

RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

for

BIG SANDY, MONTANA

MAY 7 – 8, 2003

**In partnership with
Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA),
Bear Paw Development Corporation, Montana State University – Northern,
USDA/Rural Development, MT Department of Agriculture, MT Department of
Commerce, MSU Extension – Hill County and the people of Big Sandy.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Before arriving in Big Sandy for the Resource Team Assessment, I had no idea what to expect. What I found was an incredible community with wonderful resources and a handful of leaders to guide the use of those resources. When I left Big Sandy, I found myself thinking that I would love to live there myself someday. It is obvious that in working together as a community, there is nothing to stop Big Sandy from fulfilling its wishes and dreams for the future.

Before digging in to the report itself, I would like to give recognition to MEDA – Montana Economic Developers Association. MEDA provided the contracted services that made this resource team possible. You can join MEDA and become a part of the economic development network at <http://www.medamembers.org>.

Special thanks are due Craig Erickson of Bear Paw Development who was the spark plug behind this entire project. In addition, I applaud each and every team member that dedicated hours of work and travel in order to participate on the team: Sam Antonick (Ag Finance Loan Officer with MT Dept. of Agriculture), Melody Bentz (Director of Grants and Sponsored Activities with Montana State University – Northern), Cindy Donnell (Community Development manager for USDA/Rural Development), Tod Kasten (Eastern Region Development Officer for MT Dept. of Commerce), and Jennifer Wells (MSU Extension Agent for Hill County). Each team member's contact information is provided in the following report. Please feel free to call on any of us for additional information or support. It would be our pleasure!

The Big Sandy Resource Team Assessment was truly a team effort on the local level. The support of your County Commissioners, Town Council, Mayor, and Chamber of Commerce was incredible. A special thank-you to Marlys, Shaud, Mary Gibbons, Keith, Jean and Don Sorensen. Thanks to our tour guides, those that provided lodging and to those that fed us wonderful meals! Big Sandy is to be commended for being the first community to conduct an Asset Mapping process that will enhance the Resource Team Assessment process.

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

Gloria O'Rourke
MEDA

PROCESS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THIS REPORT

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

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

The Resource Team toured the county and interviewed approximately 70 people over a two-day period from May 7th – 8th. The team interviewed representatives from the following segments of Big Sandy: Churches, Educators, Retail/Rotary/Chamber, Home School Families, Agriculture, Youth, City/County/Law Enforcement and Library, Senior Citizens, Medical Center, and Clubs.

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

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

Upon completion of the interviews, the team met to compare notes and share comments following the two days of intense study. The team then agreed that each team member would carefully analyze the things said, synthesize what they heard with their knowledge of programs and resources, prepare their notes and suggestions, and forward these items to be combined into a final report to Big Sandy.

A preliminary oral report and a summary of group recommendations was presented to the people of Big Sandy on May 8th and many of the county's citizens who participated in the interviews were in attendance.

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

**BIG SANDY RESOURCE TEAM
MAY 7TH – 8TH, 2003
BIG SANDY, MT**

**Big Sandy Team Member: Sam Antonick
Title: Ag Finance Loan Officer
Agency: MT Dept. of Agriculture
City, State, Zip: Helena, MT 59620-0201
Ph: 406.444.5420 Fx:
Email: santonick@state.mt.us**

**Big Sandy Team Member: Melody Bentz
Title: Director of Grants & Sponsored Activities
Agency: Montana State University-Northern
City, State, Zip: Havre, MT 59501
Ph: 406.265.3526 Fx: (406) 265-3596
Email: mbentz@msun.edu**

**Big Sandy Team Member: Cindy Donnell
Title: Community Development Mgr.
Agency: USDA/RD
City, State, Zip: Helena, MT 59601
Ph: 406.449.5000x4 Fx: (406) 449.5008
Email: Cindy.Donnell@mt.usda.gov**

**Big Sandy Team Member: Tod Kasten
Title: Eastern MT RDO
Agency: MT Dept. of Commerce
City, State, Zip: Circle, MT 59215
Ph: 406.485.3374 Fx: 406.228.9760
Email: kranches@midrivers.com**

**Big Sandy Team Member: Gloria O'Rourke
Title: Team Leader
Agency: Montana Economic Developers Assoc.
City, State, Zip: Anaconda, MT 59711
Ph: 406.563.5259 Fx: 406.563.5476
Email: gloria@medamembers.org
Web: <http://www.medamembers.org>**

**Big Sandy Team Member: Jennifer Wells
Title: MSU Extension Agent
Agency: Hill County
City, State, Zip: Havre, MT 59501
Ph: 406.265.5481x33 Fx: 406.265.5487
Email: jwells@montana.edu**

BIG SANDY MAIN ISSUES

After listening for two days to the people of Big Sandy, the following is a summary of main issues that were heard:

AGRICULTURE

- Transportation of product
- Railway issue
- Marketing
- Value Added products
- Diversifying and crop options
- Ag-Tourism
- Financial and mentor support of young potential farmers
- CRP

TOURISM

- Signage
- Promote recreational opportunities
 - Website
 - Brochure
- Promote Scenic Attractions
 - Monument
 - White Rocks
 - Missouri River
- Promote Local Attractions
 - river tours
 - museum
 - jail
- Partnership with surrounding communities, i.e., Rocky Boy's inner tube slope

ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH

- Summer and after school care for kids
- Youth involvement in community decisions
- Support of church activities to continue
- More cultural opportunities for kids

BUSINESS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Gas station
- Options other than Ag
- Electrician and other skilled providers
- Variety store
- Veterinarian
- Drug store with pharmacy
- Mutual support between business and community
- Business recruitment

BEAUTIFICATION

- City clean up
- Trees
- Store fronts
- Theme for downtown area – or gimmick
- Abandoned vehicles and houses

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Streets, sidewalks
- Water

COMMUNITY

- Animal Control
- Mosquito control
- Housing – empty and many
- Promotion and use of saddle club, arena and rodeo grounds
- More volunteer time (funds have been forthcoming, but we need TIME)
- Improvement of pool
- More community-wide activities such as a community dance
- Music, arts, theater (Shakespeare in the Park) – cultural activities

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES

- Shared activities and resources that will benefit the children of Big Sandy
- Access to educational strengths such as pc lab, weight room
- More Advanced Placement programs/updated curriculum/books

SENIOR CITIZENS

- Transportation for daily events and health services
- Explore retirement community options
- Assisted living

BIG SANDY RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

Report by:

Melody L. Bentz

Director of Grants & Sponsored Activities

Montana State University-Northern

P.O. Box 7511

Havre, Montana 59501

Phone: (406) 265-3526

Fax: (406) 265-3596

Email: mbentz@msun.edu

First of all, I'd like to thank the town of Big Sandy for sharing with me your hospitality, openness and friendship. First and foremost, during my visit, I learned that the people of Big Sandy certainly have a wonderful passion for the community in which you have lived and raised your families. You also have a wonderful drive and can-do attitude, which is reflected in your community fundraising and what you've already accomplished. If there's a need, you all pitch in and get the job done. This can only be said for communities that care about their own and the future. You're a very warm community, with great pride (Pioneer Pride) that is searching for answers on how to make you're community grow, flourish and be a better place to live and visit – this is very commendable.

In my report, I've tried to "think out of the box" to give you some grassroots ideas – ones that aren't so technical. Implementing and expanding on these ideas – and creating some of your own on how to work in partnership within, and, outside the community, I hope, will get you off on the right foot to achieve your goals. I want to let you know, that I am willing to continue to work with you, so please don't hesitate to keep in touch with me, if you ever need assistance with grants or help with any of the recommendations in this report.

Again, thank you so much for your wonderful hospitality. I have already been back showing off your community to my husband and some friends. This summer, we plan on taking advantage of the wonderful recreational opportunities and sights you have to offer.

MAIN TOPIC: AGRICULTURE

Issue: Ag-Tourism

Recommendations:

The people of Big Sandy repeatedly said that Agriculture is a growing concern: CRP has reduced volume and farmers must look to diversify within or from Agriculture. They cited a problem that farmers are also limited on what they can grow, there's a lack of irrigation (water) and future transportation issues that would negatively impact Agriculture are looming.

Several states have asked themselves the same questions as the residents of Big Sandy "How do we diversity from Agriculture to utilize our farms and ranches for other purposes? Possibly, tourism?" Big Sandy farmers and ranchers have a lot of unique types of farming and ranching that's really quite interesting to people, especially people from more urban and metropolitan areas. Big Sandy farmers and ranchers could start showing off their products and services through tourism-related activities. This is called "Ag-tourism".

Activities designed to attract visitors and generate supplemental income for farmers and ranchers range from conducting tours and selling products directly from the farm to operating a bed and breakfast, allowing horseback riding, Dude Ranches (cattle branding) or holding festivals, Shakespeare in the Parks, or other regional events on the land.

Other states that have embarked on the Ag-Tourism concept, indicate that the key stipulation is that tourism-related activities must be secondary to farming. It has to be a working farm or agricultural concern that encourages access to visitors--it cannot be a bed and breakfast with a cow out front. That's not agricultural tourism.

The residents of Big Sandy need to "think out of the box" to examine if Ag-Tourism will work for them. Initial steps are:

- Create a committee that will explore Ag-Tourism. Be sure to include interested parties from both sides, i.e., farmers, ranchers, Chamber of Commerce, etc., and don't forget to include youth to get an idea of what would appeal to the younger generation.
- Committee members should take inventory of what products, experiences and services the area farms and ranches have to offer the public at large. Including:
 - Land Resources: What deeded, leased, state/federal properties do we have, etc?
 - Climate: How will climate affect what types of activities you might provide?
 - Developments and Improvements (buildings, facilities, corrals, etc.)
 - Attractions: What do we have that would be attractive to visitors? (streams, wildlife, fishing, livestock, points of interest)
 - Operations & management strengths: Who in the community possess marketing, organizational, historian skills? (see results from community assessment)
 - Activities: Compile a list of activities that you already do within the community or on your operation that would appeal to the general public.
 - Assess what is lacking in your community: gas stations, hotel rooms, shopping, etc., and how you will deal with these challenges when people visit the community (alternative solutions)
- A good practice is to research what other communities are doing and determine what is adaptable to Big Sandy (see Resource List).
- Contact the Montana Department of Commerce – The Department of Commerce has indicated in its 2002-2007 Strategic Plan that expanding Ag-Tourism in the State of Montana is a priority. Inquire if there will be a team that will examine Ag-Tourism in the state and ask if a representative from Big Sandy can be a member of the team.

Some ideas:

- Start a "Visit Big Sandy's Farms and Ranches" Campaign
 - Farmer's Markets
 - Tours of farms and ranches (seasonal)
 - Provide experiences branding cattle, picking crops, sowing crops, etc.
 - Show Off "Big Bud"
 - Better Promote Natural Tourist Attractions found in the Area.
 - Partner with outlying communities including Rocky Boy's Reservation to promote an expanded area.

Contacts:

Mr. David Sharpe, Montana State University Extension Service, Office of Community Development, 106 Taylor Hall, Bozeman, MT 59717, (406) 994-2962
Montana Department of Commerce, 301 S. Park Ave, Helena, MT 59601, (406) 841-2700 or
<http://commerce.state.mt.us/>

Resources:

<http://www.montana.edu/wwwrdc/> Community Tourism Assessment Handbook

<http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/factsheets.html> ***A great place to start*** - lots of information about assessing your assets, conducting farm and ranch tours, safety and risk management, etc.

http://www.msue.msu.edu/valueadded/ag_tourism1.htm

<http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/docs/agritourhandbook.html> Agritourism and Nature Tourism in California – A handbook to help farmers and ranchers 1) to determine their tourism potential and 2) walk through the steps of establishing a tourism enterprise. It is also a resource for people working with California ranchers and farmers. Written specifically for California, but may be adaptable to Montana.

MAIN TOPIC: AGRICULTURE

Issue: Financial and mentor support of young potential farmers

Recommendations:

Residents of Big Sandy are concerned about the decline of the Agricultural Industry in the region and the future [negative] impact this will have on the community. Farmers and ranchers would like to instill in their sons and daughters the values, importance, and pride they have of farming and ranching. Keeping young people in farming and ranching is a “big” concern.

I spoke with Scott Kulbeck with the Montana Farm Bureau Federation’s Young Farmers and Ranchers program. Scott, from Big Sandy himself, said that Big Sandy is already participating in the program because of the efforts of Melissa and Thad Willis. However, Scott indicated that more volunteers from the area to promote and recruit for the program is needed. In addition, Scott indicated that there is financial and mentor support for young potential farmers from the MFBF YF&R program by way of scholarships for young people. In fact, at the upcoming Leadership Campout in July, participants can win cash for their local programs. In addition, communities can apply for mini-grants from the Montana Farm Bureau Federation in the amount of \$250.00, which can be used as seed money to establish a program or to expand existing programs. I recommend that farmers, ranchers and other individuals in Big Sandy become more involved with the MFBF Young Farmers and Ranchers program and encourage their children to be a part of this very worthwhile program as well as other national programs such as 4-H and Future Farmers of America.

Resources:

Ben & Jerry’s Foundation looks to support groups who are working to help themselves, help their own communities, and help others like themselves through self-empowering, community organizing efforts.

Ben & Jerry's Foundation
30 Community Drive
So. Burlington, VT 05403-6828

Access guidelines and application at: <http://www.benjerry.com/foundation/index.html>

Monsanto Company and the *American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture* have announced details behind the fifth annual Commitment to Agriculture Scholarship Program. In order to be eligible for one of the awards, the student applicant must come from a farm family and plan to pursue a career in the field of agriculture. One-time awards of \$1,500 will be made to 100 high school seniors chosen by an impartial selection committee of agricultural educators and industry leaders. The scholarship program is offered by Monsanto in association with the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture, and is open to high school seniors from all 50 states. Access details on line at: <http://www.mfbf.org/newnews/monsanto.html>

The *Montana Farm Bureau Foundation* has established a program to provide grants of up to \$200 for use in educational forums or activities promoting agriculture. Grants are available under two different areas. The first will provide funding and is available for classroom projects in the grades Kindergarten – Grade 12. The second will provide financial assistance for programs or projects to those organizations or groups not directly affiliated with classroom activities. Extra-curricular organizations, groups and clubs fall under the second category. Access information on the web at: <http://www.mfbf.org/newnews/mini%20grants.html> or contact *Diana Alkire* at dianaa@mfbf.org or 406-587-3153.

Contacts:

Montana Farm Bureau Federation, Young Farmers and Ranchers Program, for more information call Scott Kulbeck at 1-888-532-6601.

MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM

Issues: Tourism Promotion

Recommendations:

Big Sandy and the surrounding area are drenched in history at all levels (local, state and national), have many area attractions that are jewels of history, and there is a community proud of its heritage that wants to share it with others. The problem with tourism, is mainly promotion – how to draw in visitors/travelers to the area. This problem is due to many factors including the lack of: adequate signage, promotional materials and a website, collaboration between area attractions and surrounding communities, and individuals with the public relations and marketing skills to address the broad range of issues.

