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**Wheatland Resource Team**  
**September 11-14, 2000**

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## **Acknowledgement**

**The Wheatland Community Assessment was funded in part by the Town of Wheatland and the County of Platte. The Wheatland Area Development Corporation (WADCO) thanks the Town Council and the County Commissioners for their support and their participation. Other organizations providing assistance to the process was Pamida, Inc., Wheatland Kiwanis, American Association of University Women, Wheatland Fire Auxiliary, Platte County Ministerial Association, United Methodist Church, Wheatland High School, Platte County Memorial Hospital, Lions Club, Go-Zone, University of Wyoming/Platte County Cooperative Extension, Platte County Library, Doug Weaver, Rex Johnson, Platte County Family and Community Education Council, Services for Seniors, Platte County Emergency Management Agency, Noyce's Friendly Shop and the WADCO staff and Board of Directors.**

**We would be remiss in not mentioning the Herculean efforts of the Resource Team, both on-site and after the Community Assessment. The Community Assessment would not have been feasible had it not been for their volunteer efforts. Their expertise and resources will help the leaders and citizens of this community make decisive decisions as to the direction they choose to take. Also, thanks to the Wyoming Rural Development Council for their continuous work in helping small, rural communities make a difference!**

**Obviously the Community Assessment would not have been successful without the input of you, the citizens. Thank you for participating in the listening sessions and for letting your voices be heard. Individually and collectively you had great ideas for improving our wonderful community. Your help will be critical in supporting projects as they become identified and prioritized.**

**Lastly, but certainly not least, we extend special thanks to the Core Committee [and the organizations they represent] for their hard work and perseverance throughout the entire process. Members and agencies of the Core Committee as listed individually on pages five and six will continue to serve this vital process as local contacts.**

**Linda G. Fabian  
Executive Director, WADCO**

## **THE WYOMING RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

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

WRDC is governed by a 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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[www.wyomingrural.org](http://www.wyomingrural.org)

## **PROCESS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS REPORT**

The Wyoming Rural Development Council (WRDC) provided a resource team to assist Wheatland, Wyoming in evaluating the community's assets and liabilities and in developing suggestions for improving the environment, social and economic future of Wheatland. The team members were carefully selected based on their fields of expertise. Their job was to work with the core committee, interview citizens, business and community leaders; and develop a plan of recommended action for the city.

The Town of Wheatland and the Wheatland Area Development Corporation (WADCO) requested a community assessment from the Wyoming Rural Development Council. Linda Fabian served as the community contact, selected the core committee and took the lead in agenda development, logistics and publicity for the assessment.

The Resource Team toured the city and interviewed approximately two hundred people over a three-day period from September 11 to 14, 2000. The team interviewed representatives from the following segments of the Wheatland community: Industry, civic groups, utilities, financial institutions, retail, hotel/motel and restaurants, media, law enforcement, community development and government, elected officials, tourism, non-profits, social welfare/services, healthcare, school administration, youth, seniors, teachers, churches and agriculture. 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 Wheatland?
- ✓ What do you think are the major strengths and assets in Wheatland?
- ✓ What projects would you like to see completed in two, five, ten and twenty years in Wheatland?

Upon completion of the interviews the team met to compare notes and share comments following the three 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 the final report. The team's oral report was presented to the people of Wheatland on September 14, 2000 and many of the citizens who participated in the interviews were in attendance.

Following the oral report, a formal written report was prepared and presented to WADCO. It was agreed that WADCO would print and distribute copies within the community.

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**Wheatland Community Assessment**  
 September 11-14, 2000  
**Resource Team Agenda**

**Monday, Sept. 11**

	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Location</b>
2:45 – 5:00 p.m.	Tour of Wheatland Area	Various sites
5:00 – 7:00 p.m.	Picnic Dinner	Linda Fabian's home
7:00 – 7:30 p.m.	Introductions to Town Council	Town Hall
7:30 – 8:00 p.m.	Team Orientation	Town Hall

**Tuesday, Sept. 12**

	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Location</b>
7:00 – 8:00 a.m.	Breakfast/Kiwanis	Vimbos
8:15 – 9:15 a.m.	Financial Institutions	Library
9:30 – 10:00 a.m.	Break	Library
10:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Elected Officials	Library
11:15 – 12:15 p.m.	Social Services	Library
12:30 – 1:30 p.m.	Lunch/Students	Wheatland HS Conference Room
1:30 – 2:30 p.m.	Students	Wheatland HS Conference Room
2:30 – 3:30 p.m.	School Tour	Wheatland High School
3:30 – 4:00 p.m.	Break/ Teachers	Wheatland HS Conference Room
4:00 – 5:00 p.m.	Teachers	Wheatland HS Conference Room
5:15 – 6:15 p.m.	Hotel/Motel/Restaurants	Library
6:15 – 7:30 p.m.	Picnic/AAUW	807 Circle Drive

**Wednesday, Sept. 13**

	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Location</b>
7:00 – 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast/Physicians/Health Professionals	Hospital
8:45 – 9:45 a.m.	Break	
10:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Outreach Agencies	Library
11:00 – Noon	Record Times	Library
Noon – 1 p.m.	Lunch/Ministerial Association	Methodist Church
1:00 – 2:00 p.m.	Clergy	Methodist Church
2:30 – 3:30 p.m.	Congregations	Methodist Church
3:30 – 4:00 p.m.	Break	
4:00 – 5:00 p.m.	Industry	Library
5:00 – 6:00 p.m.	Agriculture	Library
6:00 – 7:30 p.m.	Dinner/Wheatland Fire Auxiliary	Fire Hall
7:30 – 8:30 p.m.	Volunteer Groups	Fire Hall

<b><u>Thursday, Sept. 14</u></b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Location</b>
6:30 – 7:30 a.m.	Breakfast	Extension Office
7:30 – 8:30 a.m.	Merchants	Library
8:30 – 9:30 a.m.	Law Enforcement	Library
9:30 – 10:00 a.m.	Break/Early Childhood Dev. Center	Library
10:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Utilities	Library
11:00 – Noon	Judicial	Library
Noon – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch/Services for Seniors	Senior Center
1:00 – 2:00 p.m.	Seniors	Senior Center
2:00 – 3:00 p.m.	KYCN	Radio Station
3:00 – 3:30 p.m.	Break	
3:30 – 5:00 p.m.	Prepare for Town Meeting	Library
5:00 – 6:30 p.m.	Dinner	
7:00 p.m.	Town Meeting	Library

## **RECOMMENDATIONS SUBMITTED** **BY RESOURCE TEAM MEMBERS**

The Resource Team has given many suggestions, some which have been repeated by more than one of the team members. We have listed the individual recommendations, along with contact information for the respective team members. You are encouraged to communicate directly with any team member whose recommendation you decide to implement.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Having lived in Wheatland and functioned as the town planner during the construction of the power plant, it was interesting to come to town some twenty years later and observe the changes to the community. Obvious changes include development in the retail service sector and development of highway related business. The downtown area has also undergone improvement. Businesses such as Britz-Heidbrink have come to town and local entrepreneurs have started new businesses. The town definitely has a more prosperous appearance. The town should take pride in these positive changes. However, given what was said during the listening sessions there is more to achieve, but there is not a consensus about what needs to be accomplished. As we heard at the listening sessions Wheatland has many positive assets that make it an attractive place to live and should serve it well as it strives to improve the local economy. Hopefully the information provided in this report will be the first step to identify ways the town may work toward achieving common goals that will serve the town on its journey into the twenty-first century. A follow-up town meeting should be scheduled after reviewing the Resource Team's report. This will give the community an opportunity to set priorities and develop strategies for project implementation. In the meantime any of the team members may be contacted concerning individual recommendations.

This report is organized around the major themes identified by the resource team.

### **Youth**

**Challenge:** Communities the size of Wheatland continually contend with the problems of out migration of young people and the usual discussion that there was nothing in town for kids to do and the lack of jobs for youth. Wheatland is no different. The resource team heard these problems mentioned time and time again during their listening session. The nothing for kids to do mantra may never be solved. This almost falls into the same category of imponderables such as why is the sky blue and will the Wyoming Cowboy's football team ever win another game.

**Solutions:** From the listening session that was conducted with the high school students, it

was apparent that there is considerable talent and energy among this group. This talent should be nurtured within the educational environment of the public schools. There exist many youth entrepreneurial education programs that can be made part of the public school curriculum.

**Contact:** The Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership has an excellent database devoted to entrepreneurship education. That database may be accessed over the Internet at [www.celcee.edu](http://www.celcee.edu).

### **Jobs/Economic Health**

**Challenge:** Topics such as lack of an industrial/commercial park, downtown development, need to help existing businesses, need to expand retail, business recruitment, need for better paying jobs and a desire for quality growth were topics expressed by participants of the listening sessions.

**Solutions:** The Wyoming Business Council engaged a consulting firm with a national reputation to prepare a targeted industry study that identifies, given the attributes of Wyoming communities, the most appropriate industries to recruit to the state. The analysis is from an objective, external corporate site selector's perspective of Wyoming. Even though the study focuses on business attraction, it is useful for business expansion and retention because it identifies the current business climate under which existing businesses operate. With a better understanding of the existing business climate local economic development professionals will be in a position to implement strategies that will assist existing businesses. The report also contains a guide for communities to follow to prepare themselves to attract the identified industries, as well as understand the critical location factors for each targeted industry. It is recommended Wheatland use the report as a starting point as it develops and refines both its recruitment and existing business and retention efforts.

A formal business expansion and retention program is an important component of any local economic development strategy. The city of Powell has successfully conducted such a program. It is unlikely that the community will attract a company that will create a number of jobs in excess of one hundred. It is likely however, that ten existing companies will create ten new jobs each. An existing business expansion and retention program will help to make this happen. The person to talk to in Powell is Dave Reetz at 307-754-2011.

The National Main Street Program is a highly successful program that has proven useful to communities wanting to improve the viability of the downtown area. The Wyoming Association of Municipalities and the Wyoming Business Council are currently exploring ways to bring this program to Wyoming cities and towns.

**Contact:** A copy of the targeted industry report can be requested directly from WADCO. Additional information about the report can be obtained by contacting Steve Achter or Den Costantino at 307-777-2800. The National Main Street Program has a web site that describes the basics of their program. Steve Achter may also be contacted to discuss the progress of establishing a Wyoming Main Street Program. The National Main Street Program Internet address is [www.mainst.org](http://www.mainst.org).

## Planning

**Challenge:** Industrial/business park development and who pays for the extension of public improvements to such sites was mentioned numerous times during the listening sessions. This is an important issue because the lack of developed space for commercial and industrial development obviously inhibits growth and acts as a detriment to new business development. A related issue is the lack of affordable housing. The cost of public infrastructure contributes to and is a major component of the cost of housing.

**Solution:** The town needs to develop and adopt annexation and infrastructure extension policies that will give developers a clear indication of who will be responsible for the cost of improvements. The policies should also provide a method for developers to recapture the cost of oversized water and sewer lines that are used by others at some future date. The American Planning Association (APA) has been contacted and is researching their database to provide information on model annexation and utility extension policies as well as other research on the subject. When received it will be forwarded to WADCO.

Other towns have faced the challenge of lack of affordable housing and have used a variety of methods to solve the problem. There are also programs designed to overcome the impediments of high development costs. The Wyoming Community Development Authority (WCDA), which is the housing finance agency for the state, manages the HOME Investment Partnership Program, or HOME for short, which helps pay for development costs if the subsidy is passed on to the homebuyer. The city of Powell prepared a housing demand study and in turn used it to persuade homebuilders that there was a market for affordable housing. This resulted in new housing construction.

**Contact:** Cheryl Gillum, housing programs director for the WCDA, can be reached at 307-265-0603. Dave Reetz, President of the Powell Valley Economic Development Alliance, should be contacted to learn how the city of Powell solved many of their affordable housing problems. He can be reached at 307-754-2201. The APA will send research result to the WBC office and I will forward it to Wheatland. For additional information about research available from the APA go to their Internet address [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org).

## Capital Projects

**Challenge:** Numerous capital projects were mentioned during the listening sessions, but none were mentioned as often as the community/convention center. The center as proposed and shown in the marketing material prepared by Platte County Community, Inc. shows the building would be used for conventions and local events. However, based on what was said at the listening sessions there is not unanimous agreement on the use of the facility. Others in the community have expressed a desire to have the building function as a community recreation center. This has the potential to become a divisive issue and as a result could kill the project. There also needs to be additional work done to identify the market for regional conventions to insure the community and the convention center will have the proper attributes for the identified market.

None of the material presented to the resource team in the promotional packet identified market potential or had a financial proforma.

**Solution:** The group promoting the community/events center needs to prepare a business plan. This plan then can be used to solicit private donations as well as public funding.

**Contact:** Leonard Holler, Regional Director for the Small Business Development Center should be contacted to help with the preparation of a business plan. He can be reached at 307-234-6683.

###

## **James G. (Jim) Thompson**

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### **Overview of Issues and Challenges**

I prefer to discuss community development issues in a holistic fashion because most of the major problems and issues are so interrelated. First, I want to say that Wheatland appears to be a very positive and functional community with more positive assets than many small towns. I thought that 25 years ago when I worked on siting studies for the MBPP plant and my impressions of them were reinforced by this latest visit.

I am perplexed about why the community has not attracted more clean industries with good paying jobs and benefits than it has, although it has gained some very nice businesses—which should not be overlooked. I have the feeling that the area is very close to finding the correct formula, or combinations of activities and efforts, that will yield positive growth. So I encourage you to keep pushing and to remember that follow-up is everything. This assessment is only a first step. In the rest of my discussion I try to present one approach to understanding and organizing many of the major issues and challenges we heard about.

### **The Problem**

In the case of Wheatland, I clearly heard that a major goal, which can be agreed upon is that the vast majority desires better-paying jobs with good benefits. Lesser paying jobs are also desired, but with some qualifications. Starting with this major goal is a way to focus an approach to other issues because attracting businesses with good jobs requires that other issues be resolved to the extent possible. In this day and age, any solid business owner is going to look at the following as a minimum before making a decision to locate: workforce, housing availability, school system, medical services, shopping opportunities, taxes and recreation. These and other issues that were raised that relate rather directly to jobs are:

- (1) How to create consensus in community about development goals?
- (2) How to find/provide suitable workforces?
- (3) Is adequate and affordable housing available to accommodate growth?
- (4) What should be done to provide a business/industrial park?
- (5) What kind of Events/Recreation Center is possible?
- (6) How to resolve negative perceptions of school district administration?

- (7) Are medical services adequate for an expanded population?
- (8) Can Wheatland become a regional shopping center?
- (9) Does the property tax assessment formula for MBPP need to be reviewed?

In the paragraphs below I try to summarize what I heard about each of these issues and suggest some resources or ways to help resolve the challenges/problems.

