

RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

for

HARLEM, MONTANA

DECEMBER 2 - 3, 2003

**In partnership with
Montana Department of Commerce, USDA/Rural Development, Montana
Economic Developers Association, Bear Paw Development Corporation, Harlem
City Council, Blaine County Commissioners, City of Lewistown, Double K Outfit,
CTA Architects and Engineers, and the people of Harlem.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I am sure I speak on behalf of the team in thanking the community of Harlem for its hospitality. It was a privilege to spend two days in your amazing community and learn of its challenges, strengths and dreams.

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 Mayor Jason Gibson and Craig Erickson of Bear Paw Development Corp. Jason and Craig made the assessment become a reality. More thanks are extended to the City of Harlem and Harlem High School for their generous contributions. In addition, I applaud each and every team member that dedicated hours of work and travel in order to participate on the team: Janet Held, (USDA/RD), Duane Ferdinand, (City of Lewistown), John Bolton (CTA Architects and Engineers), and Kristine Komar, (Double K Outfit Consulting). 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 stage is now being set for Harlem'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 watching for the date/time/location of the Harlem Follow-up Town Meeting!

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

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

The Resource Team interviewed over 60 people during December 2nd – 3rd, 2003. The team was available for listening to the following groups: City, County, Law Enforcement, Retail, Business, Utilities, Agriculture, Churches, Civic Groups, Youth, Senior Citizens, Renters, Property Owners, Banking, Financial, and Educators.

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

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 Harlem.

A preliminary oral report and a summary of group recommendations was presented to the people of Harlem on December 3rd.

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

**HARLEM, MONTANA
RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT
DECEMBER 2 – 3rd, 2003**

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Agenda
City of Harlem
Community Resource Assessment
December 2 & 3, 2003

<i>Tuesday, December 2</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch & Team Orientation	Hitchin' Post
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Community Tour	
3:10 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Local Government	Harlem City Hall
4:10 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Retail/Business/Utilities	Harlem City Hall
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Dinner	Deb's Diner
7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.	General Public	Harlem City Hall
<i>Wednesday, December 3</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>
7:00 a.m. to 7:30 a.m.	Breakfast	Deb's Diner
7:40 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.	Agriculture	Harlem City Hall
8:40 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.	Churches	Harlem City Hall
9:40 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.	Civic Clubs	Harlem City Hall
11:00 a.m. to 11:40 a.m.	Youth	Harlem High School
12:00 p.m. to 12:30 p.m.	Lunch	Little Rockies
12:30 p.m. to 1:20 p.m.	Senior Citizens	Little Rockies
1:30 p.m. to 2:20 p.m.	Renters & Property Owners	Harlem City Hall
2:30 p.m. to 3:20 p.m.	Banking & Financial	Harlem City Hall
3:30 p.m. to 4:20 p.m.	Educators	Harlem High School
4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.	Prepare for Town Meeting	Harlem City Hall
6:30 p.m. to 7:10 p.m.	Dinner	Hitchin' Post
7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.	Town Meeting - Team Presents Findings	Harlem High School

Last Modified: 11/25/03

**HARLEM RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT
DECEMBER 2 – 3, 2003**

Note: This list was compiled from the Listening Sessions held in Harlem.

AGRICULTURE

- Irrigation crop sustainability and control
- Production and equipment challenges
- Wind generation
- Value added ag
 - Hay Processing Plant
 - Think outside the box
 - Malt-Barley Crops
- Crop and livestock diversification
- Taxed to the Max

COMMUNITY

- Preserve Diverse Cultures
- Community Events - preserve and enhance
- Beautification
 - Abandoned Houses
 - Clean up
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Tolerance
- Youth
 - More to do
 - Organized youth activities
- Explore Faith-Based initiatives
- Grant strategies

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- Tourism
 - Awareness - get after it!
 - Signage
 - Marketing
 - RV Park
 - Accommodations
- Retention and Recruitment
 - Misc. retail
 - Practical business education

- Incentives
 - Tax abatements
 - Tax credits
 - Grants/Loan pools
- Trap Club
- Moto-Cross Track
- More restaurants - available on weekends after events, etc.
- Promotion of Arts and Culture
- Historic Preservation
- Tap local talent
- Delivery and transportation service
- Events arena
- Multi-purpose complex

CIVIC

- Law Enforcement
 - Drugs and Alcohol
 - Staff development
 - More officers
 - Slow or lack of response
 - Vandalism
 - Dispatch center
 - Resource Officer
- Mosquito control
- Streetscape & Drainage
- Highway 2
- Infrastructure
 - Highway Control
 - Improvements
 - Streets
 - St. Mary's Diversion
 - Storm drains
 - 30 Mile Reservoir/Flood Control
- Municipal water plant
- Golf Course
 - Marketing
 - Sustainability strategy
- Truck Wars

EDUCATION

- Reverse the trend of "white-flight"
- Advanced Placement issues
 - Kids need challenged
- Teen pregnancy
- Parenting skills

- Utilization of Ft. Belknap Collegiate services
- Less school dismissals reasons
- Perception of discipline problems
- Improved communication with community and within schools
- Drug and Alcohol Education/Prevention

PROFESSIONAL AND TRADES

- Health Services
 - Dental
 - Optometry
 - General Medical
 - Transportation to care
 - Pharmacist
- Attorney
- Accounting
- Electricians
- Plumbers, etc.

HOUSING

- Lack of suitable residential units
- Sellers - Low or no return on investment
- Renters - Low or no return on investment
- Little Rockies
- Affordability
- Use home-ownership programs

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MAIN TOPIC: HOUSING

Issue: Affordability

An issue raised by many of Harlem's citizens is the lack of affordable or suitable housing and an antiquated housing stock. Overall, the gap between Harlem's lower-income citizens and the available, affordable, and suitable housing units continues to widen.

Recommendations:

1. The Harlem City Council should consider appointing a citizen-based Housing Advisory Committee composed of nine voting members. The volunteer committee would serve to advise the city council on housing issues facing the community.
2. Complete a Harlem Housing Plan. The plan would serve as a foundation and justification for funding applications.
3. Determine the priority needs for housing within the community. Needs would include availability, affordability and suitability. Make an assessment of the degree and type of need. Tap government programs to broaden the housing/income mix. These measures include taking advantage of the housing programs administered by State and federal agencies. The following programs may help the community of Harlem meet its housing needs:
 - a. To increase the ability of low and moderate-income households to buy homes, make HOME Investment Partnership funds available through a homebuyer program.
 - b. To increase the availability of affordable rental units, utilize HOME funds and/or CDBG funds for rehabilitation of existing units or to construct new rental housing. USDA-Rural Development (RD) funds should also be considered.
 - c. HOME, CDBG, and RD can be applied for and made available to homeowners to assist in their rehabilitation needs.
 - d. Mix housing units (below market rate and market rate) for different socioeconomic groups to the extent that the market will bear. With any new housing developments, 20 percent of the units should be

designated as “affordable.” Federally subsidized (Section 8) and market-rate apartments can comfortably co-exist.

e. Consider all development practices that make housing affordable. These could include: 1) Providing “granny flats” or “teenager cottages” behind family homes or above detached garages; 2) Consider residential density. Large lots are usually not conducive to affordability. Strive to achieve a net residential density of at least 6 to 7 residential units per acre. 3) Use energy-efficient construction practices and landscaping for new units and for rehabilitation. Heating and cooling costs can be cut dramatically by using accepted practices. 4) Have a willingness to adapt and innovate.

f. Implement a Self-Help Housing Program. Through this program, non-profit organizations receive technical assistance grants to help very-low and low-income families finance and build their own homes. The Rural Community Assistance Corporation will provide technical assistance to grantees through a contract with the USDA-RD.

Recommended Resources:

Funding Sources:

1) Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)
PO Box 200523
Helena, MT 59620-0523
(406) 841-2777

2) HOME Investment Partnership Program
Housing Division
Montana Department of Commerce
PO Box 200545
Helena, MT 59620-0545
(406) 841-2818

3) USDA Rural Development (USDA-RD) Housing Preservation Grant (HPG). For rural development and housing services, contact the Glasgow office at (406) 228-4321, ext. 4. Also see www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt/

4) The Montana Board of Housing.

The MBOH is the administrative agency of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program in the state. The tax credit is intended to provide for retention, rehabilitation and construction of rental housing for low income individuals and families. Contact:

MBOH
PO Box 200528
Helena, MT 59620-0528
(406) 841-2850

Census and Economic Information center (CEIC)
<http://ceic.commerce.state.mt.us/>
(406) 841-2740

US Census Bureau
<http://www.census.gov>

City of Lewistown
Housing Plan
Housing Advisory Committee By-laws

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
<http://www.hud.gov/>

Rural Community Assistance Corporation
Contact Dave Conine, Rural Development Specialist
(801) 501-0458
www.rcac.org

MAIN TOPIC: HOUSING

Issue: Lack of Suitable Residential Units

Locating suitable rental units was identified as a problem for many. There appears to be a demand for three-bedroom rental units, but these units are difficult to find.

A related issue is the poor condition of some of the community's housing stock. Lack of maintenance is an issue. This is caused in part by the relationship between the relatively low rental rates (<\$300/month), the cost of maintenance, and the quality of tenant occupants. The thirty to forty water "turn-off's" and "turn-on's" per month is high for a community the size of Harlem. This reflects a transient population.

Substandard housing conditions decrease affordability because of higher energy costs and higher cost of maintenance.

Recommendations:

1. Complete a comprehensive inventory of housing stock within the community. Include in the inventory a structural and condition survey of the housing units. Make use of the data compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Census and Economic Information Center of the Montana Department of Commerce. Specific areas of Harlem may contain a disproportionate number of substandard housing units. These areas probably have a high concentration of low to moderate income and special needs households. Concentrate housing resources in these neighborhoods.
2. As stated above, complete a Harlem Housing Plan.
3. In the interest of reducing urban blight, some existing dwelling units may be in need of removal through demolition. Consider this measure only if rehabilitation is not feasible. The community

would benefit by maintaining its traditional neighborhoods in character and appearance. Therefore, excessive demolition of the existing dwelling units should be avoided if possible.

4. Housing rehabilitation needs are often not addressed by the private sector because it is not profitable. That leaves the responsibility for addressing housing rehabilitation needs to the local government. The city, therefore, should make use of existing federal and State programs for housing rehabilitation. For example a USDA-RD Housing Preservation Grant or CDBG Housing Rehabilitation Grant are appropriate programs. Administration of the programs can be contracted to the local HRDC office.