The Chamber of Commerce in Big Sandy should form a team of individuals – Tourism Committee – made up of representatives from each tourist attraction, who will take a look at tourism promotion in the region. This team would also be responsible for developing partnerships with local, state and national organizations to promote the region's attractions as well as seek funding to support area attractions,

build the capacity of area attractions, and promote area attractions. Possible partnerships include: Rocky Boy's Reservation, Russell Country, Travel Montana,

In- and out-of-state travelers to Montana are normally looking for vacation opportunities that are: adventurous, educational, unique, and more often than not, are something connected to the outdoors. The community of Big Sandy and surrounding area are perfect for this type of traveler. The following is a list of just a few attractions, natural resources, and linkages that could be promoted in Choteau County:

- Lewis and Clark
 - Trail/Wagon Rides/Campouts
 - Tie into State Bicentennial activities
- Native American History (w/Rocky Boy's Reservation)
- Flora and Fauna
- The Monument
- Agriculture
 - Working Farm Adventures
 - Big Bud
- White Rocks
- Upper Missouri River
 - Canoe/Rafting Trips
 - River Hikes/Camping

There are probably other tourism assets that should be added to the aforementioned list. It is imperative that the people who step forward to work with the Chamber address tourism issues and work together to promote what they have to potential visitors and build local, state, and national partnerships.

Development of a Chamber of Commerce [Big Sandy] website that establishes linkages at all levels is vital to the success of tourism promotion. If the community of Big Sandy lacks the expertise to develop a website, it is suggested that the Chamber of Commerce contact Montana State University-Northern's Grants Department. The Grants Department will make an attempt to connect the Chamber with individuals at Northern who can help develop a website and/or promotional materials. Once regional promotional materials are developed, these, and other promotional materials should be displayed and made available at locations throughout the city including stores, restaurants, bank, etc. Most importantly, a display should be placed at the rest area on Hwy 87, which is a high-traffic location.

To increase promotion of area attractions, it is recommended that Big Sandy call the Malmstrom Air Force Base Public Relations Office to inquire if an events flyer could be regularly distributed with their weekly newspaper "The Warrior". Many businesses and non-profits take advantage of advertising or placing flyers in the base newspaper. As an individual who once worked at Malmstrom, I know that Air Force and family members alike look forward to reading this publication every week and rely on it to provide them with, not only, current event and base information, but information about family-oriented recreational opportunities in the area. The base newspaper is an advertising "gold mine" that many do not even think about as an option. In addition, the Public Affairs Office maintains a great website that promotes area attractions. I recommend talking with them about including information about events and attractions in and around Big Sandy.

A visit to the Russell Country website, <http://russell.visitmt.com/attract.htm>, which promotes all attractions in the Russell Country area, shows that Big Sandy area attractions are not being promoted as well as they could be (on other agency websites). The only attraction listed for Big Sandy is the Big Sandy Historical Museum. In addition, no information is on this website on the Big Sandy webpage. It is recommended that once the Tourism Committee develops a regional asset inventory of attractions, that this information be provided to Russell Country for inclusion on its website.

It is also recommended that the Chamber of Commerce contact Vicki Munson, a private consultant that specializes in tourism; Victor Bjornberg at Travel Montana and Russell Country.

Contact Information:

Vicki Munson
Munson Consulting
8505 East Shore Route
Polson, MT 59860
Phone: (406) 887-2126
Fax: (406) 887-2128
Email: vmunson@cyberport.net

Victor Bjornberg
Tourism Development Coordinator
Travel Montana
Montana Department of Commerce
P.O. Box 200533
Helena, MT 59620-0533
Phone: 444-2654
Email: victor@visitmt.com
Website: <http://www.travelmontana.state.mt.us>

Melody Bentz
Director, Grants and Sponsored Activities
Montana State University-Northern
P.O. Box 7751
Havre, MT 59501
Phone: 265-3526
Fax: 265-3596
Email: mbentz@msun.edu

Russell Country
russell@visitmt.com

Issue: Other Tourism--Lewis and Clark Bicentennial

The community of Big Sandy should capitalize on this Signature Event by partnering with other communities. Big Sandy is in the heart of an area that contains a spectacular array of biological, geological, and historical objects of interest including the Upper Missouri River National Monument and

the White Cliffs. The area has remained largely unchanged in the nearly 200 years since Meriwether Lewis and William Clark traveled through it on their epic journey. In 1806 Meriwether Lewis wrote of the White Cliffs area, "the hills and river cliffs which we passed today exhibit a most romantic appearance." Big Sandy might want to look at promoting this area to "couples" that may want to spend a romantic evening, weekend, or week out under the stars along the beautiful Missouri River. The community must keep in mind, when promoting to a vast audience, any challenges that may arise such as lodging, limited services (gasoline), etc. Partnerships with surrounding (nearby) communities should be explored to maybe offer packages where visitors might stay in Havre overnight, but travel to Big Sandy to take in the sights and the city's gas station hours are extended and signage to the facility is clearly displayed along Hwy 87. If done properly, the bicentennial celebration will be the introduction of many new people to a special place in America. Many will return; some may even choose to stay.

Contact Information:

Clint Blackwood, Executive Director
Montana Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Commission
P.O. Box 201203
Helena, MT 59620-1203
(406) 443-2109
(406) 841-4004 (fax)
email: cblackwood@state.mt.us

Issue: Signage

Recommendation:

Residents of Big Sandy indicated at several sessions that there is a problem with being able to put signage on Hwy 87 because state regulations do not permit it. Residents would like to erect signage, e.g., a billboard at the North and South ends of town that would encourage visitors to stop. This would hopefully encourage visitors to shop at the local stores, take in local attractions, or pick up information about what Big Sandy has to offer and possibly stop back at a later date.

I called the Montana Department of Transportation and spoke with Mr. Rich Munger in the Helena Right of Way Office about the concerns the residents of Big Sandy have regarding the inability to place signs (billboard) along Hwy 87. Rich explained to me that federal and state regulations for the placement of signs along Montana's roads and highways are based on the Highway Beautification Act of 1965 when Lady Bird Johnson wanted to implement an Act that would keep signage from defacing the natural beauty of rural areas. In brief, this Act, together with the regulations prohibits the placement of "promotional" signage on rural Highways. The key word I found out in my conversation with Rich is "promotional". Promotional is defined as signage that promotes a business – such as Shop at IGA, turn right at the next intersection or that promotes drinking Coca-Cola.

However, the regulation would not prohibit Big Sandy from placing a billboard as you enter from the North and South that says (something like this):

“Welcome to Big Sandy – See the Beauty that Lewis & Clark Saw”
Home of the Upper Missouri River National Monument and the Enchanting White Cliffs

Information available at the Big Sandy Rest Area Kiosk Ahead

Rich will be retiring soon, but suggested that the community of Big Sandy call him (is he is still working), or his successor, Pat Hurley, to discuss what kind of sign/billboard you would like to post and where it would be posted. He or Pat will come to Big Sandy to discuss this matter with you further. He doesn't foresee a problem with a similar sign as described above, as long as there is no promotional information on the sign, besides promoting area attractions and asking individuals to stop and rest a while.

Contact Information:

Rich Munger
HELENA - RIGHT OF WAY
PO Box 201001
2701 Prospect Ave.
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Phone Number: (406) 444-7603
Email: rmunger@state.mt.us

Or

Pat Hurley
HELENA - RIGHT OF WAY
PO Box 201001
2701 Prospect Ave.
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Phone Number: (406) 444-6068
Email: phurley@state.mt.us

MAJOR TOPIC: ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH

Issue: Summer and after-school activities for kids

Recommendation:

The issue kept coming up about whether a Youth Center would be beneficial for the community. There was some contradictory information: parents and some adults indicated that they thought that kids would not use a Youth Center if it were available. Yet, when the panel met with youth from the school, a large majority of students indicated that if a Youth Center were available, they would, in fact, use it.

I personally feel that the residents of Big Sandy should have a youth center that would provide an alternative safe and fun place for their kids to gather and socialize. The center should incorporate activities that include sports, indoor recreation, cultural programs, access to technology, and outdoor activities. Big Sandy residents should form a committee of people who share a passion to serve and preserve the youth of their community. The committee must also, of course, include children of all ages for input as to what kinds of activities, equipment, and programs will be provided out of the Youth Center. The committee must realize that they will not be only building a youth center, but building their

community. It is recommended that the committee embark first on a fact-finding mission by asking questions such as:

- What strengths and problems are our young people facing, growing up in challenged rural communities?
- What kinds of school, community, family, and recreational environments can best support the development of our youth?
- What types of activities/programs do our youth want available in the community? In a Youth Center?
- What type of facility? Do we renovate an existing building, or build new?
- Who? How will we staff the building?
- What are the total costs associated with these projects?

Funding Resources:

Qwest Communications

Mr. Rick Hays

Helena, Montana 59601

(406) 441-7700

<http://www.qwest.com/about/company/sponsorships/foundation/index.html>

Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation

Lawrence R. Simkins, President

P.O. Box 16630

Missoula, Montana 59808-6630

(406) 523-1300

<http://www.washcorp.com/Foundation>

National Endowment for the Arts

Learning in the Arts for Children

Nancy Hanks Center

1100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW

Washington, DC 20506-0001

<http://www.arts.gov/guide/index.html>

Land and Water Conservation Fund

Parks Division

Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks

P.O. Box 200701

Helena, MT 59620

Tel: 406-444-3750

<http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/index.html>

Community Technology Centers

After-school programs, adult basic education, seniors' programs, etc.

Department of Education

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/AdultEd/CTC/>
<http://www.ed.gov/> to view all grant opportunities

Printed Resources:

Title: Youth Planning Charrettes; Subtitle: A Manual for Planners, Teachers, and Youth Advocates;
Publisher: APA Planners Press 1999; ISBN: 1-884829-19-8

Invest in the future! Involve young people in planning. Learn how to design charrettes, starting with workshops and ending with lessons learned. This book explores various approaches to involving youth in schools, museums, and citizen groups. It's a complete guide to successful community charrettes for younger participants. (K-8)

Title: Youth Participation in Community Planning; Publisher: APA Planning Advisory Service 1999; ISBN: 1-884829-32-5. Today's youth, raised in an era of tremendous change, have an unprecedented opportunity to shape the future of their communities. As they realize their potential to make a difference, more and more young people are making positive contributions to their neighborhoods. Explores how communities have involved children in planning. Several case studies demonstrate how various communities have encouraged young people to solve problems, voice their opinions, and make a difference. Explains how to create effective youth-based initiatives that train young people to identify social, community, or policy concerns, devise solutions, and hone the skills they need to effect change. It details the essential elements of developing a youth involvement project—organizational structure, required resources, suggested activities, and hoped-for accomplishments—as well as some of the potential stumbling blocks. A great resource for developing planning programs that benefit communities and engage a new generation.

Issue: More cultural opportunities for kids

Recommendations:

Several groups (adults and kids) made comment that they would like to see more cultural events/programs for the kids of Big Sandy. Over and over we heard about the musical, theatrical and artistic talents of community residents, both young and old. It is encouraged that the community focus on nurturing their own and their children's talents.

Begin by finding out who in the community is interested in starting cultural programs in the community (may find information from asset mapping survey). This group of individuals should come together to form a group that will focus on starting cultural programs in Big Sandy. It is recommended that the group poll the community, not only those who are interested in performing or being involved, but find out what kind of events (all) residents would attend or enjoy if performances were planned for the public. The group should then brainstorm ideas and do research (on the web or by calling MCH or MAC) to find out what other rural communities have done -- what they have been successful at. Next, contact that group to see if they are willing to talk face to face about their organization: How they got started? Where they receive(d) funding (fundraisers, grants, etc.)? What events do they deliver to their community?

Fundraising is at the heart of every issue so the group will most assuredly have to start small. If theatrical performances are on the agenda, contact groups such as the Montana Actors Theater in Havre to see if you can borrow costumes, sets, scripts, and other items. Also talk with MAT if they would

mentor the Big Sandy group to lend their expertise that would provide theatrical experience to those in Big Sandy.

Why expose youth to culture? To: give young people healthy activities as alternatives to getting into trouble, instill a sense of identity, increase their skills and abilities and to increase their self-esteem. All of these objectives are achieved through culture as the main teaching instrument in youth programs and services.

Some cultural program ideas are:

- Music workshops and seminars
- Cultural summer camps focusing on music, drama or local history
- Form a community band, drama troop, or arts group
- Partner with Rocky Boy's to explore Native American Culture
- Visiting Artist/Historian Series (school year)
- Shakespeare in the Park

Contact:

Montana Actors Theater
Mr. Jay Pyette
265-8183 (home)
265-6732 (work HPS)
Email: montanaactors@yahoo.com

Funding Resources:

Montana Arts Council
PO Box 202201
Helena MT 59620-2201
406/444-6430
<http://www.art.state.mt.us/>

Montana Committee for the Humanities
311 Brantly Hall
The University of Montana
Missoula, MT 59812-7848
telephone (406)-243-6022
toll-free in Montana (800)-624-6001
lastbest@selway.umt.edu
<http://www.humanities-mt.org/>

National Endowment for the Humanities
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington DC 20506
<http://www.neh.gov/grants/grantsbydivision.html> grants listing by division

Cultural Partnerships for At-Risk Children and Youth Program
Madeline E. Baggett

U.S. Department of Education
FB-6, Room 3E228
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202-6140
Telephone (202) 260-2502 or
Email: Madeline.Baggett@ed.gov.
www.ed.gov

Qwest Communications
Mr. Rick Hays
Helena, Montana 59601
(406) 441-7700
<http://www.qwest.com/about/company/sponsorships/foundation/index.html>

Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation
Lawrence R. Simkins, President
P.O. Box 16630
Missoula, Montana 59808-6630
(406) 523-1300
<http://www.washcorp.com/Foundation>

MAJOR TOPICS: Business and Opportunities

Issue: Variety Store

Recommendations:

The residents of Big Sandy would like to have a store that would provide more shopping opportunities for clothes, shoes, toys, appliances, etc. Currently, there are many craft-type stores and gift shops, but the community is lacking in a variety-type store. Residents must now drive North to Havre (about ½ hour) or South to Great Falls (nearly 2 hours) in order to have, primarily, more choices in clothing and household items.

Several years ago, the City of Malta identified an almost identical problem – minimal shopping opportunities for clothing, shoes, etc. A group of concerned residents came together and came up with a solution to form a cooperative that would invest in and establish a Variety Store – Family Matters, Inc. The project has been a HUGE success for Malta. The residents of Big Sandy could follow this same model. There is a store front available right on Hwy 87 (former IGA) that would be a perfect location for a store of this kind. It is strongly recommended that those interested in establishing a Variety Store in Big Sandy contact individuals who worked on the Family Matters project in Malta.