### **1. How to create consensus in the community about development goals?**

Part of what I heard was a lot of people agreeing about many goals/activities but not realizing how many others in the community were in agreement with them. This says to me that the community might benefit by going through a “visioning” exercise. I realize that the community had gone through many similar exercises in the last 20 years. But communities move in cycles and what I heard was that Wheatland is ready to move into a new phase, a phase of gradual, quality planned growth, which could provide jobs so that young people may stay or return to work and raise families. A well-executed visioning exercise can create community consensus, provide enthusiasm and momentum and help avoid misunderstandings and, hence, unnecessary conflicts which can cause prospective businesses to not locate here.

In this vein, I suggest the community consider reorganizing an “Open Planning Committee,” like the one that was used to solve problems and get things done during planning for and building of the power plant. This committee met once a month or more and was open to all people, you did not have to be a member to attend and be heard, in fact, the membership was fluid as needs changed. The Platte County Task Force report summarizing that committee and its achievements can be obtained from WADCO. Communities go in cycles, therefore such a committee could come into existence and remain until some new business successes and others were realized, then its need might be lessened and it would simply “fade away,” like the last one did.

A visioning exercise could address the interrelated issues of population size and types of businesses acceptable to a majority of residents. We consistently heard that a population of 5,000 or so was acceptable for Wheatland. Once the question of size is resolved then it is easier to decide on what types of businesses might be acceptable.

Information on visioning can be obtained from:

Wyoming Community Network: Attn. Jennifer Goodman; 307-766-2386  
<http://www.WyomingCommunityNetwork.com>

Wyoming Rural Development Council; Attn. Mary Randolph; 307-777-6430

## **2. How to find/provide suitable workforces?**

Every small community has the problem of demonstrating to prospective new businesses that an adequate workforce can be provided. I personally believe that Wheatland has a totally adequate workforce *available* to it for almost any business because I am persuaded that the work force pool for the community includes the entire Front Range from Cheyenne to Denver. Many young families living in the Front Range would like to have the small town quality of life that Wheatland offers. I believe that once a prospective employer is identified the community can demonstrate that a trained and competent workforce will relocate from the Front Range in an adequate time frame to meet the business's employment needs.

The community's job may be to prove and document this and have persuasive materials ready for prospective employers. Exactly how this can be done I am not sure, but I think the following individuals/offices can help.

Drs. Roger Coupal and Tex Taylor, University of Wyoming, 307-766-2386  
Dr. Sam Sturman, Laramie County Community College, 307-778-1237  
Mr. Steve Elledge, Wyoming Business Council, 307- 577-6012

## **3. Is adequate and affordable housing available to accommodate growth?**

A few people raised the question of whether enough housing could be provided in an adequate time frame to accommodate growth without creating too much expense for the city. Because of my previous planning experience with the city I think the answer is that there should be enough homes and building sites already served with utilities to accommodate a population of up to 5,000 people in Wheatland and 12,000 people in the county. The population of the City and County in 1980 was respectively, 5,816 and 11,975. Today figures for 1999 were 3,217 and 8,145. Admittedly some of the prior population was housed in recreation vehicles (RVs). But the majority of RV sites were in Black Mountain Village and those sites were built so that every two RV sites could be combined to form one standard sized city lot with full utilities. And most utilities were brought up to standard and code during the eighties. So I suspect that Wheatland could grow by about 2,500 more people and not incur any expenses that can't be easily managed.

It might be important for the City Council to appoint a committee or city employees and others to do an updated housing inventory and prepare a short, but attractively formatted report which could be used in business recruitment and for planning purposes. Such a document would be useful information for a visioning exercise if one were done.

#### **4. What should be done to provide a business/industrial park?**

I heard that the industrial park next to the power plant does not fulfill this need for most businesses for several reasons. Chief among these were that the site is too far from the interstate; that financing cannot be obtained on leased land and Missouri Basin Power Plant (MBPP) has to retain ownership of the land for legitimate reasons; and, that free steam/water is not of much use to most businesses. The community should come to agreement on the suitability or non-suitability of this site. It does not seem correct to me that businesses cannot obtain financing on leased lands. I believe that businesses are located on leased lands in urban areas quite often. Perhaps some investigation is needed in this area.

It appeared that there are two good possible sites for a business park, on the north edge of town on both sides of I-25. But there also seemed to be disagreement about who should pay for infrastructure services to these sites, etc. Perhaps a working committee needs to be appointed to resolve this issue, as it may be critical to attracting new businesses. Also a visioning exercise might lay the groundwork for solving the problem. But it seemed to me that the city and county might need to assume part of the risk in paying for infrastructure costs. Sources that might help with financing are discussed in other sections of this report.

#### **5. What kind of recreation and/or events center is needed?**

I believe getting a major city recreation center in place would be very helpful in business recruitment. And an Events Center has many attractions for a new business. We heard strong support for both facilities and some discussion about whether one facility could be built that would adequately meet both needs.

So it appears to me that the present Events Center committee needs to be expanded and that the idea of a joint recreation center/events center needs to be considered. There is some concern that people favoring one or another is in danger of canceling each other out. It may be that a formal needs assessment needs to be done, focusing on a joint center. There are many sources of information on this topic available from the Rural Development Council and the Wyoming Business Council.

#### **6. How to resolve negative perceptions of the School Administration.**

Numerous respondents at our meetings stated that a large percentage of the community do not “trust” the school administration. This problem was perceived as so large, that apparently the committee that organized and lobbied for the last bonding issue did not include any members of the administration or current teachers. My perception is that this distrust of school administrations has been a problem since at least the late 60s. It was a problem when the power plant was built. So it was hard for

our committee to deduce whether there is any real basis for this distrust by a large segment of the community, or whether it is an “historical” artifact carried over from past administrations, or just a communication problem.

But, in any event, I suggest the problem needs to be resolved in order to facilitate business recruitment. If a prospective employer comes to town and hears of this problem to the degree we did, that alone could lead to a negative decision to relocate. One solution might be to form a committee to do a needs assessment of school/educational needs and address this issue as part of the process.

### **7. Are medical services adequate for an expanded population?**

Most people and medical staff felt that medical services were quite good for a town this size. But two events may be driving future needs. First, the population is aging so more hospital beds; long-term care beds and assisted living facilities are going to be needed in the near future. Second, while the community has been blessed with good quantity and quality of doctors, some of these are nearing retirement so it is time to start recruiting replacements.

I believe the hospital staff has done a medical needs assessment. But this effort may need to be expanded to show empirically what facilities and staff may be needed if the town does grow to 5,000 or more. Some actual revenue and expense forecasts for one or two future scenarios might be useful in making sure that there are actual shortages. Again, being able to show that present services are good and that plans are underway for future needs can be a useful tool in business recruitment.

### **8. Can Wheatland become a regional shopping center?**

Several business people told us they thought Wheatland could become a regional shopping center drawing from all of Platte County and from Wheatland, Cheyenne, the Front Range and western Nebraska. The idea seemed to have two components that at first blush might appear contradictory but may not be on in-depth examination. At least two of your car-dealers have become successful by demonstrating that they can compete with larger urban areas. So there is the possibility that large discount retailers of several types might flourish in Wheatland. There is considerable dispute about stores like Wal-Mart Superstores, but the empirical evidence is mixed. Clearly such stores can hurt some smaller stores. But they also can be big draws to anchor regional shopping. And some smaller retail stores seem to be helped by establishing a niche that the larger stores can't duplicate.

A second component we were told of, is that a few small retailers in downtown Wheatland have established a special niche and so have shoppers coming from at least as far as Cheyenne and maybe even Denver and Nebraska. I think it might be a good

time to do a regional marketing study to see if Wheatland could become a regional shopping center.

**Summary:**

I could add additional issues to this overview but I think the above demonstrate that this “economic development” perspective is one way to organize thinking and action plans about many of the larger issues. As I said above, I like to think about “Community Development” in a holistic way. Personally I view “Economic Development” as a component of community development. Many of the issues discussed above such as medical services, education and a recreation/events center are essential for improving the quality of life in Wheatland, regardless if there is additional business recruitment. I would like to suggest that it might be interesting for Wheatland to replicate the “open-planning process” that was used by the Platte County Impact Alleviation Task Force to prepare for the MBPP project and apply this approach to community and economic development. The name was later shortened to the Platte County Task Force. A similar task force, or committee, could be formed and subcommittees created to pursue each of the major challenges reported by the community. The Task Force could meet once a month or so and membership could be totally open. The subcommittees would hold their own meetings and set their own agendas. But they would report periodically to the main Task Force (not every committee would need to report every month). WADCO could either chair and run the task force, or it might function better as one of the main subcommittees focused directly on economic development so that there would be no concerns about possible conflicts of interest.

Virtues of a Task Force and the open-planning process approach are that everyone in the community can come once a month and hear what is happening, ask questions, make suggestions and voice complaints. This process has the effect of keeping all groups coordinated and informed and reduces conflicts because no one should feel excluded. It gives everyone a legitimate, regular and facilitated (or refereed) forum in which to express his or her ideas and preferences. This can save lots of time and energy.

This discussion brings up the idea of “Institutional Memory.” Many community analysts point out that communities often lose “institutional memory,” causing them to repeat past mistakes, or at least to reinvent the wheel at a loss of time and resources. It appears to me that Wheatland and Platte County have experienced some loss of institutional memory. The former Task Force seemed to me to have worked well in preparing for the power plant. I don’t see why it wouldn’t work for economic development (it certainly wasn’t perfect but I can say from personal experience that Wheatland and Platte County prepared for and managed change better during the energy boom than most communities in the region). Jill Holloway who was the last

chairperson of the Task Force was concerned that much that was learned during that period would be lost. So she started writing a book about it, entitled, “The Plate County Story.” I have an extra copy of it if anyone is interested. If that process worked once it might work again and as we say, “why fix what isn’t broken.”

###

**Milton Green, Project Director**  
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Cooperative Extension Service  
PO Box 248  
Fort Washakie, WY 82514  
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## **Introduction**

Community resource development has been a major program initiative of the Cooperative Extension Service as mandated by Congress since the mid 1960s. The University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service has access to a wide variety of resources within the institution and across the nation designed to assist communities and address issues. Historically, the Cooperative Extension Service has focused on agriculture, family living and youth development but the organization also has access to resources that can benefit local government and small business. It is a real opportunity for the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service to partner with the Wyoming Rural Development Council and other agencies in the Community Assessment program.

## **Lack of Shared Vision:**

**Challenge:** During the listening session interviews it was clear by the responses that Wheatland lacks a shared vision of what the future should look like. Visioning is a basic step in the community development process. Although the community may have conducted visioning sessions in the past, the community may not have shared in developing the vision or many times an inadequate level of follow up after the session counters the advantage of the visioning exercise. A vision statement is very different than a mission statement because it is developed in an environment that defines “what could be” in contrast to the “what will be” nature of the mission statement. All of the focus areas identified in the interview sessions support a defined lack of shared vision within the community.

How big should the community of Wheatland be? The responses to this question ranged anywhere from the current size to 15,000 people. A number of references were made to sustaining enough growth to provide for a strong viable economy.

What should the economic infrastructure and industrial mix look like in Wheatland? Some residents want a much stronger downtown area with specialty shops, some want high-tech jobs in the computer industry, others want light “clean” industry, some don’t want any growth at all and others don’t want to see any more hog farms.

To be able to share and own a community vision it is essential to understand: Where the community has been-its culture and heritage? Where is the community right now? And, what do the residents want the community to look like? Basically, these three questions were covered in the listening session interviews but the absence of a shared community vision was clear.

**Recommendation:** There are time-tested processes available to help rural communities achieve this goal. A community visioning leadership team needs to be developed. The team, in turn, needs to determine who might be best to facilitate this process and establish a time line for completion. More important, the team needs to design a follow up plan-of-action. Follow up is the tool needed to transform the vision to reality.

**Resources:** The Cooperative Extension Service at the University of Wyoming has a number of qualified specialists and educators that can conduct community-visioning processes. The private sector in Wyoming also has a number of resources that can also assist communities in achieving community visioning. For more information contact:

Jennifer Goodman, Wyoming Community Network  
University of Wyoming  
Cooperative Extension Service  
PO Box 3354  
Laramie, Wyoming 1-307-766-2107

Milton Green  
University of Wyoming  
Cooperative Extension Service  
PO Box 248  
Fort Washakie, Wyoming 82514  
307-332-2681 mgreen@uwyo.edu

Randy Weigel  
University of Wyoming  
Cooperative Extension Service  
PO Box 3354  
Laramie, Wyoming 82071

Mickey Beaver, Navigating Change  
1020 Bristol  
Casper, Wyoming 82609  
307-235-5572

## **Youth Development:**

**Challenge:** There were two recurring themes from the interviews. The young people consistently commented: “There is nothing to do in Wheatland and I can’t wait to leave.” The adults, in contrast, expressed a strong desire to develop a future that would encourage young people to come back to Wheatland. It was interesting to note that many of the young people also expressed a desire to return to Wheatland if they could have a job and a good standard of living after returning. Thus, the challenge is to develop an economic infrastructure that targets retaining young families in the community. The solutions to meet that challenge are all over the board. The creation of professional or paraprofessional/technical jobs will be necessary but another critical factor in the success of this challenge will be quality of life amenities the Wheatland community can attach to the job opportunities. For example, the importance of having continuing education opportunities is increasing among professional ranks. The availability of recreation and access to air transportation are also important considerations. The community has to be careful at this point because trade offs have to be made and it is easy to create an infrastructure that will be too costly resulting in an environment as bad as the status quo.

**Recommendation:** The best way to develop an infrastructure that encourages the retention of young families is to directly involve the young people in the process. As community organizations plan and implement community projects it will be beneficial to include youth leaders. Organizations like 4-H, FFA, FBLA, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and others have a core leadership capable of actively participating in the development process by presenting the younger perspective. Another solution might be the formation of a youth coalition comprised of all the various youth organizations in Wheatland for the purpose of providing a shared perspective community wide. For more information contact:

Sheila Knop or Diana Lauglin, Center for Rural Assistance  
138 Aylesworth NW  
Colorado State University  
Fort Collins, Colorado 80523-4050      1-970-491-5579

Kathy Vann, University Educator  
Wind River Indian Reservation  
Fort Washakie, Wyoming 82514  
307-332-2681

## **Capitol Facilities:**

**Challenge:** There were several recommendations that referred to building new community facilities for Wheatland. The two most frequently discussed were: To cover the existing swimming pool or construct a new pool and construct a community multi-purpose center. It appears some controversy exists over the enclosed pool with respect to who should do it, how should it be done and where should it be constructed? The multi-purpose community center seemed to get the most consensus. Although some disagreement may exist as to what the center should be and look like the concept seemed to be well supported by those interviewed. Setting priorities on the importance of construction projects and getting the resources needed to construct the facilities is the major challenge here.

