

WYOMING RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL



Rural Resource Team Report

Afton, Wyoming
Lincoln County
May 2001

WRDC Mission

*To create partnerships that result in effective, efficient and timely efforts to
enhance the viability of rural Wyoming*

THE WYOMING RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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

WRDC is governed by a 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
- Promote, through education, the understanding of the needs, values and contributions of rural communities.

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

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

Mary Randolph, Executive Director
Wyoming Rural Development Council
2219 Carey Ave.
Cheyenne, WY 82002
307-777-6430
307-777-6593 (fax)
mrando@state.wy.us
www.wyomingrural.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Afton Resource Team

May 1 - 3, 2001

1.	Process for the Development	pg. 4
2.	Executive Summary	pg. 5
3.	Resource Team Members	pg. 6
4.	Local Coordinators	pg. 7
5.	Interview Agenda	pg. 8
6.	Team Members Recommendations	pg. 9
7.	What We Heard from What Was Said	pg. 45
8.	What Was Said In The Interviews	pg. 47

Appendix

Deloitte & Touche LLP Study Benchmarking & Target Industry Analysis State of Wyoming, March 2000

PROCESS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS REPORT

The Wyoming Rural Development Council (WRDC) has provided a resource team to assist the City of Afton, Wyoming in evaluating the community's assets and liabilities and in developing suggestions for improving the environment, social and economic future of Afton. The City of Afton requested a community assessment from the Wyoming Rural Development Council. Scott Darrington served as the community contact and took the lead in agenda development, logistics and publicity for the assessment. Resource team members were selected to visit, interview citizens, business and community leaders; and develop a plan of recommended action for the city. The team members were carefully selected based on their fields of expertise that Afton officials indicated would be needed to respond to the problem areas identified.

The Resource Team toured the city and interviewed approximately 85 people over a three-day period from May 1 thru 3, 2001. The team interviewed representatives from the following segments of the Afton community: Agriculture; City Government and Law Enforcement; Churches; Education; Banking and Financial; Retail, Business and Utilities; Healthcare; Civic Clubs; Youth; Social Service Providers. 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 Afton?
- What do you think are the major strengths and assets in Afton?
- What projects would you like to see completed in two, five ten and twenty years in Afton?

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 WRDC's final report to Afton.

A preliminary oral report and a summary of group recommendations was presented to the people of Afton on May 3, 2001 and many of the citizens of Afton who participated in the interviews were in attendance.

Following the oral report, a formal written report was prepared and presented to the City of Afton. It was agreed that the City would print copies or summaries for each person interviewed.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The elements are all here for Afton 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 Afton has seen the results of the smaller 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, which 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 goals. It can be done! There is no problem facing Afton that cannot be solved by the people living in the community!

On behalf of the Resource Team Members, I want to thank the community and our sponsor, the town of Afton, 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 Afton 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 willing to help you in any way that we can.

Steve Elledge, Team Leader
Mary E. Randolph, Executive Director, Wyoming Rural Development Council

RESOURCE TEAM MEMBERS

Afton, Wyoming Resource
Assessment

May 1-3, 2001

Steve Elledge, Team Leader
Wyoming Business Council
300 So. Wolcott, Suite #300
Casper, WY 82601
307-577-6012
E-mail: selledge@wysbc.com

Michael Stull
Wyoming Business Council
214 W. 15th St.
Cheyenne, WY 82009
307-777-2800
E-mail: mstull@state.wy.us

John Johnson
USDA Rural Development
P.O. Box 820
Casper, WY 82003
307-261-6315
E-mail: john.Johnson@wy.usda.gov

Roger Bower
Wyoming Business Council
213 W. Main, Suite B
Riverton, WY 82501
307-857-1155
E-mail: rbower@state.wy.us

Linda Fabian
Wheatland Area Development Corporation
P.O. Box 988
Wheatland, WY 82201
307-322-4232
E-mail: lfabian@wyoming.com

LOCAL CONTACTS/COORDINATORS

COMMUNITY CONTACT:

Scott Darrington
Town Administrator
416 Washington St.
P.O. Box 310
Afton, WY 83110-0310
307-885-9831

WYOMING RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT FOR THE TOWN OF AFTON

<u>Tuesday-May 1st</u>		<u>Location</u>
1PM-2PM	Orientation and Organizational Meeting	Town Hall
2PM-5PM	Town Tour	Afton
5PM-6PM	Early Supper	TBA
6PM-6:50PM	Retail Business	Town Hall
7PM-7:50PM	Open to anyone in community	Town Hall
 <u>Wednesday-May 2nd</u>		
7AM-8AM	Breakfast	TBA
8AM-8:50AM	City/County Government, Law Enforcement	Town Hall
9AM-9:50AM	Churches	Town Hall
10AM-10:50AM	Health Care and Social Services	Town Hall
11AM-11:50AM	Utilities, Communications and Industrial	Town Hall
12PM-1PM	Lunch at Senior Center	Senior Ctr.
1PM-1:50PM	Senior Citizens	Senior Ctr.
2PM-2:50PM	Tourism-Motels, Restaurants, Etc.	Town Hall
3:30PM-4:30PM	Youth	SVHS
4:30PM-5PM	Break and Refreshments	Town Hall
5PM-5:50PM	Education	Town Hall
6PM-6:50PM	Open to anyone in community	Town Hall
7PM	Dinner	TBA
 <u>Thursday-May 3rd</u>		
8AM-9AM	Breakfast	TBA
9AM-9:50AM	Agriculture	Town Hall
10AM-10:50AM	Civic Clubs	Town Hall
11AM-11:50AM	Banking and Financial	Town Hall
12PM-1PM	Lunch	TBA
1PM-5PM	Prepare for Town Meeting	
5PM-6PM	Working Dinner	
7PM-?	Town Meeting	School Dist. Offices

Recommendations Submitted **by Resource Team Members**

The Resource Team has given many suggestions. 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 recommendations you decide to implement.

Roger Bower
Wyoming Business Council
West Central Regional Director
213 W. Main,
Riverton, WY 82501
307-857-1155
Fax 307-857-0873
Email: rbower@wysbc.com

Introduction

I want to thank you for your warm hospitality you extend to us. I very much enjoyed learning about your community. In fact I could be part of your urban sprawl problem as you live in a very beautiful area that has amenities which are very desirable to users of the outdoors.

Challenges:

I see your challenges focus on one issue. The community has several desires which are as follows: open space, maintaining the family farm, water quality, good paying jobs, helping down town, small town atmosphere, maintaining school enrollment and access to public lands. In my opinion this all center on economic development. People fear this term, as to often they think that economic development means uncontrolled or rapid growth. They see the example to the north and it really scares them.

Solution

The first thing Afton should do is form a committee to define economic development so that the community speaks with as few voices as possible. Some basic economic projection software will allow this committee make forecasts based on new job creation (recruited company). This software is available from the Wyoming Business Council at no charge (Linda Norman 307-777-2844). Ray Sarcletti the Regional Director of the Wyoming Business Council should be able to help you run the software.

This committee should lead to the formation of other groups to promote main street beautification, a merchants association, Afton theme, and community center projects (pool, convention, and recreation). This committee's efforts will prioritize community action.

Star Valley should have a valley wide coordinated development plan. The area's closer to Jackson may have slightly different criteria than the south as the growth pressures diminish as distance increases. Jackson has paid several consultants hundreds of thousands of dollars the past few years to provide them with plans for both rural and city development. These plans could serve as a starting point for the valley to determine their plan. Sandy Shuptrine, Teton County Commissioner, has worked with Driggs Idaho on a similar situation. Her phone number is 733-8094. I haven't made contact with her.

A good planning process will smooth the way for the Valley to implement the desires of the citizens.

Challenge

Maintaining the quality and quantity of the potable water and the uniqueness of the intermittent spring was another important issue. Maintaining the quality of the delivery system was also an issue.

Solution

I believe the community is making a mistake in not metering their water. Non metering provides no incentive to fix any leaky faucets or running toilets. This causes an additional problem in that the sewage treatment must process more volume than necessary. I contacted the Riverton Director of Public Works regarding their usage. Their winter use is 149 gallons per day per person and the summer is 352 gallons. They base the design for the sewer system on the winter usage. The Wyoming Water Development Commission (307-777-7626 Director Mike Besson) compiles a database of Wyoming communities of their water and sewer statistics. This database will allow the community to determine how best to manage the health of this system. A user fee based on consumption is more equitable than using general tax revenues. If the existing users are maintaining the system it is easier to justify tap fees for new users or developers.

I am not a geologist but it appears the valley has a relative high water table. The uncontrolled development in the valley concerns me as most of these developments are on wells and individual septic systems. As the density increases, the land's ability to filter the large volume of sewage decreases.

The Jackson studies should provide insight to solving this problem also.

Challenge

The entire community understands and likes the farming culture of the valley. Maintaining this culture and value system is important to adults and students alike.

Solutions

In a recent address to the Wyoming Heritage Alliance ??? of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City spoke of the need to convert from commodities to product. This is historically how Star Valley operated in processing milk to cheese. Today farmers need to vertically integrate, that is owning the processing facility and controlling the marketing of the product. In doing this the producer shares in the potential profits further into the marketing chain. USDA through the Rural Development agency and the Farm Service Agency have programs to help producers for Co ops. The Kansas Branch of the Federal Reserve System monitors and researches the agriculture industry.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service in conjunction with the Wyoming Business Council is developing a Wyoming version of the national Alternative Enterprises and Agrotourism Program. This should be available later this summer. This program will have examples of opportunities for individual operators to implement in their own operation. Kirk Heaton, (307-382-3982) Resource, Conservation and Development Coordinator the area has a copy of the national effort.

I have a small database of various specialty crops. I have just started doing the research on where they might be produced. Currently I only have their value, I would be happy to share it. My number is 307-857-1155 and email is rbower@wysbc.com

Challenge

Developing a greater tourism effort.

Solution

It appears from driving around the valley, there is a larger tourist effort than the community recognizes. It appears many homes are occupied only part of the year. An effort should be made to involve this segment of the community in the local economy. Develop activities that draw them out of their communities (Star Valley Ranches etc.). Such activities could include art classes, tours on local history roping lessons, almost any local skill.

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

FORWARD:

One of the challenges that I face as a result of the Afton assessment is to determine *how* to approach the report and recommendation process. I have an identity crisis to wrestle with – where do I separate Afton and the Star Valley area? Harmony and teamwork among the communities that make up the Valley is very important, but there are also issues and projects that stage the communities as competitors. Some of these projects and issues have a direct influence on the future of the Afton community.

QUALITY OF LIFE:

Access to natural resources, scenic beauty, proximity to major tourist attractions, and the people, make Afton a desirable option for those seeking that type of “quality of life”. While many of us recognize this atmosphere as the most desirable, we must keep in mind that different people have different rating systems. Lack of restaurants, cultural opportunities, skyscrapers, “malls”, etc. could seem devastating to some. No community can be all things to all people, nor should that be a goal. Afton needs to stay focused on what it has and shy away from the urges to be something it does not want to be.

