishment, no matter how limited, is movement in the right direction toward achieving Saratoga's goals. It can be done! There is no problem facing Saratoga that cannot be solved by the people living in the community. It is your choice, your decision, you can do it.

On behalf of the Saratoga Resource Team, I want to thank the community and our sponsors, the Town of Saratoga, Saratoga/Platte Valley Chamber of Commerce, and Carbon County Economic Development Corporation for the warm hospitality shown to us during our stay. The meals and accommodations were outstanding and certainly deserve a gold star from this team! We heard over and over in the listening sessions that Saratoga has great people and we can certainly attest to that! Thank you very much.

We hope you will find great value in this report and remember, any team member is available for you to call to clarify or provide more information and assistance. Use these folks!

The Wyoming Rural Development Council is here to help you in any way that we can.

Sincerely,

Mary E. Randolph, Executive Director, Wyoming Rural Development Council

RESOURCE TEAM MEMBERS

Saratoga, Wyoming Resource Team,
October 2-3, 2000

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Leader)**
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2013 Eastside 2nd St.
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208 Shiloh Rd.
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LOCAL CONTACTS/COORDINATORS

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SARATOGA COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

October 2-3, 2000

Resource Team Agenda

“All Sessions will be held at the Saratoga Town Hall”

Monday, October 2

10:00 – 12:00 p.m.	Orientation/Organization & Working Lunch
12:00 – 1:30 p.m.	Area Tour
1:30 – 2:20 p.m.	Banking, Financial, Construction & Realtors
2:30 – 3:20 p.m.	Churches
3:30 – 4:20 p.m.	City, County, Law Enforcement
4:30 – 5:20 p.m.	Education
5:30 – 6:15 p.m.	Dinner
6:30 – 7:20 p.m.	Agriculture

Tuesday, October 3

8:00 – 8:50 a.m.	Land Management Agencies <i>Forest Service, BLM, SER Conservation District, etc.</i>
9:00 – 9:50 a.m.	Senior Citizens & Healthcare
10:00 – 10:50 a.m.	Utilities & Communications
11:00 – 11:50 a.m.	Civic Clubs
11:50 – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:30 – 2:15	Youth (<i>Junior Social Studies Class/SHS</i>)
2:30 – 3:20 p.m.	Retail & Tourism Business
3:30 – 4:20 p.m.	Extraction and Timber Industries
4:20 – 6:50 p.m.	Working dinner for Team
7:00 p.m.	Resource Team Town Meeting

SARATOGA RESOURCE TEAM MEMBER REPORTS

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East Central Regional Director
Wyoming Business Council
300 So. Wolcott, Suite 300
Casper, WY 82601
(307)577-6012 FAX(307)577-6032
selledge@wysbc.com

QUALITY OF LIFE:

- Saratoga appears to be a comfortable, well-presented community in a very desirable area for outdoor recreation and nature enthusiasts. A friendly community with a lot going for it. Inter-community promotion, possibly recognition of “business of the month” or “resident of the month” programs would assist in raising community pride and self-appreciation. This type of promotion is infectious and will spread to visitors, and can lead to “self-motivated” clean up efforts.
Possible sponsors might be the Chamber, City Govt., newspaper, or private industry.

TELECOMMUNICATION:

- Problems with telecommunications were very evident throughout the listening sessions. The directory assistance problem is huge for business and must be addressed.
- Fiber is one answer to telecommunication efficiency but not the only answer. Satellite communications may be an effective answer for rural communities in Wyoming and service should be investigated. Additionally, Cable modem access is effective and speedy, and may answer E-Commerce and Internet needs sufficiently for the foreseeable future.

I would recommend that a working committee be set up (Economic Development committee or Chamber of Commerce might provide originating structure) to address the issues and pursue communications and solutions. Contacts, references, resources regarding the above issues include:

Michael Stull
Director of Telecommunications
Wyoming Business Council
214 West 15th Street
Cheyenne, WY 82002 (307) 777-2847
(Telecommunications resource contact for Wyoming)

Shane Scott
EchoStar Corp.
530 EchoStar Drive
Cheyenne, WY 82007 (307) 633-5555
Shane.Scott@echostar.com
(Satellite communications resource)

Communicomm Services
Alan Price
235 N. Windriver Dr.
Douglas, WY 82633 (307) 358-3833
www.communicomm.com
(Cable modem access information resource)

www.usda.gov/rus/telephone/telephon.htm
“Advanced Telecommunications in Rural America”
Joint report from U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Agriculture,
National Telecommunications and Information Administration, Rural
Development, and the Rural Utilities Service.

BUSINESS / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

- Comments ranged from “lack of available sites” to “transportation problems”, to infrastructure, facilities, types of business, workforce, and questions as to the desire for growth and additional business.
- A multitude of comments on the need for a meeting facility or community center.
- Comments on need to diversify from the “three-legged stool”, i.e. Agriculture, Tourism, and Timber.

I have several recommendations that can be looked at to pursue reasonable development and job creation while preserving the current quality of life.

Saratoga is likely not ready for the economic development “Home Run”, the 300-500 job facility that is perceived to be evidence of successful economic development. I believe Saratoga should concentrate on very small industries, “cottage industries” and 3 to 12 employee businesses on which they can build. Most of the successful community enterprises in rural America grow from within, their success and growth based in large upon the dedication and desire of the founder/operator. I would recommend:

** A survey of cottage and home-based businesses in the community to assess their desire for growth and assistance. It is important to distinguish between hobby type businesses and those with a desire to make a good living and grow.

It is my understanding that home-based business in Saratoga are licensed, giving the economic development committee a great survey base list if the city administration can make it available.

Resources: Navigating Change

Mickey Beaver
1020 Bristol
Casper, WY 82609 (307) 235-5572
mbeaver@coffey.com
(Has conducted similar surveys in several WY communities)

** Investigation into the potential for construction of a business incubator building on the existing light industrial zoned city owned property. A building with 2 to 4 separate bays and a common office area, conference room is perfect. There are a variety of layouts and concepts that can be utilized.

The incubator houses start-up businesses for periods ranging up to 3 – 4 years under the theory of “turning them out” on their own when they are able to function without subsidy. The beauty of the incubator concept is the ability to share services many start-ups and small businesses cannot afford individually, i.e. bookkeeping, clerical, telephone service, conference room, receptionist, office equipment, etc.

Rent and services are packaged at an affordable rate. Most incubators are owned publicly or by non-profits to assist in qualifying them for grants & assistance.

Resources: Patrice Gapen

Wyoming Business Council
214 West 15th St.
Cheyenne, WY 82002 (307) 777-2813
(Former director of the Laramie County Community College small business incubator project.)

Aha Connections
William P. Edwards, Jr.
970 Dundee
Casper, WY 82609 (307) 234-7944
Wpejr@aol.com
(Consultant)

Small Business Development Center
Arlene Soto
1400 East College Drive
Cheyenne, WY 82007 (307) 632-6141
(Training, research publications, business planning)

** Establishment of a youth entrepreneur class, or club, at the high school level. Youth are looking for excitement and entertainment outside of the school arena and outside of the athletic and outdoor realm. There are a tremendous amount of great ideas resting with the youth of the community, from bowling alleys, to movie theatres, to fast food, to a myriad of other

unique ideas. Their involvement in planning for such projects, and others, helps generate their interest in pursuing them and remaining in the community. Youth groups have actually started and operated businesses developed in such an atmosphere.

Main ingredient.....dedicated and focused mentors.

** Incentives...the city owned land along the railroad tracks could be utilized as a great incentive, should a business look at Saratoga as a potential location. Life of building leases at extremely low costs, as well as outright grants of the land are possibilities.

Added incentives to develop infrastructure for specific uses are available through the County via CDBG application to the Wyoming Business Council. Other resources include the Wyoming Workforce Development fund, Convertible Loan program, and Tradeshow Assistance grants.

Resources: Thomas Johnson, Regional Director

Wyoming Business Council

1400 East College

Cheyenne, WY 82001 (307) 635-7735

(Access to and Saratoga contact for Wyoming Business Council programs and workforce development information)

Steve Achter

Investment Ready Communities

Wyoming Business Council

214 West 15th Street

Cheyenne, WY 82002 (307) 777-2811

(CDBG and Convertible Loan program admin.)

Christie Pardue

Wyoming Business Council

214 West 15th Street

Cheyenne, WY 82002 (307) 777-2833

(Tradeshow assistance grant program)

EDUCATION:

- There are a multitude of Small Business seminar and class opportunities available through the Small Business Development Center program.
 - Contact Arlene Soto
1400 East College drive
Cheyenne, WY 82007-3298 (307) 632-6141

- Library – There would seem to be tremendous support for extending the operating hours of the Public Library. Perhaps different evenings could be sponsored and manned by various civic organizations.

