

RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

for

CHINOOK, MONTANA

April 1 – 3, 2003

**In partnership with
Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA),
Bear Paw Development Corporation, USDA/Rural Development,
Montana Department of Agriculture, Glacier Action and Involvement Now
(GAIN), Beartooth RC&D and the people of Chinook.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I am sure I speak for the entire team when I write that we were impressed with the people of your county and the passion that was displayed to preserve your communities and unique rural lifestyle. We were impressed with your community leaders, students, volunteers, schools, business owners, entrepreneurs, senior citizens and all the people in between. It is obvious that in working together, there is nothing to stop Chinook from being all that you envision it to be.

Before digging in to the report itself, I would like to give recognition to MEDA – Montana Economic Developers Association. MEDA provides the contracted services that make each and every resource team possible. 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: Betty Curry (Beartooth RC&D), Quinn Holzer (MT Dept. of Agriculture), Joni Stewart (Glacier Action and Involvement Now), and Debra Swanson (USDA/RD). 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 Chinook Resource Team Assessment was truly a team effort on the local level. Thanks to our tour guides, those that provided lodging and to those that fed us wonderful meals!

The elements are all in place for Chinook to have a successful 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 Chinook in evaluating the area'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 Chinook officials indicated would be needed to respond to the problem areas identified.

The Resource Team toured the county and interviewed approximately 100 people over a three-day period from April 1 – 3rd. The team interviewed representatives from the following segments of Chinook: Local Government, Churches, Youth (Chinook High School), Senior Citizens, Agriculture (Dryland Farming/Ranchers), Educators, Finance/Banking/Insurance/FSA, Businesses/Outfitting, Health Care, Oil and Gas Producers, Agriculture (Irrigators) and Civic Groups.

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

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

A preliminary oral report and a summary of group recommendations was presented to the people of Chinook on April 3rd 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 Chinook. 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 planned for June 4, 2003, to review the report with the people of Chinook and to set priorities and initiate action plans.

**CHINOOK
RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT**

TEAM MEMBERS

APRIL 1 – 3, 2003

Chinook Team Member: **Betty Curry**
Title: Executive and Community Relations
Agency: Beartooth RC&D
Address: P.O. Box 180
City/State/Zip: Joliet, MT 59041
Phone: 406.962.3914 Fax: 406.962.3647
Email: Betty.Curry@mt.usda.gov
Web: <http://www.beartooth.org>

Chinook Team Member: **Quinn Holzer**
Title: GTA Program Manager
Agency: MT Dept. of Agriculture
Address: P.O. Box 200201
City/State/Zip: Helena, MT 59620-0201
Phone: 406.444.2402 Fax: 406.444.9442
Email: qholzer@state.mt.us
Web: <http://www.agr.state.mt.us>

Chinook Team Member: **Gloria O'Rourke**
Agency: MEDA
Address: 118 E. Seventh St.; Suite 2A
City/State/Zip: Anaconda, MT 59711
Phone: 406.563.5259 Fax: 406.563.5476
Email: gloria@medamembers.org
Web: <http://www.medamembers.org>

Chinook Team Member: **Joni Stewart**
Title: Executive Director
Agency: GAIN
Address: P.O. Box 1329
City/State/Zip: Cut Bank, MT 59427
Phone: 406.873.2337 Fax: 406.873.2241
Email: gain@northerntel.net
Web: <http://www.cutbankmontana.org>

Chinook Team Member: **Debra Swanson**
Title: Community Development Manager
Agency: USDA/Rural Development
Address: 54062 Hwy 2 West
City/State/Zip: Glasgow, MT 59230
Phone: 406.228.4321 Fax: 406.228.8101
Email: Debbie.Swanson@mt.usda.gov
Web: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt>

**City of Chinook
Resource Team Agenda
April 1, 2, 3**

Tuesday	Time	Activity	Location
	11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.	Team gathers and has Lunch with Local Planning Team	Senior Center
	1:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.	Check-In Motel	Chinook Motor Inn
	1:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	Area Tour - Leave from motel	Various Locations in and around Chinook
	6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.	Dinner with Community	Chinook Motor Inn
Wednesday	Time	Activity	Location
	6:30 a.m. to 7:30 a.m.	Breakfast	Chinook Motor Inn
	7:45 a.m. to 8:45 a.m.	Local Government	Senior Center
	8:50 a.m. to 9:50 a.m.	Churches	Senior Center
	10:00 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.	Youth	Chinook High School
	11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.	Senior Citizens	Senior Center
	12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.	Lunch	Jean's Bakery
	2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.	Ag - Dryland Farming/Ranchers	Senior Center
	3:15 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.	Educators	Chinook High School
	4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.	Finance, Banking, Insurance, FSA	Senior Center
	5:45 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.	Supper	Chinook Motor Inn
	6:45 p.m. to 7:45 p.m.	Businesses/Outfitting	Senior Center
Thursday	Time	Activity	Location
	6:30 a.m. to 7:45 a.m.	Breakfast	L&L Pizza
	8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.	Health Care	Sweet Medical Center
	9:15 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.	Oil & Gas Producers	Senior Center
	10:20 a.m. to 11:20 a.m.	Ag - Irrigators	Senior Center
	11: 25 a.m. to 12:25 p.m.	Civic-Groups	Senior Center
	12:30 p.m. to 1:15 p.m.	Lunch	Senior Center
	1:15 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.	Break	Motel
	2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.	Team prepares for Town Meeting	Motel
	5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.	Team working Supper - Catered	Chinook Motor Inn - Back Room
	7:00 p.m. to ?	Resource Team Town Meeting	Chinook High School - Lloyd Sweet Auditorium

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT
SUMMARY OF LISTENING SESSION
April 1 – 3, 2003**

MAIN ISSUES

COMMUNICATIONS

- Individuals
- Gov't Agencies
- Fed/state
- Cell phone coverage
- Regional and Collaborative Communications

YOUTH

- Something to do
- Job opportunities
- Drug and alcohol issues
- Declining enrollment

NATURAL RESOURCES

- Natural Gas
- Monument (Choteau, Blaine, Fergus, Phillips Counties)
- Irrigation and municipal water project
- Flood dike protection

TRANSPORTATION

- Getting products to market
- Public Transportation –
- Highway 2 improvements – widening, shoulder, etc.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

- Expanded services – additional medical professionals
- Telemedicine
- Exercise Center
- Drugs and Alcohol
- Nursing shortage

AGRICULTURE

- Bio diesel
- Ethanol
- Value added ag products, i.e., Harvest Montana Flax
- Identify product, opportunity for that product and marketing of that product

TOURISM

- Marketing area as a place to live
- Battlefield development and visitor center
- Highway 2 beautification, utilization, destination into Chinook
- Hunting, fishing, etc.
- Wildlife Museum
- Mosquito reduction

BUSINESS

- Buy local, shop local
- Retention
- Expansion
- Recruitment
- RLF
- Foundation
- Goods and services - Shopping and necessities

COMMUNITY

- Apathy
- Lack of voters
- Lack of participation/volunteers
- Recreation Center
- All weather track
- Tennis courts
- Recreation Opportunities
- Paintball
- Indoor swimming pool
- Light at basketball court
- Fire hall/City hall
- More rentals, medium priced homes and repair of “for sale” homes

The following reports were written by the Chinook Resource Team and address the main issues listed above.

Report by:
Quinn Holzer
Growth Through Agriculture Program Manager
Montana Department of Agriculture
303 N Roberts
PO Box 200201
Helena MT 59620-0201
(406) 444-2402
Fax: (406) 444-9442

Thanks to the entire community of Chinook for your hospitality and willingness to participate in this process. The pride you have in your community is very evident; from the well-kept yards we often heard about and witnessed first-hand (albeit slightly early in the season) to the obvious support for the local museums and social development projects.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Before jumping into specific topics and action items, I would like to make a few personal observations. Please remember these are only observations, and that they are most likely based on an incomplete understanding of the history and current situation of Chinook. However, it is my hope that these comments will serve to create proactive discussion about the future of Chinook, and all that it has to offer.

Chinook seems to have been “born” under a special blessing that has resulted in outsiders committing significant resources to the development of this community. The effects of the Sweet legacy are seen throughout the community, and have provided for a beautiful community with the infrastructure and aesthetic value around which true growth can occur. In addition, as it was explained to me, the sugar beet plant of days gone by was a development project spear-headed by the Mormon Church to provide a livelihood for settlers of the area. The pictures in the basement of your museum spoke to the success of this endeavor. However, I believe a major philosophical difference exists between these two development approaches. Looking back at the development of the sugar beet processing facility, an industry grew up around that facility that allowed for the profitable and successful growth of a prosperous community based around individual profitability. In this environment, we see a growing community, with expanding population, services, etc. Meanwhile, during the social development projects utilizing the Sweet investments, we see a beautiful community with much to offer, slowly losing population, and individuals are struggling to maintain their economic viability. **It is in the midst of this environment the community of Chinook must now set priorities for moving ahead. I would suggest that your own history makes a case for developing an economy or industry around which the community can grow, rather than developing your community and hoping industries will move in to be a part of your beautiful community.**

AGRICULTURE:

Let me just start by saying, “Yes, I am biased.” Agriculture is the basis for the Montana economy, and working for the Montana Department of Agriculture, I have seen the impacts, and believe strongly in the potential that basis still holds. Several comments were made by participants indicating their recognition of agriculture as the basis for the Chinook economy. This was usually followed by one of two comments. Find a way to bolster the local agricultural economy, or find a way to diversify and base your economy on something else. In this section, I will attempt to focus on the first option.

ORGANIC: Several comments were made on the value of projects such as the local organic flax product. Whether or not you personally agree with the organic concept, organic products have proven to be highly valuable niche products in the past, and consumer demographics suggest it is only going to grow. Growing something in a certified organic manner is only a small portion of the challenge however. Most producers find that capitalizing on that high-end niche takes a very focused and concerted effort to get the product in front of the right consumers. The marketing costs and challenges are most often the deciding factor in the success of a rural organic food product.

Contacts:

For information on what it takes to become certified organic:

Doug Crabtree
Organic Certification Specialist
Montana Department of Agriculture
PO Box 200201
Helena MT 59620-0201
(406) 444-2944

To visit with other entities who are marketing organic flax and/or flaxseed products:

David Oien
Timeless Seeds
PO Box 881
Conrad MT 59425
(406) 271-5770

Jim Schaefer
Montana Amber (not organic certified)
PO Box 1271
Baker MT 59313
(406) 778-3224

BIO-FUELS: Ethanol has received a lot of attention in the media and throughout agricultural discussions in Montana lately, and that attention is well warranted. Yet despite ongoing efforts from numerous groups across the state, ethanol production in Montana has repeatedly been delayed by financing concerns, despite the current favorable state tax laws for ethanol development. Ethanol production is reportedly less efficient with wheat or barley than with corn,

and wheat and barley are what is readily available in most of Montana. **Recent reports have indicated that the only way to profitably operate an ethanol plant in Montana is by including a cattle-feeding industry in the same business, to utilize the efficiencies of by-products and local resources. The other thing to remember is that ethanol production requires large amounts of water. In order to secure such a business for the Chinook area, any Milk River project concerns would probably have to be addressed first.**

Biodiesel may be an alternative project that warrants investigation. One advantage to this concept is the fact that individual producers could simply get involved with an existing statewide project, rather than try to develop the entire business. Sustainable Systems, LLC is currently marketing a biodiesel product under the name of Montana Biodiesel, and is partnering with a cooperative (Peaks and Prairies Oilseed Producers) of oilseed producers to develop the feedstock supply. There are still great challenges that exist for this project, but with the irrigation resources, growing conditions, and proximity to other producers already involved in this project, it may be well worth the time to investigate.