A good measure of quality of life is the availability of the necessities and Afton scores well. Ample consumable water, waste disposal, accessibility to medical and personal services, and your telecommunications services are great contributors. However, they cannot be taken for granted and future planning must be considered.

Water: Afton’s water supply is adequate and the quality is good. However, no supply is infinite and it may be feasible and prudent to invest in a metering system to monitor and assess water usage and waste.

Waste Disposal: Sewers and lagoons need to be evaluated for capacity and lifespan. There was some concern expressed regarding the current water distribution and sewage systems age and physical condition. A plan for expansion and replacement is a necessity.

Additionally, landfill and incinerator concerns were heard. Suggestions regarding a recycling program and/or facility were voiced. A recycling facility could be addressed

immediately. It appears that there is a current willingness and a desire to explore this option with the current refuse disposal contractor.

Medical, Educational, and Social Services: Afton is the home of the Valley's hospital and high school. These are prime contributors to the local economic base and large contributors to the community's employment base. These facilities need to be supported, nurtured, and promoted. These are base assets of the community that service the Valley area. Possible additions to the services offered in Afton might be an Assisted Living facility and/or some handicap accessible Senior Citizen Condos or multiple dwelling units. One idea might be the Congregate Housing concept, which provides for private apartments with central dining facilities and services which enable seniors to remain independent.

***RESOURCES: Reference information on congregate housing may be obtained from Linda Ziegler, USDA/Rural Development in Worland Wyoming – (307)347-2456

***RESOURCES: There are two successful congregate housing projects in Riverton and Green River, both built by Don Wallgrave at 101 East 34th street, Sioux Falls, SD 57105 – (605)335-6569.

***RESOURCES: WADCO in Wheatland, WY was instrumental in the construction of a successful Assisted Living facility in Platte County. Linda Fabian or Candy Wright can provide valuable referral and funding information on such a project.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The most apparent obstacles facing the community of Afton in the area of Community and Economic Development appear to be apathy, NIMBY, contentment, and the NMJ virus. A brief explanation of each follows:

Apathy – apathy was mentioned numerous times in various Listening Sessions during our stay in Afton. It also seemed apparent gauged by the lack of participation in the process by some segments of the community.

NIMBY – acronym for “Not in my backyard” is an ongoing battle virtually everywhere development is taking place, as well as where development is stagnant. Clear and communicated zoning and planning can alleviate NIMBY to some degree IF said zoning is enforced fairly and timely throughout the area. However, NIMBY will always be a part of development as I see it.

Contentment – obviously many are completely happy with things just as they are. This is not a bad thing as long as there is a realization that things cannot move forward “just as they are”. People and places age, new technologies and methods replace old, and generations evolve. Factors outside of our control prevent maintaining the status quo, including markets, lifestyles, population shifts, and the actions and intentions of our neighbors and governments. Comparing the number of small dairies and farms in the Valley 20-30 years ago with today shows a stark change in desires, needs, and methods.

NMJ virus – This one is my favorite. The “Not My Job” virus. Somebody else will come in and do it for me – that leaves me safe to complain if it doesn't turn out like it would have if it would have been my job! This is the most dangerous of the virus' because many times it disguises itself as the contentment or NIMBY menace. The first

person you should turn to when you find yourself wondering why something didn't or doesn't get done is yourself. So jump in!

How about an Economic Development Steering Committee?

This can be accomplished at two levels, the community, and the valley. A joint Council of Governments for the Valley could be formed with an emphasis on business attraction and tourist promotion. This may be facilitated through increased Chamber of Commerce activity with contributions from the communities.

I also think a working group of Afton residents could be very effective in addressing community issues directed toward bolstering the local economy. Business retention and expansion efforts would be the focus of this group. Making the community a better place for your anchor employers will likewise make the community a better place for new businesses. The assessment steering committee can easily evolve into such a group.

Assistance with marketing and promotion of local businesses is a great example of expansion and retention efforts. Afton is doing a great job in recognizing and supporting Rulon Gardner. Anchor employers such as Aviat, Silver Star, Wyoming Woolen's, etc. could likely utilize similar support. "You scratch my back & I'll scratch yours" works well in business. Many have contacts and business outside of the area they visit with and most probably have been advised that Afton is the home of Rulon. How many know that you build airplanes, make outdoor wear, or operate on the "cutting edge" technologically? Just examples but you know how rumors spread? Word of mouth is contagious and when everybody is working for the business community outcomes most often include success and pride.

***RESOURCES: Ray Sarcletti, Regional Director, Wyoming Business Council
(307)382-3163 rsarcl@state.wy.us

For assistance with group organization, focus, marketing resource assistance, trade show assistance.

***RESOURCES: Jennifer Goodman, Director, Wyoming Community Network,
Laramie, WY (307)766-2107 jgoodman@uwyo.edu

For assistance with facilitation and implementation assistance for assessment projects

***RESOURCES: Bill Ellis, Director, SBDC, Rock Springs, WY (307)352-6894
bellis@uwyo.edu

For assistance with marketing and planning.

***RESOURCES: Mickey Beaver, Navigating Change, 1020 Bristol, Casper, WY
82609 (307)235-5572 mickbeaver@home.com

For planning, visioning, organization assistance.

Mainstreet & Beautification

The small business operators that we heard from were very aware of the need to stop the traffic on Main Street. Getting your share of the business from the traveler is a challenge. Located about an hour from Jackson, which is likely a destination for many of the north bound travelers, and too soon to stop for those returning from Jackson to the South, presents an interesting challenge. Creating a theme appearance for the street might be of assistance. It appears parking is currently being addressed. One of the more frequent observations that I heard would install a traffic light at one intersection. After crossing the street a couple of times during my stay I would concede that that might be a

safety concern as well as a marketing ploy. Negotiation with the Wyoming Highway Department would be the starting point.

I would recommend that a beautification committee of Main Street merchants be mobilized to address the sprucing up and/or theme concepts.

***RESOURCES: National Main Street Program a www.mainst.org

***RESOURCES: Steve Achter, Wyoming Business Council, 214 West 15th Street, Cheyenne, WY (307)777-2811 for information regarding the status of the Wyoming Main Street effort.

Primary Jobs?

There was a lot of interest in more primary jobs for the community. The proverbial entrepreneurial spirit is a major source of new & better jobs. Growing your own is a proven method of job creation. To accomplish this, the seeds need to be planted now.

YOUTH: We had the opportunity to visit with a great group of Star Valley High School students who were bright, articulate, motivated, witty, and aware. What a great resource for the community and the valley. I would strongly recommend mentoring programs with the business community; a take off of the old Junior Achievement program; promotion of entrepreneurial clubs and activities – things that can heighten the awareness of the high school youth to the rewards of building businesses, the old American dream. There are two recognized choices for today's youth...stay home & run the family business or accept an entry level position, or go off to college and then go where the jobs are that you have trained for. There is actually a third option that is very lucrative. Awareness of this option has been heightened somewhat in recent years with the advent of the "wonder kids", or "dot commers" who have been so successful financially at very young ages. That third option is "grow your own business" – you can start any time. You can grow it fresh out of high school, or go off to college and return to grow it.

Retention and expansion:

As previously mentioned, identification of small local businesses that want to grow is essential to successful economic development program. There are a number of ways to start this identification process, including business networking, surveys, and the ever-dependent word of mouth. Perhaps the ED Steering Committee can kick off a Retention/Expansion subcommittee to assist. There are several resources statewide that can provide guidelines, examples, and assistance including:

***RESOURCES: Ray Sarcletti, Regional Director, Wyoming Business Council, 1400 Dewar Drive, Suite 208A, Rock Springs, WY 82901
(307)382-3163, rsarcl@state.wy.us

***RESOURCES: Navigating Change, Mickey Beaver, 1020 Bristol, Casper, WY 82609, (307)235-5572, mickbeaver@home.com

(Private consultant who has done custom surveys and facilitation work for Lusk, Newcastle, and Glenrock, WY among others).

***RESOURCES: Gaye Stockman, Manager of Retention & Expansion, Wyoming Business Council, 214 West 15th St., Cheyenne, WY 82002, (307)777-2807, GSTOCK@state.wy.us

Business Development:

New business development and recruitment are the recognized and apparent results of an economic development effort. Programs are developed on varying scales dependent upon the community focus and effort put forth.

Recruitment is usually expensive and time consuming. The state, through the Wyoming Business Council, continues to develop a unified and far-reaching recruitment effort. Leads received at the state level are disbursed to the community level through the Wyoming Economic Development Association website (www.wyomingeda.org), as a part of the WBC's Strategic Alliance agreement with WEDA. For information on WEDA and this website contact:

***RESOURCES: Paula McCormick, WEDA, 5319 Highway 287, Lander, WY 82520, (307)332-5546, weda@rmisp.com

New business development requires the expertise of many, primarily a driven entrepreneur with a desire to start and grow a business. There are numerous organizations and individuals available in Wyoming to assist the new entrepreneur with a variety of resources and expertise in the development process including:

***RESOURCES: Small Business Development Center, Bill Ellis, Director, 1400 Dewar Drive, Suite 205, Rock Springs, WY 82901, (307)352-6894, bellis@uwyo.edu

***RESOURCES: Ray Sarcletti, Wyoming Business Council, 1400 Dewar Drive, Suite 208, Rock Springs, WY 82901, (307)382-3163, rsarcl@state.wy.us

***RESOURCES: Wyoming Women's Business Center, Lindy Murphy, P.O. Box 3922, Laramie, WY 82071, (307)766-3084, lindyWBC@uwyo.edu

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS:

Afton and the Star Valley area have a variety of possibilities to pursue in an effort to continue developing their economy. Decisions need to be made in order to initiate a structured and orderly effort.

I believe the primary decisions include determination of a focus area, whether it be the town of Afton, a consortium of a towns, a section of the Star Valley, etc. etc. Knowing what you have offer and what your objective is would be a primary decision.

Once a focus area is defined an ED Committee should be formed to begin the process of determining the vision. It is much easier to begin the trip if a desired destination is in place. The alternative is aimless wandering in an economically inefficient manner.

Knowing the destination affords you the luxury of knowing when you arrive!

There are a number of resources, both public and private, to assist with every step of the process. There is no time like the present.

Linda G. Fabian, Executive Director
Wheatland Area Development Corporation
P.O. Box 988
Wheatland, WY 82201
307-322-4232
lfabian@wyoming.com

“While other towns are holding dollar dinners, wouldn’t it be a good idea for Wheatland businessmen to chew ham sandwiches together in an effort to do something for themselves. There is a painful lack of unity in this town, and that this condition injures all is an unpleasant, but truthful fact. There is too much of an inclination to “do up” the other fellow, and too little disposition to act together for the common good. It requires a public, unselfish spirit to build good towns, and Wheatland folks have much progress to make in these things if the best of our opportunities are to be utilized. The “doing up” of the other fellow finally ends in all being “done up together,” and in poor looking packages at that.”

The above article first appeared in the Wheatland World on March 29, 1901 as an editorial by I.O. Middaugh. It was researched by Patsy Parkin, President of the Platte County Historical Society and reprinted in The Platte County Record Times on March 29, 2001, 100 years later! I believe it could have been printed in any hometown newspaper, and serves to remind us that we MUST work toward change and progress. It is evitable anyway, so we might as well take a proactive role in helping it happen to our liking!

