

RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

for

HARDIN, MONTANA

MARCH 23 – 24, 2004

**In partnership with
Montana Department of Commerce, Montana Economic Developers Association,
NorthWestern Energy, USDA/Rural Development, LDK Associates, Headwaters
RC&D, Beartooth RC&D and the people of Hardin.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It was a privilege to spend two days in your vibrant community and learn of its challenges, strengths and dreams. Hardin is a unique community that is full of potential – and the right kind of people to make a difference for Hardin’s future.

Before digging in to the report itself, I would like to give recognition to Montana Department of Commerce (MDOC), USDA/Rural Development and MEDA – Montana Economic Developers Association. MDOC sponsors Resource Team Assessments across the state, while USDA/Rural Development provides funding for training team members and follow-up costs. MEDA provides the contractual services that make Resource Teams possible. You can join MEDA and become a part of this economic development network at <http://www.medamembers.org>.

Special thanks are due Paul Green, Economic Development Director for the City of Hardin. Other community groups pitched in as well, but Paul served as the spark plug behind this project and encouraged across-the-board community involvement. In addition, I applaud each and every team member that dedicated hours of work and travel in order to participate on the team: Nikki Stahley, USDA/Rural Development; Larry Keown, LDK Associates, Ellen Hanpa, Montana Department of Commerce; Deborah Singer, Northwestern Energy; and Connie Ternes-Daniels of Headwaters RC&D. 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 Hardin local leadership, Hardin Chamber of Commerce, Beartooth RC&D and Al Jones, Regional Development Officer for MDOC were also instrumental in the assessment process. There was a notable absence of input from the tribes in the area. Several attempts were made to hold a mini-assessment with the tribal leadership, but a date is still pending. The tribes were very willing to contribute to the process. The team will add an addendum to this report once that meeting has taken place.

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

Be sure to attend the follow-up Town Meeting scheduled for June 9th, 7:00pm at the Old Depot.

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 Hardin, Montana, in evaluating the community's assets and liabilities and in developing suggestions for improving the environment, social and economic future of the area.

Paul Green, Economic Director for the City of Hardin, served as the local contact and local team leader for the project. Paul took the lead in agenda development, logistics, budgeting and publicity for the assessment. Paul was assisted by local leadership, Beartooth RC&D and Al Jones of Montana Department of Commerce. 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 Hardin officials indicated would be needed to respond to the problem areas identified.

The Resource Team interviewed over 120 people during March 23 – 24th. The team was available for listening to the following 10 groups: Hardin Chamber of Commerce; Churches and Volunteers; High School Students and Teachers; Realtors, Lawyers, CPA's, Insurance and Banking; Ag Producers; Law Enforcement, Fire, Ambulance, Social Services, Chemical Dependency, Mental Health; Local Government; Ag Business, Auto Maintenance, Trades, Carpenters, Plumbers, Electricians; Senior Citizens; Media, Retail, Lodging, Restaurants, Entertainment. As mentioned in the Executive Summary, there was an absence of tribal participation. Hopefully, a mini-assessment can be held in the near future and serve as a supplement to this report.

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

Upon completion of the interviews, the team met in a work session to compare notes and share comments. 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 this a final report to Hardin.

A preliminary oral report and a summary of group recommendations was presented to the people of Hardin on March 24th.

Following the oral report, this formal written report was prepared and is presented to Hardin. Copies will be made available in print and electronically. The report is available on the MEDA website at <http://www.medamembers.org/resourceteams.php>. A meeting is planned for June 9th to review the report with the people of Hardin and to set priorities and initiate action plans.

**HARDIN, MONTANA
RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT
MARCH 23 – 34, 2004**

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Web: <http://www.headwatersrcd.org>**

HARDIN RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT
MARCH 23 – 24, 2004
AGENDA

March 23

7:00am – 8:00am	Breakfast at the Lariat Kitchen – Paul will pick up team at hotel.
8:00 am – 11:30 am	City Tour
11:30 am- 1:10 pm	Lunch with Chamber (Little Big Man Pizza)
1:30 pm- 2:15pm	Churches and Community Volunteers listening session (City Council chamber)
2:30 pm- 3:15 pm	Listening session Students (High School)
3:00 pm-3:45 pm	Listening session Teachers (High School)
4:30 pm- 5:15	Listening session Realtors, Lawyers, CPA's Insurance Banking (City Council chamber)

March 24

7:00 am- 8:15 am	Listening session Ag producers (Purple Cow)
8:30 am- 9:15 am	Listening session Law Enforcement, Fire, Ambulance, Social Services, Chemical Dep. Mental Health (City Council chamber)
9:30 am- 10:15 am	Local Government (City Council chamber)
10:30 am- 11:15 am	Ag Business, Auto Maintenance, and Trades Carpenters, Plumbers , electricians (City Council chamber)
11:30 am- 1:00pm	Lunch with Seniors at the senior center
1:15 pm – 2:00 pm	Media, Retail, Lodging, Restaurants, Entertainment (City Council chamber)
2:00 pm- 5:00 pm	Team Working Session
5:00 pm- 6:00 pm	Dinner for Team (4 Aces)
7:00 pm – 8:15PM	Town Meeting (Middle School Aud.)

HARDIN RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT
MARCH 23 – 24, 2004

Note: These Main Issues are a summary of the comments, ideas and suggestions made during the Hardin Resource Team Assessment Listening Sessions. This list is the outline and framework for the Resource Team written report.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

- Jurisdiction
- Crime
- Juvenile Crime
- Enforcement
- Coordination
- Prosecution
- Elected vs. Appointed
- City Police Force

HARDIN AND TRIBAL ISSUES - It's a two way street.

- Two way trust and cultural understanding
- Communication
- Patience
- Stereotypes
- Develop relationships
- Establish commerce with tribe and Hardin
- Jurisdictional
- Discrimination

COMMUNITY

- Community Pride
- Community Capacity
- Attitude
- Self Image
- Volunteerism
- Communication
- Open mind to growth and change

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Watson Drive Sewer and Water
- Ability to expand
- Repairs and upgrades to existing system
- Airport relocation

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

- Clean Up
- Littering
- Loitering
- Beautification
- Fill and revitalize empty buildings and maintain historical integrity

TOURISM/RECREATION

- Marketing
 - Package attractions
 - Explore and expand partners/network
- Signage
- Leverage assets and resources
- The Arts
- Paul Dyck
- Hwy 212
- Museum expansion

COMMUNITY and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Clothing Store
- Leakage to Billings
- Retain/support existing businesses
- Industrial park development
- Educate businesses and employees as to what is available in Hardin and the area
- Non-Profit Economic Development Corporation
- Resource Directory
- Employment
 - Livable Wage
 - Work here – should live here
- Agriculture
 - Lack of young farmers
 - Seasonal Workforce
 - Technology Transfer
 - Ethanol
 - New markets
- Transportation – leverage location

HARDIN RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

Report by: Nikki Stahley
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Web: www.rurdev.usda.gov

The Assessment Team received a warm welcome from the Hardin community and the morning tour was exceptionally enjoyable as well as informative. I have visited Hardin on numerous occasions and after the tour and listening sessions with community citizens, I realized that Hardin has many strengths and assets to offer. Hopefully, the assessment report will assist the community in seeking resources and ideas of improving and/or correcting the items of concern:

MAIN TOPIC: LAW ENFORCEMENT

Issue: Jurisdiction

Adequate law enforcement is essential to a community.

The jurisdiction appears to be the major concern – with the city not having a designated police force, but utilizing the county sheriff’s department (which is not fully staffed to concentrate in the city) and then the Crow Reservation utilizes the BIA police department. Not having definite boundaries set for law enforcement allows violence, illegal and dangerous activity to creep into a community.

Recommendations:

The community leaders may want to consider utilizing the dollars that they give to the county for law enforcement and fund their own police department. If they are in need of new buildings, i.e. police station, city jail, vehicles there are several Federal loan and grant programs available that provide financial assistance to communities to assist in professional fees associated with a project and the project itself.

Resources: USDA-Rural Development, Community Programs
Mitch Copp, Community Program Director (406) 585-2529
Shad Weber, Community Program Specialist
USDA Rural Development
1629 Ave. D, Bldg. A
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(406)657-6297 ext. 125
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- Community Facilities Direct and Guaranteed Loan Program and the CF Grant Program eligible organizations receive help to construct, enlarge, and improve community facilities that provide essential services in rural areas and towns. This assistance can include support for police facilities and equipment, criminal justice centers, hospitals, health clinics, nursing homes, community centers, roads and streets, libraries, schools, etc.

MAIN TOPIC: HARDIN AND TRIBAL ISSUES

Issue: Relationships and Culture

Since the community is so closely related to two reservations, the Crow Reservation and the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, there are cultural and trust issues to understand and integrate within the community.

Recommendations:

The children of mixed cultures are attending the same schools and learning to understand each other's culture and to gain each other's trust; however, these issues cannot be learned only at school, they must be addressed at the home and in the community itself on both sides of the cultural differences. There are many seminars, educational classes and activities presented by both the tribal communities and the non-tribal communities. All of these opportunities to gain understanding about each other needs to be incorporated by each non-tribal and tribal family, then in turn the communities will ultimately win.

Resources:

Crow Nation – www.angelfire.com/my/rabiddeputydawg

Northern Cheyenne – www.ncheyenne.net

City of Hardin – www.hardinmt.com

MAIN TOPIC: HOUSING

Issue: Compliance, Upkeep and Subdivision

The housing concerns were related to lower housing values, Section 8 Housing not in compliance, home ownership pride, and a need for subdivision development for mid priced housing with the condo, townhouse, and patio home concept.

Recommendations:

- Participation among homeowners in displaying home ownership pride can be a goal for the community leaders. Project days could be scheduled, with community potlucks throughout the city to make the cleanup fun and productive. The local newspapers and media could assist in getting the word out that the people of Hardin are encouraging homeowners, renters as landlords of rental property to take pride in their property, thereby, showing visitors and newcomers that Hardin is a great place to visit and live.
- A Task Force could be established to work with the Section 8 housing providers to ensure the homes utilizing Section 8 housing vouchers are safe and sanitary.
- Housing values – keeping property values in line with new construction is a challenge, however, when the business and tourism ideas are enhanced, the housing values will follow.

- Subdivision development – many communities tend to build subdivisions for the very low-income families and then the higher income families. What are needed to keep the middle-income families in your community are homes in the mid-price range and these can be built utilizing condos, townhouses and patio homes. Utilizing this type of housing, the community will be able to meet the needs of seniors and professional people who do not have the time, energy or ability to maintain their home.

Resources:

There are several programs available for assisting homebuyers, renovating homes and building homes. For specific information about these programs and how they will be a benefit to your community, call the following resources:

USDA-Rural Development, Rural Housing Service.
Deborah Chorlton, Program Director for the State Office (406) 585-2515

USDA Rural Development Area Office
Debra A. Swanson, Area Director
1629 Ave D, Bldg. A
Billings, MT 59102
(406) 657-6297 ext. 4
email: debra.swanson@mt.usda.gov

- Single Family Housing Guaranteed Loans used to assist low to moderate-income families who cannot obtain conventional financing without assistance. USDA-RD can provide a 90% guarantee to traditional lender loans.
- 502 Direct Loan Program designed to assist low and very-low income families with little or no down payment, at a low interest rate, with home purchase.
- 504 Program is a Home Improvement Loan and Grant Program designed to improve or modernize an existing home.

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- Community Facilities Direct and Guaranteed Loan Program and the CF Grant Program eligible organizations receive help to construct, enlarge, and improve community facilities that provide essential services in rural areas and towns. This assistance can include support for police facilities and equipment, criminal justice centers, hospitals, health clinics, nursing homes, community centers, roads and streets, libraries, schools, etc.