Contact:

Malta Area Chamber of Commerce
Mrs. Anne Boothe
PO Box 1420
Malta, MT 59538

Telephone/Fax - (406) 654-1776

Email: malta@ttc-cmc.net

Family Matters, Inc.
(406) 654-1900

Issue: Veterinarian

Recommendation:

It is recommended that concerned residents of Big Sandy should contact Veterinarians in outlying communities to see if they would consider establishing a part-time practice in Big Sandy, e.g., one day a week, twice a month, etc. It is suggested that the schedule remain somewhat constant such as every Wednesday, the second and fourth Thursday of every month, etc. This type of model has been tried in other rural communities and has worked very well. It not only has worked for veterinarian services, but dentistry, medical, and even insurance sales.

To attract a Veterinarian to “try out” this model, it may be worthwhile for the City, businesses or individuals to offer reduced rent options, free lunches, paid mileage, free fill up at the gas station, etc. (on a 6-month or 1-year trial basis). If this arrangement proves successful and the need is there, it may turn into a more permanent situation.

Issue: Pharmacist

Recommendations:

The City of Big Sandy has an overwhelming obstacle – it is geographically separated from many services that it needs. The residents of Big Sandy have a big challenge ahead to overcome this obstacle, step by step. Besides other services mentioned, residents would also like to see a Drug Store with a full- or part-time pharmacist. In this instance, distance is an obstacle especially for aging residents who have little or no access to transportation, or who must wait on transportation opportunities to get to Havre or Great Falls to fill prescriptions.

The residents of Big Sandy could use the same model described above (Veterinarian Services) to bring a Pharmacist to the area. Residents could check with K-Mart, Wall-Mart or other large chain stores and speak with Pharmacists to see if any of them are currently working on a part-time basis. If so, are they interested in expanding their practice to serve the community of Big Sandy, regularly.

The second option could be to attract a pharmacist to the community on a full-time basis by offering free housing or other “perks”. During talks with the panel, residents also expressed concern about the many houses that have been left empty and are rapidly deteriorating throughout the city. City officials should speak with owners to see if any of them are willing to donate (as a tax right off) their houses to the city – to provide “free” housing for individuals that are interested in moving to the community to provide much-needed services. Houses and yards could then be “spruced up” as a community project with the help of donations of time, money, services and products.

A third option would be to set up an independent pharmacy. This would entail advertising nationally for an independent pharmacist interested in moving to a rural town in Montana or contacting an established independent pharmacist (in Montana) to see if they would consider expanding their services to Big Sandy. A list of independent pharmacies in Montana is provided.

Contacts:

Anderson Family Pharmacy
401 15th Ave S #208
Great Falls, MT 59405
(406) 761-8781

Apothecary Drug Store
20 3rd St. North
Great Falls, MT 59401
(406) 454-2399

Clinic United Drugs
1400 29th St South
PO Box 7213
Great Falls, MT 59405
(406) 771-3399

A and C Drug Corporation
523 N Higgins
P O Box 7966
Missoula, MT 59802
(406) 721-6640

Garden City Pharmacy
700 W Kent
Missoula, MT 59801
(406) 549-898

MAJOR TOPIC: Beautification

Issues: General

Recommendation: The residents of Big Sandy are proud of their city. However, Big Sandy is dealing with many infrastructure and aesthetic issues. Sidewalks and streets are below par, and in some instances, sidewalks are dangerous to walk on; there are many unpaved streets within the city, creating a dusty/dirty environment; cosmetically, there are few trees, store fronts need painting, abandoned cars and other unsightly items are scattered about and the city needs general sprucing up. Here are some ideas:

- Implement a city beautification campaign – “Green it UP & Clean it UP” (suggested theme)

- Form a Downtown Beautification Committee or Neighborhood Revitalization Committee that will develop beautification and clean up action plans
 - Assess areas most in need of beautification & clean up
 - Map out a planting plan; create a spruce up plan
 - Review the asset mapping results and identify those individuals that have the skills you need: gardeners, carpenters, painters, etc.
 - Develop a list of supplies and items that are needed to carry out each plan
 - Have a Spring fundraiser, solicit donations or exchange product
 - Find a nursery or landscape grower that you can exchange locally grown products for their seedlings, trees, shrubs and flowers (bartering)
 - Develop a timeline for completion of each project or activity and continual beautification efforts
 - Form a youth group that is interested in helping address the needs of the community a becoming a part of National Youth Service Day activities.

What is National Youth Service Day? National Youth Service Day has three primary goals: (1) to mobilize youth to identify and address the needs of their communities through service; (2) to recruit the next generation of volunteers; and (3) to educate the public about the year-round contributions of young people as community leaders. Community projects are organized by communities, schools, and local organizations. NYSD project include: help for the homeless, help for senior citizens, school activities, neighborhood enhancements, help for those with special needs, politics and government and the environment.

In Montana, National Youth Service Day activities have taken place in Billings, Bozeman, Browning, Butte, Great Falls, Havre, Helena, Kalispell, and Missoula, through the support of the Governor's Office of Community Service and the coordination of AmeriCorps members and youth organizations statewide. In 2002, over 300 Montana youth were engaged in projects on National Youth Service Day, ranging from planting evergreens in Kalispell, to cleaning up a baseball field in White Sulphur Springs. I recommend that Big Sandy contact the Governor's Office of Community Service to see how Big Sandy youth can take part in the activities of this very worthwhile organization.

Issue: Sidewalks & Streets

For maintenance and beautification of sidewalks and streets, residents are encouraged to initiate an Adopt-a-Sidewalk/Street campaign to remove weeds, trash, junk and in the winter – snow removal. In the summer, the City could initiate a "Lawn of the Month" or in the downtown area "Business of the Month" contest with prizes awarded to winners that have been donated from the area businesses/tourist attractions, such as dinner for two, gift certificates, a canoe ride down the Missouri, etc. Winners could be showcased on the Chamber's website and/or in the local newspaper. A traveling trophy in the form of plaques that can be hung outside the business or prominently placed on the winner's lawn could be awarded. It is suggested that this could be a program of the Big Sandy Chamber of Commerce, who would be responsible for getting a (different) group together each month to judge entries. This is a very inexpensive program that wouldn't take a lot of effort to coordinate – but it could have a very positive and great impact on the appearance of the community and pride of Big Sandy's citizens.

Contacts:

National Youth Service Day (Montana Contact)
Mary Asbach
Governor's Office of Community Service/AmeriCorps
444-9655
<http://www.ysa.org/nysd/index.cfm>

Montana Landscape and Nursery Association, Inc.
President, Mike Hiel, CPP
Gardenwerks
PO Box 1235
Helena, MT 59624
Office: 406-442-5008
FAX: 406-443-4565
grdnwrks@mt.net

Funding Resources:

State Farm Foundation
Pacific Northwest Zone
1000 Wilmington Drive
Dupont, WA 98327
(253) 912-7000
<http://www.statefarm.com/foundati/foundati.htm>

AT&T Cares Youth Service Action Fund
Toyasha Albert, grants manager
Youth Service America
1101 15th Street, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20005-5002
(fax) 202-296-4030
email: attcares@YSA.org
<http://www.ysa.org/pdf/files/2003ATTC.pdf>

AT&T Foundation
(General Grants)
AT&T Public Relations
Contributions Coordinator
1875 Lawrence Street
Suite 750
Denver, CO 80202
<http://www.att.com/foundation/programs/community.html>

Nike Youth Action Awards
Global Community Affairs
Nike, Inc.
PO Box 4027

Beaverton, OR 97076 USA

<http://www.nike.com/nikebiz/nikebiz.jhtml?page=26>

MAJOR TOPIC: GENERAL

Issue: Grant Writing

Recommendations: Montana State University-Northern annually holds grant writing workshops geared towards the “novice” grant writer. The Grants and Sponsored Activities Office plans to hold another workshop in August/September 2003 and recommends that one or several individuals from Big Sandy attend this workshop. The cost of the workshop is nominal, but has proven to be very beneficial to those who have attended in the past. Northern will also be hosting workshops to help communities launch major capital-giving campaigns, start a community foundation and organize a variety of fundraisers: from golf tournaments to auctions.

Big Sandy should take advantage of each of these training opportunities as well as the great number of on-line tutorials or printed resources that can be accessed on the web or in the local library. In addition, the Montana State University-Northern Vande Bogart Library has a great number of grant writing books currently on its shelves.

Resources:

Montana State University-Northern
Grants and Sponsored Activities Website

<http://www.msun.edu/alumfnd/grants>

Proposal Writing Short Course

<http://fdncenter.org/learn/shortcourse/prop1.html>

Funding Opportunities

Federal/State/Private/Corporate

<http://www.msun.edu/alumfnd/grants/page7.html>

Report by:
Tod L. Kasten
Regional Development Officer
State of Montana; Department of Commerce
Office Phone: 485-3374
Email: kranches@midrivers.com
Web Site: <http://commerce.state.mt.us/>

Big Sandy has a lot going for it. I would agree (we heard this at every meeting) that the people of Big Sandy are good people who care about their community. You also have the same basic challenges that all of rural Montana and for that matter, rural America has. The difference between the communities that survive and the ones that fade away lies within yourselves. If it's to be, it's up to me; or probably "we" for a community. We can either be part of the problem or part of the solution. I see that a big portion of your community appears to want to be part of the solution.

The community has a number of strengths that you should consider leveraging for your benefit. These include the wonderful people, Big Sandy Activities, the Hospital and Nursing Home, the School, all the traffic that seems to just drive through town and the tourism opportunities that you have (river, big Bud, museum, White Cliffs, ferry, Virgelle and many others). I was surprised to learn that agriculture was not mentioned by many as a strength nor was the fact that you have a number talented machinists in and around Big Sandy.

As far as challenges, all of our communities have many of the same ones, the ones that are obvious are the lack of good streets, good sidewalks and the number of properties that need to be cleaned up. The water quantity and quality problem was noted by many, but it would appear that the city is on the way to trying to solve this the best it can. Other challenges, that could be helpful if overcome, are that the community must better realize how important the hospital/nursing home and Big Sandy Activities are to the community (how can you grow these businesses) and how much potential the community has for tourism if you want to embrace it.

Below I will attempt to address only a few of the bigger items that I think you as a community could focus on. I would recommend, since you have done this planning effort, that you follow up with a public meeting and vote on two or three of the highest community priorities. Then organize and take action on the projects and get them accomplished.

One general suggestion, given the great way your community raises money to support the community, is that you may want to consider forming a 'foundation' for the community. That way, excess funds raised and other donations can go into the foundation, the donors can receive tax benefits and there would be some money always available to support the community. One resource to help in this area is the Montana Community Foundation. They can be reached at 406-443-8313.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the hospitality and the opportunity to meet new friends. I would congratulate you on taking the steps to make improvements and a difference in your community. I am hopeful that at least one thing that I have mentioned while in town or in these comments will help a little. If I can ever be of any help, or just to be used as a sounding board, please feel free to give me a call. Thank you all for everything. Best of Luck.

MAIN TOPIC: WHO CAN HELP US

Issue: Where to find help

Recommendations:

There are many places to find resources and assistance. There are thousands and thousands of places to look for grants and funding assistance. I would recommend that the first place to start (the very first thing to do with anything) is to look close to home. The best place to start to find help for whatever you need will probably lie with the following: (These resources, if they are not able to help will know who can.)

Recommended Resources:

Contact the USDA Rural Development Office at 406-585-2540 and ask for a copy of their resource book:

Montana State and Tribal Resource Directory (they update it about once a year).

This book is a great resource for the people of Montana. A must have for community and economy development efforts in my opinion.

Also (besides your chamber of commerce and local leaders) keep these people busy helping you:

Bear Paw Development Corp.

Tracy Jette, Paul Tuss, Craig Erickson and crew

Ryan Bldg, 48 2nd Avenue

Havre, MT 59501

Ph.: 406-265-9226

www.bearpaw.org

Montana Department of Commerce

Helena Offices: 406-841-2730

www.commerce.state.mt.us

YOUR LOCAL CONTACT:

Randy Hanson

48 2nd Street, Room 211

Havre, MT 59501

Ph.: 406-262-9579

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNICATION AND WORKING TOGETHER

I would recommend that the community start having a meeting (it could be the existing town meeting or the chamber or whomever) where the community keeps up on what all is going on and what is being done around the community.

One big issue: Public School and Home School. The only communication challenge that I saw during my time in Big Sandy. The entire community needs to do better in being more understanding and informed on this issue.

Recommendations:

This was the toughest area of our time in Big Sandy. My opinion is that the School Superintendent must take the first step and meet with a group or individually a number of the home school parents. There must be a way that resources can be shared and benefits for both can be enjoyed. From these meetings and cooperation the community will hopefully see a good example being set and some results. If nothing else, bringing in educational opportunities that both types of students can benefit from; example may be some type of a music session that is open to all. We must be more open and understanding of each position. The fact is that some people are going to want to home school their children. We cannot allow for this decision to cause for community unrest. The decision on how to educate your children is a personal, sometimes religious, choice that all parents must make. We must respect this decision and work to find common areas to support one another.

Recommended Resources:

There are resources available to the school to help.

Matthew J. McKinney, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Montana Consensus Council
Office of the Governor
State Capital
Helena, MT 59620
Phone: (406) 444-2075
Fax: (406) 444-5529
Email: mmckinney@state.mt.us

MAIN TOPIC: INFRASTRUCTURE

Issue: Water, streets, sidewalks, and other areas to include some community clean up.

Recommendations:

The Water problem needs to be solved. Your active town council appears to working on this. The community needs to be educated on rural water districts. The benefits are great to a community and to the livestock growers. Just about every rural water district formed has found the benefits are bigger than the costs. The costs are not very much more than what they had to pay prior to the district being formed. Streets and sidewalks improved, lots and buildings need to be torn down and cleaned up. This typically and mainly requires local effort to make improvements.

