

THE WYOMING RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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

WRDC is governed by a Steering Committee representing the six partner groups. The Steering Committee as well as the Council membership has established the following goals for the WRDC:

- Assist rural communities in visioning and strategic planning
- Serve as a resource for assisting communities in finding and obtaining grants for rural projects
- Serve and be recognized as a neutral forum for identification and resolution of multi-jurisdictional issues
- Promote, through education, the understanding of the needs, values, and contributions of rural communities.

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

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

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April 14-16, 2003

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PROCESS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS REPORT

The Wyoming Rural Development Council and Wyoming Business Council have provided a Resource Team to assist the Towns of Midwest and Edgerton in evaluating the community assets and liabilities, and in developing suggestions for improving the environment, social and economic futures of Midwest and Edgerton.

The Town Councils requested a community assessment from the Wyoming Rural Development Council. Emily Quarterman served as the community contact and took the lead in assessment. Resource team members were selected to visit and interview citizens, business and community leaders and develop a plan of recommended action for the Towns of Midwest and Edgerton. The team members were carefully selected based on their fields of expertise that Midwest and Edgerton officials indicated would be needed to respond to the problem areas identified.

The Resource Team toured the town and interviewed about 160 people over a three-day period from April 14-16. The team interviewed representatives from the following segments of the community: industrial, education, youth, emergency services/law enforcement, churches and other organizations, retail, business and utilities, agricultural, and senior citizens. Each participant was asked to respond to three questions designed to begin communication and discussion and to serve as a basis for developing the action plan. The three questions were:

What do you think are the major problems and challenges in Midwest and Edgerton?
What do you think are the major strengths and assets in Midwest and Edgerton?
What projects would you like to see implemented in two, five, 10 or 20 years in Midwest and Edgerton?

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

The oral report was presented to the people of Midwest and Edgerton on April 16 following a potluck dinner at the High School, and many citizens of both communities who participated in the interviews were in attendance. Following the oral report, a formal written report was prepared and presented to Midwest and Edgerton.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The elements are all here for Midwest/Edgerton to have a successful future. To become a growing, vibrant community takes people willing to roll up their sleeves and go to work. Once this nucleus begins to exert effort, it will begin to show some successes. Then this nucleus needs to expand to include more and more of the community until the entire community is involved. But the work is not on the big jobs; it is on the small ones that can be achieved quickly. The big ones come later, after Midwest and Edgerton have seen the results of the smaller efforts and see that they can accomplish things.

There are a number of short-term, accomplishable recommendations that the resource team has provided. The most important thing is to get the entire community involved in trying to find ways to accomplish its goals. A few celebrations at the successful conclusion of an activity which 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 one out, and get started!

Each of you individually must decide what it is that you want to do – what kind of project you want to tackle. There are enough tasks for everyone. Each small step, every accomplishment, no matter how limited, is movement in the right direction toward achieving Midwest and Edgerton's goals. It can be done!! There is no problem facing Midwest and Edgerton that cannot be solved by the people living in the community. It is your choice, your decision, you can do it. The Wyoming Rural Development Council can only help you to help yourself.

On behalf of the Midwest/Edgerton Resource Team, I want to thank the communities for the warm hospitality shown to us during our stay. The vast supply of nourishment we were provided with, and the Teapot's accommodations, were much appreciated. We heard over and over in the listening sessions that Midwest and Edgerton have great people and we can certainly attest to that. Thank you very much.

We hope you will find great value in this report and remember, any team member is available for you to call to clarify or provide more information and assistance. Use these folks.

The Wyoming Rural Development Council and Wyoming Business Council are here to help you in any way we can.

Sincerely,

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Midwest/Edgerton, Wyoming Resource Team Members

April 14-16, 2003

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Midwest/Edgerton, Wyoming Community Assessment Agenda April 14-16, 2003, 2003

Monday, April 14, 2003

| | | |
|------------------------|---|--------------------|
| 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. | Orientation and Organization | Midwest Town Hall |
| 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. | Lunch with Community Resource Team Planners | Midwest Town Hall |
| 1:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. | Resource Team Area/Museum Tour | Salt Creek Museum |
| 5:30 p.m. – 5:55 p.m. | Break/refreshments | Salt Creek Museum |
| 6 p.m. – 7:05 p.m. | Industrial Listening Session | Midwest Town Hall |
| 7:10 p.m. | Resource Team Working Supper | Edgerton Town Hall |

Tuesday, April 15, 2003

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| 7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. | Resource Team Breakfast | |
| 9:10 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. | Youth Listening Session | Midwest School |
| 10:15 a.m. – 10:25 a.m. | Break/Refreshments | Midwest Town Hall |
| 10:40 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. | Salt Creek Senior Citizens | Midwest Town Hall |
| 11:45 a.m. – 12:50 p.m. | Lunch | Senior Center |
| 12:55 p.m. – 2 p.m. | Review of Listening Sessions | Midwest Town Hall |
| 2:05 p.m. – 3:10 p.m. | Education Listening Session | Midwest School |
| 3:20 p.m. – 4:25 p.m. | Break/Refreshments | Midwest Town Hall |
| 5 p.m. – 6 p.m. | Retail, Business, Utilities Listening Session | Midwest Town Hall |
| 6:05 p.m. – 7:10 p.m. | Agriculture | Midwest Town Hall |
| 7:15 p.m. | Team Supper | Midwest Town Hall |

Wednesday, April 16, 2003

| | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 8 a.m. – 9 a.m. | Team Breakfast | |
| 9:15 a.m. - 10:20 a.m. | Emergency Services/Law Enforcement | Midwest Town Hall |
| 10:20 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. | Team prepares for Town Meeting | Midwest Town Hall |
| Noon - 1 p.m. | Working lunch | Midwest Town Hall |
| 5:30 p.m. – 6:45 p.m. | Community Pot Luck | Midwest School |
| 7 p.m. | Town Meeting | Midwest School |

| | | |
|-----------------|--|------------------------|
| <i>May 2003</i> | <i>Strategic Planning Session with Resource Team</i> | <i>To Be Announced</i> |
|-----------------|--|------------------------|

What Was Heard From What Was Said

After listening to the citizens of Midwest and Edgerton, the Resource Team reviewed what was said and condensed the comments down to a few basic categories and subcategories:

People:

Volunteers,
After school activities
A place for congregating
Values/community pride
Communication

Recreation/tourism:

Improve assets, including the rifle range, golf course, rodeo arena, motocross/BMX trails, the museum, the cooling pond, fishing places, hunting, recreation center, signage

Infrastructure:

Medical and emergency
School
Road and bridge – including snow removal
Recreation improvements

Business/economic development:

Bank
Housing
Jobs and wages
New businesses
Oil industry/associated technologies

Beautification:

Livestock
Clean up landscapes and structures
Plant and water trees and flowers

Recommendations submitted by Resource Team members

Thank you.

The Resource Team would like to thank Midwest and Edgerton for the immeasurable amounts of honesty, hospitality, and friendliness that you gave during the Resource Team effort. We have every confidence that the kind of effort and enthusiasm you produced for the Resource Team will be responsible for your future successes.

The Resource Team has given many suggestions, some of which have been repeated by more than one of the team members. We have listed the individual recommendations, along with contact information for the respective team members. You are encouraged to communicate directly with any team member.

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Introduction

The Casper Star-Tribune reporter who covered the Midwest/Edgerton assessment asked me whether teams ever recommend that a community just give up. He said as he interviewed people in your towns, he heard a split in your voice – some people felt change is possible and others simply see no hope. I told him that it is typical for 20 percent of the people to do initially 80 percent of the work, but that others gradually join in the movement toward change as it becomes evident that persistence and belief will pay off. There are some who will resist, liking the way things are or wanting change on their terms. Reaching a place where the greatest good for the greatest number is attained requires leadership that is visionary and firmly rooted, and therefore not buffeted by the winds of criticism and opposition.

Midwest and Edgerton face formidable challenges, but also are a bastion of recreational assets whose potential may be only partially known. For example, when I asked the high school students we met with how many used the BMX/motocross trails, a few hands went up – all of them belonging to girls. What about a summer camp for “extreme sporting” girls and young women? A summer camp could be built around tents, a shower facility and a mess hall. The basics would then be in place for development of a full-scale campground. But I’m getting ahead of myself, which is easy to do when inspiration strikes and excitement builds about what a wealth of possibilities the future holds.

There is so much that Midwest and Edgerton can choose from to develop, market, and use, careful thought will need to go into which customer base will be targeted when facilities are being reconstructed, and how to make sure the market is well served. For example, if townspeople’s use of a recreational site is most important, followed by “local” tourists (Natrona, Johnson, Campbell counties),

some means of protecting the communities' interests must be taken into account. Perhaps the fishing holes will only be open to non-Midwest and Edgerton residents on certain days? Caution must be exercised when setting limitations – Cody's much-used indoor water recreation facility charges higher rates for out-of-county residents, which leave neighboring counties' folks feeling discriminated against.

Planning progress

My teammate, Wayne Jipsen, has suggested that a recreational plan be developed that inventories all available assets, what needs to be done to make them marketable and to prioritize what the communities' values are in terms of choosing what to fix up first. Based on that plan, it might be wise for a nonprofit recreational foundation to be created with a staff to write grants and manage the development of the recreation center, golf course, BMX/motocross trails, camping, fishing, hot water well, outdoor game sites (basketball, softball/baseball, tennis), and maybe even the corrals and fairgrounds. Don't forget that Lodging Tax money is available for marketing special events and facilities in Midwest and Edgerton. I also encourage you to invite representatives of the Wyoming Community Foundation to come visit with the elected officials and municipal employees of Midwest and Edgerton and that a "sales pitch" be made for Community Foundation assistance with development of the community around recreation. The Community Foundation's web site address is <http://www.wycf.org/>. For more information, call (307) 577-0648, or (307) 721-8300. The Wyoming Community Foundation focuses its grant making around the theme of community building, in the broad charitable fields of arts and culture, civic projects, conservation and natural resources, education, and health and human services. Regardless of charitable field, the Community Foundation gives priority to projects that assist or promote: strengthening the capacity of nonprofit organizations to do their work; leveraging the dollars of the Wyoming Community Foundation; collaboration and efficient use of nonprofit resources; improving the quality and effectiveness of service; and addressing the causes or prevention of community problems.

Partnerships make progress possible

The dependency of Midwest and Edgerton on Casper for commerce and the school, and frustration with exploitation of the oil fields without obvious benefit to the towns, are drains on the energy that can be mustered to shape the communities' future. Developing partnerships with those who have the power and make the decisions about the community's future is critical. Corporations and government will need to be your friends and allies. A school district official appeared at the Town Meeting to declare that NCSD #1 will partner with the towns to help make the school a community center usable by whole families at times when classes are not in session. To my knowledge, there was no one from the oil companies and their affiliates present at the Listening Sessions, but they certainly can be approached and asked to partner in making impact of their successful mineral extraction on the townspeople and infrastructures of Midwest and Edgerton 100 percent positive. However, it will be helpful to productive dialogue and progress if the towns approach the school district and the oil company with plans in hand, to ask for support in creating what the communities want. An opportunity to partner in projects that will benefit current and future generations is likely to be welcomed. For example, what about the Anadarko Recreation Center, or Golf Course? A presentation to the Natrona County School Board and/or Administration on the potential uses of the school as a community center where adults learn to use computers, see a doctor, work out in the gym, walk for cardiovascular health, take adult education courses, and swim (!) should be made soon so that as building budgets are development, Midwest School gets its fair share.

Similarly, Natrona County nonprofits' leaders must be recruited to Midwest and Edgerton, where they can be reminded that those communities are likely to be in their "service areas" according to their national organizations' guidelines, and are being neglected. Many times during the Listening Sessions, I heard people ask why Habitat for Humanity isn't working in Midwest and Edgerton to create livable housing for low-income residents. I called the Habitat for Humanity director in Casper, Patrick Lewis, and asked him that question. He said he's personally helped re-roof houses in Midwest and Edgerton and he knows the area well. He outlined a view of the challenges he knows will require time and partnerships to overcome. Nonetheless, he said, "I would be very excited about being involved in the solution to the housing challenge in Midwest and Edgerton. I believe these could be vital and productive townships here in Wyoming and are worth investing in. There is an obvious need and likely a solution to the problems at hand, but we will need to team with others to reveal the opportunities that lie covered in years of neglect and abandonment. Habitat for Humanity is an international nonprofit Christian entity known for building houses for those in need. It is our mission in Natrona and Converse counties to follow these basic principals to make our community a better place to live and work. Houses will be built for needy families with their full participation through "sweat equity," houses will be sold to these families at no profit and no interest, and modest but adequate houses will be constructed. Neighborhoods will be built in conformity with our founding slogan, 'A decent house in a decent community for God's people in need.' Our local mission reflects the necessity to build homes. New construction for persons who can qualify for our program under the guidelines of: 1) their ability to afford a home, 2) their willingness to participate with Habitat for Humanity to build their home and homes of others, and 3) their need for a home. Persons with the greatest need are served first, followed by those with a lesser need. The ability to afford is also a key. We believe it is wrong to burden our brethren with additional debt. This compares directly to slavery in our view and it is wrong to enslave our brothers and sisters through indebtedness to us. I do believe we have many challenges in the Midwest and Edgerton areas that will force us to take a close look at those we can help and direct and clear objectives for those we cannot. It will take a team effort and time, but I believe we can all make a positive difference on these communities." Patrick's telephone number is (307) 234-1348, and his email address is wy-hfh@trib.com, or visit the Habitat for Humanity web site, <http://www.habitat-for-humanity.com/index.htm>. He mentioned other potential housing-related programs that he is aware of that might be tapped by Midwest/Edgerton, including Christmas in April, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Other housing related web sites that might be of interest to Midwest-Edgerton and provide assistance are, Habitat for Humanity, International: <http://www.habitat.org/>, National Low Income Housing Council: <http://www.nlihc.org/>, Rural Development Online, U.S.D.A.: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/other/hous.htm>, and HUD Homes Online: <http://www.hud.org/fp2/wy/>.

I also spoke with Natrona County Human Services Commission/Community Action Director Dennis Royal, because that agency is working hard to meet the housing, employment, health care and other needs of the low-income. For more information about the organization, visit this web site: <http://www.hscnc.org/>. The Human Services Commission of Natrona County (HSC) was established in 1983 under the State of Wyoming's Community Services Act for the purpose of advising local government on matters pertaining to human services and human services delivery in the county. The Community Human Services Act enables local government to establish, maintain and promote the development of a comprehensive range of social services in the communities of the state. In 1999, the HSC became a public community action agency with a nine-member tri-partite board with board members equally representing the public, at-large and low-income population of Natrona County. The HSC by-laws identify the powers of the HSC as a leader in the efforts "to reduce poverty, revitalize low-income communities, empower low-income families and individuals to become fully self-sufficient, reduce delinquency and crime, promote mental health, prevent substance abuse and family violence and encourage cooperation with educational, health, and other anti-poverty programs. As a

community action agency we carry out our mission through a variety of means that include, a community-wide assessment of needs and strengths, comprehensive antipoverty plans and strategies, a broad range of direct services, mobilization of financial and non-financial resources, advocacy on behalf of low-income people and partnerships with other community-based organizations to eliminate poverty". Dennis said that it is possible the Human Services Commission can do outreach in Midwest and Edgerton. To discuss that with him, call 232-0124 or visit with him at 800 Werner Court, Suite 201, in Casper.

There are all kinds of proposals that Midwest and Edgerton can make to its neighbors' corporate leaders, and justification made for the spread of franchises further north. A proposal showing the amount of traffic passing through the area and the likelihood a convenience store would succeed could be presented to the developers of Mini Marts and Kum-and-Gos, who also frequently are installing ATMs in their establishments. Gas stations that serve rural communities can be approached, as well. One teenager was desperate for a Pizza Hut – perhaps he could be assigned a school project: writing a business plan showing why a franchise would succeed near (or perhaps in!) the school. I caution you, however, to beware of potentially putting your existing convenience store out of business, and maybe even the grocery store. A new restaurant is in the works, as soon as a location can be found – what might the impact be on “Annie’s Place” if a Pizza Hut sprang up at the same time? When looking at alternatives, a balance sheet (remember accounting class?) is important – consider all possible positive and negative consequences of every choice before making a final decision, consider your values and what matters most, and then be willing to endure the growing pains.