Community Development Block Grant – HOME Program
PO Box 200545
Helena, MT 59620-0545
(406) 444-0092

Montana Board of Housing
Bog Morgan
PO Box 20052
Helena, MT 59620-0528
(406) 444-3040

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

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY

Issue: Attitude

Some issues of concern were lack of community pride and positive attitude, doubting self-image, need younger volunteers, weak communication and narrow minded about growth and change. Your community has a lot to offer, it has a variety of skilled leadership, volunteers and has already shown projects can get done, i.e. community center, the museum, and depot.

Recommendations:

I recommend a Community Task Force of 6-10 members be appointed to provide direction for the community to gain "Community Pride". This Task Force may include representatives from lenders, clergy, retail/professional businesses, federal/state/county/city employees, educators and medical personnel. The Task Force needs to list community goals that would enhance attitudes, self-image, communication, open-mindedness and community pride. The Task Force may consider conducting a survey of their prospective goals, priorities, and timeframes to get the feel of the community so this will truly be a community effort. Surveys should be sent to all members of the community including the high school students. Based upon the results of the survey, the Task Force can work up a 2-5 year plan of the projects acknowledged by the community.

The Task Force may want to conduct another survey for seeking volunteers for the leaders, skilled labor and knowledge needed for the project. This survey could also include a request for donations to assist with the project. The media (newspaper, radio, and television) should be informed at all times so they can give a positive note on the community effort. Once people realize they are making progress and participating as a "community", the idea of volunteerism will grow along with a positive attitude for growth and change in the community.

Resources: Networking with other cities via Chambers of Commerce, State Chamber of Commerce in Helena and the Montana Economic Developers Association to gain ideas of what projects are successful in other communities.

MAIN TOPIC: INFRASTRUCTURE

Issue: Sewer and Water

The concerns of the community are the Watson Drive Sewer and Water deficiencies, ability to expand the sewer and water system beyond the city limits, repairs and upgrades to the existing system and airport relocation.

Recommendations:

The citizens living in the Watson Drive area have been seeking guidance and assistance on being annexed to the city so they can have public sewer and water. They need to continue on this endeavor and continue speaking out on this problem due to the safety and health hazard their sewer and water system has become.

The city also needs to consider the ability to expand to contiguous areas of the city. The city has a long-range plan for repairs and upgrades to the existing system.

There are several State and Federal loan and grant programs available that provide both financial assistance for the planning process and funding required to complete projects.

Resources: USDA-Rural Development, Community Programs
Mitch Copp, Community Program Director (406) 585-2529
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Billings, MT 59102
(406)657-6297 ext. 125
email: shad.weber@mt.usda.gov

Montana Rural Water Systems (MRWS)
925 7th Ave. South, Great Falls, MT 59045
(406) 454-1151
mrws@worldnet.att.net

Montana Department of Commerce Community Development Division
PO Box 2200501
Helena, Montana 59620-0501
Newell Anderson, Administrator
(406) 444-3757
neanderson@state.mt.us

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
www.dnrc.state.mt.us
rbeck@state.mt.us

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
www.deq.state.mt.us
tlivers@state.mt.us

MAIN TOPIC: DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION:

Issue: Clean up and Revitalize Downtown

The Hardin residents and businesses are very concerned about the need to clean up their community, eliminate littering, loitering and continue to beautify the downtown area, fill/revitalize empty buildings and maintain historical integrity.

Recommendations:

I recommend the Chamber of Commerce coordinate with the local businesses and community leaders to encourage clean-up activities, thus improving the community pride and self-image of the citizens of Hardin. This approach can help improve the community, thereby, presenting itself more favorably to visitors, prospective businesses and prospective residents. The Chamber beautification projects should be a year-round project and seek to involve as many people as possible. Media attention during these projects is highly recommended to keep citizens aware of the ongoing community participation to revitalize the community and encourage others to join in.

The current Hardin Strategic Plan includes rehabilitation of the Hotel Becker and the Sullivan Building. This plan should be reviewed semi-annually to ensure it is being followed or revised as needed.

Resources:

Networking with other City Chambers of Commerce, the State Chamber of Commerce in Helena, and the Montana Economic Developers Association can provide resources and share examples of similar programs and successes in other parts of Montana.

MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM/RECREATION

Issue: Increasing Tourism Potential/Marketing

The listening sessions brought to light several great ideas for increasing tourism and recreation for this community and area. The discussions led to increasing the arts, bringing in the Paul Dyck museum, expansion of the present museum. The concerns were how to market these attractions effectively.

Recommendations:

As you already know, Big Horn County has many historic sites that entice the history buffs and the special interest groups who like to camp, hike, bike, hunt and fish. All of this is accessible around the city of Hardin. Many travelers view the Internet to check out the historic and scenic sites in conjunction with accommodations and possible package deals available in the areas that they plan to travel. The businesses can work together to have attractive, but affordable packages for the traveler to stay in Hardin while site seeing in Big Horn County. (Hotel/motel accommodation, special dinners, museum

passes, etc.) Also, you will want to entice the traveler to get off the interstate and to drive into Hardin to spend money at the local businesses and see the sites your city has to offer. Signage is very important: the size, appropriately and timely placed, attractive and informative. Hardin has two exits and appropriate signs need to be placed several times before each exit for those traveling either direction. Your main intent is to keep the traveler in Big Horn County, not only for the actual attractions, but to enjoy your town and all it has to offer. You do NOT want them to go to Billings to stay the night, be entertained and shop.

Resources:

Montana Department of Commerce has a grant program to assist in the promotion and implementation of tourism related events, Special Events Grant Program (SEGP). Montana communities, organizations and tribal governments sponsoring or planning special event projects are invited to apply for \$50,000 in state tourism “bed tax” grant funds. Contact Carol Crockett at (406) 941-2796, email: Carol@visitmt.com.

Travel Montana is the statewide tourism development and promotion program provided by the Montana Department of Commerce. <http://www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/>

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Issue: Support of Local Business and Services

The main item of concern was the leakage to Billings for housing, entertainment, shopping and medical needs. Other concerns are lack of local business employees being aware of what is available in Hardin and surrounding area, the need for a resource directory, the need for a non-profit economic development corporation, retain and support existing businesses, further development of industrial park, transportation (relocate the airport and implement commuting buses from Hardin to Billings for employees), and agriculture is suffering with many changes, i.e. lack of young farmers, seasonal workforce minimal, technology transfer and new markets needed.

Recommendations:

I recommend the community seriously review their transportation needs, i.e. relocate the airport to meet FAA standards so the tourists who fly in for fishing, hunting and hiking fly in and stay in Big Horn County for all their needs. You should also consider implementing a commuting service at a reasonable cost for vans or buses to run 3-5 times a day from Hardin to Billings and back to Hardin for employees working in Billings. By improving the transportation, more businesses will open and this will create jobs as well.

The county employment positions could either have a restriction that the employees live in the county or the city needs to develop a plan to entice the employees to live in the county and become community minded. In order to entice employees to live in the county, the plan must include mid-range housing, improved law enforcement, more businesses, i.e. several clothing stores, more grocery stores, & etc. The businesses could offer discounts for local shoppers to encourage them to buy locally, i.e. discount tickets, appreciation days for teachers, seniors, law enforcement, students & etc.

Also, keep in mind, there are families wanting to live in a rural setting but work in Billings. An enticing slogan (i.e. “Make Hardin your home and enjoy a rural setting, Hardin is only 35 minutes from Billings”) could be developed for promoting families to be a part of your community, even if they do not work in Big Horn County. The media, local flyers, county or city web sites and job vacancy announcements could use the slogan. The promotions should include the slogan, a concise pitch for what Hardin has to offer, the City of Hardin web site address, as well as the benefits of utilizing the commuting service versus driving your own vehicle, i.e. due to increased transportation costs, the commuting service can save you dollars (use a comparison chart) and allow the employee time to relax, read the paper, take a snooze and then come home to your family in a serene rural setting away from the big city atmosphere.

Resources: USDA-Rural Development, Community Programs
Mitch Copp, Community Program Director (406) 585-2529
Shad Weber, Community Program Specialist
USDA Rural Development
1629 Ave. D, Bldg. A
Billings, MT 59102
(406)657-6297 ext. 125
email: shad.weber@mt.usda.gov

John Guthmiller, Program Director
USDA Rural Development – Rural Business – Cooperative Services
PO Box 850
Bozeman, MT 59771
(406) 585-2549
email: john.guthmiller@mt.usda.gov

Also, keeping young people in farming and ranching. There are several resources to assist beginning farmers and ranchers:

Montana Department of Agriculture
Lee Boyer
PO Box 200201
Helena, MT 59620-0201
(406) 444-2402
lboyer@state.mt.us

Farm Service Agency
Big Horn County
724 W 3rd
Hardin, MT 59034
(406) 665-3442

Report by: Larry Keown, Director
LDK Associates, LLC
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Sheridan, WY 82801
Ph: 307.751.0540
Email: lkeown@ldkassociates.com
Web: <http://www.ldkassociates.com>

I would like to thank the folks of Hardin and the surrounding area for their hospitality during the Resource Assessment. The planning and resultant turnout for the assessment is a great indicator of the commitment the community has for building a better future for its citizens and businesses. Hardin has accomplished some great things (museum, depot, community center, etc.), which show it has the ability and capacity to make things happen. I wish the community the best in your future endeavors and offer my assistance if needed. Thanks again for the experience.

MAIN TOPIC: HARDIN AND TRIBAL ISSUES

Issue: Build Working, Effective Community - Tribal Relationships

The listening sessions generated many comments regarding relations with adjacent and nearby Indian tribes. Comments ranged from misconceptions and stereotypes to capitalizing on partnership opportunities for future development. Specific comments offered were developing cultural understanding, improving two-way communication, developing patience, erasing stereotypes and misperceptions, developing relationships, forming partnerships for economic development, and overcoming jurisdictional issues.

A high school student who eloquently conveyed her wishes for relations between Hardin and the Crow Tribe offered the most profound comment. She said,

“Don’t say, He’s Crow or He’s white, but rather He’s from Hardin.”

This comment is at the heart of building positive relationships across cultural divides. It exhibits understanding, tolerance, patience, and willingness for a future that is beneficial to all cultures.

Probably the most significant issue is that of misperceptions and stereotypes that plague Hardin and local Indian tribes. Many individuals offered comments about Hardin’s image, such as, “Getting comfortable with itself,” “Needing to develop a good self-image,” “Hardin has a bad image,” and “Dispel the inaccurate ‘rough’ image of Hardin.” These stereotypes and misperceptions about Hardin are similar to the stereotypes and misperceptions about local Indian tribes.

Cultural issues affect many areas of Hardin’s future – law enforcement, housing, economic development, employment, business, image, politics, etc. Therefore, it is imperative that Hardin and the local tribes develop a healthy and effective working relationship to address and overcome many of these issues. The Hardin Strategic Plans Goals and Objectives (Number 7) specifies,

“Achieve cooperation and coordination between the City of Hardin and the Crow Indian Reservation.”

Recommendations:

The difficulty of achieving this Goal is the “how to.” And, one must recognize that it will take time and patience to develop these relationships. This goal can be accomplished by 1) developing a commitment to improve relations regardless of the “bumps in the road” that will most likely occur, 2) developing understanding and cultural sensitivity by both Hardin and the tribe(s), 3) developing personal relationships that nurture the business relationship, 4) beginning to work on simple issues that are mutually beneficial to both Hardin and the tribe(s), and 5) maturing and nurturing the relationship for the long-term.

The How-To:

1. Detailed Relationship Assessment: Conduct a detailed relationship assessment between the Crow and Northern Cheyenne Tribes and City of Hardin. This assessment should determine issues of common concern, as well as, those in disagreement. In addition, perceptions are identified and each party can clarify their true feelings and attitudes.