Recommended Resources: (Most of these are in the book I mention above)

www.mainst.org/ The National Main Street Center
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036 e-mail: mainst@nthp.org
Phone: (202) 588-6219 FAX: (202) 588-6050

Larry Gallagher, Community Builder
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Power Block Building
7 West Sixth Avenue, Level 1
Helena, MT 59601
Ph: (406) 449-5040,
E-Mail: Lawrence_Gallagher@hud.gov

Mountain/Plains Regional Office
Main Street Program
National Trust for Historic Preservation
910 16 th Street, Suite 1100
Denver, Colorado 80202
Ph. 303-623-1504, FAX 303-623-1508, e-mail: www.nationaltrust.org

Sue Gantz, Deborah Chorlton and Mitch Copp
Ph: 406-585-2515
USDA-Rural Development
PO Box 850
900 Technology Blvd., Suite B
Bozeman, MT 59771

Connie Onstad, Program Manager
Community Development Block Grant – HOME Program
P. O. Box 200545
Helena, MT 59620-0545
(406) 841-2819

Bob Morgan (Single Family Housing)
Matt Rude (Multi-Family Housing)
Montana Board of Housing
P. O. Box 20052
Helena, MT 59620-0528
(406) 444-3040

Fannie Mae Foundation
Mary Lou Affleck, Senior Deputy Director
Montana Partnership Office
404 N. 31 st Street, Suite 220
Billings, MT 59101
(406) 259-7049
E-mail: mary_lou_affleck@fanniemaefoundation.com

Gus Byrom
CDBG for Public Facilities and Housing
P. O. Box 200523
Helena, MT 59620-0523
(406) 841-2777

Newell Anderson, Coal Board
Department of Commerce
PO Box 200501
Helena, MT 59620
Phone: 405-841-2772
Fax: 406-841-2771

Jim Edcomb, Program Manager Treasure State
Endowment Program
Department of Commerce
PO Box 200501
Helena, MT 59620
Phone: 406-841-2785
Fax: 406-841-2771

Todd Teegarden, Pollution Control
State RLF Program
Department of Enviro. Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620
Phone: 406-444-5324

John Tubbs, Chief
Resource Development Bureau
DNRC
PO Box 2001601
Helena, MT 59620

Geri Burton, Bond Program Officer
Board of Investments
PO Box 200545
Helena, MT 59620
Phone: 406-444-1365
Fax: 406-449-6579

Mike Davis, CTEP Coordinator
Community Transportation Enhancement Program
Montana Department of Transportation
PO Box 201001
2701 Prospect Avenue
Helena, MT 59620-1001
406-444-4383
Email: mdavis@state.mt.us
<http://www.mdt.state.mt.us/planning/ctep/>

MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM

Issue: One item that may help improve the economy of the Big Sandy community.

Recommendations: Revive or start a tourism effort through the Chamber of Commerce. Work on signage, brochures, a visitors center or stop, update the chamber web site and start the coordination of tourism, events and activities in the community. Big Sandy is the gateway into the all the benefits for tourism on the Missouri River (Wild and Scenic) and they're a number of other rich local tourism attractions. Everyone in Big Sandy should know what the museum hours are and where people can go to get more information about all the great things to do around the area. Put on workshops for local people to learn about and how to do bed and breakfasts, be a guide, offer farm tours and the like. Start an annual fair, parade, riding event or other activity.

Recommended Resources: (Some, there are many)

TIIP: Non-profit organizations or communities with a tourism-related "brick-n- mortar project" needing funding should pick up a 2003 TIIP Grant Application. TIIP-Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program-is a Montana Commerce Department, Travel Montana program that helps fund tourism-related projects that develop new attractions in Montana, preserve or restore important heritage and cultural sites and properties, add new or update existing equipment for tourism related facilities and other physical tourism projects. Since its creation in 1995, TIIP Grants have invested over \$1.66 million in to 35 Montana tourism projects valued at more than \$21 million.

CTAP: Montana communities interested in assessing the current role tourism plays in their local economic and social activity as well as planning for tourism's future in their area are invited to apply for the 2003-2004 session of the Community Tourism Assessment Program (CTAP).

CTAP is a 9-month community "self help" process facilitated by the Department of Commerce, Travel Montana and MSU Extension with assistance from UM's Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research. Local action committees work with the facilitators to analyze their current inventory of attractions and facilities, resident attitudes toward tourism, current visitor profiles, and identification of tourism projects that would benefit the area. Since 1993, 33 Montana communities have been involved in the process. Three communities are selected to participate in each session of CTAP.

Applications for both TIIP grants and CTAP participation are available electronically at <http://www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/OURPROGRAMS/TourismDevEd.htm>. For hard copies contact Victor Bjornberg, 406-841-2795, victor@visitmt.com. Deadline for applications is August 1, 2003. Website: <http://travelmontana.state.mt.us>

The *Land and Conservation Fund* administered by the State of Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks offers grants that can be used for outdoor recreational facilities. A copy of the grant guidelines and application form can be secured at: <http://fwp.state.mt.us/parks> .

Several groups, in conjunction with Downtown Revitalization and overall community Beautification, mentioned trees. If tree planting is a priority, you should investigate these potential funding sources:

The U.S. Forest Service has a very small grant program for community trees.

Contact: Glen Roloff

North Central RC&D. The National Carbon Offset Coalition is developing potential sites for community forestry projects, utilizing carbon credits. Larry Van Rinsum with NCOG is another contact, (406)261-7094

Randy Lilge, Director of Parks and Recreation

316 North Park Avenue

Helena, MT 59623

(406) 447-8462

E-mail: rlije@ci.helena.mt.us

State of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

Web: <http://fwp.state.mt.us/parks>

Montana State Parks

1420 East Sixth Avenue

Helena, MT 59620

(406) 444-3750

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS AND OPPORTUNITIES

One big issue: This may be the key to everything that a community needs to form the backbone of a healthy place to live. Good jobs and opportunity.

Recommendations: There were some good ideas discussed during our time in Big Sandy. A few items that I think would be doable and were discussed are: Start a pharmacy (either in the hospital or a business downtown). A gas station to stop some of the cars that just pass through town. Expand the hospital related services and recruit more RN's and staff. Expand Big Sandy Activities. Tourism development. Recruit a local area veterinarian. Look into supporting ag related businesses like bio-diesel and new and different crops. Start a local cattle finishing business and sell the meat through the local restaurants and bed and breakfasts. Real estate business selling homes in Big Sandy over the internet.

Find a way to support local businesses. The chamber of commerce could put on an annual business support/appreciation dinner. At the dinner items could be discussed on what is needed to improve business in town. Cheer on and provide what support they can to the existing and new business owners. What products do locals need but cannot find to buy? And many items like this. It was mentioned at a session that the community wants donations from the businesses but that is the only time they come into the store.

Recommended Resources: (A few below, there are many)

www.doc.gov/eda/ Economic Development Administration

Attn: John Rogers, Regional Director Edrmteda@aol.com

P.O. Box 10074

Helena, MT 59626
Phone: (406) 441-1175 FAX: (406) 441-1176

John Guthmiller
Ph: 406-585-2540
USDA-Rural Development
PO Box 850
900 Technology Blvd., Suite B
Bozeman, MT 59771

Brent Poppe, Mike Sullivan and Sam Antonick
Montana Department of Agriculture
Livestock Building
303 North Roberts
P.O. Box 200201
Helena, MT 59620-0201
Ph: 444-2402
www.agr.state.mt.us

Havre SCORE

Barry Remus, Co-Chair
Gus Korb, Co-Chair
518 1st Street, Box 308
Havre MT 59501
Phone: (406) 265-4383
Fax: (406) 265-7548
E-mail: remo55@mtintouch.net or korbg@nmcl1.nmclites.edu

Great Falls SCORE

Tom Thomas
710 1st Avenue North
P.O. Box 2127
Great Falls MT 59403- 0117
Phone: (406) 761-4434
Fax: (406) 761-6129
E-mail: tthomas@imt.net

Montana Super Host Training
Debbie Donovan
(406) 228-8221

Your local extension Agent has many items they can help with.

MAIN TOPIC: ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH

Issue: Youth involvement in community decisions

Recommendations:

The youth of your community hold and are the future. They would like to see more things for them to do in Big Sandy. They are interested in a youth center, they would like more access to the schools resources, indoor mini-golf (one of the old vacant buildings) and many other good ideas. Most of all they said they wanted to be a part of helping put these together and were interested and willing to work and help

Recommended Resources:

Invite and allow the local students and youth to participate in your meetings. Allow them to have a representative on the local chamber of commerce, town council etc.

Report by:

Sam Antonick

Department of Agriculture

Helena, MT 59620

(406) 444-2402 Fax (406) 444-9442

Email: santonick@state.mt.us

Web address: <http://agr.state.mt.us/programs/add/add.shtml>

I want to say thank you to the entire community of Big Sandy. It was a pleasure to have the opportunity to meet people from the community and go on a tour of your very fine community. I now have a better understanding of the area in which you live and your unending desire to keep Big Sandy a viable and thriving community.

MAIN TOPIC: AGRICULTURE

Issue: Transportation, Marketing, Value adding, Ag-Tourism, and Financial support of young farmers.

I would first like to say that Agriculture is still the biggest industry in the state of Montana. There were several concerns of the Ag community one of which was possibility of the railroad pulling out of the area. This would leave Big Sandy cut off from markets to sell commodities. The other comments that were made were diversifying and finding new ways to add value to what is presently grown in that area. The other topic that I heard several times were how to keep youth in agriculture and how do you get them financed.

Recommendations:

- Look at possibility of forming a coop with area farmers and ranchers to start their own small railroad business to get products to and from the main line on the railroad if the present Railroad Company removes their service to the community.
- Local Ag community may look into starting a coop trucking company to haul products to and from Big Sandy to other railroad loading sites.
- Work with area State Legislators and Federal Legislators to accomplish getting road paved between Big Sandy and Winifred.
- Take advantage of quality and abundance of grain produced. Develop relationships with flourmills and specialty companies like Pasta Montana.
- I heard people express their concern that the local elevators may close. They might explore opening an elevator that is a coop and market high quality commodities to companies on the West and East coast.
- Organic market is growing at a steady rate each year; producers need to take advantage of these new markets. There are mills around Montana working with organic products and Big Sandy has some organic producers. There may be an opportunity for these producers to get together and develop a organic business.
- Internet is an excellent marketing tool. Build a web page; let people know what you have and where you are located. This is an excellent opportunity to get some Ag tourism going in that area. People from the city would love to help with some fencing that may need to be done, move cattle or some other project that they have never been exposed to in agriculture.

- Area farmers currently have the ability and growing conditions for growing oilseeds and various wheat crops. The possibility of bringing in a company or someone in the area starting a business in alternative fuels or a flourmill. In this case it would be worthwhile to do a feasibility study.
- Area farmers need access to various resources to maintain their farming operation. Local businesses need to be competitive and find ways to keep them buying local and not out of town. This maybe a possibility to do a joint venture or partnership in a business.
- Pursue development of more reliable source of water, Tiber Dam project. Water is the lifeblood of any community and you have the opportunity to capitalize on this project. This will increase irrigated acres, which will lead to alternative crops that cannot be grown otherwise.
- Organic products
- Retaining youth in agriculture was a topic that had been discussed as well.

Resources:

Department of transportation

<http://www.mdt.state.mt.us/planning/>

Montana Department of Agriculture

<http://agr.state.mt.us/programs/add/add.shtml>

Montana Department of Commerce:

http://commerce.state.mt.us/brd/brd_home.html

http://commerce.state.mt.us/cdd/cdd_home.html

Mel Schulz

Schulz Grain

PO Box 2961

Great Falls, MT 59403

1-800-486-8898

Brent Poppe

Bureau Chief, Ag Marketing and Business Development

Montana Department of Agriculture

PO Box 200201

Helena, MT 59620

406-444-2402

North Star Consulting Group

Doug Fletcher

201 South Wallace Avenue, Suite 2A

Bozeman, MT 59715

406-585-2299

www.northstarconsulting.net

Strategicom

Darrin Oelkers

602 Ferguson Ave Ste 1
Bozeman, MT 59718
406-586-9654
darin@strategicom.usa.com

Peters Associates
Randy Peters
Bozeman, MT 59715
406-585-1320
rpeters@attglobal.net

Doug Crabtree
Organic Certification Specialist
Montana Department of Agriculture
PO Box 200201
Helena, MT 59620
406-444-5400

MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM

After touring the local area of Big Sandy it is my feeling that you have a lot of things already there and that people touring the area would like to see. What needs to be accomplished is to get the people traveling through the area to stop and spend some time in the area.

Issue:

Promoting the Big Sandy area with the use of the Internet, putting up signage, and advertising the local attractions such as the museum, old jail and natural attractions.

Recommendations:

- One attraction that you already have in the area is the world's biggest tractor. I think that it would be a good investment for the community to work a deal with the owners of the tractor to bring it closer to town. Find a way to have the people traveling through the area stop and spend more time in the community, rather than have them drive way out in the country to see the tractor. I think that you could set up a deal where you could take tourists for a short ride in the tractor and charge for doing so. The owners of the tractor could be paid either with money the tractor generates or the use of some other tractor so they can continue to farm, so long as they stand to gain something for the use of the tractor.
- Incorporate the Big Bud tractor with the local museum. You have one of the best museums I have ever been in for a rural community and this would encourage people to spend a little more time in the area.
- Certainly one thing a tourist will always need is fuel. Exploring the option of investing in a gas station that is readily visible will always slow some people down and stop in the area. This is a place where you could put out a lot of literature about the area.
- I heard from several people that CRP has hurt the local economy. Here is an opportunity for people to organize some kind of game bird hunting. I would recommend talking with your local

FSA (Farm Service Agency) office to find out when you can and cannot hunt and what mode of transportation is allowed.

- Setting up local farmers market is another way to stop tourists. This would be an opportunity for people to take advantage of the organic crops that are grown in the area. Could also incorporate distributing information about the area to people who stop. Take advantage of the natural attractions in the area such as the Missouri River and the White Rocks.

Resources:

Montana Department of Commerce

<http://travelmontana.state.mt.us/>

<http://www.vcu.edu/cppweb/urban/aam%2002%20handout.pdf>

Janet Smith

Farm Loan Manager

12 3rd Street NW, Suite 300

MT West Bank Building

Great Falls, Mt 59404

406-727-7580

Report by:
Gloria O'Rourke
Montana Economic Developers Association
Montana Economic Development Services
118 E. Seventh St.; Suite 2A
Anaconda, MT 59711
Ph: 406.563.5259 Fx: 406.563.5476
Email: gloria@ixi.net
Web: <http://www.medamembers.org>

It was my delight to be in Big Sandy and become a little familiar with your community. To visit Virgelle was an incredible experience as well. Hopefully, my husband and I can one day take a canoe trip to decide for ourselves the local debate regarding mosquitoes and whether they are a hindrance to tourism in your area. ☺

Unlike my fellow team members – I do not have a deep educational background in economic development. For the past seven years, however, I have worked “in the field” and would like to share information I have gleaned that relates to the main issues the people of Big Sandy raised.

MAIN TOPIC: AGRICULTURE

Issue: Transportation of Product and Railway

I have had the privilege of participating in almost all of the Resource Teams held along the Hi-Line. Over and over, a problem or issue expressed by every community has been issues with the BNSF RailRoad and the transportation of product. As this is a common need and problem –what a great opportunity for collaboration to address this need.

Recommendation:

Bring the Hi-Line communities together for a workshop with John Karl. I spoke with John Karl, Manager of Economic Development for this region for BNSF. He said that he would be happy to come to a workshop organized by Big Sandy and surrounding communities to discuss ways to foster economic growth utilizing BNSF transportation. He would be interested in a positive dialogue as to how groups can work together, broaden the agriculture base, and provide product diversity.