Contacts:

Shirley Ball
Ethanol Producers and Consumers
Ball Rd
Nashua, MT 59248
(406) 785-3722

Paul Miller
Sustainable Systems, LLC
PMB 1005
91 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812
(406) 243-4269

Steve Simonson
Peaks and Prairies Oilseed Producers
6107 Highway 200
Thompson Falls, MT 59873
(406) 827-3074

For the latest research and technical information regarding production and scientific research:

Duane Johnson, Ph.D.
Northwestern Agricultural Research Center
Montana State University
4570 Montana 35
Kalispell, Mt 59901
(406) 755-4303

MISC: One individual brought up a concept based on the successes of a local youth's project. Reportedly this individual had developed quite a business in raising rabbits. However, due to the remote location of the market for processing these rabbits, the endeavor was eventually shut down. The idea was thrown out for consideration, that it might be possible to develop a local processing industry if enough people got into the rabbit business to form an economy of scale. Although this may sound ridiculous, it may be the kind of "outside-the-box" thinking that will be necessary to develop an economic base for Chinook. Once again, as in the organics concept, I would warn that finding the market would be the biggest impediment to such a project, but that does not mean it has no value to research. Various government assistance programs are available, especially for something that is done as a cooperative effort. **The following contacts may be valuable for almost any agricultural development, including the organic and bio-fuel concepts.**

Contacts:

Brent Poppe
Bureau Chief, Ag Marketing and Business Development
Montana Department of Agriculture
303 N Roberts
PO Box 200201
Helena, MT 59620-0201
(406) 444-2402

Mark Lindberg
Energy & Agriculture Specialist
Economic Opportunity Office, Office of the Governor
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620-0801
(406) 444-9757

Tyler Duncan
Montana Cooperative Development Center
MSU-Northern
210A Brockman Center
PO Box 7751
Havre, MT 59501
(406) 265-3771

Bill Barr
Cooperative Development Specialist
USDA Rural Development
Rural Business and Cooperative Service
PO Box 850
900 Technology Blvd, Suite B
Bozeman, MT 59771
(406) 585-2545

NATURAL RESOURCES:

WATER: Closely tied to agriculture, water is the lifeblood of any community. The entire community of Chinook appeared to have at least a basic understanding of the water supply system, which was very encouraging. On the other hand, it was discouraging to learn of some of the major issues with the siphons, and the decades-old water delivery system. Unfortunately I have little to offer in the way of exactly how to achieve the results necessary to upgrade this system, but in my opinion this needs to be **the number 1 issue** in setting priorities for the long-term viability of the community. Because of the nature of the project, and the fact that the water is used for both agricultural and municipal purposes in numerous communities up and down the Milk River, any attempts to find a way to address this issue should probably not be limited to Chinook.

Contacts:

John Tubbs
Bureau Chief, Resource Development
Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
1625 11th Ave
PO Box 201601
Helena, MT 59620-1601
(406) 444-6687

Pat Riley
Irrigation Development Officer
1371 Rintop Drive
Billings, MT 59105
(406) 247-4404

TOURISM:

MUSEUMS: Thank-you for the tour of your existing museum facilities and the developing wildlife museum. You have a museum to rival that of anything in the largest communities in the state. I would suggest these are once again great community and social developments, but I would question the economic impact without taking away from the importance of such institutions in any way. It seems that the museum is most often visited by those who have already stopped in Chinook for some other reason (beyond just stopping to fill up a fuel tank, which does not bring them into the community far enough to recognize the assets Chinook has to offer), rather than people stopping to see the community and then benefiting Chinook in some other way. **The following website is a paper underscoring the importance of studying the economic impact of museums.** You will see that this site is targeted toward urban development, but I would suggest that if urban museums are having a difficult time economically justifying their museums, that the issue is multiplied in rural areas.

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

HUNTING/FISHING/RECREATION: I was a little disappointed not to have heard more from the local individuals who are already capitalizing on this opportunity. As a result, I don't know a lot about what is being done, but I do know that everyone seems to want to hunt the Milk River Valley, and we heard from numerous individuals for whom that was an important consideration in their decision to live in Chinook. For individuals interested in pursuing opportunities, the following contact may be of assistance.

Contacts:

Victor Bjornberg
Travel Montana/Montana Department of Commerce
PO Box 200533
Helena, MT 59620-0533
(406) 444-4366

CHIEF JOSEPH BATTLE SITE: Probably the most-often repeated project that was brought up in almost every community meeting was the desire to develop a visitor center at the Chief Joseph Battle Site. There seemed to be very little common knowledge as to the status of such a project. We heard widely varying reports on why the project had not been moved forward, and there seemed to be no common understanding of what had been proposed to date. In light of the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial, and the exceedingly large number of tourists we are reportedly going to witness in the next five years, **this is a project that needs to be given high priority.** Achieving successful completion of this project ten years down the road would still be beneficial, but the major opportunity that currently exists will have been missed. The first step in this process needs to involve the entire community, so that everyone can be on the same page, all concerns can be addressed, and a comprehensive project plan can be established.

It may be possible to tie this natural tourism draw to agricultural and existing business ventures. The Undaunted Stewardship program rolled out by the Montana Stockgrowers Association and Montana State University is targeting these very types of opportunities to tie together historical events with an opportunity to discuss the agricultural stewardship that has allowed open lands and pristine historical sites to continue to exist in the west. The following are a few websites with information on the Undaunted Stewardship program.

http://www.blm.gov/nhp/efoia/mt/2002/ib/02mtb061_at23.pdf

<http://www.mtbeef.org/Naturalresources/undauntedstewardship.htm>

<http://www.rangemagazine.com/stories/fall02/undaunted.htm>

<http://www.montana.edu/news/1019741778.html>

Contacts: Steve Pilcher
Montana Stockgrowers Association
420 N California St
Helena, MT 59601
(406) 442-3420

Gene Surber
Natural Resource Specialist
Montana State University
217 Linfield Hall
Bozeman, MT 59717
(406) 994-1971

John Moorehouse
BLM Branch Chief for Planning and Biological Resources
(406) 896-5068

Regardless of the projects upon which Chinook chooses to focus; it's probably a good idea to keep not only your local legislators apprised of the situation, but also your statewide Congressmen.

Contacts: Senator Conrad Burns
Great Falls Office
321 1st Ave N
Great Falls, MT 59401
(406) 452-9585

Senator Max Baucus
Great Falls Office
113 3rd St N
Great Falls, MT 59401
(406) 761-1574

Representative Denny Rehberg
Great Falls Office
105 Smelter Ave NE, Ste 16
Great Falls, MT 59404
(406) 454-1066

Report by:
Betty J. Curry
Executive and Community Relations
Beartooth RC&D Area, Inc./EDD
PO Box 180, Joliet, MT 59041
Ph: (406) 962-3914
Email: bjcurry@beartooth.org
Web: <http://www.beartooth.org>

BUSINESS

Issue: Empty storefronts on Main Street. (1) Gives Chinook the austere look of a dying town when in fact the heart of the community is strong and resilient. The effect produced by these vacancies, in itself produces negativity. (2) Lack of shopping opportunities for locals and visitors reduces loyalty to local business and exports revenue from the community. (3) Summer jobs, part-time jobs for youth are minimal because of skeleton workforce in barely surviving businesses.

Recommendation: A quick inventory is made of vacant commercial storefronts, preferably on “Main Street”, for the purpose of identifying spots that could be temporary business locations. Screen local entrepreneurs, especially those who are currently operating out of their homes, about setting up temporarily in the downtown spaces i.e. during the tourist season. Building owners could be screened to see who would be willing to lease, hopefully at a reduced rate for the summer . . . in a sense, “Main Street” would become a business incubator with prospective businesses being – farmers markets, quilting, art shows, crafts, second hand clothing, dance classes, children’s workshops, community meeting room with daycare provided (youth jobs). This would be a good opportunity for prospective downtown proprietors to “test the waters” and perhaps relieve the burden of a vacant building for the owner and the biggest benefit would be an improved attitude in the townspeople and perhaps a new sense of loyalty to shop locally. Remember, the road goes both ways to Havre, why not recruit some shopping!

TOURISM

Issue: Chinook and surrounding Blaine County, although rich in resources and history have not been able to market these attractive assets sufficiently enough to inject needed tourism dollars to bolster the local economy and encourage growth in this sector. The Bears Paw Battlefield, Blaine County Museum and soon to be completed Wildlife Museum are significant tourism sites and were acknowledged at every session as being under utilized and in the case of the Battlefield, underdeveloped.

Recommendation: Does Burma Shave or Wall Drug mean anything to you? If it doesn’t you are not as old as I am. Two-lane highway signage, such as these two examples, can inspire creative mental activity, curiosity and anticipation. Repetition is the key and these signs started tickling your brain long before you had the chance to just pass by and wish later that you had stopped. <http://www.outwestnewspaper.com/burmashave.html>

<http://www.two-lane.com/burmashave.html>
<http://www.walldrug.com/signs.htm>

There is a Highway Beautification Act that limits the signage however the MDT person in Billings tells me that he believes that refers to commercial and not community ads. I would recommend clever signs beginning no closer than 50 miles in all directions and continuing intermittently until arrival in Chinook. That allows about 45 minutes to peak their curiosity and interest (and time for the kids to nag them about stopping to see the huge moose). I think this can be a short-term goal to begin to catch some of those Glacier and Lewis and Clark visitors to Northern Montana.

Short Term Recommendation Resources: Local Cowboy Poets, Slogan Contest
Montana Department of Transportation – District Office, Michael Johnson,
mijohnson@state.mt.us

The historical and archeological assets of Montana are some of the strongest opportunities for tourism in the Northern portion of the state. Specialty tour loops showcasing the Old West Heritage could distinguish Chinook as a vacation destination. Partnering with the Phillips County Museum, Fort Peck Interpretive Center, Daniels County Historical Museum would give maximum promotion to all involved and would fit in with the North Continental Divide Scenic Route.

The following might be lodging and event options in vacation packages marketed with the Museum Circuit. Internet is perhaps the least expensive and offers the broadest coverage.

- Agra-tourism is a fast growing factor in value-added agriculture. Working guest ranches, Bed and Breakfast on the farm, Tipi Camp lodging, etc. all lend themselves to getting people to Chinook for an extended stay.

<http://www.lonesomespur.com>
<http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/agritour.html>
<http://www.aginnovationcenter.org/resources/agritourism.shtml>

- Renovation of a historic home or hotel, complete with Old West experience, clothing, dining, transportation, etc.
- Special promotions, such as Mystery Weekends, with advertising would draw participants as part of a vacation package and attract the folks in Chinook and surrounding area for a weekend of intrigue. That would address the “nothing to do” problem for the locals, also.

Murder Mystery Weekend: <http://www.murdermysteryweekend.com/?source=overture>;
<http://www.loganberryinn.com/murder.htm>;

Battlefield Grant Program
<http://www2.cr.nps.gov/abpp/funding.htm>

COMMUNITY:

Issue: Apathy manifesting itself in low voter turnout and lack of participation of general population in civic and local government activities. A discussion at the local government session revealed the lack of curriculum targeting civics and government issues.

Recommendation: Based on the premise that much of the time, educating youth is also educating and engaging parents, a strong curriculum of civics and history would serve to instigate more interest in government and civic duty. Coming from a recent experience of serving on the MEDA Legislative Committee, I would recommend a curriculum, which included mentors from local government for the students and perhaps role reversal events, i.e. Student Council reverses roles with City Council. Funding many times stands in the way of added attention to a particular area of study. Senator Burns' most recent newsletter included a funding source for such a curriculum <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OII/portfolio/history.html> July 7 deadline.

A benefit and possible project resulting from the curriculum would be for the students to actually design a voter participation program and implement it within the community or better yet county.

Issue: Lack of participation in civic activities except by a core group.

Recommendation: Inventory the groups in your area and evaluate the return the community receives. Entertain the idea of combining groups with like goals and outcomes. A civic meeting room, as mentioned in the Business section, with an in house daycare, might improve the attendance at civic meetings or functions. This could also serve as the first step toward a Community Center, an incubator as such.

AGRICULTURE

Issue: Poor market returns on conventional crops have led to the increasing incidence of productive acres being put into CRP. The result has been devastating to rural economy as no agricultural services; parts, supplies, etc. are required to leave productive land dormant. Crops that would return a better profit to agricultural producers would allow those who have chosen agriculture as a career and a way of life for their family, to remain on the land and sustain a quickly disappearing lifestyle.

Recommendation: Investigate the possibility of alternative crops i.e. lentils, dry peas, etc. that would be suitable for the soils in Northern Montana. Cooperation with the Burlington Northern Santa Fee line in establishing a market and transport of product, possibly overseas market.