In most cases, the perceptions of what each entity wants/desires have been distorted over time. Erase perceptions and seek common ground on issues. Develop a relationship strategic plan on what each needs to do to improve working relations. Examples might include:

- a. Educational Workshops on Understanding and Appreciating Tribal/Community Culture
- b. How to Work Effectively With Tribes
- c. How to Work Effectively with Communities
- d. Develop a Joint Tribal/Community Steering Group (to coordinate issues/projects)
- e. Facilitated Joint Meetings to Begin Working on Issues
- f. Regularly Scheduled Joint Meetings to Coordinate/Cooperate
- g. Monitoring and Evaluation of Progress

2. Cultural Understanding: It is imperative that community leaders demonstrate publicly a desire and commitment to improve relationships with local tribes. Offer leadership and community workshops to better understand the local tribes. Include topics, such as historical events, cultural protocol, tribal government structure and operations, communications, building trust and relationships, etc. These workshops should be conducted on a regular basis and could be included in community events.

3. Council of Governments: Many communities have established a “Council of Governments” to effectively cooperate and coordinate activities and issues. The councils consist of government leaders in the community and surrounding area, such as, mayors, county commission chair, tribal leader(s), state organization leaders, county sheriff, police chief, fire chief, emergency services coordinator, etc. The Council must operate as a coordinating body – not a problem solving body. Their role is to provide each other updates on issues and coordination of activities. Working committees (both standing and project oriented) are established to address issues in detail and report back to the Council of Governments. The objective is to avoid the leaders of the Council becoming bogged down with trying to address and resolve issues.

4. Sister City: Hardin should seek out a sister city that has been successful building relations with an adjacent Indian tribe. Community leaders would visit this Sister City and learn how they have developed effective working relations with their neighboring tribe, surfaced and addressed issues, and worked jointly on issues and projects.

Resources:

Recommendations 1 and 2 – I offer my services for the above recommendations simply because LDK Associates, LLC is the only company I know of who does this kind of work. I am familiar with and have worked on relationship assessments and conducted workshops between Montana tribes, state agencies, counties, and NPO's.

Company: LDK Associates, LLC
Contact: Larry Keown
Address: 36 Pine Lane, Suite One
Sheridan, WY 82801
Phone: 307-751-0540
E-Mail: lkeown@ldkassociates.com
Web Site: <http://www.ldkassociates.com>

Recommendation 3 – The following organizations can provide assistance in setting up a "Council of Governments."

National League of Cities
Montana League of Cities

Recommendation 4 -- The following communities could serve as a Sister City to Hardin. Others are available with a little research.

Polson, Montana
Lander, Wyoming

All Recommendations – Sources of funding to complete many of the items recommended above can be acquired from:

1. Montana Power Company
http://www.mtpower.com/community/cm_foundation_appguide.htm

2. 1st Interstate Bank Foundation
<http://text.firstinterstatebank.com/foundation/guidelines.html>

3. Qwest
<http://www.uswest.com/about/company/sponsorships/foundation/>

4. American Express

<http://home3.americanexpress.com/corp/philanthropy/cultural.asp>

5. American Express Philanthropic Program
americanexpress.com/corp/philanthropy

6. Kiewit Companies Foundation (No internet site found)

Mike Faust
1000 Kiewit Plaza
Omaha, NE 68131
(402) 342- 2052

7. Kellogg Foundation
<http://www.wkkf.org/Grants/Default.asp>

8. AT&T Foundation
www.att.com/foundation

9. The ConAgra Foundation (No Internet site found)
C/o ConAgra Corporate Relations
One ConAgra Drive
Omaha, NE 68102-5001
(402) 978-4160

10. Fannie Mae Foundation
<http://www.fanniemaefoundation.org/>

11. Norwest Foundation
Norwest Ctr.
Sixth and Marquette
Minneapolis, MN 55479-1055
(612) 667-7860

Note: Groups not located in the Twin Cities should approach the Norwest Bank in their community. Application form not required. Initial approach is by letter. One copy of proposal needed. No deadlines given. Board meeting time varies, usually every two months. Final notification is given within two weeks after meeting.

12. Public Welfare Foundation
<http://www.publicwelfare.org/grants/cedp.asp>

13. Target Stores Giving Program
33 South 6th Street
P.O. Box 1392
Minneapolis, MN 55440

Note: Target has over 800 stores nationwide, and through each store it supports its respective local community. Target's giving is store driven because they believe each individual Target knows its

community best. Nonprofit organizations should consider their local store's Team Leader as their contact.

14. The UPS Foundation (No Internet site found)
55 Glenlake Parkway, NE
Atlanta, GA 30328
(404) 828-6374

15. Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation
<http://www.washcorp.com/Foundation/default.htm>

16. Wells Fargo
http://www.wellsfargo.com/about/charitable/mo_guidelines.jhtml

17. Wal-Mart
<http://www.walmartfoundation.org/wmstore/goodworks/scripts/index.jsp>

18. National Forests
Most National Forests have a Rural Development Grant program that allows matching funding for states and local governments and organizations for various activities. Contact the local National Forest headquarters for more information and availability of funds.

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY

Issue: Community Leadership

Many issues surfaced at the listening sessions around the concept of community pride, community capacity, attitude, self-image, volunteerism, communication, and being open to growth and change. In my thinking this equates to LEADERSHIP in the community and the ability to orchestrate change. I believe Hardin has a good leadership base; however I would like to stimulate thinking on a different level. Allow me to elaborate.

Without leadership, a community cannot effectively address and resolve issues through strategic planning, conflict resolution, or even coordination with other entities. Further more, addressing issues of low wages, economic development, jobs, substance abuse, youth activities, infrastructure, community pride, etc. requires a community that is mobilized, engaged, and committed. Hardin has shown it can be successful in this area by raising funds and reconstructing the train station, developing a community center and other projects. However, leadership is more than building stuff -- it is also addressing issues and orchestrating change. It is also, more than looking to elected officials to resolve issues or relying on funding to solve problems.

Leadership, in a contemporary sense, is that of facilitating a community to face and address their problems. Consider the following definition of community Leadership:

“Rather than define leadership either as a position of authority in a social structure or as a personal set of

characteristics, we may find it a great deal more useful to define leadership as an activity. This allows for leadership from multiple positions in a social structure. A president and clerk can both lead. It also allows for the use of a variety of abilities depending on the demands of the culture and situation. Personal abilities are resources for leadership applied differently in different contexts. As we know, at times they are not applied at all. Many people never exercise leadership, even though they have the personal qualities we might commonly associate with it. By unhinging leadership from personal traits, we permit observations of the many different ways in which people can exercise plenty of leadership everyday without “being leaders.”

Ronald A. Heifetz, 1994
“Leadership Without Easy Answers”
The Belknap Press of Harvard University

By using Heifetz’s definition, we can assume that anyone in the community has the ability to lead and assist the community in addressing and resolving issues. That is the issue in many communities -- that too many citizens and groups rely too much on elected officials to solve all the problems. Such a scenario is a recipe for failure for the individuals involved. Consider what Heifetz has to say about community leadership.

“Leadership is a normative concept because implicit in people’s notions of leadership are images of a social contract. Imagine the difference in behavior when people operate with the idea that ‘leadership means influencing the community to follow the leader’s vision’ verses ‘leadership means influencing the community to face its problems.’ In the first instance, influence is the mark of leadership; a leader gets people to accept his vision, and communities address problems by looking to him. If something goes wrong, the fault lies with the leader. In the second, progress is the measure of leadership; leaders mobilize people to face problems, and communities make progress on problems because leaders challenge and help them do so. If something goes wrong, the fault lies with both leaders and the community.”

Many individuals feel that they cannot become a candidate for public office because it would be detrimental to their business or other factors. In a traditional sense this could be true. However, if one seriously considers the contemporary approach presented above, it becomes much more risk free, as the community becomes the catalyst for addressing and resolving issues. The leader (public official) merely becomes the facilitator in a community problem-solving environment.

Recommendations:

1. Reference Resource: Acquire multiple copies of “Leadership Without Easy Answers” by Ronald A. Heifetz and make it available to elected, volunteer, and appointed officials in the community.
2. Leadership Education: Hardin should seriously consider an open community Leadership Curriculum for any individual interested in learning about community leadership. Many communities have successfully offered these sessions over a period of months. The curriculum often includes – Leadership, Working With Volunteers, Serving of Boards, Political Processes, Business Development, Conflict Resolution, etc. Most programs are offered and managed by the local chamber of commerce.

Resources:

1. Leadership Without Easy Answers

Ronald A. Heifetz, 1994

The Belknap Press of Harvard University

ISBN 0-674-51858-6

Web Address: <http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog/HEILEA.html>

2. National League of Cities offers Leadership Programs. Web site: <http://www.nlc.org/>

MAIN TOPIC: LAW ENFORCEMENT**Issue: Multiple Concerns**

Many individuals at the listening sessions expressed concerns about law enforcement – jurisdiction, crime, enforcement, prosecution, coordination, etc. It is obvious that citizens have little confidence in the agencies handling of law enforcement issues. It appears that communication is a main issue – multiple jurisdictions with little communication between the various law enforcement entities.

Recommendations:

Create a Multi-Agency Law Enforcement Coalition: Agencies that should be considered in forming a local coalition might include: City of Hardin, Big Horn County, BIA Police, and FBI. Other entities that might be included are: Search and Rescue, Fire, and Emergency Management. Folks just sitting down and discussing coordination, jurisdiction, overlap, etc could resolve many of the jurisdictional issues.

Resources:

Guidance for making this happen should follow the same format as described in the “Community” section of my report describing Leadership.

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**Issue: Hardin’s Strategic Plan**

The Hardin Community has a great strategic plan. However, citizens in the community did not mention it once. This leads one to ponder if the plan is a product of and embraced by all or most citizens in the community. The strategic plan is a great document outlining the future direction for Hardin. I could not find a date on the plan however it outlines 5 and 10-year projects. This leads to another important concept in strategic planning – the plan should be dynamic and evaluated on a regular basis. This evaluation should be conducted on a community wide basis much like this assessment.

Recommendations:

Review and evaluate accomplishments and needed changes in the Hardin Strategic Plan. Conduct the evaluation in an open environment including as many citizens and adjacent interests as possible.

Resources:

1. "A Guide to Strategic Planning for Rural Communities"
USDA Rural Development, Office of Community Development
Reporter's Building, Room 701
300 7th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20024
1-800-645-4712
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ocd>
April 1998

2. Strategic Planning Consultants: There are many consultants available to assist the community in the strategic planning process. They can assist the community by asking questions, facilitating meetings, documenting results, etc. However, they may require significant funding. If the community chooses to go in this direction, I would contact the Montana League of Cities, National League of Cities, and/or other communities for recommendations of credible consultants.

Report by: Ellen M. Hanpa
Montana Department of Commerce
Treasure State Endowment Program
Program Assistant
PO Box 200523
Helena, MT 59620-0523
Phone: 406-841-2790
Fax: 406-841-2771
e-mail: ehanpa@state.mt.us
web page: http://commerce.state.mt.us/cdd/cdd_home.html

First, I would like to thank the community for their gracious hospitality and Paul Green for his organizational masterminding of the evaluation.

MAIN TOPIC: INFRASTRUCTURE

Issue: 1917 Sewer System

The 1917 sewer system was brought up in many sessions, both as a problem and as a potential project. The system has served the town beyond its years of expected operation and is now experiencing the aches and pains of a system that age.

Recommendations:

- Continue with reconstruction of central area sewer system. Funding sources available include Treasure State Endowment Program grant and Community Development Block Grant program.
- Increasing user rates would be beneficial for grant competitions.
- Develop a Capital Improvement Plan for Infrastructure
This plan is developed for a five-year period and is an essential tool to evaluate local needs, identify priorities objectively, identify costs and funding sources, and schedule projects. Having a community developed plan encourage buy-in by more people when rates need to be increased and every day life is disrupted by the project.
- Watson Street Area. Encourage the residents to be part of the Capital Improvement Plan process. This area is definitely in need of inclusion in the city expansion of sewer system.
- Plan for expansion of sewer system. Existing infrastructure is a major selling point for industry and housing development.
- Encourage community leaders and residents to attend W2SACT workshops when they are in your area.

Recommended Resources:

The following websites have good information on project requirements and funding possibilities:

<http://www.dnrc.state.mt.us/cardd/wasact.htm> Water, wastewater and solid waste coordinating team.