Enforcing change

There was some discussion during the Listening Sessions about ordinances inhibiting business development, and there is an excellent resource in the state for support in learning about, developing, implementing and enforcing ordinances: the Wyoming Association of Municipalities. There are elected officials in Midwest and Edgerton active in WAM, but the more who attend the organization's training sessions and seek assistance from the organization, the greater the opportunity for WAM to make a difference. WAM's “passion is building strong communities,” according to its web site. “Each person in Wyoming lives, works, studies, recreates, shops, conducts business, or just spends time in our 98 incorporated cities and towns. We strive to make our communities the best they can be for the citizens who live there. From Lost Springs, population of 4, to the capital city, Cheyenne, population of 53, 011, our communities offer people the chance to make a living, to create a home for their families, to create a future for themselves and to leave a legacy for future Wyomingites.” Deputy Director Stephanie Reeves says that her office gets calls daily from communities wanting information about how to take care of funding, ordinance and other issues, and there are vast stores of information compiled at WAM to answer those questions. She encouraged Midwest and Edgerton to participate in this year's conferences and trainings, and to call for assistance. To contact the WAM office, call 632-0398 or fax 307-632-1942. The WAM email address is wam@womuni.org.

I suggested during the assessment that someone in the community take it upon themselves to look at past Resource Team's assessments in other towns, and mine those for ideas. No one seemed terribly excited about that idea and I can understand that – we all feel our communities are unique. Nonetheless, I continue to maintain that approach, believing that there are issues this team cannot address that have been carefully examined for other towns – like signage, in the Greybull community assessment. Many other Wyoming communities' assessments can be found online: <http://www.wyomingcommunitynetwork.com>.

The Wyoming Rural Development Council is a member of the National Rural Development Partnership, a national association of state rural development councils. The NRDP web site, which cites numerous rural community success stories, can be found at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/nrdp/>. The Internet directory is an excellent resource: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/nrdp/resources.html>.

Building capital

Given Wyomingites' desire for local empowerment and "home rule" ability, I'm wondering whether a revolving loan fund might be the best – and only solution – to the problem the communities have with getting mortgage and home equity loans. Revolving loan funds have gotten mixed reviews (Issues in agricultural and rural finance, "Are Revolving Loan Funds A Better Way to Finance Rural Development?," <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/AIB724/Aib72405.pdf>). But over time, revolving loans funds have the potential to be a means of giving some people the opportunity to improve their property. The trouble is finding an investor or set of investors to create the loan fund in the first place, making sure the loans are paid back at a market interest rate and that the money is carefully invested. I would first contact Steve Elledge with the Business Council, who attended some of the Listening Sessions and pledged his organization's support for Midwest and Edgerton's efforts to better themselves, (selledge@wysbc.com, 307-577-6012) to see what programs he may be aware of in rural areas or how one might be started. From a national perspective, here are some starting places: The USDA's Rural Housing Service, http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/Individual/ind_splash.htm, and <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/index.html>; The Housing Assistance Council, <http://www.ruralhome.org/>; The Ford Foundation, <http://www.fordfound.org/about/guideline.cfm>; and the Rural Community Assistance Program (RCAP) (<http://www.rcap.org/rcapnews.html>). Online, RCAP looked promising because most of RCAP's activities are carried out in rural areas with population of 2,000 or less, and in minority communities, underserved rural areas or rural areas with a high percentage of low-income individuals. RCAP's services are provided free of charge to these communities. RCAP's services include on-site assistance to address rural drinking water supply and wastewater treatment needs. However, RCAP is also a resource for community leaders and others looking for technical assistance services and training related to rural solid waste programs, housing, economic development, comprehensive community assessment and planning, and environmental regulations.

Rotary International (RI) supports a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) that provides small business loans to people who have no credit history or access to commercial bank loans. Borrowers tend to be small producers of goods and services — typically farmers and artisans — and many are women. RLFs provide the initial loans for business start-up and expansion. The ultimate goal is for these entrepreneurs to become financially independent and eligible for loans from commercial banks. Payments are generally returned directly to the fund and used to make new loans — hence, the term revolving loan fund. The RI Board supports the concept of Rotary Loan Funds to finance micro enterprise development in both rural and urban areas, provided that the funds established are carefully monitored by either the administering Rotary club or a [Rotary Community Corps](#) which it sponsors. There are many organizations from which Rotary clubs can obtain information, or work with, to establish Revolving Loan Funds in their communities.

Youth empowerment

Youth and adults report there is not much for them to do in Midwest and Edgerton, in the form of recreation or vocation. Youth say they want after-school and summer jobs, community service work to help them qualify for competitive college scholarships, and school-based clubs that offer meaningful

activity. Adults say they want more entertainment for themselves and their families. The teenagers we spoke with didn't volunteer that drugs and alcohol are a problem for them, their school or their peers. Meanwhile, adults report alcohol is a problem for young and old. A youth empowerment council idea circulated in the community in the past, but did not take flight. There are a number of places within that Midwest and Edgerton can look to for technical assistance with mobilizing around youth issues.

Boys and Girls Clubs have been successful in many Wyoming communities. For more information about what it would take to get a Boys and Girls Club started in Midwest, call John Oliphant, (972) 690-1393. For information about how Boys and Girls Clubs are working in Wyoming towns of various sizes, call Ashley Bright in Casper, (307) 234-2456. Bright directs the Boys and Girls Club of Central Wyoming. I spoke with Mr. Bright about Midwest/Edgerton and he said the club could be based in the Midwest School, would have to have at least 100 members ages 6 to 18, and would need to operate a minimum of 20 hours per week. Some grant money may be available but the community will need to match those dollars with in-kind and cash contributions; up to \$30,000 to \$40,000 likely will be needed to get a club started. Mr. Bright offered to come to Midwest and Edgerton and meet with local officials, and offer any assistance he can to get a club going in the school or Salt Creek Rec Center, or some other facility. The Central Wyoming Boys and Girls Club offers the following to youth in seven communities: Personal and Educational Development (Career Opportunities Opened for a Lifetime, tutoring quiz programs, Smart Moves, essay contests); Citizenship and Leadership Development (Youth of the Month, Youth of the Year, Torch Club, Keystone Club); Cultural Enrichment (guitar lessons, painting, arts and crafts, sign language, dance); Health and Physical Education (indoor soccer, fencing, basketball, karate, volleyball, weight training, gym games); Social Recreation (game-room activities, field trips, chess club, sports card club, special events); Outdoor and Environmental Education (Green Thumb Club, Adopt a Highway, summer camping trips).

A few years ago, an organization called the Wyoming Community Coalition for Health Education (WCCHE) launched a Healthy Communities-Healthy Youth initiative in the state. Chances are good some Basin residents have attended the annual Healthy Communities-Healthy Youth gatherings in the fall at the Casper Events Center in Casper. There are still groups working on asset building in youth in the state that can help a community look at ways to change without spending a lot of money. I suggest first going to this web site: <http://www.trib.com/WCCHE/asset.html> or calling Bronwen Anderson, WCCHE Executive Director, in Gillette, (307) 687-0647. Healthy Communities-Healthy Youth is a national initiative of Search Institute (www.search-institute.org) that seeks to motivate and equip individuals, organizations, and their leaders to join together in nurturing competent, caring and responsible children and adolescents. Healthy Communities-Healthy Youth grows out of Search Institute's research on 260,000 sixth to 12th grade youth in more than 500 communities across the United States, the largest developmental study of youth ever done. This research shows that far too few youth have the developmental assets they need to grow up healthy. The average youth can identify only 18 out of 40 assets in their lives. Developmental assets are internal and external factors -- support, boundaries, structured time use, commitments, positive values, and social competencies -- that provide a foundation for young people's healthy development. The more assets young people experience, the more they engage in positive behaviors, such as volunteering and succeeding in school; the fewer assets young people have, the more likely they are to engage in risk-taking behaviors, such as alcohol and other drug use, antisocial behavior, violence, and premature sexual behavior. In short, there is a direct inverse relationship between the number of assets young people report and their risk-taking behavior. The more assets they have, the better decisions they tend to make. Young people who experience more of these assets are more likely to grow up caring, competent, and responsible. This

important relationship between developmental assets and choices made has been documented for all types of youth, regardless of age, gender, geographical region, town size, or race/ethnicity.

If Midwest and Edgerton want to mobilize around combating and preventing substance abuse, the Wyoming Department of Health Substance Abuse Division may be able to help. The Division's mission is to assist communities in Wyoming to change attitudes and behaviors about the use and abuse of both legal and illegal substance (drugs, alcohol and tobacco) by helping communities to develop and implement programs to prevent use of all substances by minors, prevent use of illegal substances by adults and treat substance misuse, abuse and addiction. Its mission is based on these beliefs: 1) Substance use by minors is not only illegal but is the gateway to health problems, delinquency, poor academic achievement, and a limited future; 2) Change is accomplished best by impacting the norms, attitudes and mind-set of entire communities about the use of substances; 3) Substance use and abuse bring high costs not only for individuals but also for communities. For more information about work that is being done with prevention monies allocated to Natrona County programs and organizations, contact Dave Shavel, (307) 777-3357, dshave@state.wy.us. 21st Century/State Incentive Grant funds are being used to assist communities with the reduction of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse and to promote academic success among young people. A total of \$13.5 million has been awarded to communities over three years (\$4.5 million per year). The grant was awarded to 26 Wyoming communities. In order to participate, communities must ensure community-wide collaboration in planning and implementation efforts; implement and evaluate effective, research-based programs and strategies; provide a range of services across a broad continuum of care; and enhance sustainability in community efforts beyond the three-year funding cycle. For more information about the 21st Century State Incentive Grant please contact Christine Ricketts, 21st Century SIG Community Program Specialist, (307) 777-3744, cricke@state.wy.us.

Within the Wyoming Department of Education, Safe Drug-Free Schools and Communities money may be available from the Health and Safety Unit for Drug/alcohol abuse prevention. Only school districts may apply, however, so again the Midwest School will need support from the Natrona County School District's administration. The funding's purpose is to prevent drug use and abuse by Wyoming children and youth. Some of the money is distributed by formula and some is discretionary. There are no matching requirements. For more information, contact Dr. Paul O. Soumokol, 307/777-7168, psoumo@educ.state.wy.us.

When we toured the school, it was suggested by teenagers that photography or art clubs might broaden the choices available to students in need of more to do. I encourage teens not to wait for adults to deliver whatever is lacking in the school. A teenager can start a community service program, or start a new club. What about a cinema club, showing movies once a week – perhaps a children's movie one week, an arts film another week, an action film, and a documentary? Check with the Wyoming Arts Council to see if there is help to be found with bringing movies to town: (307) 777-7742, jcoe@state.wy.us, or the Wyoming Humanities Council, (307) 721-9342, <http://www.uwyo.edu/wch/>.

Helping hands multiply progress

In Sweetwater County, an initiative's been launched successfully for consecutive years called "Honey Do Week," which this year will be May 7-10. An email was sent across the county in March by the Young At Heart Senior Center in Rock Springs inviting families, church groups, and civic clubs to help senior citizens with chores. Jobs that will be done during the week include window washing, yard work, oven and refrigerator cleaning, vacuuming, mattress turning, and light bulb changing. The Rock Springs and Green River fire departments will install new smoke detectors. Volunteers are asked to

commit about two hours apiece. For more information about “Honey Do Week,” call Jeanine Cox at the Young At Heart Senior Center, (307) 352-6737. In 2002, more than 100 volunteers turned out to help 50 senior citizens.

The Wyoming Commission for National and Community Service’s mission and purpose is the enhancement of community and empowerment of citizens through the development and promotion of service opportunities and volunteerism to help solve problems and address unmet needs. To find out whether the Commission can provide ideas for getting a volunteerism or community service program started, contact Cathy Lyman, Executive Director, (307) 777-5396, clyman@state.wy.us

For the health of it

Wyoming communities’ health coalitions have developed health facilities (including Lusk’s hospital), health promotion and wellness programs, Healthy Communities-Healthy Youth initiatives and alcohol, tobacco and substance abuse prevention and intervention programs. There are a number of community health planning coalitions in place across the state in various stages of development in towns of all sizes. Their purpose is to gather the people who professionally and personally have an interest in improving community health, develop action plans that facilitate and measure change, and ensure that ideas become reality. If Midwest and Edgerton want to mobilize around the absence of primary care providers in the area, the Wyoming Department of Health’s State Office of Rural Health has available community health planning assistance. For more information, contact me: Emily Quarterman, Community Health Planner, Wyoming Department of Health, (307) 777-8938, equart@state.wy.us. I spoke with a representative of the Central Wyoming Community Health Center in Casper, a program new to the state that provides primary care, mental health and dental services to the medically un- and underserved. It is possible a satellite of the Casper facility could be created at the Midwest School or in another building, and a mid-level (physician assistant or nurse practitioner) or physician recruited to serve the community. For more information about the Community Health Center of Central Wyoming and to explore the possibility of opening a satellite facility in Midwest or Edgerton, contract Ken McBain, the administrator at the CHC, (307) 233-6000, or Chris Kehl, the chief information officer.

GrantsRUs

Grants are the surest means of getting startup funding for a wide range of projects and are heavily relied on by municipalities for infrastructure improvements. I have offered to do a Wyoming-specific grant writing seminar for Midwest and Edgerton, and will invite grant makers and successful grant seekers in small communities in the state to join me in teaching northern Natrona County residents how to get more bucks. Based on my conversations with the folks in the Midwest Town Hall, it sounds like lots of grants are being researched but an aggressive “sales” approach is lacking. I know that we have already stressed the word “plan” in this report, but here’s one more reason to go through the process: grant makers require a complete and detailed plan before they will let loose of their dollars. Grants are mostly competitive – a case must be made for why Midwest and Edgerton should get money, and a lot of it. I will schedule the grant-writing workshop after the Resource Team’s follow-up meeting has been scheduled. This can be a fundraising event for the community – if everyone who attends pays a small fee, the money can be put toward a project in need of grant funds, or can be used to pay a grant writer to start gathering funds for Midwest and Edgerton priorities. A great place to start will be state government; lot of grants I’ve cited as being available from state government are included in the state Library’s online grants catalog, which lists numerous other possible grants offered by Wyoming state government agencies and can be found at:

<http://cowgirl.state.wy.us/grantscat/>. The Workforce Services Division also has a grant resource guide online, <http://dwsweb.state.wy.us/community/guide.asp>.

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Introduction

Our community assessment team was warmly welcomed and afforded every available accommodation for three days in the towns of Edgerton and Midwest. Monday afternoon before the listening sessions began, Pauline Schultz, Salt Creek's resident historian was our tour guide of the entire area. She related the Salt Creek's history; it's ghost towns, its ups and downs and the two surviving communities of Edgerton and Midwest. This background information was critical for the ensuing listening sessions during the next two days.

Attendance at the listening sessions was outstanding, a sign that the Salt Creek area people feel threatened enough that they are motivated to begin taking a proactive approach to their future. Nearly a third of the total population was willing to invest their time to participate in at least one listening session. This may be the highest community participation in any Wyoming Community Assessment showing many area residents are concerned for their town's survival. The citizens of Midwest, Edgerton and the surrounding area are commended for taking their time and sacrificing other activities to attend the community meetings.

Oil drilling operations began in the Salt Creek Oil Field late in the 1880's. Early in the 20th Century, Salt Creek contributed greatly to the wealth of Wyoming and especially Casper and Natrona County for most of the last 100 years. The Shannon Field continues to be the world's largest light oil field. In this context, the communities of Midwest and Edgerton have been in the fore of the boom and bust economy that has plagued Wyoming's entire lifetime as a State. Over the course of the 20th Century, several million people lived and worked in the Salt Creek field before moving on. The field is only nine miles long and five miles wide at its widest point, but this small area hides it's incredible economic impact on the history of Wyoming. Salt Creek oil built Casper. On the far southern boundary of the Salt Creek field is the US Naval Petroleum Reserve, which was the focal point of the Department of the Interior's Teapot Dome scandal in the 1920's.