Bear Paw Development Corporation, Havre
P.O. Box 170
Havre, MT 59501
Phone: (406) 265-9226
Fax: (406) 265-5602
Website: www.bearpaw.org

SUMMARY

Research, imagination and marketing are the tools most readily available to me, since I can't give away something I don't have, the list of funding sources are less than inspiring. Chinook has incredible assets (asset inventory might be helpful), more than most towns it's size, and as I could see during my short stay, citizens with pride and loyalty. That is a sufficient beginning to bring the economy back – maybe with a different look but prosperous no less. I reserve the option to make this a progressive report and if any additional ideas or sources appear, I will send them on to my new second hometown.

Report by:
Debbie Swanson
Community Development Manager
54062 Highway 2 West, Suite 3
Glasgow, MT 59230
Phone: 406-228-4321 ext. 119
Fax: 406-228-8101
Email: Debbie.Swanson@mt.usda.gov

The resource assessment for the town of Chinook revealed that the community has many strengths and assets for a community of its size. The weaknesses are the lack of small business development and youth activities. As Gloria stated at the Town Meeting at the conclusion of the assessment, “Chinook must invest in Chinook” to slow the population decline and provide some economic stability. Capitalizing on the existing natural resources and tourism opportunities can result in small business opportunities for local entrepreneurs willing to make the effort or existing businesses to expand. **Marketing what Chinook has to offer to residents east of you is essential in stopping the caravan of shoppers on their way to spend their money in Havre or Great Falls.**

Business planning and grant writing are hard work and success depends on teamwork. Chinook has access to grant writers at Bear Paw Development but it isn't likely that they have the time or the resources to do all of the work for you. Chinook should consider developing a list of individuals or a local team of people to write funding proposals for Bear Paw Development's review, concurrence, and support. These people should be given the opportunity to attend training seminars and workshops. The Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) has some funding for this type of training. MSU-Northern occasionally holds grant writing workshops that are affordable and very helpful to both the novice and seasoned grant writer. There are many other sources for this type of leadership development training. This type of investment in yourselves and in your community can result in considerable amounts of personal development and networking opportunities in addition to potential funding for local projects.

Grant administration is also time consuming and complex. It would be cost-effective to rely on BDP and their extensive experience is administering and accounting for grant funds.

A terrific resource for all communities and businesses in Montana is the [Montana Finance Information Center](#) website which is hosted by the Montana Department of Commerce. This site provides a summary of information for the most significant financing resources available from state, federal and local sources. The purpose of the website is to assist Montana businesses and communities to achieve economic prosperity. The website address is <http://mtfinanceonline.com>. Topics and/or links include business finance, public infrastructure, housing, tax incentives, local development tribal resources, and technical assistance.

Another good resource for projects of any type is Randy Hansen, Regional Development Officer, Montana Dept of Commerce, Havre @ 262-9579.

The Community Development Block Grant-Economic Development (CDBG-ED) program can be used for a variety of planning activities, including the initial planning necessary to develop a CDBG-ED project, or to prepare an economic development strategy, capital improvement plan or similar planning efforts needed to help communities meet critical needs. The planning grants have a \$15,000 limit and local government must provide a dollar-for-dollar match. The next application cycle opens in June, 2004 which would allow adequate time to conduct public meetings, prepare an application, document the benefit to low-to-moderate income residents, etc.

TOURISM

Chinook has the potential to become a tourist destination. In addition to the natural resources of the area that can be promoted, the historical significance of the Battlefield can also be a major draw. **Some projects need to be developed and promoted within the next two years in order to capitalize on the Lewis & Clark influx.** The travel industry has still not recovered from the 9/11 tragedy but most experts predict an increase in domestic travel. Most tourists come to Montana to ski, hunt, and fish, visit national parks and battlefields, and visit family and friends. Future tourists are projected to be older, traveling in motor homes, and needing entertainment and services. Any traffic generated by the Lewis & Clark bi-centennial must be capitalized on since it will be an once-in-a-lifetime experience for many of these tourists and an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for communities along the L&C trail.

Travel Montana – Community Tourism Assessment Program (CTAP)

This nine-month program is designed to help rural communities capitalize on tourism as an economic and/or social improvement tool. CTAP is a community “self-help program provided as a cooperative project of MSU Extension Service, Travel Montana, and the U of M’s Travel Research Program. Each year, three communities are accepted into the CTAP program through a competitive application process. Contact Anna Marie Moe, Travel Montana @ 406-444-2654.

Travel Montana – Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program (TIIP)

This program invests a portion of Travel Montana’s bed-tax funding into new tourism-related infrastructure projects or the enhancement of existing tourism facilities including projects that preserve Montana’s historical or cultural treasures. The primary goal of TIIP is to create or improve attractions and services that will entice visitors to spend more time and money in Montana’s communities (and therefore increase bed-tax revenues for future TIIP grants). Since 1995, TIIP has invested nearly \$1.5 million of bed-tax funds into 22 communities throughout the state.

Other potential funding sources for arts, culture, museum, and performing arts projects:

Baker Foundation (R.C.)
C/o Frank L. Scott, Chairman
P.O. Box 6150
Orange, CA 92863-6150
Phone: 714-750-8987

Brach Foundation (Helen)
c/o Raymond Simon, President
55 West Wacker Drive, Suite 701
Chicago, IL 60601
Phone: 312-372-4417

Bair Family Trust (Charles M.)
C/o First Trust Company
ATTN: Beverly Jensen, Admin Sec
Box 3168, Portland, OR 97208-3168
Phone: 506-657-8124

Kongsgaard-Goldman Foundation
c/o Martha Kongsgaard, President
1932 First Avenue, Suite 602
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: 206-448-1874

Microsoft Corp Contributions Program
1 Microsoft Way
Redmond, WA 98052-6399
Phone: 425-936-8080

Harriman Foundation (Gladys & Roland)
c/o William F, Hibbard, Secretary
63 Wall Street, Suite 3101
New York, NY 10005
Phone: 212-493-8185

HEALTH CARE

Adequate health care is essential to sustain a community. It can also be a major economic development tool as increased health care services can result in numerous spin-off business opportunities.

USDA-RD Community Facilities Program includes a CF Guaranteed Loan Program, CF Direct Loan Program and a small CF Grant program. It is possible to utilize funds from all three programs along with funds from other sources to complete the financing package for a particular community facility project. Eligible uses of funds include construction or expansion of facilities, purchase of land or major equipment, and payment of reasonable professional fees associated with the project. Examples of eligible projects include:

- *Health Care – clinics, nursing homes, assisted living centers
- *Cultural – museums, theatres
- *Public Safety – child and adult care centers, libraries, community centers, senior centers, youth centers, municipal buildings
- *Educational – public schools
- *Transportation – bridges, airports, sidewalks, street improvements

USDA-Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grant Program is designed to specifically meet the educational and health requirements of rural communities. Eligible uses of funds include equipment for distance learning classrooms and equipment for telemedicine programs. This technology allows smaller clinics to interact with health care specialists located elsewhere in the state or in the nation. Eligible applicants include hospitals, health care clinics, educational institutions, libraries, etc. Regulations and applications are available at: www.rurdev.usda.gov.

USDA-Rural Economic Development Loan Program provides zero interest loans to electric and telephone utilities financed by the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) to promote sustainable rural economic development and job creation projects. The RUS utility is required to re-lend, at zero percent interest, the loan proceeds to an eligible third-party recipient for economic development projects. Examples include business expansions, business startups, community facilities, medical facilities and equipment, educational facilities and equipment and infrastructure

necessary for economic development and job creation. More information is available at: www.rurdev.usda.gov.

USDA-Rural Economic Development Grant Program is designed to establish a revolving loan fund and it requires the RUS utility to contribute to the fund an amount equal to 20% of the grant proceeds. Eligible third-party uses of funds include seed money for revolving loan funds to finance community facilities and infrastructure, project feasibility studies/technical assistance, and the establishment of business incubators. More information is available at: www.rurdev.usda.gov.

Community Development Block Grant - Public Facilities Program – CDBG funds are used in combination with other federal, state, or local funds to make basic community infrastructure improvements, such as water and sewer facilities, affordable to low and moderate income families. Public facility projects can also include facilities designed for use predominately by persons of low and moderate income such as nursing homes, senior centers, Head Start centers or mental health centers. A county or city government can apply for CDBG funds on behalf of an area agency on aging or a hospital association. More information about all CDBG programs is available on the Montana Department of Commerce website: <http://commerce.state.mt.us>.

Montana Board of Investments INTERCAP Loan Program – This program lends low cost money to Montana local governments and state agencies for a variety of purposes. Eligible projects include new or used equipment of all kinds, real property improvements, interim financing for construction, preliminary engineering and grant writing work. The variable interest rate on this program changes every February but presently stands at 3.15%. More information is available on-line at: <http://www.investmentmt.com>.

SMALL BUSINESS FINANCING:

Resources include:

Montana Department of Commerce	http://commerce.mt.gov	406-444-3494
Business Development:		
Economic Development Division		406-444-3797
Manufacturing Extension Center		406-994-3812
Financial Assistance:		
Microbusiness Finance Program		406-444-4325
CDBG Economic Development Program		406-444-0560
Office of Economic Development		406-444-3146
Minority Opportunities:		
Disadvantaged Business and Women		
Business Procurement Assistance		406-444-6337

Department of Agriculture Marketing Program	406-444-2402
US Dept of Commerce Export Assistance Center-Missoula	406-243-2098
Havre Small Business Development Center @ Bear Paw Development Corporation	406-265-9226
Montana Chamber of Commerce 2030 11 th Avenue, Helena, MT 59601 P.O. Box 1730, Helena, MT 59624	406-442-2405
USDA-Rural Development State Office	406-585-2540
Small Business Administration District Office – Helena	406-441-1081
Small Business Advancement Network http://www.sbaer.uca.edu	501-450-5377
Montana Finance Information Center http://mtfinanceonline.com	

Again, the USDA-Rural Economic Development Loan program can provide funds to an eligible RUS telephone or electric utility for the creation of a revolving loan fund for small businesses.

Other USDA programs for small businesses include:

Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) program finances and/or facilitates development of private business enterprises. The grant funds can only be used for technical assistance such as business planning, feasibility studies, and training to enable small, emerging, private businesses to get started or to expand. The grant funds cannot be passed thru to the business. Some examples of the use of this program include: travel and related expenses for participation in trade shows where products are displayed and marketed to a wide audience, technical assistance such as business and financial planning, etc.

Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG) program promotes sustainable economic development in rural communities. Eligible uses include economic development planning, leadership development training, establishment of business support centers, and a variety of other technical assistance uses.

Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan (B&I) program bolsters the existing private credit structure through the guarantee of quality business loans. Guaranteed loans can be made for working capital, machinery & equipment, and real estate acquisition or improvements. Loans up to \$5 million can receive an 80% guarantee from USDA. This is by far, the largest business-financing tool for USDA and Montana consistently ranks if the top four states in the nation in utilization of this program. However, it is underutilized in eastern Montana.

Rural Cooperative Development Grant (RCDG) program establishes and operates centers for cooperative development. There is a Cooperative Development Center at MSU-Northern in Havre which can be a great tool for the Chinook area. The CDC is charged with the responsibility of improving the economic condition of rural areas by developing new cooperatives and improving the operations of existing cooperatives. They will provide technical assistance, research and educational services, advisory services and recommendations for improving management and/or processes. Cooperatives aren't limited to agricultural businesses. They can be anything from an arts & crafts marketing cooperative to food processing cooperative. Contact Ty Duncan the Montana Cooperative Development Center in Havre at 265-3771 or Bill Barr, Cooperative Development Specialist for USDA in Bozeman at 585-2545.

AGRICULTURE:

Unfortunately, USDA's farm programs such as CRP (which I sarcastically refer to as the "Community Reduction Program") has been extremely detrimental to small businesses in rural agriculture-dependent communities.

Area producers need to consider projects that will add value to their agricultural products. Establishment of cooperatives can limit the risk for an individual producer by involving other producers with similar products or ideas. Ty Duncan at the Cooperative Development Center in Havre @ 265-3771 or Bill Barr, USDA's Cooperative Development Specialist in Bozeman (585-2545) are great resources. Jan Tusick at Mission Mountain Marketing Cooperative Development Center in Ronan is a great resource for forming food-processing cooperatives and for providing assistance with bringing food products to market. She can help with packaging, marketing, bar-coding, calculating recipes exponentially, etc.