MAIN TOPIC: HOUSING

Issue: Sellers of dwelling units realize little or no return on their investment

Property owners have indicated the difficulty they have in selling dwelling units. Most of the market in the community is in rental properties. This is, however, a reflection of the economy in the local area to a large degree. Certain conditions in a community that affect property values are not under the control of individual property owners.

Recommendations:

1. The community, particularly the local government, can provide the foundation in which the market for real estate will be able to function as intended. The following initiatives must be in place to assure the property values are protected and the community moves forward:

a. Infrastructure – This includes adequate water, sewer, streets, sidewalks, schools, medical and other community services such as fire protection and law enforcement. These are essential capital improvements and durability, flexibility, and simplicity should be incorporated into the design.

b. Code implementation and enforcement – Community decay negatively affects property values. An effective community decay ordinance would help in ensuring that private property is kept free of unsightly debris and junk. A well thought out community-wide zoning ordinance would also serve to protect property values.

c. Host an annual community “Shine-On Harlem” cleanup day. Reduced land-fill charges is an incentive to all to participate.

d. Adequate community spaces must be available to provide for civic gatherings. This is essential to the vitality of the community.

e. The City of Harlem should be concerned with esthetics and all that is done should be functional as well as aesthetically pleasing. There should be a public-private partnership in the consideration of building materials, environment, land coverage, massing and scale.

2. Encourage the upgrading and maintenance of private property and structures.

Recommended Resources:

See above list of resources

MAIN TOPIC – COMMUNITY

Issue: Beautification

Several of the listening session groups mentioned the deteriorated condition of some of the properties within the community. This includes both public and private properties. It is important to remember that people visit and then choose to live in beautiful and attractive communities and places. Therefore, beautification is also an economic development tool. The first of 20 Clues to Community Survival states that successful communities are often showplaces of care, attention, history and heritage.

Recommendations:

See also the recommendations discussed above under property values.

1. A Community Decay Ordinance may be essential in curbing some of the community conditions associated with blight. Community decay is a public nuisance created by allowing debris, junk, or refuse to accumulate resulting in conditions that are injurious to health, indecent, offensive to the senses, or obstruct the free use of property so as to interfere with the comfortable enjoyment of life or property.
2. Conduct an annual community-wide cleanup day.
3. Encourage the use of landscaping in all public and private projects and facilities. Consider requiring landscaping in site development and in public places.
4. Develop landscaping standards for all public places and rights-of-way. Encourage the planting of trees, shrubs, and flowers as appropriate. Flower baskets downtown would be appropriate as the season permits.
5. Consider design standards
6. Encourage upgrading and maintenance of private property and structures.
7. Vacant and underutilized properties can quickly become a problem. Encourage infill development.
8. Some of the community is lacking curb, gutters and sidewalks. A lack of functioning curb, gutter and sidewalk system is a blighting influence. Some of this contributes to poor drainage in some of the neighborhoods. A solution may to combine funding sources including the creation of Special Improvement Districts. Public funding would include a Community Development Block Grant.
9. Pay attention to off-street parking lots. Unimproved parking lots should be constructed the City of Harlem standards. Dirt and mud from unimproved lots enter the street network where it becomes airborne from vehicle tires.
10. Discuss the Community Reinvestment Act with you local banks. A federal regulation states that banks have an obligation to meet the credit needs of their entire community, including low and

moderate-income areas. Banks could focus on special programs such as low-cost home improvement loans, paint-a-thons, or neighborhood cleanup projects.

Recommended Resources:

1. Other communities have community decay ordinances and would be glad to provide a copy to Harlem. Great Falls and Lewistown are examples. Many city codes, including Lewistown's, can be reviewed online from Sterling Codifiers. Access is available at this address:

<http://www.sterlingcodifiers.com/mt/lewistown/index.htm>

2. A Visual Awareness Tool Kit is available from Scenic America. It is titled, "O, Say, Can You See." (202) 543-6200. www.scenic.org

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Issue: Business Retention and Recruitment

This issue actually involves rebuilding Harlem's downtown economy – economic restructuring. Preventing further decay in the Central Business District is central to Harlem's economic health. Real estate values and commercial activity are closely related. Based on comments from local citizens, the vacant buildings downtown are a concern. Each vacant building represents a loss to the community of roughly \$1,500 in property taxes. While the loss of rural population is partially the result of federal government programs (CRP, etc.), there are steps the community can take to bring about positive economic change to the downtown area.

A good downtown is essential to the economic health of the community. With each business lost, there is a less chance that a small industry will be attracted to Harlem. Business owners want to locate to a community where they know their employees will want to stay to live and work. High employee turnover is costly to businesses.

Recommendations:

1. The National Trust for Historic Preservation identifies the following activities in the Main Street approach to economic restructuring:

- ✓ Stabilize and improve the value of downtown real estate.
- ✓ Study local market conditions and identify areas of opportunity and design strategies to build on those opportunities.
- ✓ Help existing businesses find better ways to meet their customers' needs and expand to meet market opportunities.
- ✓ Recruit new businesses to complement the downtown's retail and service mix and boost the downtown's overall market effectiveness.
- ✓ Find new or better uses for underused or vacant downtown buildings.
- ✓ Develop appropriate incentive programs to stimulate commercial and real estate development.
- ✓ Reposition the downtown in the marketplace and effectively promote it.

- ✓ Develop long-term economic development strategies for the downtown's continued evolution.
- 2. Involve both the public and private sector in the downtown economic restructuring.
- 3. Consider using one of the vacant or underutilized downtown buildings as a business incubator location.
- 4. The downtown retail mix must be appropriate if shopping on Main Street is to be a unique, enjoyable experience. To determine what customers want, complete a retail market analysis as a tool for making a determination about potential sales and who the most likely customers would be.
- 5. Encourage some group or individual to set up a program to monitor the downtown's retail sales, property values, and customer base.
- 6. To remain a viable downtown business district, the community must decrease leakage and increase the capture rate for certain retail sectors. Leakage is the percentage of shoppers who buy some products out of town. Capture rate is the percentage of local shoppers business owners can expect to attract to their stores. Harlem falls short in some retail sectors. A pharmacy outlet is one example. Business is lost to other communities because of convenience, price, selection, and store hours. Community volunteers should be recruited to do a complete market analysis for Harlem. The market analysis would include business inventory, property inventory, primary trade area, market competition, demographic profile of the trade area, current and potential customers, customer surveys, business owner surveys, current retail sales, retail sales potential, and market opportunities.
- 7. Determine a community vision and ask those who have moved away to "come home" and share the vision. This would include school alumni who have moved away and who may have a business or skill they could bring "home." This assumes that the community is ready to receive newcomers. Remember that people visit and then choose to live in beautiful places.
- 8. Become a member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation Main Street Network. Timely information on downtown revitalization is available from the Main Street network.

Recommended Resources:

1. www.comehomemontana.org
2. "Step by Step Market Analysis" is a workbook for downtown business development. It is available from the National Main Street Center of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20036. \$30.00. A companion on business recruitment is also available for \$30.00 and is titled "Fill-in-the Blank Business Recruitment."

3. National Main Street Network. Annual dues are \$195.00. Available from National Main Street Center, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20036. (202) 588-6219. www.mainst@nthp.org

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Issue: Historic Preservation

Harlem has many historic buildings that merit being saved, especially in the Central Business District. Some of these buildings are vacant and in danger of being lost through neglect or vandalism. The economic benefits of historic preservation are significant. Historic preservation is an economic development tool and the case must be made for the preservation of Harlem's historic properties. Saving historic buildings (our built heritage) is not a luxury but has a potentially tremendous positive and comprehensive economic impact on the community. Investors and developers will judge the community by the quality and character of your central business district.

Recommendations:

1. Designate the Central Business District as an Historic District. Determine the boundaries of the district and designate which buildings contribute to the historic nature of the district and which buildings are non-contributing.
2. Take steps to nominate the Central Business District to the National Register of Historic Places. Contact the State Historic Preservation Office for assistance.
3. Take advantage of Montana's National Register of Historic Places sign program. A property owner represents a property that is listed in the National Register of Historic Places should be encouraged to participate in the sign program. The sign program would serve to improve public knowledge of Harlem's rich and colorful heritage and to promote the preservation of the town's historic resources.
4. Encourage the adaptive reuse of vacant Main Street buildings including the upper stories. Upper stories may have potential for downtown housing. Consider affordable and market rate housing; however, avoid concentrating low-income housing in the downtown area.
5. Harlem must have a downtown revitalization program in place that includes the reuse of existing historic buildings. If this is not done, taxpayer dollars are not being utilized in the most cost-effective manner. This is because in the downtown, the infrastructure is already in place – streets, lights, parking lots, sidewalks, water and sewer lines and other infrastructure.
6. Build on the existing improvements that are already in place. The new sidewalks and streetlights are commendable improvements in the downtown business district and should stimulate further improvements from the private sector. You may want to consider replacing the clear globes now existing on the streetlights with a frosted prismatic globe made of impact resistant poly-carbonate

material. This would help diffuse the light and reduce glare while still enabling lighting standards to be met.

Remember that the infrastructure that is already in place must be used close to its design capacity to make effective use of taxpayer dollars. For instance, a sidewalk that is used only for 30% of its capacity still must be replaced every so many years. Cost per use or user is very high on under utilized infrastructure.

Recommended Resources:

1. State Historic Preservation Office. Discuss National Register of Historic Places with Kate Hampton, (406) 444-3647. kahampton@state.mt.us

2. Montana's National Register of Historic Places Sign Program. Contact the State Historic Preservation Office, PO Box 201202, Helena, MT 59620-1202. (406) 444-1687.

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Issue: Incentives

Business development is a public-private partnership. Part of the public responsibility is to create an attractive atmosphere wherein the private sector can operate competitively and profitably. Listed below are some economic development tools that may help to move the community forward.

Recommendations:

1. Consider the establishment of a Business Improvement District (BID). A BID is a self-help enterprise that allows private businesses to share costs, address problems and even finance capital improvements. The power of the local government is behind the BID. It can be a useful tool to solve problems such as deteriorated commercial buildings, signage, empty lots, empty buildings, and lack of marketing. BID's are useful in maintaining the streetscape and attracting new businesses.

2. Implement a Tax Abatement Program for residential and commercial properties undergoing rehabilitation.

3. Encourage the use of Historic Tax Credits and Low Income Housing Tax Credits for housing development.

4. Some communities have retail development grant programs available. For example, the Helena BID has a grant program offering \$2,000 for new or expanding retail businesses within the district. Consider this as a useful tool for downtown Harlem as well.

5. In 2000, Congress created a new tax credit to stimulate business development in low-income and moderate-income communities. This is the New Markets Tax Credit – a 39% credit for companies

and individuals for work done in commercial districts. This may be a tool that would work in Harlem's Main Street revitalization.