Midwest and Edgerton are the last surviving towns in the Salt Creek Oil Field and are faced with inherent advantages and disadvantages for the resident employees. Pauline Shultz quoted records and showed pictures that described Midwest and its many businesses. It boasted a population of 2500 in the 1920's and 1930's. Residents of Edgerton, Salt Creek, Lavoye and Snyder were fully involved in oil field development and operation. Today, the combined resident population of the Salt Creek area is only 577 people. Until 1960, every building in the Company towns were owned, operated and maintained by the reigning oil company that owned the Salt Creek Field. A few of the oil companies that owned the field were: Midwest Refining Company, Standard Oil of Indiana; AMOCO, Howell, and most recently, Anadarko Oil Corporation. In 1960, the towns became independent and people were allowed to buy their own homes and to continue to live there after they retired. Some people who remember the days of the Company town feel that when the towns became independent, it spelled the end for Midwest and Edgerton.

A newcomer driving into the Salt Creek Oil Field is struck by the austere, desert-like natural resource challenges stemming from alkaline soils, white edged saline watercourses, and sparse vegetation. The Field bristles with hundreds of utility poles, pump jacks, tank batteries, pipelines and the tools of the oil industry and the web of deep rutted clay roads that underscore the number of active wells scattered through the field. At night, Salt Creek looks like a sparsely populated town with electric light bulbs punctuated by the orange flares burning off the sour gas.

Listening Sessions

The procedure of developing a community assessment is to have the team meet formally face to face with the residents who actually work and live in the town. For the purpose of this report, the towns of Midwest and Edgerton are referred to as one entity, although it is obvious that most residents of the towns do not make that association. During the course of the three-day assessment, the team met with eight groups for an hour apiece. A team member facilitated each session. All comments were recorded as the attendees spoke and were combined at the end of the sessions. Each group was asked three standard questions: 1) What is not good with your community? 2) What is good with your community? and 3) What is your vision of where Midwest/Edgerton should be in two, five, ten and twenty years?

After the last listening session, the team assembled the hundreds of comments into general categories from which a short list of priorities was developed. These concerns, in no particular order, were: (1) People; (2) Infrastructure; (3) Beautification; (4) Economic Development and Business; and (5) Tourism and Recreation.

Two summary sessions were held Wednesday evening at the Midwest school. A few initial findings were shared with the people who had attended to the listening sessions and came back that night to hear the team's findings. Because of the volume of comments and suggestions that we heard, the team did only a general review of the findings.

After the first visit to Midwest/Edgerton, it was then the task of the evaluation team to go back to their offices to research the priorities and to develop a list of suggested solutions for as many of the communities concerns as possible.

Priorities

Residents who contributed at the listening sessions had strong common feelings about their communities. Virtually everyone appreciated the small town atmosphere and the fact that Midwest/Edgerton is a safe place for the children and a good place to raise a family.

The Midwest School is a source of community spirit and pride. The academic and sports programs were mentioned at several sessions. Pride in the Midwest Oiler teams was often mentioned. The school is considered a central point for both towns. One comment summarizes much of what we heard during the listening groups, "If the School goes, these towns are gone!"

A constant theme that we heard was the sense of isolation experienced by the residents of rural Natrona County. Many people said that anything good (entertainment, businesses, medical care, goods, services, technical assistance, etc.) that happened in Natrona County was kept in Casper. Most people agreed that only minimal amounts of benefits come out to the rural communities of Natrona County and that was only after the Casper had taken more than its share. Fear, distrust, frustration, and

isolation surrounding Casper's treatment of the Salt Creek towns continue to be a major stumbling block to progress. Many residents are disgusted by years of being ignored by the “powers that be” in Casper and the elected County officials.

People

The residents of Midwest/Edgerton are as tough as the country around them. The listening groups showed us a community that is full of talented, goal-oriented people who are ready and willing to work on the challenges faced by the towns. "Old-timers" recalled having weathered the storms of boom and bust economic cycles, fires, floods, blizzards, droughts, tornadoes, transient populations, corporate changes and the hardships of living and working in the Salt Creek Oil Field. They have passed on their toughness to their offspring, friends and neighbors. The people who continue to live here are the community's greatest assets.

From the first meeting, residents told us about two major "people" needs in Midwest/Edgerton: They told us that the greatest "people" need was a place, other than the town halls and the school, where community events could be held.

Secondly, most residents said young people need to have some structured activities after school and in the summertime to keep them busy and out of trouble. Their greatest concerns appeared to be the lack of things for teens and pre-teens to do for “fun” after school and in the evenings. Many mentioned that the lack of facilities and programs in town might be contributing to the high incidence of drug and underage drinking.

Community Center

The need for a multi-purpose center was mentioned at every listening session by every segment of the community. There is no place where large wedding receptions, funerals, and reunions can be held in Midwest/Edgerton outside of the school and the Town Halls where any moderately sized event can be held. The Harold Jarrard Park recreational area and community building facility in the neighboring town of Kaycee was the example most often mentioned that people would like to see in town.

Virtually every rural community in Wyoming would like to have a community center. The Harold Jarrard Park in Kaycee is partially supported by the Johnson County Commissioners with the 1% lodging tax, the rest is from donations and support from a local private foundation. The cost of operation and maintenance of the facility is done mostly by a volunteer Board and partially paid for by Johnson County. The USDA Rural Development may be the best potential source for low interest loans for a community center. The reference is:

USDA-Rural Development
Central WY Area - Rural Development Manager
508 North Broadway
Riverton, WY 82501
(307) 856-7524, Extension 4

Five years ago, the WY Housing Authority helped the citizens of Glendo plan and fund the local Senior Citizen Center.

Youth Activities

Creating a Boy and Girls Club organization for Midwest/Edgerton was suggested during the listening sessions. Boys and Girls Clubs are one of the fastest growing youth programs in the United States. The national Internet Homepage address for the Boys and Girls Clubs is: www.gcamerica.org. Statewide contacts for the Boy and Girls Club around Wyoming clubs are:

Boy and Girls Club of Central Wyoming
Ashley Bright, Executive Director
353 West A Street
Casper, WY 82601
(307)235-5694 or (307) 234-2456

Boy and Girls Club of Central Worland
834 Big Horn Avenue
Worland, WY 82401
(307) 347-4899

There are also Boys and Girl Clubs in Cheyenne, Gillette and on the Wind River Reservation that might be contacted for additional information.

A mentoring program for younger grade school and middle school children along the lines of the DARE drug awareness program was mentioned. There appears to be a sizeable population of latch-key children who are home without adult supervision after school who could benefit from supervised mentoring activities.

Senior Citizens

Midwest/Edgerton's senior citizen population is a large and valuable asset to the community. During the listening session with the seniors, they said that they have outgrown their current facilities. They worry about the availability of medical care, transportation in and out of town, safe, affordable housing and assisted living facilities.

These concerns are consistent with other senior citizens in rural Wyoming who are living on a fixed income and are faced with a few, but expensive options for their living arrangements.

The listening groups indicated that the seniors are particularly concerned about health care. The clinic behind the Midwest City Hall closed up several years ago and there is no structured local health care. There may be opportunities through the Natrona County Public Health office to establish a "clinic day" where Midwest/Edgerton seniors could consult with home health care nurses or family practice physicians about their health concerns. There may be a chance that the same type of "outreach program" to local residents through the Nursing Director at Casper College. As it stands currently, there is no one in the communities who can take vitals, give inoculations, etc. With the high percentage of senior citizens living in the communities, it is important that the local Emergency Medical Technicians are able to locate emergency cases with an enhanced 911 system.

These references might provide additional information and suggestions concerning local health care projects.

National Rural Health Association
(816) 756-3140
www.nrharural.org

National Rural Health Resource Center
(218) 720-0700
www.ruralcenter.org/nrhrc

A serious problem that will be facing the limited resources of the senior citizen community from now on will be the retirement of the "baby boomer" generation. The first wave of these people who were born shortly after their GI fathers came home from World War II are now reaching their mid fifties. During the next 20 years, the senior citizen population will grow exponentially as the "boomers" retire, putting a huge burden on the Federal, state and local programs, resources, and facilities for aging Americans. The impact of this rapidly retiring generation on existing senior citizen facilities is hard to measure. According to the National Association of Development Organization's Research Foundation, "a baby boomer in the US turns 50 every seven seconds".

This influx of new retirees may not be all bad for Midwest/Edgerton. As the baby-boomer generation leaves the conventional workforce and move into retirement, America is facing a huge wave of new retirees. Many "Boomers" plan to retire in small, quiet rural communities and, sometimes, to their hometowns. In this situation, Midwest and Edgerton may benefit if their returning "baby boomers" are entrepreneurs. These people could be a catalyst to help businesses in the two towns. Statistics claim that a large percentage of retirees between 55 and 65 years do not intend to stop working but actually plan on creating small businesses where they can work on their own terms and in locations where they want to live. If this happens around Salt Creek, it could provide small, stable employment for residents in the two towns.

Availability of high-tech retirees combined with fiber optic telecommunication facilities in Midwest/Edgerton makes it a good place to attract these highly productive retirees. Because they are past the age of parenting, few of these people will be consumers of the educational system, but will provide a wider community economic base.

There are many information sources to research planning on the short and long-term changes in the senior citizen programs and facilities. American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) is one of the best known advocates for senior citizen issues. The AARP monthly magazine "Modern Maturity" cites many of the dynamic changes within the post-retirement segment of America's population. AARP is considered one of the most powerful lobby groups in Washington, DC.

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
(800) 424-3410
www.aarp.org

National Aging Information Center
(202) 619-7501
www.oao.dhhs.gov/naic

Administration on Aging
(202) 619-7501
www.aoa.dhhs.gov

National Center for Rural Aging
(202) 479-1200
www.ncoa.org/ncra/ncra.htm

Grantmakers in Aging
(937) 435-3156
www.giaging.org

Volunteers

People at every listening session recognized and were very complimentary to the number of dedicated volunteers and "core" residents who were willing to put in extra effort to make things happen in Midwest/Edgerton. Both towns have a number of dedicated volunteers showing that volunteerism is a way of life for many in Midwest/Edgerton.

The community volunteers themselves are hoping that more people will be encouraged to step forward to help them in their activities on the fire department, ambulance services and other volunteer activities. Every community has needs for volunteers. People who are shy about volunteering to help the volunteers do not need to be an active fireman or an Emergency Medical technician. All of these important volunteer organizations in town could use people who could help with record-keeping, and other non-physical duties that must be completed by the volunteers.

Internal (Intra-community) Communication

The people we met and worked with during the listening sessions at Midwest/Edgerton are relatively optimistic about moving forward to solve the challenges faced by the community. Community leaders thought there was a lack of local communication, which is a stumbling block in the towns of Midwest/Edgerton.

When the residents do not hear about things going on around the community, they feel "left out" and that they are being ignored by the "powers that be". Some communities have resolved this lack of information by producing a small weekly newsletter/bulletin that is distributed around to the local businesses and in public places like the cafes, the grocery store, post office and the town hall. Midwest and Edgerton are fortunate to have a cadre of proactive leadership and volunteers who could reproduce the newsletter locally on a simple copy machine. It is not a perfect solution for local communications, but it is a step in the right direction.

During the Midwest/Edgerton Community Assessment we heard from nearly every group that one of the things people liked most about living in small towns was the feeling that "everybody knows everybody". That may be a mistaken assumption because even though people think that "everybody knows every thing that we do, good or bad", there appears to be a problem with internal communications in town.

Without a local newspaper, town officials are unable to communicate efficiently and effectively with the residents of the area. When there is no local news source, other than the grapevine and rumor mill, information suffers and becomes a major source of mistrust, misunderstanding, fear, and discontent. Several groups of people mentioned that they were "out of the loop" about community, agency, and organizational meetings.

The first of two suggestions to help a better flow of information between residents, businesses, and elected officials would be to print a weekly community newsletter that could be posted at all of the businesses, the post office, town halls, library and the senior citizens center. This one or two page information sheet could be written by a few volunteers and then copied for little expense at the Town Halls. It might be done in cooperation with Midwest High School English/Journalism classes to give the students experience in reporting.

The other option for more important public meetings and issues could be a "Community Public Information Forum." This could be an opportunity that would allow citizens easy, open access to their elected officials and community leaders. Something like a series of "Community Suggestion Boxes" at various locations in the community would provide people with a non-threatening avenue for suggestions. This might even provide a source for Midwest/Edgerton natives to "keep an eye" on their hometown, which could attract a few of them to bring their families and businesses "home".

Youth Out-Migration

Midwest/Edgerton is like every rural American community that is suffering from the loss of young people. Wyoming's demographic statistics show that a majority of our young adult population will leave the state after they finish their advanced education. This has been true for most of the 20th century following World War I. A song of that era was titled "How you going to keep them down on the farm after they've seen Paree?" The decline of the population in Midwest/Edgerton is a reflection of what is happening in small agricultural communities across Western America.

Our children are the most important value-added product that we ship out of state to population centers. Statistics show that the vast majority of the population of the United States lives within a two-hour drive of the ocean. We heard that "once they leave, or go to college, our kids only come back to visit". America became an even more mobile society following World War II as the country moved away from a heavy manufacturing economic base to a high technology, information and light industrial economy. Cities like Seattle, San Diego, Houston, Tampa, Savannah and Charleston have swelled to become hubs of high tech industries that offer high paying jobs, warm climates and recreation without equal. The lure of these places is very strong to young people with stars in their eyes and a brand new Midwest High School diploma in their suitcase.

The undeniable fact of nature is that, once they leave the nest, our children are going to "try their wings" and they generally fly far away, at least for a while. It is hard to admit that most rural Western communities are faced with the problem of their kids leaving for bright lights and big cities.

Parents, friends and educators told us how proud they were of Midwest/Edgerton's many successful native sons and daughters, most of who had gone away to become leaders in many career fields. Wyoming's small town young people who have a good education and have grown up with a strong work ethic that makes them highly marketable to out of state employers.

Midwest High School has graduated many young people who are well prepared for the workplace and for advanced education. With the education that they received here and with the exposure they have had to computer sciences, many of them will likely end up working in the computer industry. After these Midwest High School graduates have worked several years in the high-technology industry, some of them will be capable of creating a highly mobile computer-based business that they could eventually bring home to Salt Creek.

It will continue to be extremely difficult to keep our young people in Midwest/Edgerton after they graduate from High School. Without more businesses providing employment opportunities, the potential for keeping them here is greatly diminished.

One strategy that might be developed is to "bring them back" after they have lived somewhere else for a period of time. A technique that some North Dakota communities use is developing a "Welcome Home" program for successful natives of their towns. Town residents contacted these hometown successes and gave them a special invitation to come home and bring their businesses with them. To begin a "homecoming welcome", a group like the Midwest/Edgerton senior citizens could work together to put together a mailing list and contact local natives and Midwest High School graduates who own and operate their business elsewhere. It is up to the local citizens to determine if these businesses are compatible and acceptable to the community and it's desired future way of life.

Personal contacts with these young entrepreneurial business owners could provide the personal incentive to bring them "home" to a place where they can raise their children in a non-threatening atmosphere like they grew up with and would provide new, low impact, computer-based businesses in Midwest/Edgerton. Many writers, artists, and computer based business owners have moved to small Wyoming towns like Thermopolis, Sundance, and Ten Sleep during the last 15 years to partake of the quiet rural life and still be able to build their product. Most of these businesses market their products nationally and internationally through the Internet. There may be Midwest natives who might be excited to come back to their roots in Salt Creek.

To implement some of these ideas, the communities might work with the Wyoming Business Council, the University of Wyoming, the community colleges, local economic development groups and local government to assist Midwest/Edgerton High School graduates with college tuition and fees. When they complete their formal education or technical training, the young people would have an obligation to return to the community for a given period of time to "pay back" their educational costs.