YOUTH:

- Day care / childcare is a nationwide concern. I see it as an excellent entrepreneurial opportunity for someone so inclined. Could be supported additionally by major employers as an employee benefit.
- Others will address the need for activities for youth in addition to athletics and outdoor opportunities. I believe opportunities in the business community could serve a dual purpose. Promote entrepreneurship and progressive thinking, and listen closely to what they are saying. Have Internship programs been investigated?

HOUSING:

- The need for an assisted living facility was mentioned several times. A model for the community might be provided through networking and studying the Wheatland, Wyoming facility.
Contact: Linda Fabian or Candy Wright at WADCO in Wheatland, (307) 332-4232.

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:

- A very enjoyable experience for me meeting and listening to the community and area residents. When diversification of economic base is considered I caution you not to look past who bring ya, i.e. Agriculture, Tourism, and Timber. Enhancing and growing the businesses that sustain the area are paramount to economic stability, controlled growth and prosperity.
Agribusiness and Tourism are staples and assistance and support is readily available:

Contact: Bill Bunce
Director of Agribusiness
Wyoming Business Council
300 South Wolcott, Suite 200
Casper, WY 82601 (307) 237-4692

Laurie Green
Director of Tourism
Wyoming Business Council
214 West 15th Street
Cheyenne, WY 82002 (307) 777-2808

Thank you for your gracious hospitality and for exposing me to an area of Wyoming that I definitely wish to return to.

SARATOGA RESOURCE TEAM REPORT

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It was a pleasure working with the community of Saratoga on this assessment. I want to thank you for your warm hospitality and your open and honest dialogue with the team.

The following are recommendations that I offer the community of Saratoga based on what I heard.

Town Meeting

First, I would recommend that after you have received this report and it has been distributed and read throughout the community, you host another Town Meeting. This would be an opportunity for the Town as a whole to decide which projects to pursue and to prioritize those projects. The Wyoming Rural Development Council would be happy to assist with facilitating that second Town Meeting. Please contact my office at the above address.

Grant Writing

Many projects Saratoga are interested in pursuing can be funded through grant opportunities.

Suggestion: Every two years, the Resource Conservation and Development agencies offer a 1 week grant writing program that is outstanding! I recommend that someone from the community, chamber or economic group attend the training. Cost is approximately \$500 for the week.

Contact: Kirk Heaton
RC&D
307-382-3982

Suggestion: Each year the State of Wyoming Department of Administration and Information, State Library Division, publishes a Catalog of Wyoming State Grant Programs. Get a copy of that book!

Contact: Department of Administration and Information
State Library Division
Supreme Court and State Library Building
2301 Capitol Ave.,
Cheyenne, WY 82002
On the web: www.wsl.state.wy.us/sis/grants/index.html

Suggestion: Another excellent contact for grant assistance and opportunities in the Wyoming Community Network.

Contact: Jennifer Goodman
Wyoming Community Network
307-766-2107
307-766-5544 (fax)
jgoodman@uwyo.edu
www.WyomingCommunityNetwork.com

Suggestion: If you are lacking in grant writing expertise, the Wyoming Rural Development Council has a volunteer grant writer than can be “lent” to a community for a specific grant project. To schedule assistance, contact:

Contact: Mary Randolph, Wyoming Rural Development Council
307-777-6430
mrando@state.wy.us

Education

Education for business owners or entrepreneurs was stated as a project need.

Suggestion: E-Commerce should be recognized as an opportunity for small business people and pursued for the community through the Chamber of Commerce or Economic Development group. Small Business Administration offers and excellent training session, free of charge!

Contact: Mahlon Sorenson
Small Business Administration
100 East B. Suite 4001
Casper, WY 82601
307-261-6503
mahlon.Sorensen@sba.com

Additional e-commerce resources include:
www.smartplanet.com

www.sba.gov/classroom
www.becrc.org/sme/smbiz.html

Housing

Assisted living for seniors was emphasized in the listening sessions.

Suggestion: It is important to assess the need and funding options for assisted living in Saratoga. I would suggest a need and feasibility assessment be completed. The City of Worland just completed an assessment using a consultant in Sheridan, Wyoming. I recommend you contact them.

Contact: Rodney Proffitt
Washakie County Planning Office
1001 Big Horn Avenue, Suite 104
Worland, WY 82401
307-347-2741
307-347-9366 (fax)

Business/Economic Development

Suggestion: Each year the NRF Foundation sponsors a National Small Stores Institute for retailers, main street coordinators and Chamber of Commerce Specialists. It is an excellent 3 day workshop. This year, a retailer from Douglas attended the session and in his words, “it was like 4 years of college for a retailer in 3 days!”. Retailers in Saratoga might pursue this Institute.

Contact: NRF Foundation
325 7th Street, NW, Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20004
202-737-2849

Suggestion: The Federal Reserve Bank in Kansas City, offers an excellent training session titled: “Doing the Doable Deals”. The cost of this session is free and would assist in preparing your community for new business.

Contact: Larry Meeker, Federal Reserve Bank
925 Grand Boulevard
Kansas City, MO 64198-0001
816-881-2476
larry.g.meeker@kc.frb.org

Citizens expressed a need for a diversified economy in Saratoga.

Suggestion: The Wyoming Business Council engaged a consulting firm to prepare a targeted industry study which identified, given the attributes of Wyoming communities, the most appropriate industries to recruit to the state. It is recommended that Saratoga use the report as a starting point as it develops and refines both recruitment and existing business and retention efforts. (see attachment A)

Contact: Steve Achter
Wyoming Business Council
307-777-2811

Youth

Many of the listening session, including the session at the High School, the use of drugs and the attitude of acceptance in the community of drugs was verbalized.

Suggestion: The Executive Office of the President, Office of National Drug Control Policy, provides a wonderful granting opportunity for community drug programs. The grant will be open in January.

Contact: Gregory Dixon
Administrator, Drug Free Communities Program
Executive Office of the President
Washington, DC 20503
[Gregory L. Dixon@ondcp.eop.gov](mailto:Gregory.L.Dixon@ondcp.eop.gov)

Miscellaneous Grant Opportunities:

The following information is to alert you to miscellaneous grant opportunities you may be eligible to apply for that would assist with projects Saratoga would like to pursue:

Challenge America Fast Track Grants: designed to support arts projects in rural and underserved communities. The intent of the initiative is to provide quality arts activities in communities which may have limited access to cultural art resources.

Applications may be submitted under one of the two priority areas:

1. Community Arts Development – including civic design, cultural planning and related arts initiatives impacting community, economic and tourism development.
2. Positive Alternatives for Youth – including arts education or after school activities for school-age youth.

Grants will be for \$5,000 to \$10,000 with a 1:1 matching requirement.

Web site will be available in mid-December or early in 2001. <http://www/arts.gov>

Making work Work; Boosting Job Retention and Advancement of Low-Wage Workers": The Hitachi Foundation has announced they will award 5-8 grants for up to \$200,000 for workforce development. Qualifications for the grant include: they are responsive to local conditions; they build effective partnerships with the business sector, they have an effective facilitator/organizer; they have staying power; they get better jobs for low-wage workers; they facilitate a full continuum of skill development; they improve the quality of and access to other services and supports. www.Hitachi.org/newinitiatives.html

David “Tex” Taylor

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FAX: 307-766-5544

Email: TTAYLOR@UWYO.EDU

Overview

If your goal is a rural lifestyle, then it probably doesn't get much better than Saratoga, Wyoming. The community has an excellent location with mountain ranges on both side of the valley and the Platte River running through the middle. The community has a strong sense of community, good municipal infrastructure, good health services, an excellent airport, and a good selection of restaurants for a community this size. The community has a fairly diverse economy based on Agriculture, Timber, and Tourism. Since the economy is not strictly dependent on the energy industry, the community has not experienced the extreme changes in economic activity seen in other parts of Wyoming. Still we did hear a number of concerns expressed by residents during our two days in Saratoga. Also, the State of Wyoming's web site indicates that the population of Saratoga has decreased by 7 percent between 1990 and 1998.

Challenge: Implementation

I believe there are three keys to the successful implementation of the Saratoga Community Assessment. They are: 1) follow-up, 2) follow-up, 3) follow-up. The process seems to have created an excitement in the community. It also has probably created some expectations among residents that something will happen. In order to take advantage of this momentum and meet the expectations the community needs hold a community meeting to discuss the results among themselves and begin to implement projects to accomplish their goals. Initially, priority should be given to short-term projects that have a high probability of success in a rather short time frame. The community should celebrate these successes. This will hopefully provide the incentive to work on more difficult, long-term goals. The community might want to consider two parallel tracks. One track would involve selected short-term projects to hold peoples' interest. A second track would involve planning and organizing to accomplish long-term goals.