One obvious void appears to be missing in all of the facility projects: no market research. Market research is critical to the success of a facility project. A good market analysis answers the who, when, what, where and why challenges by the community. Market research is what sells the projects to the public.

**Recommendation:** Because a great deal of work has already been done on the Platte County Community Building Project it would be logical to use this project as a point of departure for getting a “brick-and-mortar” project off the ground. The hospital parking lot, swimming pool and the assisted living center are all great projects and should not be discounted.

The portfolio for the Platte County Community Building Project is very well done. But, the document does not exhibit any market research. Who is the target market for this project? What are the projected “use days” for the facility? Where is the break-even for the project? Should there be a break-even or should the facility be targeted to local citizens and used as a community facility? What is the right commercial/community mix for using the business? How will the facility be paid off? And, the most important question: How much will it take to maintain the building? If the research is not done on a project of this magnitude, it tends to attract a lot of opinions by well-intended people that don’t really know but tend to have their thoughts publicly accepted as fact. The public has a strong tendency to believe what they want to believe.

The optional sales tax law is a tremendous tool to help pay for community facilities. Taxpayers in Wyoming are very prudent about taxation and it is important to answer all of the questions possible internally before they are asked in public. Wyoming residents want to know what the qualitative and quantitative returns on their tax dollars will be.

**Resources:** Again, there are a number of private sector resources available to conduct market research. There are also several public resources that conduct market

research studies for public facilities. The Wyoming Business Council is an excellent information source for this information. Because specific reference was made to the Goshen County multi-purpose facility contact should be made with:

Paul Covello (Cactus) Jr.  
c/o Covello Motor 1306 Main Street  
Torrington, Wyoming 82240  
307-532-2141

Or

J.K Gibson and Associates Realty  
Lingle, Wyoming  
307-837-2110

(Note: Cactus was coming on the Goshen County Fair Board as the multi-purpose facility was being built in Goshen county. The individual who was on the ground level of the project was J.K Gibson from Lingle).

## **Education**

**Challenge:** During the listening sessions numerous references were made as to the need for educational opportunities. This is a two-fold problem. From the comments a serious communication problem exists between school district administration, teachers, students and parents. The second issue identifies educational needs well beyond the capabilities or mission of the traditional school system.

Primary and secondary education has twelve (12) very short years to teach students a highly regimented core curriculum. The observation made following the tour of the school facility was that some very innovative cutting edge teaching methods are being incorporated into the curriculum for which the teachers should be commended. Although parents were very supportive of the school system a number of references were made as to existing needs not being met for the overall student body. In other words, the academic requirements of those students with proven academic skills appear to be well supported but the needs of those students who do not excel in the academic arena need some immediate attention.

The communication issue needs to be addressed. Many suggested the school was one of the community's strongest assets. In contrast, many expressed some anxiety in not being able to communicate with school district administrators and the Platte County School Board.

Community education also appears to be a well-defined need. Vocational training, more credit classes for Associate and Bachelor degree programs, continuing

education for professionals, after school programs and non-credit community education were all suggested as needs during the listening sessions.

**Recommendation:** A two-fold challenge most likely needs a two-fold recommendation. A coalition of adult, community, vocational and continuing education professionals need to have a conversation about what can be done to address the educational needs of Wheatland. A key question in this conversation is and will continue to be: How will these additional services be paid for? This issue must be addressed because it is usually a major reason why many educational services are not offered in rural communities. The Cooperative Extension Service should lead this initiative. The Extension Educator has a daily presence for the University of Wyoming in Platte County and it is logical for that agency to provide leadership to this effort.

The coalition should include, but should not be restricted to, the school district administration, the Platte County School Board, teachers (both primary and secondary), vocational shop teachers, FFA, FBLA, Eastern Wyoming College, the Wyoming Business Council and WADCO. The purpose of this coalition should be to review and discuss the strengths and challenges identified in the community assessment. A facilitator might be helpful in the beginning.

The coalition may wish to consider:

Dr. Michael Day  
College of Education-Department of Lifelong Learning  
University of Wyoming  
Laramie, Wyoming 82071  
307-766-5459

or

Mickey Beaver  
Navigating Change  
1020 Bristol  
Casper, Wyoming 82609 307-235-5572

## **Agriculture**

**Challenge:** Agriculture is a foundation industry for the Wheatland community. A contemporary debate contends the contribution production agriculture makes to the local economy is relatively small. When production agriculture is included with the food and fiber industry, which is a much more accurate reflection of the total contribution to the overall economy, the agriculture industry becomes a critical player in the economic “big picture.” In addition, agriculture is part of the heritage and culture of Wheatland. It is a big part of “who” this community is. Agriculture in

Wheatland appears to be lacking any value added industry. A high percentage of the products produced are raw products that are shipped into other economies to be value added through processing. This is one aspect that can change but remember a new industry coming in puts pressure somewhere else in the economy. The challenge is whether or not the economy is viable enough to support the new venture while retaining existing business.

The new global agriculture economy will be a highly segmented consumer driven market. This shift creates some opportunities for Wheatland producers in non-traditional areas such as agri-tourism or heritage tourism as well as traditional crops such as alfalfa hay. Very specialized crops with small niche markets will provide profit opportunities for producers but the question is whether or not farmers have the marketing skills to take advantage of the new markets. Traditionally farmers and ranchers have not had to deal with marketing strategies because products sold are raw products sold in global commodity markets. As farms get larger and fewer farms control a larger percentage of the traditional commodity market farmers will need to identify new markets. New markets that will be heavily segmented and specialized. There are both threats and tremendous opportunities in this new farm paradigm.

**Recommendation:** Alternative crop education is a key element in this recommendation. It is important for agriculture producers to determine what crops can be grown in the area and what crops can be effectively marketed at an acceptable profit margin. This is particularly true when enterprises such as agri-tourism, heritage tourism, game farming, aquaculture and non-consumptive recreation are considered. Each enterprise has profit potential for the agriculture producer.

Agriculture will most likely become more and more regulated. This industry is literally at a crossroad and must decide whether or not it will make the choice to be pro-active or reactive. To make the choice to be pro-active will require some type of land use planning and will possibly demand some type of zoning. The choice to be reactive is to take a position of status quo and continue to be impacted by federal and state laws regulating and protecting natural resources. Wheatland has already seen strong evidence of this problem. Several references were made to the Endangered Species Act with respect the impact the regulation had on the Wheatland community. Likewise, several comments about problems associated with confined swine feeding operations in the area are associated with the lack of planning. A pro-active position by the community would have minimized the impact of these issues. Wheatland should create a diverse agriculture focus group to include county and municipal decision makers that can bring these issues to the table and help develop a pro-active strategy designed to reflect the diversity of the community and local economy.

Finally, value added development for any product produced in Platte County should be a priority. Resources will be needed to conduct market research to determine the profitability and sustainability of each value added enterprise.

**Resources:** The Agriculture and Applied Economics Department in the College of Agriculture has the resources available to assist with the enterprise analysis and market research. The local Conservation District is an excellent resource to address the natural resource and zoning issues. The Wyoming Business Council should be the primary resource in developing value added industries.

Contact:  
Tex Taylor  
University of Wyoming  
Cooperative Extension Service  
PO Box 3354  
Laramie, Wyoming 82071  
307-766-5682

Bobbie Frank  
2304 East 13<sup>th</sup> Street  
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82001  
307-632-5716

Bill Bunce  
Wyoming Business Council  
Casper, Wyoming

Milton Green  
Small Farms Projects/Farm and Ranch Recreation/Agri-tourism  
University of Wyoming  
PO Box 248  
Fort Washakie, Wyoming 82514  
307-332-2681

Dave Carter, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union  
10800 E. Bethany Dr.  
Aurora, Colorado 80014-2632  
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## **Youth**

As with most communities in Wyoming, Wheatland is struggling with the continued out migration of youth. There is a general consensus that there are not enough high paying jobs in Wheatland to keep or attract the youth to stay in your community. Under the jobs and continuing education below, you might be able to create attractive opportunities to help with this issue.

“We have great kids in Wheatland” was heard many times through the listening sessions. You told us when the youth believe in and support an initiative or project such as the skate park, it is likely that they will accomplish their mission. Great! There are plenty of projects to get the youth involved in that will accomplish community goals and should also generate increased community pride.

Technology Training – Work with school administrators, teachers and students to create training programs for the use of the Wyoming Equality Network (WEN) video connection in the Wheatland High School. Teach the students to teach the adults! Depending on the depth of the training, the students might require travel to be trained and might need sponsors from a school organization or private businesses. If a group of students took this on as a class project, it would benefit the entire community by utilizing a tool that currently is not being used. After they are trained, the students can teach others in the community to use this equipment in off-school hours.

Consider selecting (or allowing the students to select) a junior representative to serve on a few community boards. (Chamber, WADCO, etc.). This representative should have a teacher sponsor who can support them and assist them in reporting their board activities back to the students through a school newsletter or through school civic clubs. This youth representative should also speak on behalf of the students and should work to link school/community activities and goals together.

## **Jobs and Continuing Education Opportunities**

The need to diversify the economy was mentioned several times. There is a great amount of interest in technology training, for students and adults. Increasing such training will enhance the workforce and will help in attracting high-tech companies.

Work with Joe Coyne, Director, CANDO in Douglas to involve Wheatland residents, especially students and young adults in the Douglas Technical Center training program.

These classes train attendees in use of computers and in being prepared for finding a job (resume development, interview skills, etc.). Douglas has successfully trained 30+ people and is looking to expand the program. Joe Coyne is also searching for additional funding for this program and expanding the program to include Wheatland could assist in acquiring additional funds.

Contact: Joe Coyne

Director, CANDO  
(307) 358-6520  
[cando@netcommander.com](mailto:cando@netcommander.com)

The Internet Masters Program sponsored by University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension and the Wyoming Rural Development Council will provide 30 hours of intense Internet training to interested participants. These training classes are scheduled throughout the state. The cost of the course is only \$90 and the classes have received great evaluations. For information on the next Internet Masters class contact the following:

Contact: Mary Randolph

(307) 777-6430  
[mrando@missc.state.wy.us](mailto:mrando@missc.state.wy.us)

Continue Technology Training – use those trained in the Internet Masters Program to train others in Wheatland to extend this training opportunity to all who are interested.

Research information to educate Wheatland residents about work at home options. With sufficient telecommunications options in Wheatland, promoting this option to current residents and recruiting others to move to Wheatland could diversify job opportunities in Wheatland.

Resources for work at home information include:

Contact: Gail Gordon  
Community Development Specialist  
University of Wyoming  
Cooperative Extension Service  
(307) 766-5373

Resources: Business @ Home – Making a life while making a living

<http://www.gohome.com>

Telecommuting Jobs Listing & How to

Telecommute Handbook

<http://www.tjobs.com>

Resources for learning how to grow an online business

<http://netpreneur.org>

## **Economic Health**

Work with the Wyoming Community Network to help in your community development initiatives. The network is up and running and has been developed to help in your community

development projects. The network will have a database of resources and will help to connect communities with the resources that are needed to reach your community development goals. The network is also being developed to assist in funding opportunities in the future.

Contact: Jennifer Goodman  
Wyoming Community Network Director  
(307) 766-2107  
Email: [jgoodman@uwyo.edu](mailto:jgoodman@uwyo.edu)  
Website: [www.wyomingcommunitynetwork.com](http://www.wyomingcommunitynetwork.com)

Consider participating in the National Trust for Historic Preservation Main Street Program to assist in preserving the historic downtown area. This program will revitalize the downtown area, assist existing businesses in improving store fronts and assist in attracting new businesses. Powell participated in this program and it was very successful.

Contact: National Trust for Historic Preservation  
Main Street Program  
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone - (202) 588-6219  
Website: [www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org) or specifically [www.mainst.org](http://www.mainst.org)  
(Be sure to look into their Small Town Main Street Program)  
Email Dave Reetz in Powell for questions on their success: [powell@wir.net](mailto:powell@wir.net)

Sheila Bricher-Wade  
State Historic Preservation Office  
Barrett State Office Building  
Cheyenne, WY 82002  
307-777-7697

Involve community members in economic development by increasing the number of qualified and experienced grant writers in Wheatland. Ask local businesses or organizations to sponsor these individuals by paying for their training. In return, these trained grant writers give back to the community by researching and applying for funding for community projects. The following grant writing workshop has proven to be very successful:

Bi-Annual Resource, Conservation & Development grant writing workshop. This workshop is for one week in November 2000 in Jackson and is considered to be one of the best grant writing schools in the region.

Contact: Kirk Heaton  
Resource, Conservation & Development  
(307) 382-3982

Several people mentioned there is a lack of moderately priced housing. Work with Wyoming Community Development Authority and consider participating in their WCDA Outreach Program. They can assist Platte County on ways to address housing needs.

Contact: Cheryl Gillum (307) 265-0603.

## **Capital Projects**

There were several capital projects that were mentioned consistently throughout the listening sessions. A community center, covered swimming pool, convention center, recreational center and a walking path were all mentioned repeatedly. Even though these projects each have many supporters, there is an obvious division between these advocacy groups. Each group is working separately to get their project funded and approved in various phases. Your community should draw upon the strong community ties in which you pride yourself and come together and support one project at a time.

Convene a town meeting to discuss all the major projects that are of interest to the community. Advertise the meeting and focus on getting a large, diverse group of people to attend. Hire a facilitator to manage the meeting. As the discussions take place, I recommend a focus on the project that will have the greatest economic impact on Wheatland as the first project. Prioritize all the projects to show the advocates of the other major initiatives that there is interest in pursuing their project at a later date. Once the participants have agreed to support the first project, develop plans for an extensive grassroots initiative to gain more support for the project and determine the kind of funding that will be pursued. (Sales tax, property tax, grant funding, forming a 501©(3), etc.)

The Wyoming Rural Development Council maintains a list of facilitators that communities can utilize at little or no cost.

Contact: Mary Randolph  
WRDC  
2219 Carey Avenue  
Cheyenne, WY 82002  
307-777-6430  
Email: mrand@state.wy.us

Many people mentioned the need to cover the swimming pool, however a few people feel the current pool needs to remain uncovered but a separate covered pool should be built. They felt that the current pool is too small and would not be ideal as a covered facility. These points should be discussed in a town meeting. A cost comparison between the two options should be considered as well as the specific needs for a covered pool.

Potential funding sources for capital projects:

The Kresge Foundation. While many private foundations do not fund capital projects, 80% of Kresge's foundation dollars support capital projects. Be sure to check out the "Bricks and Mortar Program." Contact: [www.kresge.org](http://www.kresge.org)

Rural Development USDA

Contact: Lonnie Allred (307) 856-5383

The Foundation Center:

Consider subscribing to the Foundation Directory Online for \$19.95 per month. This will give you access and application information to over 10,000 of the largest U.S. foundations.