Economic and Community Development

Challenge:

The majority of people in the listening sessions felt the downtown area could use a facelift. Discussion also revolved around developing a “theme” that all merchants could buy into. Such an idea would build consistency and become a thread strong enough to encourage interest and gather momentum.

Solutions:

Afton has an incredible historical legacy. I think this should be built upon. Apparently design work has already been done to put a Victorian face on the downtown area. Either of these concepts would work in my opinion, although I personally favor playing upon the history of the area. One of the students at the High School made the point that the theme “Little Switzerland” just doesn’t work anymore, especially since the dairy farms are no longer in business.

Whether you go “history” or “Victorian,” I believe there are several ways to accomplish this goal. One would be to see if the State Historic Preservation Office has resources that could get Afton on the National Register of Historic Places. Not only would this be of interest to tourists, there may also be funds available. I suggest you contact Scott Brooks-Miller. Although his name is Scott, he goes by “Chris.” Chris is an

historic architect and was recently named State Historic Preservation Officer. You can contact him at:

SHPO
Barrett State Office Building
Cheyenne, WY 82002
307-777-7697
cbrook@state.wy.us

Sheila Bricher-Wade has a twenty-year career in the State Historic Preservation Office and is well versed on nominations to the National Register. She can be contacted at:

SHPO
Barrett State Office Building
Cheyenne, We 82002
307-777-7697
sbrich@state.wy.us

You might also contact the Main Street Program in Washington, D.C. Their address is:

Main Street Program
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-588-6219
www.nationaltrust.org or www.mainst.org

The community of Powell, Wyoming has had quite a bit of success with this program. Contact **Dave Reetz at 307-754-2201** to find out how they went about it.

Dr. Jim Thompson was on the Wheatland Resource Team and has become a tremendous asset. His is a professor of Community Development at the University of Wyoming's Department of Agriculture and Applied Economics. He and his students have been most helpful to us and I know he would enjoy working with Afton. While there are no funds available through his program, his students are ready, willing and able to help with PowerPoint presentations, research and in developing surveys to build consensus. Contact him at:

Dr. Jim Thompson
Room C-220, Ag Building
University of Wyoming
Laramie, WY 82071
307-766-4204/2386
jtgoss@uwyo.edu

Challenge:

I observed a lack of cohesiveness among merchants.

Solution:

I recommend that the downtown merchants form an association dedicated to the promotion and well being of Main Street. This would be relatively easy to do and wouldn't cost any money at this point, just a commitment of time. The newly formed *Afton Downtown Merchants Association (ADDA)* could hold monthly meetings at various places of businesses (prior to opening hours) and discuss such things as the timing of sales, downtown activities and simply the general state of affairs. In addition, the ADDA could sponsor events that would not only draw the attention of the locals, but would detain the tourist. For a wide variety of information about what other towns are doing, go to the popular Internet search engine, **Altavista.com** and type in "**Downtown Merchants Association.**" There were three that you could draw (steal) ideas from – one from Placerville, California; the other was from Whitney, Texas, a little town about the size of Afton, and the other was the Bound Brook Downtown Merchants Association in Bound Brook, New Jersey. Remember, you can borrow and personalize every good idea you run across!

This also reminds me that the Town of Afton should immediately get their own website. Links could include Jackson, Dubois, Cody and the other tourist areas within a 100-mile range! In almost every town there is one person who has mastered the creation of websites. Perhaps you could find a volunteer who would be willing to create the town's web page and keep it up to date.

Challenge:

In each of the listening sessions it was obvious to me that Afton needs to take a more active role in working with the Star Valley Chamber of Commerce. I understand the limitations, yet the challenges mentioned far outweigh the limitations and should be pursued.

Solution:

Ideally, I would like to see Afton have its very own chamber, or at the very least, take a stronger role in the current structure. I would also suggest a "town meeting" with Thayne, Afton and Alpine to hear constructive ideas of how you can work together to market the area. There is strength in numbers!! Another idea would be to form a local coalition. These people would be responsible for knowing what is going on in all areas of the community and communicating it to residents and tourists. For instance, they would be responsible for working with Triple AAA to help divert traffic into town dispute whatever obstacles are in the way! We did this in Wheatland after our Community Assessment. The core committee is now called the Wheatland Area Steering Committee and we serve as the impetus to continue the momentum created by the Community Assessment. It is so easy to fall back into old patterns, but people have to take the bull by the horns and keep things moving!

Several Wyoming towns with a population similar to Afton's have formed their own successful Chambers. These include, but are not limited to Glenrock, Basin, Greybull, Lovell and Wright. They can be reached at:

Glenrock Chamber of Commerce, Box 411, Glenrock, WY 82637 (307-436-5652)

Basin Chamber of Commerce, Box 599, Basin, WY 82410 (307-568-3331)

Greybull Chamber of Commerce, 333 Greybull, Greybull, WY 82426

(307-765-2100)

Lovell Chamber of Commerce, Box 295, Lovell, WY 82431 (307-548-7552)

Challenge:

We heard over and over that a stoplight is necessary in downtown Afton. Not only for safety factors, but it would serve to slow people down a little and perhaps entice them to stop and enjoy the downtown area.

Solution:

Mark Williams, P.E., Resident Engineer, Wyoming Department of Transportation (Wheatland office) told me that traffic through Afton on Highway 89 averages out to 4,000 cars per day (at the north end of town), and at the south end where Highway 89 intersects with Highway 238 an average of 6500 cars pass through per day. That's a lot of people! A stop light would certainly help slow them down, and if you follow through on developing a more active visitors center there is no doubt you could cause people to take more time going through Afton. You're very lucky to have a major highway going through your downtown area and not around it!

To find out more about getting a stoplight contact:

John Eddins, Supervisor

WYDOT – District 3

Box 1260

Rock Springs, WY 82902

Challenge:

Lack of one person or entity responsible for responding to Economic Development opportunities such as the expansion and retention of existing businesses or to attract new businesses.

Solution:

This task could fall to the Town Administrator, or could be a separate operating agency under the Town Administrator's supervision. Another possibility would be to establish a non-profit corporation such as Wheatland did about ten years ago. Our major funding source comes through the Town and the County. Other funds come from major employers and memberships. I would be happy to provide WADCO's bylaws or any other information I can about how we operate. You have my name and number! We have strong partnerships with the Wyoming Business Council, the Wyoming Economic Development Association, the Wyoming Small Business Development Center and many others.

Membership in the Wyoming Economic Development Administration is vital. WEDA is responsible for providing local economic development agencies with leads that come to the state via the Wyoming Business Council. The WBC reviews and verifies each lead before it is submitted to WEDA, who in turn submit it to communities. Of course they are screened somewhat and if there is no way a community meets the criteria developed by the site selection consultant then it isn't provided. Yet, there are many leads that Afton could respond too. Site selection consultants are hired by corporations to search potential new business locations. When a lead comes to a community it is always identity protected; we only know the criteria and if we can meet the criteria then we respond. The purpose of operating this way is so one community doesn't have an unfair advantage over another. It works very well statewide and puts all of us on a level playing field. Your contact for membership would be:

Paula McCormick
WEDA
307-332-5546
weda@rmisp.com

A couple of years ago the Wyoming Business Council contracted with the firm of Deloitte Touche to conduct a statewide study of what kind of businesses would best suit what Wyoming has to offer. You can get a copy (free of charge) from:

Linda Norman
Wyoming Business Council
214 W. 15th
Cheyenne, WY 82002
307-777-2800
lnorma@state.wy.us

Challenge:

I perceived a lack of communication between local government entities and the citizens.

Solution:

This is so easy! Look around you and see what you are doing that is newsworthy. You'd be surprised. Then, start sending well-written press releases to the *Star Valley Independent*, the *Casper Star Tribune* and the *Kemmerer Gazette*. You might also work with the editor of the *Star Valley Independent* to have a regular column. I don't prefer this solution because people get used to seeing the same old headline and end up not reading the column, but it is a suggestion. Don't just put the minutes of the Town Council meeting in the paper – make a story out of it. Who are some of the movers and shakers in your town and why? You can make a newsworthy story out of almost anything – it just takes a little practice and I would be happy to help. Plus, in a town the size of yours there aren't enough reporters to go around and I'm sure the editor would not mind a stringer or two!!

In the meantime, develop a press release letterhead that might look something like this:

PRESS RELEASE
Town of Afton
(street address)
Afton, Wyoming 83110

Date

Contact: Scott Darrington, 555-1212

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

-30-

Newspapers like to receive press releases via e-mail, fax or hard copy. E-mail is obviously the easiest because they have less editing to do that way. You have the address for the *Star Valley Independent*, but the others are:

Casper Star Tribune, Box 80, Casper, WY 82601
Kemmerer Gazette, Box 30, Kemmerer, WY 83101

Challenge:

Many citizens were interested in a skate park for Afton's young people to enjoy.

Solution:

GET THE KIDS INVOLVED! There is nothing more successful to holding people accountable than making them help themselves. Two years ago in Wheatland a group of students took it upon themselves to make a presentation to the Town Council for support in constructing a skate park in our town park. They began the concept by going through a teacher and asking her to be their adult sponsor. She worked with them in developing a budget, marketing the idea to the community, drawing up the plans and fundraising. From start to finish the project took approximately a year. They placed donation jars all over town, they got donations from local businesses, they held dances and skate-a-thons, and I think even got a grant (Katie could answer that question). They negotiated with the Town Council for insurance and maintenance, and got the Department of Parks & Recreation to turn the old tennis courts over for the base. From there they worked with American Ramp in designing and constructing the skate park. All in all they were able to come up with approximately \$25,000 and, to this day they maintain an enormous sense of pride in their accomplishments.

The skate park is utilized not only by locals, but the traveling public as well, and they also host competitions. For more details contact:

**Katie Carmen, School to Career Counselor
Wheatland High School
307-322-2075**

**Holly Winders, Student Advocate
307-322-4499**

**American Ramp Company
214 E. 4th Warehouse #1C
Joplin, MO 64801
Toll Free: 877-RAMPS-R-US
(877-726-7778)
sales@americanrampcompany.com
[www:americanrampcompany.com](http://www.americanrampcompany.com)**

Challenge:

I sensed that service providers could use some motivation.

Solution:

How about hosting a customer service workshop and entice people to attend by presenting certificates to hang in their place of employment, or at the completion of the workshop give them an inexpensive pin to wear on their clothing that says something clever like “Knock ‘Um Alive,” or “I’m A Graduate: Ask Me.” Something like either one of these would entice customers to strike up a conversation, giving the employee a chance to tell them what they learned!! Such a workshop is designed to help service providers know what’s going in town, to know the hours at the museum, to know where something fun is happening, and to know what’s going on up in the national forest, or to know what makes Afton famous!! You would be shocked (well, maybe not) at how many employees say, “I don’t know.” Not a welcome phrase to a weary traveler! We held a very successful workshop like this in Wheatland. Employers were more than happy to pay for their staff to attend, and it wasn’t that expensive. Our WSBDC representative, Leonard Holler, helped us set up the program through Don Jackson of Casper. Don is experienced in the field of economic development, financing and small business management. He developed the “Knock ‘Um Alive” workshops to specifically help employees who meet the public learn how to be more effective.