6. Prepare a simple brochure listing the benefits of investing in "historic" downtown Harlem. In the brochure, list the incentives for property development. The target audience is business owners, property owners and other investors.

7. Consider establishing a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). Initial funding can be acquired from the Community Block Grant Program. Loans would be available for business start-ups or for business expansion. Local governments can keep loan repayments from businesses if the local government demonstrates it has the capacity to administer a RLF. The maximum amount per community is \$400,000.

8. Many financial resources are available for consideration. However, it has been shown that communities that are successful economically aren't those that go out and actively seek industry. It is those that create an atmosphere that is attractive to people looking for a great place to live and do business. Think what entrepreneurs need and then work on those things.

Recommended Resources:

1. Montana Code Annotated 7-12-1101, Business Improvement District Act.
2. Montana Code Annotated 15-24-1601, Property Tax Abatement Program
3. For the Historic Tax Credit program, contact Pete Brown, Historical Architect at the State Historic Preservation Office. (406) 444-7718. pebrown@state.mt.us Also see <http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/tax/index.htm>
4. For low-income housing tax credit information, contact the Julie Flynn at the Montana Department of Commerce. (406) 841-2818. juflynn@state.mt.us
5. Contact communities that have successful Business Improvement Districts. They include Great Falls, Helena, Missoula, Hamilton, and Billings. They would be willing to share information on their retail grant program and provide a copy of the grant application.
6. Online guide to Historic Preservation Funding – <http://www.achp.gov/funding.html>
7. New Markets Tax Credit information – http://www.cdfifund.gov/docs/2002_nmtc_cde_certification_application.pdf
8. Visit the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA). This website gives you access to a database of all Federal programs available to State and local governments, tribal governments, and others. <http://www.cfda.gov/public>

9. The Finance Information Center provides a source of information on all relevant state, federal, and local public finance programs in Montana. Contact (406) 841-2732 or www.mtfinanceonline.com

MAIN TOPIC – BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Issue – Tourism

Tourism is the most important industry in the world in terms of employment. The community of Harlem should have its share of the industry in terms of visitors and jobs created. Tourism activities, events and products should be an integral part of the vision for the community. Harlem has undeveloped rural resources that must be utilized. It also means that there are new skills that could be learned by community members. Tourism for the community is viable because it relies on the Harlem areas unique cultural, historic, ethnic, geographic and natural attributes. The biggest obstacle to overcome is the lack of adequate facilities and a focal point to draw tourists.

Recommendations:

1. The latest trend in the travel industry is the packaging of tours and travel-related services into attractive and affordable trips. Explore any opportunities for these services in the Harlem area.
2. Complete the following inventories and/or assessments:
 - ✓ Tourism Attractions Inventory
 - ✓ Accessibility Inventory
 - ✓ Public Services/Facilities Inventory
 - ✓ Food Service Facilities Inventory
 - ✓ Lodging Facilities Inventory
3. The Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research at the University of Montana has a questionnaire that asks residents opinions about tourism. This questionnaire would be useful to gauge the level of community support for tourism activities. Not all residents support tourism development.
4. Consider undergoing a Community Tourism Assessment Program. This is a state sponsored program. Your county extension agent has information on application procedures.
5. Individual and community efforts are needed to promote or develop tourism opportunities. Essential elements would include the following:
 - ✓ Encourage development of sustainable tourism while maintaining quality of life and protecting natural, cultural, and recreational resources.
 - ✓ Support development and maintenance of quality infrastructure.
 - ✓ Secure diversified long-range funding sources for tourism development.
 - ✓ Extend benefits of tourism throughout Montana.
 - ✓ Strive for a high quality visitor experience.

6. Fully describe the special tourism-related projects that are currently ongoing or are in the planning stages. Ask: a) things you like and would support; 2) things you want to preserve or maintain; 3) things to continue and/or enhance. Also as what is not going well? a) challenges or concerns; b) things to change/eliminate/fix; c) things you dislike.

7. Explore opportunities for arts and crafts activities. An example would be a “Friday Soap Opera” held each Friday noon during the summer months in an outside downtown area. A local performing arts group could put on drama episodes for the lunch crowd. This would bring people downtown.

8. Keep visitors guides and maps current and of high quality.

9. Consider carefully the design and wordage for highway gateway signage into Harlem. The highway signage can be used also to promote a special feature or attraction to the community such as the golf course.

10. Consider “Branding” the community of Harlem to enhance its image. When you hear the term “Mile High City” Denver immediately comes to mind. What can Harlem be noted for?

Gather a “brand team” to manage the process of developing the brand and all its activities. Identify the key publics and visitors. Create a communications plan.

Ask, “What does the brand promise?”

a. What business are we in? Creating an entertaining retail destination with a sense of place that is unique to the region is an example.

b. What do we provide? An experience that is authentic and not sterile.

c. What differentiates our product from the competition? Independent businesses, outdoor lifestyle, friendly environment.

d. What do we do better than anyone else? This needs to be determined.

Recommended Resources:

1. Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research – (406) 243-5686; www.forestry.umt.edu/itr

2. Tourism Development: A Guideline for Rural Communities, by Glenn D. Weaver. 1993 University Extension, Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri. No phone number available.

3. Travel Montana – (406) 444-2654

4. Community Tourism Assessment Program. For status of the program contact the Cooperative Extension Service, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT 59717. They can also provide information on doing an economic impact analysis on specific tourism related projects.

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I would like to take this opportunity to thank the community of Harlem for your generous hospitality. To be a part of the resource assessment team was truly a rewarding experience for me. It is evident that the people in Harlem are very interested in economic and community development by the ideas that were expressed during the listening sessions. Again, thank you for the hospitality and for sharing your concerns and ideas.

MAIN TOPIC: AGRICULTURE

Issues: During the agriculture listening session, wind generation was mentioned as an alternative energy development for the area.

Recommendations: Businesses, agricultural producers or groups of interested individuals should explore the possibilities of wind generation. There are a number of websites, which provide information on renewable energy.

Recommended Resources: The USDA, Rural Development has a Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements Grant Program, which is available to agricultural producers and rural small businesses to purchase renewable energy systems and make energy efficiency improvements. This grant program is designed to help agricultural producers and rural small businesses reduce energy costs and consumption and help meet the nation's critical energy needs. Energy efficiency improvements can be any improvement to a facility or process that reduces energy consumption. A renewable energy system is a process that produces energy from a renewable energy source, such as wind, solar, biomass, or geothermal source of hydrogen derived from biomass or water using wind, solar, or geothermal energy.

For additional information on the Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements Grant program, please contact:

John D. Guthmiller
RBS Program Director
USDA, Rural Development
P.O. Box 850
Bozeman, MT 59771
(406) 585-2540
John.Guthmiller@mt.usda.gov

or

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Bozeman, MT 59771
(406) 585-2547
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USDA, Rural Development also has a Value-Added Producer Grant Program which may provide another option for alternative energy development. The contact person is:

Bill Barr
Cooperative Specialist
USDA, Rural Development
P.O. Box 850
Bozeman, MT 59771
(406) 585-2545
Bill.Barr@mt.usda.gov

The Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy through the U.S. Department of Energy, has a website which is full of information on wind power. The website is:

<http://www.eere.energy.gov/windpoweringamerica> The Wind Powering America is a commitment to dramatically increase the use of wind energy in the United States. This initiative will establish new sources of income for American farmers, Native Americans, and other rural landowners, and meet the growing demand for clean sources of electricity.

North America Rural Futures Institute (NARFI)
<http://www.narfi.org>

Montana Wind Working Group
<http://www.deq.state.mt.us/energy/Renewable/MtWindWorkGroup.asp>

Other recommended resources:

Farming Alternatives: A Guide to Evaluating the Feasibility of New Farm-Based Enterprises. This is a step-by-step workbook that aids in planning and evaluating new enterprises. Contact:

Cornell Instructional Materials Service
420 Kennedy Hall, Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853
Phone: 607-255-9252

Introduction to Risk Management Handbook

This is a USDA publication that briefly discusses the types of agricultural risk and risk management strategies like diversification. It can be accessed on the Internet at:

<http://www.usda.gov/rma/pubs.html>

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY

Issues: During the listening sessions the matter of beautification for various areas of the community came up.

Recommendations: First impressions are especially important in communities that are trying to attract tourism to drive their economy. The new sidewalks and street lights have not only provided an attractive look to Harlem's main street, but they have also given the community a sense of pride. There are many ways residents can all join in to keep their community looking clean. Plan community clean-up days or neighborhood block clean-up days. You might be surprised how many people do get involved. Identify and prioritize projects that could include community members and businesses working together towards a common goal.

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY

Issues: During the listening session at the High School, the youth stated that there was nothing to do in Harlem and that there were no organized youth activities.

Recommendations: As I was visiting with the various community groups, I was told that Harlem used to have a swim team. It was not affiliated with the school, but was a summer recreational activity that a group of volunteers ran. Form a committee to explore the possibilities of an organized swim team. The committee could be comprised of parents whose children use the swimming pool. Talk to other communities to see if there is interest in having swim meets. A swim team not only gives the youth of the community something to do, but it will also draw people from out of town to your community.

Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts - these are excellent organizations for the youth of the community. The websites provide information on how to start one in your community. The website addresses are:

Boy Scouts of America
www.scouting.org

Girl Scouts of the United States of America
www.girlscouts.org

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Issue: Business retention and attracting new businesses

Recommended Resources: The USDA, Rural Development, has a Business & Industry (B&I) Guaranteed Loan Program. This program is designed for the commercial lender, with a guarantee from RBS up to 80% on traditional lender loans. The primary purpose of the program is to create and maintain employment and to improve the economic climate of rural communities by providing financial backing for new and expanding businesses. The B&I guaranteed loans are available to any legal entity or business which will save or create jobs in areas **outside** any city with a population of 50,000 or more and its immediately adjacent urbanized area. Eligible loan purposes include:

- purchase and expansion of land, buildings, and equipment
- working capital

- some agriculture production when connected with processing or value-added
- tourism
- recreational facilities

Another loan program available through USDA, Rural Development is the Intermediary Relending Program (IRP). This program provides one percent loans to nonprofit development organizations for the establishment of a revolving loan program for the purpose of making loans to small businesses. The Intermediary in your area is Bear Paw Development Corporation. Contact Paul Tuss or Craig Erickson at Bear Paw (406) 265-9226.

The USDA, Rural Development also has grant programs available to assist small businesses in rural areas. The Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) program provides funding to nonprofit organizations or public entities for the purpose of providing technical assistance to small and emerging businesses during startup or expansion. Eligible technical assistance purposes include feasibility studies, market research and product and/or service improvement. The grant cannot be given directly to a business. A public body or nonprofit corporation must make an application to USDA, Rural Development, specifically identifying how the grant will be administered.