Contact: [www.fdncenter.org](http://www.fdncenter.org)

The Kellogg Foundation for matching grants

Contact: [www.wkkf.org/ProgrammingInterests/Guidelines.htm](http://www.wkkf.org/ProgrammingInterests/Guidelines.htm)

Technology or Telecommunications Grant Resources:

Technology Opportunities Program

Contact: [www.ntia.doc.gov/otiahome/top/grants/grants.htm](http://www.ntia.doc.gov/otiahome/top/grants/grants.htm)

AOL Rural Telecommunications Awards through the National Center for Small Communities.

Be sure to check out last year's winner to understand the criteria. However, NCSC is a good organization to get involved with regardless of your grant application. Contact: [www.natat.org](http://www.natat.org)

## **Beautification**

Consider a "Clean-Up" Project on 16<sup>th</sup> Street. Involve the students through school organizations and consider giving prizes and awards to the largest and/or most active group(s). Involve the businesses (especially those along 16<sup>th</sup> street that will directly benefit) and ask them to donate prizes.

Apply for a Community Development Block Grant through the Wyoming Business Council for a "Welcome to Wheatland" sign. The Greater Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce worked to get the welcome sign for Cheyenne that is located on I-25 and has offered to answer any questions if needed.

Contact: <http://wyomingtourism.org/wbc/> (Click on "Investment Ready Communities")

Steve Achter, Wyoming Business Council (307) 777-2811

Greater Cheyenne Chamber Contact: Larry Atwell 307-778-1406

## **Marketing/Promotion**

Advertise Oktoberfest and other Wheatland events through the following:

- The new Wyoming Arts Council Events Calendar to reach other communities in Wyoming and out of state travelers. Contact: Mike Shay, Wyoming Arts Council (307) 777-5234.
- The State of Wyoming Home Page – [www.state.wy.us](http://www.state.wy.us)

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**Jennifer Goodman, Executive Director**

Wyoming Community Network

P.O. Box 3354

University of Wyoming

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307-766-2107

Fax 307-766-5544

Cell 970-222-1964

[jgoodman@uwyo.edu](mailto:jgoodman@uwyo.edu)

[www.WyomingCommunityNetwork.com](http://www.WyomingCommunityNetwork.com)

The first step to a successful community assessment is to have a follow up town hall meeting and have an outside facilitator help you work through this report. There are volumes of information involved and it can seem overwhelming. You will want to prioritize the Major Themes section of the report and decide as a community which two or three you want to work on first. Decisions like:

- Who will take responsibility for these projects?
- What is our time line for completion?
- How will we measure our success?
- What happens when we fail to meet our goals?
- What needs to be answered?

But in the short run you need some Quick Wins.

It is vital to have some quick wins for Wheatland. I define these as short-term projects (3-6 months). After you complete each of these projects as a community, remember to celebrate. People will want to be a part of any group that is having fun.

**Suggestion 1: Hold a Youth Summit.** Give the kids in Wheatland this report and ask them to prepare some action plans for solving some of the solutions. Give each group of kids one of the Major Problems and Challenges and have them come up with a proposed solution. Make sure that this process includes presentations in front of the City Council, County Commissioners, local business leaders, religious leaders and WADCO. Remember to have an outside facilitator come in and guide the youth through this process. This will allow the kids to be creative with out wondering if they are gaining teachers or parents approval. I would be very happy to help with this project.

**Suggestion 2: Post a “Welcome to Wheatland” Sign off of I-25** and put some of the things that might interest travelers to exit and spend money in your community. Be sure to plan for signage once these travelers get in town so they know where to go and what to do.

One great addition would be a dog park so travelers can exercise their dogs while on the road. I know of several communities that have dog parks and advertise them to travelers.

**Suggestion 3: Come up with a community slogan and logo.** This would be a great first project. Develop a slogan and logo that WADCO, the Chamber of Commerce and the City of Wheatland would all use. Make a special effort to mark everything with the logo and slogan. Letterhead, brochures and all signage in your community should all bear the shared logo. *Jennifer Alan of Angel Designs* in Laramie has agreed to develop a logo, free of charge, for the Wheatland Community in exchange for some minimal advertising of her donation. I can personally recommend Jennifer as she did the logo for the Wyoming Community Network. Jennifer will give you 5 to 10 proofs and work with you until she can deliver something that your community will be pleased with. However, it would be helpful if you had a slogan already chosen to help give some direction to your logo. Her contact information is 877-621-9060 or [jenallen@occasionallabels.com](mailto:jenallen@occasionallabels.com). She knows that I am making this offer for her and is more than willing to offer her services free of charge.

*One slogan suggestion heard during the Assessment was:  
“Wheatland, The Good Neighbor Community”*

## **Youth**

Challenges the team heard:

- Out migration of youth
- Need for good jobs
- Nothing for youth to do/supervised activities
- Drug abuse
- Alcohol abuse
- Need for day care/infant care

Possible Solutions: I am a true believer in *youth entrepreneurs*. These types of programs could be used to combat all of the problems listed above. Kids ages 10-20 have been involved in running successful lemonade stands to Web-Site Design Businesses. There are niche markets both inside Wheatland and across the state of Wyoming that could be filled with youth run businesses. Your youth can learn to write business plans, find financing and market their products and services as well as adults can.

It would be incredible if Wheatland became known as the young entrepreneur capital of Wyoming.

## **Step One: Offer Training**

Hold a meeting with local business, school officials, local bank presidents, a representative of the local SBDC, 4-H leaders and anyone else who is interested. Decide how you want to train your kids to own and operate their own business. Kids need information about writing business plans, receiving financing and handling employees.

Great Training Resources include: Rural Entrepreneurship Through Action Learning National REAL Director, Rick Larson, 115 Market Street, Suite 320 Durham, NC 27701 (919) 688-7325. This is a curriculum that takes school age children through the process of thinking like entrepreneurs as well as teaching them the basic tools needed to start their own business. Contact Leonard Holler your Small Business Development Center Representative out of Casper for other leads on training both for adults and children. 1-800-348-5207 or [leonarh@trib.com](mailto:leonarh@trib.com)

### **Step Two: Infrastructure and Continued Support**

So now that everyone is excited about kids owning and running businesses, give them the support to survive. Build some infrastructure for young entrepreneurs. Find a place for them to house their businesses. WADCO might rent some empty space in town that would house the business start-ups. Develop some type of small local competitive grants that could be used as start-up financing (\$200 dollars up to \$1000 dollars). Provide follow-up training for young business owners, offer free or low cost training on software applications. Organize a mentor program between existing local businesses and these young start-ups. Host a “get to know the local services” social where the youth entrepreneurs mingle and get to know local banks, accountants, real estate agents, lawyers and high speed data providers.

Resources: the SBA and Entrepreneur Magazine have just named the First State Bank of Wheatland as the best bank in Wyoming for micro lending for small business. (As of September 25, 2000) Check out the below link for more information: [http://www.entrepreneur.com/Home/HM\\_Static/1,1845.dbapp\\_best\\_banks\\_state.00.html](http://www.entrepreneur.com/Home/HM_Static/1,1845.dbapp_best_banks_state.00.html) What a great internal resource to have in Wheatland. I am sure that they will be more than willing to help organize this type of program. I think some of your greatest resources are internal for this one. Involve as many people as you can to make sure this program works.

We often heard that the youth have nothing to do in Wheatland. I have two thoughts on this topic: 1) Kids never have enough to do, and 2) they need to be involved in solving their problems.

***Your youth need to learn how to solve problems both in their own life and in your community.***

Start a junior WADCO, City Council, County Commissioners and Chamber of Commerce. Have the traditional organizations recruit youth members and assign them tasks that involve problem-solving activities. Your youth will be amazing assets to these organizations. They have never been told, “We can’t do that because it won’t work.” They are true free thinkers and will help lead these organizations in new directions.

## Jobs

We heard that Wheatland experiences:

- Low wage jobs without benefits
- Lack of skilled workers
- Lack of job diversity

It does not take a PhD Economist to understand that “Good Jobs Make Great Economies.”

Lack of skilled workers is a national crisis especially in technical jobs. There are new historic highs in college attendance and graduation, but college graduates often lack technical training. High school graduates are often offered college or low skill service jobs as their choice for post high school direction.

Both your school and your community need to offer technical training for both youth and adults needing retraining.

*60% of Jobs Currently need some type of technology training...is 60% of the workforce in Wheatland trained to use some type of Technology?*

### Step One

One of the limiting factors in the new economy is a trained workforce. The baby boomer generation will be retiring in the next 5-10 years in record numbers and with record wealth. They will be leaving behind jobs that will need to be filled. Companies looking to relocate often site presence of a skilled workforce as a major contributing factor in site selection. One objection to training a work force is: “If we train workers they will leave the community.” This is true! In the short run trained workers will leave your community for jobs, but in the long run you will attract businesses and maintain a skilled workforce for them.

Resources: Just up the road from Wheatland, the community of Douglas has opened a “Tech Center” aimed to train both youth and adults on workforce skills and new technology. They have received over \$45,000 in grants that have bought 10 computers and a server that are housed at the state fair grounds. They have developed a job-training curriculum that teaches people to count change to customers as well as develop Excel spreadsheets. My suggestion is to contact Joe Coyne, director of CANDO (Converse Area Development Organization) and offer to partner with them and the Tech Center. They have invented the wheel -- no reason that you should have to reinvent it. His number is: 307-358-6520 or email him at [cando@netcommander.com](mailto:cando@netcommander.com)

Contact [Sam Sturman](#) with Laramie County Community College. Sam was a member of this team and is a resource for workforce development training. Sam works closely with business to help provide training for their current employees as well as training perspective employees. His contact information is provided within this report.

Workforce Development Training Fund, Jan Wilson, P.O. Box 2760 Casper, WY 307-235-3294. Their purpose is to enhance employment opportunities for people in Wyoming.

Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998:

Heather Wagoner, Hathaway Bldg. 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl, 2300 Capital Ave., Cheyenne, WY 82002 307-777-5329. Their purpose is to develop academic, vocational and technical skills of vocational students.

## **Step Two**

Diversify the economy by helping create new markets for current business. Job diversity can be created within existing businesses. Your current business owners and managers have dreams of business expansion but there are always barriers to realizing those dreams. Local expansion means more jobs with existing businesses that will be much more committed to Wheatland than incoming corporations. Begin an outreach effort to your business community that includes understanding all the plans of your local small business and their perceived barriers to expansion. You will begin to see patterns in barriers. Most local businesses are probably facing the same two or three. The job becomes easier with everyone working on the same page.

## **Resources:**

*Small Business Development Center*, Leonard Holler Director-Casper Center  
1-800-348-5207 or [leonarh@trib.com](mailto:leonarh@trib.com)

*Mid-America Manufacturing and Technology Center*: Larry Stewart, P.O. Box 3362, Laramie, Wyoming 307-766-4811

*Wyoming Business Council*: Steve Elledge, Regional Director, 307-577-6012, [selledge@wysbc.com](mailto:selledge@wysbc.com)

## **Step Three**

Concentrate more on internal business creation through entrepreneurship rather than business recruitment. Locally grown entrepreneurs are more likely to show allegiance to your community by staying in your community after they begin to grow. I have focused on youth entrepreneurship, but adults can learn to start their own businesses as well. You can use the same suggestion that I gave about the youth and apply it with adults. I believe that people no longer think like entrepreneurs. I think the risk and effort involved to start a small business is not understood and frightens most people. Small businesses are the heart of your community.

## **Planning**

We heard...

- Lack of infrastructure...no one wants to pay for it
- Confined hog operations
- Subdivision regulations
- Lack of clear and concise zoning regulations

### *Fail to Plan...Plan to Fail*

The uproar about the hog farms is a prime example of lack of planning. People in your community are not happy about the farms regardless of what type of economic development they bring to your community. But, due to many factors that include lack of planning and community coordination they have arrived and will not be going anywhere. They do bring jobs and they are an example of 20<sup>th</sup> century agriculture. If you do not want to have anymore of them I would suggest a grass roots effort toward planning. This would have to include lobbying the legislature to pass laws that improve counties and communities ability to plan.

*Solution: Invite the managers of the confined hog operations to sit down with local leadership (County Commissioners, City Government, WADCO and the Chamber of Commerce) and begin to develop a friendly cooperative relationship between the hog farms and Wheatland. Find out what they are doing to combat the smell that most people are upset about. And find out what you could do cooperatively to help each other. \*\*\*This meeting should not be hostile and you will need an outside facilitator to help you work through this process.*

Resource: The Wyoming Rural Development Council has a list of qualified facilitators that will help you work through this problem. Mary Randolph, Director, WRDC, 307-777-6430, [mrand@state.wy.us](mailto:mrand@state.wy.us), [www.wyomingrural.org](http://www.wyomingrural.org)

*Solution: Consider hiring a city/county planner.* I know that no one wants their private property rights limited, however, the smell from the hog farms has decreased some property rights and values in your community. Look at planning as a preemptive effort to protect your community rather than an invasive regulatory effort.

Resources: Wyoming Association of Municipalities, George Parks, 307-632-0398, [gparke@wyomuni.org](mailto:gparke@wyomuni.org), [www.wyomuni.org](http://www.wyomuni.org) George will have more information on developing city/county planning efforts.

### **Economic Health**

We heard:

- Need downtown development
- Ag sustainability and diversification
- Banks do not lend to non-agricultural enterprises
- Need varied retail businesses
- Lack of affordable housing

Wow...this is a huge challenge for Wheatland. I have no sure and hard answer for Wheatland but some suggestions are:

- First, make sure you have a community vision about what type of economic development you want. You will never have a 100% buy in on anything you do. But develop a vision anyway. Is your vision for Wheatland to be the confined feeding capital of Wyoming? Or does your community vision differ from that?
- Second, develop a strategic plan for community and economic development based on your community vision. Take the Major Problems and Challenges section and pick the top two or three topics to concentrate on during the next two or three years. WADCO needs to create “Task Force” groups to work on these issues.
- Third, have each “Task Force” responsible for setting timelines, measurable goals and organizations and people responsible for seeing things happen. This Task Force needs to have these issue plans in writing and someone needs to be responsible for making sure that things happen on the given timeline. Find the resources needed to complete projects and reach the measurable goal.

Specific Economic Development Resources Include:

*Wyoming Business Council:* Steve Elledge, Regional Director, 307-577-6012, [selledge@wysbc.com](mailto:selledge@wysbc.com)

Wyoming Community Network: Jennifer Goodman, Executive Director, 307-766-2107, [jgoodman@uwyo.edu](mailto:jgoodman@uwyo.edu), [www.WyomingCommuntiyNetwork.com](http://www.WyomingCommuntiyNetwork.com). My job is to help you find the resources to meet your development goals. I can also help during the planning and community visioning stages of this process. I am in the process of developing an online database filled with all the economic and community development resources. So check the website for more details in Early November 2000.