You could partner with the Wyoming Small Business Development Center to host this workshop, and many others for that matter. Contact:

Bill Ellis
WSBDC (Rock Springs Office)
352-6894
bellis@uwyo.edu

Don Jackson
DLJ Consulting & Market Research
Casper, WY 82601
307-577-0000

In closing let me reiterate my thanks for Afton's hospitality and receptiveness to the Resource Team. I would be pleased to help in any way possible and look forward to seeing the community use these resources and others offered by the team in such a way that you'll quickly see results. One last bit of advice – remember that someone has to take responsibility for maintaining the momentum – why not YOU!

Linda Fabian

John L. Johnson
USDA-Rural Development
100 East B
P.O. Box 820
Casper, WY 82602
307-261-6315
Fax 307-261-6339
john.johnson@wy.usda.gov

FACILITIES

Swimming pool

The subject of a swimming pool came up at most of the listening sessions. The community needs to evaluate its potential utilization and decide on how large and what type of a pool is needed to best serve the community. An outdoor pool would provide summer swimming or an indoor pool might be best so that it could be open year around. I feel the community should consider the following as they are in the planning stage. First, the pool should be located in an area that would provide the best utilization. An indoor pool could be located near the high school, as the students could provide the use necessary to make it feasible. The second item would be to look into alternative sources of heating the water.

The city of Cody recently built a new indoors aquatic center and ice arena. Contact information is Victor or Karen Riley at 307-527-5211.

Convention Center

The subject of a convention center/visitor center came up at several of the listening sessions. It appears this is moving past the planning state. I feel the community needs to evaluate and take another look at the use of the facility before moving to the construction phase. Would it be in the best interest of the city/community to build the visitor center with some office space and provide a meeting room to handle as many as 75 people. This room should also be able to be divided into a couple of smaller rooms to be used by community or leased out to smaller groups. If larger meeting facilities are needed, the community should look at making use of the new high school facility and or build a multi-purpose building in connection with the proposed new fairgrounds.

Medical Facility/Hospital

A number of comments were made concerning the area needing access to good medical facilities. They said the present hospital is too small to provide needed office space, rooms for new equipment, and the necessary number of patient rooms.

There are many different ways entities may be formed that may benefit the ability to obtain funding and operate the community type facilities. The community needs to consider the following entities:

1. Forming a joint powers board between the City of Afton, the County of Lincoln, and the school district or other communities within the valley.
2. Form a non-profit organization.
3. District such as a hospital district
4. One entity could build it and lease to another for operation.

Funding sources for the above might include:

1. A community facility loan from Rural Development. This would be for a direct loan or small grant. Contact point is Rod Hansen, Rural Development Manager, 625 Washington Street, Afton, WY. The phone number is 307-886-9001. His email address is rod.hansen@wy.usda.gov.
2. Local banks have funds available for projects and these loan can be guaranteed by Rural Development. Contact a local bank or contact Rural Development at the address above.
3. Any bond councils in the state can help set up bond elections and give advice as to the best bonding route to pursue. Three bonding companies are:
 - a. Borthwick Law Firm, 1312 Capitol Ave., Suite 506, P.O. Box 1124, Cheyenne, WY 82001, phone 307-635-2433.
 - b. Herschler, Freudenthal, Salzburg & Bonds, 314 E. 21st Street, P.O. Box 387, Cheyenne, WY 82003-0387, phone 307-634-2240.
 - c. Wiederspahn, Lummis & Liepas, PC, 2020 Carey Ave., Suite 700, Cheyenne, WY 82001, phone 307-638-6417.
4. State Loan and Investment Board, Brad Miskimins, phone 307-777-6646.
5. Private foundations can be found through the Internet at the Foundation Center. Their web site is www.fdncenter.org.
6. For the hospital other contacts are Doug Thiede at the Wyoming Department of Health Office of Rural Health Manage, 2020 Cary Ave., 8th Floor, Cheyenne, WY 82002. His e-mail address is dthied@state. Also, the Kresge Foundation has information at www.kresge.org.

HOUSING

A number of comments were made concerning the influence that Jackson has had on the value of real estate in the area, making it is very hard for local residents to obtain affordable housing. Finding building sites within the city of Afton was also noted as a problem, even with a number of vacant lots available, since residents of the community want open space. Affordable housing can take many forms. Two major items that effect the cost of housing include the cost of building site and the size and type of construction. There are a number of programs that non-profit entities can access to reduce the costs of the building site.

1. If no developer is available, the community could initiate development by purchasing and installing the needed infrastructure. Funding is available on a non-profit basis from Rural Development under its Section 523 program. This program loan funds a

very low interest for the development of building lots. These lots are then sold to prospective low-income homeowners in conjunction with the building of a home.

2. There are a number of other different sources of funding for site development such as SHOP funds, Housing Assistance council funding, CHDO funds, and Tax Credit Programs. A contact that knows about using this program is Sue Hoesel with Housing Partners, Inc. in Riverton, at 307-857-1988.
3. Another source of funding is through the WCDA's HOME program, which has funds available to finance single family homes for low-income purchasers. This program involves an interested builder who will construct homes using HOME funds then sell them to authorized buyers. Rural Development can participate with WCDA in financing these homes. The contact for WCDA is Cheryl Gillum, Housing Programs Director, 155 North Beech, and Casper, WY 82601. Her phone number is 307-265-0603.
4. To reduce the cost of construction, Rural Development has a program called "Self-Help Housing." This program is designed to allow several applicants to work together to construction several homes under supervision of a construction supervisor sponsored by a Housing authority or other non-profit organization.

Recently, Housing Partners in Riverton applied for a Self-Help Grant for Technical Assistance in the development of a Self-Help Project. Four homes have been built. A contact to learn more about their experience is Sue Hoesel at 307-857-1988

Lower income households can purchase a house with Rural Development funding under the Section 502 program. The local office in Afton handles these programs. Contact information is the same listed above, in number one.

ACCESS TO PUBLIC LANDS

A number of comments were made about the development of walk/bike paths into the canyons around Afton. These could be used by local citizens and marketed to get tourists to stop in Afton. Listed below are several sources for funding that might be available for projects like this:

1. Habitat Trust Fund Grant (aquatic), Mark Fowden, 5400 Bishop Blvd., Cheyenne, WY 82006. Phone 307-777-4559. The purposes are to maintain or improve water developments and riparian habitat for the benefit of aquatic wildlife.
2. Land and Water Conservation Program, Jeff Hauff, Manager, Planning and Grants, Herschler Bldg 1E, 122 W 25th Street, Cheyenne, WY 82002. Phone 307-77-7029. The purpose is to acquire and/or develop or renovate public outdoor recreational lands and facilities. A 50% match is required.
3. Habitat Trust Fund Grant (terrestrial), Gary Butler, 5400 Bishop Blvd., Cheyenne, WY 82006. Phone 307-777-4590. The purpose is to maintain or improve water development and riparian habitat. A 50% match is required.
7. To obtain a catalog of Wyoming state grant programs contact the Department of Administration and Information, State Library Division, 301 Capital Ave., Cheyenne, WY 82002. Their web site is <http://www-wsl.state.wy.us/sis/grants/index.html>.

8. A community facility loan from Rural Development would be for a direct loan or small grant. Contact point is Rod Hansen, Rural Development Manager, 625 Washington Street, Afton, WY. The phone number is 307 886-9001. His email address is rod.hansen@wy.usda.gov

OUT-MIGRATION

This problem was discussed at several sessions and generally relates to young people leaving the community to find good paying jobs elsewhere after their college graduation. It is reported that this has caused a “brain drain” on the local community and is a problem within most of the communities in Wyoming. The solution is to create technical jobs in the community. Most comments indicated a lack of interest in industrial jobs, so the logical solution would be high-tech jobs, and this is the type of company that is currently moving into smaller communities in the state. SENTO, a Utah company that has employed several hundred workers, opened a business center in Evanston and is contemplating expanding into Green River in the next year or so. SENTO plans on employing 200 more in Green River. They deal in computer technologies and are a clean business to bring into a community. Their web site may be viewed at www.sento.com. Boise Cascade Office Products opened an order center in Casper about two years ago. Due to its growth, that business now employs over a hundred people. Their web site is www.bcpb.com. Businesses like these are becoming more common in rural America. Their business can be conducted from basically anywhere that rapid Internet access is available.

The following contacts are available for financial assistance to train and develop the workforce of the community:

1. Carl D. Perkins, Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998. Contact Heather Wagoner, Hathaway Bldg., 2nd Floor, 2300 Capital Avenue, Cheyenne, WY 82002. The telephone number is 307-777-5329. This program is available to develop academic, vocational and technical skills in vocational students.
2. Workforce Development Training Fund. Contact Jan Wilson, P.O. Box 2760, Casper, WY 82602-2760. The phone number is 307-235-3294. This fund is meant to enhance employment opportunities and help meet training needs of existing and new industries.
3. Adult Education and Literacy. Contact the Department of Education, Karen Milmont, Hathaway Bldg., 2nd Floor, 2300 Capital Avenue, Cheyenne, WY 82002. The phone number is 307-777-3545. Their purpose is to provide education for adults who have not graduated from high school or received a GED.

WATER

A number of comments were made about Afton's water being quite good. Therefore, the need to protect it was identified to insure the best water in the state continues to be available to its citizens. I feel the Town of Afton needs to consider installing water meters. This will help with demand problems since a lot of water is being wasted. It could increase revenues to help pay the cost of replace lines and etc. The following are some funding sources can be contacted for community water and waste disposal systems:

1. Rural Development can provide assistance for Water and Waste Disposal Systems in the form of direct loans, grants and loan guarantees.
2. Dept. of Environmental Quality, Assistant Program Director, Water Quality Division, Heschler Building 4th Floor West, 122 West 25th, Cheyenne, WY 82002. Phone 307-772-7781.
3. State Loan and Investment Board, Brad Miskimins. He may be telephoned at 307-777-6646

Overview of the
Afton Assessment
by Michael Stull
May 1 – May 3, 2001

Preview

Participation in the Afton assessment was truly a pleasure. Prior to this visit I had only been in Afton and the Star Valley only one other time, and that was simply “passing through” on my way to another destination. As a result, the following comments and suggestions are truly those of someone unfamiliar and without preexisting opinions on any of the day-to-day aspects found in Afton or the Star Valley. I hope you find these comments helpful and, if you should have any questions, I can be reached via the following information.

Address: Michael Stull
Director of Telecommunications
Wyoming Business Council
214 W. 15th Street
Cheyenne, WY 82002

Telephone: (307) 777-2847
e-mail: mstull@state.wy.us

ISSUES OF DISCUSSION

A. Creation / Community / Convention Center and Related Issues

Challenge:

During nearly every listening session significant comments were made about the need for a swimming pool. Likewise, many members of the community actively mentioned the need for a “center” for recreation, community and convention activities. As the community is no doubt aware, the construction and ongoing operation of these facilities are expensive. However, there are things that can be done to help minimize the long-term financial outlays required by such projects.