Valuable resources for funding

http://commerce.state.mt.us/cdd/CDD_TSEP.html Treasure State Endowment Program

http://commerce.state.mt.us/cdd/CDD_CDBG.html Community Development Block Grant

W2SACT video available through the Community Development Program at 406-841-2770.

<http://www.montana.edu/wwwcommd/> Extension service site

Report by: Deborah Singer
Key Account & Economic Development Specialist
NorthWestern Energy
P.O. Box 80330
Billings, MT 59108-0330
Ph: (406) 655-2550
Email: deborah.singer@northwestern.com
Web: <http://www.northwestern.com>

HARDIN

I want to thank the residents of Hardin for the opportunity to be a part of the Hardin Resource Team Assessment. Your community was extremely kind and I really appreciated your openness and hospitality.

Even though your community is less than a one-hour drive from my home in Billings, and I have been through Hardin many times; I felt like I really saw your community for the first time. Your community has a lot of strengths that you may take for granted, and community assets not normally available in a community of your size. In many ways communities like Hardin suffer from an identity crisis and poor self-esteem, but you really do have a lot to offer. With the new power plant development, and the addition of Paul Green to your community I sensed that a positive momentum is building to improve your community. You need to better understand your strengths and community assets, and how you can market these assets to others outside the community. Since I work in economic development for NorthWestern Energy, the areas I feel most confident in address are the community and economic development issues identified in the community meetings.

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- Clothing Store
- Leakage to Billings
- Retain/support existing businesses
- Industrial park development
- Educate businesses and employees as to what is available in Hardin and the area
- Non-Profit Economic Development Corporation
- Resource Directory
- Employment
 - Livable Wage
 - Work here – should live here
- Agriculture
 - Lack of young farmers
 - Seasonal Workforce
 - Technology Transfer
 - Ethanol
 - New markets

- Transportation – leverage location

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ISSUE: Non-Profit Economic Development Corporation

Recommendations:

In Billings I serve on the Big Sky Economic Development Authority (BSEDA) (government funding entity) and the Big Sky Economic Development Corporation (BSEDC) (privately funded). As a board member of these two organizations I encourage you to tap into these organizations for resources as well. With the addition of the Big Sky Economic Development Corporation and their private dollars the organization sees its role as a regional economic development organization. Hardin is certainly a part of the Southwestern Montana economic region. You can find out more about the organization on their website, but I also encourage you to contact our Executive Director, Joe McClure and the contact information is listed below as a resource.

Having been on the BSEDA & BSEDC board for two years, the one piece of advise I offer the community is you must have leaders in your community willing to take risks to make things happen. The Big Sky EDA just recently announced the addition of a regional operations center for Bresnan Communications, and that only happened because members of the Big Sky EDA organizations were willing to take some risks and persevere in site of the hurdles along the way.

There are several services the Big Sky EDA/EDC could provide to Hardin in your economic development efforts.

- The Big Sky Economic Development Corporation was formed a little over a year ago and already has over 40 private investors that are businesses willing to invest in economic development in the community. I encourage you to contact Joe McClure at the Big Sky EDA to get a copy of the bylaws the organization had drafted as a model for a non-profit privately funded economic development organization.
- You could also visit with Bruce Whittenberg, who did the initial marketing of memberships in the Big Sky EDC to find out what types of questions potential investors might ask about what's in it for them to invest in a private non-profit economic development organization. Bruce Whittenberg can be contacted at the email address listed below.

RESOURCES:

- Big Sky Economic Development Authority & Big Sky Economic Development Corporation, Executive Director, Joe McClure, 406-256-6871, Email: mcclure@bigskyeda.org and website: www.bigskyeda.org
- Bruce Whittenberg, Executive Director, Leadership Montana, Email: bwhittenberg@leadershipmontana.org

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ISSUES: Retention/Support For Existing Business

Recommendations:

Retention and support for expansion of your existing businesses in your community is key to a healthy economic development plan. If you can keep your existing businesses and support them so they can create jobs that is often a much easier task than trying to recruit new businesses into the community. Existing businesses have already elected to be in your community, so they need your support so they can survive.

One of the best new business retention programs recently introduced in the state to address existing business retention is the BEAR (Business Expansion & Retention) program. This program was first launched over two years ago by the Big Sky Economic Development Authority and has now grown to other communities around the state. Listed below is a brief overview of the BEAR program and the BEAR resource contact person is listed below. Recently the BEAR program expanded to allow interviews in other communities near Billings including Laurel. I would suggest you contact the program's coordinator to see if a satellite program could be launched in the Hardin area. As a Big Sky EDA board member and active BEAR committee representative I offer my assistance in helping launch a program like this in Hardin.

A BEAR type program would have numerous benefits to your community, and is a way to open up communications with existing businesses to find out the real issues they face to grow and prosper in your community. It may also provide an opportunity for you to network these different businesses together to increase business in your community. One of the ideas also suggested for your community is to develop a business resource guide, which lists the existing businesses in the community and their services. In the course of developing this guide if you could conduct BEAR interviews on many of these companies you would really have a picture of the companies and what services they could offer their fellow businesses in your community.

RESOURCES:

- **Linda Beck, Linda Beck, Director of Business Outreach and Recruitment, Big Sky EDA, 406-256-6871 or email her at beck@bigskyeda.org**

BUSINESS EXPANSION AND RETENTION (BEAR) IN THE BILLINGS, MONTANA AREA

BEAR is a collaborative partnership among Big Sky EDA and the Chamber of Commerce, Montana State University-Billings, Montana Department of Commerce, Billings Job Service Workforce Center and Montana State University-Bozeman has been created to help Billings region businesses with problems, issues and opportunities.

This program includes a four-step process:

1. Area business people interviewing businesses which desire assistance to ascertain where the partnership may be of assistance.

2. A team consisting of representatives from the partnership, the interviewers and potential resources for that business assessing the results of the interview and recommending resources to the CEO of the business.
3. Appropriate resources are made available to the business - these resources may include marketing advice, expert manufacturing I operations information and assistance, as well as assistance from the local government entities, etc.
4. A representative from the core partnership group follows up with the business to evaluate the results of the intervention and open the door for further interaction.

BEAR's objectives are to:

- Demonstrate our community's pro-business attitude.
- Develop a high degree of cooperation and collaboration among public and private agencies and/or businesses and leaders.
- Create and maintain a forum in which sensitive information on the needs and/or complaints of businesses can be addressed effectively and confidentially.
- Collect data on our community's strengths and weaknesses as a place to do business.
- Develop an ongoing action plan to address weaknesses and emphasize strengths as identified throughout the process.

BEAR intends to:

- Improve understanding of our community's economic outlook.
- Develop a comprehensive long-term strategic plan to encourage local economic development.
- Implement programs that improve the competitiveness of our local forms and assist in expanding their markets.
- Develop informal channels of communication among our County, City, State and Federal development-related organizations to facilitate the flow of information.
- Retain and expand jobs, income and investment in the community.

Report by: Connie Ternes Daniels
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305 W. Mercury, Suite 211
Butte, MT 59701

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e-mail: ctdaniels@bigskyhsd.com
Web: <http://www.headwatersrcd.org>

I am also an elected county commissioner serving on the Anaconda-Deer Lodge County Commission.

I would like to personally thank everyone involved in the Hardin Resource Team Assessment. Hardin is a wonderful community filled with great people who care deeply about their community. A very special thank you to Paul Green, all the staff, Gloria O'Rourke, and my fellow team members who made this assessment a great experience.

I had never visited Hardin before serving on the resource team, I found Hardin attractive and the people open and willing to share their hopes and desires as well as discuss their problems and challenges. Hardin and the surrounding area are rich in both natural and cultural resources and while all communities are faced with challenges, I believe Hardin's strengths far out way any weaknesses that were discussed during the assessment.

Please note that my report will not focus on all issues discussed during the listening sessions but rather on the areas that I may be able to provide some assistance and direction. Again I would like to thank the people of Hardin and Big Horn County and everyone involved in the Hardin Community Assessment for providing me with a very rewarding experience.

MAIN TOPIC: LAW ENFORCEMENT

Issue: Law enforcement jurisdiction, enforcement, and the need for a city police force.

All of the listening sessions included some concern with law enforcement. While some of the discussion was on actual crime, most of the discussion focused on problems with enforcement and structure. The current arrangement of contracting with Big Horn County does not seem to meet the needs of the citizens living within City of Hardin.

Recommendations:

Local government officials should consider conducting a feasibility study to determine the costs associated with contracting vs. providing their own police service. If current city ordinances are not being enforced and associated fines, fees etc., are not being collected, additional funding could be factored into the study.

Resources:

May want to contact the Montana Department of Justice and/or the Office of Homeland Security for potential funding assistance.

Issue: Elected vs. Appointed Chief of Law enforcement

It is very important for a community to consider the strengths and weaknesses of an elected chief of law enforcement vs. an appointed chief of law enforcement. The community I serve in as a county commissioner has operated with both, currently, the position is elected. Many people believe that their right to vote is the most important factor in filling a chief of law enforcement position, however, others believe that qualifications and direct accountability are more important. In my experience working with both, I have found that this position is better served by being appointed by local government officials based on qualification and being directly accountable for job performance. In our case, the position is also an administrative position. It is very difficult to elect qualified administrators, consequently our community has seen high turn over and uncompleted terms of office since the position was made an elected position. I personally believe the community and the position are much better served by an appointed chief of law enforcement rather than an elected one.

Recommendations:

If the City of Hardin decides to create its own police department and terminate its contract with Big Horn County then determining the selection method of its chief of law enforcement will be a critical step in the future direction of the new department. I would suggest that city officials contact other communities of comparable size and examine their structures and access how it is working in those communities.

Resources:

Montana League of Cities and Towns
P.O. Box 1704
Helena, MT 59624
(406) 442-8768

Anaconda-Deer Lodge County
800 S. Main Street
Anaconda, MT 59711
(406) 563-4000

MAIN TOPIC: HARDIN AND TRIBAL ISSUES

Issue: Cultural Understanding

One of the biggest reasons I wanted to serve on the Hardin team was for a change to experience a community with multi-cultural differences. The area I work in does not afford this opportunity, as there are no Indian reservations located within the seven county area of Headwaters in southwest Montana. Unfortunately, while some issues were touched upon, no real dialogue or listening session included input from the Crow Tribe during the assessment process.

Recommendations:

I believe that one of Hardin’s greatest strengths is its multi-cultural makeup, as well as its greatest challenge.

Resources:

Larry Keown, a member of the Hardin Resource Team, could help facilitate a discussion between the City of Hardin and the Crow Tribe.

Issue: Communication

Again it became very apparent to me that the communication between the community and the tribe needs to be a priority.

Recommendations:

The community and the tribe may want to consider establishing some sort of coordinating council to begin a dialogue. The coordinating council should meet on a regular basis and make recommendations to both local government officials and tribal officials. After establishing some common ground the focus could be on some project that would be beneficial to both parties.

Resources:

Again, Larry Keown could help facilitate this discussion.

Issue: Establish commerce with the tribe and Hardin

Throughout the listening sessions we heard about commerce leaving Hardin and going to Billings. It was also told to the resource team that at one time Hardin had a much stronger connection through commerce with the tribe than it does today. While markets change and many main street businesses are suffering because of these changes, we must find new ways to meet each other’s needs.

Recommendations:

A clear understanding of the buying trends within the community and the tribe could help in understanding the needs in reestablishing commerce. A leakage and shopping survey could be conducted to help identify these needs. The extension service and university system can assist in preparing and conducting a survey.

Resources:

Still again, Larry Keown could help facilitate this discussion.

Montana State University
Extension Service
(406) 994-5704

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY

Issue: Self Image and Community Pride

During the listening sessions a lot of discussion focused on Hardin problems, such as, the section 8 trailer houses and a need to improve the community. As an outside observer I was amazed at the resources that are in the community. The Community Center is a tremendous resource for Hardin and the surrounding area. I was quite impressed with the level of community pride in such projects as the Depot renovation and the Hospital fundraising campaign.