It is always better to build on what you do best rather than tirelessly recruiting new businesses to town!

The State's Growth Through Agriculture program can provide assistance with marketing, etc., for new and/or expanding agricultural businesses. Contact Quinn Holzer at the Montana Department of Agriculture (444-2402).

Many locally produced agricultural products could be marketed to a much larger area with some technical assistance such as that available from USDA's RBEG program or the Growth through Agriculture program. These products include venison, beef, grains, hides, etc. In addition to developing markets, resources are available to add value to these products. Examples are hay cubing, flax seed oil and/or flax cloth production facilities, bio-diesel or ethanol production facilities, etc. There are also alternative crops that can be considered with the irrigation opportunities in the Chinook area. Potatoes and onions are becoming a major crop in western North Dakota. Contact the MSU Extension office in your area. Production of these crops could result in a variety of value-added production facilities and opportunities.

Report by: Gloria O'Rourke
Montana Economic Developers Association
Montana Economic Development Services
118 E. Seventh St.; Suite 2A
Anaconda, MT 59711
Phone: 406.563.5259
Fax: 406.563.5476
E-Mail: Gloria@medamembers.org
Web: <http://www.medamembers.org>

GENERAL OVERVIEW

It was my privilege to be a part of the Chinook Resource Team Assessment. At times, I wished that each one of you could have been in my seat to hear all that the people of your community had to say. Yes, there are some problems, but the assets you have far, far outweigh those problems. I found myself increasingly excited as the listening sessions went on as the comments confirmed the fact that the area has all that it needs – in its people. The people of Chinook are the greatest asset you have.

I do have three recommendations that could make an impact on any project or plan Chinook undertakes.

- Utilize the Volunteer Survey sheets that were filled out during each session and start tapping some shoulders. It is easier to ask someone to jump into a project when they have already indicated their interest.
- Participate in MEDA. The Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) is an association of economic development professionals. MEDA is made up of lead economic developers, business specialists, government employees, and staff members of affiliated non-profit organizations, which promote and foster economic development activities in Montana. MEDA, a non-profit organization, is high on networking and mutual assistance that would be of benefit to Chinook. Learn more about MEDA by visiting their website at <http://www.medamembers.org/>.
Web: <http://www.heartlandinstitute.com>
- Do utilize your nearby economic development assets. MT Department of Commerce Regional Development Officer, Randy Hanson, is an incredible resource for topics all across the board in the economic development field. Your local MSU Extension agent and your RC&D are also excellent resources.

Contact: Randy Hanson, MT DOC/RDO
Box 311
Havre, MT 59501
Phone: 406.262.9579
Fax: 406.262.9581
Email: hanson@ibic4.ibic.org

In my comments below, I will include several topics identified during our Listening Sessions, make recommendations and include contact information for available resources.

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNICATIONS

Issue: Improve communication within community groups

It became obvious during the Listening Sessions that many of the community groups and organizations did not know what the other groups in town were doing. With both human and financial resources always scarce, it is essential that communication be improved.

Recommendations:

- Glean the email addresses from the many Volunteer Survey sheets (filled out during the Resource Team Assessment) and create a listserv with these addresses as well as other community leader's email. There are free programs available for this purpose that are very user friendly. I recommend Yahoo. Visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/> for easy directions to begin a group. Use this listserv to share information and updates in Chinook. This would also be a great way to promote a community website.
- Newsletter – create a brief newsletter (nothing fancy) that is simply a fact sheet of events, programs, projects and activities going on in Chinook. Submit it to the area newspaper on a weekly or monthly basis.
- Make better use of the whiteboard posted in the newspaper office by posting a person's phone number on the board. If they spot their phone number (because they have come in to check the news posted on the board) they receive a prize from a local merchant. Well...it's an idea. ;-)

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNICATIONS

Issue: Communication between various government agencies

Chinook, as well as many other communities, find themselves working with several government agencies. Before long, progress is fractured because of a lack of communication among all of the groups.

Recommendation: Contact Larry Mires of the Ft. Peck Interpretive Center as he has expertise in pulling together various government agencies to accomplish successful projects. Larry wrote:

“Each regulatory agency has its own prescribed “mission statement” by which it is to operate under as directed by congress. They do a very good job of staying within those confines. The agencies were established to work for the citizens, even though sometimes we may feel that is not what is actually happening. If you examine each carefully, you will find that they are all going in the same direction, just some are taking different roads to get there. The solution is to get everyone on the same road or track. It is also important to get a consensus on issues and a solution to those issues. It is important to keep in mind that in dealing with any

agency/organization – negative comments receive negative responses! Keep a positive attitude and outlook and work within the various agencies mission statements so that a win-win solution can be achieved. Build a positive working relationship with all the agencies.”

Contact:

Larry Mires

Email - 2LMIRES@NEMONTEL.NET

17 Robertson Court

Glasgow, MT 59230

Phone 406-263-8403 (cell)

MAIN TOPIC: YOUTH

Issue: Something to do

It was a pleasure to visit with Chinook’s youth. Based on what was heard during the High School Listening Session, I would like to suggest the following recommendations on a variety of topics. First: Something to Do

Recommendations: The students mentioned a need to improve school spirit, a need to revive the community and a need for “something to do.” Perhaps with a little creative thinking, we can come up with some activities that would handle all three of these needs.

- The students said their **Student Council** has ideas of things to do, but when approached by the administration of the school, their ideas are rejected. I would suggest asking an impartial mediator/facilitator to step in to pave the way for improved communications. Your local MSU Extension agent is experienced in facilitating, as well as, I am sure, are other community leaders. The important thing is for both sides to agree on the facilitator – and go forward from there. Chances are, it will only take one or two meetings to get things rolling again.
- Havre has a very active Boys and Girls Club that may be willing to form a satellite group in Chinook. Havre also has a leadership-training course for young people that may be helpful as well.
Contact: Debbie Vandenberg
Executive Director Havre Area Chamber of Commerce
Phone: 265-4383
Email: havremt@mtintouch.net
- Nothing builds school/community spirit like a project – a project that involves youngsters as well as oldsters. Here are some projects to consider:
 - Take another look at a youth center. It appears to be a difficult project because the facility must be appealing to teens, affordable, somewhat supervised and attract a healthy mix of the entire youth population – ranging from school athletes, intellectuals, privileged as well as the underprivileged student. In my search for answers, 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 center projects: “Whether you have a youth center, are planning to start one 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](#)

[Resources on Afterschool/Out-of-School Programming](#)

- What about a skateboard park? As with youth centers, skateboard parks are in high demand. Libby, Colstrip and Helena are three communities that I know of that have skateboard/BMX parks. I also found a terrific website that serves as a resource for everyone involved in the process of getting a public skate park built, and generally promoting skateboarding. Visit <http://www.skatepark.org>. From lollipop sales to 24 hour skate-a-thons, the ideas are there, all you have to do is use them. What a great way to involve the youth in community development!

Contact: Jane Thom
Libby Skate Park Inc.
Phone: 293-574
Email: janiethom@yahoo.com

Randy Lilge
Director of Parks and Recreation
City of Helena
316 North Park Ave.
Helena, MT 59623
Phone: 447-8462
Email: rlilje@ci.helena.mt.us

Colleen McCarthy
ED of Helena Housing Authority
Ph: 406.442-7970

Rick Harbin
Colstrip Parks and Recreation
Ph: 748.3326

MAIN TOPIC: TRANSPORTATION

Issue: BNSF and getting products to market

I have had the privilege of participating in almost all of the Resource Teams held along the Hi-Line. Repeatedly, a problem or issue expressed by every community has been issues with the BNSF Railroad.

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 the Hi-Line 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 Fax: 206.625.6471
Email: john.karl@bnsf.com
Web: <http://www.bnsf.com>

MAIN TOPIC: TRANSPORTATION

Issue: Public Transportation

I had a wonderful discussion with David Jacobs of the MT Department of Transportation. After explaining to David the need in Chinook for transportation within communities as well as between communities, David offered the following:

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

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

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

I asked David if the vehicle could be used to transport youth or non-elderly or non-disabled passengers. He explained that if additional seats are available, you can open the seating up to anyone. You must first make sure to give preference to serving the elderly and disabled.

David further explained that MT Department of Transportation holds grant application workshops in the fall – usually in October. Notices of the workshops is sent to every Senior Citizen Center in the state – or just call David to get placed on the mailing list.

Resource:

David Jacobs
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Ave.
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
ph: 406/444-6120
fax: 406/444-7671
E-Mail: dajacobs@state.mt.us

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

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

MAIN TOPIC: HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Issue: Drugs and Alcohol

It seems that every community has a problem with drugs and alcohol to some extent. Below are two resources that may be helpful:

Recommendation: For underage drinking/drugs, visit the excellent Youth Change website at <http://www.youthchg.com>. It is “Your Problem-Kid Problem-Solver.” In addition, to support and encourage more work to be done in the Chinook area on prevention, the following was taken from a government website:

- Substance abuse prevention programs reduce rates of substance use
- Youth already using cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana significantly reduced their use of substances after joining a prevention program
- Gender plays an important role in risk, protection, and substance use
- Family, peers, school, and community can all protect against substance use
- Science-based program components produce consistent and lasting reductions in substance use

To summarize: Communities with more opportunities for participation in prevention programs positively impact substance use by youth. More information is available at <http://www.health.org/govpubs/FO36/overview.asp>

Finally, the National Governors Association has compiled “best practices” information on dealing with the issue of substance abuse. Strategies other states are using to combat this problem include:

- Coordinating stakeholder resources to create and sustain effective substance-abuse policies;
- Building public awareness about the chronic nature of chemical dependency and the *societal* benefits of treatment;
- Implementing cost-effective programs to prevent, reduce, or minimize the incidence of drug and alcohol abuse and its negative consequences;
- Encouraging private insurers to offer adequate coverage for treatment of chemical dependency;
- Leveraging federal funds to expand coverage for substance-abuse treatment services; and
- Requiring effective and sustainable treatment alternatives as part of sentencing for chemically dependent offenders.

Visit: http://www.nga.org/center/divisions/1,1188,C_ISSUE_BRIEF^D_4479,00.html

MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM

Issue: Mosquito reduction

I believe my team members have done a terrific job in discussing ideas for tourism, beautification, and marketing of Chinook. One topic that came up under tourism was the problem with mosquito control and how these little “buggers” can drive people away.

Recommendation: This information was “stolen” from Tom Kaiserski, who served on the Resource Team for Custer, MT. Tom may be contacted at Beartooth RC&D, P.O. Box 180, Joliet, MT 59041, ph: 406.962.3914 or email tom.kaiserski@mt.usda.gov

- **Mosquito Control** – I personally share this concern, I live in Columbus and this is a big problem there too. The April 24, 2003 Billings Gazette contained an article that said the USDA has developed a patented virus that kills only mosquitoes and they are looking for private companies to make a spray containing the virus. USDA, by law, is not permitted to make the spray; let’s hope a private company will utilize this patent a manufacture a spray product. The information below is from the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, the contact person there is Amy McKenzie at 444-5303. Call Amy to receive the full report. Here is a portion:

Several state agencies involved in researching and mitigating the spread of West Nile virus in Montana are reminding residents about simple but effective steps they can take to help.

"Spring is here, migratory birds are returning and mosquitoes will soon be hatching ... all are factors in the spread of West Nile virus," said Amy MacKenzie, who is coordinating mosquito surveillance for the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS). The message, like last year, is to take preventive steps to reduce mosquito-breeding sites, avoid mosquito bites, and report the deaths of certain species of birds. There is also a vaccine against WNV for horses, a message the Department of Livestock has been sharing since February. The equine WNV vaccine is available through veterinarians. There is no human vaccine.

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 birdbaths. 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.