Challenge: Seasonal Economy

We heard a number of comments about the seasonal nature of the Saratoga economy, partly due to the seasonal nature of tourism in the area. This concern was tied in many cases with the lack of good paying jobs and the need for affordable housing given the many jobs with low wages.

Suggestion 1: One solution might be to extend the tourism season. Not necessarily making it bigger, but just longer. There may be some potential to attract more winter visitors, either with or without the proposed downhill ski area near Encampment. Also if adequate sized meeting rooms were available it might be possible to attract small conferences to Saratoga during the off-season or during the week when there may be excess capacity in the lodging facilities. Any effort to extend the tourism season should be accompanied by the gathering of basic information about existing visitors to help target the marketing effort and the an inventory of existing facilities and attractions to identify capacity and limitations to expansion. Laurie Green, Director of Travel and Tourism at the Wyoming Business Council (lgreen@state.wy.us, 307-777-2808) may be able to provide assistance. Although tourism is important in and of itself, it is also important as way to introduce business people to the community. For example, a number of the hunters and fishermen that come to Saratoga are probably also business owners who might consider re-locating to Saratoga. Getting information to these people about the desirability of locating in Saratoga during their stay might be a good recruiting strategy,

Suggestion 2: Another solution might be diversification of the local economy. Two possibilities were frequently mentioned during the assessment. One was light industry and the other was high tech businesses. These may have potential for Saratoga particularly if the goal is higher paying jobs. However, these are very competitive industries and Saratoga would need to have the infrastructure in place to compete for these types of firms. Steve Achter, Director of the Investment Ready Communities Program at the Wyoming Business Council (sachte@state.wy.us, 307-777-2811) may be able to provide assistance in evaluating the community's potential in this area.

Suggestion 3: Another solution might be to look for valued-added opportunities for traditional industries such as agriculture and timber. As one resident note: "Saratoga is near the end of the food chain for agriculture and timber production." There may be niche markets that can add value to the agriculture and timber produced in the valley. Bill Bunce, Director of Agribusiness at the Wyoming Business Council (bbunce@state.wy.us, 307-237-4692) may be able to provide some assistance.

Suggestion 4: A final solution might be a Business Retention and Expansion Program. This type of program would focus on retaining existing businesses and helping them to expand. Existing businesses have the advantage of already being located in the community and so are apparently able to deal with the logistics of doing business in the Platte Valley. Your Regional Director for the Wyoming Business Council may be able to provide information on starting a Business Retention and Expansion Program.

It is important to note that no one strategy will be likely to solve the economic concerns of Saratoga. One-dimensional strategies are likely to fail. Success is more likely if multi-dimensional strategies are implemented combining a number of possible solutions.

The assessment also identified several barriers to economic development Saratoga.

Barrier 1: One barrier was the perceived lack of industrial sites for small firms to locate at. One solution to this barrier might be the development of a business incubator where small business could be housed together and share the overhead costs. The Wyoming Business Council may be able to provide assistance in how to establish a business incubator.

Barrier 2: Another barrier was the often mentioned weak telecommunications system in Saratoga in terms of basic service such as director assistance and phone service and more advanced services such as high speed lines and a point of presence for fiber optic. This weak telecommunications system is a concern not only for existing business but especially if the community is interested in attracting high tech businesses. Michael Stull, Director of Telecommunications for the Wyoming Business Council (mstull@state.wy.us, 307-777-2847) may be able to provide assistance in getting improved telecommunications services for the community.

Barrier 3: Another barrier was the lack of affordable housing. With the influx of retired people there was a concern that affordable housing might not be available for existing workers and workers in firms considering relocating to Saratoga. A good contact for assistance on affordable housing would be George Axlund at the Wyoming Community Development Authority (307-265-0603).

Barrier 4: The lack of meeting facilities for larger groups represents a barrier to expansion of the tourist industry through the attraction of small conferences and conventions. The meeting facilities might be part of a multi-purpose community center which will be discussed later.

Barrier 5: A primary barrier to all economic development efforts in Saratoga is distance. Regardless of the economic activity, it is a long ways to markets and suppliers. This affects costs and makes it difficult for firms in Saratoga to compete with the rest of the world. While there are no pat answers, there may be ways to minimize the problem. One approach is to focus on firms with high value and/or low weight products where the cost of transportation are less of a concern. Another approach is to focus on firms that don't use traditional forms of transportation. One example would be high tech firms that use telecommunications to conduct business. Access to fiber optics is particularly important for these types of firms. Another approach would be to look for ways to reduce transportation costs. Perhaps businesses in Saratoga could buy supplies jointly or combine shipments to customers in order to reduce the transportation costs. Also businesses could perhaps coordinate shipments to reduce empty backhauls. A final approach might be to better utilize the transportation that is available in Saratoga. For example you have an excellent airport. Are there ways that it could be better utilized by local businesses? Also, does the community still have rail service? If so, can that be better utilized? To some businesses the isolated location of Saratoga may be perceived as an advantage. The community needs to identify and recruit those types of businesses.

Challenge: A Community Center

Though out our two days in Saratoga we heard about the need for a community center. There were several visions for this community center. To some it was a recreation center to give the youth of the community something to do. For others it was a civic center for community activities. For others it was a convention facility with meeting rooms for small conferences and conventions. Since it is unlikely that Saratoga would have three community centers a multi-purpose community center with some aspects of all three visions might be the most feasible. For example, we heard a number of comments from the community that there was need for a covered swimming pool for the kids to use . However, the high school students we talked to indicated that they were much more interested in a teen center where they could get together and talk. A major question is how to finance the building and operation of a community center. Linda Ziegler of USDA Rural Development (linda.ziegler@wyworland.fsc.usda.gov, 307-347-2456) may be able to provide information on Federal programs that fund this type of facility. Also the county's 1 percent capital facilities tax might be an option, although that would require concurrence from the rest of the county. Finally, Saratoga has a long history of private donations to support community projects. It might be possible though a combination of these sources to come up with the finances to build and maintain a community center.

Challenge: Trail System

Another project that was frequently mentioned during our visit to Saratoga was a trail system along the river. This trail system might tie together Veterans Island, the Hot Springs, Saratoga Lake, and the Platte River. This trail system would benefit both residents and visitors by providing a scenic place to walk. This would benefit residents since Saratoga does not have sidewalks. It would also make a visitors stay in the community more enjoyable by providing another activity particularly in the evenings. Kim Raap, Manager of the State Trails Program (kraap@missc.state.wy.us, 307-777-7550) may be able to provide assistance in developing a trails system. The Department of Geography and Recreation at the University of Wyoming (307-766-3311) may be able to help with the designing of a trail system using it as a class project.

Challenge: Community Planning

Regardless of what Saratoga decides to do in future, there is a need for community planning. Growth may be inevitable, but there is a need to organize the growth to retain the desirable qualities of the community to the extent possible. This planning could range from providing affordable housing to retention of open spaces to maintaining and improving city water, sewer, and streets. It might include aspects of land use, economic development, and community development. A first step in community planning might be community meetings to discuss residents' vision for Saratoga. A second step might be some in-depth strategic planning for the community. These types of meetings are most effective if an outside facilitator is used. Jennifer Goodman, Director of the Wyoming Community Network (jgoodman@uwoyo.edu, 307-766-2107) may be able to provide assistance in developing a community plan for Saratoga.

Joel Strong

Bighorn National Forest
2013 Eastside Second St
Sheridan, WY 82801
Phone – (307) 674-2645

RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

Saratoga Resource Team Report
October 2-3, 2000

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the community of Saratoga and our sponsors, especially those that contributed time and energy, lodging and meals to make this visit a success. It was extremely rewarding to see how the residents cared about their town and its future. Not only were concerns and problems shared, but many practical solutions were proposed. Saratoga does have a bright future!

I would also like to thank the other Team Members for their willingness to put in long hours and work cooperatively as a group. We had many productive conversations. Most important, it was FUN and a very rewarding experience.

My expertise is primarily in recreation and tourism, although I do have formal training in sociology and psychology. Most of my detailed comments address tourism issues. Many of the suggestions offered in my report are not necessarily mine, but came directly from participants at our listening sessions. In addition, the “town tour” provided some additional ideas that are detailed for your use. I’ve taken the liberty to capture, in table format (Appendix A), a condensed version of the challenges and potential solutions for most concerns raised. I consider it a road map for the future. The comments were grouped according to “major themes”. These theme categories were compiled by the Resource Team and allow us to better display and address the many expressed concerns.

I will be happy to address any of these issues in more detail or provide additional clarification. My email address is: jstrong@fs.fed.us or call me at (307) 674-2645.