For more information on the loan and grant programs available through Rural Development, please contact:

John D. Guthmiller, Program Director
 Rural Business-Cooperative Service
 USDA, Rural Development
 P.O. Box 850
 Bozeman, MT 59718
 (406) 585-2540
john.guthmiller@mt.usda.gov

MAIN TOPIC: CIVIC

Issue: Infrastructure – The water treatment facility is in need of major repairs.

Recommended Resources: A source of funding is the USDA, Rural Development, Community Programs. The Water and Environmental Program (WEP) provides loans, grants and loan guarantees for drinking water, sanitary sewer, solid waste and storm drainage facilities in rural areas and cities and towns of 10,000 or less. Public bodies, non profit organizations and recognized Indian towns may qualify for this assistance. WEP also makes grants to nonprofit organizations to provide technical assistance and training to assist rural communities with their water, wastewater, and solid waste problems.

For additional information on the Water and Environmental Program, please contact:

Mitchel R. Copp
 Program Director

Community Programs
USDA, Rural Development
P.O. Box 850
Bozeman, MT 59771
(406) 585-2520
Mitch.Copp@mt.usda.gov

Other recommended resources:

Montana Department of Commerce
Local Government Assistance
www.commerce.state.mt.us

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

Montana Board of Investments
www.commerce.state.mt.us/BrdInvst

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

MAIN TOPIC: PROFESSIONAL AND TRADES

Issues: The need for health services

Recommended Resources: The USDA, Rural Development Community Facilities provides a CF Guaranteed Loan program, CF Direct Loan program, and a CF Grant program. These loan and grant programs are designed to develop essential community facilities for public use in rural areas. These facilities include schools, libraries, childcare, hospitals, medical clinics, assisted living facilities, fire and rescue stations, police stations, community centers, public buildings and transportation.

For more information on the Community Facilities Program, please contact:

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RUS Program Director
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Bozeman, MT 59771
(406) 585-2520
Mitchel.copp@mt.usda.gov

or

Shad Weber
Community Program Specialist
USDA/Rural Development
1629 Ave. D, Bldg A, Ste 6
Billings, MT 59102
(406) 657-6297 Ext. 125
Shad.Weber@mt.usda.gov

MAIN TOPIC: HOUSING

Recommended Resources: There are several programs available for assisting first time homebuyers, renovating homes, and even building homes. The following are loan and/or grant programs that the USDA, Rural Development offers:

- The 504 Program is a home improvement loan and grant program designed to improve or modernize an existing home.
- A 502 Direct Loan Program is designed to assist low and very low-income families with little or no down payment, at a low interest rate, with home purchase.
- Single Family Housing Guaranteed Loans are used to assist low to moderate income families who cannot obtain conventional financing without assistance. USDA, Rural Development can provide a 90% guarantee to traditional lender loans.
- The 515 Multi-Family Housing Direct Loan Program is designed to address rental housing needs and to provide eligible low and very low income persons with economically designed and constructed rental facilities and rental assistance subsidies.
- The Multi-Family Housing Guaranteed Loan 538 Program is designed to serve the housing needs of low and moderate income families. It complements other affordable housing programs and seeks to meet the needs of rural America not being served by the Section 515 Direct Rural Rental Housing Program.
- The Rural Housing Service Housing Preservation Grant 533 Program is designed to aid in the repair and rehabilitation of individual housing, rental properties, or co-ops owned and/or occupied by very low and low-income families.
- The Self-Help Housing Program provides technical assistance grants to non-profit organizations to help very low and low-income families finance and build their own homes.

Classes for first time home buyers and others are available through Rural Development to assist people with this process.

For further information on the above housing loans and grants, please contact:

Deborah Chorlton, Program Director or
Rural Housing Service
USDA, Rural Development
P.O. Box 850
Bozeman, MT 59771
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The following are issues and resources of which I felt most comfortable about writing and discussing.

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS

ISSUE: Sustainable Economy

The people of Harlem has stated that there are specialty opportunities that come around seasonally to help sustain the economy above and beyond the basis of agricultural economics of the cattle and wheat markets. The basic necessity items for everyday life has been globalized by larger dealers/outlets that make it to easy to get to in different and away from Harlem locations. Many of the local businesses cater to the 40 hour week crowd and do not operate on weekends, thus leaving the community somewhat short of services that may and could be rendered. It is understood by the success stories of Harlem that the business needs to see what it can do for the community and not be on the look out for number one in any sense of greed or the I have paid my dues to society attitude. Again the community of Harlem is of the people. The problem lies that the seasonal and annual specialty businesses cannot be the mainstay for the economic future in Harlem, however can assist in the enhancement of it with existing local businesses.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

All businesses, not one, not two, not three, but all continuing and ongoing businesses contribute to the local economic viability of Harlem in maintaining sustainability and striving to improve the viability of the existing businesses (year round and seasonal) and any new possible business ventures.

Lets identify the businesses that are a mainstay and include possible suggestions on maintaining viability. The existing businesses are viable resources, thus growth and nurturing can be from within to be successful, just a few key ones that may strive for improvement and how to go about it.

Year Round Business:

Library – It is true that the Library is an operation run by the City and that opening for longer hours or on weekend may or may not be viable. Look at the hours of operation and the days that the library could function. Maybe the Library main hours operates during the afternoon (12 – 5) 6 days week for a total of 30 hours per week, with expanded hours (2.5 for 4) Tuesday through Friday. Volunteerism is great within the community and maybe a schedule of volunteers could be utilized to operate the facility during expanded hours. The high speed internet access can allow Harlem Library and local Technology gurus to offer internet / computer courses to move elderly if they so desire into the world of high tech. Volunteerism.

Local Restaurants – Not open weekends. Collaborate between local restaurants to possibly set up a schedule with each other to operate on different weekends. Maybe open up every other weekend – each to consider this and operated simultaneously. Do not change mainstay menu, but consider specialty menus for possibilities. Possibly consider operations on Sunday and have a Brunch Menu – hours – 12:00 to 5. This would allow the possibilities of at least having a restaurant(s) to be open on the Weekends and allow for the locals to have a choice.

Grocery Chain – Albertsons – Contact Albertsons Corporation and discuss with them the opportunities for a local pharmaceutical market. Albertsons typically have pharmacies within their stores. It may be that they could operate one out of the Harlem facility to serve the very need of the local Harlem community and surrounding area. One resource that could be looked into here is at www.albertsons.com corporate home page under community development.

Harlem Lumber – Owners of Harlem lumber may consider offering school of hard knock teaching / training lessons of how businesses can succeed within the Harlem and outlying communities. Understanding the community and the people of the community could be taught and operational secrets be traded. Harlem Lumber is a success story in itself and along the Hi-Line due to a positive outlook and hard work.

Local Plumbing Mechanical Shops – Currently maintaining status quo. Expand on specialty services through training personnel that can lock up local work for the I.H.S. – ie med gas systems are a specialty

Seasonal Business / Businesses

Golf Course: The course is open to the public, expand on public beyond the locals and attract travelers down highway 2. Get some advertising up. Possibly advertise a bucket of range balls and mosquito repellent for NON LOCAL walk ons to capture the travelers coming down highway two. Take the example of Wall Drug in South Dakota – advertisement goes a long way. Host some golf tournaments, possibly tie into the Heart of the West Roping Circuit. Activities other than roping can be fun for all involved and provide for other activities for other activities to support the local economy and businesses. Possible Heart of the West Annual Golf Tournament that can be done – Sponsors and Prizes possibly for the Rodeo Circuit.

Montana Seed Show. Advertise the event. Possible coordinate with the events calendar for the state of Montana Department of Commerce and the made in Montana Resources to get the word out. The Montana Seed show seems to be only known by and attract the local hi line area. Let it be known and coordinate with viable resources such as the Made in Montana Group. Capitalize on the opportunity. Coordinate with local businesses for enhancing the business during the event. For additional ideas please coordinate with the following resources:

www.madeinmontanausa.com

www.discoveringmontana.com doing business heading

<http://travel.state.mt.us/tripplanner/wheretogo/cultural.htm>

<http://travel.state.mt.us/tripplanner/events/>

Heart of the West Roping Circuit – Coordinate the actual event and get it on the calendar utilizing the above listed resources. Coordinate with local businesses to be in operation during the events. Local

businesses should not shut down just because of this event. Not knowing the statistics on the draw of people and crowds participating in the event, Harlem and Belknap need to collaborate on the statistics and determine feasibilities of additional support feasibilities for Hotel / Restaurant / multipurpose center. Grant processes and resources are possibilities through rural development resources.

Specialties – Bead and Craft Show – Possible set up and rent downtown space to Business tenants in Harlem – Advertising a must. Business ventures for new startups in specialty businesses are not far fetched ideas. They can be viable and bring the businesses to the down town area of Harlem. Opportunity arises for expanding starting and maintaining businesses for economic survival. A viable resource in the state includes:
<http://bizmt.com/>

The Harlem area provides great opportunity for Seasonal recreation and businesses such as outfitted guided hunting opportunities. Even though seasonal, the area allows for great possibilities for Guided Hunting Tours and a boost to the local economy since many supplies, guides and outfitters would be local.

Agricultural – The Milk River Valley area can be producers for other viable agricultural products other than wheat. Think outside of the box and strive for different products. Granted wheat prices need to come up, however the valley around the Harlem area offers opportunity for other viable crops such as durum, barley, buckwheat, honey, sugar beats and alfalfa. As all Montanans know, there are specific areas for producing enormous amounts of specific quality products, however the advancements of the agricultural basics is allowing this general thought to be expanded on and production of many products outside the norm is being done and done successfully. Montana’s agricultural business is a mainstay to the entire state and local areas. As taken from the MT Department of Agricultural News Letter:

Montana ranked 2nd among the states in production of spring wheat, 4th in durum, 9th in winter wheat, and 4th in all wheat production. It also ranked 8th in the production of honey, 6th in sugar beets, and 8th in alfalfa hay.