When outside and mosquitoes are present, use repellent containing DEET (may show as N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide on product labels). DEET can be harmful if not used as recommended. DPHHS recommends that people use mosquito repellent containing up to 30 percent DEET for adults, along with wearing loose-fitting long-sleeved shirts. When an adult goes into an area of biting mosquitoes, the DEET can be sprayed onto the clothing, thus reducing the amount of DEET exposure to the bare skin on the neck, face and hands. Other mosquito repellents can be used, but they don't work as well or as long as those containing DEET. If you plan to be outdoors for a great length of

time, it is recommended to wear shirts that cover the arms and pants that cover the legs. Then, for bare skin on the face, neck and hands, use mosquito repellent containing DEET.

For children, repellent containing less than 10 percent DEET is recommended along with wearing clothing that covers the arms and legs.

To keep mosquitoes out of your residence, make sure windows have screens, and repair any holes in the screens.

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS

Issue: Buy Local, Shop Local

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

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

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

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

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

Resource:

www.chainstoreage.com

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY

Issue: Lack of participation and need for volunteers

Recommendation: Do use the volunteer survey sheets collected during the Listening Sessions to build a database of community volunteers. Individuals have already indicated their area of interest and are expecting to be approached. Here are ideas as to where to find more volunteers:

1. Business/Corporate volunteer programs - provide opportunities for employees to become involved in service to the community. Some businesses even allow their employees to work with nonprofit organizations during the workday. You might even discover a new funding source when obtaining corporate or business volunteers.
2. Scope out other organizations - churches and other institutions with volunteer programs offer a wealth of volunteer prospects who are motivated by their beliefs to serve their community. Service committees and youth groups within these organizations can be a great source of volunteers for special events or other group activities.
3. Try internship programs - at colleges and high schools. Some internship programs require a stipend for the students while many others provide interns free of charge in exchange for a meaningful volunteer project. For example, interns can develop a marketing plan, perform prospect research, organize a special event, or manage a telemarketing campaign. With the Internet, an intern never has to step foot in your community.
4. Career-counseling centers - can help you identify individuals who are changing careers and considering entering the nonprofit sector as volunteers. These individuals may need to build their nonprofit resume by volunteering with nonprofit organizations in the community.
5. Civic clubs, fraternal organizations, sororities and fraternities - can be great resources for large numbers of volunteers needed for group projects. For example, a local Rotary Club may assist you with security along the route of a 10K Run or distribute refreshments at a school carnival.
6. Newspapers, radio, television - are excellent vehicles to promote your volunteer needs. Press and media can be enlisted as sponsors of your events and encourage people throughout the community to become involved with and attend your events. Some offer free or as-available space to help you advertise.
7. Governmental offices at local, state, and federal levels may also be a source of volunteers to assist your organization. Many governmental organizations allow employees to leave work for up to one half day a week to serve as volunteers in the community.
8. Court systems offer a ready source of individuals who have committed minor offenses and who have to provide community service in lieu of jail. These volunteers can be of great assistance in performing tasks such as setting up or cleaning up a special event. Our own office benefited greatly from the skills of a high school student who was sentenced to community

service. The student was sentenced for hacking into and harming our local high school computer network. Our office realized his computer skills would be of value to us in servicing our computer network. It turned out to be a win-win situation for everyone involved.

9. Volunteer recruitment fairs can be conducted along with other nonprofit organizations to reach a wide audience of volunteer prospects.

10. Other nonprofit organizations can be a tremendous resource in identifying and recruiting volunteers for your organization. If the volunteer needs are made clear to our associates in other nonprofit organizations, they can steer volunteers your way who may not fit within their current volunteer needs.

How do you keep and encourage the volunteers you currently have in your community?

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!

Report by: Joni Stewart
GAIN Development, Inc.
PO Box 1329
Cut Bank, MT 59427
(406) 873-2337
gain@northerntel.net

Overall Impression:

My first impression of Chinook was of a slightly run-down town typical of many along the Hi-Line. After spending three intense days there, I came away with an entirely different impression. The pride and dedication demonstrated by the attendance at the listening sessions and town meeting was incredible. Once a visitor ventures off Highway 2 and sees the well-kept streets, houses and yards, the community pride is evident. Over and over, when asked about the strengths of the community, the answer most often heard was the people. I would like to thank all the citizens of Chinook for the warmth and hospitality shown to the Resource Team and for the opportunity to see a much different community than what is seen on Highway 2.

MAIN TOPIC: LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The main weakness evidenced by the team was a lack of leadership and focus. Many groups are working toward their own agendas but there was a lack of a consolidated effort. As with many small communities, it was apparent that a small group of individuals bear the “volunteer load”. In order for this assessment process to make an impact on the community, more individuals must be brought into the community effort. As stated at the Town meeting, “Chinook needs to invest in Chinook”. One method of bringing more individuals into community efforts is a port authority.

Recommendations:

By state law, a county can levy one mil for the purposes of **forming a port authority**. A port authority is a public body whose purpose is to “...promote, stimulate, develop, and advance the general welfare, commerce, economic development, and prosperity of its jurisdiction...” (Montana Code 7-14-1104). Public hearings must be held before the mil can be levied. Up to four mils can be levied if the voters of the county support the request. The courthouse in Blaine County told me a mil is worth about \$11,500.

While one mil won't fund a great deal, it is a start toward hiring someone to promote and develop your community. Toole County was the only rural county that experienced an increase in population in the last year. They have had a port authority since 1987 and claim the existence of the port authority is responsible for most of the positive developments in their community.

Another simple way to fund development is to **ask people to donate a small amount of money every month for promoting and developing Chinook**. If fifty people committed to contributing \$20 per month, a pool of \$12,000 per year would exist and could be used to find ways to develop and market the area. As with many small communities in Montana, marketing efforts are not apparent in Chinook. Using the port authority and the community development

fund, hire a person to work on promotion and development. The Lloyd Sweet Foundation has shown the citizens of Chinook the value in a community foundation. In Aurora, Nebraska, fourteen community funds exist with combined assets of \$38,845,000. Sam Moyer, former President of the Aurora Development Corporation, describes an Aurora tradition where "...every time someone dies we don't send flowers; we send \$10 to the community foundation. It's a dollar at a time."

Many communities have leadership programs. Yuma, Arizona created a program called the **Neighborhood Leadership Training Program**. The program conducted workshops in leadership training and team building along with a host of other topics. As a result, several citizen-lead groups were formed and the relationship has meant greater community involvement in city government and issues and a broader base of volunteers.

CONTACT:

Lisha Garcia, Neighborhood Services Coordinator
City of Yuma
3 West Third Street
Yuma, AZ 85364-2217
(520) 343-8707

MAIN TOPIC: YOUTH

Meeting with the high school students provided valuable insight to the town's problems. The youth identified that there was no entertainment, no jobs and no future opportunities. Most of them stated they couldn't wait to graduate and go somewhere else. **The youth of your community are one of the most overlooked assets of Chinook.**

Recommendations:

The high school kids said they needed a recreation center or somewhere to hang out. Put the students in charge of this problem. **Create a group within the high school and have them explore methods to fund and build a center.**

Training young people to become involved in the community now lays the foundation for them to become leaders in the future. Including youth in the community's decision-making processes helps limit their potential to become community problems. The Innovation Center has a Youth Development program designed to build equal partnerships between youth and adults. They have a Tool Kit for a nominal price that helps create community change. The web site is www.innovationcenter.org

The Youth Leadership Initiative is a program administered by the school that focuses on civic education. The program is administered by a teacher and is free to all participating schools. The web site is www.youthleadership.net

The 4-H Program has a module called Personal Development and Leadership. With the active program already in existence in Chinook, this is an ideal way to get started on developing future leaders. The web site is www.fourhcouncil.edu/programs

Havre, Billings and Kalispell all have successful leadership programs in the high school. Havre's program includes community service, job shadowing, skills and other topics that educate the youth on issues and government. In some communities, a student representative is present at city council meetings and Chamber of Commerce meetings. While participation is voluntary, teachers encourage students and often give extra credit for attendance.

CONTACT:

Havre: Debbie Vandenberg
Executive Director, Havre Area Chamber of Commerce
Phone: 265-8853
Email: havremt@mtintouch.net

Kalispell: Shawn Lowney
Youth Leadership Flathead
Kalispell Chamber of Commerce
Phone: 758-2803

Billings: Charlene Zaske
Leadership Billings
Billings Area Chamber of Commerce
Phone: 245-4111

Another way to challenge the older students is through a Youth Entrepreneurial Program. Some communities start these programs at an elementary school level and continue on through high school. In Cherokee, Iowa, a culinary arts class in the high school acts as a caterer for community events. The students contract jobs for local businesses and events. They are responsible for purchasing, planning, cooking and delivering meals and are paid for their services. Many schools have business clubs offering school supplies and snacks through a storefront at the local school. A sixth-grader from Anniston, Alabama, participated in a school sponsored entrepreneurship program and turned a beading hobby into a lucrative jewelry business.

Addressing the student's complaints of "nothing to do" requires a different approach. One program successful in providing activities for young people is **Boys and Girls Club of America**. The main requirements to start a Boys and Girls Club of America are a handicapped accessible location and the first year of operating capital in the bank. The organization does not have to have a dedicated building. Kalispell operates their program out of the school. The first year's operating capital would include salary for a full-time or part-time director and program expenses. Havre used a grant from the Montana Board of Crime Control to form their club. Exploring a partnership with the Havre organization may prove a viable option and reduce the amount necessary to hire a full-time employee.

Contact: John S. Oliphant
Regional Service Director
Phone: (972) 690-1393
joliphant @Bgca.org

Robyn Morris
Help Committee
Boys & Girls Club
305 Third Avenue
Havre, MT 59501
Phone: (406) 265-6206

The Twenty-First Century grant program is available to schools through the Office of Public Instruction and offers funding for after-school programs. The school can design a program that includes tutoring, homework help and fun activities for students. Cut Bank has applied for the grant for not only after school programs but also for a Summer Fun Program. The summer program is a six-week program promoting physical fitness and arts and crafts.

Contact: Gary Pfister
Office of Public Instruction
1227 11th Avenue 1st Floor
Helena, MT 59620
Phone: (406) 444-2562

MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM

As a newcomer to Chinook, the first impression I had was the area along Highway 2.

Recommendation:

Extensive cleanup needs to be done in this area. Removal of old signs and cleaning up the industrial areas along the railroad tracks may divert some of the traffic traveling down Highway 2 into Chinook. City ordinances are often in place to address abandoned (empty) buildings and properties. The Visitor's Center is not very visible to a traveler going thirty-five miles per hour down Highway 2. Signs announcing the Center at the edges of town may catch a few travelers. The commercial business district is not easy to access off the highway because it is not well marked. Better signage may attract travelers into the town. The Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) offered through the Department of Transportation may help alleviate some of the unsightly areas. CTEP money is available to all counties and cities. Chinook has used some of the funding for sidewalk projects. Perhaps a future CTEP project could include landscaping or pocket parks for areas along Highway 2 and Main Street.

Contact: Craig Erickson, Bear Paw Development
PO Box 170
Havre, MT 59501
Phone: (406) 265-9226

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@northermtel.net

Behind Yellowstone and Glacier Parks, the third most popular attraction in Montana is the Little Bighorn National Monument. **Developing the Chief Joseph Battlefield** could very well create one of the most significant tourism impacts to the area. A beginning place may be contacting congressional offices and lobbying to have funds appropriated to complete the Visitor's Center. Special and celebration events structured around the Battlefield may bring recognition and with it, visitors. The average out-of-state tourist in Montana is upper middle-class and usually returns to Montana at least twice. Well-promoted special events have the benefit of drawing visitors from the urban areas of Montana.

Contact: Representative Denny Rehberg
 Great Falls Office
 Mike Waite – Field Representative
 105 Smelter Avenue NE, Ste 16
 Great Falls, MT 59404
 Phone: (406) 454-1066

 Senator Max Baucus
 Great Falls Office
 Kim Falcon - Field Representative
 113 Third Street North
 Great Falls, MT 59401
 Phone: (406) 761-1574

 Senator Conrad Burns
 Great Falls Office
 321 First Avenue North
 Great Falls, MT 59401
 (406) 452-9585

An area of tourism often overlooked is hunting. The Milk River Drainage and other areas surrounding Chinook provide a unique opportunity to attract more hunters to the area. Dillon has an average of 30,000 hunters in the area during the four month fall season. Imagine what half of those would do for Chinook! In looking through the brochure racks around town, I failed to see anything touting the great hunting in the area. Developing maps with landowner information or contact information would be a wonderful starting point in attracting hunters.