Recreation and Tourism

CHALLENGE: Planning - Saratoga has many natural amenities that make it an ideal tourist destination. Obviously, most of the residents are already aware of these, but I’m not sure that the casual visitor tunes into all this information. Likewise, it’s unclear to me that the town has capitalized on its resources in a structured format that will allow for planned growth. Your community parks, playgrounds, the hot spring, swimming pool, river access, restaurants, lodging

establishments and the nearby National Forest all provide an excellent backdrop for marketing the area. Marketing should be done to promote your attributes. You do not want to significantly change the character of the town or its' surroundings without a "Plan". Marketing is not just promotions, but matching visitors and their expectations to the services of the community. It includes steps necessary to fulfill customer needs and ways to monitor success. It is more than creating a brochure.

Many of the respondents at our sessions mentioned the need to coordinate efforts and formalize the recreation program. Although the town should be applauded for beginning this process by hiring a Recreation Director, his/her task will be difficult without a "Development, Operations and Maintenance Plan". This issue is even larger in scope than just recreation, we must consider all aspects of community growth, including new light industry, housing, public infrastructure and services. I would encourage you, at a minimum, to do the following:

- Inform the residents, officials and community as a whole about tourism and its potential impacts both positive and negative. Get the town involved early in the decision making process.
- Integrate tourism efforts with local, state and federal government
- Encourage cooperation among neighboring communities and/or counties
- Encourage cooperation among private, public and nonprofit sectors.

SOLUTION: How do you get started? I would suggest you consider a consultant to provide these services and complete a "Community Development Plan" – your recreation resources would be one critical element of this planning process. You may want to contact some local firms to get an idea on the complexity of the job and the dollars necessary to complete the work. It may be possible to establish the Plan in phases to make it more economical and efficient. Our Forest (Bighorn) has had some excellent success in working with EDAW with offices in Fort Collins, CO. (Address: EDAW, Inc., 240 East Mountain Avenue, Fort Collins, CO. 80524 – Phone: (970) 484-8518). They have a web site that provides additional information (<http://www.edaw.com/>). Your main contact person would be Jana McKenzie. Their offices do extensive work including economic development, land use planning, streetscape design, environmental planning, development of design guidelines and zoning. *Plan for the future today, while you still have options.*

CHALLENGE: Pathways (Bike Trail) – At most of the listening sessions we heard about building a bike trail or the addition of a walking path along the Platte River. No doubt the town is blessed with a beautiful river offering excellent fishing and rafting opportunities. A trail or pathway system, if properly designed and operated, can become part of a unique recreation development for all the community. It can serve as a walking path for adults and seniors, a biking path, and an exercise facility to promote health and safety. In addition, it can become part of strategic plan for economic development while reducing traffic congestion and air pollution.

SOLUTION: As with any new project careful planning can avoid many pitfalls. I would recommend that the town consider such an endeavor as part of a much larger “Community Development Plan”. The pathways portion may be one phase of the project, as mentioned earlier. Nevertheless, if the community wants to proceed with a pathways project (Note: - best to describe this as a “pathways” project to allow the broadest interpretation for funding grants – it needs to be considered part of the community transportation system), it’s imperative that proper planning, at an appropriate scale, be done early. A good “Pathways Plan” will make grant writing easy and should be used as a selling point when applying for funds. This Plan should be structured to accomplish the following goals:

- Solicit public input into the design process and appropriate trail routes.
- Review potential environmental impacts and other factors that may affect implementation (e.g., access to the river).
- Determine the priority of development.
- Identify issues requiring more input and analysis.
- Provide a supporting document for funding.
- Outline how developments will be maintained and operated.

Enclosed (Appendix B) is an example of the “Sheridan Pathways Project” planning document. This effort actually began with the interest of several citizens who eventually formed a non-profit organization called TRAC (Transportation Alternatives Coalition). Their primary effort was to convince the community of the need for a trail system, develop a plan, and then secure funds for its construction. I spoke with [Robert Forister \(Electrical Inspector with the City of Sheridan – Phone \(307\) 674-5941, Extension 253\), now in “charge” of the project.](#) To ensure success he recommends:

- ✓ Do the planning up front – It takes time to build confidence and support from the community.
- ✓ Consider forming a non-profit organization to encourage grants and donations from organizations, individuals and civic groups.
- ✓ Do not re-invent the wheel – others have done this – learn from them.
- ✓ Get a trail segment built as soon as possible – this encourages community participation – it will no longer look like a dream.

Mr. Forister estimates that the initial planning cost approximately \$10,000. A bidding process was used to secure the most appropriate design contractor ([Aspect Consultant Group, L.L.C., 45 E. Loucks Street, Sheridan, WY 82810 – Phone \(307\) 672-2066](#)).

Additional contacts for supporting information include:

Gary Lacy (Former Greenways Coordinator for Boulder Colorado – Phone (303) 545-5883). He may be able to provide you with additional information on planning and/or contracting.

Dave Young (Wyoming Department of Transportation – Phone (307) 777-4275). Mr. Young administers the T.E.A.L. grant program (Transportation Enhancement Activities Local also known as the TEA 21, Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century). I understand that the town of Saratoga has used this program before to secure funds to build a restroom across from the Medical Center. TEAL grants are due in Cheyenne on June 30 of each year. A 5 member selection committee ranks the proposals. Awards are generally made by October. Competition for these funds is increasing. The committee normally receives 2 ½ to 3 times the number of grant requests as available dollars. The project should be well planned to ensure consideration. Two type of funds are available; on-system (projects associated within road rights-of-way) and off-system (projects outside of road rights-of-way). It appears that most funds for a trail project along the Platte River would qualify as off-system dollars.

In a side conversation, after the listening sessions, the question was raised on the use of the “Rails to Trails” program. I’m not aware of the opportunities that may be available for Saratoga. Generally, this program converts old rail grades (rights-of-way) into trail projects using a variety of funding sources (TEA-21). More research on this subject is necessary. Background information can be found on the web at:

<http://www.bts.gov/smart/cat/irt.html>
<http://www.railtrails.org/>

Enclosed for reference is the “Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities” (Appendix C). Many of the adopted standards for pathway construction can be found in this document published by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).

CHALLENGE: Marketing Opportunities – It appears the community of Saratoga has many recreational opportunities that may go unnoticed by the casual visitor. It’s also unclear if the facilities meet the needs of the tourism customer or the town resident. All too often we assume, as residents, that recreation sites are easy to find – We know where they are. All too often we assume that the services provided are adequate and fulfill our customers desires. Promoting what the town has to offer is critical to ensuring that tourism remains an important part of economic development. Many of the following suggestions were offered at the listening sessions. In addition, the “town tour” provided the opportunity to view some of the facilities and make some of my own recommendations.

SOLUTIONS:

- 1) Constituent Surveys – Visitor/User surveys are the building blocks of future recreation plans and developments. It’s important to determine if the public is satisfied with the facilities and services offered. What would they like to see changed or added. Surveys may include such information as demographic characteristics, perceptions regarding the adequacy of facilities and services, and scales of development. Survey participants should include visitors to

Saratoga and the resident users. Varied tools can be used to collect this data. If the community does not already have this information, I would suggest that a survey be conducted as soon as possible. The University of Wyoming has supported this type of data collection in the past through its Sociology Department and Recreation/Geology Department. The Bighorn National Forest conducted such a study through use of a graduate student project in the early 90's. Tex Taylor, UW Cooperative Extension (Phone – (307) 766-5682), can provide some background information.

- 2) Signing – I was impressed with many of the towns recreation developments. The public playgrounds, campground, swimming pool and hot springs are facilities you can be proud of. Nevertheless, it was unclear to me, as a first time visitor, who operated these sites or where they were. The Chamber publishes an excellent map, but you still have to obtain a copy before its usable. I would recommend that the town consider a more consistent approach to signing its recreation developments. Doing so will portray unified, quality management. Appendix D includes an example of signing using international symbols. This is only an example and the exact working would require more design time. All signs should meet MUTCD (Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices) standards (e.g., size, color). You may wish to contact the Wyoming Department of Transportation for help in securing a quality manufacturer. More information on signing is available at this interesting web site:

<http://members.aol.com/rcmoeur/signman.html> .

I would also suggest that the community construct a welcome sign on the south side of town similar to the northern entrance.