Downtown Development Resources:

Main Street Program  
 1785 Massachusetts Ave. N.W.  
 Washington, D.C. 20036  
 202-588-6219  
[www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org) or [www.mainst.org](http://www.mainst.org)

Powell, Wyoming has had great success with this program. Give Dave Reetz, with the Powell Economic Development Alliance, a call to find out more information. 307-754-2201 or [powell@wir.net](mailto:powell@wir.net)

**Business Lending:**

The SBA and Entrepreneur Magazine have just named the First State Bank of Wheatland as the best bank in Wyoming for micro- lending for small business. We were told more than once that the local banks would not do non-agricultural lending. So I wonder if they were talking about First State Bank? Regardless of what one bank is doing this perception may be a reality for non-agricultural based businesses dealing with local lending institutions. One solution at least to further understanding between local lenders and their potential borrowers is to get

everyone together and discuss the process and expectations involved. How do the local banks score loan applications? What can a business do to make itself more attractive to lenders? You also might invite the SBA to this meeting to discuss potential challenges.

## **Housing**

The first step in getting affordable housing in Wheatland is to assess what you already have. I know you just went through an assessment, but this one is different. The Wyoming Community Development Authority has an extensive detailed housing assessment. That looks at things in your community like average rents, land prices and occupancy rates. This will be very helpful in deciding what kind of housing you need. Do you need senior assisted living homes, low-income single-family housing, or multifamily housing?

### Resources:

Fannie Mae Foundation. The Fannie Mae Foundation provides grants that revitalize neighborhoods and create affordable home ownership across America.

Fannie Mae Foundation [www.fannienaefoundation.org](http://www.fannienaefoundation.org)

Wyoming Community Development Authority (WCDA)  
George Axlund  
P.O. Box 634  
Casper, Wyoming 82602  
307-265-0603

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Kelly Jorgensen  
Senior Community Builder  
Wyoming State Office  
100 East B Street, Room 4229  
Casper, WY 82601-1918  
[Kelley L. Jorgensen@hud.gov](mailto:Kelley.L.Jorgensen@hud.gov)  
[www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov)

## **Vision**

Your community needs to develop a joint vision between: City Government, County Government, WADCO, Chamber of Commerce and all other interested parties. You could decide on a population size that is acceptable to most people; what kind of businesses everyone wants to see; what services your community would like to see improved, and then come up with a list of questions that the leadership organizations need answered so they can get on the same page. This should be your first step in taking this process forward. I would also suggest that you use an outside facilitator to develop your vision.

## **Capital Projects**

We heard that you want a:

- Covered pool
- Community center
- Walking path
- Recreation/activities center
- Convention center
- Hospital parking lot

I think that the current project for a convention center would be a very positive asset for your community. However, this project has polarized the Wheatland community. The current proposal for the convention center does not meet all the needs of the community. The project has been priced for 3+ million dollars that would be exclusively for conventions. I would suggest a more multi-use type facility. I think that meeting space is a definite asset, but recreation facilities would strengthen the community support for this project.

*\*\*\*You will need to have a 501 © (3) to accept any private foundation grants.*

Funding ideas for the above projects include:

Kresge Foundation

[www.kresge.org](http://www.kresge.org)

80% of the Kresge Foundation funding goes toward capital projects

USDA-Rural Development

Federal Building, Room 1005

100 East B. St., P.O. Box 820

Casper, Wyoming 82602

307-261-6300

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/wy>

For foundation information contact the Foundation Center on the Web at [www.fdncenter.org](http://www.fdncenter.org).

For \$19.95 per month you are allowed unlimited searches for foundations that meet your criteria.

## **Beautification and Historic Preservation**

Contact Nancy Wiedel, State Historic Preservation Office, for more ideas on historic funding opportunities. Her contact information is: 307-777-6312 or [nweide@state.wy.us](mailto:nweide@state.wy.us)

Also contact Echo Renner with Meeteetse Museums for other ideas on historic tourism.

Meeteetse has three museums in a community of 400 people. They do a great job of using history to further their economy. Her phone number is 307-868-2423.

I have also made a commitment to your emergency services manager to help your community get enhanced 911 capabilities. This allows the emergency dispatchers to see your address when you call 911 in case you are unable to give it to them. This is an important service and I would love to help Wheatland get this service.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions or comments. Again let me reinforce the fact that my job is to help your community reach locally conceived development strategies. Call me at any time for help. Thanks for your hospitality.

###

**Sam Sturman**

Laramie County Community College  
1400 East College Dr.  
307-778-1237  
Fax: 307-778-1269  
E-mail: struman@mail.lcc.wheou.edu

Wheatland -- 100 years from now

I do not have the impression that Wheatland knows where it wants to go in the future. I get this feeling from city government and community members. They are taking small steps like the pocket park and new jail, but is that really economic development?

Many people said they would like to see 5,000 to 10,000 new people in Wheatland, but had no idea on how to achieve these ends. Deciding where you want to be when you do not know how to do it is hard.

Wheatland is not unique in trying to grow its community. Wheatland is competing with thousands of small communities concerned about their livelihood. I do not see an organized vision. This is the most basic issue in the future of the community.

A community that impressed me with revitalizing a failing community was Pueblo, Colorado. When the steel industry left, that community was dying. While there is a significant population difference these community leaders could help you create your vision. Contact the Pueblo City Clerk's office at 719-584-0840 for more information.

Ann Azari, the former mayor of Ft. Collins has a consulting service. Maybe she could be of service on how to instill vision in Wheatland.

Contact: Ann Azari  
Consulting Services for Business & Community  
1825 Essex Drive  
Ft. Collins, CO  
970-482-6336

**Recruiting Industry to Wheatland**

Develop a move packet that sells the advantages of Wheatland as a place for new businesses. This document could address the pros of the community, what services WADCO can offer to help the company (like writing training grants) and offer suggestions for a company's objections for moving to the community. You could get a copy of a company's move packet as a model. This document could have great value on what

companies are expecting from communities when considering relocation.

SafeCard Services in Cheyenne or even LEADS may have a sample that WADCO could review.

Contact: Randy Bruns  
Cheyenne LEADS  
307-638-6000

Bob Peck, CEO  
SafeCard Services  
Cheyenne, WY 82001  
307-771-2768

### **Developing a workforce**

The 9-12 grade system is probably the best place to develop and implement a program to train workers for jobs that they might create in Wheatland. It is the chicken and the egg scenario. Do you try to attract the company and then provide the training or develop the basic skill sets and use that to attract the company?

I would suggest a special task force of area businesses to work with the Platte County School Board to tell schools what type of employee they need. While the school district curriculum seems exceptional, it focuses on students who will move away from the community to find jobs. What does the school do for the student who is not college bound?

There is a real lack of vocational training opportunities at the area high school for those inclined to pursue light manufacturing and production jobs.

The following are examples of how industry has teamed up with businesses to train a workforce:

Contact: Wyoming Hospitality Alliance Mentoring Program  
Monica Miller  
P.O. Box 1003  
Cheyenne, WY 82003  
307-634-2279

Michigan Department of Career Development  
Carole Ann Stacy  
Career and Technical Preparation

P.O. Box 30712  
Lansing, Michigan  
517-373-8776

Piedmont Manufacturing Certification Model  
Workforce Development and the Role of the Community College  
Wanda Hill  
P.O. Box 1467  
Greenwood, SC 29648  
864-941-8416

Wyoming Training Compact  
Bruce Snyder  
Wyoming Community College Commission  
Cheyenne, WY

Focused Industry Training for North Carolina  
Scott Ralls  
919-733-7051

### **Attracting New Companies**

Has WADCO considered meeting formally and informally with recent retirees who have moved to the community? These people seem influential and have come from high paying professional careers. Could they entice them to provide contacts on companies that might wish to move or expand to Wheatland?

### **Promoting Wheatland**

With business travelers and tourists that move through the area, they could create a note pad promotional to be placed in tourist's rooms. Possible title of promotion: 10- Reasons Wheatland would be a great place for your small business . . .

### **Type of Businesses Wheatland Could Recruit**

Expecting companies like Kodak to relocate is unrealistic for Wheatland and expand to this community for the following reasons:

- There is not a sufficient population base to support such industry. Compounding the problem is the lack of housing, trained workforce, jobs for spouses and amenities a metropolitan community can provide.

- There is a lack of similar type jobs should an employee quit or be fired. Finding a similar job in Wheatland would be nearly impossible to for high-tech people.
- There is a lack of infrastructure and vacant space. Much of business relocation deals with what a community has to offer. This can include space, tax incentives, building space, training, etc. Wheatland needs to decide what they can offer.

### **Space for new Companies or Space to Expand**

As a casual observer, I did not see many buildings with 10,000 to 15,000 square feet that would be available to light manufacturers or even call centers.

### **WADCO determining its Niche**

WADCO and the citizens of Wheatland need to decide how they define economic development. Companies expand and relocate out of the Front Range. What is acceptable to Wheatland?

What is wrong with being the swine capital of the Rockies? There are pros and cons of every venture. By careful planning this business could boom. There was great opportunity only to decide this was not the industry Wheatland wanted. The worst thing any community can do is recruit new industry and then not support it. Not only is the livelihood of the community at stake, but also the business.

There are several small businesses like Wheatland Fire Equipment and Britz-Heidbrink that could provide ideas in the recruiting of like industries. These people need to be directly involved in recruiting like type industries. The car dealers are another good resource.

### **Size of Company for Wheatland**

Wheatland could sustain a couple of companies that employ 15 to 20 employees. Those are companies that could survive employee turn over and attrition. I do not see these at high tech industries.

While many communities do not want call centers, such companies might add a boost to the community though these companies typically do not pay high wages. They could possibly send out feelers to:

SafeCard  
Sierra Trading Post  
Catalogue stores

## **Community Center**

A community center is long overdue in the community. However, I am skeptical this facility could attract the number of clients and renters the community believes and cover operating revenue. There is much talk that conferences would flock into Wheatland to use this facility. Is there another community that Wheatland can see how their facility is being used and related costs?

They need a lodging tax to promote tourism.

Those people involved in the project are truly dedicated, but other than a few rough plans, there are only at the vision stage of making this center a reality. The public schools are the largest investments in a community. Why is the community not using these facilities more? The community owns these buildings. A great time for partnerships is available.

Dick Woods from Aims Community College 800-344-5209 operates a conference center in Greeley, CO that committee members should visit. It is a wonderful facility.

## **Benchmarking**

Wheatland may want to investigate what other small communities like there are doing for economic development. I suggest contacting towns like Craig, Lamar, or Ft. Morgan, Colorado. Education contacts that can help you identify what these smaller communities are doing to recruit businesses include:

Nelva Claycomb, Lamar Community College 719-336-2248

Larry Propp, Morgan Community College 970-542-3262

Cheryl Blackburn, CNCC Rangely, CO 970-675-3265

Dick Woods Aims Community College 800-344-5209 (runs one of the best programs in Colorado in working with local economic developers in developing training programs for new and expanding companies).

## **Schools**

I did not see a presence of Eastern Wyoming College at our meetings yet I know they can provide some programs and services.

## **Demonstrate**

Wheatland must be able to demonstrate to any business that there is an available workforce or a vehicle to develop a workforce. I doubt that exists in the community at this time.

## **Energy Park, Missouri Basin Power Project**

This is a truly wasted opportunity.

## **Possible short-term training providers.**

Companies like The Training Company (TIC) can probably be able to help with short-term training on industrial topics. Possibly Wheatland could model a training program like the way TIC delivers training. Some technical schools will also work with you. They can contract training services.

Dan Harmon  
Manager of Craft Recruiting  
970-879-2561  
Steamboat Spring, CO

David Figlino  
Emily Griffith Opportunity School  
1250 Welton St  
Denver, CO 80204  
303-575-4709

###

**Wheatland Resource Team**  
**September 11-14, 2000**

**WHAT WE HEARD FROM WHAT WAS SAID**

After listening to citizens of Wheatland, the Resource Team reviewed what was said and condensed the comments down to a few basic statements for presentation at the town meeting held on September 14. **These are in no particular order:**

**Assets**

- Great kids
- Transportation Accessibility
- Safe Community
- Excellent Healthcare
- Climate
- Law Enforcement and Emergency Management
- Low Crime
- Small town atmosphere
- Good schools
- Parks
- Recreational Opportunities
- Friendly people
- Great location
- Clean Community
- Low taxes
- Good church community
- Basin Electric

**Youth**

- Out migration of youth
- Need for good jobs
- Nothing for youth to do/supervised activities
- Drug abuse
- Alcohol abuse
- Need for day care/infant care – round the clock care, need for after school care

**Jobs**

- Low wages without benefits
- Lack of skilled workers

- Lack of diversity

### **Planning**

- Lack of infrastructure. Who pays?
- Business Park. Who pays?
- Lack of clear and concise zoning regulations
- Subdivision regulations – less than 35 acres
- Confined hog operations

### **Economic Health**

- Downtown development
- Ag sustainability and diversification
- Bank lending practices
- Increase opportunity to create varied retail businesses
- Lack of affordable housing

### **Vision**

- Lack of cohesive vision within the community
- Growth is status quo
- Coordination between county and city leaders

### **Capital Projects**

- Covered pool
- Community Center
- Walking path
- Recreation/Activities Center
- Convention Center
- Hospital Parking Lot

### **Education**

- More outreach classes
- Technology/Vocational Training
- Credibility of school board and administration?
- Lack of extension educator

### **Beautification**

- Clean-up at both North and South exits
- Weeds at closed businesses and abandoned buildings
- Clean up along 16<sup>th</sup> Street

- Canal beautification/development
- Historic Preservation

### **Marketing/Promotion**

- Increase signage along Interstate to direct people downtown
- Market community assets externally
- Develop opportunities to market area tourist opportunities

## **WHAT WAS SAID AT THE INTERVIEWS**

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

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

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?**

- Communication between young and old
- Nothing for the kids to do
- Not any real prospects for professional job opportunities for young people
- Nothing in this community to keep us – even the young people. No social activities for when they're here...theatre, shows
- Lack ability to communicate with the older people, vice versa
- People do not want to change the status quo
- We need better leadership to bring in factories and industry
- Grow culturally and build community center
- Lack of enthusiasm to develop the area
- Need to provide infrastructure
- Close proximity to major economic areas
- Not having resources to compete with larger cities
- I don't know who the pig farm is helping; we didn't get a dime out of it; that is not economic development
- Need to do something to get the youth positive and doing something more than just standing around and goofing off
- Concerned about attracting businesses that compete
- Don't think my tax dollars should be used to create public assistance, etc.
- Under financed community
- Banks are agriculturally oriented; no venture capital available
- Lack of financing in the non-ag industries