Other crops grown in Montana include apples, buckwheat, canola, cherries, potatoes, dry beans, field peas, flax, grapes, garlic, lentils, safflowers, sunflowers, oats, mustard, corn, rapeseed, mint, kabocha squash, christmas trees, and many more

A viable resource for further information and development on Agriculture products and services in your area is:

<http://www.agr.state.mt.us/grants/first.htm>

MAIN TOPIC: SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

ISSUE: Failing Physical Fabric (Building Blocks & Glue) of the Community

The people of Harlem stated that without a viable physical infrastructure fabric of within and to the community of Harlem, the town would basically die. Key operational people within Harlem Gov’t, Schools and businesses see the problem and identify a failing physical infrastructure as an effort that must be overcome to sustain the community of Harlem and the efforts of the Townspeople. Infrastructure can come in the forms of, City Utilities providing water services etc, School district

providing education, the Milk River Valley water duct system, the culture of the people and the faith of the community, and the beautification of the City of Harlem.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The task of taking on or evening identifying a problem with infrastructure in any sense can be a challenging task and reward, yet to successfully resolve can be an enormous challenge. Infrastructure tasks take a great deal of time and efforts when taken head on. Some of the infrastructure tasks presented herein need to be dealt with from within the community and some the community needs to get assistance on.

School District – The population of the Harlem High School with the number of in town students needs to be rectified. The outflight of local children within the community to other schools within the district is to great of a loss of local talent. Tolerance levels between Harlem and the Native American population needs to be collaborated within the district. There is no justice to the community to have the talent shipped off to another community within the district. Collaborate and tolerate.

Utilities infrastructure – The Saint Mary Diversion and water shed is an enormous project that cannot be taken on by one community alone. Concerns of all communities that survive on the Milk River Valley by this very necessary and valuable source of water needs to be heard. Suggest collaborating and be informed with other communities on the Hi-Line to layout the needs and assess what the communities can do to help the effort with the State of Montana. A very viable resource for collaborating and being heard by the community: <http://www.dnrc.state.mt.us/cardd/loangrnt.htm>

Local Utilities Water issues: The existing water plant of Harlem is currently antiquated and has seen its useful life. A good team Harlem Public Works people keep the municipal plant in operation. The plant, being antiquates as it is, operates as a class A water treatment facility. It is costly to operate and maintain. The city needs to start planning now for funding a new plant in the future. It may be a five year, ten year plan, but the development of a new water treatment facility to handle the needs of the City of Harlem is needed. A physical report done by Neil Consultants of Great Falls was developed a few years back indicating the need. Assistance and procedures for obtaining grant monies for community improvement can be found at the following resource:
http://www.commerce.state.mt.us/CDD/CDD_Home.html

Mosquito Control – Consider communities of Harlem and Ft Belknap again to collaborate and tolerate on this issue and to combine funding for the control of the pesty insects. By controlling this issue together, huge steps will be made in community improvement and life sustainability during the summer months. A sense of achievement will also be accomplished. Currently each community tries to overcome the pests by themselves. Buy combining efforts greater control will be accomplished. City and Tribal Government need to again tolerate and collaborate on this issue.

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Human geography encompasses common beliefs, locally based skills and livelihoods, local culture, a sense of place, and shared history. It is not just the lay of the land, but how the land shapes culture and in turn is shaped by culture.

Top Recommendations

- 1) Figure out how to get Harlem's fair share of government and private foundation money. Focus on developing community capacity by creating a non-profit to help government and community groups be more successful in bringing in resources for community development. Begin by bootstrapping some money to help you develop skills in building capacity and grant seeking.
- 2) Get serious about ensuring that the golf course survives and is sustainable—do what it takes to make this happen. (See #1.)
- 3) Get serious about ensuring that the Montana Seed Show is sustainable and has a strategy for growth—do what it takes to make this happen. (See #1)
- 4) Seriously consider creating a Mosquito Festival to attract summer tourists.
- 5) You have businesses that are not only surviving, but thriving. Move beyond excuses for why the failed businesses have failed to figuring out how and why the successful ones are able to do what they do. Share these learnings with existing business that need help and use them to coach and mentor potential new business owners.
- 6) Ensure that the communities of Harlem and Fort Belknap sensitively, honestly, and with patience and determination find ways to collaborate together for the benefit of both communities. Perhaps a way to take the next step would be to share Resource Team Assessments with each other and identify a project or two to work on together. (Fort Belknap has also completed a Resource Team Assessment.)
- 7) Big ideas are inspiring, can build energy, and are important components of a vision for the future. That said, a vetting process still needs to be applied to determine if big ideas are feasible and will actually accomplish what has been envisioned. The Resource Team Assessment process is a beginning, and while many of the ideas are excellent, they are not integrated, focused in a strategic way, or tested for feasibility. An integrated strategic plan of some kind is recommended.
- 8) In addition to a strategic approach and plan, it is essential to build widespread community support for the plan. This is most easily accomplished by including, in a sincere fashion, individuals and community groups in the strategic planning process. This necessitates that planning leaders understand and find value in individual contributions and an understanding that these contributions

serve the interests of community members, resolving issues and creating opportunity. Recommendation 7 is the technical side of moving forward, 8 the social.

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Issue: New Business Development / Recruitment

Harlem has opportunities for business development, but community leaders need to ensure the feasibility of plans and create effective strategies that include widespread opportunities for participation. The best way to proceed might be to take small incremental steps that will find traction rather than envision a very grand vision that will be difficult to begin. Creating even one sustainable, quality job or business in Harlem would be a success. One, then two, then three... Then the community will have confidence and can attach a larger strategy that requires more resources than are currently available.

Recommendations / Resources:

Build on obvious community strengths and mine existing assets.

- Albertsons. Reportedly, this is one of the best performing stores in the chain. What resources does the company have that could help Harlem in other ways? For example; does Albertson's have relationships with other business that often co-locate—say a drugstore or other type of retail companion?
- Motocross Facility: Investigate the possibilities. <http://www.nohvcc.org/noflash/index1.htm> Once at the site, go to “Contacts”, then to “Montana” for a comprehensive list of helpers. These people are the best resources in Montana. Call ‘em to discuss you ideas about a facility.
- Bike Shop: Highway 2 and backcountry roads reportedly attract bicyclists. Is there enough of an opportunity here to attract someone interested in owning and operating a bike shop? Rather than say why this won't work, figure out if it could. Perhaps it would work if there were a bike shop + another outdoor recreation business under one roof such an ATV or M/C dealer? Or what about a nature shop / bookstore? How far does one have to go to get a field guide to the areas US 2 serves? Add espresso and you're set. There are enough people in Harlem to support an espresso machine, yet there isn't one (that I could find.)
- Bat Bridge: Do I remember that a new bridge in the area will be built to include bat habitat and hopefully support a bat colony? (By the way, each bat eats how many pounds of mosquitoes a minute?) Check out how the city of Austin, Texas has created a huge attraction out of the their Congress Avenue Bridge at <http://www.batcon.org/discover/congress.html> Would there be an opportunity for a guano business, too. :-) www.google.com with “bat bridge”. (By the way, a few years ago I attended a conference in Austin and the bat bridge was the #1 item on every attendee's “to do” list .)
- Pharmacy: See #1 above... Albertsons owns Osco and Savon—might they be interested in assessing the market to add a store for Harlem/Fort Belknap. What kind of draw would *that* be?
- Hardware Store: The good folks at the lumber yard are so busy they can hardly stand it. Folks are driving way farther than they have to shop here—why? The owners feel they had to take on some aspects of the hardware store when it failed. They don't *want* to run a hardware store but feel they need to provide rudimentary stock in this area to satisfy their customers desires. (Hmmm, could this be why they're so successful—attending pleasantly to the needs of their customers?) The owners of the lumber yard say they can compete with the discount stores. Ask em' how they do it? Is it possible to create an incentive for these knowledgeable and experienced good people to help design and create an opportunity for someone interested in owning and operating a hardware store to be

recruited to do so in Harlem? What incentives can the City provide? What about others? Who will lead the effort? (See one above... i.e. does Albertsons have any corporate relationships with hardware stores? *Yeaaaaa*, Osco, Savon, plus others.)

- Vacant Buildings: How valuable are they empty. Investigate how the City might purchase, rehabilitate, and provide a retail space as an incentive to attract and recruit businesses. If the marketplace isn't able to do this, why can't the City?
- Café / Restaurant: How about working with a cooking school to recruit a cook looking for an opportunity? Again—how can you use what you have to get what you need? Is there a closed restaurant that could be rehabilitated by the City? Could a restaurant begin in a church kitchen, the school, the senior center?

Issue: The Arts & Crafts

Create a stronger local economy by developing opportunities for local artists and crafts people. Once existing artists are recognized as valuable to the community, other artists may be drawn.

Recommendations:

- Recent studies indicate that local arts and crafts and culture and heritage travel mean big money.
- Ensure that there is an opportunity and reason for artists to care about Harlem. Create an “Art Center” in a vacant space or share space with another business.
- Work more closely with Fort Belknap to include Native American arts and crafts.
- Explore bringing Artist in Residence (AIR) programs to the community. AIR programs are a fantastic way to provide opportunities for artists, enhance school curriculum, and create a vital community connection. Both Artist in Schools and Artists in Communities grants are available from the Montana Arts Council.

Issue:

Encourage the involvement of artists and craftspeople—they can help make anybody's good business idea better.

Recommendations:

- Identity and welcome signage is a practical need and artists can help make it very special and unique. An outstanding sign will authentically (as opposed to cutesy or artificially) draw interest from passers by. And artists can help integrate local culture and tradition into the signs.
- Main Street improvements create an ideal opportunity for artists to be involved. Remember, authenticity is a key issue, rather than cute. Engaging local artists and craftspeople to help you add scenic value to the downtown area can help ensure that your enhancements are authentic rather than cute.
- Involve artists and craftspeople in any project to improve visual quality.
- What about vacant lots? I bet you \$100 that artists could do amazingly interesting temporary installations on vacant lots or maybe even do something with derelict structures that would be attractive and must see.
- Downtown walking / local area driving tour. Create a simple walking tour of the downtown area. Create a brochure and make them available everywhere visitors congregate: especially the cafe. Most people feel like a little stretch of the leg after a meal. For things outside the downtown area, consider a companion brochure outlining local sites of interest to drive to.