- 3) Historic Interpretation – Many of the buildings appear to have historic significance. No doubt the town has a heritage that would be important to share with the visiting public. A rather simple approach is the development of a walking tour in the downtown area. I would include some information about settlement of the region and how important the ranching, tourism, and timber industry are to the local economy. I would also include some information on the Platte River. I assume the river was important to why the town was founded. Studies show visitors are excited about our colorful western history. The City of Buffalo, Wyoming has a similar walking tour. Contact the Buffalo Chamber of Commerce for more information (Buffalo Chamber of Commerce, 55 N. Main Street, Buffalo, WY 82834 · Phone: 800-227-5122 or 307-684-5544; Nadine Gross, Executive Director) <http://www.buffalowyo.org/index.html> .
- 4) Infrastructure - Maintaining infrastructure is critical to making a favorable impression on the visitor. Simple things can make all the difference. Keeping facilities clean is extremely important. Consider placing more gravel on the campground roads and spurs (e.g., around the accessible sites) and at the wildlife viewing area parking lot. Does the city park/playground opposite the Medical Center have a name? Sometimes names can be important recognition factors and drawing cards to an area. Consider placing curb and gutter

in the parking areas around this city park. Paving might be a future option. The area will look more manicured and fit the appropriate scale of existing development.

Future plans should call for upgrading facilities at Veteran's Island (restrooms, and potable water).

- 5) Intergovernmental Cooperation – I would recommend that the town, Chamber and the county consider forming a union with Albany County for marketing the Snowy Range and its adjacent communities. Although the first reaction is to compete for business, it's often better to combine resources and share in the benefits of a consolidated marketing program. The part that binds you together is State Route 130, a "Scenic Byway". Encourage people to make a loop using Interstate 80. This form of collaboration has worked extremely well in Johnson, Sheridan, Big Horn, and Washakie Counties with the forming of the Big Horn Mountain Country Coalition. County Commissionaires along with representatives of the tourism industry serve on a board that meets on a monthly basis. The board has a paid director that applies for grants and coordinates activities over the entire region. Originally started as a means to promote the Big Horn Mountains, its mission has grown in scope. Your contact is Donald L. McCracken at P.O. Box 153, Cowley, WY 82420 – Phone (307) 548-6153; <http://www.bighorns.com/> .

As a sidelight, I would encourage you to work closely with the Medicine Bow/Routt National Forest and their local office, especially as they continue their Forest Plan Revision. It's critical that the town gets input into this process.

- 6) Community Recreation Center – It was obvious in almost all sessions that leaders of the community, the youth, and many of the residents want some type of community center. For the tourism market there is no meeting space for conventions or large- scale gatherings. For the recreation user there is no place for indoor recreation, especially during the winter. The youth wanted some place to socialize. The Team felt it was appropriate to consider a multi-purpose building to better meet all these needs. If the community wants such a building, it will have to figure a way to construct and maintain it. No doubt the will is there, now it's the strategy that needs developed. *I would encourage you to form a team to address these issues composed of representatives of each user group.* Please don't forget to include your youth – they are the future of Saratoga.

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Communication

CHALLENGE: We heard that there seems to be a lack of coordination between organizations, local government continuity and coordination between Government.

SOLUTIONS: It is recommended that the Town of Saratoga hold a **Town Hall Meeting** as soon as possible, no more than a month after receiving the Resource Team Report, and invite and encourage everyone that participated in the Resource Team assessment process to attend. Also invite the county commissioners to attend. Use this meeting to develop some goals for Saratoga, short term as well as long-term goals, and establish committees to implement the goals set at this meeting. Set specific time frames for completion of these goals, and then celebrate the accomplishment of these goals. Make sure committee chairs are given the ability to choose their team members. You may want to have Mary Randolph help facilitate this meeting. A facilitator will keep the meeting focused and encourage input from all participants. Have periodic meetings to keep one another informed on the progress of the committees.

SOLUTIONS: You may want to try some quick and easy projects to start with, such as:

1. **Have a Community Wide Clean Up day**, -- Involve the school, civic organizations, churches, and anyone who has an interest in seeing your community look neat and clean. Set aside a day and organize groups of people to work on specific projects, mow vacant lots, paint windows on downtown buildings, and pick up junk and trash around town. You may want to offer property owners the service of removing some unsightly objects that clutter lawns in town.
2. **Have a Christmas Decoration Contest** --Since Christmas is approaching have a Christmas decoration contest between the school, the churches, the farmers/ranchers, the City Council, etc. Have someone from out of Town act as judge, and offer a prize such as a free lunch or dinner at local restaurant or free pizza.

Business/Economic Development,

CHALLENGE: We heard you tell us that you feel there are no supportable family wage jobs, the small population and size of Saratoga, limited retail shopping, lack of support for local businesses, and the aging population. These are common problems for most small towns in Wyoming.

SOLUTION: I feel that because of the recreational resources available to the area, these should be capitalized on. Put up signs advertising the community spirit, the natural resources, medical service, the climate, the open spaces, the friendly people and the stable economy. Include the kids, maybe have some of the high school students make up brochures to distribute to adjacent towns such as Laramie, Cheyenne, Rock Springs, and Rawlins. Advertise and encourage hunting. Include the Seniors in the planning and designing of the brochures.

SOLUTION: The road to economic opportunity and community development starts with broad participation by all segments of the community. This may include, among others, the political and Governmental leadership, community groups, health and social service groups, environmental groups, religious organizations, the private and nonprofit sectors, centers of learning, and other community institutions.

RESOURCES: One of the resources available may be for the local farmers and ranchers to consider forming one or more co-operatives. A cooperative is a user-owned business that processes and markets products, purchases production supplies or consumer goods, and provides other services needed by rural residents. By working together for their mutual benefit in cooperatives, rural residents are able to reduce costs, obtain services that might otherwise be unavailable, such as the grocery store, and achieve greater returns for their products. The Cooperative Services program of Rural Business Cooperative Service is administered in Wyoming out of the USDA/Rural Development Office in Casper located at 100 East B Street or write to P. O. Box 820, Casper, WY 82602 or call John Cochran, Director Business & Cooperatives Program at (307) 261-6319.

The Rural Utilities Service through the local Rural Electrical Association can provide funds to finance a broad array of projects, including for profit businesses. Grants are targeted to certain purposes such as community development assistance, education and training for economic development, medical care, telecommunications for education, job training or medical services, and technical assistance . Contact Local Rural Electric Association.

USDA/Rural Development offers Business and Industrial Guarantee Loans, Intermediary Re-lending Program Loans which consist of loans made by the Rural Business-Cooperative Service to intermediaries to provide loans to ultimate recipients for business facilities and community development projects in a rural area.

USDA/Rural Development also has a program called Rural Business Enterprise Grants to assist public bodies and nonprofit corporations to finance and facilitate development of small and emerging private business enterprises.

If you are interested in learning more about these programs you should contact Keith Campbell with USDA/Rural Development in Riverton at (307) 856-5383 or Billie Kirkham with USDA/Rural Development in Riverton at (307) 856-7524, Ext. 4.

Housing

CHALLENGE: We heard that there was very little to no affordable housing to rent or buy for families or senior citizens.

SOLUTION: Conduct a needs survey. It is important to know what is needed, how many units are needed and whether there is a need for family versus elderly housing units. USDA-Rural Development offers several loan programs to for profit, and non-profit groups as well as individuals to construct low income rental housing as well as single family dwellings through direct loans, guarantee loans through local lenders, participation loans with local lenders and Rural Development. There are also Wyoming Community Development Authority (WCDA) low interest loans to first time homebuyers. Housing and Urban Development has housing programs as well as the Veterans Administration has guaranteed housing programs for veterans.

SOLUTION: Instead of individuals trying to construct rental units for the senior citizens, the Town can form a Housing Authority to let them seek assistance for constructing apartments as well as assisted living centers.

RECOURSE: It is suggested that you contact Cheryl Gillum. Wyoming Community Development Authority (WCDA), P. O. Box 634, Casper, WY 82602 or call (307) 265-0603 to request assistance in completing a needs assessment to determine the need for a rental housing project. Contact Keith Campbell USDA/Rural Development, at (307) 856-5383 in Riverton, WY Most Real Estate Agents as well as local lenders are familiar with the WCDA loans as well as the HUD and VA loans. The Town of Sundance may be able to assist the Town of Saratoga as they have a very successful Senior Citizen Apartments run by a Housing Authority appointed by the Town.

CHALLENGE: There is a need for Assisted Living for the elderly.

SOULUTION: Again a needs assessment should be done to determine the size of facility needed. This type of program would be considered a community facility and as such USDA Rural Development has a community facility loan, grant and guaranteed program to assist in constructing such a facility. Through the community facility program, essential community facilities must provide an essential service to the local community – the service should be a service that is typically provided by a local unit of government; be needed for the orderly development of the rural community, considered a public improvement; and may not include private, commercial, or business undertakings. Significant community support is a critical factor in determining applicant eligibility since the type of project (financed through a nonprofit organization) has to emulate the same level of need and support that a public body would rely on. The following are eligible to apply for community facility loans: governmental entities such as towns, cities, counties, or special-purpose districts; nonprofit organizations (including associations, private corporations, or cooperatives) if they can demonstrate significant ties with the local rural communities.