- Worry of drugs among our youth
- We're too "small town"
- Nothing to do for the youth
- Lack of jobs for young people
- Businesses lack an enthusiastic attitude toward customers
- Lack of customer service
- Local infrastructure at city council level
- City Council wants too many guarantees before they encourage new business
- City Council has no vision, they are not risk takers
- Community is unsympathetic toward teens not having anything to do
- Need to get more businesses
- Small towns have limited resources
- Everyone wants something for free
- City Council sometimes perceived as not being pro-business
- Airline transportation
- Hotel/Motel owners need to educate themselves about the benefits of a lodging tax and the benefits of attracting new businesses
- Town Council shouldn't base decisions on personality issues
- Need better childcare for preschoolers
- No vision among our city leaders
- Problems with expansion of the hog farms will affect salability of property
- Odor of hog farm
- Need a community facility (convention center)
- Concern about the effect of the hog farms on our health and economy
- We need to work harder on making the downtown a part of the community
- Need more shops downtown
- Maintain vitality of downtown
- Pig farm, downtown, schools, communication
- Need an indoor swimming pool
- Clean up junk on outskirts of town (East side of Interstate)
- Mess at north end does not provide a good first impression
- Youth that drink
- A local establishment that makes it easy to get drugs and alcohol
- Interstate poses a problem as far as getting easy drugs
- Need to increase our awareness of gangs
- Beautify the area along Vimbos and Wheatland Co-op
- Get rid of the weeds
- Put in flowering bushes
- Parent's attitudes need to be changed in general

- Lack of communication between the hog farm and the community
- Tax base limits budgets for needed things
- Opposition to new people and businesses
- Statistics at Treasurer's Office show that young people are leaving the area
- School system not providing technical training so kids will stay and get work
- Overload of retired people living on fixed income
- We need to become more cohesive as a community
- Growth as an ag industry needs to be important
- Need qualified people to hire
- Schools need to train technical jobs
- It is a challenge to maintain our economic base
- Keep young people here
- Challenge to remain active (the town)
- Lack of qualified personnel
- Employees need more training
- Diversify economic base
- Training our kids to stay in Platte County
- Qualified personnel – kids need training on outside living
- No temperature and time clock downtown
- Diversify economy
- Need coordinated planning effort between town and county to attract businesses
- Economic development efforts – infrastructure, grants, business financing
- Lack of communication between town, county and organizations
- Government and school no communication
- Businesses want the town's money to develop their business
- Lack of childcare
- After school program has been cut
- Day cares will be losing capacity because of new fire codes
- Busing changes – no longer go to all day cares after school
- Parents are finding it hard to get good daycare
- Infant care – need large grant to secure a building for an infant care center
- Lack of childcare
- Lack of follow-up, housing and employment for people who have left violent situations
- Follow-up employment and childcare for violence victims
- Lack of options for violence victims
- Administrators in schools are very inaccessible
- The administration does not meet teachers halfway
- Teachers are threatened with insubordination
- Concerns of teachers are not met

- Administration doesn't care what makes parents and teachers happy
- Computer lab programs cut
- Working with others for services to assist violence victims – protection orders, mental health
- Project Safe is not included in curriculums (schools)
- Lack of working together
- Lack of coordination between social service agencies
- Lack of doing what they say they will do
- Separation between towns in counties
- Separation between social service agencies
- Lack of things for young teens to do and places to go that are positive
- Drug and alcohol abuse among teens and generally their parents too
- Meth and pot problem
- Kids smoking
- Drugs and drinking
- People are too clicky, don't interact enough
- Drinking and smoking, if you don't do it, you are not cool
- Drinking and drugs
- Loitering around Taco Johns
- Kids smoke very near the drug-free school zone
- Too many people whine
- Too many underage kids drinking, too many people smoking on school grounds and chewing tobacco
- Nothing to do
- Need more activities
- People are nose-y and everyone knows everyone else's business
- City workers don't move too fast; baseball field should have been completed and construction has just begun
- Nothing to do
- Nothing to do but drink
- Not a big choice in jobs
- People are too judgmental
- Don't like to be judged, nothing to do
- People judge you by activities you like to do
- Popular people are judgmental
- Community is too focused on sports
- Everyone drinks and nothing to do but leave town
- Need a mall

- Different groups are non-inclusive
- School isn't involved enough in rodeo; we only get a picture in the yearbook
- No where to hang out; we need a mall
- Streets need repairs, lots of big dips
- Nothing to do here
- Too many conflicts between people for no reason
- Hard to fit into more than one group in school
- Bored
- Feedlot smell
- We were supposed to get a gym but the funding was used elsewhere
- Too expensive to buy stuff here
- Clothes are cheaper in Cheyenne
- Students worked to raise money to cover the pool and we don't know where the money went
- Pollution from power plant
- Both gyms are small
- Sport focused school board
- No support for academic teams, ag, speech, drama, academic decathlon
- Not good leadership, poor administration, no rule enforcement
- Need to look down the road at economic development; we have an aging population and our youth are moving on
- Stimulate economic growth
- Economic development and young families
- Moderate decrease in school population in elementary school. Say they are leaving because of jobs
- Large decrease in number of students in the past 15 years. Lack of quality jobs
- Seeing an influx of high need kid, requires more money to educate
- Deterioration of family
- Lacking social skills
- Poor reading skills
- Poor grammar and speaking skills
- We only have one shot at economic development and that is education
- Need structured supervised programs for our youth in the community,
- Need a recreation center. The school buildings are not adequate to the task
- Challenge to meet the socio-economic needs of the kids
- Need to help make them successful as they exit their public education
- Drug and alcohol problem. Don't get a lot of help from the community
- Inhalants, Meth, alcohol
- Alcohol and marijuana

- Unsupervised recreational facilities in town Age inappropriate associations
- Lack of services available in town
- Saturday downtown is deserted
- History aspect is not marketed
- Lack of employees that want to work
- WADCO giving out money for a new business (hotel/motel) that would compete with current hotels/motels
- That kind of economic development puts people out of business
- Hard to replace employees
- Employee taxes killing us
- Not afraid of competition but don't want our federal tax dollars paying for the tax dollars to come in
- Keeping and finding employee's is biggest challenge
- Very concerned that the community is trying to bring in new businesses with their own employees
- Low level employment
- Quantity and quality employees
- Need a community center
- Need a covered swimming pool that can be used year round
- Appearance of our community; weeds at empty buildings or abandoned building and along 16<sup>th</sup> street as you enter town
- Competition is viewed as negative
- Lack of non-sports related activities for our youth
- Lot of teenagers loitering and smoking and cussing in the park
- No directed activities for youth
- No jobs to come home too after graduating from college
- Concerned about loss of student population. Need to attract young people
- Not enough for the young teens to do
- Not enough music and cultural activities for the kids
- The city needs something for kids to do, but on the other hand has to be something to keep the adults here
- Community Center, covered swimming pool, no places to dance
- No after school program for young children
- No living quarters for able retired people. Need a place where you don't have to worry about upkeep, etc
- Kids need to have places to work. No incentive to come back
- Town needs to be cleaned up...weeds, etc. Even some of those you can see from the Interstate
- Would like to see updated playground equipment in the park

- Would like my children to have some amenities
- Need a good walking path and bike path that would be safe
- Need affordable housing for young couples
- Need better and higher paying jobs
- Need affordable retirement housing
- Need an overpass walking bridge. One on Mariposa and on Oak Street
- Sidewalks in town need to be repaired
- People need to keep their trees trimmed and areas maintained
- Need to have access to better financial resources
- Employees – professional employees within health care and outside
- Aging demographics
- We need to attract youth back to this state – professional and unprofessional jobs
- Substance treatment programs in the area of youth and young adults
- Lack of opportunity for youth to be involved in community
- Economic growth – a community is either growing or it is dying
- Job opportunities – lack of professional job opportunities
- Hard to find jobs for spouse
- Aging community with kids leaving
- Wrong jobs are coming here
- Need to attract jobs and industries that are higher quality and with higher pay
- Need to attract higher paying, professional jobs
- A building built in 50's and trying to do 2000 medicine in it
- Challenge to get past the sole ag industry
- Careful growth
- Insufficient infant daycare – licensed infant daycare
- Not having a lot of shared information – referrals with other agencies
- How to keep furnishing services we now have and new services without tax burdens
- No ag and natural resource agent for three years
- Irrigated farmers and other farmers are having a hard time
- Appearance of Wheatland – garbage and junk yards
- Junk cars up and down the interstate, weeds, abandoned lots not taken care of
- Second poorest county
- Grayrocks usage by out of towners. We're losing revenue by not charging
- Keeping our youth here
- Lack of something for teens to do
- Enclosed pool
- Community center – conventions, teen activities
- Need to keep teens busy – they grow up and leave
- Create a secure tax base for county agencies

- Existing tax structure
- County extension agent is needed in Platte county
- Pregnant teens- support program is needed
- Endangered species laws threaten agriculture
- Elected officials and public need to have forward thinking on a regional landfill before it gets out of control
- Covered pool – assets for old as well as young
- Small businesses are always struggling
- Are our children going to be able to find jobs in a small area like this
- Extension agent is needed
- Long term maintenance of the public facilities
- Long term maintenance of historic downtown
- We are losing what we are because we have no community pride, like the Guernsey cabins and the Frederick Museum
- Trouble holding youth
- No progressive industry
- No incentive for industry to come here
- No beef specialist at extension office – need extension agent
- Nothing for teens and a little older to do if not interested in drinking and partying
- Need career jobs
- Retailers – selection is small
- Difficult to find what you need in town
- Need to work to help businesses stay in business
- Need another grocery store to give current grocery stores more competition
- Prices are too high
- Competition may help keep prices down
- No vision or leadership in the community
- No clear answer to be what we want to be as a town. Where do we want to go?
- Street maintenance needs to be improved.
- Need a lunchroom at high school.
- Town is just a little too small
- Lack of employment opportunities.
- Population is too small
- We need some growth
- Need more services
- Want to stay rural but need more people
- Youth – lack of vision
- Struggling youth – drugs, alcohol & pregnancy
- Need an active organization that is going to promote businesses in Wheatland

- Community needs to keep up with changing demographics – retirees are coming here and so are small businesses but the town or the county is not keeping up with that influx
- Recreational activities
- Lack of cultural opportunities
- Lack of educational, technology opportunities
- Domestic violence is hidden – no employment for spouse that has to get out
- Lack of things for kids to do
- Almost takes a crisis for somebody to take an initiative for youth activities
- More opportunities for youth – junior high and high school
- New people to the community have a hard time feeling they are a part of the community
- Hispanic population is almost invisible – they are part of the economics of this area and need to more a part of the community
- Retirees – unless you make an effort to get out and make friends it is hard to become a part of the community. Have to make a conscience effort to meet people
- Growing problem in terms of infrastructure: water supply, water pressure, improve and expand the water delivery system
- Sewer system is becoming less and less adequate
- Sewer system is old and aging and needs to be updated
- Jail facility is inadequate
- Rehabilitation after jail term – get on bus and go someplace else
- More support for mentally ill
- No group homes to offer services
- Drugs
- Extension agent
- Lack of employment that can support a family – decent paying jobs
- Need for more store fronts – specialty shops – antiques
- Competition breeds better businesses
- We need bigger stores, like a Wal-Mart
- Canal that runs through city limits could be an asset instead of a liability
- Beautification of canal – flowers, could be a pathway – fence line
- No covered swimming pool
- Have missed chances for swimming pool through all the schools that have been built
- No fore sight
- No rooms available for power outages – 300 people
- No viable commercial real estate
- Lacking infrastructure
- Lack of industrial growth backing by government
- No land use plan
- Evaluations placed on industry by state – no tax base

- Losing children because parents moving on
- Agricultural mind set of banking sector toward industry
- Communication – radio station and newspaper are not up to date
- Labor pool
- Nothing for people to do when they graduate- no jobs
- Community reactive instead of proactive, i.e. Goshen county fairgrounds
- Nothing for young people
- Nothing for people with degrees / nothing to come back for / no pay scale
- Lack of water in agriculture
- Community doesn't want to grow
- People happy with status quo and not moving forward
- Agriculture will not be a mainstay, become a retirement community
- Fast becoming retirement community
- Everyone looks negatively toward growth, no patience
- Looking at small business or other type of businesses
- Little or no business development, community attitude
- Airport capabilities lacking
- Pay scale better in Cheyenne
- No jobs for degrees
- No community center—project stalled
- People want a lot but not willing to work for it
- Cliques in the community
- Some business ignored because they're different
- No warning system besides the fire siren
- Community center -- we do the work and then no action
- Educating the community on potential for disaster that rarely happens here – earth quake or hazardous waste spill
- School system sucks
- Teachers aren't committed
- Attitude that unless you're going to college there is no other alternative
- Need for vocational programs that serve agriculture and light industry
- Where is welding, CNC, assembly, light manufacturing in the school?
- College track – where is the vocational track
- Need to design a plan to bring new business into the community
- No commitment to vocational program
- Vocational program cut for the only the college students
- Poor pay scale for people in the community
- Teachers not paid enough
- Can't keep the police here, we train them and then they leave

- Need money for safety equipment
- Vote for popularity rather than ability
- Don't have enough economic opportunity for the young people
- Outsourcing all the kids that grow up here
- Proximity to Casper and Cheyenne and the perception that people shop based on price, rather than service and support
- An effort to understand our message would benefit the community
- Unrestricted growth in certain areas like hog farms
- Would like to see restrictions to that industry
- Our prices are competitive with Cheyenne, yet people are going for other things, i.e. cultural events, etc.
- We should attract out of towners to our area
- Would like to see more businesses – shoe store, another clothing store
- Need to be able to get qualified employees
- As a community along the front range we need to keep planning for slow sustained growth
- There is an element in town against any growth
- We are prime for growth from Colorado
- Leaders need to be aware so it can be slow and steady
- If you are developer and want to start a project on a piece of land where there isn't infrastructure, you are expected to pay. The city should step up to the plate
- Growth is coming, we need to plan for that and make this a place people want to come to
- Would like to NOT have to pay extra money for my phone, or a local access number for the network
- Would like to see more people come into Wheatland; need to do something to bring them in
- Drinking and drug problem with the youth and adults, too
- Would like to know the numbers of retirees and their income. Our services need to focus more on their needs and desire
- Nothing for teenage kids to do
- Law enforcement and others do not work well together (with others outside of emergency management)
- Need quality childcare
- Misunderstanding of 911 – people use as an information operator – people call and ask what are the road conditions
- Drug use in the community – Meth lab was taken down in town in 1999 this helped reduce for short-term but use and labs are and will be a problem
- Disagree that we do give a chance for education – misunderstanding that emergency management is a see all, know all
- Can't go out because people want to continually complain to them even during private

time. They are considered see all know all (emergency management)