Create a "Welcome to Salt Creek" Group

One reoccurring theme we heard during the listening sessions was the problem of people living in Midwest/Edgerton where new residents were left out of the community because there was no mechanism for new people to meet the residents and learn more about the town activities.

The purpose of a "Welcome Wagon" group is to help people new to the area to become acquainted with their neighbors and their community. Groups like these used a variety of special social activities; dinners and civic projects to make newly arrived people more comfortable in their new setting.

For instance, the Welcome Wagon Club of Reading, Pennsylvania listed coffee clubs, brunches, card parties, book discussion groups, family game days, movie nights, potluck dinners, and craft groups to help newcomers become acquainted.

Resolving Conflicts

A third of the Midwest/Edgerton area residents attended the listening sessions. Our first question, "What do you not like about your community?" brought out the negative feelings and comments of the attendees. Most of the negative comments focused on a handful of issues, namely: the town's appearance, cows in town, lack of jobs, lack of a community facilities, and lack of youth activities.

People spoke of disagreements between neighbors, especially about residents not taking responsibility for cleaning up their individual properties. Part of these comments sounded like some basic differences between long-time residents and people new in the communities. These towns have a long history of transient populations moving in and out of the Salt Creek Oil Field. It is important to build an internal communications bridge between long-time residents and people who may just be "moving through". Building trust and respect between the citizens will reduce the rumors, fear of confrontation, criticism, and mistrust that often keeps people from face to face meeting to calmly discuss their ideas.

Conflict is inevitable in any organization, club, group, family, town, or neighborhood. No group is immune to conflict. It doesn't have to be feared or avoided, because it is a normal step in the maturing of any group. By meeting conflict head on, the community can grow stronger. John F. Kennedy said, "It is possible to disagree without being disagreeable."

Collaboration and cooperation can solve most local issues by opening communication channels. If informal discussions fail, facilitated meetings are one method to resolve conflicts. A neutral facilitator can create a process where both sides can meet and calmly state their positions. Once the issues are heard, they usually can be addressed in a manner acceptable to both parties.

When a new open communicative atmosphere is created, people will be encouraged to support creativity and new innovative solutions to the old problems.

The W.R. Kellogg Foundation provides community assistance grants. The final product of Kellogg community assistance grant is a comprehensive long-range plan after a team comes to the community to work directly with the local citizens. Competition for the Kellogg grants is very tough, but Lusk received one about 1997. The Lusk contact person would be:

Mayor Mark Lohr
Box 390
Lusk, WY 82225
(307) 334-3612

Infrastructure

Community infrastructure was a general category of concerns that were mentioned during the listening sessions.

Midwest and Edgerton stopped being Company towns in 1960. That year, all community services that previously had been provided by the Company stopped. Dozens of services that were previously provided were inherited by the citizens and elected officials of the towns. Since then, lower population, fewer businesses, and more residents on fixed incomes are reflected by a lower tax base, which hurts every town, regardless of size.

We heard many infrastructure concerns including: street maintenance, water, electricity, phone service, internet, cell phone service, public fire protection and medical services, community health and safety (including housing), the "ownerless" bridge between Gas Plant and Midwest, aging community maintenance and emergency vehicles.

Aging infrastructure is a fact of life, regardless of the community. Pipelines corrode, vehicles get high mileage, wood rots, and concrete weathers and deteriorates. These factors force community leaders to budget tighter than they would like so replacement schedules are extended until something else within the infrastructure breaks. The Community Assessment is designed to help find assistance to meet some of these challenges. Solutions can be much harder to find, but being able to find resources for information is a step in the right direction.

The following programs and points of contact may help to meet infrastructure needs for Midwest/Edgerton. They are not arranged in any particular order.

American Planning Association
(202) 872-0611
www.planning.org

National Association of Counties
(202) 434-4780
www.naco.org

Community Trans. Assn. of America

National Rural Development Partnership

(202) 661-0217
www.ctaa.org

Corporation for Enterprise Development
(202) 408-9788
www.cfed.org

(202) 6990-2394
www.rurdev.usda.gov/nrdp/index.html

Sustainable Communities Network
www.sustainable.org

Public Vehicle and Equipment Replacement

Every community is faced with the inevitability of having to periodically replace maintenance, service and emergency vehicles. The Midwest/Edgerton vehicles like the dump trucks are still serviceable, but are not in good shape.

The Emergency Medical Technicians and the firemen told us that all of the emergency vehicles are high mileage and are rapidly becoming outdated. New emergency vehicles are extremely expensive (\$200,000+) and may take up to a year to be delivered after the order is placed.

One option for obtaining dump trucks, and other heavy construction equipment to build the town's capacity for meeting the infrastructure needs would be to contact the Wyoming Surplus Property Office in Cheyenne. That is the State government agency that administers, coordinates and operates three diverse programs of disbursing excess property. The mission of each of these programs is to redistribute tax dollars fairly and equitably. The three programs are 1) Federal Surplus Personal Property; 2) Law Enforcement Agency Support; and 3) State Surplus Personal Property.

The Wyoming Surplus Property Internet homepage is an interactive source of information where qualifying units of government, including communities can browse and make application for available equipment. The surplus property is not limited to vehicles, but includes other items like computers, desks, and other office equipment.

Their homepage address is: <http://ai.state.wy.us/generalservices/surplus/prop.htm> The contact person for Wyoming Surplus Property is:

Ellen Stephenson, Manager
Wyoming Surplus Property Office
Department of Administration and Fiscal Control
2045 Westland Road
Cheyenne, WY 82002
(307) 777-7901 fax (307) 654-5710

It pays to be creative when working to solve community vehicle problems. The Big Horn Basin Resource Conservation and Development Council assisted the towns of Worland and Basin to work out a trade of ambulances. This gave the small community of Basin a serviceable, freshly updated ambulance while Worland got a better opportunity to apply for a state grant to purchase a new vehicle to serve the larger population community. This type of creative collaboration may be possible within Natrona County or the surrounding Counties. For more information contact:

Bill Hill, RC&D Coordinator
208 Shiloh
Worland, WY 82401
(307)-347-2542, Extension 6.

The Gas Plant Road Bridge

During our Monday afternoon tour, we were introduced to the Gas Plant Bridge. This structure needs basic maintenance as soon as possible, but incredibly, neither the Wyoming Department of Transportation nor Natrona County claims the bridge. Because of the ongoing question of ownership, no one is willing to do the needed maintenance.

It was suggested during the tour that either the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) or Natrona County has told the town of Midwest that if they wanted the bridge fixed, the town was responsible for fixing it. The alternative was that the bridge would be abandoned and removed, forcing people from Midwest and Gas Plant to drive east to Highway 259 to cross Salt Creek. Traffic over this bridge and the apparent safety risk appears to be significant enough that either the County Commissioners or the State legislature should be concerned over the liability should an injury (or fatal) accident occur. It is presumed that operation and maintenance of the bridge should be the historic responsibility of either WYDOT or Natrona County.

The old Gas Plant Bridge is not simply a convenience, it is one of only a few access points over Salt Creek where traffic could be routed should something like a toxic waste spill close the Highway 259 bridge over Salt Creek. Bridge replacement would have the additional benefit of keeping quicker fire department and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) access to people living near Gas Plant and/or working in the south end of the oil field. Having this greater degree of fire and EMS protection would give people better response times, but also more peace of mind.

If ownership of the Gas Plant bridge is determined to be Natrona County, there is one avenue that could help the County pay up to \$50,000 for a replacement bridge. US Forest Service has had a Timber Bridge program for several years where they will pay up to half of the total cost (not to exceed \$50,000) for installation of a high-tech "Glu-lam" timber and steel bridge. This bridge is designed by engineers at the US Forest Service Timber Products laboratory at Madison Wisconsin to meet US Department of Transportation (USDOT) specifications for federal highway bridges.

A timber bridge would provide a large measure of safety and peace of mind to EMS and fire protection providers who currently are faced with the unsettling decision to cross the bridge that needs so much work.

The timber bridge project could be implemented by a joint cooperative planning effort between the Natrona County Commissioners, County Engineers, County Planner, US Forest Service, and Midwest/Edgerton Town Councils. Qualified locations for the program must be within 100 miles of any US Forest Service administered land. Virtually every acre of Wyoming qualifies under this regulation. The Natrona County Engineer could provide the local engineering information necessary to complete the application and submit to the US Forest Service before the next deadline. County Engineers and Planners could collaboratively develop a budget, and operation and maintenance agreements for the long-term care of the bridge. Surveys, pre-engineering work, removal of the existing bridge and site preparation before the bridge is installed would be the responsibility of the County. Operation and Maintenance for the bridge will be the responsibility of the County.

US Forest Service, Region IV
Bob Dettmann
Box 25127
Denver, CO 80225
(303) 236-7073

Habitat for Humanity

This program was mentioned several times during the listening sessions as a possible cure for the housing shortage in Midwest/Edgerton. The national habitat for humanity Internet website is: www.humanity.org.

According to the Habitat for Humanity, Heart of Wyoming, Inc. homepage, there are few qualifications for the project. "Each family must qualify for a home by demonstrating the ability to afford a home, a willingness to participate in the construction of Habitat homes in the area and the need for affordable, decent and safe housing.

Heart of Wyoming Habitat for Humanity
Box 2886
Casper, WY 8260202886
(307) 234 -1348
wy-hfh@trib.com

Housing and Community Services

USDA Rural Development has a number of program areas that could address problems that people mentioned during the Midwest/Edgerton listening session. A brief summary of the programs and what they may address include:

Rural Utilities Service - Distance Learning and Telemedicine - May address some of the concerns about linking the Midwest schools to other limited teaching resources

Rural Housing Service - Home Ownership Loans - May provide opportunities to buy, build, improve, repair or rehabilitate rural homes and related facilities.

Rural Housing Service - Section 504 Rural Home Repair Loans and Grants - May be used to pay costs for repairs and improvements that will remove identified health or safety hazards. Loans may be used to improve or modernize dwellings regardless of the removal of health or safety hazards.

Rural Housing Service - Community Facilities Grants - Grant assistance up to 75% for public safety facilities like fire stations, fire trucks and rescue vehicles, Public Service facilities like child care centers, libraries, city halls and schools.

Rural Business - Cooperative Service (RBS) - Rural Economic Development Loan Program (REDL) - Provides zero-interest loans and grants to promote rural economic development and job creation projects.

Rural Business - Cooperative Service (RBS) - Business and Industry low interest loan guarantees may be used for businesses that benefit rural areas.

Further information about availability, qualifications, and participant requirements must be addressed directly to the Rural Development personnel who administer the programs. Mr. John Cochran is the State Director. Natrona County is serviced from the Central Wyoming Area out of Riverton.

USDA Rural Development
Central Wyoming Area
Rural Development Manager
508 North Broadway
Riverton, WY 82501
(307) 856-7524 extension 4

The following resources may have additional information or suggestions for improving housing in the Midwest/Edgerton communities.

Housing Assistance Council
(202) 842-8600
www.ruralhome.org
Casper, WY 82602
US HUD
www.hud.gov
(202) 401-0388

Wyoming Community Development Authority
Cheryl Gillum, Director of Housing
155 N. Beech

(307) 265-0603
gillum@wyomingcda.com

US Economic Development Admin. Wyoming Independent Living Rehabilitation, Inc.
(202) 482-5081
www.doc.gov/eda
Ken Hoff, Executive Director
305 West First
Casper, WY 82601
(307) 266-6956

More information about housing might be obtained next month in Casper during a meeting that runs June 4 through 6. Governor David Fruedenthal will host a Conference on Affordable Housing in Casper entitled, "Building Blocks to Affordable Housing." The conference will be held at the Radisson Hotel, 800 North Poplar in Casper. The Conference is sponsored by:

Wyoming Community Development Authority
Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City
Fannie Mae
Rural Community Assistance Corporation

Recycling

Recycling was mentioned as a project for the Midwest/Edgerton area. It is a great way to pull material out of the solid waste stream to be reused and to save local landfill space. But before a community begins, they must be aware of a number of potential problems with recycling programs.

Many small towns in Wyoming that created recycling programs were, within months, abandoned because of the amount of work and lack of selling success. Generally speaking, collection of

recyclable products is never a problem. The problem is the manpower to sort, package, and ship the material to other collection centers.

Contrary to what many people believe, recycling is not a "money-maker". It always costs more than it makes. Markets for glass, paper, and plastics swing wildly. Collection of these materials can be challenging because when the recycling center is not taking amber glass, or office paper, or cardboard, you are stuck with it until they are willing to take it.

There are other questions that any town or organization considering beginning a recycling business must answer. Transportation is a major consideration and is often the deal-killer in establishing a recycling program. Isolated communities are forced to transport recyclables to a distant collection point. If there are not volunteers willing to haul this material, transportation costs generally far outweigh any income that the recycled material might generate.

Recycling programs are labor intensive. Volunteers in the recycling program must commit many hours a week to keep the material collection problems to a minimum. Collecting the material is the easy part. It takes people because then the recyclables must be sorted and packaged in a manner prescribed by the collection center. Recycling takes a lot of time and manpower. This generally becomes a problem in small towns with a light waste stream because the period between collection and transportation is often a long time. The longer the collected materials sit at the collection point, the more problem with wet and moldy paper and cardboard, rusted ferrous metal cans, broken bottles and so forth. Ideally, the collected material should be removed within a week, but in very small towns, there is simply not enough material to ship.

Low population rural Wyoming communities are faced with other challenges when they begin creating their recycling program. Small towns seldom generate a constant flow of recyclable materials. The local collection site must be monitored by people on site so that it doesn't become a place for residents to get rid of "junk". Unattended collection sites result in wind-and animal-scattered papers creating an unsightly mess that result in unhappy neighbors and additional community problems for the elected officials of the town.

A new recycling program takes an intensive information and education process to teach the public about: (1) what materials can be recycled (aluminum, newspapers, glass, plastics, etc.); (2) what is not recycleable (household wastes, garbage, animal carcasses, etc.); (3) what materials are considered toxic wastes (household chemicals, batteries, unused paint, solvents, petroleum-based products, antifreeze, etc.) and (4) what type of effort, marketing is necessary to get the collected materials to a regional recycling center.

Home pages for Wyoming recycling:

www.trib.com/WYOMING/RECYCLE/

<http://deq.state.wy.us/shwd/index.asp?pageid=98>

Wyoming Solid Waste and Recycling Assn
John Kiplinger, President
Jckiplinger@vcn.com
P.O. Box 310
Powell, WY 82435

Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality
Pollution Prevention (P2) Program Coordinator
Office of Outreach and Environmental Assistance
Herschler Building 4W
122 West 25th Street

(307) 283-3451

Cheyenne, WY 82002
(307) 777-6105

sroseb@state.wy.us

The Sheridan County Conservation District created innovative used motor oil recycling collection point in Clearmont. This collection point has been successfully operating for several years.

Sheridan County Conservation District
Carrie Rogaczewski
1949 Sugarland Drive, Suite 102
Sheridan, WY 82801
(307) 672-5820 Extension 101

Casper College has a recycling program on campus. They collect aluminum, ferrous metal (iron-based), newspapers and corrugated cardboard according to their home page. The recycling program manager for the College is Wayne Robinson. He may be able to help the communities evaluate the possibilities of beginning a recycling program. The College is close enough for interested individuals to visit their operation to get a better idea of the project.

Wayne Robinson, Supervisor, Custodial Services
125 College Drive
Casper, WY 82601
(307) 268-2695
waynerob@caspercollege.edu

Room to Expand

An important concern voiced by many Midwest/Edgerton residents is that their towns are "hemmed in" with no place to grow because they are surrounded by Federal land administered by the USDI Bureau of Land Management. There may be some source of relief for expansion through the BLM under the provisions of the Recreation and Public Purposes Act (R&PP). The local BLM information resource contact is:

USDI Bureau of Land Management
Casper Field Office
John Markin, Manager
1701 East E Street
Casper, WY 82601
(307) 261-7600

Celia Skelman – BLM Realty Specialist
Randy Sorenson - BLM Realty Specialist

Internet Service and External Communication

Poor quality and slow speed Internet services were mentioned as problems at the listening sessions. It is imperative to improve Internet connectivity throughout the community in order to allow for business expansion or relocation. Midwest's children are learning computer sciences through the school that has high quality, high speed Internet connection available. Computers are apparently being used in many school programs.