Another possible program is the Congregate Housing and Group Home programs funded also by USDA/Rural Development. Congregate housing is residential housing consisting of private apartments and central dining facilities in which services are provided to tenants to enable them to remain independent. A group home is housing that is occupied by elderly, handicapped or disabled tenants sharing living space within a rental unit in which a resident assistant may be required. All congregate housing and group homes finance by Rural Development must provide at least 1 nutritious meal a day, 7 days a week; transportation to shopping, services and medical facilities; routine housekeeping; non-medical personal services, such as assistance with shampooing hair, dressing, bathing, etc.; recreation and social activities.

RESOURCE: Contact Keith Campbell, USDA/Rural Development in Riverton at (307) 856-5383 or Billie Kirkham in Riverton at (307) 856-7524, Ext. 4. State and area agencies on aging or other appropriate agencies may be able to provide some of the above named services. There are two successful congregate housing projects, one in Riverton and one in Green River, built by Don Wallgrave at 101 East 34th Street, Sioux Falls, SD 57105 (605) 335-6569. The name of the congregate housing in Riverton is Owl Creek Apartments located at 2220 Rose Lane (307) 856-6068.

Youth

CHALLENGE: There seems to be a very real need for affordable day care facilities.

SOLUTION: Congress has appropriated \$6 million for the Rural Community Development Initiative. This money will develop the capacity and ability of private, non-profit community housing and community development organizations and low-income rural communities to undertake projects to improve housing, community facilities and community and economic development projects in rural areas. One of the major focuses is on childcare facilities. This program is funded through the community facility program and administered by USDA/Rural Development

RESOURCE: Keith Campbell, USDA/Rural Development, in Riverton at (307) 856-5383 or Billie Kirkham also in Riverton at (307) 856-7524

WHAT WE HEARD FROM WHAT WAS SAID

After listening to the citizens of Saratoga, the Resource Team reviewed what was said and condensed the comments down to a few basic statements. These are in no particular order or priority.

QUALITY OF LIFE

- Community spirit
- Lack of crime
- Natural resources
- Medical services
- Climate
- Volunteerism
- Open space
- Friendly people
- Stable economy

COMMUNICATION

- Coordination between organizations
- Local Government continuity
- Coordination between Government
- Generation gap

TELECOMMUNICATION

- Directory assistance
- Fiber optics
- Service reliability
- Radio/TV reception

BUSINESS/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Light industrial siting
- Small business financing
- Seasonal economy
- Cyclic economy – need diversification
- Transportation challenges
- Workforce-availability and wages
- Community Center

EDUCATION

- Community education (business, e-commerce, tourism)
- Adult/Continuing education
- Small business training

HEALTH

Social Services availability and programs
Full time EMT
Staff/Support availability
Specialists visits

YOUTH

After school activities
Teen center
Drug & alcohol misuse
Employment for youth
Stereotyping of youth
Teenage pregnancy
Day care/Child care

HOUSING

Affordable senior housing
Assisted living
Affordable family housing – purchasing and rentals

RECREATION/TOURISM

Trail system
Winter season
Recreation center
Established recreation area improvements
Historic interpretation

TRANSPORTATION

Public transportation
Senior transportation
Accessibility

PLANNING

Planned growth
Protect community values
Zoning – consistent and enforcement

AESTHETICS

Community clean up
Community entrances

INFRASTRUCTURE

Paving streets

WHAT WAS SAID IN THE INTERVIEWS

The Resource Team spent 2 days interviewing local residents to hear what they had to say. Those being interviewed were directed to answer three questions:

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

We have listed below, without comment, what we heard from those who volunteered to be interviewed.

What are the major problems and challenges in your community?

Small economic base
Need for jobs for family
Lack of employable people - no workforce
Astatically cleaning up community
Astatically cleaning up community
Organized growth of community, but keeping small town atmosphere
Lack of affordable housing/lack of well paying jobs
Lack of accommodations for tourism
Lack of government cooperation
Lack of jobs for families
Phone service
High utility rates
Lack of jobs for families
Affordable housing - under \$100,000
Lack of room for light industry to grow
High teen pregnancy
Teen alcohol & drug use
Not enough recreations activities - lack of other than outdoor recreation (want swimming pool, problems using existing buildings, rules, politics)
Problems retaining young adults
School system lowering standards - cannot read when graduate
Problems with communications - telephone information highway with no gate
Town government is not helpful to small business

Education problems - conflicts, discipline, administrative
Telephone communication problems - no directory assistance
Break up of family unit is
Light industrial zoning in the town
Abusive situations related to alcohol or drugs
Union telephone - no directory assistance - won't negotiate with US WEST to get this done
Light industry - two problems - zoning enforcement and not much room
Rely too heavily on tourism as an economic base
Employment for young adults
Apathy and complacency - nobody making real efforts or plans
Lack of infrastructure - including fiber optics
Need a light industrial area
Need a light industrial area
Recreation group just fell apart
Get more citizens involved - same people on all boards
Jurisdiction problem at the lake
Serious alcohol problem/chewing tobacco problem
Apathy and tolerance of self-destructive behaviors by youth
Apathy and tolerance of self-destructive behaviors by youth
Community norm about drinking - it is an acceptable social behavior with adults and youth
Community norm about drinking - it is an acceptable social behavior with adults and youth
Lack of jobs that pay a decent wage
Lack of jobs that pay a decent wage
Lack of affordable daycare, children left alone or at many places - lack of quality daycare
Lack of affordable daycare, children left alone or at many places - lack of quality daycare
Lack of affordable daycare, children left alone or at many places - lack of quality daycare
Lack of affordable daycare, children left alone or at many places - lack of quality daycare
Lack of something for kids to do, recreational
Lack of activities outside of the school
Lack of state of the art telecommunications
Lack of state of the art telecommunications lack of state of the art telecommunications lack of support services /behavioral/social development of youth
Utility costs
Lack of light industry
Lack of funding, lack of grant resources/information
Transportation availability and costs
Youth keep leaving the town and state
Lack of work force
Transportation problems - weather- ability to get into the area in the winter, freight,
Lack of childcare
Too much emphasis on tourism, have other economy areas such as agriculture and timber - don't put all eggs in one basket
Lack of cooperation and appreciate about agriculture from government
Government regulation (too much)

Federal government being involved in family and business (i.e. Nebraska water fight) making decisions without the input of those affected

Overall tax structure in regards to agriculture - looking at sales tax and other states

Property taxes are burdensome to agriculture

Lack of things for teenagers to do

School district #2 financing is not equitable; Cheyenne does not understand the rule issues of riding buses

4-H is plummeting

Overloaded extension program - requiring master's degree - losing kids to everything else

Lack of vocational education classes

Communications - local telephone carrier - services-data lines, cell phones, computers, regular phone use

Lacking in planning and commitment in the community - across the board

FFA - vocational training problems

Lack of radio services at different times of the day, lack of television stations

Economic viability keeping agriculture afloat

School enrollment way down

May need a higher level of medical services

Recruitment and coverage of law enforcement and medical

Public access

Public access

Amount of timber that has been offered recently

Fire at mill created loss of jobs - affected community

Evolution of zoning requirements, astatically

Maintain trains and lifestyles, in a stagnate economy

Endangered species

Platte river water issues

Infrastructure - phones, radio, communications, high-speed modem lines

Telephones - not being listed in directory assistance

Lack of rental housing

Transportation is a problem, EMTs not funded well, recruit and maintain good EMTs

Transportation is a problem, EMTs not funded well, recruit and maintain good EMTs

Specialty providers are 150+ miles away (medical wise)

Transportation to specialist

Transportation to specialist

Transportation to specialist

Bring in specialists once per month

Assisted/independent living

Assisted/independent living

Assisted/independent living

No adequate housing for low-income seniors

Shrinking populations of younger people (workforce)