- Those who in charge (sheriff dept, police dept) and those above (commissioners, town council) are afraid to move ahead, do something new – afraid to prepare for future
- Growth is going to happen - Colorado is moving towards us, and we need to get infrastructure set-up; it is going to run over us if we do not get going
- More for teens – the middle age children that do not have much to do. They cannot drive and too big to play with little kids. Have nothing to do.
- Increase tax base
- Find good paying businesses to relocate
- Tenure for teachers needs to be done away with
- High school teachers need to be evaluated by peers, students & parents, plus look at class attendance and pass/fail rate
- We need a community center for entertainment/education purpose
- Something besides the movie theater for youth to do in winter
- Sports focused school board
- No support for academic teams
- Not a very good superintendent
- Poor administration
- No rule enforcement
- Younger people feel that there are not enough opportunities
- No covered pool
- Pig farm and the increase in feed lots decrease the air quality and smell have degenerated at times to almost intolerable
- Grayrocks Reservoir should collect revenue
- Weeds at abandoned building or closed businesses
- Need more mail receptacles on south and southwest end of town
- Too much negativity among individuals
- Territorialism
- Lack of support between agencies (social services)
- Black and white thinking – change is resisted
- Separation between town in county
- Follow-up after abusive situations
- Activities for youth
- After school program for school age children
- Lack of infant care
- Lack of the school administration to work with parents and teachers
- Things for kids to do, including jobs
- More communication between all elected officials
- Drinking water is safe

- Lack of safe, affordable housing
- Division of natives and outsiders
- Competition is viewed as negative
- Customer service lacking
- Weeds
- No place to hold meetings and/or attract conferences
- Unprofessional
- Lack of community pride
- No carnival at the fair
- Stores lack items, need a shoe store
- Lack of day care for babies
- Community center
- Need condominium/apartments
- Lack of labor force
- Easements and acquisitions
- Need more new projects and businesses to make the community grow
- School administration refuses to listen to teachers and parents
- Infrastructure needs to be strengthened, not only utility wise, water, sewer, wastewater, etc.; Improvements and expansions need to be made
- Phone service declines, prices go up
- We need a salvation army or goodwill center
- Need a community center
- Better care for mentally ill
- More diversification for agriculture, economic growth
- No options to develop plans for growth, no zoning, no planning process, having to have something statewide to develop 35 acres and up; developers break up those plots and there is no infrastructure, or plan for growth
- Need a vision and leadership to carry it forward
- Would like an outlet to sell malt barley
- Stabilize present business area
- Need to increase tax base
- Find small good paying businesses to relocate
- Eliminate tenure for teachers
- Community center
- No more hog farms
- Lack of major facility to attract events
- Dirt roads within city limits, no maintenance
- Getting consumers to shop Platte County
- Need more economic base, slow steady growth

- Do not get a Wal-Mart, etc
- Lots of people want status quo
- No coordination with DFS – safe house is coordinating well with most programs
- Endangered species act is a major threat to communities like this
- Do not see how we can handle much growth without increasing our population
- Evaluate teachers on a regular basis
- Feed is all shipped in for hog farm
- Businesses are closed over the noon hour
- Seniors need more public transportation around the clock
- No more hogs
- Lack of clean industry
- WADCO needs to only work with businesses that have their own money
- Only contact businesses that can pay for them to be here; to heck with the grants
- Bring back the busy signal on the phone system
- Bring back the time/temperature clock downtown
- Losing population
- Need more affordable senior housing
- Supervised youth activities
- Beer bottles everywhere
- Alcohol and drug problem
- Construction project hurt merchants
- Too small of a work force
- Too few businesses that pay decent salaries
- Declining population of young adults and families
- Growing senior population
- Inadequate commercial/infrastructure makes it impossible to develop commercial park
- No more hog farms OR enlarging the ones we have
- Rules and regulations are out of date or not enforced
- County doesn't have any organized, controlled, regulated growth plans
- No more pig factories
- Lack of communication and cooperation between county and city officials
- Pig factories are not an answer for economic growth and stability

### **What are the major strengths and assets of your community?**

- Community backs civic projects over and above the call of duty
- Strong community organizations
- Everyone gets along pretty well
- Friendly and cooperative people
- Excellent library system
- Wonderful people
- The school system is the best
- Low crime
- Majority of people have high expectations for themselves and their kids
- Work together well
- This community has more to offer than any other city in the state of Wyoming due to the fact that is on the interstate and taxes are reasonable
- Has the ability to become one of the best in the state of Wyoming
- Neat and clean
- Good group of students
- Good police organization
- Chose Wheatland as a place to live; finest place I've ever been
- Good schools, good people, town is clean
- Have plenty of water and our location is really good
- Would like to be able to have my kids live and work here
- Stable, creative and intelligent labor force
- Lack of traffic
- Good, friendly clean
- Great school system and community pride
- Community has vision
- Affordable for almost anyone
- Good church foundation in the community
- Irrigation helps us have a good stable economy Ag based
- We've got outdoor recreation opportunities, in town and the surrounding area
- Business leaders are working hard to strengthen the community
- Strong community in general
- Our location is a strength for the overall future of economic development
- Lower property tax base, no state income tax
- Close knit community and safety level

- Small community
- Safe and trusting
- Location for growth is really good
- Good recreation opportunities
- Climate, despite the wind, is wonderful
- Ag based economy provides a sense of values that are positive
- Banana belt
- Excellent health care and medical services
- Great selection of extended activities
- Small town
- Basin Electric
- Environment and the view of the mountains
- Diversity of our area we can go to the lakes and mountains quickly
- Slow paced life
- The security of a safe town
- Size of community
- Close to recreation
- Good facilities – hospitals and schools
- Friendly
- Small community, great place to live
- Low crime rate – kids can play outdoors at night – no organized gangs
- Good medical clinic
- Good community support
- Excellent library
- Infrastructure is good
- Low tax state which is attractive to prospects
- Quality of life
- City park
- Quality of life
- Businesses are devoted and provide excellent service
- Wheatland is one of best kept secrets on I-25
- Good reputation for being a nice place to live with good people who support the community
- Intimacy of a small town, culture, history
- The proximity to transportation services – rail service
- Technology available is rare
- Great senior citizen program
- Parks and Rec
- Community Education is good
- Location
- Town Council

- County Commissioners
- Quality of life
- Infrastructure
- Great business ideas
- Reservoirs, tourism and Fort Laramie are all close
- Road network
- Sound infrastructure
- Diversity of our religious community with good following
- Parks and recreation program
- City park
- Individual schools keep activities and extracurricular activities available
- School sports
- Wheatland's beautification
- Pocket park beautification
- County fair & 4-H
- Extension office
- Bulldog bark (student paper) is done by students themselves
- Great economic development going on in town
- Business people have pulled together
- Great job in attracting clients to downtown
- Great job in keeping town clean
- Close to Cheyenne
- Close to mountains
- Hunting and fishing
- Better than living in a big city
- Less smog
- Good rodeo team
- More courses in school, friendly teachers
- Friends
- Plenty places to fish, hunt and go mudding and good places to hide from police
- Not a bad drug problem
- Small town, close friends, easy to get to know people
- Lots of places to ride horses
- More classes than Chugwater
- Less crowded
- Easy to have close friends
- Close to lake to water ski
- Skate park
- School is safe
- Power plant
- Everyone is down to earth here

- Motels – friendly community
- Very good work ethic
- So much room to advance in this community; we can't stop the growth and that is an asset
- Basin Electric and the railroad
- People are great throughout the community
- Park your car and don't have to worry about it getting stolen
- Without the support of the locals we wouldn't make it
- Excellent emergency services
- The interstate is a major asset; we are a center hub
- Motel owners share the wealth
- Businesses helping each other
- WADCO tries, but need guidelines from City and County on incentives
- Superb library and staff
- Our youth could be an asset, but I don't know what to do to get them more involved and to be good employees
- Family oriented families
- Excellent ministry co-op
- Excellent schools and beautiful recreation areas
- City park is a plus
- Appreciate low tax base, low property taxes, availability to buy land and build in the country
- Lots to offer as far as land is concerned
- Friendly people who pull together in a crisis without question
- Downtown renovation a real plus, just need to expand it
- Pocket Park is going to be wonderful
- Community involvement
- Great businesses, very accommodating
- Friendly people
- Fire Department is great
- Best volunteer fire department in the state; their response time keeps our insurance rates down
- Excellent school system
- Excellent health care system
- Community attracts people to move
- Good place to live children
- School system
- Recreation – fishing, hunting
- Community pulls together when there is a challenge
- Core group of people that are here and will stay here
- Higher than average educational and technical training base (power plant)
- Law enforcement – strength and good direction

- Family and personal security
- Sense of true community
- Nice to know neighbors
- Community pulls together
- Clean fresh air...recreation is great
- Hunting, fishing
- Small community – takes no time to get to work
- Climate – banana belt
- No snowbirds – our elderly population sticks around
- Good core of individuals in the community (mostly elderly) civil servants in the community – concern with who is going to replace them
- There has been a lot of success in past
- Health care, school, good population base to build on
- We are selling Wheatland - that is how we are going to get people here
- Quality of life is great
- Togetherness of people
- Local agencies are great to work with
- Great network of resources – Human Resource Coalition
- Ditto including Project Safe and the Child Protection Team
- The people are great. Pull together when it is necessary
- Ditto
- The farmers and ranchers are environmentally minded people – they work hard and do a good job and it is sad that they get a bad rap
- Low taxes, no personal income tax, low property taxes, utilities are reasonable
- Real estate prices are reasonable
- Accessibility and proximity
- Safe
- Pretty area – lakes, mountains, recreation
- Safe
- People are friendly – they pull together
- We are now tree city USA
- Respectful teenagers
- In a disaster people pull together
- Clean town
- Nice parks for a town this size
- Streets are good from chip and seal program
- Schools are good
- Council people have done a great job
- Great parks and recreation department – soccer, ballet, tap dance, baseball- kindergarten through junior high
- Great community ed program

- Library – internet access and public programming keep community involved
- People are extremely outgoing and friendly
- Welcome visitors and new
- Great people
- People lend a helping hand to those in need
- Nice safe place to live
- Retail great compared to Thermopolis
- We have craft stores, bible store, Pamida
- Sense of community
- Cooperation churches working together – 14 churches
- Ministry Coop & The Chaplain's Association working together
- Fiber Optics capabilities
- Friendly community
- Beautification efforts and Pocket Park
- Safety factor
- Clean town, healthy environment to live in emotionally and physically
- Cost of living – property tax is low and housing costs
- Access to interstates and highways
- Community involvement
- Very church oriented community – churches come together and work together; all worship the same God
- Care and concern for the elderly
- Upgrading the streets, the lights, the Pocket Park; the gradual improvements are great improvements
- Rural community as opposed to an urban society. We don't have an urban attitude we have a rural attitude, and care about others
- A farming community first – we have retained the best of that in our society
- Intergenerational cooperation – the whole town is at high school games – everybody is all part of the same family
- Hospital is great
- The personnel and level of medical care is great
- Excellent support services – police and sheriff
- Golf course
- Project Safe
- Mental Health center is excellent but stretched
- Close knit community
- Is a great place for retirees – services offered they need
- Marvelous community for all age groups for all families
- Good schools
- Caring community
- Great place to raise kids

- Adult education program – community education
- Churches, lifestyle
- People and safety
- Atmosphere simple life
- People employment base industry support
- People wonderful, trusting
- Taxes are favorable
- Inexpensive place to do business
- Cable modem network – technologically ahead
- Beauty of County – clean
- Great location
- Location accessibility, climate
- Size of community
- Small town knowing everyone
- Low crime
- Good bunch of kids
- No crime
- Friendly people
- No road rage
- Location
- Good hunting and fishing
- Location, Location, Location
- The agricultural population is so caring
- Small town values
- It is my home and my community
- Strong volunteer community
- You know everyone by face and by name
- Volunteer spirit
- We are in a prime location to draw people and businesses
- The diversity we experience in this community, large retirement population, youth, religious groups, all these pieces fit together to make us an attractive community
- Environment and recreation opportunities
- Accessibility is the most exciting thing about being in Wheatland
- Not only geographically, but accessibility to people in leadership positions
- We have lots of artistic talent in this town, music and the arts, crafts
- We could be a cultural center if we worked toward that
- Great customer service among all our merchants
- Need better signage for downtown
- Friendly
- This is an outstanding place to raise a family
- Being able to be involved in church and schools

- Our size allows someone who wants to be involved to do so
- School system is an asset
- Friendly kids
- Low taxes
- Interstate is a wonderful asset
- Elementary and the quality of education within the elementary
- Quality of the people involved in emergency services – including ambulance and Wheatland police department – well trained and know their business and are dedicated to doing their job
- Small community atmosphere
- Beautification of the downtown area – we are ready to go and there is a lot in place for us to expand on
- The area – state parks within county, mountains, recreation, lakes – all bring in a lot of traffic, tourism
- Wyoming’s best kept secret
- People in emergency services bond together and work well together
- There is some forward looking besides just the small town attitude – did approve new jail
- WADCO is doing a great job
- People and good community
- Relaxed place and close to larger activity centers
- Outdoor recreation
- School pride
- Pocket Park
- Low cost energy
- Basin Electric
- We have adequate power and water
- Teachers, social workers and citizens really care and go the extra mile
- Low taxes
- Police department, management and staff
- Lots of room to grow
- Judges Kautz and Voight are great
- Libby elementary admin and staff
- Working relations between all service providers
- Location and access to major transportation, interstate, front range, etc
- Clean
- Church oriented
- Medical care, services such as project safe, are excellent
- Good REA group
- Good road system
- Community involvement; when things need to get done entire county gets involved
- Good neighbors

- City Council and County Commissioners try to work with people in several types of industries
- Cheap utilities
- On interstate and rail capacity
- Retired people are an asset, they don't take our jobs, yet they contribute to the community as volunteers and good citizens
- Safe
- Good churches and ministerial association
- No traffic
- Personal friendly service
- Great radio station, very community oriented
- Great business people
- People support each other in a crisis
- Safe environment
- Location next to I-25
- Easy access to Denver
- Beautiful scenery, mountains and prairies
- Location is close to three major reservoirs and numerous lakes and rivers
- Attractive downtown area
- Small town atmosphere
- Water
- Low Taxes

**What projects would you like to see accomplished in your community in the next two, five, ten, or twenty years? (Short and long term)**