One of the greatest requirements for creating new or expanding existing businesses in today's business climate is dependable, fast Internet access. It is critically important to have the option to conduct business on the Internet in today's business world. The World Wide Web gives Internet business users access to global information, services and markets that were unheard of five years ago. Many rural Wyoming communities have businesses actively selling their products to people around the world on the Internet. These businesses require the highest quality telecommunications facilities and service.

Scott Gaulke is RT Communications' Senior Technician in Worland and is used as the primary reference for this section. RT Communications is the telephone service provider for Midwest/Edgerton and is a leader in building new communication infrastructure and delivering communications and technical services across Wyoming. RT Communications Corporation has installed fiber optic technology into Midwest/Edgerton and can provide Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) technology to local residents as they indicate a desire for DSL services. The line allows the subscriber a fast, secure digital line where business can be conducted on the Internet.

When four or more Midwest/Edgerton customers request a hookup to DSL, RT employees will install a connection called a DSLAM that will provide DSL services to four or more customers. RT has a full time employee in Kaycee and one in Newcastle who are available for DSL connections in the Salt Creek area. The average monthly cost for RT Corporation's high speed DSL service is \$50 per customer per month. There may be other companies in the area that could provide local DSL services.

There are two Internet Service Providers (ISP) in the Salt Creek area. TRIB.com from Casper and VCN.com from Gillette provide Internet service connections into Midwest/Edgerton.

The Town of Upton secured an Internet connection between the Weston County Public Library in Newcastle and the Upton Branch about five years ago. This allowed library users 30 miles away from the main library an opportunity to have the same access in Upton as in Newcastle. If similar arrangements could be made to connect the Natrona County Library in Casper with the local branch library, better use could be made of the Midwest/Edgerton library.

Among other benefits, a good connection would provide local Internet access to the extensive Foundation Center Grant Research Facilities at the Casper Library. The Foundation Collection is Natrona Country's premier location for grant information. One of the greatest challenges to any Wyoming organization or unit of government seeking grant-funding sources is finding those sources.

Computers and printers could be found to put into the Edgerton Branch Library from corporate or government agency sources. Installation could be made with minimal cost to the local residents during corporate or government hardware upgrades or good serviceable hardware could be obtained through the Wyoming Surplus Property Office.

Community Beautification

The appearance of the town was the leading problem we heard in every listening session. We were told that the greatest problems are abandoned, dilapidated and unoccupied houses and buildings; abandoned vehicles; machinery; building materials and trash in yards; cows in town; a general unwillingness by the residents to clean up individual properties and a lack of pride within the communities.

People were very open and willing to share what they perceive as Midwest/Edgerton's biggest problem. "Our town is ugly!"; "Who would want to move here when it looks like this?"; "Midwest smells like a barnyard!"; "We don't have any community pride!"; "You just can't just build a crappy looking shed or have six junk cars in your back yard!"

There is a general feeling with some residents that, "it doesn't matter if I clean my place up, because my neighbor isn't going to do anything". Some people did not see a problem with the esthetics of the towns. Their reasons for not cleaning up the "junk" around the towns included: inability to get loans to upgrade, remodel homes; "need" the metal, vehicles to carry on home-based businesses.

Abandoned/Derelict Houses

Non-resident ownership of many of the abandoned/unoccupied properties appears to be a large part of the legal problems with removing unserviceable buildings in and around both towns. Until a solution can be found to purchase, cleanup or remove these structures, both towns are at the mercy of the absentee landowner.

The Natrona County attorney's office can clarify the legal status of and provide a basis for removing the old structures based on public health issues and/or fire hazards. The County attorney could suggest what the towns need to do such as notifying non-resident owners, condemning the structures, taking control by non-payment of taxes, etc! One person at a listening session said she was concerned about rats and rattlesnakes coming into the neighboring house during the summer.

Cattle in Town

After the abandoned/non-maintained houses, the next greatest complaint concerned uncontrolled cattle grazing within the city limits. The rancher who owns the cows attended the listening sessions and is open to suggestions to keep the livestock out of the town.

Fencing is probably the best option, although there may be others. Fencing for the town of Midwest would be expensive, but would stop the cattle from coming into town. This project could have a win-win double benefit in that the town could hire local unemployed (or under-employed) teenagers to build the fences on the weekends or during the summer. Once the fencing material is procured, fencing should take less than a month to construct with three crews of three members each. When the fencing project was completed, the small crew could extend the water lines to the corrals on the north side of town. Fencing the town would provide some temporary income to the nine crew members and give them some local work experience, a sense of community pride, and would be a great service to the towns.

According to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation FY 2003 statewide cost list, installation of a four-strand barbed wire fence to exclude cattle will cost \$.95 installed per running foot. This would mean a mile of new four-wire fence would cost about \$5000. Woven wire/barbed wire combination fence to exclude sheep would cost \$1.85 per running foot. The class of animal (cattle or sheep) would determine the type of fence needed to keep livestock out of town. These prices are based on all-new fencing materials being installed to US Department of Agriculture specifications.

In some listening sessions there was a "we can't do it here" attitude firmly in place. Long-term residents remembered the days of the "Company Town" and mourned the loss of the good old days when the towns ran "like they are supposed to!" "The Company" was referred to as a major

component of the Midwest/Edgerton business and social community. Anadarko, the new Company might be approached with a grant proposal to pay for fencing materials and for part of the costs of a community beautification effort.

Town Cleanup

The greatest concern of the listening session participants was that the communities had a problem with people not willing to clean up their homes and personal properties. "Junk" cars were mentioned often, as were old sheds and piles of tires and metal.

Generally the coordination of a Town Clean Up Day would fall to a small group of dedicated volunteers. The Cleanup Day would entail creating a small group of volunteers who would serve as the local community pride/ neighborhood cleanup group. One young man told us that the local FFA chapter was important to the community. Their Chapter might get special recognition for being a part of the clean up project. They could be the core group of volunteers to help clean up the town. Volunteers could assist landowners that request help in cleaning up their yards. Trash bags could be provided and volunteers with pickups could gather the bags to be delivered to a trash pickup point.

Another option may be to involve the Boy Scouts. A Scout must have an Eagle Scout service project before he can complete the requirements for the Eagle Scout rank. The Eagle service project requires the Scout to gain experience by coordinating a broad-spectrum project like a community clean up. If there are no Scouts in Midwest/Edgerton who are working for advancement at the Eagle Scout level, the Central Wyoming Council of the Boy Scouts of America's office is located in Casper. The Central Wyoming Council administers and works with Scout troops all over northern and central Wyoming.

This may be an option to bring volunteers to help with the community clean up as an Eagle Scout service project. This would be a win-win situation for Midwest/Edgerton and for the Scout who is working to complete his Eagle award.

Boy Scouts of America
Central Wyoming Council
3939 Casper Mountain Road
P.O. Box 1506
Casper WY 82601
(307) 234-7329
www.wyoscout.org

After the Cleanup Day, a garden club could help residents select planting materials based on the local soil and water conditions. A group like this could be the foundation for a community beautification committee who could present "Yard of the Week" recognition or something similar to restore pride in property ownership. Some communities have a "Spring Cleaning Day", often in conjunction with Earth Day every April 22.

Business and Economic Development

Few Wyoming communities in Wyoming are facing greater economic challenges for the future than the towns of Midwest and Edgerton. The Salt Creek Oil Field has historically been one of the state's premier energy centers for most of the twentieth century. Boom and bust cycles have left the residents of the Salt Creek area struggling to maintain business, schools and community infrastructure. Like

every single industry dependent town, these communities are susceptible to the boom and bust economy within the global energy industry. The Salt Creek Oil Field has only had one basic industry for a hundred years.

At the listening sessions we were reminded us that the Midwest/Edgerton suffers from isolation, and lack of information technology to help develop business and a healthy economic climate. One of the most important modern technologies that is inadequate in the community is the Internet. Business today is global. Without a viable Internet communication link into Salt Creek, the towns will continue to be left out of the fast moving world of business.

Incentives might help encourage new low impact, high-technology, computer-based Midwest and Edgerton native business owners to move “home”. Williston, North Dakota developed a “Welcome Home” program for inviting their successful natives to return to their hometown and to bring their businesses “home”.

It may be possible to implement this type of program by working with the Wyoming Business Council, local economic development groups and local government. Assistance may be available to assist Midwest/Edgerton High School graduates with college tuition in trade for an obligation for the student to return for a specified period of time after college graduation. This could be one way to increase the possibility of having health care workers move to Midwest.

There are a number of viable sources of business and economic development information located within Wyoming and available to the communities. Many of these organizations and government agencies have representatives located in Natrona County that could be called upon for technical assistance and business information.

Wyoming Small Business Development Center
Leonard Hollar, Director
300 South Wolcott, Suite 300
Casper, WY 82601
(800) 348-5207
leonah@trib.com

Economic Development Coalition
Jeff Stephany, Program Director
Box 3948 222 S. Gillette Ave, Suite 402
Gillette, WY 82717
(307) 686-2603 or (800) 376-0848
newedc@vcn.com

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

Small Business Administration
Mr. Steve DeSpain, Director
100 E. B Street, Room 4010
PO Box 2839
Casper, WY 82602
(307) 261-5761

Wyoming Economic Development Association
Paula McCormick, (WEDA)Coordinator
5319 Highway 287
Lander, WY 82520
(307) 332-5546
weda@rmisp.com

Haydite

During our April 14th afternoon tour, we visited the site of the Midwest Power Plant north of town. Pauline Schultz, our historian and tour guide, mentioned that the building was built of a locally produced shale-based material called haydite. This material is apparently so strong that the power plant building has been nearly indestructible since it was built. The main power plant building appears extremely solid, even after seventy-six years. Abandoned haydite oil derrick pads that were installed in the 1920's appear resistant to the corrosive salts and alkaline chemistry of the soils. Most of the soils in the Salt Creek oil field are extremely corrosive to conventional concrete. The haydite material appears to be nearly unaffected by the salinity and alkalinity. Seeing the existing examples of the strength of the haydite structures around Salt Creek, it may be a potential industry for the area.

Commercial haydite is produced from high-grade silica/alumina shale (SiO_2 and Al_2O_3) in Canada and in Ohio. Dr. Paul Graff, a professional geologist and former instructor at the University of Wyoming mentioned that haydite was close to the chemical composition of industrial ceramics. Haydite is used for lightweight aggregate for construction, pre-cast concrete, concrete blocks, ground cover landscaping, hydroponics and soil amendments. One website that can be used to research more information on haydite is located at:
http://hpbhaydite.com/haydite_properties.htm.

There may be an opportunity through technology-development grants and technical assistance to mine the original shale to produce a haydite in a plant in the Salt Creek area. If there is a local entrepreneur interested in investigating the potential development of a haydite operation at Midwest/Edgerton the Wyoming Business Council is available for assistance.

There may be technical and financial assistance available to entrepreneurs and innovative small business owners for new product concepts through the federal Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program or the Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR). The Wyoming SBIR/STTR Initiative is a joint venture of the Wyoming Business Council and the University of Wyoming Research office. Jill Kline is the contact for information and application procedures on these business development programs.

Wyoming SBIR/STTR Initiative (WSSI)
Jill Kline, Outreach Coordinator
222 South Gillette Avenue, Suite 402
Gillette, WY 82716
(307) 682-2660 or toll free (866) 703-3280
jillkline@vcn.com

National Science Foundation, SBIR Manager
Joe Hennessey
4201 Wilson Blvd
Arlington, VA 22230
(703) 306-1391
jhennes@nsf.gov

Mid-America Manufacturing Technology Center could help with the manufacturing technology that would be required to develop the haydite mining and/or manufacturing processes. They can be reached at the University of Wyoming at:

MAMTC
Box 3362
University Station
Laramie, WY 82071
(800) 343-1432

Aquaculture

Meeting attendees underscored the value of high volume of hot water at the cooling pond as an important resource. Salt Creek's unique geology produces hot artesian water wells. This is an untapped resource that could be utilized to develop a viable aquaculture industry, depending on the water chemistry. Jim Bennage, director of the Sheridan College Aquaculture Center, has developed strategies and techniques for commercial fish farming that might be adaptable to geothermic artesian water. If the water is compatible to supporting a population of commercial fish, a low maintenance, non-recirculating water system might be designed to raise commercial warm water fish species.

Dr. David Fisher, Dean of Sheridan College's Technology Sciences has been closely involved with the Aquaculture Center and might be an important source of information on using geothermal energy in other processes. Sheridan College is a leader in aquaculture technology in the western United States. Jim Bennage, director of the Aquaculture Center at Sheridan College has developed strategies and techniques for commercial fish-farming. He and his associates also have experience planning aquaculture systems using geothermic water sources.

Sheridan College Aquaculture Center
Jim Bennage, Director
Box 1500
Sheridan, WY 82801
(307) 674-6446
davef@sc.cc.wy.us

Sheridan College
Dr. Dave Fisher, Dean of Tech Science
PO Box 1500
Sheridan, WY 82801
(307) 674-6446 x 6165

Greenhouses and Hydroponics

The name "Cooling Pond" indicates that heat from the hot water well is a waste product. Produced year round from deep in the earth, this water has to be cooled before it can be used for much of anything else. The heat that is being allowed to escape into the air can be put to work by using it in a variety of industries, including greenhouses and even hydroponics.

The greatest expense in the operation of greenhouses is the cost of heating. Utilizing the hot water, a greenhouse would save that cost and could be used to grow vegetables, flowers, or specialty crops. There are numerous greenhouse operations located in northern Colorado Front Range where additional information may be available. There are many greenhouse sites on the World Wide Web that can be used for reference.

Hydroponics is the science of growing plants without soil. In these systems, the nutrients necessary for plant growth are added to the water as needed. This is a highly refined science that would take more planning and business start-up funding than a regular greenhouse. Jill Kline would be one contact person for information on starting a hydroponics business. Her address and phone numbers are in the Haydite section above.

Small and Home-Based Businesses

Most of the listening sessions highlighted the need for business assistance to individual entrepreneurs who want to build new businesses or to expand their current ones. Many types of small or home-based businesses were mentioned being needed in Midwest/Edgerton. Among these were a day care center,

laundromat, vehicle and tire repair shops, larger grocery store, more eating places, car wash, bowling alley, and additional motels.

Wyoming Business Council may be useful to fund initial business viability studies. Steve Elledge attended several of the Midwest/Edgerton listening sessions and has access to important information for people considering beginning or expanding their business.

The mission of the Wyoming Small Business Development Center is to provide technical assistance to people who are planning to start a business, or to expanding an existing one. SBDC's technical assistance includes developing business plans, writing resumes, etc. Mr. Leonard Holler is the regional director and is a great source of information and technical assistance.

Wyoming Small Business Development Center
Leonard Holler, Director
300 South Wolcott, Suite 300
Casper, WY 82601
(800) 348-5207
leonah@trib.com

Economic Development Coalition
Jeff Stephany, Program Director
Box 3948 222 S. Gillette Ave, Suite 402
Gillette, WY 82717
(307) 686-2603 or (800) 376-0848
newedc@vcn.com

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

USDA Rural Development
Mr. John Cochran, State Director
100 E. B Street, Room 1001
Casper, WY 82601
(307) 261- 6300
john.cochran@wy.usda.gov
www.rurdev.usda.gov

Small Business Administration
Mr. Steve DeSpain, Director
100 E. B Street, Room 4010
PO Box 2839
Casper, WY 82602
(307) 261-5761

Sheridan College Aquaculture Center
Jim Bennage, Director
Box 1500
Sheridan, WY 82801
(307) 674-6446

Sheridan College
Dr. Dave Fisher, Dean of Tech Science
PO Box 1500
Sheridan, WY 82801
(307) 674-6446 x 6165
davef@sc.cc.wy.us

Economic Development Association
Paula McCormick, Coordinator
5319 Highway 287
Lander, WY 82520
(307) 332-5546
weda@rmisp.com

USDA Rural Development
Central Wyoming Area
Rural Development Manager
508 North Broadway
Riverton, WY 82501
(307) 856-7524 Extension 4
www.rurdev.usda.gov

UW Cooperative Extension
Tom Heald, Director
2011 Fairgrounds Road
Casper, WY 82604
(307) 235-9400
theald@natrona.net

Tourism and Recreation

The residents of Midwest/Edgerton have a full appreciation of the natural and man-made recreational opportunities around them. Recreation development has a long history in the Salt Creek area when Midwest was the location of the very first electrically lighted night football and baseball games played back in 1925.