Contact: Judy Siring
Dillon Chamber of Commerce
Dillon, MT 59725
Phone: (406)683-5511
chamber@bmt.net

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS

Most economic development organizations would agree that the potential of recruiting new businesses into a community is an expensive and difficult task. The new trend for communities with limited resources is “growing your own” businesses. Chinook already has an agricultural base with which they could look to expand. The flax seed business, a commercial kitchen and a rabbit farm are all businesses that have the potential to create a more stable business environment.

The Heartland Center for Leadership has a worksheet to rate the ways your town helps to identify, support and nurture entrepreneurs. Rate the following statements to determine what your community offers to create new ventures.

SCALE: 1 – Not at all 2 3 – Somewhat 4 5 – Very strong

- Community clubs or school activities promote entrepreneurship.
- A Chamber of Commerce or Development Corporation helps local businesses get started and support existing business expansion.
- Public recognition or acknowledgment for business achievement.
- A program to identify and recognize entrepreneurs in the area.
- Inter-generational mentoring by business owners and managers.
- Internship opportunities for local youth and young adults returning from college.
- Networks linking entrepreneurs to capital, new employees, and strategic partners.
- An environment that supports young people who are starting new businesses.
- Entrepreneurial education as part of the K – 12 curriculum.
- Business incubator with low-cost or shared office space, services or equipment.
- An information resource center or person to help entrepreneurs develop their enterprise.
- Access to affordable and professional legal, accounting and consulting services.
- Participation in a business expansion and retention program.
- Access to financing resources supporting start-ups and expansions.
- Locally available entrepreneurship training.
- A micro-enterprise development program.

If you have a low score, growing your own businesses will be difficult. The higher you score, the more businesses you can create. Tracy Jette, Small Business Development Coordinator for Bear Paw Development, is one of the best resources available to entrepreneurs in your area.

At every listening session, people commented on the lack of a local clothing store. Both Malta and Plentywood created cooperative clothing stores. Colstrip is in the process of developing a cooperative clothing store called “Got Socks?”. MSU-Northern has a Cooperative Development Center and can advise the community on the feasibility of starting a clothing store.

Contact: Ty Duncan
Montana Cooperative Development Center
PO Box 7751
Havre, MT 59501
Phone: (406) 265-3771
mcdc@msun.edu

Jim Atchison
Southeastern MT Development Corporation
Colstrip, MT 59323
(406) 748-2990
www.semcd.org
semcd@mcn.net

Anne Boothe
PhillCo Economic Growth Council
Malta, MT 59538
Phone: (406) 654-1776
phillco@ttc-cmc.net

Another method to address the lack of underwear in Chinook is convincing one of the local merchants to carry a limited selection of clothing. The difficult part is convincing shoppers to buy locally!

“Buy Local” programs are difficult to implement in smaller areas. Many urban areas have marketing campaigns stressing the benefits of buying locally. A community wide campaign educating shoppers on the benefits of buying locally would help stop the disposable income leakage. A large local employer in one small Montana community paid its employees with \$2 bills and asked them to pay their bills and buy groceries with them. In return, merchants reported to the employer how many bills they received back. Some Chambers offer interest-free loans at Christmas time and provide scrip money that can only be spent at local businesses. Program providing bonus points (similar to S & H green stamps) have proved successful in some areas. If one dollar of a paycheck is spent at the local grocery store, and the grocer spends the same dollar at the hardware store, and the hardware store buys a prescription at the local pharmacy, that dollar has now multiplied by two the impact on the community. **Educating citizens on the multiplier effect of money would provide a good start.**

MAIN TOPIC: WATER

While I have little experience in solving water issues, I felt I needed to include this topic in the report. **This is the most important issue facing Chinook and needs placement as the top priority.** Solving water issues are usually a long and complicated process and the longer communities wait to explore alternatives, the most costly the fixes become.

Recommendation:

The Department of Commerce has a planning grant available every year. Hiring an engineer to start providing a direction may be a useful starting point. USDA has a rural utilities program specialist that is very knowledgeable about the Milk River project. The staff at Bear Paw Development is an excellent resource for suggestions on water resource development.

Contact: Mitch Copp
USDA Rural Development
Director, Rural Utilities Service
PO Box 850
Bozeman, MT 59715
Phone: (406) 585-2520

Randy Hanson
Regional Development Officer
Montana Department of Commerce
48 Second Avenue; Room 211
Havre, MT 59501
Phone: (406) 262-9579

While many other important topics were discussed during the listening sessions, those covered within the scope of my report are the ones that create the basis of future development. I would encourage the fine people in Chinook to contact me if I can help the community in way with further information.

CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM

April 1 – 3, 2003

LISTENING SESSION – LOCAL GOVERNMENT CHALLENGES

- More community involvement/ ownership
- CRP affected ag industrial
- Communication and relationship between communities
- Working together
- Transportation of products
- Creating more jobs
- Apathy
- Low voter turnout
- Few candidates for office
- Lost ag resources/struggling to replace
- No community promotion
- Lack of funding due to legislative actions
- Services are taking hit-have to raise local taxes to replace
- No recreational facilities for kids
- Need activities for kids
- Economic development needed
- Losing businesses
- No community involvement
- Losing our kids – no reason to stay
- Losing ag base in community
- Not enough money to operate city
- Tendency to look at problems the same way – need new approach
- Overcome assumptions by looking at differently
- Lack of interest in elections
- Curriculum doesn't cover local government or kids are not learning about it/need education for kids
- Lack of cell phone service
- Need to work together more
- Create and work for common goals
- Need planning
- Youth recreational opportunities
- No community involvement in problems faced by local governments
- Businesses don't thrive
- Difficult to reach out to the people that don't get involved
- State and federal governments create problems for local governments – difficult to plan when those laws impact funding
- Community involvement
- No rental properties
- Surplus of homes for sale

- Price of houses too high
- Crime Drug problem
- Police staff inadequate

LISTENING SESSION-CHURCHES CHALLENGES

- Lack of support for local businesses
- People shopping out of town
- Need to encourage and create small businesses
- Need more small businesses
- Can't compete with other areas on wages
- Not enough money to go around
- Independent pioneer attitude – people working three jobs to try to hang on
- Nothing to keep youth here
- Ag suffering
- Not enough people here to support all the things the community needs
- Crisis is that we need change or we will die
- Enrollment in schools down
- Easier now to go to Great Falls – losing shoppers
- Don't have a clothing store – draws people out of the area and they shop for other items
- Creates a cycle that reduces economy
- Need buy local education – people need to understand multiplier effect
- No activities for youth
- Smaller congregations, have not lost any churches
- Losing our kids, don't return
- Dwindling population
- Need coordination between different groups
- Need to pull together and streamline efforts
- People in this community are very busy trying to make ends meet
- Both spouses generally work, some more than one job
- People are tired, overworked and underpaid
- As many bars as churches
- Alcoholism apparent
- Chinook was a thriving community
- Rural America changing and people have to change with it
- Difficult to start a business in town
- No work for youth, no good paying jobs to keep them
- If we don't bring in a large business to provide jobs, we will die
- Housing – no rentals
- Struggles of people affect the church spiritually
- Closure of local businesses has negative impact

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM
LISTENING SESSION – YOUTH
CHALLENGES**

- Can't stay here after we graduate
- No jobs around here – not for high school students now or in the future
- Drinking and drugs problem –nothing to do
- No movie theater
- No fast food
- No shopping
- No good radio stations
- No Pamida
- Need one stoplight
- Only jobs are churches, bars and beauty shops
- Better jobs
- Must be able to get necessities here in Chinook
- Community is stagnant
- Farming property limits growth
- Schools are headed for trouble because not enough students to keep teachers
- Teachers have to pay themselves to teach – make financial sacrifices
- Narrow mindedness in the community
- Dying community
- Poor school spirit – poor attitude
- Lack of any industry at all
- Lost our grain facility – everything that was here is gone
- Our town is dying
- Our student council tries to do things but school administration doesn't let us try it

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM
LISTENING SESSION – SENIOR CITIZENS
CHALLENGES**

- Getting more businesses in town
- Too many empty buildings
- Ditto
- We are lazy – no one will open a business, then no one will support it
- Need more people – industry to attract them here
- Ditto
- More prosperity for farmers – would bring prosperity to Chinook
- Discouraging to see empty buildings
- Medical services are lacking
- Voice in government missing
- Ditto on businesses

- Hard to get people involved in the Senior Center – we have a nice center and can't get people to come and use it
- Business doesn't get a kick-back or government support like farm/ranch businesses
- Develop a vision for retired people
- Health Care – large elderly population and not enough care
- Transportation – to go anyplace and to get services
- If railroad shuts down – want to ride Amtrak
- Local people do not support local businesses
- Tough for seniors to find transportation to GF or Havre

CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT

LISTENING SESSION – AG

CHALLENGES

- Government – need to support local towns – i.e., if a veteran needs medication, it has to come out of Helena – doesn't support our local pharmacy
- Biodiesel and gasohol – laws to support it
- Freight out of here is high
- Apathy – hard to get ag people involved
- Bureau of Reclamation and BIA
- CRP – people take money out of town with them
- Focus isn't on what can I grow but what payment will I get – people change production that may not be best for them
- Morale is down – few incentives to do things on your own
- Drive and ambition is hard to find when it comes to opening a new business
- Still waiting on Chief Joseph visitor center

CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT

LISTENING SESSION – EDUCATORS

CHALLENGES

- Ag is dying and we as a community are dying with it
- Hurting our quality of life – want to stay at home and be with my kids – but can't – can't support the farm without working outside the home
- College graduates don't stick around – no job opportunities
- Ditto
- Kids don't have a place to go that is clean and well run, a place without drugs and alcohol
- Need competitive salaries in Montana – so young people can come back here
- Hard to live in Montana – can work here, but it is a hard living and difficult
- Lack of employment opportunity with middle income wage
- CRP has hurt us tremendously – a welfare program in a way – paid to not work – so no work, no need to buy machinery, seed, etc.
- Ditto
- Wages – hard to make a living on Montana's wages
- Have to travel out of town to get things that you need

- Lack of cultural varieties – art, music, etc.
- Opportunities for children – we as parents want to find things for them to do...yet we know higher population brings problems too so you may be damned if you do or damned if you don't.
- Sad that we send excellent kids who will be excellent parents and citizens out to other communities.
- Ditto with all that has been said.
- Ag base – price of cows is the same as 20 years ago – but the price for a car hasn't stayed the same
- Weather based – drought has hurt us badly
- Ditto on losing our young adults – not just out of our community but out of the state
- Ditto all of the above
- School system has always been top notch – concern is that as we drop in enrollment – more and more program cutbacks.
- As a high school – biggest concern is no future for our students – not in this area
- Nothing for adults to do, either – now that our kids have grown – not much to do
- Business is so bad, even one of the bars closed
- Kids in college can't even come home during summer break – have to stay away to work

CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT LISTENING SESSION – FINANCE, BANKING INSURANCE, FSA CHALLENGES

- Create more jobs – focus on trying to find something with two to ten jobs
- Need higher paying jobs that you can afford to make a house payment on
- Ditto
- Need to work in connection with Ft. Peck and Malta – get people stopped here
- Jerked around on the battlefield project for years – not enough power to get anything done on it
- **Re: battlefield project - state has not decided it to the federal government yet**
- Need to diversify economy – can't be just ag any longer
- Need jobs – kids look for jobs and can't find them, too.
- Wildlife museum – hard for a non-profit to hire people to write grants
- Housing market – costs are on the high end – no medium priced houses
- Flood plain is a major problem for investors –
- School enrollment dropping – smallest class B school in district
- Shipping and postage costs are a major factor in business success, or getting service/repair men to come to this area – very expensive
- Expensive high speed access – not sure if all businesses can access it
- Growing drug problem
- Our highway 2 area is poorly maintained, narrow bridges – as compared to other areas – and we have the most traffic