Access to department of family services, come here once or twice a month

Recreation opportunities for children

Lack of family planning - high teenage pregnancy rate
Lack of family planning - high teenage pregnancy rate
Lack of local options for substance abuse patients
Lack of recreation center - water recreation in winter
Inadequate staffing at nursing home
Lack of medical assistance for children who don't qualify for Medicaid but do not have insurance
Lack of medical assistance for children who don't qualify for Medicaid but do not have insurance
Inadequate paid EMTs, not appreciated
Alcohol & drug problem with teenagers
Litter, no enforcement
Lack of prenatal classes in community
Vandalism
Telecommunications - need fiber optics
Seasonable, economy
Seasonable, economy
Lack of recreation for younger people - teenagers, young adults
Lack of recreation for younger people - teenagers, young adults
Not much room for growth, commercial or residential
Keeping people here - jobs
Lack of affordable real estate
Attitude toward change, stay like we are, don't want growth
Attitude toward change, stay like we are, don't want growth
Attitude toward change, stay like we are, don't want growth
A destination for retirement mode - want services but don't want to pay for it
Expectations are higher than willing are people to invest
Expectations are higher than willing are people to invest
Challenge to keep up with quality infrastructure
Lack of work force/keeping the young kids here
Wages and benefits are not keeping up with the cost of living
Lack of cohesiveness in community between groups
Lack of volunteerism - same people are volunteering
Lack of cooperation between services organizations and municipalities
Planning and open space
Getting it's own house in order - cleaning up and being ascetic
Don't have enough business competition in town
Teen smoking and drinking issue
Lack of use of seat belts
Lack of family growth - declining families and school population
Town doesn't cater to year round residents - more focused towards tourism
Lack of out of school activities for children
Lack of out of school activities for children
Getting young people in service organizations and volunteers

Zoning issues

Clean up of hazardous buildings

Lack of adequate news coverage's for events

Affordable day care

Low-income housing

Lack of a place for arts and cultural resources

Lack of a place for arts and cultural resources

Lack of a place for arts and cultural resources

Lack of meeting space

Lack of a place for arts and cultural resources

Convention center/auditorium

Inadequate phone system

Inadequate phone system

Inadequate phone system

Lack of directory assistance

Inadequate phone system

Lack of family planning-teen pregnancy, children having children

Phone Company finding a way to increase revenue, but not providing basic service

Drugs & alcohol

Drugs & alcohol

Drugs & alcohol

Drugs & alcohol

Not enough things for youth to do

That is why youth are doing drugs alcohol

Town is boring

Town is boring

Gas prices too high

No fun

Pick up garbage

Cops don't let you do anything

Speed limit too low

Speed limit too low

Speed limit too low

No curfew or different curfew

Community shuns kids - adults think that kids are all bad

Don't give kids a chance, 2nd chances

Lack of shopping opportunities

Lack of stock in stores
Merchants closing and opening at bad times
Community not supportive of girl's sports
Lack of fast food places
Restrictions in school - cannot play hack sack –
Money for school not distributed equally
Treat high school like 1st graders
Need for employment opportunities - diversified
People are leaving
Finding quality employees
Perception and lack of knowledge of Wyoming and Saratoga
Lack of winter business
Seasonal nature of community - tourism, agriculture, - a real short season
Seasonal nature of community - tourism, agriculture, - a real short season
Communications element - phone, cell phone, Internet
Communications element - phone, cell phone, Internet
Internet service is sporadic, DSL is reliable but expensive
Basic phone service - connection problems - two cans and a string
Lack of meeting space
Zoning and planning in general is poor - not followed and enforced
How many businesses being run out of home
Lack of tourism promotions from WBC
Lack of funding to Wyoming tourism
Lodging folks are having to play chamber of commerce because of lack of promotion
Becoming a retirement community - not bringing in families and workforce
Anti tourism attitude in community - bank is not favorable to small business
High and rising utility rates
PSC should be elected and not appointed - funded by people they regulate, fox in the hen house -
Do not represent people-
Lack of public transportation - none
Distance - remoteness of community - cost of transportation
Restaurants have to honor employees wishes and close down on Holidays - makes it tuff for visitors
Drawing people to community and having jobs and housing for them
Lack of balance between retirement and those raising families
Lack of balance between retirement and those raising families
Lack of educational for all ages - continuing education, etc
Lack of funding for schools
Lack of work force
Lack of affordable real estate - no reasonable housing available
Tunnel vision - lack of awareness of issues - educated about community issues - regional,
national and international
Lack of recreational opportunities in town
Lack of understanding how important it is to be involved

Communication - people don't get involved in meetings and then story is not put out right
Land use planning and enforcement
Water use and allocation
Telecommunications
Outlets for kids - stuff for them to do, besides sports

What are the major strengths and assets in you community?

Strong community spirit
Appealing atmosphere
Pleasant community - assets - river, mountains Natural resources
Close business community relationships
Atmosphere to raise families - laid back
Small town atmosphere - low crime rate
Reasonable cost of living
adequate to high recreations opportunities A
Pleasant weather
Excellent business community that works well together
Natural resources, airport, golf course
Family oriented - parents get involved
Outdoor recreation opportunities year round
County has historic significance
People who live here
Have a diverse economy
Small town friendly community
Sense of community, dependable, friendly
Good people
Sense of safety, lack of crime
People have a positive outlook
Scenery, diversity, recreational (hunt, fish, snowmobile)
Recreation, outdoor activities, diversity
Affordable rental housing
Really good medical community
Diversity - timber, agriculture, recreation
Strong church community - strong tradition of churches
Airport
Arts council
Museum and outdoor pavilion
Putting on a recreation director (for planning and implementations)
Interested in recreation/addressing the recreation issue
People who live here- always same people attending meetings though

Recreational opportunities

Medical services

Community

Strong quality of life, but expensive

Strong city government and city employees

Excellent school system

Dedicated teachers

Growing airport

Good relationships with surrounding communities

Valley is the community, not three separate communities in a valley/joint community efforts

Location

People who live here, catch & release

Transportation - great airport

Scenery, the valley

Scenery, the valley

Home, roots - homey - no tract homes

General attitude of people - good attitudes

General attitude of people - good attitudes

Supportive parents

Supportive parents

Open space, not congested

Strong community

Great collaboration - Community Readiness Team

Strong civic organizations

Get along well with surrounding towns - community relationships

Ingenuity by people to create activities and atmosphere

Ingenuity by people to create activities and atmosphere

Diverse

Excellent medical team and facilities

Excellent medical team and facilities

Playground & soccer fund raising events

Student/teacher ration - quality of education

Student/teacher ration - quality of education

Chamber is progressive in their efforts for the community

Outdoors - river, mountains, recreational opportunities, natural resources

Outdoors - river, mountains, recreational opportunities, natural resources

Abundance of resources and land

Restaurants and novelty shops

Merchants - friendly, know people, services - quality of service

People who live here

People who live here

Local civic organizations

Sound economically - maintain standard of living - low crime rate

Members contribute to community that provide items

Low crime rate, safe

People who have made the community what it is

Valley is outstanding as cattle producers, quality of production, ranchers educated

Lower tax base, property

Major private land is under stable ownership

Medical personnel and facilities, ambulance, vet, dental, nursing home

Outstanding emergency personnel and emergency response

Local soil conservation district passed a levy, active board, protective helps agriculture and the town

Churches, variety

Lots of voter interest, well informed, active

Town Council and Chamber of Commerce - creative - out side of the box thinking

Generosity of people in town

Friendly people

Willingness to help each other's

Involvement of community

Lifestyle

Natural resources

Access to public lands

Wildlife resources

Low crime rate, safe

Excellent working relationship between federal agencies

Schools

North Platte River corridor

Hot springs

Affordable housing for purchase

Good medical, fire, police

Restaurants

Golf courses

Variety of ages and people living here

Recreational opportunities

Volunteers

Wealthy citizens, good at giving donations

Excellent medical facility and staff

Community activities, especially in summer

Strong sense of community

Strong senior center

Well bonded community

Clean water, fresh air, and deer in town

Location, beautiful area
People want to be here
People want to be here
Strong community commitment
Strong community commitment
Natural resources - outdoor activities
Community taking steps to plan for change
Is not dependent on energy, more diversified
Chamber of commerce - promotions
Playground
The mill - commitment to stay
Natural attributes - location
Agriculture community preserves natural resources and quality of life
Remodeling of down town area, innovative ideas
Overall culture
Great place to raise kids
Helping hand type of attitude
Beautiful location, natural resources
Good access to town
Airport
Airport
Medical facilities
Quality of life, low crime, safe
Quality of life, low crime, safe
Good neighbors
Security
Strong arts council
Strong Lions club
Good schools and caring professionals
Small town friendliness
Small town friendliness
Strong volunteer base - easy to get involved
Strong volunteer base - easy to get involved
Strong volunteer base - easy to get involved
Professionalism - college degrees base
Community Readiness team - collaborations
Old Baldy Club - financial donations - very generous - supportive- volunteering
Old Baldy Club - financial donations - very generous - supportive- volunteering
Medical facilities
Hot springs
Saratoga lakes campground

See stars at night
See stars at night
See stars at night
See stars at night
Low populations
Not a lot of violence
Know everyone, small community
Small community
Outdoor recreational opportunities
Mountains
Small, can walk to places
Quicker to get through town
Gopher fishing
Schools, student/teacher ratio and contact
Nothing
Snow boarding/sledding
Ice fishing
No traffic
No traffic
No traffic
No pollution
No traffic
Safe community
Good support for boys sports teams
Good support for boys sports teams
Good support for boys sports teams
No stop lights
Close to mountains
Close to mountains
Close to mountains
Safe community
Ice skating
Wonderful place to raise children
Schools are well run

Strong tradition of public service
Strong tradition of public service
Strong volunteer organizations
Strong volunteer organizations
Great community
Great community
Great people
Pretty little town
Natural resources
Natural resources
river runs through the town
Facilities - airport, golf course, medical facilities
Active chamber of commerce
A lot of recreation - parks
Great restaurants - people from Rawlins drive here to eat
Strong cooperation between lodging and restaurants
Strong business community - stable and reliable
Tourist are paying high percent of sales tax and all of lodging tax
Family is here and have been here - safe place to be, wholesome, support structure
Multiple use availability
Sense of community
Friendliness, willingness to help
Friendliness, willingness to help
Locations, proximity to public land
Services - medical, dental
Services - medical, dental
Rustic appearance
Good reputation throughout Wyoming
Natural resources
Proximity to other towns - far away enough to enjoy, close enough to be available
Excellent fire dept and ambulance
Excellent fire dept and ambulance
Excellent volunteerism

What project would you like to see accomplished in your community in the next TWO, FIVE and TWENTY years?