There are many existing facilities in and around the communities that need development, overhaul and renovation. Among the many recreational and tourism sites that were mentioned at the listening sessions were: the cooling pond, golf course, motorcycle track, museum, rodeo grounds, shooting range, fossil beds, historical sites, hunting and potential fishing locations.

Salt Creek Country Club and Golf Course

During one listening session, the golf course was mentioned as a "money magnet, if it was improved and irrigated". Landscaping with drought and salt tolerant grasses might be one solution to the irrigation challenges on the golf course. The golf course is featured in one Internet page that is cleverly written with nice pictures, encouraging visitors to try the challenge of "pasture golf". George Davis, District Conservationist from the Natural Resources Conservation Service Field Office in Casper can be a source for technical advice on grass species selections.

Fishing Pond Development Project

One man who attended one of the listening sessions is convinced that the Wyoming state record bass was living in the cooling pond. I couldn't tell if that was fact or wishful thinking, but after a call to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's office in Casper, it might be possible. The WG&F planted a number of Florida largemouth bass in the cooling pond a few years ago. Other fish like sunfish, catfish and goldfish serve as forage species to support a healthy bass population. During the listening sessions, the pond's potential for development a warm water fishery was often mentioned. The technical contact for additional fisheries development is:

Paul Mavrakis, Fisheries Biologist
Wyoming Game and Fish Department
3030 Energy Lane, Suite 108
Casper, WY 82604
(307) 473-3400

Other residents thought that the pond is a good focal point for a recreational area that could include picnic tables, and trees if there are any that could survive the salty conditions. BLM usually have recreation specialists on staff who could provide technical advice about creating a picnic area at the cooling pond.

USDI Bureau of Land Management, Casper Field Office
John Markin, Manager
1701 East E Street
Casper, WY 82601
(307) 261-7600

Motocross Track

The challenging nature of the Edgerton motocross/BMX track was an attraction to visitors until the track fell into disrepair a few years ago. The potential for bringing in motorcycle events to the track again appear to be a viable possibility according to many of the local residents.

The American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) is a formalized organization that sanctions racing events within designated AMA Districts. Wyoming and Colorado are not covered by an AMA recognized District. Questions about being included in a sanctioned AMA District should contact:

American Motorcyclist Association- Member Activities Department
13515 Yarmouth Drive
Pickering, OH 43145
(613) 856-1900
fax (613) 856-1921

Two Wyoming-based motorcycle organizations may also have information or suggestions about ongoing state events that might eventually include Midwest/Edgerton again.:

Wyoming Motorcycle Trials Assn.
% Fred Martinson
2119 South Richard Street
Casper, WY 82601
(307) 237-9036
2feetup@coffey.com

High Desert Riders
Box 672
Rock Springs, WY 82902
musicman@fascination.com

Landscaping Soil Information

Long-time residents of Midwest and Edgerton do not have to be told that growing landscape plants and gardens is a challenge because of the salty, clayey and shallow soils. Few places in the Western United States has tougher soil and water conditions that restrict plant growth than here in the Salt Creek oilfield.

Soil information in this section was researched from the 1997 Soil Survey of Natrona County, published by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). This publication is available from the Casper NRCS Field Office. If you get one of the free-of-charge surveys from NRCS, it may be a bit intimidating at first, but the central part of the Salt Creek oil field, including Midwest and Gas Plant are located on map sheet 10. This map continues northward to the Johnson County line. Edgerton's map is located on sheet 11. The numbers on the photo correspond with descriptions in the text that is included with the set of maps.

The Natrona County Soil Survey is mapped on an "agricultural scale" which means that there can be wide variations between areas within the "map unit". The unit covers the general location and describes the soil conditions and chemistry over the whole unit. There are minor differences within those boundaries. If you are requesting information on a specific site, like a park, a particular place on the golf course, or a personal yard, a soil sample needs to be taken directly from the area in question. The University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service (which used to be called "the County Agent") will be able to help answer additional questions about taking and sending in a soil sample).

The CES office is located near the Natrona County Fairgrounds and their phone number is (307) 235-9400.

It is important before doing any plantings that both soils and the water be tested for that specific site for salts and alkalinity. The University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service is responsible for sending soil tests to the University soil labs. Contact the Casper Extension office for assistance on soil and water testing. The Natrona County Master Gardeners may also be a source of technical assistance to local landowners on landscape and gardening problems. They are a group of volunteers who are co-located with the Extension Service. On site assistance can be provided by the USDA NRCS. Mike Collins is a former USDA soil scientist in Gillette who has indicated that he could be available to offer technical soils information and planting recommendations for plantings at the proposed recreational sites.

Once the water and soils are tested, planting and irrigation plans for landscaping could be made to start development of the recreation sites. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Casper Field Office and the Natrona County Conservation District could provide technical information about tree selection, planting, and weed control. County Soil Survey, planning and purchasing trees and planning the irrigation systems.

Midwest and Gas Plant are mapped mostly within soil map Unit 112 - Arvada-Absted-Slickspots complex, 0 to 6 percent slopes. It is briefly described as being located on alluvial fans and low terraces. Percentages of the unit are 35% Arvada clay loam, 30% Absted clay loam and 15% slick spots. There are some rare inclusions of sandy clay loam, but are mostly heavy clay loam soils. Slick spots are described as small areas of soil having a puddled, crusted, or smooth surface and a high percentage of sodium. It is slippery when wet and supports little or no vegetation. Clays take on water very slowly, so irrigation is going to generally be a problem. pH is a measurement of the alkalinity (or liminess) of the soil. Neutral soils have a pH of 7.0, acid soils are lower than 7, alkaline soils are greater than 7. Plant growth is severely limited when the pH gets above 8.4.

The Arvada portion of the unit is a very tough soil to develop because it has severe limitations for lawns, gardens and landscaping due to the amount of sodium salts and alkalinity (pH greater than 9.0 within the top three inches). The high clay content of the soils cause a severe shrink-swell potential so the foundations and concrete floors and streets will break because of the high amount of swelling when the clay is wet and then shrinking again when it dries out. This property also causes problems with septic tanks and leach fields. .

The Absted soil in this unit is slightly more forgiving than Arvada, but only slightly. The pH doesn't get to 9.0 until it is deeper than the top two feet.

Most of the Town of Edgerton is mapped by the NRCS within Soil Map Unit 134, Bowbac-Taluce-Terro complex, 6 to 20 percent slopes. Briefly, this map unit includes soils that are located on relatively steep hills. Percentages of the unit are: 40% Bowbac sandy loam, 25% Taluce sandy loam and 15% Terro fine sandy loam. The remaining percentage is a blend of sandy loams, shallow gravelly soils and rock outcrop. Sandstone provided the parent material for most of these soils. Soft sandstone can be found between 9 and 22 inches.

Shallow soil depth is the greatest soil limitation for plant materials and for construction. When the vegetation is removed from sandy loam, it is susceptible to wind erosion until it is covered by plants again. Chemically, these soils are slightly alkaline and mildly salty, but shallow rooted plants should

be relatively easy to grow if they are watered on a regular basis. Water moves faster in sand than in clay but sand cannot "hold" water for long periods of time.

Selection of tree, shrub and grass species is extremely dependent on the type of soils and the water at each of these recreational sites. Salt Creek soils are naturally alkaline and much of the water from the oil field is highly saline. The saltier, more alkaline sites reduce the selections of plants that can be used for planting in the recreational areas.

Larry Holzworth is the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Montana and Wyoming Plant Materials Specialist. He travels extensively in both states although his office is located in Bozeman. Larry is an important resource person for information on new grass, shrub and tree varieties that may be adaptable to the saline and alkaline areas around Salt Creek.

He is knowledgeable in the species of salt and drought tolerant species that might be used in demonstration plots and test plantings around Midwest/Edgerton. Larry has worked on some plant materials tests on the US Naval Petroleum Reserve south of Salt Creek.

University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension
Tom Heald, Director
2011 Fairgrounds Road
Casper, WY 82604
(307) 235-9400
theald@natrona.net

USDA Natural Resources Cons Service
Mike Collins, Resource Conservationist
319 South Gillette Avenue, Suite 308
Gillette, WY 82716
(307) 682-8843
mike.collins@wy.usda.gov

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Larry Holzworth, Plant Materials Specialist
10 East Babcock Street
Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 587-6838

Natrona County Conservation District
Jaimie George, Cons District Manager
2020 Fairgrounds Road, Suite 101
Casper, WY 82604
(307) 261 5436 Extension 103

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Casper Field Office
George Davis, District Conservationist
2020 Fairgrounds Road, Suite 101
Casper, WY 82604
(307) 261 5436
george.davis@wy.usda.gov

Historic Trails RC&D
Mr. Wayne Jipsen, RC&D Coordinator
Box 924
Rawlins, WY 82401
(307) 347- 2542
wayne.jipsen@wy.usda.gov

Natrona County Master Gardeners (co-located with Extension) mgardeners@natrona.net

Grants

Many of the suggestions for implementing projects have suggested using a combination of corporate and government grant funds to supplement local funding. There is a huge misunderstanding in most communities about what and when grants can be used, who writes them, who receives and administers them and for what grant money can and cannot be used. Generally speaking, few communities have had a great amount of experience developing grant proposals. Communities also must understand the basic points of managing grant funds once they are successful receiving a grant.

There are a number of state and federal agencies that have personnel capable of assisting communities with the basics of planning projects and from the basic project plan, developing a grant proposal that could provide some of the project funding.

Some Wyoming Counties have hired grant writers as county employees. If Natrona County has a staff grant writer, that person could help Midwest/Edgerton learn basic grant writing and to understand the process of developing proposals to meet the needs of the Salt Creek communities.

Historic Trails Resource Cons and Development
Mr. Wayne Jipsen, RC&D Coordinator
Box 924
Rawlins, WY 82401
(307) 347- 2542
wayne.jipsen@wy.usda.gov

Northeastern Wyoming RC&D
Ted Buchanan, Coordinator
400 South Kendrick, #104C
Gillette, WY 82716
(307) 682-8609
ted.buchanan@wy.usda.gov

Professional grant writing training is expensive and demands a high level of commitment from anyone who attends the training. Among many of the professional trainers is:

Dr. Barbara Bader and Mr. Stephen Carr
Community Systems
P.O. Box 516
Bozeman, MT 59771-0516
(406) 686-4726
(406) 587-8970

Summary

Midwest and Edgerton are old, historic Wyoming towns that have weathered the best and the worst of the state's boom and bust cyclic economy. They continue to survive despite many challenges that go back to the earliest days of the Salt Creek Oil Field. Few Wyoming towns are faced with the number and types of challenges that we found during the assessment. Every challenge affords an opportunity.

Midwest/Edgerton's strongest and most marketable asset is its people. There are many dedicated, hardworking people who live and work here. Ideas and energy flowed deep and wide at our listening sessions. While hearing about the challenges and the problems, we saw the strength, the excitement, and the willingness of Midwest/Edgerton citizens to step forward to make a difference in their future. Cooperation between the two towns is remarkable. The outstanding level of citizen participation during the assessment proved that the people care about their towns and want to see them improve. Projects like the trail between Midwest and Edgerton show that the towns cooperate well.

There many sources of assistance found in this report that will help address the long list of proposed projects. Every project begins with an idea, a vision, and a dream. The hard part is turning the dreams into reality. It takes sweat, commitment, patience, enthusiasm and creativity to create a project plan. Every project MUST have the best plan that the community can afford in order to attract funders.

It is now incumbent upon the residents of Midwest/Edgerton to put aside petty differences, step up and work together to meet the challenges that are holding them back. The time is right for people to put aside their petty problems and to pull together to help Midwest/Edgerton meet the challenge of their second century.

Regrettably, I could not get to every subject from the numerous listening sessions but did address what I could with recommendations. Some of the subjects that I didn't get to but may be worth pursuing were: contacting Casper banks to install ATM machines; participating in the KTWO Health Fair; and contacting the Wyoming Department of Transportation about projects along the highways.

I would like to thank everyone in Edgerton and Midwest who were responsible for the support and accommodations we were afforded during the Community Assessment between April 14 to 16, 2003. The intense, positive attitude of the volunteers, the residents and local leaders we worked with that week impressed me very much. Indeed, I have always had a warm place in my heart for these unique communities because my family lived here during the boom days before the Great Depression.

Wyoming Community Assessment Resources

Historic Trails Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D)
Mr. Wayne Jipsen, Coordinator
Rawlins, WY 82401
(307) 347- 2542

Mid America Manufacturing Technology Center (MAMTC)
Box 3362
University Station
Laramie, WY 82071
(800) 343-1432

Wyoming Association of Municipalities
George Parks, Executive Director
200 E. 8th Avenue
PO Box 3110
Cheyenne, WY 82003
(307) 632-0398
wam@wyomuni.org

Wyoming County Commissioners Association
Joe Evans
409 W. 24th Street
PO Box 86
Cheyenne, WY 82003
(307) 632-5409
evansjm@att.net

Wyoming Community Network
Mary Randolph, Executive Director
2219 Carry Avenue
Cheyenne, WY 82002
(307) 777-6430
mrando@state.wy.us

Wyoming Department of Agriculture

2219 Carey Avenue
Cheyenne 82002
(307) 777-7321
www.wyagric.state.wy.us

Wyoming Independent Living Rehabilitation, Inc.
Ken Hoff, Executive Director
305 West First
Casper, WY 82601
(307) 266-6956

Wyoming Manufacturer's Association
951 North Poplar, Room 706
Casper, WY 82601
(307) 237-9660

Wyoming School Facilities Commission
Dr. Don Bryngelson, Director
1920 Thomes Avenue, Suite 300
Cheyenne, WY 82002
(307) 777-8670
dbyng@state.wy.us

Internet Grant Source Web Sites

| | |
|--|--|
| 100% Wyoming | www.me.uwyo.edu |
| A Territorial Resource Foundation | www.atrfoundation.org |
| Administration on Aging | www.aoa.dhhs.gov |
| American Association of Retired Persons | www.aarp.org |
| American Small Town Directory | www.peakware.com/smalltown/index.html |
| Aspen Institute | www.aspeninst.org |
| Community Development Block Grants | www.wyomingbusiness.org |
| Federal Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance | www.gsa.gov |
| Federal Web locator | www.law.vill.edu/fed-agency/fedwebloc.html |
| Foundation Center online | http://fdncenter.org |
| Fundraising Online | www.fundraisingonline.com |
| Governor Fruedenthal's Office | www.state.wy.us |
| Grantmakers in Aging | www.giaging.org |
| Grants Funding Loans | www.idimagic.com |
| Grantsmanship Center | www.tgci.com |
| Internet Prospector Newsletter | w3.uwyo.edu/~prospect |
| Library of Congress | http://loc.gov |
| National Aging Information Center | www.oao.dhhs.gov/naic |
| National Center for Rural Aging | www.ncoa.org/ncra/ncra.htm |
| National Council of NPO Assn. | www.ncna.org |
| National Rural Development. Partnership | www.rurdev.usda.gov |
| Non Profit Resource Center | www.not-for-profit.org |
| Non Profit Times | www.nptimes.com |
| Notices of Government Funding | http://ocd/usda.gov/nofa.htm |

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| Non Profit Organization | www.npo.net/nponet/hotlists/ntee-t.htm |
| Pew Charitable Trust | www.pewtrusts.com |
| Regional Assn. of Grant Writers | www.rag.org/rags/map.htm |
| Small Business Administration | www.sba.gov |
| State of Wyoming | www.state.wy.us/state/welcome.html |
| USDA Economic Research Service | www.ers.usda.gov |
| USDA Non Profit Gateway | www.usda.gov/nonprofit.htm |
| USDA Rural Development | www.rurdev.usda.gov |
| UW Business Assistance Center | www.uwo.edu/bu/bac/bac1.htm |
| W. R. Kellogg Foundation | www.wrk.org |
| WY Grants Information | http://will.state.wy.us/sis/grants |
| WY Rural Development Council | www.rurdev.usda.gov/nrdp/wy.html |
| WY Secretary of State (corporations) | http://soswy.state.wy.us/corporat/corporat.htm |
| WY Small Business Development Center | www.uwo.edu/sbdc |

National Rural Community Development Information

Community Transportation Association of America
 (202) 661-0217
www.ctaa.org

Corporation for Enterprise Development
 (202) 408-9788
www.cfed.org

Economic Development Administration
 (202) 482-5081
www.doc.gov/eda

Educational Resources Information Clearing Center on Rural Education and Small Schools
 (800) 624-9120
www.ael.org/eric

Housing Assistance Council
 (202) 842-8600
www.ruralhome.org

International City/County Management Association
 (202) 289-4262
www.icma.org

National Rural Education Association
 (970) 491-7022
www.colostate.edu/Orgs/NREA

National Rural Health Association
 (816) 756-3140
www.nrharural.org

National Rural Health Resource Center
(218) 720-0700
www.ruralcenter.org/nrhrc

Organizations Concerned about Rural Education
(202) 822-7300
www.ruralschools.org

Smart Growth Network
www.smartgrowth.org

Sustainable Communities Network
www.sustainable.org

US Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
www.hud.gov
(202) 401-0388

Aliza Sherman

Manager, Marketing and Public Relations
Wyoming Business Council
214 West 15th Street
Cheyenne, WY 82002
307-777-2851
asherm@state.wy.us

People**INTRODUCTION**

Participating in the Midwest/Edgerton Community Assessment demonstrated to me the power of small communities with the commitment to want more for their towns. Many good ideas came up during the listening sessions. I'll be addressing issues surrounding "people" in the community with the main topics being volunteerism and community pride, after school activities and a recreation center.