Recommendation:

Recommendation 1 – First, the community should discuss incorporating the swimming pool within a recreation / community / convention center. Additionally, the community should explore the feasibility of locating the entire facility on city property adjacent to the high school.

Reasoning:

Combining the facilities will reduce the design and construction costs that would otherwise be required to construct two separate facilities. Locating a swimming facility adjacent to the high school will allow easier school district access and provide legitimate reason for the school district to help fund and operate the structure; the school can use the swimming pool for classes and the meeting and classroom facilities can be utilized for tournament / state-wide school event overflow purposes. Likewise, for large professional conventions, the high school complex could be utilized for overflow purposes. Finally, this location will also minimize the amount of new parking that would be required while, at the same time, maximizing the usage of existing parking assets.

Recommendation 2 – Consider the development of an organized fund raising campaign to help fund construction costs of the “center”. Many people are encouraged to donate if the building, specific rooms or even the bricks in the outside walk are available for naming. Consider contacting Paul Hoffman with the Cody Chamber of Commerce ((307) 587-2297) ask him to provide contact information regarding the “name a brick” program used to help fund the Buffalo Bill Dam visitors center.

Recommendation 3 – Consider holding regular community fundraising events such as balls and other socials with the proceeds going to construct the facility or fund an operational endowment. For more information contact Eugene Joyce (City of Evanston (307) 783-6300) and ask him to provide information on the annual community ball held to help restore their railroad roundhouse.

Recommendation 4 – Grants through the Community Development Block (CDBG) Program are available to help with land acquisition and building costs related to projects that will serve and benefit low-moderate income people (i.e. continuing or re-education of the existing residents). Depending on the specific community project and CDBG program, the grants could range from \$150,000--\$250,000. Matching funds are also required. For more information, and to determine eligibility, please contact:

Steve Achter, Director
Investment Ready Communities
Wyoming Business Council
214 W. 15th Street
Cheyenne, WY 82002
Phone: 1-307-777-2811
Email: sachte@state.wy.us
Web: www.wyomingbusiness.org

Challenge:

Community beautification and interaction was repeatedly mentioned during numerous sessions. Ideas such as downtown beautification and jogging / walking paths that provide exercise and forest access opportunities were discussed. There are many sources of information and funding available to assist the community with these associated projects.

Recommendation:

Recommendation 1 – Explore the acquisition of TEAL program funding for the construction of walking/bike/jogging paths, roadside landscaping, historic preservation (i.e. historic downtown preservation), and other non-highway related projects. The typical grant ranges between \$100,000--\$200,000. There is also a 20% match requirement. For more information, contact:

David Young
Wyoming Department of Transportation
530 Bishop Blvd.
Cheyenne, WY 82009
Phone: 1-307-777-4384
Email: dyoung@state.wy.us

Recommendation 2 – For the specific construction of trail systems the community may want to consider applying for a Recreational Trail Fund Grant through the Wyoming State and Cultural Resources division. Eligible programs include maintenance and restoration of existing trails and construction of new trails. Typical grants are in the range of \$2,500--\$75,000. There is a 20% match requirement. For information please contact:

Joann Buster
Grants Program Specialist
State Parks and Historic Sites
122 W. 25th Street
Cheyenne, WY 82002

A. Government Related Issues

Challenge:

Growth was regularly mentioned as a concern by many attendees. Many participants stated that they want things to remain as they have so that Afton doesn't become another "Jackson". Unfortunately – like death and taxes – growth does happen and there is little a community can do to prevent it; especially when your community is located in as beautiful a place as the Star Valley. The secret is to anticipate the impact of growth and mold it to the long-term benefit of the community so that Afton's way of life can be maintained well into the future.

Recommendation:

Recommendation 1 - Develop a master plan for Afton and surrounding areas. I would strongly recommend that such a plan be coordinated with and incorporated into an overall Comprehensive master plan for the entire Star Valley. This plan could and should address:

- Public infrastructure.
- Individual types of business development and where to physically locate each.
- Open space planning and preservation.
- Future land annexation.
- Valley-wide planning and zoning.

Recommendation 2 - The Wyoming Business Council has in place a grant program that can assist Afton in the cost of plan development. Funding of up to \$25,000 is available through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program and would require a partial community funding match. For more information, please contact:

Steve Achter, Director
Investment Ready Communities
Wyoming Business Council
214 W. 15th Street
Cheyenne, WY 82002
Phone: 1-307-777-2811
Email: sachte@state.wy.us
Web: www.wyomingbusiness.org

Recommendation 3 - USDA/Rural Development offers funding through the Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG) program . This grant program can be used for technical assistance and planning purposes (i.e. master planning activities). The average RBOG grant is usually under \$10,000. However, this program does not require matching funds. For more information concerning this program, please contact:

Susan Mizner
USDA Rural Development
P.O. Box 190
Afton, WY 83110
Phone: 1-307-886-9001, ext. 4
Email: susan.mizner@wy.usda.gov
Web: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/>

Recommendation 4 – Afton should consider teaming with the newly established land trust in order to acquire property that would be considered prime locations for future development. But doing this today Afton can avoid highly inflated future land values and will then have the ability to channel future growth to predetermined locations.

Challenge:

Afton has one of the best sources of community drinking water available in Wyoming. Unfortunately, unmetered flat-fee usage (up to 2,500 gallons per person per day) is placing undo wear and tear on the water and sewer infrastructure and may lead to premature infrastructure replacement needs. Additionally, rates are not generating the revenues needed to build out the system or to allow the town to fund a infrastructure escrow account cover emergency infrastructure needs.

Recommendation:

Recommendation 1 - Afton should implement metering as soon as possible. Water and sewer rates should be based on a per thousand gallon usage fee (i.e. if a resident uses 1000 gallons over a month, his bill would be \$1.00 for water and \$1.00 for sewage). Contact the Wyoming Association of Municipalities at (307) 632-0387 and request a listing of current water and sewer rates.

Reasoning:

Utilizing metered rates will result in several positive things:

- 1) As mentioned above, metering will conserve usage thus prolonging infrastructure life. Metering will protect existing system capacity meaning that system capacity expansion projects may be avoided.
- 2) Metering will generate additional revenues needed to build out sewer and water infrastructure to north Afton. This will protect the ground water under north Afton and help the community avoid the possibility of forced future clean up of the water table.
- 3) Metering will generate revenues that can be used to accelerate maintenance schedules thus protecting citizens from significant sudden increases in rates in order to replace large ticket projects (such as treatment plants).

- 4) Metering will generate additional revenues that are banked and eventually used to replace existing infrastructure (water and sewer lines, common use telecommunications conduit, etc.) prior to major projects such as downtown redevelopment and main street beautification.

Challenge:

Many people mentioned the quality of the service that the existing hospital provides to the citizens of Afton and Star Valley. Most also mentioned that the facility is operating either at or very near capacity on most occasions.

Recommendation:

Recommendation 1 – The CDBG program can be used to acquire land and in the construction of facilities that will provide critical services to low-moderate income people. As long as these facilities don't unfairly compete with the private sector, this project might be a good candidate. The maximum grant amount for this program is \$250,000. To determine eligibility and to get more information, please contact:

Terry Koerwitz
CDBG – Community Development Manager
Wyoming Business Council
214 W. 15th Street
Cheyenne, WY 82002
Phone: 1- 307 777-2812
Email: tkoerw@state.wy.us
Web: www.wyomingbusiness.org

C. Business / Economic Development

Challenge:

Economic development and the need to provide jobs to stop the exportation of young adults was an often-mentioned issue. Afton has a significant workforce that commutes to Jackson, so finding a workforce would likely not be a problem. The challenge comes in recruiting the businesses that would employ these individuals.

Recommendation:

Recommendation 1 – Utilize free business assistance programs through the Wyoming Small Business Development Center (SBDC). The SBDC, in part funded by the Wyoming Business Council, can assist people wanting to start a business in Afton, as well as those businesses already in operation. SBDC can assist businesses with issues involving financial matters, human resource issues, marketing, intellectual property (including patent and trademark issues), business plan preparation assistance, and other

miscellaneous topics. For more information, or to schedule appointments to get small business assistance, contact:

Bill Ellis
P.O. Box 1168
1400 Dewar Dr. Suite #205
Rock Springs, WY 82902
Phone: (800) 348-5205
Email: bellis@uwyo.edu
Web: www.uwyo.edu/sbdc

Recommendation 2 – Organize a group of local investors to finance the growth or expansion of existing businesses. I would suggest exploring the interests of individuals living at Star Valley Ranch. Many of these individuals are retired from distinguished careers in a variety of industries and other businesses. Organizing investors can be tricky but if done correctly, Afton may be able to form a cohesive group of individuals willing to collectively launch new businesses or that will form local angel or venture capital groups. A great organization that might be able to assist the community is Venture West. The contact information is:

Venture West
Web: www.venturewest.org

Recommendation 3 – Explore the possible purchase of businesses that can be bought somewhere else and relocated to Afton. Purchasers would be individuals mentioned in Recommendation 2 or other members of the community. Two websites that list businesses that are for sale are:

www.bizbuysell.com and www.businessesforsale.com

Both websites list businesses for sale by location, type, price, and cash flow. Afton could search for all manufacturing businesses for sale that are located in Idaho. Depending on the strength of the history of the business and the particular industry, organized investors could then purchase the business, move it to Afton, and employ local citizens that currently commute to Jackson. If the community explores this route, take care to exercise proper due diligence prior to executing a purchase.

Recommendation 4 – Start a Business Challenge program for the entire Star Valley. This is a business competition program that can be tailored to existing business and/or start-up businesses. The program utilizes in-kind donations to assist businesses. The donations can range from in-kind advertising to in-kind accounting services. The following chart demonstrates just how far these in-kind contributions can go.

Business Challenge

**Business X
Winner**

Local Accountant \$1,000 In-Kind Services	Local Attorney \$1,000 In-Kind Services	Local Newspaper \$1,000 In-Kind Advertising	Local Radio Station \$1,000 In-Kind Advertising
WBC \$1,000 Cash	Chamber/EDC \$1,000 Cash	Local Printer \$1,000 In-Kind Copying	Community College \$1,000 In-Kind Software Training
Local Bank \$1,000 In-Kind Services	SBDC Counseling Services	City/County \$1,000 Cash	DDA \$1,000 In-Kind Rent

The reasons for business failure (lack of cash, lack of support services, etc.) are readily addressed through each of the in-kind contributions.

Businesses interested in winning this competition submit full and complete business plans to an independent review committee. The review committee then judges each business based on feasibility, cost, and community need. Once the committee reviews all eligible business plans, a winner is determined.

The contributing businesses will also benefit from this program, as they create a successful customer who will likely continue to utilize their services after the in-kind contribution period ends. In addition, partnerships are created between the private and public sector that can be useful in other business development projects.