John made it clear that he is not the point of contact for complaints regarding grain rates or service problems. He said that you could speak with your local train masters regarding local issues and/or write to the address below:

BNSF
VP of Ag Products
P.O. Box 961051
Ft. Worth, TX 76161-0051

John Karl, Manager Economic Development
Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway
2454 Occidental Ave.; Suite 1-A

Seattle, WA 98134
Ph: 206.625.6176 Fx: 206.625.6471
Email: john.karl@bnsf.com
Web: <http://www.bnsf.com>

MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM

Issue: Promote Recreational Opportunities

Prior to coming to Big Sandy, I visited your website and gave it a little test. I sent a message to the email listed on the page to let them know I would be coming to Big Sandy and would look forward to receiving their answers to the team's three questions. The "test" was to see if anyone would actually reply to my email. To my delight, a high school student named Skyler (called "Bob" by his classmates) responded to my note.

Recommendation:

I mention this because it is critical for any community, especially one that has as much to offer as Big Sandy, have an active and viable web presence. You are off to a great start with your website – now expand on it and link, link, link with surrounding communities and areas.

I want to make sure you are aware of scenic loops that are being formed and encourage you to form a "loop" or join an existing loop. To save you from reading my feeble description of what this entails, it would be best for you to visit the following websites: <http://www.montanascenicloop.com> and <http://www.montanatrails.org>. Gordon Hollingshead of Montana Recreation Connection is the coordinator behind these projects. Gordon specializes in web marketing and web development.

Contact:
Gordon Hollingshead
Montana Recreation Connection
P.O. Box 9
Clinton, MT 59825
Ph: 406.825.3187
Email: gordonh@blackfoot.net
Web: <http://www.mtadventure.com>

In addition, Joni Stewart, Executive Director of GAIN in Cut Bank, wrote the following for the Chinook Resource Team Assessment:

"A pilot program called Hands of Harvest is working to develop cultural tourism loop tours. Cultural tourism is a method used to highlight visitor opportunities that are unique to the area. The group is identifying artists, craftsmen, museums and other unique opportunities for visitors. In the fall of 2003, the group will print a guidebook with maps of the loops. Applicants can be listed for a yearly charge of \$25. The Blaine County Museum is included but no other applicants from Chinook are listed. This program provides low-cost and widespread advertising and works to draw people from the urban areas into the rural areas."

Contact: Joni Stewart
GAIN, Inc.
PO Box 1329
Cut Bank, MT 59427
Phone: (406) 8873-2337
gain@northerntel.net

MAIN TOPIC: ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH

Issue: After School Programs and Youth Involvement

The youth of Big Sandy are the heart of Big Sandy. In addition, no doubt some of these young people will be the future leaders of Big Sandy. Get the students involved in the community – most of the time, they only need to be asked and given a job to do.

Recommendation:

In my search for answers dealing with youth development, I came across a wonderful website sponsored by the National Youth Employment Coalition. NYEC is a non-partisan national organization dedicated to promoting policies and initiatives that help youth succeed in becoming lifelong learners, productive workers and self-sufficient citizens. The program has a special section called “Youth Zone” and gives practical advice and examples of youth projects: “Whether you have a youth center or want ideas on how to enhance your employment program to effectively engage youth, check out the resources on this page for examples of programs already out there, resources for planning and information on how to serve youth.” Visit the website at <http://www.nyec.org/Jettcon2001/designguide.htm> and receive information on:

Examples of Youth Centers/Programs

Examples of Programs Using Technology Tools for Planning

Tools for Assessment and Improvement

Resources on Youth Development

Resources on Afterschool/Out-of-School Programming

Tools for Planning

Tools for Assessment & Improvement

Resources on Youth Development

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Issue: Gas Station

The issue was raised frequently that Big Sandy does not have a full service gas station/convenience store.

Recommendation:

To make sure the community would be able to support this kind of business, I would first suggest conducting a feasibility study. Bear Paw Development could assist with this process.

I was fortunate enough to speak with Dan Keanneally, an owner of the Town Pump enterprise. He listened patiently as I explained the situation in Big Sandy and then spoke quite frankly as to the obstacles.

Dan described the process as an evolution that has been going on for years. Towns like Big Sandy have been losing their gas stations because the margin for profit in petroleum is slim, plus the cost for installation of equipment is more and more expensive. Dan said that Federal and State regulations require ultra expensive piping, equipment, venting, etc... This high cost demands high volume, which does not exist in the Big Sandy area.

Dan also mentioned the problem of a mobile society – that people shop in other areas – and get their gas where they shop. He said it simply boils down to economics.

Dan recommended that Big Sandy not focus their efforts at this time on opening a gas station – that the probability for success is very small. He said to put the town's efforts in other areas – and perhaps one day, a gas station will follow.

For more information contact:

Email: townpump@townpump.com

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

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS AND OPPORTUNITIES**Issue: Mutual Support Between Business and Community**

If the community of Big Sandy wants to see more and stronger businesses in their town, the people of Big Sandy must support current businesses. In the same manner, the local business owner should be willing to provide service, reasonably convenient hours and be active in the community.

Recommendation:

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

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

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

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

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

Resource:

www.chainstoreage.com

The town of Anaconda has formed a local group to promote support of local businesses. For information on how it functions contact:

Anaconda Chamber of Commerce
306 E. Park Ave.
Anaconda, MT 59711
Ph: 406.563.2400

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Issue: Business Recruitment

Many who have worked in economic development far longer than I would agree that the idea of finding that one big company to move into just the right small town and “save the day” is a dim and costly hope. Ray Rasker of the Sonoran Institute said, “People always ask me what the biggest industry is going to be, and I always say small businesses. That’s where all of the jobs are coming from.”

Recommendation:

A recent report put out by the Sonoran Institute states that small towns in Wyoming, Montana and Idaho can achieve economic success by providing good schools, fast Internet service, flight connections to major cities and access to outdoor places that are protected. The report points out a few key common elements for communities that are doing well despite tough times elsewhere:

- Educated local workforce
- High-tech infrastructure in place
- Quality of life amenities such as decent schools, public libraries, a friendly downtown, preservation of open spaces and plenty of places for outdoor recreation.
- Access to airports

Ray Rasker also states that successful communities do not actively seek a specific industry but create an atmosphere that is attractive to people looking for a great place to live and where they can do business. “The new way (of thinking) is to position yourself to allow the market to work on it sown. Think what our entrepreneurs need – and then work on those things.”

Resource:

“Getting Ahead in Greater Yellowstone” report – available at <http://www.sonoran.org>

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS AND OPPORTUNITIES**Issue: Options Other than Ag**

Montana Jobs Network has been awarded \$5,000 through the Qwest / MEDA (Montana Economic Developers Association) Building A Better Economy Grant for the Come Home project. Montana Jobs Network is a non-profit Internet based talent portal. Its mission in part is to help keep those educated in Montana here and help to bring back those alums that wish to return.

Out migration of many Montana communities, lack of new business types to off-set the decline of an agricultural economy, a 7 year drought, and low commodity prices have led to severe economic downturn for some areas. Most young people leave their community believing they cannot stay or return due to the lack of opportunity. Alums and entrepreneurs that would like to come into the communities have no invitations. Community resources and assets are unsung outside the general locale. Although access to sometimes very high end telecommunications exists, the technology is not used to it's highest potential.

Big Sandy is one of the “chosen” communities to take advantage of this project! Working together using advanced telecommunications and technology, invitations will be presented to entrepreneurs that would enjoy doing business in Montana.

A solution to the out-migration problem is to retain young people, regain some of those that have left, attract other entrepreneurs into town and create diversity in people and economies. The MEDA / Qwest grant will fund Internet forums and a database that contains each communities Assets, Challenges and Vision as identified during the resource team sessions. The "Come Home" project will provide an invitation and information to those the communities must attract.

Forums will allow community members to communicate easily with entrepreneurs that have left in earlier years and now would like to come home as well as new professionals that would like to explore the possibility of locating to one of these Montana towns. Entrepreneurs wishing to enter a community will receive a good idea of what assets and challenges they will be working with from viewing the information in the database. By reviewing the community vision new business owners will know where they "fit". Questions and other issues can be partially worked out on the forums which will allow many people to communicate on an issue at the same time. The forum tool is a bit like being able to call a town meeting any time you need one with no travel cost or scheduling problems.

The Come Home project will kick-off with the following communities, Cutbank, Conrad, Forsyth, Polson, Liberty County, Rocky Boy, Judith Basin, Big Sandy, and Harlem. Other contributors to the success of the project are First Interstate Bank, Montana Associated Technology Roundtables, Pioneer Entrepreneurs and RightNow Technologies.

Recommendation:

Don't miss this opportunity! Participate in the series of workshops that will take place to teach community members the basics of using the forums and database. Be watching for the date and location near you.

Resources:

The site at <http://www.montana-jobs.net/comehome> will be operational on June 30th.

MAIN TOPIC: BEAUTIFICATION

Issue: City Clean Up

Many communities are struggling to deal with the issue of blight, abandoned homes, neglected yards and basic junk and clutter.

Recommendation:

Dale Longfellow, Mayor of Hobson, made this problem a priority for the people of Hobson and worked to establish a Decay Ordinance. As a result, beautification is happening in Hobson. Dale is now very experienced in this area and would be glad to tell other communities/counties how to get the job done. Baker, Montana, is another community that has had great success in this area.

Contact:

Dale Longfellow, Mayor of Hobson
Hobson Insurance
Hobson, MT 59452
Ph: 406.423.5428

Roger Schmidt, Planner
Baker, MT
rds@midrivers.com

MAIN TOPIC: BEAUTIFICATION

Issue: Abandoned Vehicles and Houses

It was noted that Big Sandy has homes that are either abandoned or no longer cared for.

Recommendation:

Please note the information above to deal with this issue. In addition, perhaps Big Sandy could take on these homes and/or areas as an "adoption" process. For maintenance and beautification purposes, initiate an Adopt-A-Sidewalk/Street/House campaign to remove weeds, trash and in winter - snow. The program can be patterned after Neighborhood Watch where one person per block or block area is the

coordinator. To encourage interest and participation, a contest can be held every month with a photo of the project and the volunteer placed in the local newspaper. Businesses could also get involved with a Business of the Month beautification award. A little effort and pride will cause a ripple effect and increase pride community-wide.

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY

Issue: Animal Control

Several times, the issue of the need for better animal control was raised.

Recommendation:

As budget dollars are tight everywhere, it may be necessary for a community to take paws into their own hands. ☺

Resource:

Visit this website and discover what “One Person Can Do” to assist with animal control and animal issues in Big Sandy.

<http://www.bestfriends.org/nmhp/oneperson.html>

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY

Issue: Mosquito Control

The issue of mosquito control and the debate these little bugs caused on our tour had the entire team smiling. Some residents said that there was no mosquito problem at all – that people should expect to wear bug spray and at times, long pants and long sleeved shirts. It was obvious that to enjoy the beauties of Big Sandy, one might have to swat a bug or two. Other residents said mosquitoes were a terrible problem, and definitely hinder tourism in the area.

Recommendations:

The following information is from Tom Kaiserski of Beartooth RC&D.

*The best way to stop mosquitoes from breeding is to regularly remove all man-made potential sources of stagnant water, because mosquitoes can potentially breed in any stagnant puddle that lasts more than **four days**.*

Drain any water-holding containers, including discarded tires. Drill holes in the bottom of containers that are left outdoors. Clean clogged roof gutters regularly.

Turn over plastic wading pools or wheelbarrows when not in use and do not allow water to stagnate in bird baths. Clean and chlorinate swimming pools or hot tubs that are not in use and be aware that mosquitoes can breed in the water that collects on pool and tub covers.

Aerate ornamental pools and use landscaping to eliminate standing water that collects on your property. Thoroughly clean livestock watering troughs monthly.

Resource:

Read Tom's entire report on this subject (pages 37- 38) in the Custer, Montana Resource Team Assessment Report located at <http://www.medamemberes.org/resourcesteam.php>

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY

Issue: Volunteerism

Big Sandy does have a core of volunteers. It is important to prevent burnout and seek new volunteers for fresh ideas and energy.

Recommendation:

Do use the Asset Mapping results – what an incredible tool for Big Sandy! To make sure that the data is used, perhaps one or two people should be appointed to be volunteer or asset coordinators for various projects. The important thing is that shoulders are tapped and the human resources are utilized.

In addition, here are some pointers to encourage volunteers and to prevent burnout:

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

MAIN TOPIC: EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES

Issue: Shared activities and resources that will benefit the children of Big Sandy

Recommendations:

It became obvious that here is a rift in the community between those that home school their children and those that utilize the public school system. I was especially surprised to hear the public school students vocalize this rift, demonstrating that they have feelings involved in this issue as well.

As we all know, conflicts that are not addressed only worsen. Use this opportunity (the resource team process) to take steps to resolve this conflict. It will only worsen and damage the children and community of Big Sandy. The truth is, the home school curriculum has something to offer to the public school system and the public school system has something to offer the home school curriculum. Why not take the best of both worlds and enhance the education of the students in Big Sandy?

I strongly recommend contacting a trained facilitator that is outside of the area to begin the conflict resolution process. I have two recommendations for you – one is the utilizing the Montana Consensus Council. Their whole purpose is to resolve conflict.

On a more personal level, I would recommend to you my husband, Mike O'Rourke. Mike has the perfect background to address this issue. He is the County Superintendent of Schools for Anaconda/Deer Lodge County and taught in Montana schools for 15 years. Mike is also a minister and has served a congregation in Anaconda for the past 13 years. Finally, he is an LCPC --Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor and operates Sunrise Family Counseling. He is trained in facilitating and the conflict management process.

I spoke with Mike about the problem in Big Sandy – and he is willing to waive any fees and provide whatever help he can in building a solution.

Contact:

Mike O'Rourke, LCPC
Sunrise Family Counseling
118 E. Seventh St.; Suite 2A
Anaconda, MT 59711
Ph: 406.563.9178
Email: morourke52@aol.com

Matthew J. McKinney, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Montana Consensus Council
Office of the Governor
State Capital
Helena, MT 59620
Phone: (406) 444-2075
Fax: (406) 444-5529
Email: mmckinney@state.mt.us

MAIN TOPIC: SENIOR CITIZENS

**Issues: Transportation for daily events and health services
Explore retirement community options
And Assisted Living**

Recommendations:

It does seem that there is already a good relationship between Seniors and Big Sandy Activities. Big Sandy Activities is fortunate to have vehicles for transporting its clients. Perhaps agreements could be reached that would enhance both Senior Citizens and the clients of Big Sandy Activities in sharing these transportation resources.

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

Contact:

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

In closing, I'd like to thank the community of Big Sandy for opening the community to the team members and for sharing with us each challenge, strength and goal for the future. Working together, we can make incredible things happen!

Report by:
Cindy Donnell
Community Development Manager
USDA, Rural Development
790 Colleen St.
Helena, MT 59601
(406) 449-5000 ext 4
(406) 449-5008 FAX
cindy.donnell@mt.usda.gov E-mail

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people of Big Sandy for the wonderful hospitality. I never realized all the great resources in your community! My time there was very enjoyable and I hope to return real soon.