Below are some ideas and resources to pursue.

Volunteerism – Values/Community Pride

Challenge: There is a need to foster community pride and volunteerism among community members.

IDEA: Tap into the youth to instill volunteerism and values.

Research and Resources:

Youth As Resources - <http://www.yar.org/>

Funding sources for youth - <http://www.yar.org/funding.htm>

Youth as Resources (YAR) is a philosophy and a program that recognizes youth as valuable community resources and engages them as partners with adults in bringing about positive community change.

The three principles of YAR are: Youth-adult partnership in governance, Youth as grantmakers, Youth-led service.

Youth as Resources (YAR) programs are initiated in all kinds of communities-large and small, rural and urban, demographically diverse (by ethnicity, race, socioeconomic levels, religion, age, gender, etc.)- all with a unique set of needs and resources. Each YAR program develops its characteristics, policies, and procedures while conforming to the core standards of YAR.

Youth Service America - <http://www.ysa.org>

YOUTH SERVICE AMERICA (YSA) is a resource center and the premier alliance of 300+ organizations committed to increasing the quantity and quality of volunteer opportunities for young Americans, ages 5-25, to serve locally, nationally, and globally. Founded in 1986, YSA's mission is to strengthen the effectiveness, sustainability, and scale of the youth service and service-learning field. A strong youth service movement will create healthy communities, and foster citizenship, knowledge, and the personal development of young people. YSA envisions a powerful network of organizations committed to making service the common expectation and common experience of all young Americans.

Servenet - <http://www.servenet.org/>

Web site for service and volunteering

SERVEnet is a program of [Youth Service America\(YSA\)](#), a resource center and the premier alliance of 200+ organizations committed to increasing the quantity and quality of opportunities for young Americans to serve locally, nationally, or globally. YSA's mission is to strengthen the Effectiveness, Sustainability, and Scale of the youth service movement.

Humanitarian Resource Institute – <http://www.humanitarian.net/usdatabase/usaaa.html>

“Redefining Volunteerism and Community Service”

IDEA: Get funding and guidance for youth in the community to tackle needs of the community such as beautification.

Research and Resources:

Wyoming Youth and Community Grant (WYAC)

This grant is through the Rural Rehabilitation Program managed by the Wyoming Business Council. The WYAC grant program provides student organizations with grant money up to \$1500 to improve the facilities, grounds or buildings on public property in Wyoming communities.

Contact: Cindy Garretson-Weibel

Wyoming Business Council

Rural Rehabilitation Program

2219 Carey Avenue

Cheyenne, WY 82002

307-77-6589 - cgarre@state.wy.us

What Kids Can Do (Keep America Beautiful) - <http://www.kab.org/kids1.cfm>

Wyoming Affiliate of KAB:

Community Appearance Commission

Brenda Eickhoff-Johnson - Director

Casper, Wyoming

Phone: 307.234.6485

bseick@aol.com

IDEA: Improve/build playgrounds for younger children in the community.

Research and Resources:

FundingFactory - <http://www.fundingfactory.com/>

Founded in 1997, The Funding Factory makes it easy for schools to succeed in fundraising by providing a suite of unique funding programs and an online applications interface for managing the school fundraising process.

FundingFactory is perhaps best known for its Cartridge Recycling Program, formerly known as ETCEP. With this award-winning program, over 15 thousand schools are collecting empty laser and inkjet cartridges from their communities. The collected cartridges earn points, which schools may

redeem through the Funding Factory's online catalog of technology and or recreation products. In the year 2001, US schools will earn in excess of \$2.5 million through this simple act of recycling. The Funding Factory offers schools a unique departure from the traditional fundraising model of selling goods and services. Combined with our applications framework that makes it easy to manage these programs, The FundingFactory has helped thousands of schools acquire needed classroom technology and recreation equipment

Hasbro's Childrens Foundation - <http://www.hasbro.org/hcf/>
They are currently redesigning their site but check it in May 2003.

Kaboom Playground Planner - <http://planner.kaboom.org/>
A pamphlet on Community-Built Playgrounds that explains how to raise funds and gather help to install a playground by community groups is available through [Landscape Structures, Inc.](#) It appears that many of the planning documents are not available unless you meet with company representatives. <http://www.playlsi.com/Database/common/webleadsentry.nsf/PlaygroundLitSelection?OpenForm>
Nike Community Affairs - <http://www.nike.com/nikebiz/nikebiz.jhtml?page=26&item=product>

IDEA: Learn from what other states are doing in terms of community service and volunteerism.

Examples of Statewide Volunteerism Initiatives:

The Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service -
<http://volunteerky.state.ky.us/>

The Texas Commission on volunteerism and Community Service - <http://www.txserve.org/>
Afterschool activities

Challenge: There are limited after school options for youth to participate in – from kindergarten through senior high.

IDEA: Start a comprehensive after school program for various age groups.

Research and Resources:

Afterschool Alliance - <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/>

After School Action Kit - http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/action_kit.cfm

The Afterschool Alliance works in partnership with afterschool providers across the country as well as numerous organizations dedicated to children, youth and education. As the Alliance grew out of a partnership between the Mott Foundation and the U.S. Department of Education, it coordinates many activities with the [21st Century Community Learning Center](#) initiative. The 21st CCLC is the fastest growing provider of afterschool programs in the country, offering grants to school districts to run afterschool and summer school programs in partnership with community organizations.

Afterschool.gov - <http://www.afterschool.gov/cgi-bin/home.pl>

A good resource for information on after school programs for children of all ages. NOTE: Includes resources for child care as well.

How to Get Money - <http://www.afterschool.gov/cgi-bin/htgmsrch.pl>

Beyond the Bell Toolkit - <http://www.ncrel.org/after/bellkit.htm>

Beyond the Bell™ Second Edition: A Toolkit for Creating Effective After School Programs. Highly practical and easy to use, the second edition of *Beyond the Bell* is filled with important information for anyone working in a school-based after-school program. The toolkit is designed around key decision points in six areas -- management, collaboration, programming, linkages with the traditional school day, evaluation, and communication.

The new *Beyond the Bell* contains 21 new tools to help staff work faster and smarter. All 51 tools are available on the enclosed CD-ROM. They are offered in both a PDF and Word format so that they can be easily revised to meet any program's specific needs. 168 pages and companion CD-ROM. \$19.95 plus \$5.00 shipping and handling. *Beyond the Bell*, NCREL, 1120 E. Diehl Rd., Suite 200, Naperville, IL 60563. You can get more information about *Beyond the Bell* products by leaving your name and number at (630) 649-6642.

Promising Practices in After School Database (PPAS) - <http://www.afterschool.org/text/funding.cfm>
Search this online database for potential promising practices of after school programs nationwide.

Public Recreation in High Risk Environments: Programs That Work

A free resource guide: Information on programs that are providing safe, healthy, and mentally and physically challenging programs for youth who are at risk of delinquency, academic failure, or personal harm due to community violence. *Public Recreation in High Risk Environments: Programs That Work* is a document that describes gang prevention and intervention, academic enhancement, natural resources leadership training, substance abuse prevention, employment training and entrepreneurship, and artistic development programs. The programs can be copied and used again by others, are cost effective, and produce direct results. For a copy of the document, contact the National Recreation and Park Association, 22377 Belmont Ridge Road, Ashburn, VA 20148.

Coalition of Community Foundations for Youth - <http://www.ccfy.org/>

For information/contacts: The Coalition of Community Foundations for Youth (CCFY) is a network of over 185 community foundations in communities across the United States dedicated to securing improved conditions for children, youth and families. Launched a decade ago with support from the Rockefeller Foundation, CCFY is now supported by more than a dozen national foundations and nearly 100 of our own members through voluntary contributions.

Edna McConnell Clark Foundation - <http://www.emcf.org/programs/youth/index.htm>

The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation is embarking on a major effort to help young people from low-income families make a successful transition to independent adulthood.

To achieve that goal - which eventually will become the sole focus of all our activities - we have begun implementing a new grantmaking approach, which we call *Institution and Field Building (IFB)*. It differs considerably from the way we've worked in the past - from the identification and selection of grantees, to the kind of support we provide, to the way we measure success.

Key to our new effort is our emphasis on *helping youth organizations that work with young people during the non-school hours grow stronger and better able to serve larger numbers of low-income youth with better quality programs.*

Place for congregating

Challenge: Having a community center that is more extensive and inclusive than the old bar currently being used with one pool table.

IDEA: Build a new community center to serve all members of the community.

In order to qualify for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to build a community center, a community must prove that they qualify based on federal objectives. One objective is to “serving low and moderate income” families in the community.

To qualify for “low or moderate income,” a community must have at least 51% low or moderate income families. Based on the HUD Low and Moderate Income Estimates, Edgerton has 53% and Midwest has 59.9% low/moderate income families. Therefore, Both Midwest and Edgerton DO qualify for a CDBG.

The Wyoming Business Council administers the CDBG program for economic and community development projects, and its board of directors approves grant recipients.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR CDBG

Only counties and incorporated cities and towns are eligible to apply for CDBG funds. However, local governments may apply on behalf of other units of government, non-profit and for-profit businesses, and special interest groups. The cities of Casper and Cheyenne are not eligible because they are entitlement cities and receive CDBG funds directly from HUD. Laramie and Natrona counties may apply on behalf of a project located within the municipal boundaries of Cheyenne and Casper respectively if it can be demonstrated the benefits of the project are available on a countywide basis.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For further information concerning the Community Development Block Grant Program, please contact:

[Steve Achter](mailto:sachte@state.wy.us), Director, TEL: 307-777-2811, sachte@state.wy.us

[Terry Koerwitz](mailto:tkoerw@state.wy.us), Community Development Program Manager, TEL: 307-777-2812, tkoerw@state.wy.us

Miscellaneous funding sources

These funding sources cover many areas discussed in the listening sessions. Some deadlines have passed but are good resources to look at next year. Some have multiple deadlines.

Funding to Encourage Bicycle Use

Bikes Belong Coalition Grants Program

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

Bikes Belong Coalition, sponsored by the American bicycle industry, seeks to put more people on bicycles more often. Bikes Belong accepts requests for funding of up to \$10,000 for facility, capacity, and education projects. Eligible facility projects include bike paths, trails, routes, lanes, parking, and transit; and mountain bike facilities. Eligible capacity projects include projects that make a new organization sustainable and programs that make organizations more effective at generating ridership. Only bicycle advocacy organizations are eligible for capacity grants. Eligible education projects include safe routes to school and recruiting new riders. Generally, Bikes Belong will consider funding advocacy work, construction costs, and matching funds. Bikes Belong will also accept successor proposals from previously funded projects. Nonprofit organizations and government agencies are eligible to apply. Applications are reviewed four times a year, and the remaining deadlines for 2003 are May 16, August 15, and November 14.

GREENBACKS FOR GREENWAYS

Conservation Fund: Kodak American Greenway Awards Program

<http://www.conservationfund.org/?article=1006>

The Kodak American Greenways Awards, a partnership project of Kodak, The Conservation Fund, and the National Geographic Society, provides small grants of up to \$2,500 to stimulate the planning and design of greenways in communities throughout America. Greenways are corridors of protected public and private land established along rivers, stream valleys, ridges, abandoned railroad corridors, utility right-of-ways, canals, scenic roads, etc.

Youth Awards for Exemplary Acts

Angel Soft Angels in Action Awards Program

<http://www.gp.com/consumerproducts/angelsinaction/index.html>

The Angel Soft Angels in Action Program will recognize children, ages 8 to 15, for executing exemplary acts of service to benefit their community, a charity, or cause. Angel Soft gives awards to individuals and to classrooms. In the individual category, ten children are awarded \$5,000 and a one-year supply of Angel Soft bath tissue. The individual nomination deadline is June 1, 2003.

VARIETY OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT AVAILABLE

Wells Fargo Charitable Contributions Program

<http://www.wellsfargo.com/about/charitable/index.jhtml>

Wells Fargo is committed to improving and sustaining the company's local communities through grants and volunteer activities. Although funding priorities vary from state to state, Wells Fargo generally supports community development, K-12 education, human services, and arts, culture and civic projects.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT TARGETED

Edward W. Hazen Foundation

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

The Hazen Foundation's principal focus is on middle and high school-age youth in rural and urban low-income and minority communities. The Foundation maintains a national geographic focus for its Youth Development Program, which is focused on youth organization and leadership development around concrete social issues that are important to young people and the larger community.

EQUIPMENT AND APPAREL FOR GIRLS' SPORTS PROGRAMS

Women's Sports Foundation: Equipped 2 Play

<http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/cgibin/iowa/funding/featured.html?record=26>

Initiated in 2001 by the Women's Sports Foundation and Gatorade, Equipped 2 Play is a grant program available to girls' sports programs in schools, clubs, and other recreational organizations demonstrating a need for equipment and/or apparel. Since its inception, Equipped 2 Play has provided \$150,000 in new equipment and apparel to more than 100 sports programs across the country.

GRANTS FOR COMMUNITY PROJECTS WITH A TECHNOLOGY FOCUS

PeopleSoft Community Relations Program

http://www.peoplesoft.com/error_404.jsp?404=/corp/en/about/community/charitable_contrib.asp

PeopleSoft's Community Relations Program mainly targets community service projects that focus on technology in communities where company employees live and work. The primary program, called "Caring through Computers," supports efforts that provide underserved populations with computer technology training and education.

MATH AND SCIENCE EDUCATION A FUNDING PRIORITY

Toshiba America Foundation

<http://www.toshiba.com/taf/>

The Toshiba America Foundation funds projects designed by teachers to improve science and math education through project-based learning. Individual or groups of classroom teachers working in public and private schools throughout the U.S. are eligible to apply. Toshiba offers two types of funding opportunities.