Recommended Resources:

- Montana Arts Council www.art.state.mt.us 406/ 444-6430; Fax 406/ 444-6548, PO Box 202201, Helena, MT 59620-2201
- Economic Impact of the Arts in Montana: www.art.state.mt.us/resources/resources_ecoimpact.htm
- Arts Driven Economic Impact in Montana: www.art.state.mt.us/resources/resources_ecoimpact.htm
- Artists in Communities & Schools Grants: www.art.state.mt.us/orgs/orgs_aisc.htm
- Grants for Organizations: www.art.state.mt.us/orgs/orgs.htm
- Grants for Individuals & Cultural and Aesthetic Grants: www.art.state.mt.us/individ/individ_c&a.htm
- Folkart Apprenticeships: www.art.state.mt.us/folklife/folklife.htm
- Beck McLaughlin bemcloughlin@state.mt.us sends out regular information on grants and other relevant art-related “stuff”... He maintains three lists; one for Organizations, one for Educators, and one for Artists. I get all three. There’s some overlap, but all are interesting.
- Arts 4 All People is a resource for anyone or any group dedicated to the arts and culture, who wish to share or gain better insight into successful ways to build and enhance audience participation. The site was designed to facilitate the exchange of new research, concrete ideas and "best practices" to promote service to people as integral to the health of arts institutions and to the life of their communities. www.arts4allpeople.org
- National Endowment for the Arts, www.nea.gov
- National Endowment for the Humanities, www.neh.gov

Issue: Heritage Tours, Celebrations & Festivals

Barns, Mills, Elevators, and other Historic Rural Structures are COOL and people love to go see them! You see them every day and they’re just boring to you, but to many others who haven’t grown up with them—they’re fascinating!

Recommendations:

- Barns, mills, elevators, and other historic rural structures are COOL and people love to go see them! You see them every day and they’re just boring to you, but to many others who haven’t grown up with them—they’re fascinating! Create a driving tour and brochure of local rural buildings and sites—like the plane crash site and monument. Where possible add value by being able to arrange a personal tour, hear a story, or enjoy a traditional picnic lunch in an historic setting.
- Establish a month long celebration, with special events throughout designed to attract visitors. Many communities have accomplished this, you can, too! A Mosquito Festival? It *could* work in Harlem, goodness knows it works for other communities. Type “mosquito festival” into www.Google.com and get 10 pages of info... here are a couple of the most obvious. It’s too fun... Ms. Quito Contest, Fly-in, "If you can’t beat ‘em, celebrate ‘em!", etc. You can learn from/copy from the best of these experienced communities—one has been holding the festival for 23 years--and make it work for Harlem. Does Ft. Belknap have a Mosquito Dance? Two sites: <http://www.mosquitofestival.com/> <http://paisley.presys.com/mosq.htm>

The Great Texas Mosquito Festival--What do you do in a popular tourist destination when the mosquitoes come out in full force? Follow the lead of the fun-loving folks in Clute, Texas, and throw a party, dedicated to this delightful little bloodsucker. The **Great Texas Mosquito Festival**, which began in 1981, takes place the last Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of each July, offering carnival rides, games, races, way too much food, arts

and crafts sales, and generally a good time for all. There's dancing to live music by top country, rock, Tejano, and R&B groups, plus barbecue and fajitas cook-offs, a horseshoe-pitching tournament, haystack dives, bike and skate tours, and a disc golf tournament. Specialty contests -- perhaps the highlights of the festival -- include the Mosquito Legs competition, the Mosquito Calling contest, the Senior Citizen Mosquito Swatter contest, and the ever-popular Ms. Quito Beauty Pageant. For more information, contact the **Clute Parks and Recreation Department** (tel. **800/371-2971** or 979/265-8392), or the **Southern Brazoria County Visitors Convention Bureau** (tel. **800/938-4853** or 979/265-2508; www.tourist-info.org). And don't forget your insect repellent.

- Get involved in the Hands of Harvest Heritage Trail.
- The Montana Seed Show is a gem (no pun intended.) Be more appreciative of what you have and figure out a way to leverage it. Begin by creating a web site—maybe get help from the local high school computer class? To see why you need one, just type “seed show” into www.Google.com and see all that others are doing to attract attention for their seed shows.

Recommended Resources:

- www.Google.com Type: “seed show” and “mosquito festival”.
- Hands of Harvest: The Heritage Trails of North Central Montana, Gain, Inc. PO Box 1329, Cut Bank, MT 59427.
- Kristine Komar, kristine.komar@att.net, 406/ 375-9953
- National Trust for Historic Preservation, www.nthp.org
- Barn Again! www.agriculture.com/barnagain
- Montana Tourism and Recreation Strategic Plan 2003-07, www.travelmontana.state.mt.us
- Share Your Heritage, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, 1029 Vermont Avenue, NW, 2nd Floor, Washington, DC , 20005, 202/ 347-6352; FAX 202/ 737-0526, www.nasaa-arts.org
- National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, 1029 Vermont Avenue, NW, 2nd Floor, Washington, DC , 20005, 202/ 347-6352; FAX 202/ 737-0526, www.nasaa-arts.org
- Utah Heritage Tourism Toolkit, <http://history.utah.gov/httoolkit>

ISSUE: TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Recommendations:

The Harlem area is remote and quiet. Just the place for a segment of travelers looking for the right place to rest and be away from it all. The goal is not necessarily to develop the Harlem area as a destination for tourists but rather to market what it has to offer to those who are looking for exactly those things.

Ensure that everyone in the Harlem area understands the basics of welcoming visitors. In the long term, success will be judged not only by the number of guests who visit the area but also by the quality of their stay and the number of times they return. Montana has an outstanding reputation for friendly people and is fortunate to have a comprehensive customer service training/visitor information program in place. The SUPERHOST! program is designed to create an awareness and understanding of Montana's travel industry and to enhance the level of customer service provided by the industry. Ultimately, the program strives to encourage the state's visitors to stay longer, to tell their friends about

the positive experiences they found here and the great people they met, and to make plans to return to the state year after year. The SUPERHOST! program stands ready to lead the way in educating Montana communities and businesses about the importance and economic impact of Montana's tourism industry.

Recommended Resources:

- Montana Tourism and Recreation Strategic Plan 2003-07, www.travelmontana.state.mt.us
- Travel Montana SuperHost Program, <http://www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/OURPROGRAMS/Superhost.htm>
- Travel Montana Grants, www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/OURPROGRAMS/tourismDevEd.htm
- Mark Martin, Missoula Cultural Council, mcc@missoulacultural.org, 406/ 721-9620, produces a kickin' newsletter.

Issue: Film Location

Attract the film industry to the Harlem area. (Just a wild idea—but the has scenic assets!) Not a great deal of time need be spent on this subject to ensure a productive relationship.

Recommendations:

There are beautiful locations in the Harlem area and this work brings dollars to the local economy. Ensure that you have created and are maintaining a strong working relationship with appropriate film commissions. You know the best times of the year, the best light, the best scenic vistas, etc.

Recommended Resources:

- Montana Film Office, 301 South Park Avenue, Helena, MT 59620, 406/ 841-2876, FAX 406/ 841-2877, montanafilm@visitmt.com
- Northern Montana Film Commission, Great Falls, MT, 800/ 735-8535, FAX 406/ 761-2029
- Travel Montana, www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/OURPROGRAMS/FilmIndustry.htm

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

Issue: Community Capacity Building.

Governments and other formal organizations are critical to our way of life. Yet, individuals connected through informal organizations and networks also have a great deal to offer. Sadly, the role of informal organizations in our communities are often less well understood and therefore underutilized.

Appropriate attention should be given to building capacity within informal networks and organizations within the community as well as in formal systems. Most often capacity building in this area manifests in a creative and active group of individuals engaged in non-profit resource development.

Recommendation:

Albertson's has a strong community foundation—given that the Harlem store is a good performer, the Harlem area should be entitled to a piece of the pie if you just ask.

Recommended Resources:

http://www.albertsons.com/abs_inthecommunity The foundation's focuses are: hunger relief, youth & education, and health & nutrition. Any matches with needs in Harlem?

Recommendation:

Visit with Bank of Harlem leadership and ask to gain an understanding of the Community Reinvestment Act. Ask bank officials to help strategize ways funds available can be leveraged for the benefit of the greater Harlem community.

The Community Reinvestment Act is intended to encourage depository institutions to help meet the credit needs of the communities in which they operate, including low- and moderate-income neighborhoods consistent with safe and sound banking operations. It was enacted by the Congress in 1977 (12 U.S.C. 2901) and is implemented by Regulations 12 CFR parts 25, 228, 345, and 563e. The Regulation was revised in May 1995.

Recommended Resources:

Bank of Harlem officials.

Recommendation:

The Harlem area has many dedicated volunteers. Much community work would go undone without them! Don't take volunteers for granted... continue to consciously develop the organizations and projects that support them.

Recommended Resources

INDEPENDENT SECTOR's Giving and Volunteering in the United States Signature Series provides a comprehensive picture of the giving and volunteering habits of Americans. Based on a national survey of more than 4,000 adults, this series of reports explores the why, how, and who behind the extraordinary everyday generosity—both in time and money—of American households.

www.independentsector.org/programs/research/gv01main.html

Recommendation:

Non-profit Board Capacity Building. The Harlem area has a vital and active community of volunteers and non-profit organizations. The non-profit sector can be developed just as the for-profit—same idea, different strategies and techniques.

Recommended Resource:

Short enough to read over a cup of very strong coffee, the Board Café offers a menu of ideas opinion, news, and resources to help board members give and get the most out of board service. CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, www.boardcafe.org. *Commit to learning new stuff... subscribe everyone who's involved with a non-profit.*

Recommendation:

Human geography encompasses common beliefs, locally based skills and livelihoods, local culture, a sense of place, and shared history. It is not just the lay of the land, but how the land shapes culture and in turn is shaped by culture.

Gain an understanding of the human geography of the area and the informal networks within the community. Members of the community operate within networks that caretake and resolve issues for the community; ensure its survival and success by adapting to change; and carry its shared history and cultural values forward.

Recommended Resource:

www.NaturalBorders.com

Kevin Preister, Social Ecology Associates, 541/ 488-6978, kevpreis@jeffnet.org

Kristine Komar, Double K Outfit, 406/ 375-9952, kristine.komar@att.net

MAIN TOPIC: AGRICULTURE => COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY, SLOWFOOD**Issue:**

The Harlem area has experienced a decline in the market value of the food and other crops it produces, so much so that it almost costs more to raise it than can be realized from sending it to market.

There is an emergent market shift underway in our country and likely the world. More and more people will want to know where their food comes from; including how it was grown and care that it is healthy, tasty and fresh; that the people who grew it are fairly compensated for it; that it was grown as locally as possible.

Capturing this opportunity will mean that agricultural producers will need to *think differently about food*. Two important grass roots concepts are gaining advocates world wide—*food security* and *slowfood*.

Recommendations:

Understand the concepts embodied by the Slowfood movement, in short:

- enjoying the sensual pleasure (taste) of sharing good food among friends; and
- knowing where your food comes from--that the grower/producer receives a fair living from providing it and that s/he takes good care of the land and other natural resources involved in farming/ranching.
- Other aspects include the amount of transportation on food—i.e. does it come from a great distance or within the region?
- Food security is the concept of all people having access to adequate types and amounts of food that is affordable and nutritious.