The Business Challenge Program is truly unique and innovative. Currently, some of the Wyoming Business Council's regional directors are working in a variety of communities to establish such a program. For more information on this program, please contact:

Ray Sarcletti, Director
 South West Regional Office in Rock Springs
 1400 Dewar Driver, Ste. 208
 P O Box 1377
 Rock Springs, Wyoming 82902
 Phone: 307-382-3163
 Email: rsarcl@state.wy.us
 Web: www.wyomingbusiness.org

Recommendation 5 – Hire a full-time Chamber of Commerce director to actively promote tourism in the community. As an offshoot of the Chamber, create an Afton Business Alliance. Make sure the alliance includes representatives from the city, county,

school, youth, if possible, all the employers in town, health care, and others. This will help the Alliance broaden consensus and develop a grassroots perspective for business development.

Recommendation 6 – Refer Afton’s women entrepreneurs to the Wyoming Women’s Business Center. The Center offers business-planning services and has a micro loan program (\$2,500 and less) available to small businesses at rates far below prime and at favorable repayment terms. For more information, please contact:

Ilsa Lund, Lindy Murphy, or Zee Zee Moore
Wyoming Women’s Business Center
P.O. Box 3661
Laramie, WY 82071
Phone: 1-888-524-1947
Email : ilund@uwyo.edu
Web : <http://www.wyomingwomen.org/>

Recommendation 7 – Review and, when appropriate, utilize the Government Resources and Opportunities for Business program (Gro-Biz). Gro-Biz can help Wyoming companies acquire contractual arrangements with federal, state and local governments. In particular, examine one program called Bid Match, which utilizes e-mail daily to notify registered Wyoming businesses of government contracting opportunities. For more information, please contact:

Rudy Nesvik
State Director
Gro-Biz
Laramie County Community College
1400 E. College Drive
Cheyenne, WY 82007
Phone: 1-866-253-3300
Email: grobiz@wyoming.com

Recommendation 8 – Local manufacturers should take advantage of the services of the Mid America Manufacturing and Technology Center (MAMTC). MAMTC can help Wyoming manufacturers become more competitive through programs that address quality, business systems, the manufacturing process, company assessment, marketing, and product development. For more information, please contact your local regional MAMTC representative:

George Twitchell
Field Engineer
MAMTC
P.O. Box 727
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82902
Phone: 1-307-382-1840

Email: gtwitchel@wyoming.com

Web: www.mamtc.com

Recommendation 9 – Encourage local businesses that manufacture products sold out of the Star Valley to utilize the Wyoming Business Council’s Trade Show Incentive Grant Program. This program will assist businesses in exhibiting their products at trade shows. It is a matching grant (dollar for dollar) up to \$2,000 /year. For example, if a company in Afton was to exhibit its products at trade show in Denver that costs \$4,000, the Trade Show Incentive Grant could cover up to \$2,000 of these costs related to the event. For more detailed information on this program, please contact either:

Christie Pardue
Marketing and Public Relations Specialist
Wyoming Business Council
214 W. 15th, Street
Cheyenne, WY 82002
Phone: 1-307-777-2833
Email: cpardu@missc.state.wy.us
Web: www.wyomingbusiness.org

Or

Ray Sarcletti, Director
South West Regional Office in Rock Springs
1400 Dewar Driver, Ste. 208
P O Box 1377
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82902
Phone: 307-382-3163
Email: rsarcl@state.wy.us
Web: www.wyomingbusiness.org

Recommendation 10 – If a local business is selling its products in Wyoming consider referring them to the Wyoming First Program (available to help companies promote their products as “Made in Wyoming”). Wyomingites are loyal to products made in Wyoming if they are aware of them.

Recommendation 11 – When existing or start-up companies are in need of funding refer them to the Challenge Loan Program. This program is a state revolving loan fund partnering the state with local banks to provide lower interest rates to the business community. Another program asset includes human resource consultation. For more information, contact:

Ray Sarcletti, Director
South West Regional Office in Rock Springs
1400 Dewar Driver, Ste. 208
P O Box 1377

Rock Springs, Wyoming 82902
Phone: 307-382-3163
Email: rsarcl@state.wy.us
Web: www.wyomingbusiness.org

Recommendation 12 – A great program that helps businesses recruit and train a pool of employees is the workforce training grant program. It is available to new and existing companies that create new jobs and the program covers costs associated with employee training. Typically, the amount of these grants are \$1,000-\$1,500 per employee, depending on the wage an employee will be paid. These grants are subject to availability and eligibility, so for further information, contact:

Jan Wilson
Project Manager
Department of Employment
P.O. Box 2760
Casper, WY 82602
Phone: 1-307-235-3294
Email: jwilso@state.wy.us
Web: <http://wydoe.state.wy.us/>

Or

Ray Sarcletti, Director
South West Regional Office in Rock Springs
1400 Dewar Driver, Ste. 208
P O Box 1377
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82902
Phone: 307-382-3163
Email: rsarcl@state.wy.us
Web: www.wyomingbusiness.org

Recommendation 13 – Utilize the Afton Town Hall (later use a full time Chamber director) as a central contact point for business information. However, due to the fact that Afton serves a population of about 1,800, it is important – at least in the short term – that the Town Hall provide informational material to those interested in starting a business or economic development.

Recommendation 14 – Create a business incubator to help local start-up technology-based businesses to develop and begin to prosper with little or no facilities related costs. Powell, Wyoming has explored and launched such a facility. The Town may want to consider locating such a facility in offices already owned by the community. For more information contact:

Dave Reetz
C/O First National Bank of Powell

245 E. 1st Street
Powell, WY 82435-2703
(307) 754-2201

D. Agriculture

Challenge:

Routinely throughout the review process participants mentioned concern over the apparent decline of the Afton agricultural community. Unfortunately, during the agricultural session no one from the farming or ranching community chose to participate so I have little information that can be used to generate possible solutions. Regardless, there are things that the agriculture community can do to help their industry, but it will take commitment and participation.

Recommendation:

Recommendation 1 – Apparently the dairy farming industry has been suffering and, due to increased costs and regulations, many family owned farms have disappeared over the last few years. The solution is straightforward; producers must find ways to cut costs. The Wyoming State Legislature enacted a new COOP law during the 2001 session that is among the best in the United States. I would recommend dairy producers consider forming a COOP that can operate such things as centralized milking and bulk feed purchase operations. Since Star Valley Cheese purchases the majority of local dairy products it should be encouraged to join this COOP as well. An organized COOP will significantly reduce the operation costs of all producers and help secure product markets over the long run. For more information, contact:

Bill Bunce
Director, Agribusiness Development
Wyoming Business Council
300 S. Walcott, Suite 200
Casper, WY 82601
Phone: 307-237-4692
e-mail: bbunce@state.wy.us

Recommendation 2 – Afton is located in absolutely one of the most beautiful places in Wyoming. As a result the development of agri-tourism is a real possibility. In other places farmers and ranchers have developed and operate successful programs where tourists are housed on the local operation and pay to have the opportunity to work doing a number of different everyday jobs. If the operation has camping and fishing available, tourists will also pay significant dollars in order to be able to access these privately held natural resources. For more information, contact:

Bill Bunce
Director, Agribusiness Development
Wyoming Business Council
300 S. Walcott, Suite 200
Casper, WY 82601
Phone: 307-237-4692
e-mail: bbunce@state.wy.us

Recommendation 3 – If the agricultural community is interested in launching an agri-tourism program, the city and county should consider refocusing lodging tax dollars towards the promotion of this program.

E. YOUTH

Challenge:

Numerous participants expressed concern over the lack of activities for Afton's youth. Examples of youth turning to partying and drug use were often cited as evidence of the need to provide activities and other options for local youth. Teens themselves were very helpful in providing information so that the team could formulate a number of recommendations.

Recommendation:

Recommendation 1 – The following web sites have proven to be help to communities looking for ways to develop youth activities and involvement programs.

Learn and Serve Program (another sister organization of Ameri Corp)

Web: www.learnandserve.org

-Provides programs and grant money to get youth involved in communities

National Council on Youth Leadership

Web: www.nycl.org

-Provides programs geared toward teaching youth leadership skills

Recommendation 2 – Explore the possibility of establishing a “microsociety” in the grade schools. The “microsociety” concept is an innovative long term approach to addressing the economic and community challenges that tend to pit citizens against each other when the topic of economic and community development is discussed.

Students collaborate with parents, business volunteers, and teachers to create functioning small communities. A community can start a “microsociety” in an individual class, a small learning community, a whole grade, or an entire school. Traditional academic subjects are studied in the morning, then applied "on the job" during afternoon program activities. Students spend one hour or one class period each day in their jobs where they learn to run businesses, apply technology, develop government and social agencies, and

create cultural and arts organizations. Gradually, students become immersed in the realities of a free-market economy, with taxes, property concerns, income issues, and politics.

Lingle, Wyoming has already experienced success with this program in its fifth grade class. For more information, please contact:

Cindy Gulisano
5th Grade Teacher
Lingle-Fort Laramie Elementary
Phone: 1-307-837-2254
e-mail: cgulisano@goshen.k12.wy.us

Recommendation 3 – The Town Council should consider the creation of a junior town council. Youth are either elected by their peers or apply and are appointed to the junior council by the mayor or administrator. Participants provide input to the council on youth related activities and recommend programs and projects that the community should adopt to provide opportunities for the community’s youth. This program also helps interest and train tomorrow’s local leaders for service in local government. Two communities that have youth councils are Cody and Gillette. For more information contact:

Laurie Kadrach
City Administrator
1338 Rumsey Avenue
Cody, WY 82414
Phone: (307) 527-7511

City Administrator
201 E. 5th Street
P.O. Box 3003
Gillette, WY 82717-3003
Phone: (307) 686-5203
Web: www.ci.gillette.wy.us

Recommendation 4 – Consider the construction of a skate / skate board facility in the vicinity of the community center.

F. Community Involvement

Challenge:

Find ways to get more local citizens involved. Comments were made in several sessions that the same people always do everything and that there is a need to get more citizens involved.

Recommendation:

Recommendation 1 – Develop a Star Valley leadership program. These programs have been very successful in providing resource and leadership training in a number of communities across Wyoming. The typical program is comprised of a class of individuals that meets regularly over the period of a year together. Each meeting is held with a specific theme (i.e. learning about private and public sector operations). Such programs have lead to the creation of large local networks of civic leaders that are available to help each other to achieve common community goals.