Recommendations:

The Hardin Strategic Plan is an excellent guide to implementing the community's vision and future image of itself. Keep working on your top ten priority projects.

Resources:

Continue to implement the Hardin Strategic Plan and continue to involve the kind of community support in the Depot renovation and the Hospital fundraising campaign.

MAIN TOPIC: INFRASTRUCTURE

Issue: Watson Drive Sewer and Water

Residents living in the Watson Drive area just outside of Hardin have described a situation of failing septic systems and impacts to public health. A water and sewer committee is proposing the creation of a rural water and sewer district.

Recommendations:

I agree with the water and sewer committee that a preliminary engineering report must be conducted to devise a plan of action and determine actual costs. State and federal agencies may be able to provide grant and loan funds for the preliminary engineering report and for implementation of a course of action. Either the City or the County could assist the residents of Watson Drive in obtaining a preliminary engineering report. Funding agencies should be contacted and a plan developed to conduct a preliminary engineering report. The Montana Department of Commerce and USDA Rural Development both have great resources for planning and financing community water and sewer systems.

Resources:

Montana Department of Commerce
301 S. Park Ave
Helena, MT 59601
(406) 841-2700
<http://comerce.state.mt.us/>

USDA Rural Development
900 Technology Blvd.
Bozeman, MT 59771

(406) 585-2520

How To Hire An Engineer

Midwest Assistance Program, Inc.

Bill Leonard

Rural Development Specialist

P.O. Box 1456

Whitefish, MT 59937

(406) 863-4900

Issue: Repairs and Upgrades to Existing System

Need to continue upgrades to the 1917 sewer system.

Recommendations:

Again I would suggest working with the various federal and state agencies in assisting Hardin with funding requirement to continue to improve the system.

Resources:

Montana Department of Commerce

301 S. Park Ave

Helena, MT 59601

(406) 841-2700

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

USDA Rural Development

900 Technology Blvd.

Bozeman, MT 59771

(406) 585-2520

Water, Wastewater, and Solid Waste Action Coordination Team (W₂ASACT)

In 1995, the state and federal funding agencies adopted a common preliminary engineering report format that would be acceptable to each of the agencies that fund these kinds of projects. Additional information can be obtained through the Montana Department of Commerce, USDA Rural Development, and other state and federal agencies.

MAIN TOPIC: DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

Issue: Clean Up, Littering, and Beautification

Having never visited Hardin before I was impressed with the city's appearance. Store fronts looked attractive and empty buildings are made to look appealing. All communities can improve their downtowns through clean up efforts and beautification.

Recommendations:

Local government officials may want to consider an urban renewal plan and the implementation of tax increment financing (TIF) to assist areas within the downtown that may suffer from blight. Several communities across the state have implemented TIFs. Local government officials may want to visit with some of these communities and discuss the benefits of downtown revitalization efforts using this tool. While Montana has not support a state-wide main street program, several communities across the state have developed their own main street programs for revitalization. Again, local government officials may want to investigate the merits of the program and consider some sort of implementation of this proven program.

Resources:

TIF Information
Tax Exempt Financing for Economic Development Purposes
Mae Nan Ellingson
Dorsey & Whitney LLP
125 Bank Street, Suite 600
Missoula, MT 59802
(406) 721-6025
ellingson.mae.nan@dorsey.com

Pam Cote', URA Director
Butte-Silver Bow
(406) 497-6465

Main Street Approach-Making Downtowns Come Alive
The National Trust for Historic Preservation
www.mainst.org/

George Everett
Butte Main Street Director
gevertt@mail.montana.com

Issue: Fill and Revitalize Empty Buildings and Maintain Historical Integrity

Hardin is rich with historic resources. Preserving its historic buildings and maintaining its historical integrity will benefit Hardin's overall economy.

Recommendations:

Hardin should work with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and the Montana Preservation Alliance. Federal and state tax credits are available for preservation of historic building. Local preservation officials should work with the SHPO on any preservation projects.

Resources:

National Trust for Historic Preservation

www.nationaltrust.org/

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
225 N. Roberts Office
P.O. Box 201201
Helena, MT 59620-1201
www.his.state.mt.us

Montana Preservation Alliance
516 N. Park, Suite A
Helena, MT 59601
(406) 547-2822

MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM AND RECREATION

Issue: Marketing

Hardin is surrounded by incredible historic and natural resources including the battlefield at the Little Big Horn and Yellowtail Dam.

Recommendations:

The community needs to link its self to these resources. People coming to visit the area should include a stop in Hardin. The Hardin Chamber of Commerce may want to work closer with Travel Montana and Custer Country in developing a marketing strategy.

Resources:

Travel Montana

Issue: Museum Expansion

The Big Horn County Museum again is a great asset to the community. Its location would be envious of most facilities of this kind.

Recommendations:

The museum board may want to contact Travel Montana and consider applying for a tourism infrastructure improvement grant to assist with expansion plans.

Resources:

Travel Montana TIIP Funding

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Issue: Clothing Store

The Hardin Chamber of Commerce together with local economic development official may want to consider contacting stores that are expanding into Montana. Currently, Bi-Mart a discount chain store out of Eugene, OR is expanding into Montana.

Recommendations:

You may want to contact Bi-Mart and discuss the possibilities of locating a store in Hardin.

Resources:

Bi-Mart

Dick Hunsaker, Vice President of Real Estate and Construction

Executive Offices & Distribution Center

P.O. Box 2310

Eugene, OR 9742-0199

(541) 444-0681

dick.hunsaker@bimart.com

Issue: Retain and Support Existing Businesses

Recommendations:

Hardin may want to consider implementing a business expansion and retention program (BEAR). Big Sky Economic Development Authority has implemented a successful BEAR program. The BEAR program involves five steps:

1. Local business people volunteer to assist with the program.
2. Local businesses apply to be interviewed.
3. Volunteers interview the businesses and identify roadblocks to their expansion.
4. BEAR task force identifies solutions and/or resources to alleviate those roadblocks.
5. Resources provide individual assistance (at no cost) to the company in the form of
 - a. Marketing assistance
 - b. Workforce training
 - c. Financing
 - d. Public services
 - e. Grant research and writing
 - f. And more

Resources:

Big Sky EDA

222 North 32nd St.,

Billings, MT 59101

(406) 256-6871

Issue: Industrial Park Development

Recommendations:

The community may want to consider tax increment industrial financing for continued expansion of the industrial park.

Resources:

Jim Smitham, Marketing Director
Butte Local Development Corporation
305 W. Mercury
Butte, MT 59701
(406) 723-4349
www.buttemontana.org

Mae Nan Ellingson
Dorsey & Whitney LLP
125 Bank Street, Suite 600
Missoula, MT 59802
(406) 721-6025
ellingson.mae.nan@dorsey.com

Issue: Non-Profit Economic Development Corporation

Recommendations:

Through MEDA discuss with the existing local development corporations how they have been established and use their information as a guide in creating a 501 (c) (3) organization.

Resources:

Jim Davison, Executive Director
Anaconda Local Development Corporation
118 E. Seventh Street
Anaconda, MT 59711
(406) 563-5538

Evan Barrett
Butte Local Development Corporation
305 W. Mercury
Butte, MT 59701
(406) 723-4349

Issue: Agriculture

Recommendations:

Value added agriculture should be a priority in Hardin and Big Horn County's overall economic strategy.

Resources:

The Montana Department of Agriculture-Growth Through Agriculture Program
Agriculture Marketing & Business Development Bureau
(406) 444-2402

Conclusion of Connie Ternes Daniels's Hardin Resource Assessment Team Report

While Hardin is faced with some challenges your strengths can make you very successful. You have great facilities including your schools, hospital, museum, community center (WOW), and your recently restored Depot. Natural resources abound with coal, gas and oil. Recreation opportunities are second to none including fishing, the river, Yellowtail Dam, and your historic resources including the battlefield. Your rich multi-cultural fabric can be a benefit to you and the tribe. I was impressed with the people, their volunteerism and support of the community. Your location on I-90 and your access to rail truly are assets. Your small town flavor can offer opportunities to the Billings area. Development at your industrial park with the power plant and ethanol plant will bring you economic benefits. Paul Green is an asset to your community, he is making economic and community development happen in and around Hardin, hold on to him.

Finally, I came away from Hardin with a deep appreciation for your community and a new understanding of its dynamics and while tribal input was lacking, I do hope that a constructive dialogue will come about for all of you. One of your high school students summed it all up, "I don't want to be known as white or crow, but rather that I am from Hardin."

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

Thanks to the community of Hardin for making the time commitment to share your concerns, strengths and vision for the future with the team. It was a rewarding experience to learn about Hardin and to meet the terrific people in your community.

I believe my team members have done an excellent job of covering the Main Issues brought up during our visit to Hardin and have only a little to add.

Overall Recommendations and Resources:

Use the resources already available in your area to implement some of the projects mentioned in this report: Beartooth RC&D (406.962.3914), City and County offices (i.e., county planner), and Al Jones, MDOC Regional Development Officer (406.655.1696), Nikki Stahley, Area Specialist for USDA/RD (406.657.6297).

In addition, use the resources of MEDA – Montana Economic Developers Association. The office of MEDA holds a membership in GrantStation. GrantStation is a web-based program that offers a huge database to search for grant resources. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have a particular project in mind that may need additional funding. Also, if Hardin needs some extra clout in dealing with upper level agencies or programs, MEDA contracts with Tony Preite to serve as an Economic Development Liaison for projects and proposals around the state. Please call the MEDA office if you would like more information (406.563.5259).

Finally, the most common concern expressed throughout each and every listening session involved tribal issues. I strongly, strongly recommend that you address the Hardin/Tribal relationship as this one issue would solve a string of other issues. Hardin was extremely fortunate to have Larry Keown, Tribal Relations expert, serve on the team. People like Larry are few and far between – but the community of Hardin has access to his expertise. Please read Larry's report in detail and act upon his recommendations. If funding is needed to provide for his services, do not hesitate to contact the MEDA office for grant search options.

Hopefully, in the near future, a mini-assessment can be held with the tribal entities with the information added as an addendum to this report.

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Issue: Business Retention – keeping what you have!

Recommendation:

It is obvious that Hardin needs to focus on retaining the businesses it currently has. We all know that it is easier to grow a current business than to recruit a new one. The BEAR project mentioned previously in this report is an excellent model. Here are 12 steps to jump-start the process.

Consider the following article by Del Birch of Business Retention Technologies <http://www.brt-inc.org/index.html>

12 Essential Steps for Jumpstarting the Business Retention Process

Creating an effective, sustainable business retention program *looks* easy on paper. Actually implementing it is *easier said than done*. Providing an ongoing retention program that delivers value to your community is a significant accomplishment and a major competitive advantage for your community.

Here are 12 essential steps that economic development and community leaders can take to create an effective program sustainable over the long term.

Again, we offer a note of caution: these steps only look easy on paper. Creating and then maintaining an ongoing retention program is not easy. Here's another caveat: this is not an *a la carte* line where steps can be taken – or missed – at will. Building an effective, sustainable retention program is a systematic process. Each step in the process is critical and essential.

There's no question that retention takes a substantial investment in time, energy and willpower. While the investment is high, the potential return on investment is equally high – keeping wealth and job creating companies in your community and growing job opportunities for area residents.

Remember what every private sector company already knows: *satisfied customers* – your community's employers – *typically don't leave*.

Step #1 Recognize the value of retaining existing businesses.

Attraction or retention? Consider that up to 80% of job growth in any community is generated by firms already located in the community.¹ Can you really afford to ignore the customers – your community's existing employers – that you already have?

Step #2 Generate a commitment from key service providers. Build the team.

Retention requires a team of dedicated service providers who are ready (and willing) to respond to customer needs identified through the interview or outreach process. Don't bother with outreach without a strong, committed, dedicated team in place. And, don't expect the team to coalesce immediately. Team-building takes time so start early.

Step#3 Focus on a common objective: job growth through retention and expansion of existing businesses.