Contact / Recommended Resource(s):

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

<http://www.foodsecurity.org/index.html>

The Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC) is a non-profit 501(c)(3), North American organization dedicated to building strong, sustainable, local and regional food systems that ensure access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food for all people at all times. We seek to develop self-reliance among all communities in obtaining their food and to create a system of growing, manufacturing, processing, making available, and selling food that is regionally based and grounded in the principles of justice, democracy, and sustainability. They have a great list-serv!

MAIN TOPIC: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Issue:

- Individual centered economic development.
- Most jobs are created by small businesses.
- Many local people have good ideas for business, but need support of knowledgeable marketing, financial, or product experts to make their ideas successful.
- Most of this knowledge is available within the community or region for little or no cost.

Recommendations:

Contact the Sirolli project folks in the Golden Triangle project. Find a way to participate in this project.

www.enterprise facilitation.net/goldentriangle/project~index.html

Recommended Resources:

- www.sirolli.com
- *Ripples on the Zambezi: Passion Entrepreneurship and the Rebirth of Local Economies*, Ernesto Sirolli. Order from you local bookstore (\$14.95) or available from Amazon.com (used copies starting at \$7.95.)

REPORT BY: Gloria O'Rourke
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Web: <http://www.medamembers.org>

What a delight it was to be in your community. My schedule allowed me to arrive in plenty of time to do some exploring before the assessment began. It was wonderful to see all that Harlem has to offer, to meet some of your wonderful citizens, and to chat with business owners and local officials in your community. Thank you for your hospitality.

MAIN TOPIC: AGRICULTURE

Issue: Wind Generation

I don't know very much about wind energy – but I know people who do!

Recommendation:

Ask to be placed on the Montana Wind Working Group email list – and participate in the meetings. The Montana Wind Working Group is an open group of industry, consumer and government representatives promoting the development of wind energy in Montana. This group is active, enthused and in-the-know about wind energy efforts in Montana.

Bear Paw Development Corporation is involved in wind energy issues – Craig Erickson would also be an excellent resource.

Resources:

View minutes of previous meetings, current articles and activities at:
<http://www.deq.state.mt.us/energy/Renewable/MtWindWorkGroup.asp>

Craig Erickson
Bear Paw Development Corp.
P.O. Box 170
Havre, MT 59501
Ph: 406.265.9226
Email: cerickson@bearpaw.org

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY

Issue: Preserve Diverse Cultures

Recommendation:

Perhaps on a yearly basis, a day could be set aside to focus on the unique cultural makeup of the Harlem area. To begin, I would strongly recommend involvement of Larry Keown, of LDK Associates, located in Sheridan, Wyoming. Larry is well known for his work with the Medicine Wheel project and has

worked extensively on Indian and other cultural issues around the country. Larry has presented his workshop series titled: *"Developing Effective Working Relationships With Indian Tribes and Organizations"* in Montana and other states as well. I have no doubt Larry's efforts for tribal, city, and cultural relations issues would serve the area well.

Resource:

Larry Keown
LDK Associates
P.O. Box 7095
Sheridan, WY 82801
Phone/Fax: 307-673-4838
www.ldkassociates.com

Issue: Grant Strategies

Recommendation:

I would be happy to spend several hours searching for funding resources for Harlem. Serving as the office for MEDA, I have access to a huge grant-search program called GrantStation. I would be glad to assist. To be honest, finding the sources is the easy part – the hard part is to investigate these contacts and write proposals for funding. But...Harlem can do it! GrantStation provides "how to" information regarding proposal writing.

Tap into the services offered by MSU-Northern. Melody Bentz is currently the Director of Grants and Sponsored Programs. Melody is a "pro" at finding funding sources for a variety of projects.

Resources:

GrantStation: <http://www.grantstation.com>

Gloria O'Rourke email gloria@medamembers.org

Melody Bentz, MSU Northern
Grants and Sponsored Programs
P.O. Box 7751
Havre, MT 59501
Ph: 406.265.3526
Email: mbentz@msun.edu

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Issue: Signage

There is very little signage to encourage a traveler to stop in Harlem. 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.

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>

Great Falls Transportation District

Phone: (406) 727-4350
104 18th Ave. NE, PO Box 1359
Great Falls, MT 59403-1359

Issue: Practical Business Education

Recommendation:

Contact Bear Paw Development Corporation and ask about scheduling Small Business Development classes in Harlem. Perhaps they are already offered – or have been tried before - and need community support

American Mosquito Control Association
P. O. Box 234
Eatontown, NJ 07727-0234
Telephone: 732.544.4645
FAX: 732.542.3267
E-mail: amca@mosquito.org
Martin S. Chomsky, MPH, Business Manager
[Joe Conlon](#) - Technical Advisor - AMCA Information Contact

**HARLEM, MT
RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT
LISTENING SESSION
DECEMBER 2 – 3, 2003**

CITY, COUNTY, LAW ENFORCEMENT – CHALLENGES

- Lack of services to provide to the people
- \$\$\$ Money to provide services to the people, i.e., we have buildings, people, but people still have to drive far away for some services – medical, lawyers
- More and more businesses are closing
- Not only keeping and maintaining businesses, but PEOPLE as well
- Migrant population – population shifts
- Not many young people able to stay
- Improved tax base – need more people paying taxes
- Water plant – sized for 2500, sewer as well – antiquated.
- Flood plain is a challenge
- We hold on to city status – but if population drops to 650 – may need to go to “town” status that will hurt us.
- Private capital investment in Main Street – businesses not as strong to provide main street services
- More true collaboration needed between the reservation and Harlem
- Parents concerned re: No Child Left Behind
- Roads - this is an ag friendly community and we should allow trucks on our streets
- Loan issue/payment for Golf Course is a struggle – membership is about 50, not enough to handle \$13,000 per year payment and run the course
- Nay Sayers – quick to put down ideas. We have to be more tolerant of each other.
- We have people willing to help – but aren’t at meetings – too time consuming
- We need another police officer – voted down twice – will try again
- Ambulance – very hard to respond during the day, only seven volunteers – and they work during the day

RETAIL/BUSINESS/UTILITIES – CHALLENGES

- Library needs to stay open longer hours
- Teachers that teach in our schools need to send their own kids to our schools
- Theater – cold in winter, hot in summer
- Why do businesses close? Accounts receivable – can’t collect money owed
- Can’t switch ownerships – globalization of franchises swallows up small dealer
- Until cattle and wheat prices come up – nothing will change

GENERAL PUBLIC – CHALLENGES

- Hard to get individuals to work with the community and for the community
- Loss of population has led to loss of business
- Lack of economic development – business is fading away
- Collaborate more with Ft. Belknap and Harlem – City, County and Tribal

- If we can't all be civil to each other, we are in a world of hurt
- How to sustain smaller businesses in spite of larger competition
- No public transportation at all
- Mosquitoes

AGRICULTURE – CHALLENGES

- Cannot tolerate any additional taxes
- Hard to change people's thinking – farming practices need to change, modernize
- Farmers in this area are “stuck” – raising products the same old way – need to improve production methods
- Actual money earned from products continues to go down

CHURCHES – CHALLENGES

- Economic stagnation
- Decline of agriculture sector
- Face of Harlem is changing – now more than 50% Native American – change is always a challenge
- Incoming pastors want to start a complete different program instead of following the previous pastor's plan
- People do not want to step up and get involved
- Get more churches involved in Ministerial Association
- Many challenges – most involving economics
- Sections of Harlem do not look good – rental properties are hard to keep up
- Unemployment – can't buy a house if you don't have a job
- Huge demand for rentals – hard to sell a house

YOUTH – CHALLENGES

- No businesses – everything is closing down
- Not enough people to keep business open
- Not much for kids to do
- Summer pool is mostly for little kids
- Drugs, alcoholism – not enough to do
- Restaurants not open on weekends
- Light posts are great - Dimmer bulbs on the downtown street lights
- Not enough variety in stores here
- Empty run down buildings
- Water is bad
- Need younger, more dedicated teachers – not all are bad, just a few
- A lot of negativity in our town

SENIORS – CHALLENGES

- Local Harlem kids need to go to school in Harlem
- Stopping big semi truck drivers and fining them – is wrong
- Need people to move into retirement center

- Clean up dirty yards – they are a disgrace
- Ditto
- Young people must move away to get a job – no jobs
- No incentive to open a business – people won't shop here
- We don't take advantage of the highway
- Lack of traffic enforcement on Main Street – including the law itself
- Restaurants not open on weekends
- Train needs to cut down railroad crossings – too long and too often
- No local medical services here –
- No public transportation
- Discipline in the schools used to be a problem – maybe that is why Harlem people don't like their kids to go to school here
- Going to lose the golf course because can't pay the bank payments
- If I were a business person – I wouldn't put no windows in – they get broke.
- Quit gouging businesses – i.e., city street lights. Businesses have to pay more than their share.
- Better maintenance of streetlights
- Garbage removal is expensive
- Just sold two farms – to Californian's – land is being sold
- Hard to compete with Bi-Mart, Kmart - Havre is too easy to get to.

RENTERS AND PROPERTY OWNERS – CHALLENGES

- Not enough to keep businesses going
- Larger stores in larger areas take business away from Harlem
- Rentals in town are getting older – hard to maintain
- Doesn't matter if low or high rent area – still get people who do not take care of the property – have to be careful
- Non-payment of taxes to the city are a problem
- More demands for three bedroom houses – mostly have available one or two bedrooms – no one wants one bedroom homes anymore
- Rental business is a constant day to day fight – starting with rental applications and fighting the “sting” client
- Sad to see a once full main street – down to about one business per block.
- Town becoming a rental town with short-term non-tax paying citizens
- Deteriorating condition of water and sewer lines
- Sewer lines heaving, bulging, need drainage
- Lack of café – want people to stop but we have nothing to feed them with
- Need open and honest communication with the media, law enforcement, government, etc.