I hope the following will offer some help on the suggestions raised during the listening sessions:

MAIN TOPIC: AGRICULTURE

Issue: Diversifying and Crop Options

Recommendation:

There seems to be some diversity in your area with the possibility of pursuing new businesses such as lumber, fertilizer plant, value-added products, etc. The community suggested forming Co-op/s and a Bio-diesel Manufacturing Plant that could take advantage of the “new” markets available along with forming programs for the young farmers to get involved in agriculture.

Resources:

The following resources can provide a variety of information in agriculture--
Agricultural Marketing and Business Development Bureau
Montana Department of Agriculture
Livestock Bldg, 303 N. Roberts
Helena, MT 59601
(406) 444-2402
www.agr.state.mt.us
ATTN: Brent Poppe

MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM

Issue: Promote Scenic Attractions

People seem to be passing by without stopping. They must not know what your community has to offer. Could the issue be “Welcome” signage? The success of many small communities depend on the quality of the visit of those passing through.

Recommendation:

The SUPERHOST! Program may help. Montana has an easy to understand customer service training program in place to help attract visitors. It is designed to create understanding of Montana's travel industry and to enhance the level of customer service provided. The program is designed to encourage visitors to stay longer, tell all of their friends and relatives about the wonderful people and great experiences they found here and hopefully make plans to return year after year. This program is ready to educate Montana communities and businesses about the importance of the tourism industry. They also provide signs to show your community is a SUPERHOST! Community.

Contact:

SUPERHOST! Seminars are available by contacting--

Jeri Mae Rowley – Statewide Coordinator
SUPERHOST!
Flathead Valley Community College
777 Grandview
Kalispell, MT 59901
E-mail: superhost@fvcc.edu

I also think that utilizing your rest stop there in town is a vital!!

Let people know what you have to offer. Put up a sign with the name of the businesses and what they offer. (Have Ice-Cream? ... I'll stop if I know its there!)

Promote your Local/Scenic attractions! When is the Museum open? Everyone in town should know the hours of operation.

There was much talk about the natural resources and scenic attractions in the area... White Rocks, Missouri River, Monument, etc ... perhaps you should look into creating biking and/or hiking trails as well as outdoor adventures for visitors.

The Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks as a recreational Trails Grant Application that can be used for a lot of different types of trails (rural and back country, non-motorized, multiple use and so on) You can contact them at www.fwp.state.mt.us

Other resources for information:

Recreational Trails, Inc
P O Box 553
Great Falls, MT 59403
(406) 761-4966
trailsrus@in-tech.com

MAIN TOPIC: ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH**Issue: Activities for Kids/Youth Involvement in Community Decisions**

There was much discussion about “nothing for the youth to do”.

Recommendation:

One thing that I heard was that the youths would like a “Cosmic Bowling Night”. This could be easily accomplished by utilizing the local bowling alley. My suggestion would be to schedule a night (once a month or every other Friday or Saturday) and close the bowling to anyone over the age of 18. I would lock the door that separates the bar and bowling alley, charge admission (\$5 or so) for anyone who enters the bowling alley (give them a stamp on their hand or something) let the kids bring in the CD’s of their choice, sell pop and pizza and charge a flat rate of \$ to who ever wants to bowl.

On those particular nights I would not allow anyone under 21 into the bar side either. (I did hear a few comments about how some adults do not like being in the bar drinking when there are kids in there playing pool etc.) This way you would have 1 or 2 nights a month were everyone would get what they are requesting!

There was also talk about a paint-ball park, mini-golf course and an activity center. The kids suggested a “center” should be a place to hang out, play pool, do homework (need computers), listen to music etc. They would like it to be set up more like a “Club” then a teen-center.

The community may want to organize a Task Force to facilitate the development of such a venture. I feel the teens need to be involved in the development. They can research the funding opportunities and be involved in fund raising activities, which would give them a feeling of ownership in the project.

Possible resources available:

Director of Parks and Recreation
316 North Park Ave.
Helena, MT 59623
ATTN: Randy Lilge
(406) 447-8462

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS AND OPPORTUNITIES**Issue: Mutual Support Between Business and Community**

Supporting of existing businesses is a major concern. Stressing the importance of buying locally is critical in any small community. Maybe the local businesses could print up a coupon or button, which when shown would give a 5% discount on a certain day of the month. This would need to be supported by all local businesses.

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS AND OPPORTUNITIES**Issue: Pharmacist/drug store****Recommendation:**

Outreach for a Pharmacist (and a drug store) should be done. This may help to keep the people of Big Sandy in the community and not forced to drive to Great Falls for the necessary medicines etc.

RESOURCES: USDA, Rural Development – Rural Business & Cooperative Services

P O Box 850
Bozeman, MT 59771
ATTN: John Guthmiller – Program Director
John.guthmiller @mt.usda.gov

American Asso. Of Healthcare Consultants
1926 Waukegan Rd., Suite 1
Glenview, IL 60025
(847) 657-6964
info@aahc.net
<http://www.aach.net/>

MAIN TOPIC: BEAUTIFICATION

Issue: City Clean Up

This seemed to be mentioned by every group we listened to!

Recommendation:

The down town area needs to be spruced up. This would be a great way to advertise the beauty of your community as well as making the locals feel good about your town.

Maybe a “VOLUNTEER FOR YOUR TOWN DAY” could be started. This would be a great way for the whole community to be involved. (Maybe have a Street Dance that evening, as noted under the Community Section!)

Fund-raising and marketing are key elements to initiating downtown improvements. Promote events that bring people to downtown.

Resources available:

Montana Community Foundation
101 N Last Chance Gulch
Helena, MT 59620

Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)
MT Dept of Commerce
1424 Ninth Ave
Helena, MT 59620
ATTN: Gus Byrom
(406) 444-2488

MAIN TOPIC: INFRASTRUCTURE

Issue: Curbs and Sidewalks

There was a lot of concern on the streets, curbs and sidewalks.

Recommendation:

The City needs a long-range plan for prioritizing and fixing the concerns. There are several State and Federal loan and grant programs available that provide financial assistance to assist with both the planning and funding of such projects.

Resources: USDA, Rural Development – Rural Utilities Service
P O Box 850
Bozeman, MT 59771
ATTN: Mitch Copp, Program Director
Mitchel.copp@mt.usda.gov
(406) 585-2529

Treasure State Endowment Program
Jim Edgcomb
P.O. Box 200523
Helena, MT 59620
Ph: 406.841-2785

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY

Issue: Housing... empty and many! A need for assisted living as an expansion of the nursing home was discussed along with affordable homes to purchase. A need to rehabilitate existing older homes was also mentioned, as well as vacant homes and sub-standard housing.

Recommendation:

There are several loan and grant programs available for purchasing existing homes, and rehab of owner occupied homes and rentals.

Resources:

USDA, Rural Development (RD) has a loan and grant home improvement program for very low-income homeowners that occupy the property. The max loan amount is \$20,000 with an interest rate of 1.00% for up to 20 years. (Other regulations and restrictions may apply)

Contact for Choteau County: USDA, Rural Development
12 3rd Street, NW / Suite 300
Great Falls, MT 59404

ATTN: Cindy Stene
(406) 727-7580

Community Development Block Grant – HOME Program
P O Box 200545
Helena, MT 59620
ATTN: Connie Onstad
(406) 444-0092

Report by:
Jennifer J. Wells
MSU/Hill County Extension Agent
315 4th St
Havre, MT 59501
406-265-5481, ext 233
jwells@montana.edu

MAIN TOPIC: AGRICULTURE

Issue: Marketing

Marketing of agriculture products is a concern to rural Montana and Big Sandy has additional limitations due to location. Improving the marketing plan of producers can be improved through the education of the producer.

Recommendations:

Market Manager Program is offered for individuals who want to increase their knowledge in the area of marketing of products. This program has been offered as a course and there is also a simulated game that can be done through the web site to increase your skills. The web site reports that Big Sandy has two marketing clubs. My questions are – are they active? if so does the group have goals and are they working towards those goals?

Another program that is offered through Bear Paw Development, in cooperation with the Montana Department of Agriculture and Havre Small Business Development Center is “Tilling the Soil of Opportunity” . This program assists farmers and ranchers in the development of a business plan, marketing research and financial management skills.

Recommended Resources:

For additional information and ideas, please visit the web site or contact the individual.

<http://www.montanamarketmanger.org>

<http://www.montnaa.edu/extensionecon/Marketing/agmarketing.html>

<http://ampc.montan.edu>

Bear Paw Development Corporation, Tracey Jette, phone: 406-265-9226

MAIN TOPIC: AGRICULTURE

Issue: Value Added Product

Agriculture producers only receive a small portion of the retail price of a product. Some individuals are interested in retailing to the customer; much research needs to be done if you are considering this endeavor.

Recommendations:

Montana State University Extension has been involved with some projects concerning value added. A video has been produced and is available through Extension Publications and can be order through the local extension office for \$24.95 or the website. This video lists other resources that are available.

Several producers may be interested in combining their efforts to form a co-op. The Montana Cooperative Development Center is located at MSU-Northern in Havre.

Recommended Resources:

For additional information and ideas, please visit the web site or contact the center.

<http://www.montana.edu/extensionnutrition/resourceguide>

<http://www.montana.edu/publications>

Montana Cooperative Development Center 406-265-3771

MAIN TOPIC: AGRICULTURE

Issue: Ag-Tourism

Recommendations:

See tourism section

MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM

Issue: Signage

Recommendations:

Members of the community stated that a sign for the park is being constructed currently promoting businesses in Big Sandy, hopefully that has been completed and is now up. I would also suggest signage as folks are arriving from the north and south of town and on secondary 236.

MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM

Issue: Promoting recreational opportunities and scenic attractions

Recommendations:

This section includes all other areas under tourism. I would suggest to businesses that they work with the Missouri River Canoe Co. as they appear to have a stable clientele. Suggestions may be to have coupons available to all rafters that would offer a small item to get them into your store; you want foot traffic into the businesses, or have Big Sandy as a stopping spot for all canoe participants for 30 minutes. This will give the participants an opportunity to stretch their legs and to visit a business or two.

There was some interest in ag-tourism and it appeared that there may be several folks participating in this activity, if it works for you continue. A survey done by the University of Montana found that there

are only 1-2% of the people that are interested in a farm or ranch tour. The greatest interest is in open spaces and wildlife, which Big Sandy has available. There are several resources available to you to explore, one is just currently being produced. The one video that is available is called "Fun on the Farm: Starting a Farm and Ranch Recreation Business". The video includes operations of a bed and breakfast, dude ranches, working guest ranches and cattle drives. It also addresses licensing and health requirements. Order the video for \$14.95 through your local extension office or the website. The new video that is being worked on examines nature-based tours. One thing to think about is the transportation issue. Tourists may come in on the train or fly, how do they get to Big Sandy and around the community? One thing I learned when I was there was that a person can drive to the white rocks, not everybody wants to take a canoe or raft down the river, are you or do you want to market this drive. Dave Sharpe, Extension Community Development Specialist, has worked with both of these videos and provides training.

Big Sandy does have a website; I would suggest improving it to strengthen what the community has to offer the tourist that is coming through. I would think that those individuals that are using the Missouri River Canoe Co. have searched your site to see what else they can do while there, did they learn what other activities are in the area?

Recommended Resources:

For additional information and ideas, please visit the web site or contact the individual.
Dave Sharpe, Extension Community Development Specialist, dsharp@montana.edu or
Phone 406-994-2962
<http://www.montana.edu/publications>

MAIN TOPIC: ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH

Issue: Summer and After School Care for Children

Recommendations:

You have the beginnings of a summer program already with the pool. You are working at enclosing the pool so that it can be year around, a great idea. The pool can also work as a place for teens for pool parties in the summer with music and food. Another thought may be to hire a person part-time in the summer to develop a summer recreation program for youth. You could offer some things that may be economically self-sufficient like tennis lessons, golf lessons, basketball or volleyball. Hire local high school students that have excelled in these sports. You may want to try an activity twice a week for the younger children; it may be games or a craft. I don't think people want the activities free but the city could provide the funding for the person to manage the program. You have some resourceful youth in your community that may be willing to come in to teach a skill, especially those youth involved with 4-H as they have a great curriculum.

After school programs provide a safe place for children, especially if parents are working outside the family home and are not available to the children. I would think that there are parents that may be working in Havre and thus the children are home longer in the evening by themselves. In other communities service groups have taken on the project of after school care and small communities have

even done their own Boys and Girls Clubs or become a satellite of an established program. The program does not have to be everyday but could be 2-3 times a week. There has been grant dollars available from the Montana Board of Crime Control. This could be a way to use space in your school.

Recommended Resources:

For additional information and ideas, please visit the websites.

<http://www.bccdoj.doj.state.mt.us>

<http://www.afterschoolalliance.org>

<http://www.montanachildcare.com>

<http://www.juvjus.state.nc.us>

<http://4hafterschool.org>

MAIN TOPIC: ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH

Issue: Youth Involvement in Community Decisions

Recommendations:

There were some volunteers from the youth to become involved with city government. Now the leaders of the community need to step forward to invite the youth and to value their input. Several communities have conducted a program that would be called Leadership Big Sandy, Havre has been participating and it was based off a program in Great Falls. Selected juniors in high school participate and learn more about their community, activities are held on a monthly basis. Youth would learn how the town and community function.

Recommended Resources:

For additional information and ideas, please contact the individual listed.

Debbie Vandenberg, Havre Area Chamber of Commerce, 406-265-4383.

MAIN TOPIC: ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH

Issue: Support of Church Activities to Continue

Recommendations:

They youth in Big Sandy were happy with the activities that have been happening at the local churches, please continue. During the summer there is a break, maybe each church would like to take a month and do one activity for the youth, this keeps them connected and are in a safe and supportive environment.

MAJOR ISSUE: BUSINESS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Issue: Mutual Support Between Business and Community

Recommendations:

I heard over and over how supportive the community is when someone is in need. The business owners know that the agricultural community is hurting financially; this then affects the business community. Do you rely on each other? The business community does want to support youth and other activities but those asking for the financial support also need to support the businesses. Realize that you need each other, buy at home. It is not cheaper to go out of town when you consider your time, fuel, meals and other extras that you purchase when you go for one item.

MAJOR ISSUE: BUSINESS AND OPPORTUNITIES**Issue: Business Recruitment****Recommendations:**

There were specific needs stated in the listening sessions. I am sure that somebody with some of those skill areas is originally from Big Sandy. Sit down as a group and think back to past high school graduates that have obtained those skills and are working somewhere other than in the community. With this list solicit those individuals to come back to the community, maybe they do not know that the community is in need of their skills.

MAJOR ISSUE: BEAUTIFICATION**Issue: Beautification****Recommendations:**

We all know that as we drive into a new area the visual impact will make us feel welcome or to keep driving. There were some concerns about the physical appearance of Big Sandy. One comment that was heard several times were that people stopped at the old grocery store on hwy 87, can you take the sign down? There is a community visioning project that can be done through MSU Extension and MSU School of Architecture. The project involves community members examining the town and deciding what they would like to do. Students from the school of architecture work on ideas that you may have and give their input.