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT
LISTENING SESSION – BUSINESSES/OUTFITTING
CHALLENGES**

- Retain our current businesses
- Out of town shoppers – we need to support local businesses
- Don't have some basic need items such as clothing – other basic needs – so then buy lots of items out of town
- Ditto
- Declining population
- Ditto
- Just try us first! We might have what you need!
- Ditto
- Hard to find local contractors or construction work or plumbing services
- Hard to find employees – we can't pay a good wage
- Declining and aging population
- PR our community about the Chief Joseph battlefield and our museums
- Chinook is getting known for being a drug traffic area – effecting our image
- Illegal drug use is growing
- Aging population
- Leadership of business community – miss more experienced people in leadership – younger leaders are trying to step up but lack some experience
- Young family parents are not stepping up to take a leadership role in the community – with youth sports and other activities

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM
LISTENING SESSION – SWEET MEDICAL CENTER
CHALLENGES**

- Economic situation – no true jobs to retain young people – can't make it on \$5.50 per hour
- Transportation – getting people back and forth to medical appointments and out-of-town specialists.
- Affordable health care
- Ditto on Transportation
- Ditto
- No dental care for Medicaid/Medicare patients
- Lack of goods and services – have to drive to Havre or Great Falls
- Better economic environment would help ease service delivery
- Availability of nurses
- Lack of follow-up and carry through on immunizations
- Communications lacking between different health care agencies
- Continuity of care – too much shift in local doctor position – need continuity so people will use local services

- Kids have nothing to do in Chinook – teenagers – outside of school activities – left on their own.
- Poverty
- Elderly population not able to afford medicines
- Education – educate the public to what services we have
- Fear of losing nurses – could close us down
- No Grey-hound or commercial bus service

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM
LISTENING SESSION – OIL AND GAS PRODUCERS
CHALLENGES**

- Need something for the kids to do
- A lot in the oil and gas industry is not understood – need to build relationships with the companies in the area
- Regulations work against us – especially on the Federal level
- Transportation of product out of the area

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM
LISTENING SESSION – AG - IRRIGATORS
CHALLENGES**

- Irrigation and all of its infrastructure is roughly 100 years old. Used to be programs in place to care for these things – now our system, built in 1902, has serious problems.
- Waste ways don't function; drops are worn out – seriously worn.
- No money to rehab it – it is so worn
- Government agencies, finger pointing and drought – cause problems – need coordinated effort
- Infrastructure within the products – no good pool of money, no coordination of efforts to fix those things
- Lack of irrigation discourages farmers from making production decisions
- Ditto, ditto, ditto
- Infrastructure of irrigation system is in serious decay
- Limited growing season – limits what we can raise
- Farmers/ranchers on verge of bankruptcy
- Losing business and people from our community
- Local businesses can't compete with bigger and cheaper stores
- Need pool of money to fix irrigating system – we are developing more downstream users – and warmer winters – need to adjust for these changes
- Separation between what is critical water need (crops) and non-critical (lawns and car washes)

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM
LISTENING SESSION – CIVIC GROUPS
CHALLENGES**

- Lack of interpretive signing of historic cemeteries, homestead sites
- Large group of Senior Citizens – but middle age group is dwindling –
- Need after hour day care – currently one state licensed operate basic work hours – no weekend or after hours
- Ditto
- Same people do the volunteer work for and get burned out. No one to take his or her place – organizations are dwindling.
- Sometimes feel that all we do is go to meetings – and little gets done. Yet hard to say “no” – or it won’t get done at all. No one to step up.
- Reality – mom’s are working all day and taking care of kids at night – hard to stretch so thin
- Library better used – rich in resources
- Getting people to come out for say, highway clean up – same three people come out – and they are probably 70+ years old
- Hard to find people to serve as officers
- Young people are busy with their children – hard for them to find time – grandparents help as much as they can
- Business of Ag and Livestock runs on ability to communicate – internet, cell, fax – cell service is so sporadic – can’t rely on the service to stay in touch with your stock broker or seller.
- Lack of coordination among community groups – too many meetings conflict
- Drug trafficking problem on hi-line area – especially in low population areas
- Communication – don’t know a business is in trouble – until too late (i.e., Schwann’s depot moving)

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM
LISTENING SESSION – LOCAL GOVERNMENT
STRENGTHS**

- Clean and quite community
- Good place to raise kids
- Good people
- Know everyone – good community
- The people – good work ethic
- When people get involved – great job
- Clean town, friendly people
- Good infrastructure, great streets, water treatment plant great
- Nice place to live
- Good location – near hunting and fishing
- Chief Joseph Battlefield
- Nice pool

- Golf Course
- Museum
- Special Community
- Attitude of people is to take action
- Good attitudes
- Tidy well kept community off Highway 2
- Good water
- Houses and yards kept up
- Streets
- Adequate natural resources conducive to business creation
- County makes the most out of services and building maintained
- County government handled well
- Blaine County has three of the best commissioners
- Major strength community pulls together and helps each other
- Hunting and fishing underused
- Off the highway, community attractive
- Camping for free at water plant
- Once get tourists off highway, they love the community
- Chinook Motor Inn great facility

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM
LISTENING SESSION – CHURCHES
STRENGTHS**

- Full of loving people
- People always there to support each other
- Community support
- Sense of community strong
- Safe place to live
- Kids can ride down the street
- Great community
- Supportive community
- Over 100 showed up for support troop ceremonies
- Hunting and fishing
- Great school system

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM
LISTENING SESSION – YOUTH
STRENGTHS**

- Small town so everyone knows each other
- Less crime
- More personal attention in the schools due to fewer kids
- Safe place to raise kids
- Chief Joseph Battlefield
- We get some tourists coming
- Prettier than most of the towns along the highline
- Safe

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM
LISTENING SESSION – SENIOR CITIZENS
STRENGTHS**

- The clinic is good
- Dear hearts and gentle people
- If a tragedy or death occurs – the community rallies
- This is home
- Wonderful to greet everyone as you go up and down the street
- The people are wonderful
- Lived here all my life – great place to live
- Villa is good
- Good schools
- People take pride in the community, care for their houses and yards
- People are solid in supporting school and community
- A lot of clubs and organizations

- The Senior Center is great
- Ambulance service is good
- Caring, helpful community
- Variety in natural resources – golf course, mountains, valley, rivers
- Safe community
- Access to Havre
- This is Mayberry
- University near
- Blaine County is a HUB zone – easier for an entrepreneur to come here
- Museum
- Battle field
- We are “there” for people
- Safe community
- Easy to commute to Havre for college
- Great nursing home
- Do have dentist
- Do have eye doctor
- Great pharmacy
- Rodeo and Western days – has not helped local businesses, though
- All school reunion

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT
LISTENING SESSION – AG
STRENGTHS**

- Great location, great livestock
- Northern Montana College
- Livestock yard is pretty much state-of-the-art
- Railroad – although it is not “user friendly”
- Comfortable place to live – nice and quiet
- Packing plant
- Natural resources, grass, water, clean air
- Good reputation livestock, sheep and/or cattle
- Operate livestock well and freely
- Columbia Grain – peas and lentil production
- Organic Flax production

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT
LISTENING SESSION – EDUCATORS
STRENGTHS**

- Taxpayers provide our kids with a great education – if only we could keep them
- School system has always been top notch
- Great opportunity to live here – great school – glad I could raise my 4 kids here

- We know everyone – feel safe – comfortable
- Hometown atmosphere
- Sense of community
- People live here because they want to live here – like it – want to stay
- Classrooms are small – give individual attention
- Safe
- Ditto – great place to raise kids
- School district is a huge asset to the community
- Ditto all of the above
- Chinook has had a reputation for a quality school along the hi-line
- Good recreation – guests come in the fall to hunt, in the spring – gopher hunts, river fishing.
- Kids are known as individuals in our school system
- We are a county seat
- Nice county museum being well taken care of
- Battlefield
- Good school system
- Location provides opportunity for growth – need to think differently
- Highway 2 – highest travel is between Ft. Belknap and Havre
- Lots of empty buildings for relocation purposes, businesses
- Excellent clinic, nice park
- Nice public library
- Good grocery store
- Several banks
- Nice buildings
- Infrastructure of the town is in place – and here
- Kids are respectful and have good role models
- Town is very clean, lots of community pride – more so than in most places
- Safety for my family – can't imagine a better place
- The people are wonderful here – the best – like an extended family
- Everyone pulls together in a disaster and no one is left on their own
- Lloyd Sweet support has been unbelievable
- Nursing home here
- Eagles, Lion's Club, Chamber, 4-H, Girl Scouts, all the churches
- Always a successful fund raiser for the wildlife museum
- We have lots to offer –
- High quality museum
- Visitor Center completed
- Spring sports are difficult here – indoor track, tennis would be great –
- Entice businesses – to pay for all of these dreams
- Function outside of our comfort zone – just because we are an aging community, mustn't get negative

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT
LISTENING SESSION – FINANCE, BANKING INSURANCE, FSA
STRENGTHS**

- Good housing incentives are in place for people to buy a home
- Great place to live
- Hell of a good garbage man
- Less crime rate, clean
- Scholarship program through the school is great
- Cleaner properties
- Nice library
- Great retirement community
- Safe community to walk in and exercise
- Kids can take off on their bikes
- Hunting, fishing, recreation,
- Blaine County has more acres under block management hunting program than anywhere else in Montana – get more hunters every year.
- Finest upland bird gaming
- Block management program has brought a lot of hunters into Chinook
- Great nursing home
- Lloyd Sweet – his generosity
- Great golf course

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT
LISTENING SESSION – BUSINESSES/OUTFITTING
STRENGTHS**

- People like to come back because their family is still here – less expensive to live here, too.
- Nice yards, tree lined streets, people want to keep them nice
- Garden club – chooses a Home of the Week throughout the summer
- People are so very friendly
- Quality of food – restaurants are good
- Try to provide better service
- Good turnout for high school functions – support the kids
- Quality of life
- Wonderful scholarship program
- School is good
- We are opening our eyes to the drug problem
- Nice rest home
- Ditto
- Library is excellent
- We have a nice swimming pool

- Schools and teachers are excellent
- Great kids – parents care – show up for conferences, etc.
- Golf Course
- Business friendly attitude – businesses work together and help each other
- Good Extension office – good 4-H, Girl Scouts, summer programs
- We have the main things that are needed in a community –
- Northern Montana College is an asset
- Fantastic Christmas Stroll

CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM
LISTENING SESSION – SWEET MEDICAL CENTER
STRENGTHS

- Grant Award – will provide funds for those who cannot afford health care
- Nice environment to raise children
- Senior companion program
- Tight knit community
- People want to be involved – spend time after hours to serve others
- Good community to raise your children – good education, safe
- Ditto – people take care of each other
- Community willing to share what they have-cash, in kind, very generous
- Good people
- So much to offer for our size – Dr, P.A., Dentist, Optometrist, Nursing care, etc.
- Ditto
- Adult Protection Services – meet every six weeks – abuse watch, severe problems addressed with the elderly
- Good foundation, great community
- County seat – good active commissioners
- Sound educational system
- Nursing home is a huge asset for a community this side
- Chinook Motor Inn is a big asset-
- Banks are very supportive of our endeavors
- Nice clean town – paved streets, people care for their property
- Golf course
- Stock yards very active
- Vet clinics –
- Airport – recently renovated, charter services available
- Swimming pool – people come from Havre
- Lloyd Sweet – funds have done so much –
- Lion’s club
- Contractual agreement with Great Falls specialists – urologist, and podiatrist, same arrangement pending with Havre and Billings, too.
- Excellent EMT personnel – awesome!