- Would like to see a major activities center
- More industry
- Small industry
- Could be a good retirement community
- Steady, slow growth
- Potential as a retirement community
- Resurgence in community and civic orgs
- Need a couple more restaurants
- Cover the swimming pool
- Need an activities center
- Game and fish management
- More support for Internet access for every kid
- Need a swimming pool that is covered
- Clean up area along the Interstate
- Clean up both entrances – short-term goal
- Attract state little league tournament in 2004
- Change the ownership of golf course and make it public, enlarge and enhance it
- Cover the swimming pool
- Tube the irrigation canals through town and create a walking path
- Strengthen senior center
- The irrigation canal is a grand idea to fix that up
- Maintain our beautiful park
- Would like to see more beautification along entrance to towns
- Enlarge airport for commercial aviation
- Increase infrastructure to attract industrial park
- Give our kids a reason to come home and give them jobs
- Strengthen senior center, need an expansion of affordable apartments near the senior center
  
- Attract good businesses that will attract our UW grads to come back here and work
- Don't want to become another Cheyenne, but do need to attract businesses
- Slow, quality growth
- We need a large meeting facility
- Find incentives to create little shops in this community
- More community support – we tend to not want people to compete with us, but actually competition helps
- One hour photos, for instance
- Street project on 16<sup>th</sup> street, need a turning lane, and better traffic control

- Eliminate stench of hog farms, size of lagoons is not adequate; seepage into our soil; communicate to the public what is going on
- Concern over ground water and about leakage into Laramie River
- Continue hospitality training and awareness of what other businesses are doing
- Define slow quality growth
- Event center for all ages – plays, concerts, an all encompassing event center
- Covered pool
- Need something for youth – jobs – where are they going to work?
- Event center
- Activities for kids – bring in more athletics
- Community center
- Place to hold meetings – cannot hold state meetings without a place to hold them
- Employment for qualified individuals
- Town grow to 5,000 within next five years –help bring our kids home, keep people here
- Jobs for qualified individuals
- Provide a future for our children
- Community center
- Covered swimming pool
- Clean economic development – community growth
- Replacement for 4-H building – community center
- Quality services and products keeping people in town
- Ag industry needs to have a future
- Create niche opportunity for ag businesses
- Community center – convention center
- Quit being threatened by endangered species
- Quality jobs for those that want to be here
- Diversified jobs
- Work together as far as town and county – better meshing
- Event center
- Improved higher education possibilities
- Economic development – we need to bring in businesses to keep our kids here
- Listen to outsiders and get their views
- Define what we expect the community center to be, and who we want to attract
- Explore a 1% sales tax or Capital Facilities Sales Tax to create a community center and covered pool
- Create a coordinated planning effort for community enhancements
- Need to complete the business park
- Do not become an outlet to attract more hog factories
- We do not wish to go to the hog industry
- Support beautification in other towns in county so there is not so much animosity between towns

- Churches and schools working together – schools recognizing church nights and not having games on specific religious nights; work together so we can keep kids out of trouble
- Rec center so families can do stuff together
- Let teachers take part in decision making; let them serve on the school board
- Create a coordinating council for social service agencies – family violence program, public health, mental health (people who work with those who need help); develop policies and procedures that people can follow or refer to.
- Garbage men reattach cans when they have empties
- Indoor pool is needed
- There is a shortage of gyms in town
- Have a need for long-term safe house
- Big mall
- Recreation center
- Covered swimming pool
- No more stench
- Covered swimming pool
- Recognition of rodeo activities at the school
- More things to do for kids like a YMCA, soccer field, lacrosse and more recreational activities
- International airport
- More things for kids to do
- Small mall
- Miniature golf course, like the one in Cheyenne
- New gym at high school
- Place for freshmen and sophomores to eat lunch (cafeteria)
- Amusement park
- Bigger movie theater
- Drive in theater
- Space port
- Wrestling room – there isn't a place to wrestle or practice
- A wooden floor for gym
- Soccer team
- Roller rink
- Teen hangout place
- Recreation facility
- Educate the community when it comes to working toward goals...
- Develop a facility to keep tourists in town... recreational facility...float trips, bike trips, etc.
- Need an event center/recreation center for adults too
- Supervision at the skate park
- Good smelling community in ten years

- Young people earning a good living
- Affordable housing
- Very active senior center in ten years
- Covered pool
- Community center
- Ten thousand people in ten years
- Be a bedroom community to Cheyenne
- Specialty shops downtown
- Careers and not just jobs with potential for advancement
- Outdoor Rec areas for kids...baseball fields, etc
- Completion of new school
- Enhanced growth...population of up to 8 or 10,000
- Would like to see interstate businesses develop
- Need to pursue Business Park
- Sustained economic growth for a number of years; permanent employment but expand cultural opportunities for children and exposure to the fine arts
- Prime if we look to attracting the high tech industries
- More high tech jobs brought in by the Wyoming Business Council, Hewlett, Kodak, IBM
- Need well paying jobs to take care of our tax base, i.e. computer assembly, etc
- Turn around at the power plant keeps us alive
- Need more high tech jobs
- Would like to see a parking lot at the hospital
- Housing for elderly – assisted living
- Large employer to town – 100 plus employees
- Fish float bobber
- Continue beautification of the town
- Industry that will employ 100 plus employees
- Community center – civic center to draw more conventions and events
- Bike paths, walking paths,
- Large employer
- Tap into small business – convention center
- Every month we should have something happening to bring people to the community – good use for event center
- We need to grow enough to feed the community – jobs will come along
- Keep community under 10,000
- New hospital
- Long term care and acute care
- 50 to 60 bed hospital
- Long term resources
- Parking lot at hospital
- Acute care with swing beds

- We do not have an Alzheimer's unit – Cheyenne is the closest. Need an updated hospital for 2000 medicine.
- Drug dependence and rehabilitation
- Youth population 14 to 21 and 18 to 30 programs for drug dependence and rehabilitation
- Rehab centers that are dedicated to drug centers – not many in our state – maybe could be good but do we really want one in our town??
- Need to address health care needs – and need a facility
- Hospital, nursing home for long term needs of community
- Expand general aviation airport, including a restaurant
- Nursing shortage
- More apartments, affordable housing
- Incentive to provide daycare in their homes for infants
- Continue with hazardous waste pick up
- Continue with beautifying community
- Resource District continue
- Community Center
- Rec center
- City – County planner is needed
- Recruit Cabellas
- Tree City USA – will bring pride
- Community Center – Convention center
- Welcome wagon committee
- Young mothers group
- More teen programs
- Extension Agent for our County
- Regional Landfill is a must
- Ongoing beautification of area (downtown)
- Continue base for law enforcement
- Historical preservation
- Rec Center
- Swimming Pool with activates
- City/County Planner
- Alley paved behind library
- We need to take advantage of what we have (armory, library, church basements, 4-H building)
- Want a Kentucky fried Chicken
- Clean up mess at south entrance
- Immediate clean-up of weeds that have overtaken town
- Covered swimming pool
- Need a place to dance
- Jobs – advertise in paper and on the radio, not just through Wheatland Employment Center

- Sewer system and water supply improvements
- Actively involved in bringing in small industry
- Walking path to be completed
- Halfway house - Or a way to integrate individuals back into the community after they have had troubles
- Shopping improvements
- Before and after school programs for children
- We need better telecommunications including digital cell phone
- Preschool facilities – day care
- Rec center – youth center
- Social services need to be covered: group home, drug addiction (Meth)
- Cover the pool and a tennis facility
- Community center
- Pathway and walkway two separate projects; walkway from downtown to 4-H building and then a pathway would go around town
- Churches have been working together wonderfully
- Joint Thanksgiving service will even work with schools
- Canal beautification
- Covered pool
- Stores like Wall Mart – bigger department stores
- Stores with more reasonable prices
- After school program – there are churches that have programs after school but they are one day a week and both on the same day
- Gathering place for teens
- National guard armory needs to be utilized
- More department store availability – we have high end and low end
- Put a “visit downtown Wheatland” sign off of the interstate
- Develop a “theme” – The Good Neighbor Community
- Restore the old brick buildings downtown
- 5 yr build infrastructure business park
- More power companies
- Land use plan to support business
- Community center
- More skilled labor
- Opportunities for youth to do a variety of things
- Training
- Government be more active measuring success or failure
- More industry
- Better paying jobs
- People asking and government providing
- Industries that bring in good tax base

- Younger people attracted back
- Attract baby boomer retirees back
- 18 hole golf course
- High tech businesses
- Community of about 20,000
- Balance business to save downtown area
- Demise of farmers, corporate farms in 20 years do not want to see
- Population growth above 5,000
- Develop ideas about where to get workforce
- Transportation system: Our own trucks, UPS
- Figure out what kind of industry we want and get them; diversify economy
- Sell our community in a positive manner
- Technological businesses that like small town atmosphere
- More business
- Business able to keep open and to be competitive with Cheyenne
- Sustain building of agriculture
- Knowing and learning if new businesses were economical and could survive here before they come
- Community building, big meeting place
- Telecommunications in place for businesses to come
- 20 yrs – 10,000 people, certain pop base to support workers
- 20 yrs – transient community – 10,000
- 15,000 people with higher education available so kids don't have to leave
- 10-15,000 people
- Focus on retaining businesses
- Develop ways to help farmers and ranchers in the area
- Market ag products
- Community Center
- Radio system for 911
- Develop what we have like ranch life stays, water recreation (Wisconsin Dells), local artists outlet, hunting (birds), etc, rook working (western items, figurines, leather or wool or horseshoes)
- WADCO call out of yellow pages to companies in large metro areas we want here
- More community college programs
- Projects to utilize the snowbirds
- Community Center
- Use of the Energy Park
- Find those companies that want to be here
- Cabellas
- Companies that provide benefit packages
- House numbers in town and in rural areas—for emergency management

- Indoor pool with water slide
- Get more community involvement in the school
- Create a better opportunity for advanced education, technical training or college course
- Eliminate funding problem for the community hospital
- Zoning needs to be addressed
- We need a community center, more functions, more marketing of the town, beautification and signage making downtown more accessible; little yellow footprints
- Civic/convention center would be great
- Indoor swimming pool
- Community center
- Weigh all the possibilities and make the center work for us as a community: Conference rooms, conventions, state sporting events
- Need signage along South Street to get people downtown (16<sup>th</sup> Street)
- Swimming pool
- Motor cross track for motorcycles
- Create revenue to market the town
- Clean up the junkyards as you enter from the south
- North on Interstate 25 right in town an incredible amount of garbage
- Need a multi purpose center; can't be just associated with sports
- Need compressed video
- More doctors
- Need more police officers and educate community as to why 24/7 is important
- Would like to see the county and the city working together to make our resources better – to incorporate our resources; enhance 911, the ambulance service, etc. Pathway
- Covered pool
- Not grow to much not 20,000 maybe 10,000 – keep it a small town
- New hospital
- Town grow enough that police department can add a few positions so that there is more avenue for advancement – another supervisor position and an investigative position
- Give people a reason to want to stay here – pay is so low – no incentive to stay
- More industry
- Need something to keep the young people here
- Cover swimming pool
- Closed campus and lunch program at high school
- Enhanced 911
- Community Center
- Develop Grayrocks Reservoir as a revenue maker for the county/town
- Signage and theme: “A community of Good Neighbors”
- Focus on the good people
- Convention Center
- Business Park

- County/city cooperation in upgrading common facilities: dispatch, hospital, emergency services
- Community Center
- Coordinating council for social services
- After hour sports for non school sport people
- Churches and schools work together more
- Teachers being consulted as knowledgeable professionals in the field
- Community Center
- Increased awareness of ecology/environment
- Some type of youth council for jobs, etc.
- Covered pool
- Community Center
- Beautification of entire area
- Infant care and after school program
- Walking path
- Better social services
- Better water supply and pressure
- Improved sewer system
- Close pool/Olympic size
- Continued support for youth
- More support of hospital senior care, hospice facilities
- Community Center
- Desire for more shopping downtown
- Support for the new facility
- Increase tax base
- Bond issues, etc
- Community center – get back on that project
- More jobs for younger kids
- Infrastructure needs to be strengthened so we can deal with new growth, look at specific projects – telecommunications
- Need to drill more wells to accommodate growth
- Enhance water pressure at Black Mountain
- Tap into our tourism opportunities – history, recreation, outfitting, etc.
- Develop lake recreation areas
- More restaurants, meeting rooms, community center
- Infant day care and after school
- Pathway
- Need to renovate county courthouse
- Get a historic preservation grant for the courthouse
- Right of way legislation
- Projects need financing to get off the ground

- Capital Facilities Tax
- Lodging Tax
- Activity/Recreation/Convention Center
- Covered Pool (new construction)
- Air Condition for ALL schools
- Increased opportunities for women to get good paying jobs
- Create a 501c3 “Wheatland (Platte County) Foundation”
- 1% sales tax
- 1% sales tax or Capital Facilities
- Have more services for seniors
- Upgrade continuing education possibilities
- Find out what niche markets or industries our ag and small businesses can fill
- Look at tax structure
- Upgrade infrastructure to be business capable and friendly
- Look for businesses to fill niche markets
- Rework Tax structure
- Have enough businesses to keep and draw young families
- Review the entire plan again in twenty years!
- Host an annual ‘Wheat’ land day’s festival, capitalizing on the town’s name
- Host antique shows, gun shows, car shows, farmer’s market, craft shows, etc to attract local and regional business and participation
- Clean up the entrances to Wheatland
- Landscape and maintain the area in front of Vimbos, Arby’s and the Coop, create a picnic area there
- Create a walk/bike path that weaves through town, starting at Vimbos, Arby’s and the Coop
- Covered swimming pool for year round use
- Build an events center

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The elements are all here for Wheatland 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 Wheatland has seen the results of the smaller projects and sees that it can accomplish things.

There is 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 that has involved a large number of citizens will lead to a feeling of accomplishment that will carry over into other activities. Look through the short-term suggestions, pick out one that you know what 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 Wheatland's goals. It can be done! There is no problem facing Wheatland 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 Wheatland Resource Team, I want to thank the community and our sponsors, WADCO and the town of Wheatland for the warm hospitality shown to us during our stay. The meals and accommodations were outstanding. We heard over and over in the listening sessions that Wheatland was filled with warm, caring individuals and we certainly can 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 information or provide more information and assistance.

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

Mary E. Randolph, Executive Director  
Wyoming Rural Development Council

## **APPENDIX**

**The following documents may provide additional information, and are available from the  
Wheatland Area Development Corporation  
Box 988  
Wheatland, WY 82201  
307-322-4232**

- *Platte County Task Force*, a document published in 1974 to address the impact of the Basin Electric Power Project.
- *Benchmarking and Target Industry Analysis State of Wyoming* published by Deloitte & Touche LLP in March 2000 for the Wyoming Business Council.
- *Wheatland, Wyoming Workforce Report*, published in September 2000 by PFRESOURCES, Dallas, Texas. This report, funded in part by the Wheatland Town Council, was produced in cooperation with WADCO and the Wyoming Business Council.