Recommended Resources:

For additional information and ideas, please contact the individual listed.
Dave Sharpe, Extension Community Development Specialist, dsharpe@montana.edu,
Phone 406-994-2962

MAJOR ISSUE: COMMUNITY**Issue: More Community Wide Activities**

Recommendations:

Your community both young and old has enjoyed the activities that have been done in Big Sandy. There is some concern that there are a few that volunteer, many are willing to open their pocket books but giving of your time is also needed. I have mentioned previously the churches may want to rotate sponsored activities during the summer. Civic organizations may want to sponsor one type of social activity in Big Sandy a year they become an annual event. Ideas may be a barn dance in the fall, a snowball dance in the winter or maybe a cultural event every summer. Bring your community in to support each other emotionally. The listening sessions brought out that there is a lot of great musical talent, maybe a talent show or a summer band in the park.

MAJOR ISSUE: EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES**Issue: Shared Activities and Resources****Recommendations:**

You have many talents and human resources in your community. There is great interest in the arts. I would suggest that the public school and home school organization work together to bring guests in that can benefit all the children of the community. One of you may not have the financial resources but together it may be possible.

The community is divided by the beliefs of children attending public school or to be home schooled. The youth in the high school are very aware of this division, either from parents or school personnel. This division will continue to pull your community apart until it is resolved. This division comes down to money due to funding formula from the state; the parents of the home school parents pay the same taxes as everyone else. Money breaks up many relationships, including communities, churches and marriages. You have a wonderful community do not let this issue break up Big Sandy. Think creatively, it is up to each school district how they handle home school children using the public school formal teaching and extra curricular activities. Be innovative and it may become a win – win situation for all the children of Big Sandy. I would suggest an outside mediator that would assist in this situation.

MAJOR ISSUE: EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES**Issue: Advanced Placement/Updated Curriculum and Books****Recommendations:**

I am not sure if the decrease in advanced placement classes is due to enrollment or instructors. If it is due to enrollment you may be able to combine with another school to offer a class, for example Box Elder. They may have four students and Big Sandy six, work together to form a class that could be offered. Have you explored idea of distance learning to work with another school that has a program?

The youth commented that they were using the same texts that their parents used, updated texts would be beneficial. There are some subjects that do not change, but history is one that is being made daily

and to occasionally update would be good. The students may want to head up a fundraiser to assist with the purchase of new text, give them the ownership in the project.

MAJOR ISSUE: SENIOR CITIZENS

Issue: Transportation for Daily Events and Health Services

Recommendations:

Big Sandy does have a van for the seniors, I heard seniors stating that they would like some organized trips. Explore the idea with them to determine what they would like; it may be just a trip down to the Missouri or to the neighboring town for their celebrations in the summer.

MAJOR ISSUE: SENIOR CITIZENS

Issue: Retirement Community/Assisted Living

Recommendations:

Different individuals thought that Big Sandy should explore the possibility of promoting Big Sandy as a retirement community. Think this idea through, what is your goal, to fill the empty houses or to bring revenue to the town? Promoting the retirement community could be part of an overall plan, but maybe not the only plan.

Research the idea of assisted living facilities; it is nice to keep the seniors in the community where their families are located. What buildings are available that could be used?

BIG SANDY RESOURCE TEAM
MAY 7 – 8, 2003
LISTENING SESSION
CHALLENGES - CHURCHES

- More and better water
- More water
- Drought
- Not welcoming to new residents
- Lack of industry/business
- Poor Roads
- Poor water supply
- Not enough trees
- Dry appearance
- Need a drug store
- Residents don't support local businesses
- Downtown appearance needs improvement
- Dusty streets
- Abandoned buildings
- First impression – run down cowtown/junk cars/dusty streets
- Attitudes do be improved – negative
- Improve appearance
- Negativity is not uncommon
- No public transportation
- Losing our grain elevators
- Losing UAP store

CHALLENGES – EDUCATORS

- Keeping enrollment in school
- Keeping businesses - and get new businesses in
- Income and population are big items
- CRP is killing us
- Ag – small farms are closing
- Poor Ag economy effecting schools
- Wages are not good enough coming out of college to pay student loans
- Mosquitoes
- Ditto – mosquitoes discourage retirees
- School enrollment – causing classrooms to be combined
- Want to encourage home schooled children to attend public school (13% home schooled)
- Losing students – losing electives
- AP program – need more options
- Paved streets, sidewalks and curbs – reduce mud and muck
- Agri-Basics – don't want it to shut down, or any other current businesses

- Location - 75 miles from GF; 35 miles from railroad
- Lost an elevator and have a railroad system that doesn't want to support us
- Young people need a lease opportunity/finances to allow them to come back to the farm
- Need high-quality students to return and/or stay here
- Home schoolers brought back into public system
- Big Sandy doesn't fit into Choteau County well – it has been this way for years; don't communicate well with each other
- Stray animals – dogs and cats; officer is in Ft. Benton but need local reinforcement
- More qualified staff at the hospital
- Very few jobs available
- Farmers/ranchers – can't afford to pay wages for the work that needs done on a farm
- Water – drill too deep and you hit minerals

CHALLENGES – RETAIL/ROTARY/CHAMBER

- Loss of young people - keep saying goodbye to our kids
- Ditto
- Aging population
- Losing people and businesses
- Drought and CRP hurt business
- Lack of people – don't need services any more, so the hotel/motels are not being used
- Ditto
- Less people – so harder to make a living. Fewer customers.
- Small flourmill in Ft. Benton – put there because of transportation access – couldn't transport from here.
- Railroad treats us like step children....they hate to deal with companies on a single car basis. Have lost cars of ours going to the east coast. Don't tell us when cars show up – then only have a few hours to fill them.
- Attitude – don't encourage children to come back to the farm – too difficult to make a living
- Water! Need to find adequate water for gardening, yards, as retirees enjoy yard work.
- Ditto – need water infrastructure in place for future business
- Lack of jobs has affected hotel business.
- Good people move away – with no reason to come back. Very difficult.
- People are in a pit of despair – can't give up hope.
- Youth – can't hire them until they are 18 (due to industrial accident insurance) but they don't have skills or basic work skills. Don't get practical experience first.
- Too much government regulation on some of these things – can't afford to hire people.
- Shop local – can't get people to shop here.
- Constantly get asked for donations – but the people don't shop at my store.

CHALLENGES – HOME SCHOOL FAMILIES

- Redefine Big Sandy away from Ag – especially as another round of CRP is coming
- Losing a fertilizer plant, lost an elevator
- We are a rich county in Ag, but can't survive.

- Ditto – Ag is dying and so is the community.
- Feel animosity from the community because we are home schooling.
- Our tax dollars do pay for the school – so we aren't trying to have our cake and eat it too....not trying to take advantage of the public system
- It is perceived that we do not support the school – but we think that it is a good school – just choose to have our children at home
- Need to have you families come and stay
- Ditto
- Businesses pulling out – main negative
- As a 17 year old – not a future for me here – no open doors or anything besides ag to tie into
- Ditto all of the above
- Water – can't keep our yards and community green and attractive
- Railroad – 10mph speed limit on train – could lose our last elevator
- Have the reputation for being “the brownest town around” – and will blow away some day
- Ditto – not a pretty place –
- So many empty homes for sale – not all are well kept up
- Ag can no longer be a base to grow on, depend on
- Can't get gasoline here – need a credit card accessible pump

CHALLENGES – AGRICULTURE

- Ag is going down, costs are going up
- Lots of confusion as to what to do – how to go on from here
- Businesses closing down – down to one elevator
- Consolidation of farms – it is a necessity sometimes but the trend hurts us – fewer farmers to support local town
- Ditto
- Transportation – in a few years Big Sandy will be an island because there won't be a railroad
- Ditto
- Hard to come up to grow something different – don't know how to get it out of here
- Need volume to survive – CRP has reduced volume – must diversify from Ag
- Limited on what we can grow – lack of irrigation – economically unfeasible
- Ditto all of the above
- Major problem in keeping the school open in the next 20 years
- Diversify our economy
- Lose people to death – aging community – not enough young people
- Young people can't get into Ag.....unless it is handed down
- Federal and state government need to support new ag producers
- Ditto all of the above
- Water problem – can't keep property looking nice
- Ditto – solve the water problem
- We have to keep changing with the ups and downs of the ag business –
- Don't have programs for young children – so it is hard to get families to move in – especially in the summer months

- Ruts – get stuck in them – and we are exporting \$\$ out (K Mart, Sisc, American Food Services) this rut is a deep one. Need to diversify.
- Need help in marketing our products
- Water source
- Ditto
- Animal Control
- Farmers are not aware of the finance support that is available from Dept. of Ag

CHALLENGES – YOUTH

- Nothing to do
- Ditto ditto ditto – lots of dittos
- Too many gravel roads – everywhere
- Too many potholes
- No summer activities
- No shopping
- Need water!
- Only one bank in town
- More variety of restaurants
- School is shrinking
- More activities other than school
- Mosquitoes are going to be back – and will be terrible to be outside
- Roads not been kept up
- Can only go swimming one month out of the year
- Old abandoned houses are sitting empty and ugly – store fronts too
- Conditions and age of school books
- Housing prices are high – no one can afford to move into town
- When grade the roads – gravel is in the ditches – grass in the road
- Police do not respond when called
- A lot of drugs in Big Sandy – not being cracked down
- More drugs among older people – the old hippies – than young people
- Alcohol use about the same as other places
- Employment – a challenge
- Need an open gas station
- Too many home schoolers – take money away from the schools
- Newspaper more informative and better typed
- Never a chance for kids to bowl – unless in a league
- Need to get teachers that care about their jobs – older teachers are stuck in ruts
- Some teachers grade by according to how they like a student – not on how they do
- If you are in sports – teachers that don't like you can keep you from being eligible

CHALLENGES – CITY, COUNTY, LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND LIBRARY

- Funding for library – if cutbacks continue, our branch may be cut

- Keep open the businesses that we have
- How do you replace a dying community – older people are retired and passing away – not enough to keep young people here
- Business owners need training to stay open....
- Don't have an electrician in town
- Need volunteers – dependable and committed that would get the job done
- Not enough places to stay for large events to be held
- Lack of things in the summer for kids to do
- Law enforcement is county wide – need to be out of town servicing the rest of the county –
- No gas station, convenience store
- Prices of houses are too high – for what the actual value is

CHALLENGES – SENIOR CITIZENS

- Loss of business
- Lots of dittos (63)
- Lack of public transportation for the elderly and others; social events, too
- Lots of dittos (63)
- People need to support the local businesses
- Ditto
- Population is decreasing and causing problems
- Ditto (5)
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is hurting businesses
- Lots of dittos (63)
- People don't know what is great about Big Sandy – don't know how to get people to stop
- Lots of dittos
- Clean up the town!
- Lots of dittos – but hard to get absent owners to clean up
- Better water – more water
- Kids are leaving – no jobs
- Hard to get around town if use a walker or wheelchair or cane

CHALLENGES – MEDICAL CENTER/ACTIVITY CENTER

- Lack of a pharmacy/pharmacist
- Ditto, ditto, ditto
- Recruiting doctors and nurses – want to be out in the country – but there are not many ranchettes available
- Nurse practitioner is here – but no job for the spouse
- Nothing for our kids to come back to – but the same can be said for big towns, too
- Town suffers from loss of Ag and CRP
- BSA is not able to pay the salaries our staff deserves
- BSA needs to find work for the individuals they serve
- Need to clean up the town
- Single moms – nothing for kids to do after school – after school care

- No city map for 13 years – 31 years lived here and still don't know where people live – need map with streets and numbers
- Muddy, pot holed streets
- Work out area for every age
- Better police – stolen kitchen items and got no response
- Too many bars – nothing else to do and lots of alcoholics
- Mosquitoes – get rid of town junk – clean up anything with water laying in it
- Animal control in town
- Need more incentive for people to come – and jobs for spouses as well.
- Struggle to fill staff schedule – RN's especially
- Horrible eyesore – and junkyard – is unsafe as well – near the city hall – big danger. Old cars, skunks, falling bricks, other dangerous things.
- Need to get rid of a few teachers that don't care anymore

CHALLENGES – CLUBS (Senior Citizens, United Methodist Church, Homemakers, Stampin' Up, Creative, Coffee Group, Future Big Sandy Golf Association, Chamber of Commerce, Silver Spurs, Alfred Rice and Signs, Rotary, and Eastern Star)

- Tourist related activities are not coordinated with the Chamber or Town
- We need a tourism link
- Roads aren't paved
- Young people leaving
- Lack of awareness (paddles to saddles) of what exists
- People don't get involved (apathy)
- People tend to be resistant to change
- Young people leaving
- Job market is sad (unless a nurse or teacher)
- Funding for Emergency Services especially EMT is burdensome i.e., training and travel discourages people from participating
- Lack of Vision
- Lack of Vision not problem – lack of action/commitment
- Competition with school activities discourages other types of activities for youth (Rainbow Girls)

BIG SANDY RESOURCE TEAM

MAY 7 – 8, 2003

LISTENING SESSION

STRENGTHS – CHURCHES

- Friendly people (except Keith Edwards)
- Wonderful children
- Family oriented community
- Good schools
- Close knit people
- Friendly people
- Strong sense of community
- People care about future of Big Sandy
- Active ministerial association (5) churches
- Can do attitude – Can get things done
- Great senior center
- Strong fire/EMT services – well funded and supported
- Big Sandy Activity Center
- Strong sense of survival
- Strong AG base
- Affordable housing
- Significant housing stock
- Hunting and Fishing
- Close proximity to Missouri River
- Lewis & Clark connect
- Good City Council
- Ministerial Association
- Special missions to Gideons, Native American Ministries, Rocky Mountain College, etc.
- Methodist Women – meet regularly and supports Green Thumb Gardening and other charitable interests around town.