BANKING & FINANCIAL – CHALLENGES

- Job availability – not enough work
- Too easy to jump in your rig and get everything you need at one place in Havre or Great Falls
- Not enough people shop at stores to keep them going
- Young people take off, go to college, nothing to bring them back
- Keep customers you have pleased so that they stay with you

- Mosquitoes are unbearable

EDUCATORS – JR HIGH/HIGH SCHOOL - CHALLENGES

- If we do not fix St. Mary's – we are down the drain
- No business – need a restaurant open on weekends
- Emergency services – not enough volunteers for a 24 hour ambulance
- Need more dentists – in North Central Montana
- Need plumbers, electricians, etc., basic trade services
- More law enforcement – and better trained
- Run down - abandoned houses
- Community improvement
- Mosquitoes
- No jobs
- Drug and alcohol problem is bigger than people want to admit
- Children with learning disabilities from drug/alcohol disease
- Teen pregnancy is a huge problem
- Lack of parenting
- Major problems began when kids who live here, go elsewhere

MISC. COMMENTS - CHALLENGES

- Crank is a major drug problem
- Police are too concerned about drunk driving and not concerned enough with drugs
- Crime is very high here
- Not enough for youth to do – no game room to play pool except in the bar
- No pharmacy
- Not enough rentals

**HARLEM, MT
RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT
LISTENING SESSION
DECEMBER 2 – 3, 2003**

CITY, COUNTY, LAW ENFORCEMENT – STRENGTHS

- High speed internet access is here
- Diverse population – Native Americans, Townspeople, Hutterites, Ag community – a strength
- A very accepting town
- A pool of hidden talented people – choose to be humble
- Large population of under-employed. Live here for quality of life.
- Quality of life
- Great library – hi-speed connection through the school – lots of cooperation.
- Tons of holiday lights – homes well decorated
- Seed Show – combined arts, crafts, chili, etc.- held in March
- Some grant writing success
- Bear Paw Development
- A mayor that can facilitate difficult meetings

RETAIL/BUSINESS/UTILITIES – STRENGTHS

- Wonderful Hitchin' Post
- Several successful businesses

GENERAL PUBLIC – STRENGTHS

- Some retired people here that are willing to work
- Good leadership
- Appreciate clean streets
- As long as the river has water, we are happy
- Our kids – good community for the kids here
- Kids seem extremely polite and helpful
- Very courteous
- Great to see kids graduate – then take on volunteer work in the community
- Senior Center
- Golf Course
- Montana Seed Show
- Golf Course – manager that worked for nothing all summer
- Ropers circuit
- Pow Wow circuit – Ft. Belknap
- Mid-Winter Fair at Ft. Belknap
- Lewis and Clark tourism possibilities
- Bicycle stopping place

AGRICULTURE – STRENGTHS

- Fertilizer business
- Accessible railroad corridor

- Have irrigation in place
- 30 mile creek
- High speed terminal – Columbia Grain

CHURCHES – STRENGTHS

- Unique in that close to Ft. Belknap Reservation
- Not in a serious state of population decline
- Six churches in Harlem
- Fairly active Ministerial Association that meets
- Churches try to do as much together as we can
- Miracle Sunday School - joined forces for it
- Really enjoy working with Native American youth
- Safe community
- Food bank – informal – not maintained to any regulations – distribute \$4,000 to \$5,000 in food each year
- Food baskets sent out for Thanksgiving – this year, 15 entire dinners provided. Businesses give discounts – public contributes
- Tree down at the bank so public can purchase gifts for needy – very generous people
- Native Americans and Non-Native’s get along comparatively well
- Harlem doesn’t have as deep of a “you ain’t from here” attitude – which allows newcomers to join in the community
- Terrific multi-community network and internal network to discourage “users” of beneficial services.
- Harlem does not have that “woe is me” mentality
- Christmas lights
- Big sidewalk project done
- New retirement center

YOUTH – STRENGTHS

- Teen night on Wednesdays at Ft. Belknap
- Lots of support for boy’s basketball
- Swimming pool in the summer – mostly for little kids
- New street lights make us feel like a town again
- Not much community involvement in the town

SENIORS – STRENGTHS

- Good teachers
- Good golf course
- Golf course brings Harlem and Ft. Belknap people together
- Small community works well together
- If your hard-working attitude is in place, you can make a business work in Harlem
- Five denominations of churches
- Streetlights and sidewalks
- Senior Center is best of all – we have the best cook in the state
- We work together – no matter what

- Hart of the West

RENTERS AND PROPERTY OWNERS – STRENGTHS

- Quiet here – safe here
- Golf Course
- Bowling
- Hart of the West – draws a lot of ropers
- 10 – 12:00am in the mornings – swim at Ft. Belknap, sauna
- Diabetic program at Ft. Belknap
- Strong support for sports
- Tight knit and caring kind of people in our community
- Concerned and compassionate to each other – along the entire hi-line.

BANKING & FINANCIAL – STRENGTHS

- Without the school, Harlem would be about shut down
- Bank supports basketball team, girl scouts, etc. – other causes that are reasonable and worthwhile and sincere
- Customer service with local banks – more “user friendly”
- Cost of living is low
- The people – good friendly people here
- You know everyone
- Great hunting in this area
- Trap Club – great!
- Lion’s Club

EDUCATORS – JR HIGH/HIGH SCHOOL – STRENGTHS

- School – stable teaching staff and established staff
- School runs a greenhouse where people can purchase bedding plants, florist-type products
- Donate greenhouse products to the community
- Cheap housing
- Grant that Sweet Medical Center received – sliding scale fees
- Clinic and staff in Chinook is good
- Indian Health Services is an asset
- Good fire service
- Friendly, nice people in the community
- Golf Course
- Cultural diversity – lucky to have as many ethnic groups as we do have
- Wide variety of churches, VFW for bowling, banks, theaters, good library
- Swimming pool in the summer – also employ people
- Year round pool at Ft. Belknap the kids can use
- Great lumberyard – give good deals and service
- Western shop and activities – roping, etc.
- The Seed Show – all volunteer work – all \$\$ back into the community
- Not a lot of transition here – people who live here have been here awhile

- New comers – are welcome
- Little discipline problems compared to other schools

MISC. COMMENTS – STRENGTHS

- Appreciate the entire Hi-Line - Big Flat, Ft. Belknap, Hutterite colonies, etc.
- Build it and they will come!

**HARLEM, MT
RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT
LISTENING SESSION
DECEMBER 2 – 3, 2003**

CITY, COUNTY, LAW ENFORCEMENT – PROJECTS

- Business retention and recruitment
- Library addition needed – space for computer room and meeting room
- Explore truck stop, multipurpose facility and motel
- Four lane highway in next ten years
- Expand growth to the North – take on the flood plain challenge
- A clean community
- More open to change – take some risks
- Continue to preserve the culture of the area – and events, i.e., Christmas stroll
- Seed Show festival – keep promoting it and continue it
- Address volunteer burnout
- One big summer event and one big winter event i.e., last person standing mosquito survivor event
- Private capital investment – find those deep pockets
- Water infrastructure upgrade – big issue!
- Co-op building for artists to display their work – divided up kind of like the Hitching Post
- Need a 501c3 for golf course – need about \$90,000 to finance it

RETAIL/BUSINESS/UTILITIES – PROJECTS

- Expand library hours
- Retain businesses we have

GENERAL PUBLIC – PROJECTS

- Don't dwell on loss of population – need to go on!
- Start tapping the talented “people” resources that we have
- Potential for tourism
- Some form of public transportation
- Improve membership numbers for golf course
- Moto-cross track promoted and developed
- Encourage exercise for diabetics through Native America dance
- Improve collaboration and funding to spray mosquitoes by air – improves kill rate i.e., spray via air and do it every Friday in the summer
- Remove abandoned houses
- Utilize this as a Bicycle spot-to-stop
- Create a gathering point for the Sturgis Rally
- Fireworks display

AGRICULTURE – PROJECTS

- Consider wind generation

- Highway improvement – not necessarily 4 for 2 – assure good roads and access for trucks
- Diversification of crops and products
- Cooperatives to be formed to explore diversification ideas

CHURCHES – PROJECTS

- Establish a cooperative – even across county lines – to pull churches working together
- Have HUD come and do a presentation on Faith-Based funding.
- Explore self-help housing and housing ownership education workshops
- Community beautification – step across your property line and help your neighbor clean up the mess
- Technology prospects wide open – we have learned from some previous mistakes – keep going with it.
- Ag growers, producers – need to think outside of the box – encourage this to bring an economic boost to Harlem
- Put our labor force to work!

YOUTH – PROJECTS

- A place for us to hang out
- Pool table place that is not in a bar
- Waterslide for pool
- Benches downtown for people to sit on
- Plant trees
- Fix the roads
- Need more that goes on in Harlem – besides the Seed Show
- Repaint, clean up old abandoned downtown buildings
- Improve city water
- Park on north side of town – more parks with play equipment
- Keep us in school – don't let us out for stupid things
- Better qualified, younger teachers – keep us interested
- Ft. Belknap Tribal Police – do their job
- School needs to offer math beyond calculus and other AP classes

SENIORS – PROJECTS

- Fill the retirement center!
- Enact an ordinance that property owners **MUST** clean their property
- Use the highways – comes in every which way to our town – and we must take advantage of the highways
- Do more to promote Harlem to Canada
- Expanded shopping – more opportunities for wider range of goods
- A drug store
- Save the golf course!
- Need to improve police protection – sometimes don't see a policeman for weeks at a time
- More healthcare in the community
- Improve law enforcement
- Support Hart of the West

- Community center – may be hard to maintain
- Fix the St Mary's infrastructure

RENTERS AND PROPERTY OWNERS – PROJECTS

- Sports facility – multi-purpose building, soccer
- More restaurants – or keep open the one/two that we have
- Perhaps it would help to pave streets again – seemed to improve business when we did it before
- Open hardware store – longer hours, different products –consider a chain store
- Encourage individuals to purchase existing homes, buy lots, build new homes.
- Encourage out-of-town area individuals and retirees to come to live here
- Initiate a tax incentive to encourage locals to keep up their property
- Need open an honest communication with the media, law enforcement, government and community – including Harlem AND Ft. Belknap
- Encourage each other to to pursue our dreams and goals
- New business suggestions:
 - lock and key
 - screen and window repair
 - carpenters
 - ground maintenance work – lawns, mowing, snow removal, etc. – Kids – the door is open!

BANKING & FINANCIAL – PROJECTS

- New streets – street improvement and street maintenance
- Value added ag projects are a possibility
- Large portion of people that drive by – especially in summer – get them to stop!
- Would like to get more good quality loans
- Great opportunity to expand Trap Area, hold more shooting events
- Excellent Trap Club – keep improving it
- Explore guided hunting business (but balance out-of-state population)
- RV Park would be utilized in the summer time
- More mosquito spraying, and control

EDUCATORS – JR HIGH/HIGH SCHOOL – PROJECTS

- Canada has come out with a new product – major problem we need to address
- Ditto – can do something about the mosquito problem
- Address teen pregnancy problem
- Provide parenting skills, parenting training
- Somehow, reverse trend of our community kids not attending school here
- Kids can take AP classes online – school can't afford entire AP curriculum
- Continue and improve relationship with Ft. Belknap College
- Highway 2 needs improved
- Signage improved – point out truck route, golf course, etc.

MISC. COMMENTS – PROJECTS

- RV Park – do it!
- Big community park