Infrastructure - water, sewer, streets
Small business, light industry
Beautification projects to south to be like the north
Infrastructure - water, sewer, streets
Veterans Island clean up, accessibility, water, sewer, restrooms, enhancement, bridge,
Infrastructure
Convention center - meeting facilities
Convention center - meeting facilities
Design in a way to add a recreation center in the future
community center - meetings and recreations
Incentive for residents to clean up their property
Get town cleaned up
Incentive for residents to clean up their property
Get town cleaned up
Tourism - walking path/track keep people here longer
Eliminate weeds on sidewalks
Zoning requirements enforcement
Keep parks clean
Invite city managers to come spend the night in exchange for ideas on an on-going basis
Walking/bike trail from town hall to the forest service building (RIVER)
Walking/bike trail by river for beautifications
Community center with a performance area - attract cultural events
Fiber optics
Community center for youth
Building to house stuff clothes and furniture for donation (resource center for those in need)
Continue paving streets
Speaker's bureau
Community/recreational center
Swimming pool open all year round
More room for light industry
More room for light industry
Work with YMCA to promote a project to build a facility
To attract light industry
Growth to infrastructure - planning and maintenance
Convention center - utilized for community activities
Covered swimming pool

Creating jobs

Getting fiber optics

POP at Walcott Junction plus fiber optics to the valley

New industry in light to medium area - stable employer

More stable employers

More activities for the young people that they like to do

Variety retail business that would provide more shopping opportunities

Development of a light industrial park

Completion and improvements of the recreation project started at the lake

Develop community educations regarding how funding is spent, how economic development will help the tax base

Method put in place to decide on goals and follow them through - build a foundation that

Someone might build a house on

Follow through with goal setting

Support system and services for troubled youth, teens and adults

Expand our recreation facilities including the plans for a walking trail

Saratoga Inn Bridge finished

Decent walkway from end of town to airport and rest of community on top of hill

More paved streets - all areas

Curb and gutter

More jobs

Recreational center - kids have a place to go and do activities (supervised)

Quality, affordable childcare and after school care

6-6 program, school & city, school would provide meals and supervision, activities

Area between highway ditch and the river (Bridge Street south to Male and east to the river to be developed into business district

River front cleaned up

See the community alive during the winter - activities in winter

See the community alive during the winter - activities in winter

More affordable housing in lower income brackets

Soccer/baseball fields - athletic facility for adults and youth

Stable- year round job opportunities/economy

Paid activity director and staff to pursue grant writing

Clean up abandoned areas - clean up of property - safety, sanitary, aesthetic

More business opportunities - more choices for shopping

Small business training

Proactive instead of reactive services in the mental health area

Speed limit 20 mph

Covered swimming pool

Clean up around and in town, as you approach town

Recreations center

Cottage industry development

Zoning and planning in a format that is doable and enforceable

Nothing - keep the small community -the community we like

Amtrak come through Rawlins to enhance transportation

Higher education in additions to what is here
Better garbage disposal and more competition
More stable economy in town, get away from boom and bust cycle
Continue infrastructure improvements, including medical facilities
Community center - meeting opportunities
Public restrooms/facilities down in town
Economic study of the valley
Capitalize more on the hot springs - development
Community/recreation center
Community/recreation center
More recreations development with the Platte River
Convention facilities
Trail system following North Platte corridor
Community web site - more interactive - more information
Horse campground, trail
Historical interpretation
Establish an outdoor learning center for kids
Career fairs - can find careers in rural areas
Community master plan and work as an entire valley
Interpretive programs, environment education
Federal and state agencies offer more seasonal opportunities
Library open more hours
Emergency services assistance
Community education and planning for more people in the valley
Urban interface and fire danger planning
Indoor recreation center
Indoor recreation center
Indoor recreation center with community center
Assisted living center
Assisted living center
Health care program for the poor who don't qualify for anything else
Housing for low income seniors
City planning for ascetics, signs garbage
Ski area
Paid EMT position - paramedic level - to coordinate, grants
Public transportation in town
Have county offices in Saratoga, so county offices from Rawlins could come to Saratoga to be
 here for a week or every other week
Involve the town of encampment
Park project continued and developed
Recreation center - indoor pool
Community center/meeting facilities/motel facilities
Development of a long range plan

Development of a long-range plan

Low income housing for seniors
Affordable real estate development
Light business comes to community
Plan for water usage, become involved in water law
Enhance the natural beauty - clean up the town - pride back into community
Enhance the natural beauty - clean up the town - pride back into community
Project to develop winter activities - reduce dependency of seasonal economy
Finish football field project - soccer tournaments - track meets
Continue to development and maintain infrastructure
Convention center with an auditorium
Convention center done with good planning
Convention center done with good planning
Town clean up - get rid of junk spots
Comprehensive plan and open use plan be developed -if convention center need a motel
Get fiber optics, adequate phone system, and gateway to future
List published of charitable and service organizations along with their accomplishments
Cover existing swimming pool and hot springs and upgrade facilities
More stable economy base
Formalized way civic, church leaders get together on a quarterly basis to coordinate activities
Improve winter economy - promote ski area
Winter activities - if you build it, we will come
Improve transportation - ability to move snow - winter access
Be proactive instead of reactive in planning
Walking path/trail
Movie theatre
Movie theatre
Skate Park
Movie theatre
Recreations center
Recreations center
Recreations center
Recreations center
Recreations center
Bowling alley
Music store
Music store
Music store

Recreation center indoor pool

Place to get underwear
Fast food - McDonalds
Fast food - McDonalds
Dance club
Hangout - somewhere to go
Hangout - somewhere to go
Hangout - somewhere to go
Tutoring group - more involved in other schools
Track finished
Track finished
Track finished
Track finished
Track finished
Golf team
Golf team
Golf team
Golf team
Block scheduling in school
Prohibit out of state hunting
Roller coaster
Pizza hut
Pool hall/w food
Pool hall with arcade
Pool hall with arcade
Pool hall with arcade
Paint ball
All around mini mall
All parents gone

All parents gone

New phone company

Caller id

*69

Internet access

Slow

Expensive

Three way calling

Would rather have bowling alley than covered swimming pool

Bowling, movie, hangout, arcade thingy would give them fun things to do an jobs

Help us please

Public education that would show how a tourism dollar turns over 7 times, how tourism benefits community and how taxes spent help other taxes from rising

Convention center

Indoor recreation facilities

Diversify economy to not count on tourism so much - study on how to make this community more year round employment

Diversify economy to not count on tourism so much - study on how to make this community more year round employment

Diversify economy to not count on tourism so much - study on how to make this community more year round employment

Community event center that wears many hats - multi purpose

Community event center that wears many hats - multi purpose

Community event center that wears many hats - multi purpose

Senior assisted living units

If adequate meeting spaces then rooms and motels will be built, it is the cart before the horse

Zoning should be looked at enforced, consolidated, planned

Sandy Beach at Saratoga Lake cleaned up and improved

Place where kids would be comfortable hanging out, talking, go socializing in a constructive way

More availability and affordability in buying and renting housing

Recreation walking trails from river connecting to lake

Recreational center centralized location, stuff for kids to do

Library expanded to include more services, materials, programs, and hours

Local pool enclosed

Assisted living facility

Hot pools stays open and free in 20 years

Curb and gutter

More business opportunities - new business - will bring in more people

Another telephone company

Improved infrastructure - telecommunications, power

In 20 years the town looking like it does not, not a lot of growth, but some

Health center with pool, walking track, weights, classes in exercise & nutrition