STRENGTHS – EDUCATORS

- Ag Educator in our school – one of the few around
- Music, Math and Science departments top notch
- Technology in schools are top-notch
- Growth of Native American population in Box Elder creates jobs for this area
- Hospital – employs people and is very well run
- Big Sandy Men's Home
- Wonderful EMT staff and volunteer firefighters
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Business owners – very kind, provide service and a pleasure to shop here

- Staff at high school and grade school beyond compare – especially math, science, technology areas
- Great basketball team – school is the center of the community
- School is the largest employer
- Entertaining basketball coach
- Very minor drug problems – atmosphere in school is great
- Quality of people – fund raisers, support the troops rally – very generous
- Adult Ed program is excellent – open up school facilities for classes
- Senior Citizens in Big Sandy support our school system – pass levy's
- Great Rotary Club
- Senior Citizen section at the ball games – easy access in and out
- Extremely caring community
- Several churches – all work together extremely well
- Grain Growers Marketing program
- Local businesses are very supportive of the school and activities

STRENGTHS – RETAIL/ROTARY/CHAMBER

- Attitude – we are still fighters.
- Commitment to the community – we love it here, have roots here.
- Rally during problems.
- Good retirement community – have doctor, airport, close to college, no crime.
- Ditto
- School system
- Medical facility
- Energetic city council and chamber
- Access to Missouri River
- Ditto
- Fire department and EMTs are excellent
- The people – not everyone has given up and we want solutions to move forward.
- Survivorship- tenacity to continue on.
- A few small businesses that are innovative in the area
- No traffic is a plus
- Close to GF and Havre
- People are friendly – watch out for you
- Ditto all of the above
- Great place to raise kids
- The asset of the people – if they get behind an idea – the idea becomes a reality.
- Fortunate to have as many businesses as we do – push your youth more to shop here, too.
- Fire Dept. Chili Feed
- Excellent library
- Hospital and Nursing Home are great.
- We are an Ag community – and always will be.
- Butcher Shop

- Cheaper cost of living here
- Northern Montana College – automotive shop/metal shop is terrific

STRENGTHS – HOME SCHOOL FAMILIES

- Amazing what this town does when there is a need in the community.
- Recreation, fishing retirement – great for retirement/recreation activities
- Airport
- Business owners are willing to work with you
- Saddle Club, 4-H Club – willing to make things work for you, too
- Wide variety of things – Museum, Mary Ann’s, RavenCrest, Tumbleweed
- Moto-Rodeo, Medical Center, Group Homes
- The people come together when needed; very caring
- Asset mapping process – will bring out community strengths known
- Awesome arena – can build on those activities
- People – very helpful
- Museum
- Musically talented people in town
- Many creative people
- Marlys at the Chamber and our Mayor, Darren
- The River and the bakery, Q’s Restaurant
- Landscape, river, the people, wide open spaces
- Medical facility for a town this size is phenomenal
- Creativeness within home school community

STRENGTHS - AGRICULTURE

- Lots of traffic on the highway – busier than Hwy 2
- Good town to retire in
- Big Sandy people are loyal to Big Sandy
- Close knit town
- Town with a lot of pride
- Isolated – which is a mixed blessing
- School system is good – need to keep supporting it
- Ditto
- Aggressive young city council – getting things going
- Good community/state leaders – serve on state councils and do a lot of work to keep AG viable
- Good organizations working together
- School and the hospital are major employers – reason for people to come to town
- Opportunity to tap into the Tiber water supply – mixed support due to costs involved
- Big Sandy is in a good position as far as location – our isolation is good in the sense that people do need to stop here

- Fire department – got here by looking to the future and the entire surrounding population getting involved
- Ditto – see the leadership involved in getting the fire department in place
- School and medical center – medical center could be expanded
- Strength of the people is all in all

STRENGTHS – YOUTH

- We have a very generous community
- Good education
- No law enforcement
- Good basketball program
- Safe community – don't need to lock cars
- Pizza Pro
- Someone is always looking out for you
- People are courteous
- Not a bad pool for the size of town we have
- Like our location
- River is an asset
- We know everybody
- Grocery store
- Bakery is good
- Mint Bar, bowling alley, butcher shop
- Big Sandy Activity Center
- Attitude to help the community is good
- Hospital and medical center is good
- Farmers do well when it rains

STRENGTHS – CITY, COUNTY, LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND LIBRARY

- The people! Incredible supportive people
- Proximity to the wild and scenic Missouri
- Canoes – come here – need to use them
- Use our highway park – only rest stop between Havre and Great Falls
- Rec. Association to help with summer programs
- Tri-Agency task force out of Havre – involved with it
- Food Bank

STRENGTHS – SENIOR CITIZENS

- Homemakers Club – help with health fairs, blood mobile, Chouteau County Fair. Donate to families in trouble and school functions;
- Homemakers - Community Christmas Party every year
- Nearest town to White Rocks – needs to be promoted
- Senior Citizens Center – provides meals and delivers meals

- Senior Citizen Center – home chores and respite care are available; health screenings, foot clinic, exercise and craft classes, and bridge.
- Senior Citizen Center is available for events and parties as needed
- People always come together when needed
- Lots of Dittos
- Fire department
- Hospital
- Willing to pay for streets and sidewalks

STRENGTHS – MEDICAL CENTER/ACTIVITY CENTER

- Fresno Chapter of Walleyes unlimited
- Big Sandy Activities – provides insurance for workers
- Homecoming Committee
- Good school system
- Dedicated staff
- Community support (Foundation Board and Auxiliary groups are both active)
- Remodeled clinic, hospital and physical therapy areas
- Stable patient base
- Good reputation
- Good school system for employees' children
- Comparable wages to other similar sized health care facilities
- Fresno Lake, Beaver Creek and other recreational areas
- People are welcomed and help needy
- BSA – 1 million dollar budget – operations save tax dollars and money goes into Big Sandy
- Tumbleweed paid out to Consigners \$13,600; money back into the community due to expenses \$36,800
- Caring community – can accomplish what we set out to do
- Money raised last year with chili feed, rotary, library tea, science club, evening of art, school carnival, hospital rummage sale, baby benefit totaled \$81,000.
- Hands of Harvest – Cultural Corridor
- Churches
- Bakery, Tumbleweed, RavenCrest, Massage, Tanning Booth
- School is open to the public sometimes
- Do have AA group; but not well attended
- BSA – employs 43 full-time and part-time staff
- Wonderful hospital and fire and ambulance
- Make a Difference Day
- Acute Care Hospital Services – 100 admissions last year
- Emergency room – 230 ER visits last year
- Physical Therapy, Lab Services, Radiology Services and other outpatient services – 5700 visits last year
- Home Health Services – (Skilled Services only – client must be homebound to qualify) 525 visits last year

- Rural Health Clinic Services (Services are provided by one full time family practice physician and one family practice nurse practitioner) –4,350 visits last year
- Long Term Care Services (skilled nursing provided to all patients: we have 22 nursing home beds) average daily census of 19 last year
- 48 employees
- Annual budget of \$2million
- Charity Care \$40,000
- Revenue Sources: 41.5% Medicare, 15% Medicaid, 18.5% Commercial Insurance, 25% Self Pay or in other words “un-insured”
- Comparable wages to other similar sized health care facilities

STRENGTHS – CLUBS

- Several organizations
- Odd Fellows, Stars and Masons present within community
- Museum and 1912 jail
- Rich Western History
- Talent local artists
- Large and effective Rotary Club
- Large quilters guild
- Bear Paw Gun Club – could be developed

**BIG SANDY RESOURCE TEAM
MAY 7 – 8, 2003
LISTENING SESSION
PROJECTS - CHURCHES**

- More water
- More trees
- Cover the pool – need a place for the families
- Become a retirement community – take advantage of the available housing
- Need more people
- Create public transportation system (elderly to Great Falls for Health Care)
- Need a clothing store
- We must improve the Ag-base
- Develop value-add Ag products
- Need a Boy Scout Troop
- Start a fly-fishing club (Hi-Line Fly Fishers)
- Need home economics back in schools
- Need more people – especially kids (school population dwindling)
- Develop a gas station/convenience store (get people to stop)

PROJECTS - EDUCATORS

- Coordinate better with the reservation – provide housing, services, etc.,
- Revitalize Ag – provide financing
- Become more progressive with Grain Growers Marketing programs
- Beautify with paved streets and sidewalks
- Mosquito control
- Renovate the swimming pool
- Old vacant buildings torn down or repaired
- Ditto
- Hardware store, pharmacy/drug store – meet the basic needs to retain dollars here
- Need more trees planted
- Water! Can no longer make it on one well for the entire community
- Youth center, activity center for teens – keep our kids busy! – use empty buildings for space
- Boys and Girls Club
- Local Animal Control

PROJECTS – RETAIL/ROTARY/CHAMBER

- Non-Ag business to bring jobs in
- Continue work with Rocky Boy Water project
- Exploit monument status – use it to our advantage
- Take out an ad in Time Magazine – come to Big Sandy if you are tired of the Rat Race

- Hold a community day – put on by business people – or for business people to thank them
- Take more chances with entrepreneurs – provide seed money
- Set up County-Wide Economic Development Fund – to have a fund to start new and innovative businesses (is on the ground floor)
- Open a pharmacy here
- Solicit Big Sandy to larger companies to bring in 20 or 30 jobs.
- A resource to help farms/ranchers make more money on what they do produce
- Try the “City Slickers” tourist experience
- Advertise Big Sandy in other magazines
- Make paper out of straw – in developmental stage
- Look at other ways to market and utilize what we grow and produce here
- Continue to explore alternate energy projects – i.e., wind power
- Investigate a call center – i.e., needlework business, or catalog centers
- Upgrade gas station for 24 hrs/day service
- Signage along the highway to advertise businesses

PROJECTS – HOME SCHOOL FAMILIES

- Tie in to some other main industry – or theme i.e., become a retirement community, serving the retired person’s needs. Must loosen our tie to Ag.
- Utilize the Saddle Club to pull in events.
- To work more closely with the public schools
- Build on our available recreation
- City continue to look for water sources
- Pave the road between Big Sandy and Winifred
- Build on the monument potential
- Open swimming pool year round
- Use the airport better
- Light manufacturing or specialty products – use trucks that usually leave Montana empty for transport
- Utilize talented musicians in town to develop a program or production or...???
- Get children/youth involved in the community so that they will grow roots here and want to stay
- Missoula Children’s Theater – continue
- Add Shakespeare in the Park -
- Include the home school students in an activity (such as Shakespeare in the Park or musical events)
- Community Band
- Dance Club/Group- to get community to get together as a family and have dances
- Would like home schoolers no longer looked upon as “the enemy” to public school
- Work together with Public School System and home schoolers
- Change the way the state funds education – bringing the home schoolers back to public school won’t change the financial situation
- Musical ability in the school system – need to bring it out of the school – share it with the community
- Fishing pond just for kids

- Allow home schools students to join extra curricular activities and take a few specialty classes at the public school
- Beautify Main Street – adopt a theme
- Build a golf course – or indoor miniature golf in Kaste’s Department Store
- Bring in light manufacturing that would get people into the 50 homes for sale and fill in the empty stores one Main Street
- BMX track

PROJECTS - AGRICULTURE

- Local farmers need to invest in local business – buy a business AND work the farm – will support the local economy and boost business
- Stretch ideas behind the farm – ditto of above
- Spruce up the town
- Center for Rural Affairs – Land Link – Nebraska – links older farmers to younger farmers to strengthen the profession
- Rest Home would be a good area of growth for us
- Tiber Dam project to Rocky Boy – 33 communities are looking at getting involved (water = domestic use)
- Attract new residents – push our open spaces, hunting, safe place to raise a family
- Bring people in – quality of life and recreation
- Loop tours – ag people are starting to get involved with Ag Tourism
- Advertise!
- Summer programs for kids
- Pool project –
- Bio-Diesel – look into it for Big Sandy
- Find a use for our empty elevator
- Gas station
- Utilize the big tractor lure
- Get into tourism – whether we want it or not – need to take advantage of it
- Encourage young people to go after their dreams – support entrepreneurs
- Utilize the MT Dept. of Ag – and Sam!
- Promote Judith Landing more! Do something with the road between Big Sandy and Winifred

PROJECTS – YOUTH

- Advertise the gas station – make it available via credit card
- Teen Center – contain tutors and mentors, arcade games, pool, pc games and tournaments
- Movie Theater
- High school baseball team
- Roller skating
- Open gym with weight room accessible
- Sophomores, Juniors, Seniors – not so interested in youth center, but Junior High kids are
- 6th and 7th graders need a different place to hang out besides the bars
- Motorcycle/BMX track

- High school rodeo team
- Skateboard park
- Expand arena and rodeo grounds
- Indoor paint ball
- A fair and a permanent roller coaster
- Indoor basketball court – outdoor would be nice, too
- All weather track
- Access to school computer lab – it is always locked
- Clean up the town – old buildings gone
- Roads paved
- Fix up the old buildings
- Sam Goody store
- Enjoy the church activities – want it to continue
- Improve parks with children's equipment
- Climbing wall
- Cosmic bowling
- Put overlay over the bowling alley to have a roller rink in the summer months – man in Harlem has done that.
- Places like a Taco Johns, Subway, Dairy Queen, a real pizza place – more food varieties
- Go cart place
- Interested in Community Band if different music was played
- Increase community activities – mix the generations up more
- More handicapped accessible places
- More full time employment jobs needed for people to move here
- Change Pizza Pro from a "druggy" place to a family place – or even a teen gathering place

PROJECTS – CITY, COUNTY, LAW ENFORCEMENT & LIBRARY

- Put on a grant workshop
- Get those canoe folks to come into town....
- Working on advertisement for town events at the rest area
- Walking tour
- Develop a flashy brochure and improve the website that sells the area
- Become a Lewis and Clark link
- Connect with other recreation areas – i.e., Rocky Boy's sledding hill, Bears Paws ski area, etc.
- Work more closely with the Rocky Boy's Reservation
- More people involvement – more attendance at town meetings, i.e., Rec. Association needs help, Chamber, Rotary, etc.
- Trees!
- Need an ATM at the Wells Fargo Bank
- Need a veterinarian

PROJECTS – SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER

- Pharmacy
- Senior Citizens willing to talk with community leaders for new streets and sidewalks
- Sidewalk project is currently in the works with the Chamber
- Gas station
- Let people know what is here so can stop when driving by
- Dry good store – socks, undergarments, buttons, shoestrings, baby clothes, etc.
- The potholes fixed.....
- A covered swimming pool
- A 13 passenger van for seniors to use

PROJECTS – MEDICAL CENTER/ACTIVITIES CENTER

- Contact young professionals and see if they can come back – use the Homecoming database to send out a brochure to get people to come back.
- Put in place a volunteer coordinator – to put to work those willing to volunteer. For example – someone is willing to remove fallen tree limbs – but doesn't have chain saw.
- Elderly people are willing to pay young people to clean up their yards – need a matchmaker
- Clean up the community
- Green it up
- Pave it; more sidewalks
- More culture brought in – music, drama
- Assisted living facility
- Water – if regional system built it will involve ten years of construction in Big Sandy's back yard - so do you spend \$\$ on infrastructure that could be obsolete in 8 – 10 years or wait

PROJECTS – CLUBS

- Paving road to Winifred
- Identifying crops
- Marketing of Community Assets
- Fall Foliage Tour
- Gas station/convenience store
- See Big Sandy grow
- Big Sandy will become the most attractive small community in the state
- Form Co-op that would own and operate museum/art gallery/gift shop/shopping mall in the Big Store
- Art Classes at the Big Store (see previous bullet)
- Create Jobs
- Do Randy and Robert Williams raise malting barley
- Big Sandy needs a visiting center – coordinating visits, providing information between April and early October
- Pave streets
- Fix potholes
- Develop ordinances that precipitate the demolition of abandoned buildings