The objective is simple: create more jobs at existing firms. How is this done? First, use outreach to build relationships and identify the firm's needs. Second, deliver required services efficiently, enhancing the firm's bottom line. Third, maintain open lines of communications with CEOs to ensure that they are happy and satisfied.

Step #4 Target specific business segments yielding the highest return on investment.

Economic development organizations have limited budgets, staffs and time. It makes sense to target limited resources to those firms that have the highest propensity to create jobs and wealth. Retention is Darwinistic. Focus limited resources on winners, not losers.

Step #5 Create an efficient team communications network.

Winning teams know each player's strengths and weaknesses. Winning teams communicate efficiently. Today, winning teams in business use technology and email to communicate quickly and efficiently.

Step #6 Initiate customer outreach

Why talk to your community's business owners? You want to accomplish specific goals: 1) learn more about the companies that employ area residents; 2) identify the needs of the company and then deliver those services efficiently; 3) learn what business owners like and dislike about the business climate in your community and state; and, 4) use this knowledge and intelligence to constantly improve service delivery and the business climate.

Step #7 Create a useable, accessible, dynamic customer database.

Empower your team to efficiently meet the needs of businesses by giving them the data, knowledge and intelligence gathered through outreach. Databases are useless unless they are used. Allow service providers on the local retention team to access company profiles and satisfy customer needs faster, smarter and better.

Step #8 Respond to customer needs consistently and promptly.

Train your team to respond to pre-qualified company needs quickly. The service provider receiving a referral should contact the CEO within 24 to 48 hours for a follow-up meeting. This demonstrates to the CEO that the local economic development team understands the real time constraints that the firm faces in today's dynamic business environment.

Step #9 Use the database to anticipate needs.

The data from your outreach effort is current, accurate and highly specific to your community and region. Analyze it for opportunities to add services, improve existing services, and identify programs and policies that can make your community and state more competitive. You're gathering relevant, accurate information from your business owners so use it!

Step #10 Measure customer satisfaction.

Adopt another technique from the private sector: call companies requesting assistance and ask if they were happy with the assistance provided to them. Follow-up with the customer to ensure customer satisfaction. This strengthens the customer relationship and provides valuable feedback about the quality of programs and service delivery.

Step #11 Make necessary changes to increase customer satisfaction.

Follow-up with the customer provides a good checks and balances for the team. It identifies those service providers who are doing a superior job – and those who are not. Use this information to strengthen the team and replace non-performers with service providers totally committed to superior customer satisfaction. Customer follow-up can identify opportunities to improve program. Use this feedback to make programs more user-friendly.

Step #12 Constantly strengthen the team to benefit the customer.

Once you have a team in place, use it to benefit the customer. Tap the expertise of your multi-organization team as an informal economic/community development “think tank.” Analyze gaps in resources and programs. Create and/or suggest new programs or program enhancements. Respond to recurring problems or opportunities. And, always remember: *satisfied customers typically don't leave.*

Issue: Shop at Home – “Leakage” to Billings

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: Volunteerism - Ask and Encourage

Recommendation:

One way to develop a better sense of community is to encourage volunteers to step up and become involved in community projects. Surveys have shown that people are not unwilling to volunteer – they simply have never been asked. Tap shoulders and ASK for assistance. More often than not, people would volunteer – but they have not been asked.

Another important issue is to encourage the volunteers you currently have:

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!

Resource:

A terrific website for recognizing volunteers is

<http://www.baudville.com>

Issue: Apathy and Attitude

Apathy is defined as “lack of emotion, motivation, lack of concern; indifference.” It has also been defined as “a slow sapping of civic spirit, which shows itself through listlessness, defeatism and self doubt.” A community simply cannot thrive and survive with a heart of apathy.

In my research, I learned that apathy often comes about due to a lack of process, not lack of attitude. People often care about their community, but they don't know how to participate. (See #3 below.)

Recommendations:

1. Defeat the defeatism. You must not sit back and observe/allow things to happen to you. You DO have a say, you DO have a voice, and with patience, change can begin to happen.
2. Know your enemy. Most people, if properly approached and given direction are willing to help their community, but be aware that you have some natural enemies. These days, time is of the essence – people have prioritized family time, time with the television, sports, eating out, or working late. Be aware of cynics who play the role of “gloom and doom” in a community. Be prepared to say over and

over “Let’s try.” Some individuals may openly oppose any effort for change. All you can do is try to understand their objections, work with them as much as possible, and go on.

3. Become a learning community – a community willing to risk failure to find the best way. Be willing to try new approaches, take on a new project, review what works/doesn’t work and apply the lessons learned to the next project. Some experts call this the gardening approach:

Planting – talk about your issue. Call attention to the issue, be descriptive, unfocused, and simply discuss a problem that you feel should be dealt with. This is not just complaining, but reaching out to others. Learn how other communities solved a similar problem. Find five to seven people that you feel you can count on to begin to address the issue. Remember – you don’t have all the answers at this point, but are confident a solution can be found. Consensus to finding solutions will take place in the “blossoming” step below.

Cultivating – as interest builds, don’t rush things. Thoroughly investigate an issue before taking a major first step. Put together a steering committee, talk and write about the issue, get public opinion and input, perhaps conduct a survey to begin intensive planning. Realize that objections and doubts will now be raised such as, “who is going to do all this work?” or “where will the money come from?” and the famous “we have tried this before and it didn’t work”. To replace the defeatism, have short answers prepared as to why your community can – and should – address this issue. Do visit public officials, non-profits, business leaders, etc., to see where they stand on the issue. Ask advice – but it is too early to push for a commitment. As you visit, ask about possible resources. Have a plan in place to put-to-work new volunteers. Now is the time to create your volunteer database.

Blossoming – this would involve a big event or series of events. The purpose is to set the stage for excitement, commitment and direction. To avoid appearing manipulative or “pushy” – thoroughly complete the Cultivating step before moving on to Blossoming. To hold a successful “blossoming” event, think about what other community events have proven successful in the past. Perhaps it was a community dinner, a town meeting, an outdoor get-together. It is not so important as to having a large number turn out, but that there is a good cross-section of the community present. The event must conclude with consensus and commitment. Remember that a solution may be found to the issue that you had not thought of...keep an open mind.

Harvesting – be ready to run with success. Usually a successful event will reveal new volunteers. Plan ahead as to how you will welcome and put-to-work these individuals. The more people you can offer meaningful roles to, the faster and farther enthusiasm will spread. Put people in their right “slot” – matching their ability with a portion of the project. Remain enthusiastic – and enthusiasm will continue to grow.

4. Keep the momentum going: divide big goals into smaller ones – and celebrate success along the way; be sure to broadcast your successes – don’t let people forget what has been accomplished; reward or acknowledge your volunteers; keep attention focused on the problem AND the solution.

MAIN TOPIC: LAW ENFORCEMENT

Issue: Juvenile Crime, Substance Abuse

Recommendation: For underage drinking/drugs prevention, 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 Hardin 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. *Consider this project an issue that both the tribes and the local Hardin residents can join together to work on.* 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.

Resources:

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

<http://www.youthchg.com>.

MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM/RECREATION

Issue: Signage

Signage could be improved to encourage visitors to stop in Hardin. Visitors will not stop if they do not feel welcome or receive a bad first impression of the community.

Recommendation:

Work with your local artists to construct beautiful AND cultural signs. (Another opportunity to work with the tribes.)

To provide more reasons for travelers to stop, develop a strategy outlining actions:

1. Identify kinds of visitors (i.e. leisure, pass through, sightseers, retirees, friends etc.)
2. Recreationists; destination visitors
3. Heritage/Cultural Travelers; seeking enrichment from local history
4. Commercial and Business Travelers; international trade, agency/business travelers

Identify where visitors come from. Tourism development efforts can focus on serving these markets more effectively by anticipating and fulfilling their needs. Pass-through tourists need visible information and activities (farmers market, hikes) and improvements to entrances/community appearance to entice them. Heritage and cultural travelers seek local history, culture and arts (historic buildings, community/tribal culture, local artists/craftsmen, events). Commercial travelers need business support services (data ports in hotel rooms, access to copying/printing services, meeting rooms, cell phone coverage). All of these segments seek good quality dining and shopping experiences.

You MUST visit the MT Dept. of Transportation website regarding Outdoor Advertising Regulations. <http://www.mdt.state.mt.us/rw/oacinfo.html> Here is a *small portion* of the information available on the website.

Congress passed the Highway Beautification Act to control and limit signs along the interstate and primary highways which allows the traveling public to enjoy the nation's scenic beauty.

The Montana Legislature also enacted laws consistent with the federal act. Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) is responsible for enforcing these laws, and failure to do so could jeopardize millions of dollars in highway construction funds.

Outdoor advertising signs are not prohibited, but there are specific limitations such as where they may be located, how close they can be to other permitted signs, how large they can be, and how they must be maintained.

- Signs may be placed in areas that are zoned for commercial and industrial use or in unzoned areas where commercial or industrial activities are located. It's our responsibility to determine if those areas qualify for the placement of signs.

- Permitted signs must be at least 500 feet apart along interstate highways and 300 feet apart along primary highways. Outside of incorporated cities and towns they cannot be closer than 500 feet from a public park or public forest boundary. Also, they must be at least 500 feet from highway rest areas or from an interstate highway interchange

- Signs may vary in size but cannot be larger than 672 square feet in area. (A sign that is 48 feet long and 14 feet high is 672 square feet.) The sign cannot be more than 48 feet long and no higher than 30 feet above the surface of the roadway.

- In addition, there are several other regulations that may apply. Before applying for a sign permit, you should discuss your plans with a right-of-way agent at the [MDT district office](#) in your area.

Resources:

Montana Community Foundation

Linda Reed

101 N. Last Chance Gulch #211

Helena, MT 59601 ph: 406.443.8313

<http://www.mtcf.org>

For onsite signage assistance visit

<http://www.sba.gov/starting/signage>

HARDIN LISTENING SESSIONS

MARCH 23 – 24, 2004

The following pages contain comments from individuals that participated in the Listening Sessions held in Hardin. The first series lists problems and challenges, the second lists strengths and assets and the third describes projects and ideas for the future.

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES – CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

- Need something new in terms of business – not same as what we already have – new business ideas
- Bring more people downtown
- Not working together towards a common purpose
- Ditto
- Need newer and younger people = new ideas
- Ditto
- Law enforcement, social, and jurisdictional problems
- Ditto
- Ditto young people
- Native Americans wondering on streets
- Harding has hard time accepting itself as an image – needs to develop good self-image
- Billings too accessible – lost business (ag, etc)
- Housing
- Way too many taxpayer jobs in county commuting from Billings -- \$ leaving Hardin
- People should have to live here that work here
- Litter problem
- Airport not certified by FAA

CHURCHES AND VOLUNTEERS - CHALLENGES

- Drug abuse and alcoholism
- Drug abuse and alcoholism among parents
- Need a curfew – have seven and eight year olds riding bikes at one in the morning
- Vandalism
- Respect for people and property
- Ditto – need to teach parents to teach respect
- Need unity between people and Crow Tribe
- Problems with cultural differences are deepening – Racial problems
- Volunteerism is dropping
- Hard to get parents to step up and volunteer
- Same volunteers do it all

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS – CHALLENGES

- No place to shop, no clothing store
- Nothing for teenagers to do, except get into trouble
- Way too much alcohol

- Crime and murders
- Racism – between Indians and whites – need to remove stereotypes
- Education is not very good here – not broad enough – need to expand
- Ditto crime and racism
- Not open to learn about each other
- Ditto crime and nothing to do
- Three tennis courts – ditto
- Don't want white culture ignored – lots of emphasis on Indian – need others, too
- Need baseball program, and field
- Police department struggles working with BIA and vice versa

TEACHERS – CHALLENGES

- Crime and drugs, alcohol and drug abuse
- Low graduation rate
- Sense of community
- Loss of businesses
- Low income area
- High unemployment
- Downtown businesses struggle – people head to Billings
- Beautification –
- Local businesses need to work together and not fight against each other
- Local law enforcement is weak
- Hard to predict needs of various student groups – ie., one year had strong physics class – the next year, not enough interest.
- Transient student population is a challenge