Many leadership programs already exist in Wyoming. Probably the one that matches Afton or Star Valley the best is the Park County program that includes the communities of Cody, Powell and Meeteetse. For more information on forming a “Leadership Afton” or “Leadership Star Valley” contact:

Rhonda Shipp
UW Park County Extension Office
Courthouse, 1002 Sheridan Ave.
Box 3099
Cody, WY 82414-5905
Phone: (307) 527-8560
Email: rshipp@parkco.wtp.net
Web: <http://www.wtp.net/parkco/uwces/pcli.htm>

For more information on other leadership programs within the United States, please visit:

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

Afton Resource Team
May 1 - 3, 2001

WHAT WE HEARD FROM WHAT WAS SAID

After listening to the citizens of Afton, 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 May 3. **These are in no particular order:**

MAJOR THEMES

1. Swimming Pool
 - a. Year Round

2. Economic Development
 - a. Main Street Beautification
 - b. Merchant's Association
 - c. Theme
 - d. Development (retail)
 - e. Venture Capital Fund
 - f. Functioning group
 - i. Chamber/E.D.
 - ii. Communication
 1. Marketing joint efforts

3. Jobs
 - a. Retention

4. Center
 - a. Recreation
 - b. Community
 - c. Convention

5. Sustainable agriculture
 - a. Save the farms

6. Maintain Access to National/Public Resources
 - a. Bike Path
 - b. Walking Path
 - c. Less federal government interference

7. Tourism
 - a. Develop a niche

- b. Market what you have (to whom)
 - i. Water
 - ii. Scenery
 - iii. History
 - c. Utilize lodging tax
 - d. Work w/ Triple AAA
- 8. Growth
 - a. Identify and define what you need
 - b. Shifting demographics
- 9. Youth
 - a. Structured activities
 - b. Skate Park
 - c. Community effort to work on high-risk behaviors
- 10. Untapped Resources
 - a. Star Valley Ranch
- 11. Valley Divisions
 - a. Religious
 - b. Municipal (county, town, school, hospital)
- 12. Housing
 - a. Rental Units
 - b. Land Costs
 - c. Subdivisions
 - d. Infrastructure
- 13. Water
 - a. Contamination
 - b. Unmetered use
 - c. Potential treatment
 - d. Demand
 - e. Infrastructure
- 14. Apathy
 - a. Lack of participation
 - b. Same people do everything
 - c. In the ag community (they feel helpless, yet they have a need)

WHAT WAS SAID AT THE INTERVIEWS

The Resource Team spend 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?

Need to do something to our main street between 4th and 5th avenue
Lack of jobs. Young families are moving away and schools are shriveling up
Main Street is deteriorating.
Merchants on Main Street are discouraged.
Lack and inability to attract major employers.
Aging workforce and population.
Summer residents
Too many people commuting to Jackson and spending their money elsewhere
We are out of the way; not on a main artery
Physical location presents transportation problems
Ditto
We want someone else to fix our problems.
Keeping money in Afton and Star Valley.
Triple AAA has routed cars around Afton
Everyone wants things done but no one steps up to the plate
Leakage (money) is a problem
Our main street could use some work
People go out of town to shop so others are less likely to set up shop
Inherent inability to stop tourists
Lack of cooperation among elected officials
People don't want any growth
We need employers that offer benefits and pay good wages
Lots of apathy as shown by the empty chairs
Same people do the same thing all the time
No local coalition to support our efforts (Chamber became valley wide)
Recreational opportunities for kids
People don't have a need to come to Afton from throughout the Valley
We need a movie theatre with more than one screen
Customers don't support the merchants when prices are raised
Income levels are low
Everything (land) is getting chopped up and bought by the money people

Low-income level

Ditto

Limited space – the valley is landlocked by its Federal neighbor

Nepotism in local government jobs

Challenge to maintain what we have while we continue to grow

Contradictory opinions – people want open space, yet they want industry that will create growth.

Lack of parental resources to help with the youth

Lack of residential lots

Challenge to protect our water

Challenge to provide infrastructure needs that come with growth

Surviving WYDOT's construction projects

Reduction in traffic flow as a result of construction projects

Need an effort to keep traffic coming through town

Lack of transportation in and out of the valley

Hard to survive economically in the winter

Casper Star Tribune doesn't like our sports team

Jackson Hole's popularity is going to affect our growth

No swimming pool

No bike/walking path

Denial in the community about alcohol and drug use

No business/industry to attract young families

Ditto

Better education in our high schools and more public awareness about violence in the community

Lack of professional health staff

Nothing for spouses of professionals to do

Need to keep young people in the valley

Need to beautify our town

Job shortage for people in the valley

Lack of employment and lack of things to bring outsiders in

Would like to see a stoplight on Main Street

Staffing issue at Mental Health – can't compete with wages

If any one of our current major employers shut down we'd be in big trouble

Ditto everything

Beautification of Main Street

Health Benefits for employees aren't that great

Need a better-trained work force

Lack of swimming pool

No recreational activities aimed at teens and families

Our taxes are increasing greatly

People who live here in the summer only are a burden on our tax base

Citizens can't afford houses because of the influx of the summer home people

Ditto

Affordable housing, i.e. apartments, etc.

Farmers can't make a living so they're selling their land

Business is lagging behind
Downtown needs some major renovation
Too many vacant buildings
No public access to fishing areas – too many regulations
Lack of industry to keep the working class here
Need something to attract people and hold them up a little while they're here
Lack of community centered activities
Lack of cohesiveness among the citizens
Too many people at the public trough
Lack of personal pride
Not utilizing the people talents we have within the community
Not a room for large meetings/ conventions
NIMBY attitude pertaining to ED
Ditto
Not enough decent paying jobs
Leakage-tenancy to shop out of town
Not utilizing surrounding resources to our benefit
General apathy of general public regarding community
Leakage
EPA rulings regarding water
Lack of good potable water – need help finding it
Town divided in two – Afton & North Afton (no sewer North)
Infrastructure – underground – replace & upgrade
Lack of cultural diversity
Underutilize our high school
Lack of entertainment & recreational activity choices.
Older folk have the votes – squelches lack of younger input
Lack access to continuing education
Lack qualified workforce in many areas
Ditto
No swimming pool
Unknown water supply capacity
Federal involvement in the future of the West
Demographic shift to the older folks
Lack of Radio Engineer locally
Lack coordination between County & town regarding recreation opportunities/services.
Everything good is fought by the people
No growth attitude
Not enough stores
Not enough restaurants
Don't chlorinate the spring
Summer residents
Need a traffic light
Exporting medical services
Dog problem
Access limited to public lands

Apathy among property owners
Need a public swimming pool
All the empty stores
Need something to entice a business to come in
We need a stoplight
Tourism is diverted because of construction projects
Signage is poor at the curve and people miss the turn (just out of Cokeville before Border)
Concerned about the empty shops
Parking problems
Citizens need to support what is here
Ditto everything
Have heard that Highway 89 is undergoing major construction
Triple A use Highway 89 as the scenic route from Salt Lake to Jackson
Not enough activities for our youth
Need a swimming pool or a recreation center
Ditto
Also need activities for the elderly
Multi-use recreational facility
Gateway to Yellowstone – need to create something to stop the traffic
Tourism industry needs to be enhanced year round
Ditto
Modify the weather to lengthen the tourism season
Need to capitalize on those events that have a national edge
Chamber building is in terrible condition
We need to utilize the existing visitors center that is in bad condition
No jobs
Simplot laid off people and so has the school district
Need reciprocity for taxes that are taken out of the area
Oil and Gas leases are a controversial issue
Need to go back to a multi-use forest
Not enough entertainment
Ditto
Ditto
No ski resort
Ditto
Movie theatre isn't current
Bowling alley needs to be better
Not enough jobs
Contrast of buildings is horrible
Need a pool with a diving board
Need a theme for downtown
Ditto
Lack of clothing store
Lack of music store
Lack of something to do

Kind of an in-between community (small town / resort / retirement/ transient/ etc..)
Kids parking at visitor's center
Not enough landscaping
A lot of beer parties
-Can't blame it on nothing to do
Not enough jobs
High School dropout problem is major
People making the laws & protecting us have never been here
Overnight package takes 4 days to get here sometimes
High price of land
Ditto
Ditto
Want quality jobs....not low paying quantity of jobs.
Winter makes survival difficult for businesses
Continual changing of the guard
Summer home residents impact the community
Not enough steady income to avoid roller coaster effect
Decline in the agricultural economy
Not enough activities for the kids and young adults to do
Urban sprawl
No swimming pool
Challenges associated with growth and how to deal with it
Afton needs to specifically concentrate on planning efforts
Slight handedness of politics in this town when it comes to subdivisions
Quality of life is threatened
Main Street needs to be revitalized and atmosphere maintained
Ditto – core downtown area is hurting
Once you spread out downtown you lose the heart of your community
Majority of people aren't involved in activities
Facilities are under utilized
Could expect more academically from our students
Community is tapped – think global
Eagle Scouts can't get their merit badge because they don't know how to swim and we have no place to teach them
Don't like it when people say there is nothing to do
Lack of creativity
Land values are selling for recreational value than ag value
Over 100 dairies 15 years ago, now under twenty
To keep us an agricultural area is a challenge
Creamery (Star Valley Cheese Factory) is hauling more milk in than they are producing
Ag community is fairly antigrowth because it increases complaints against their business
We're an overflow for Jackson
Hard place to come back to – no jobs
No swimming pool
Nothing positive for youth to be involved
Need a community/activities center

Drugs are not foreign to this valley (alcohol and substance abuse)
Kids graduate and leave because there aren't any major jobs
Community doesn't grasp opportunities, i.e. coors, jail
Need some economic development
No place to buy clothing
Need a variety store
There's lots of money leaving this valley
Need some competition to provide better service
Need a larger post office
Used to be lots of loyalty but now people get in their car and go elsewhere for the services they need
Lots of denial in the community when it comes to drug use – meth, marijuana, alcohol
Lack of capital and disposable income
Turning into a retirement community and need something to bring jobs in so young families can come in, which in turn would increase enrollment in our schools
Disenrollment in the schools
Difficulty stimulating economic development
Naïve when it comes to competing for businesses to come in
No incentives to attract businesses
Apathy in the community
County vs. Municipalities vs. the schools – lack of communication
Afraid of change
People are afraid to ask for help when it comes to their businesses
Apathy in the agricultural community – They feel helpless, yet they have a need
Access to proper organizations – where can people go for help
Isolation is a problem
Growth and development
Competition between the communities in the valley causes strife
Political inequities within the county
Changing demographics
Conflicting influence effecting the planning and zoning of the area
Need to be proactive instead of reactive
Look at broader picture when it comes to improvements, rather than specific areas
Don't have the resources to afford the summer residents
We are becoming a bedroom community to Jackson, therefore our growth is being identified by someone else
Community needs to develop priorities
Business environment creates dilemma
Buying habits of the consumer are changing
We have not tapped some of the resources available to us

What are the major strengths and assets of the community?