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM
LISTENING SESSION – OIL AND GAS PRODUCERS
STRENGTHS**

- Great place to do business here in Chinook
- City Council is very helpful
- Everybody knows everybody – all great people
- Natural resources here
- School clubs and activities are good

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM
LISTENING SESSION – AG - IRRIGATORS
STRENGTHS**

- Good living here and great place to raise your family
- Sweet Memorial Scholarship great asset
- Clean beautiful town
- Milk River is lifeline of the hi-line
- Municipal water providing project – increased habitat in Milk River Valley
- Premier irrigation supply business in the valley – here in Chinook – Rainbow Irrigation
- Group of producers that feel they need to do it right – improved irrigation practices

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM
LISTENING SESSION – CIVIC GROUPS
STRENGTHS**

- Only chapter in the state of Japanese Flower design - Ikebana
- Quilt Guild – 30 members – encourage quilting and “show and tell” – donate to Wildlife Museum, raffles, Sweet Medical Center, etc.
- Garden Club
- Swim Team
- Youth baseball and Soccer
- 4-H
- Chamber of Commerce
- Milk River Genealogical Society
- Library Board
- Lion’s Club – gets a lot done around town – active
- Women’s Bowling Association
- Bowling alley
- North Central Stock Growers
- Tragedy happens – illness happens – they all get together
- There are people who are willing to wear several hats
- State Garden Club convention held in Chinook last year
- Walk to most places, reasonably priced
- Very nice fabric shop – County Quilts

- Pharmacy is very good
- Fairgrounds – have an events facility – hold PRCA rodeo in June - plus a Fair
- Blaine County has “Community Transportation Enhancement Program” - \$135,000 available – match is only 13.42%
- Appreciate business we do get from tribal areas
- Beautiful countryside

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM
LISTENING SESSION – LOCAL GOVERNMENT
PROJECTS**

- Continue sidewalk project
- Pursue coal to create jobs
- Use local resources better – oil and gas, coal
- More businesses along Main Street
- Recreational center for kids
- More businesses
- Improved fire equipment
- Recreational facility for kids
- Sidewalk project continued
- Recreational facility
- New City Hall
- Fire Hall without raising taxes
- Recreation for youth
- Business creation
- Method to deal with outsourcing to Havre
- Recreation for kids
- Recreation for kids and adults
- Facility for both kids and adults – Community Center
- Promote Battlefield and upper Missouri River Monument
- Become the richest county in the state
- Diversify and regionally pool resources
- Utilize natural resources
- Cleanup Highway 2
- Highway 2 cleanup
- Four for 2 on highway
- Stop the tourist and bring into town
- Improve highway through town
- Monument promotion
- Promote unique sky at night
- Marketing an promotion for unique location we enjoy
- Battlefield – NPS has plan/develop area
- Big Hole has 40000 visitors, we have 6000 – improve numbers
- Utilize Railroad

- Monument has hurt economy – reduce size to reduce impact
- Create small businesses
- Tax big box retail

LISTENING SESSION – CHURCHES PROJECTS

- Indoor swimming pool
- Four for two
- Manufacture local products like venison, beef, grains
- Department store to buy clothing, etc.
- Bear Paw Battlefield development needed
- Custer Battlefield has over million visitors – try to develop similar
- Self-help housing projects – like Habitat for Humanity
- Battlefield Visitors Center needed – have plans to create and have talked to tribe about location; need to purchase land; push NPS to pursue
- Faith-based initiatives may help fund some issues
- Water – need to consider upgrading emergency water resources
- Water source and treatment not adequate to supply industry
- Problem with entire Milk River Drainage – Fresno is filling up with silt/problem is basin wide

LISTENING SESSION – YOUTH PROJECTS

- Paint ball facility
- Recreational facility
- Wild life museum
- Movie theater
- Subway and Burger King
- Concerts brought to town
- YMCA
- Indoor pool
- Indoor basketball court – or outdoor
- Rec. center where we can play pool and hang out
- Youth rec. area
- Indoor skate park
- New tennis courts
- Ditto
- All weather track
- Lights at basketball court (Meadowlark)
- Improved internet service
- Improved cell phone service
- Folf course

- Drag strip
- Pole vault for the track team
- Big open space in rec. center
- Group to learn about your ethnic background
- Computer lounge in rec. center
- Pamida
- Ditto
- Any retail store
- Chain grocery store
- Sporting goods store
- Motocross track
- Encourage growth
- Weight room facility – can't get into the gym
- High school weight room is too small
- Skateboard Park
- Phone booth
- Taco Johns
- Digital Cable
- Turn the beet factory into a rec. center
- Affordable and better quality housing
- Better quality water
- Climbing wall
- Better art classes
- Bonfire
- We need to welcome people when they do come here
- Improve communication with administration
- Improve school spirit
- Computer program needs badly improved
- Not enough teachers to do advanced placement – not enough deeper math, etc
- Ditto
- Need to offer classes that we really need
- Improve music program
- School too focused on sports
- Foreign languages added
- Classes need to go beyond just the basics
- Too much focus on sports
- Computer drafting classes
- Teachers so stretched in every direction – if in choir can't take biology...etc.
- Year-round school
- Classes on politics
- Block scheduling
- Hospital
- Psychology class
- Better prepared for the real world – get out of narrow minded attitude

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT
LISTENING SESSION – SENIOR CITIZENS
PROJECTS**

- Clubs communicate more with each other
- A business center – a busy downtown business center
- Townhall meetings held in Chinook, where all factions of the community attend and we decide what is our vision, what do we want, how much business – and then go hit the targets.
- Expand clinic – less need to travel to GF - more money spent local
- Need a community center, rec. center
- Get community to come together for something besides funerals
- USDA kitchen facility built into the community center
- Dances and socials – lost our reason to get-together
- Want activities the whole family can partake in
- Start a cozy corner – soda fountain, few tables, juke box in the back...kids can be kids

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT
LISTENING SESSION – AG
PROJECTS**

- Bio diesel or gasohol needs to be developed and laws passed to support it
- Divide up water projects so that smaller contractors can bid on these big projects
- Get a stable market
- Chief Joseph visitor center – get it finished (feasibility study has been completed) – why it hasn't happened
- Vacant sugar beet building – used for something – industry
- Refine and value add to our ag products before we ship it out
- Housewives buy only US Beef
- 4 for 2
- Irrigation infrastructure repaired – may cost 100 million (Milk River)
- Compete with CRP – develop markets that encourage folks to get land out of CRP

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT
LISTENING SESSION – EDUCATORS
PROJECTS**

- Use the sugar beet building (Columbia Grain)
- New businesses, new industry
- Cabellas
- New track for the school
- Drug free area for our kids to go hang out
- Racquet ball court in the old Circle K
- Need a nice gym – hold events in it – run tournaments and cultural events
- Auditorium to lend itself to the arts

- Churches are active – some kind of community band formed
- New tennis courts – current ones are beyond repair
- Archery range, indoor running track, fill the Columbia Grain building
- Offer computer classes
- Bowling alley – all florescent lighting
- Recreational opportunities
- Taco Johns in the old Circle K store
- Theater – other things for grown ups to enjoy
- Bear Paw battlefield more developed

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT
LISTENING SESSION – FINANCE, BANKING INSURANCE, FSA
PROJECTS**

- Create better paying jobs
- Get the wildlife museum finished!
- Blaine County Development Corp back up and running again
- Bear Paw Development write a grant for the Wild Life Museum
- Completion of the dike –
- Get the word out about housing incentives and supports for home buyers
- Improve internet access
- Campground would be nice here in Chinook
- Mosquito birth control
- Something for the kids to do on the weekends – other than sports
- More trees on main streets
- Water park
- See a population of 3,000 – 3,500 in the town again
- Fill 8 vacant buildings on the Main Street –Indiana
- Capitalize on being the main gas area in the area
- Ft. Belknap bombing range – National Guard putting in
- Border Patrol increasing as well

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT
LISTENING SESSION – BUSINESSES/OUTFITTING
PROJECTS**

- More PR so that people know what is here
- Package our safe community, kids can fish, kids can bike
- Think regionally – work with Havre, Harlem, other communities to support each other
- Bring more diverse businesses here so the basic necessities are here
- A gym, rec. facility, and a place for kids to go after school
- Clean industry or finished value added ag product
- More for the older kids to do – rec. center, skateboard park
- Outlet store – good location for outlet stores

- Skateboard Park
- New building for fire and ambulance – city hall
- Have gym or rec. center- and have it open late at night, early in the mornings
- Value added ag products
- Fitness Center for adults
- Get a call center
- Stronger industrial arts program in our schools – Women in Construction
- 4 for 2
- Water slide
- Clothing store – socks, underwear, family clothing store
- Take advantage of potential Hydrogen development
- Need an assisted living center – no place for the “in between” to live
- RV park – overnight parking just west of town – build it into a place to stop

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM
LISTENING SESSION – SWEET MEDICAL CENTER
PROJECTS**

- Continue to grow services at the Medical Center
- Communications link in place for the various health care centers along the hi-line – to keep better track of patients and who has gone where for what
- Youth Center with organized activities
- Indoor exercise facility – YMCA
- Study to determine Assisted Living facility
- Provide dialysis
- Educate the community as to what services we have i.e., Senior Companion program
- Collaborate with the reservations to improve services
- Walkway between Grand Villa and Senior Center – so safer walking in winter
- Use Adult Protection Services to improve communication among health service providers - possibly involve reservations?
- Need more Main Street Economic Development
- Mosquito removal ☺
- More businesses in – so we can buy socks, etc.
- Department type store would be nice on Main Street
- Geriatric specific health care available – perhaps an intern
- Utilize Bear Paw Development grant writing services for funds
- Telemedicine developed
- Expand the building – (can’t use new grant money to go beyond the exterior walls)
- Improve relationship with Havre medical community – they are not interested in taking over our clinic – so use the benefits and specialists available at Havre
- Improve transportation when patient needs to see care out of town
- A perfect world!
- Attract nurses to bring their families here
- More professional jobs to keep the people here

- Can participate in the federal programs that provide “pay backs” for medical professionals
- Clinic services expand – possibly even have an infirmary
- YMCA
- Start a class at the high school to prep for a medical career
- Patient files are on modern database
- Communications – need to know what is happening with area and surrounding clinics regarding patient care
- Light rail to transport people along the hi-line
- Push telemedicine – get an intern here with support from Great Falls, etc.

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM
LISTENING SESSION – OIL AND GAS PRODUCERS
PROJECTS**

- Address drainage problem
- Rec. area for the kids to keep them involved
- Change laws:
 - State law – any new gas well drilled has a one-year holiday from paying taxes. Result: the first year the well gets pumped so heavy that the well is abused. Keep holiday law, but add safeguards.
- Educate radical individuals trying to stop production from cattle grazing to oil production on public lands
- Must continue multiple use of public lands
- Ditto

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM
LISTENING SESSION – AG - IRRIGATORS
PROJECTS**

- Need coordinated effort to address irrigation problems and system – cheap loans, business incentives to use water
- Need to produce something that uses the water to pay for the water
- Rehab economic development or innovative creative way of funding our irrigation problems
- Establish some kind of fund in a three – five county area to get some things done. Funds could be lobbied to get things done.
- Fix Fresno, raise the spillway crest, get manufacturing in that will use the water (and help pay for the water)
- Efficiently develop and use our water
- Get our water up to par – our economy will turn around
- Need economic development fund – don’t invest private funds into stock market- put it into the local system.....
- Two major gas lines cross Highway 2 – production

- Rabbit business-had to truck rabbits clear to Coeur d'Alene – is a need for rabbit production. Individuals could raise some – then supply production...entire rabbit is used- blood, pelts, meat, etc.
- Potato processing plant in this area- we can raise potatoes – good crop rotation
- Fund formed – for irrigation project
 - Revolving loan and grant fund – hit the ground and run
 - Need to get communities to focus
 - Pool money – form a foundation - use interest from it – and slowly do the project bit by bit
 - Give businesses loans to utilize the interest, too

**CHINOOK RESOURCE TEAM
LISTENING SESSION – CIVIC GROUPS
PROJECTS**

- Writing a book on homesteaders of Northwest Blaine County
- Protecting, preserving homestead cemeteries – all had churches with them
- Fire in the Wind – (book on historical fire) –proceeds used for library, fencing of cemeteries
- Put up informational signs on Hollandville – replica of church built to half size
- Improve cell service for producers to stay in closer touch with brokers...
- A community calendar – to organize our community meetings
- Market community as a small conference site
- Old Opera house above the Journal building – CTEP money could help with outside of the building – use it for rec. center or theater
- Business brought in that would keep our families here – jobs with good wages and benefits
- Expand daycare hours
- Clothing stores back in town
- People need to shop first locally – they do have socks at the hardware store!
- Expand retail base – one business will build on the other
- Get wildlife museum going – and products to buy
- Advertise the Chamber Business Directory and promote it
- Do an asset mapping project
- Need new tennis courts – and a track – utilize Nike foundation