REALTORS, LAWYERS, CPA'S INSURANCE, BANKING – CHALLENGES

- Commercial properties infringing on the private/residential property
- Getting everyone on the same page working together – too much city/county bickering
- Law enforcement – we have the reputation for being a high crime area – will stop businesses from coming here.
- Don't have an economic development entity that is unconnected with a local or county government
- Lack of personal pride in property
- Rentals have garbage in the yard
- Will see a nice house, then a dump – landlords are to blame
- City ordinances – lack of enforcement
- Airport no longer FAA certified
- Ditto, ditto, ditto
- Law enforcement – when there is an arrest, must follow through with appropriate punishment
- Ditto
- 1917 Sewer system
- Younger farmers are not coming in
- Many teachers live in Billings, not here in Hardin
- Lack of housing for good paying jobs
- Vagrants on the street

- Curfew violations a big problem

AG PRODUCERS – CHALLENGES

- Need a clothing store – go to Billings and buy everything else, too
- ditto
- Trouble with Law Enforcement – one on reservation one on county – neither has jurisdiction in the other’s area
- People don’t like growth and change – holds businesses back – forces them to close
- Do not have young farmers coming up – can’t keep them, and...same with businesses
- New markets needed for our crops
- Farmers on reservation have problems with BIA
- Bankers need to be more open minded
- Lack of jobs
- Don’t have open minded community when it comes to bringing in new business or new ideas – without them, Hardin will die
- Need proactive people here
- Affordable electricity –
- People don’t accept new ideas if they aren’t their own ideas
- Large number of Medicaid patients
- Hard to find seasonal help to work the seasons
- Ditto
- County and school employees that buy products in Billings
- Lack of volunteers
- Only one grocery store – causes people to go to Billings
- People don’t like their neighbor to get ahead
- When someone starts selling something and it looks successful – others start selling it too, and...there goes the business.
- Community does not want change
- Tax dollars are going to the reservation – we don’t get the dollars – and the dollars are often wasted

LAW ENFORCEMENT, FIRE, AMBULANCE, SOCIAL SERVICES, CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY, MENTAL HEALTH – CHALLENGES

- Sewer system needs revamped
- Location – both a strength and a weakness
- Lack of water
- Increasing crime rate in Hardin – increasing violent crime rate
- Location to Billings
- Juvenile crime – last murder committed by 14 year old with baseball bat
- Lack of communication among the community – for such a small community, there is a gap between what people know and don’t know that is going on
- Blight in the area – nice neighborhoods are now down hill
- Limited area for growth – expand East of town – housing?
- Live in a “nice” house in Hardin – like, not ever
- Jurisdictional issues/boundaries – County sheriff, city of Hardin and Crow Tribe and BIA.

- Biggest issue here today is law enforcement and safety
- People don't feel it is safe to live here anymore
- Need water and sewer to people
- Street people sleep in the Sheriff's office foyer in the winter months
- Rumor mill is more factual than the "truth"

LOCAL GOVERNMENT – CHALLENGES

- Factionalism – tribal people just think about tribe, local people just think about Hardin
- Ditto – race issues
- Economic development and jobs
- High poverty level
- Ditto – jobless rate highest in the state – in the top of the nation statistics
- More support needed for small businesses
- Employment, services to the people, poverty, increase small businesses, retain businesses we have
- Better communication between agencies
- Fight litter
- Juvenile crime – one of the worst problems we have
- Don't use the agencies that are available to us
- Need to see more growth
- Law enforcement – in a turmoil right now
- Sewer system is antique – in dire need of funding
- Empty buildings – need to re-fill them
- Some day coal tax base will be gone – then what will we do?
- We are not reaping the benefit of people using local recreation areas

AG BUSINESS, AUTO MAINTENANCE, TRADES, CARPENTERS, PLUMBERS, ELECTRICIANS – CHALLENGES

- Housing prices – can build a house but it won't sell for what we built it for
- Law enforcement
- Social problems
- Jurisdictional problems
- Business climate – is good – few things lacking – such as implement dealer
- Declining property values –
- Local leadership must listen with both ears – get off center. City must get tough to clean up the town, clean up trailer courts, and do home improvement.
- City leadership must make law enforcement accountable
- Ditto – city fathers must open up their eyes – must get tough and take a stand
- City council needs to be open to new ideas – if it is not their idea it doesn't go anywhere
- Educate our residents better on issues at hand –
- More people need to step up and run for city council
- City is not open to big development
- Need judicial integrity.

SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER – CHALLENGES

- Two cultures fight here

- Vandalism
- Homeless/loitering on the street
- Expensive ambulance service
- Better reporting in newspaper
- Can't get a picture I.D. at the courthouse

MEDIA, RETAIL, LODGING, RESTAURANTS, ENTERTAINMENT – CHALLENGES

- Dispel rumors/impression that this is a rough community
- Hard to produce enough revenue to make money
- Hard to enhance a community and to make money at the same time
- Considerable pollution around the old Fox Service Center – but have permission to clean up as of today
- 50% of vehicles towed do not have auto insurance
- Must have the community behind us for business to succeed
- Low literacy – people just are not reading
- Hardin has a bad image
- People that live here do not know what we have here
- Hardin needs to get a positive identity
- Litter – businesses need to clean up their area, too
- Street people – loitering – gives a bad image of Hardin
- Boarded up buildings and windows
- Roads coming in to town
- Some vacant buildings are maintained, others are not
- Very hard to attract investors here
- Open up the local business peoples eyes – they see only their own business and tend to shut out the rest of the community

HARDIN LISTENING SESSIONS MARCH 23 – 24, 2004

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - STRENGTHS AND ASSETS

- The people
- Access to a lot of natural resources – coals, gas, oil
- Railroad goes thru Harding, Interstate – good transportation
- Quietness – walk downtown
- Lots of activities – Re-enactment, river, Crow Agency, museums, etc. (tourism)
- Ditto Tourism
- First class medical facility
- Good schools – physical shape good
- Dedicated city government workforce
- Swimming pool and associated activities
- Rich in culture – historic, battlefield, route to Yellowstone, Fort Smith, River, etc.
- Excellent core of volunteers in community (people) – doers
- Ditto schools – tremendous amount of talent
- Two cultures in community
- Demographics an asset by making things available – opportunities and use of data
- Greater tourism opportunities
- Operating coal mines
- Depot is completed and occupied – a real asset to community
- Agriculture
- Two really nice nursing homes

CHURCHES AND VOLUNTEERS - STRENGTHS

- Schools
- Chamber of Commerce – hard working group
- Senior Citizens are very hard working volunteers
- Business owners are very supportive – always get hit up and are supportive
- Schools are very supportive of community activities, i.e. museum
- Boys and Girls Club
- 4-H
- Ministerial Association
- Transients – Ministerial association tries to assist
- Ministerial Special Services – 7 Lenten breakfasts
- Union good Friday services, Thanksgiving service, and reenactment days service
- Citizens in Hardin are generous
- IGA Store – make sure Boys and Girls Club kids are fed every day after school
- Recreational area draws people in
- International tourists come to our area
- Public Library
- Museum is very nice

- Great hunting, fishing (need to preserve it)
- Huck Fin Days
- Law Enforcement has a huge area – doing the best they can
- Great volunteer fire department
- Parenting classes
- Smart Moves program – boys and girls club
- Dance studio – fitness center
- Piano lessons are available

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS – STRENGTHS

- Put a lot into basketball and football programs
- Support money in education when they can
- Small town not a lot of gangs
- Creative in coming up with ideas for things to do
- Bowling alley and movie theater
- Everyone knows each other – friendly face
- Hired new young teachers – cool teachers (a few are iffy)
- See lots of different backgrounds – Hispanic, Native American
- Subway
- Ditto we all know each other, small town friendliness
- Culture diversity – get to learn a lot about other cultures – will help us in the future
- A lot of churches – try to keep you on the right path
- Hunting and fishing
- Out in the country
- Location – right in the middle of everything
- Close to Billings and Sheridan
- Movie theater – good sound
- Swimming pool
- Bowling alley is pretty good
- Re-doing our gym
- Restored RailRoad Depot

TEACHERS – STRENGTHS

- Streets have improved, water lines, too
- Grants have been received
- Olympic pool
- City does nice job of keeping town as clean as it can
- Parks are nice
- School system is a strength
- Size, location, family oriented
- Community support for the school
- Lots of recreational opportunities
- Hunting, fishing, boating
- Core group of people volunteer and work hard
- Community minded people

- Baseball program in the spring – little guy football, wrestling - all run by volunteers and parents
- Parents support their kids
- Good clinic and funding for the hospital additions
- Museum always a nice attraction
- Little Big Horn Days
- For size of school offer a nice curriculum
- High number of our graduates go to college or vo tech or armed services

REALTORS, LAWYERS, CPA’S INSURANCE, BANKING – STRENGTHS

- Nice community
- Tourists attractions/recreational attractions in the area
- Battlefield
- A lot of good people – just need to get them to work together
- Dam
- Blue ribbon trout streams
- History in the area
- Natural gas, oil, coal
- Natural resources
- Coal Bed Methane production
- Some of the best range land in the entire state is in this area
- Good decent school system
- Ditto
- Great volunteers – some school teachers volunteer as well
- Depot project – great volunteers

AG PRODUCERS – STRENGTHS

- Historic background – battlefield, things to see and do
- Long time residents are great church supporters and like to be involved with community projects
- Small town feel
- One of the most stable irrigation supplies in the state.
- Lots of people that want to do things – but held back due to leadership.
- Location – within 40 miles of the largest city in Montana – still have rural setting here
- Good irrigation system ditto
- Farmers and ranchers
- Yellowtail Dam
- Battlefield, museum, many things to offer

LAW ENFORCEMENT, FIRE, AMBULANCE, SOCIAL SERVICES, CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY, MENTAL HEALTH – STRENGTHS

- Town is looking great
- Wonderful nursing home and assisted living
- Developmentally disabled welcomed in the community
- Location – convenient to Billings, battlefield, future development resources, coal, etc.
- Ditto
- New City Council is an asset – making tough decisions on raising rates to access grants.
- Great city workers

- Ditto
- Study commissions for city and county in the works – could change local government operations
- Ditto
- Workers are very dedicated to this community
- Community looks to the future instead of trying to hang on to the past
- Community Center – very nice and a great attractor.
- Health care – got a great leader there ☺
- Ditto location – on the interstate corridor and the rail road spurs
- Good schools
- Good street lights – good lighting district
- AWARE, IN-Step, several other agencies for disabled
- Beautiful parks

LOCAL GOVERNMENT – STRENGTHS

- Great location
- Concerned community members willing to get out and make changes
- Nice community – could be friendlier
- Location right in the middle –
- Convenience area as you come into Hardin is nice
- Motels are here
- Sports activities here
- Great school system
- Paul Green is an asset
- Battlefield – huge tourist attraction
- Ditto
- River – draws people in
- Great leaders – community, city, county and state
- Ditto
- Yellowtail Dam
- School system
- Olympic sized pool
- Great city crew that does the street repair
- Concerned citizens
- Clinic, hospital, nursing home, parks, museum, activity center
- Ditto
- Tourism – great expansion opportunities
- Positive with 90% signing on to district - RSID
- Potential is great
- Ditto on tourism and fishing
- School system – terrific
- Olympic sized pool – brings in state meets
- Improved streets, sidewalks and gutters
- Great city crews
- People is the major strength
- If you need something, people will provide it
- Location and the people – ditto

- Tourism potential
- Gaming is a draw
- Youth group activities that bring in outlying communities
- Fair grounds
- Wonderful newspaper here

AG BUSINESS, AUTO MAINTENANCE, TRADES, CARPENTERS, PLUMBERS, ELECTRICIANS - STRENGTHS

- Overall we have a good community – just need to figure out how to make it better
- Ditto
- Great curbs, gutters, sidewalks – better than any other small town in the state
- City does its own work and saves a bundle of money
- Potential to develop small businesses
- Natural resources – coal and gas not far away
- Great river, damn, a lot of excess power
- Location and rural setting
- The people here are wanting to see changes and do positive things.
- A good community – just need to overcome some major issues and become even better.
- Coal reserves on Crow Reservation could be the richest in the U.S.
- Do have local electricians, construction workers.

SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER – STRENGTHS

- The people
- Short lines at the store
- Lots of strengths – pool
- Good hospital
- Good doctors
- Re-enactment
- Museum
- Pharmacy
- Grocery Store

MEDIA, RETAIL, LODGING, RESTAURANTS, ENTERTAINMENT – STRENGTHS

- Very concerned for our community and our people
- Feel like we have a lot to offer the community
- Clean safe business – family business award (Hansers)
- Good working relationship with fire departments
- Why do business in Hardin? A. Liked Rich Fox, B. Enjoyed what was already built here- saved the signs that said Fox Service Center
- Restoring Fox Service Center to original condition as possible
- Refurbishing of the Depot
- Native American culture
- Friday Farmer’s Markets
- Incredible Chevy business
- Utilize Hanser’s property for a location for community events

HARDIN LISTENING SESSIONS
MARCH 23 – 24, 2004

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - PROJECTS

- Men's clothing store
- Industrial park
- New additions to museum
- Hospital expansion (even though on it's way)
- Ditto
- Harding get comfortable with itself
- Hardin will continue to grow – attract new business
- Something to bring young people back
- Continue to pursue power plant and ethanol plant (good for tax base)
- Encourage and assist agriculture – keep it going and not lose any
- Ditto business to keep shoppers in Hardin
- Investment in young people – youth center, boys/girls club, etc.
- Arts and clothing store
- City sewer and water near interstate (need 100%) (Watson Drive)
- Need
- Airport relocated
- Paul Dyck museum
- Another large grocery store might keep people here

CHURCHES AND VOLUNTEERS - PROJECTS

- More industry – small factory
- Fill the vacant Stage building
- More variety of stores
- Clothing and shoe store
- Unified Law Enforcement
- Great idea to have our own City Police
- Encourage our county commissioners to think bigger – out of the box
- More family supporting jobs – livable wage for families
- Support local businesses
- Trailer park behind Boys and Girls Club destroyed
- Clean up our yards

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS – PROJECTS

- Advanced placement classes
- Improve education – broaden the choices
- Improve tennis courts
- Baseball field and program
- Reduce crime and drug use
- Clean up the trailer courts
- Education – match other areas – not be behind in our standards
- More businesses – empty stores occupied
- Pregnancy and STD rates to go down

- Have our own Police Department
- Law enforcement –ditto – better priorities
- Ditto
- Clean up the town – spruce it up like Red Lodge
- Bigger math and science teaching staff
- More community wide events
- Don't say, He's Crow He's White – but rather He's from Hardin.
- Downtown businesses improved
- Ditto
- Clean up low income and government housing – slum lords accountable
- More tennis courts
- Ditto
- Good steak house or fine dining
- Good activities for teens – healthy and safe things: Like Desparados in Billings – had dance contests, pool tables , video games, no alcohol. Have it here!
- See Hotel Becker restored

TEACHERS – PROJECTS

- Improve graduation rate
- Beautification – fix up buildings, litter
- Sculptures scene from the highway – attractions to get in the drive-bys
- Need a place for the kids to go to – do have gym, track, but 50% don't want to do that
- More businesses
- Industry to support businesses
- Get the power plant going
- Pamida – smaller department type store
- Industry of some kind
- Mini Kmart would be good
- Something with towels and kids shoes
- Improve local law enforcement – too lax here
- Build a diamond so can have Babe Ruth back
- Address high freshman dropout rate
- Clean up or demolish trailer courts

REALTORS, LAWYERS, CPA'S INSURANCE, BANKING - PROJECTS

- Overcome the bickering – get city, county, tribes to work together
- Turn around the bad crime image we have
- Make Hardin look attractive
- Create an independent local development non-profit
- Condemn the trailer courts and create new housing
- Enforce the city ordinances that are on the books – i.e., clean up, crime, etc.
- Replace 1917 sewer system
- Take advantage of the traffic that is in our area
- Get the jurisdictions to all work together
- Bring as well as retain our young people – need to work together
- Draw more people to make the community grow
- Need a major industry

- Encourage teachers, police officers to live here by creating middle income housing
- Promote the industrial park
- Ditto – need major industry to come in – follow-up on the leads
- Be ready for business opportunities
- Downtown area improved – fill empty buildings
- Educate the community so that fear and panic buttons don't go off when an opportunity comes by (i.e., prison)
- Subdivision
- Paul Dyck Museum brought in – largest collection of Native American artifacts in the world
- Airport built
- Maintain the curfew violations – too many young kids on the street loose
- Teen center

AG PRODUCERS – PROJECTS

- Develop alternative crops
- Do something with meat packing plant
- Build better relationship with banks
- Farm implement dealership brought back
- Improve relationship with county policy makers and planners
- Health clinic that is designed for Medicaid customers
- Local businesses more supportive of season work activities and needs
- Local entities, such as schools and hospital – get to shop local too
- Recruit more volunteers
- Get power plant and ethanol plant rolling
- Perhaps a feedlot to go with excess grain
- Utilize Billings population – attract folks to come here to live.
- Consider high-end housing to attract folks leaving Billings
- Bouncer for the grocery store to reduce theft
- More businesses – businesses that support affiliated supplies existing businesses need. I.e., - oil for crop spraying business, equipment, repairs, tools, tractor parts
- Business assessment to find out what people are going out of town to shop for
- We need to grow!
- Do some relationship building to recruit businesses – keep your eyes open for opportunity
- Ditto – keep those feelers out and stay on the phone
- All the vacant buildings full and open
- Vagrants no longer on the street
- No litter
- Ag technology transfer program that gives access to local farmers and ranchers access to federal laboratories that can field test products
- Tap into programs offered by the federal government
- Recruit people that drive here to work to live here – housing program
- Transportation developed by local government that starts reverse commute where people here can be transported to their work in a cost saving manner
- Recruit more volunteers
- Housing
- Trailer park destroyed – hurting the town

- Adult Education - Distance learning or easier use of colleges in the area
- Learn lessons from North Dakota – little things say “made in North Dakota”
- Create new strategic plan
- Create an economic development agency (501c3) –
- Crow tribe and community of Hardin both be treated fair – that we are treated as equals.
- Use Oklahoma model and remove tribal boundaries
- Ditto

LAW ENFORCEMENT, FIRE, AMBULANCE, SOCIAL SERVICES, CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY, MENTAL HEALTH – PROJECTS

- Juvenile detention center here
- Hired sheriff instead of elected sheriff
- Look at review of government this year –
- Must develop water and sewer to grow – educate people so willing to pay for it
- More business development – to fill empty storefronts
- Ditto
- Expanded museum complex
- More motels operating
- All downtown buildings occupied
- See new homes being built – older homes not on the market
- Make this a bedroom community for Billings
- Middle class housing
- Hardin needs its own fully development police department
- Establish Hardin as an art center – an artist’s community – very talented locals – more galleries in town.
- Sugar factory as an outlet mall – put an Applebee’s or Chili’s out there too
- Ditto downtown improvement
- Ditto art gallery
- Keep re-building streets and see downtown full
- Tree project and vegetation
- See my daughter graduate as valedictorian
- Keep people here
- Tribe develop a detox center and help with intervention and treatment
- Have community be aware of all the services that are available for mental health, social services
- Law enforcement and treatment issues need to go hand-in-hand
- Need to use Adult Protective Services that is available in Billings
- Encourage local county workers to live in Hardin

LOCAL GOVERNMENT – PROJECTS

- **Burns has a full time grant writer – Rehberg has grant support as well**
- Rural Improvement District north of town
- Resolve Law Enforcement issue
- Continue with sewer project
- Use tourist sites (battlefield, dam) more to bring in more people
- Need Preliminary Engineering Report – for water annexation project
- Market tourist sites

- Do more county-wide events
- Pave road from Edgar to Pryor – travelers would not go to Billings
- Ditto
- Promote tourism – Chamber could focus on it
- Plant and coal bed methane development is important – but we want to do it right
- Do make changes in a cooperative way
- Better signage
- Make it a friendly atmosphere
- Get more information out
- Multipurpose building – civic center for events
- Airport – making progress – will be in place in a few years
- Rural fire station – will have rural fire house
- Rosebud battlefield – not been tapped
- Ditto airport
- Maintain air and water quality – we have the technology today to do it
- Get aggressive – package deals so they eat here, sleep here, etc.
- Natural resource development will bring jobs
- Watson drive area – water and sewer
- Ditto – hard to give a bath to a child and keep the water out of its mouth
- Recruit high wage earners to come live here and do business here
- Attract micro businesses
- Ditto
- Dyck Museum – would become a world renown museum
- Power plant
- Many more small businesses to create ten to 20 jobs each – population growth
- Resolution to address the factions in Hardin
- Ag community able to gear up and feed ethanol plant.
- Regional approach to highway 212 promotion – a package deal with side tours as people travel to Billings or Yellowstone
- Heart of Indian Country – tremendous interest in old west and Indian Country

AG BUSINESS, AUTO MAINTENANCE, TRADES, CARPENTERS, PLUMBERS, ELECTRICIANS – PROJECTS

- Educate the public about issues – in detail
- Change to a hired form of government, not appointed – would have more accountability
- Sheriff is elected by county vote – so their responsibility is to county. We need city coverage.
- Need accounting of fines being paid from the city that go to the Sheriff’s office
- See six businesses that employ ten or twelve people each
- Do something with the packing plant
- Spin off other business from the current business needs
- Tap people with good ideas –they are out there
- Location is perfect – encourage businesses to come in, don’t just expect them to walk in.
- Good decent paying jobs needed.
- School system – encourage teachers to live here. Give them an incentive. (Same with HIS, County workers, etc.)

- Incentive could go both ways – have an incentive for people that currently live in Billings to move here.
- Must improve the image of Hardin to the Billings community.
- Coal bed methane is going to move more into Montana.
- Tribes need fair, equitable judicial system.
- To get tribe and Hardin to work better together – reduce animosity, address jurisdictional problems, educate both native and Americans as to cultural differences and similarities. Must build integrity in judicial system.

SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER – PROJECTS

- Add gas tax to pay for Medicare
- Get non-insured people off the road
- Bring back the train service
- Public restrooms
- Need competitive grocery store
- Improve police force
- Ethanol plant
- House of ill repute
- All streets to have sidewalks
- Repair roof on Senior Center
- Catch drunk drivers
- Hitch-hiking to be legal in Montana
- A restaurant with authentic N.A. Food
- Water and sewer at KOA Campground

MEDIA, RETAIL, LODGING, RESTAURANTS, ENTERTAINMENT – PROJECTS

- Dispel poor and inaccurate “rough” image of Hardin
- Complete restoration of Fox Service Center – continue to expand business
- Open to suggestions for Fox Service Center appearance
- Continue cleanup pollution around the Fox Service Center
- Want to see growth in Hardin
- Each business makes it mandatory for all employees to become familiar with what is available here – like Super Host but with a local focus.
- Community needs to tell Hanser’s what they would like that property to look like, i.e., trees? Round post fence?
- Chamber after hours – copy it from Billings program – but must include employees
- Stabilize and use our old buildings
- Get people off the interstate, past McDonalds and on into town
- Tap into international markets
- Expand museum so that it is an even bigger attraction to get people to pull off the road
- Consider “new” Hardin and “old” Hardin and market attributes of both
- Create the mood for the town so that others will be attracted to come here
- Promote Indian Culture – sell Native American crafts
- Utilize Hanser’s property for community events and local product sales
- Create network with businesses that are bringing tourists in here
- Create events such as open Pow Wow, street cookout that draw people and let them see what is here

- Create tourist package deals and combine features of this area
- Get airport up and running