We have wonderful people here
Lots of talented and knowledgeable work force
Quality of life is great
Recreational opportunities, clean water is abundant
Ditto
Quality of people is good.
Place is a great one to live in.
Great to wave to people you know.
Small Town Feel
Beautiful scenery
The aesthetics of the valley are second to none.
The water –
Ditto all of that
Clean Air
Great People
Valley is beautiful
People who wave don't even have to know you
Sense of safety
Sense of trust
Very affordable power rates (and abundant)
Technologically advanced – lots of connectivity to the outside world
The area is just prime for something to happen
Honesty of the people
Recreational opportunities
School system is excellent
Good quality teachers
Our hospital and staff is excellent
Excellent education facilities
Ditto
The golf course
Willingness and eagerness of people to come back
People love to live here
Accessibility of government officials – locally and statewide
Great work ethic and values among those who are employed
Close proximity to Yellowstone
The new school is a great draw
Rulon Gardner
The proximity to a national forest
Location, location, location
We have extremely low crime
Low power rates
Strong work ethic
Greatest people you could find anywhere
Educational opportunities for adults

Good community services, like the hospital, etc.
High quality school program
You have everything you need here and good personal service
Beautiful place with great outdoor recreation opportunities
Tremendous resources for parents as far as recreational opportunities
Abundance of natural resources – recreational, scenic, easy to use
Winter keeps the mosquitoes away
The natural beauty and quality of life
Safety is a big plus
Family oriented community
Intermittent springs
Climate
Place I want to raise my kids
Hunting and fishing
Ditto everything
Good religious foundation in the valley – cooperative efforts
Safe place for my children
Good hospital administrator
Good community leaders
Great search and rescue and EMT program, fire department, etc.
Elementary School system is excellent
Silverstar Communications
Best broadband & access to telecommunications
Ditto
People
Comparatively low power rates
Reliable power supply
Beauty of the valley
Abundant Natural Resources
Excellent utilities
Environment – great place to raise kids
Low crime rates
Low traffic
Aggressive, visionary mayor
Unlimited outdoor recreation possibilities
Affordable cost of living, land is going up though
Proximity of metro shopping opportunities
2 hours from 3 excellent airports – good accessibility
Excellent work ethic being developed in young adults
Aggressive hospital district, excellent public facilities
Ditto
Great school district
Cohesive business environment
Scenery
People
Water Air

Schools
Hospital
People
Climate
Senor Center and the people who run it
Low Crime
Great hospital
Good outreach and social service programs
Community Education Classes
Cheapest place in the world to play golf
Good utilities with low rates
Low crime
Ditto everything
Need more town-sponsored activities
Wonderful trails and outdoor recreational opportunities
Scenery is a plus
Quality of the people is exceptional
People are treated well here
We try to help each other provide good service
Wonderful historical legacy
Star Valley Historical Society is awesome
Intermittent spring is one of the wonders of the world
(The only one in the western hemisphere – Yugoslavia and Belgium)
Geology is beautiful
Good opportunity for national events
This community pulls together in times of need
Rulon's RIGHT
Lot of good people here
Positive attitude...not much negativism
Baseball & Softball during the summer
One on one personal attachments...personal service
Sports participation and community support
Ditto
Ditto
Safety
Access to outdoors
Ditto
Ditto
Ditto
A bit more relaxed than faster paced places
Atmosphere, closeness of community
Access to business owners
Everybody knows "who you belong to"
Prefer here over anywhere else in Wyoming
Ditto
Ditto

Ditto
Sports teams' reputation
Secure & safe
Competition – more than one gas station
Nice, new school with 4 gyms, Nautilus & wrestling rooms
Star Valley Braves
Lincoln County Fair
Thriftway grocery store
Kids show a lot of respect for elders
Farming atmosphere
Ditto
Being able to go shoot
Competitiveness of sports...lot of pride
Ditto
Town's layout
Ditto
Frito Lay chip guy...gives you free chips once in awhile
Red Baron
Great water
Ditto
Ditto
Ditto
Ditto
Trees along the river
Ability to change clothes in my room with curtains open & nobody will see me
People are the assets of this community
Educational system
Access to schools for personal use
People make great neighbors
People are approachable and helpful
Kids are great
Community based town with good values
Ditto everything
We know how to shovel snow
Facilities we have between schools, recreational facilities, Fairgrounds are excellent
The Fair Board has done a great job
Ditto
Lots of opportunities to become active in the community
Ditto everything
Fair is great – that heart and passion needs to be put into everything else
Silver Star Communication has really increased our technology opportunities
And made us strong competition for the global market
Access to national forest needs to be continued
Low cost of energy
Excellent health care
Agreement between University, Town and County regarding the multiple use facility

I love it that we don't have a stoplight
The Forest Service and others are starting to diversify in an effort to attract and keep
tourists
Outdoor recreation and natural resources
Good place to raise your kids
I like it the way it is
Lots of cohesiveness in the community
Great natural resources
Good quality of living
Water is the best in the country
Lots of community pride as demonstrated in the sports programs
Clean air
Standard of living isn't too high
Natural resources and scenic beauty
Ditto
Recreational opportunities
Star Valley Ranch
Tremendous entrepreneurial spirit here
People are a big, big strength – loyal, good people
Ditto
Work ethic
Rural setting
Quality of life – we're safe here
People are very supportive once they are convinced a project is good
The open spaces
Educated workforce
Quality teachers, practitioners and medical facilities

What projects would you like to see implemented in your community in the next two, five, ten or twenty years?

I would love to see awnings up and down Main Street
Parking in the West alley
Beautification
Major industry to create employment
Recreation Center
Swimming pool
Downtown businesses humming
Beautification
Pleasing storefronts w/ thriving businesses in every building
Clean Air and Fresh Water
Wilderness Areas Maintained
Ditto all
A place for kids to hang out
Clean industry – small but good
Call Centers
Internet Farms
Community/Convention Center to attract tourism
Couple more motels
Couple more restaurants
Milder winter
Bike paths maybe even up the canyon
Afton, Alpine and Thayne working together
Another nine holes on our golf course
Larger medical facility
Public transportation, especially for the elderly
Enhanced recreational opportunities, i.e. snowmobile trails, etc.
Community Center - Multipurpose
Higher standard of living
Stable employment
Clean industry
Recreation Center
More infrastructure
Six Plex Baseball Facilities
Interesting and appealing look to Main Street
Thriving Main Street
Farming and Open Spaces
PBA circuit stop (bull riders)
Thriving winter recreational opportunities
Better way to tap the tourist market
No pig farms
Winter activities that would make this a destination area
A flowing salt river that is ecologically functioning (currently dried up by diversion)
Community effort to work on high-risk behaviors

Community center
Ditto
Curb and gutter
Ditto
Swimming pool
Open up industry like logging and oil field; decreased environmental regulations
Walking/bike paths
Recreation Center
Safe house
Community/conference center
Utilization of available technology for the entire community
Focused community effort, i.e. enhanced chamber or paid promoter
Community College
Specific educational opportunities for health professionals
Develop snowmobile trails – eliminate bureaucracy so permits are easier to get
Open access to forest lands
Cohesiveness among valley
Structured recreational opportunities for tourists
Equalize tax structure from one end of the county to the other
Summer needs to last longer
Curb and gutter
Sidewalks
Lots of trees planted
Park benches
Art and sculpture
Big Hotel w/ a convention center
Increase tourism opportunities for those things that already exist
Create a REASON for people to come to Afton
Stop urban sprawl
Increase opportunities for Community Learning Centers
New water line system completed & in place
UW Extension Programs
Sewer system in North Afton
Strong land use plan for the Valley/County
More public access to Salt River & Big Ridge
Swimming pool – Rec. Center
Multi Use Center functioning with an Executive Director
Adequate hospital funding and help to expand
Nursing School here
Smaller developing industries
Farmers still farming .. not subdividing
Recreation Center for youth
Enhanced transportation
Sidewalks
Storm sewer expansion
Greater use of the fiber

400 block of Main Street looking good
New water lines under Main Street
Communication costs localized
Youth swimming lessons
Country music abolished
Replaced water system
Increased social services to assist aging population
New industry in the community
Need a Fred Myers Store
Need an ice cream store
Take advantage of the tourism industry
Main street beautification
Rec Center
Health Facility
Good jobs with better wages
More youth programs
Tram to the spring
Better parking at the spring
Need more industry
Assisted Living Center
Need more jobs
Need stronger rules and regs for Mobile Home Parks
Paid parking lots for employees
Take out the Snake River Bridge
Divert the heat from the landfill to heating a swimming pool
Put a monorail to the spring
Businesses full
Get creative with the businesses – get a niche
Utilize the history of the Dairy Farms
Controlled growth
Beautify Main Street
Swimming pool and recreation center
To see that the shops aren't empty
Don't want to be a copy of Jackson Hole; Individualize
Pride in personal property and downtown area
Multi-use center – recreation and conventions
Something constructive for the kids to do
Convention facilities so we can be a destination rather than a pass through
Enhancement of fairground and a completed convention center with adequate parking
One stop shop for visitors center, game and fish, chamber of commerce
More jobs w/ good wages to sustain the increase in population
Jobs for kids to come back to
A little quicker growth
Maybe more kids after school programs
Star Valley tradition...have a lot of kids so you don't have to pay anybody
Remain home

Ski Resort
Recreation Center
A new Dunk Court
Stay the same
Better jobs, not more people
More year-round long-term job opportunities.
Less reliance on Jackson.
Continued unrestricted forest access
Ditto
Ditto
Ditto
Long-term hometown people running the town
Ditto
Full use of the forest
Ditto
Specialty Doctors, like for my nose – don't want to drive to Jackson
Dentists
Hunting & fishing remaining
Ditto
Ditto
Rec Center with a nice pool
Better theatre
Same mom & pop, locally owned stores...not the chains
Keep good hard working work ethic & jobs for kids
Cultural opportunities
Ditto
Ditto
Need lumber mill & farm revival
Need more businesses like Aviat
More tourism related industry
Indoor skate park
Want a swimming pool
Ditto
Community/Convention Center that includes the museum and fairgrounds
New hospital
More and diversified things for kids to do
Maintain the same atmosphere
Need things that encourage creativity
Opportunity to expand on people's abilities that would increase chances for scholarships
Ditto about community/convention center, museum, fairgrounds and hospital
Would like to see the farmers doing better and programs developed to help them get through the hard winters
Promote the legacy of this community
Protect our open spaces and family farms
Stricter planning and zoning regulations
Ditto everything

We have a wonderful quality of life where you can enjoy the backcountry all to yourself
 Have to change our focus from ag producing to the tourist market
 Sustained low rate of growth
 Need a swimming pool
 Don't want to see the water affected by EPA values
 More structured recreational activities
 More options for shopping – clothing store, grocery stores, shoe stores
 Community Center/Recreation Center
 More jobs
 Short and Long-term plan for community and economic development
 Long-term plan to protect our natural resources
 Convention Center would spur economic development to include education center
 Venture Capital system within the valley
 Enhanced communication – more town meetings, an awareness of what is available here
 Ditto
 Give agricultural community some resources to make it easier – protect our agricultural base
 New hospital built within the next couple of years
 Community Land Trust to continue
 A recycling center in the Valley
 Ditto
 Teach people how they can help protect our natural resources
 Community/convention/rec center
 Make our natural resources accessible – create bike and walking paths
 Utilize and expand our airport
 Organic Hay Production
 Organic Dairying
 Mini milk processing plant: cheese, yogurt, butter, ice cream
 Alfalfa cubing or pelleting mill for equine, pet, elk refuge markets
 Manure cubing or pelleting for home & garden fertilizer markets
 Organic gardening – education and Farmer's Market Cooperative
 Nutraceuticals: Medicinal herb crops
 Ag Tourism: Star Valley Science Center, Fee hunting(game bird)
 Farm & Ranch Recreation
 Ecotourism and adventure vacations
 Recession proof businesses such as Consulting, Consumer products, Pharmaceuticals, Entertainment, Prisons, Collection agencies, Health care, Travel
 Business incubators
 Unified strategic economic development plan
 Elimination of overhead wires and utility poles
 Mainstreet appearance code
 Ban non-licensed junk vehicles from inside city limits
 Sidestreet improvements, i.e. sidewalks & blacktop
 Livestock ban within city limits
 Mobile home ban within city limits