Teacher Grants Available for Instructional Creativity

Jordan Fundamentals Grant Program

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

Jordan Fundamentals grants are awarded to teachers or paraprofessionals who work with students in grades 6-12 in U.S. public schools and who also demonstrate instructional creativity and exemplify high learning expectations for economically disadvantaged students. Applicants must develop an original lesson plan or thematic unit. Unique teaching methods and projects are encouraged. The grants fund resource materials, supplies, equipment, transportation, or other costs related to field trips. The application deadline is June 15, 2003.

DONATIONS TO IMPROVE TECHNOLOGY IN CITIES

3Com Urban Challenge Program

http://www.3com.com/solutions/en_US/government/programs/urbanchallenge_ameriacorps.html

The Urban Challenge program rewards forward-thinking cities with \$100,000 worth of 3Com products and services to incorporate new uses for information technology into the fabric of their communities, namely transforming education, improving public communication, and making municipal services faster and more convenient to use.

Miscellaneous resources

The following are miscellaneous booklets, websites, organizations, etc. that have useful information for your community.

Wyoming Foundations Directory - Miller, M. Ann (comp. and ed.) *Wyoming foundations directory*. 8th ed. Cheyenne, Wyoming: Laramie County Community College, [2002]. xii, unpaginated. (\$5) 120 WY 2001

The directory is divided into two primary sections: Wyoming foundations, and out-of-state foundations that have a record of giving in Wyoming. Available from Administrative Assistant, Laramie County Community College Library, 1400 E. College Dr., Cheyenne, WY 82007-3299. Tel.: (307) 778-1377.

Wyoming Community Foundation

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

The Wyoming Community Foundation, established in 1989, strives "to ensure and enhance the quality of life for present and future generations of Wyoming people." The Foundation focuses its grants in the general areas of arts and culture, civic projects, education, conservation and natural resources, and health and human services. Awards range from \$500-\$5000, and the Foundation favors giving in two areas: prevention and early intervention for high-risk children and families, and community based organizations that address physical, social and economic issues at the grassroots level. Visitors to the Foundation's Web site will find application guidelines, information for donors, a list of the Foundation's board and staff, related links, and contact information to request additional resources available directly from the Foundation. (2/7/00)

The Wyoming Community Foundation welcomes requests from charitable organizations in Wyoming recognized as tax-exempt under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code and on occasion, to public/governmental agencies. Grants are not made to individuals. The Community Foundation relies

on affiliate boards, affiliate steering committees, and other local advisory groups to help identify grantmaking opportunities within their respective geographic areas. The Wyoming Community Foundation focuses its grantmaking around the theme of community building, in the broad charitable fields of arts and culture, civic projects, conservation and natural resources, education, and health and human services.

Regardless of charitable field, the Community Foundation gives priority to projects that assist or promote:

Strengthening the capacity of nonprofit organizations to do their work.

Leveraging the dollars of the Wyoming Community Foundation.

Collaboration and efficient use of nonprofit resources.

Improving the quality and effectiveness of services.

Addressing the causes or prevention of community problems.

Low priority is given to:

Block Grants

Capital Campaigns

Annual Campaigns

Debt Retirement

Governmental programs that don't meet needs of priority concern.

Activities or programs for lobbying are ineligible for Community Foundation funding.

20 Clues to Rural Community Survival

For a copy of the workbook, contact: Heartland Center for Leadership Development, 941 "O" Street, Suite 920, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

800-927-1115, heartcld@aol.com – <http://www.4w.com/heartland>

Rural Resource Guide

Order copies from: Wyoming Community Network, 2219 Carey Ave, Cheyenne WY 82002; Phone 307-777-6430 -<http://www.wyomingcommunitynetwork.com>

Coleen Collins

Department of Workforce Services
122 West 25th Street
Herschler Building, 2-E, Room 2103
Cheyenne, WY. 82002
307-777-7375
ccolli1@state.wy.us

INTRODUCTION

I would like to thank the communities of Midwest and Edgerton for their warm hospitality. I personally enjoyed meeting all of the folks who participated in the assessment and loved all of the home cooked meals!

I had a great experience in Midwest and Edgerton. The people of Midwest and Edgerton have a great spirit and are committed to taking steps to improve the community.

This report is organized around the major themes identified by the resource team. I have included contact information, websites and recommendations.

PEOPLE

Challenge: In several of the listening sessions, the community identified a lack of after school activities for the youth.

Solution/Contact: There is the possibility of tapping into the Children's Trust Fund and Family Preservation Program operated through the Wyoming Department of Family Services. The Wyoming Children's Trust Fund will fund multi-year programs and projects, however, applications must be submitted annually. Matching funds are required. For more information contact:

Steve Vajda
Department of Family Services
Protective Service Division
Hathaway Building
2300 Capitol Avenue
Cheyenne, WY. 82002
307-777-6081
svajda@state.wy.us

Solution/Contact: The Corporation for National and Community Service may be able to assist in establishing and organizing after-school activities. For more information contact:

Patrick Gallizzi
Corporation for National and Community Service
308 W. 21st, Room 206
Cheyenne, WY. 82001
307-772-2385
pgallizz@cns.gov

Challenge: A number of people stated there is a lack of community involvement from all age groups and a lack of communication. The assessment team was told the same individuals volunteer for projects. If the same individuals are always volunteering, there is the potential for burn-out. The community would like to see more individuals volunteer their time to various projects and would like to see them more involved in community issues.

Solution/Contact: The Corporation for National and Community Service is again a great resource for these challenges. Big IMPACT serves Wyoming youth through quality mentoring. Americorps VISTA may be able to help build a local volunteer base. For more information contact:

Patrick Gallizzi

Corporation for National and Community Service
308 W. 21st, Room 206
Cheyenne, WY. 82001
307-772-2385
pgallizz@cns.gov

Solution/Contact: Consider establishing a local youth council and have them participate in meetings with the town council to address their concerns and ideas in regard to the community. If the youth are involved in decisions which affect them, they will take pride in their community. The Youth Empowerment Council out of Casper is a good resource. For information contact:

Barb Rea
1522 East A
Casper, Wyoming 82601
307-233-6000

Solution/Recommendations: In order to improve communications the community may want to implement a monthly newsletter which is mailed or distributed to local citizens. The newsletter could include dates and agendas for town council meetings, minutes from the town council meetings and general community news.

The mayors may want to contact the Casper Star-Tribune to obtain space in the community section of the newspaper in order to report the needs and accomplishments of Midwest and Edgerton. The section could be called "The Mayor's Corner" and Guy Chapman and Sandy Schutte could take turns writing the articles.

Check into what the youth are currently doing in the community. Do the youth have anything established at school in terms of volunteer activities or community projects? If so, tap into this and foster the volunteer activities and community projects.

Challenge: The community would like to see more senior citizens active in the senior citizen center. Midwest and Edgerton have approximately 90 senior citizens of which ten are active members of the senior center. I believe the community is taking a step in the right direction by forming an advisory committee that is working on making the senior center a fun place to be in order to attract members.

Solution/Contact: I asked a few individuals during the listening sessions why senior citizens did not become active members of the senior center. I received answers indicating that the senior citizens

would like a companion to take them to the center. I recommend checking into the Senior Companion program which provides companionship and support to seniors. For information contact:

Tamra Ward
Wyoming Senior Citizens Inc.
106 West Adams Avenue
PO Box BD
Riverton, WY. 82501
307-856-6880
taward@wyoming.com

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Challenge: The assessment team heard there is a need to bring in new business and diversify the economy. The community feels there is a need for business associated with the oil industry and business outside of the oil industry for creation of jobs. The community recognizes that one day the oil will be depleted in the area so there is a need for other industry in order for the communities to survive.

Solution/Contact: The Wyoming Business Council is an excellent resource in the area of business and industry recruiting. Information about the Business Council can be obtained at their website which is www.wyomingbusiness.org/home/index.cfm. For more information contact:

Den Costantino, Director
214 West 15th Street
Cheyenne, WY. 82002
307-777-2842
dcosta@state.wy.us

Solution/Contact: The Wyoming Small Business Development Center is also a helpful resource. The Small Business Development Center services include: consulting, training programs, resource library and referral programs. They can also assist in providing information in regard to starting a business in the community. For more information contact:

Leonard Holler, Director, Region III
300 South Wolcott, Suite 300
Casper, WY. 82601
307-234-6683 or 1-800-348-5207
sbdc@trib.com

Solution/Contact: The USDA Rural Development has a business and industry program which provides loans for expansion and preservation of jobs in rural areas. They also administer the Rural Business Enterprise Grants to finance and facilitate development of small and emerging private business enterprises. For more information contact:

Jerry Tamlin
Business and Cooperatives Program Director
100 E. "B" Street
Room 1005
Casper, WY. 82601

307-261-6319
jerry.tamlin@wy.usda.gov

Challenge: There is a lack of jobs available for youth and adults. The community would like to see better than minimum wage jobs, retention and progression in employment and better training opportunities. The community, like many other across the State of Wyoming, is seeing youth leave the community after completion of high school or college to find good paying jobs.

Solution/Contact: The Workforce Development Training Fund administered by the Department of Workforce Services assists existing and new industries in the state in meeting the training needs of their newly-hired or current employees. For more information contact:

Jan Wilson
Program Manager
100 West Midwest
Casper, WY. 82602
307-235-3294
jwilso1@state.wy.us

Solution/Contact: The Department of Workforce Services operates the Building Trades Program. This is a program where youth learn carpentry, electrical, plumbing, cement work and real world math skills. The youth learn skills in this program and could assist the community in repairing houses or building new houses. For more information contact:

Chuck Blackwell
Employment and Training Specialist
851 Werner Court
Suite 120
Casper, WY. 82601
307-234-4591
cblack@state.wy.us

Solution/Contact: The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) assists youth, unemployed adults, employed adults and dislocated workers. The Workforce Investment Act offers occupations skills training, on-the-job training, programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, training programs operated by the private sector, skills upgrading and retraining, entrepreneurial training, job readiness training, Adult Basic Education activities in conjunction with these activities and customized training with commitment to employ trainees. For more information contact:

Chris Corlis
Program Manager
100 West Midwest
Casper, WY. 82602
307-235-3242
ccorli@state.wy.us

Information about the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services can be obtained at their website which is <http://dwsweb.state.wy.us/index.asp>.

Recommendation: Placement opportunities for youth through WIA are limited in Midwest and Edgerton during the summer months because of the small employer base. There are several placement opportunities in Casper but transportation is a problem for the youth. I would suggest the community check with the school district to see if a bus or van can transport youth in the summer. To check on transportation availability contact:

Tom McIntosh
Vocation Curriculum Coordinator
970 North Glenn Road
Casper, WY. 82601
307-577-0229

Solution/Contact: The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) administered by the Department of Workforce Services provides useful community services and fosters individual economic self-sufficiency through training and job placement in unsubsidized employment. This program serves persons who are 55 years old or over and low income. For more information contact:

Edna Vajda
Senior Services Consultant
122 W. 25th Street
Herschler Bldg., 2-E, Room 2104
Cheyenne, WY. 82002
307-777-8717
evajda@state.wy.us

Challenge: There is not a bank located in either Midwest or Edgerton. Individuals must do their banking in Casper. It has been difficult for some folks to cash checks in Casper because they have an out of town address even though the checks reflect a Casper institution.

Solution/Contact: Jeff Stephany from the North East Wyoming Economic Development Coalition may be a helpful resource in this area. He may be aware of individuals interested in opening banks in rural communities. Contact Jeff at:

North East Wyoming Economic Development Coalition
222 S. Gillette Ave., Suite 402
PO Box 3948
Gillette, WY. 82717
307-686-2603
newedc@vcn.com

Solution/Contact: Check with a Credit Union to see if they would open a two man office and recruit the employees from Midwest and Edgerton. Check with your community membership charter at:

Energy West Federal Cu
130 N. Ash St.
Casper, WY. 82601
307-265-0678

Recommendation: I also suggest contacting one of the Casper banks to see if they are interested in opening a branch in the community.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Challenge: Many homes and buildings are in disrepair. There are a number of houses where windows are boarded up or the house has been abandoned.

Solution/Contact: The Wyoming Business Council administers the Community Development Block Grant Program. This program funds eligible activities in economic development, community development and housing. For information contact:

Steve Achter
Wyoming Business Council
214 W. 15th
Cheyenne, WY. 82001
307-777-2811

Solution/Contact: The Weatherization program administered by the Wyoming Department of Family Services is a federal program for low income individuals. The program is designed to lower monthly fuel costs by making the home more fuel efficient and comfortable. The weatherization program monitors for unsafe conditions, tunes and adjusts heating systems, wraps pipes and water heaters, seals off major air leaks and provides insulation for attics, floors and walls. For more information contact:

Jeff Dockter
Department of Family Services
Economic Assistance Division
Hathaway Building
2300 Capitol Avenue
Cheyenne, WY. 82002
307-777-6346
jdockt@state.wy.us

Solution/Contact: There are a number of innovative programs administered by Habitat for Humanity, the Heart of Wyoming, Inc. One of their special programs is entitled "Youth Build". Habitat for Humanity is working with the Natrona County School system. The first pilot project is for student to construct a home on the grounds of Kelly Walsh High School. For more information contact:

Habitat for Humanity, the Heart of Wyoming, Inc.
442 West Collins
PO Box 2886
Casper, WY. 82602
307-234-1348
wy-hfh@trib.com

Challenge: The school swimming pool has not been operational since January of 2003. The swimming pool is very important to the community as it is used as a recreational facility as well as a school facility. The swimming pool also employs youth in the summer as lifeguards. In the listening sessions, several people told us the school district had been out in January to try to fix the pool but they

apparently could not find what was causing the pool to leak. The school district has not been back to look at the pool since January.

Solution/Contact: Contact the McMurry Foundation to see if they can help with funds to repair the pool. The Foundation focuses on innovative ventures as well as established community programs which have the potential of making a lasting difference. Special emphasis is placed on education, religion, children and advocacy for children, health and human services, arts and humanities and a favorable business environment. For further information contact:

Rachel Chadderdon, Director
McMurry Foundation
PO Box 2016
Casper, WY. 82602
307-261-9953
Rachel@mcmurry.net

Recommendation: Both adults and youth are very proud of their school. The school was consistently named as the greatest strength in the community. I believe the community needs a school board member or a political representative on their side in order for the school district to place the repair of the pool high on the priority list. Consider sponsoring a “Kids Day” where the school board members, county political representatives, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Governor are invited to the school. Have the kids take these individuals on a tour and show them what you are proud of and show them what has happened with the pool. Inform these representatives how important the swimming pool is to both the kids and adults. Let them know the pool is one of the few recreational facilities available to the citizens and one of the few places where youth can become employed in the community.

Challenge: The Salt Creek Museum building is in need of repair. There is a large crack in the ceiling. It appears if there is much more damage to the cracked area, the ceiling will cave-in. There is also flood damage in the basement of the building.

Contact/Solution: The museum is very important to the community as it contains so much history and attracts tourism. I suggest you contact the following entities to see if funding is available to assist in building repairs:

Wyoming Arts Council
2320 Capitol Avenue
Cheyenne, WY. 82002
307-777-7742

Rachel Chadderdon, Director
McMurry Foundation
PO Box 2016
Casper, WY. 82602
307-261-9953
Rachel@mcmurry.net

Daniels Fund
201 E. Fifth

Sheridan, WY. 82801
307-673-1987
866-673-1987
website: www.danielsfund.org/

The Kresge Foundation
3215 W. Big Beaver Road
P.O. Box 3151
Troy, Michigan
248-643-9630
website: www.kresge.org/

The National Historical Publications and Records Commission
National Archives and Records Administration
700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Room 111
Washington, DC 20408
nhprc@nara.gov
website: www.archives.gov/nhprc_and_other_grants

National Endowment for the Humanities
Grant Programs
website: www.nch.gov/grants/guidelines/public-consult.html

Institute of Museum and Library Services
website: www.ims.gov/index.htm

BEAUTIFICATION

Challenge: The assessment team heard in every listening session that the community needs to work on beautification. The community would like to see lots cleaned up, old cars removed from yards and pristine houses and buildings. Currently, several lots are not taken care of by owners of the property. Some of the owners of the lots do not live in the community and have not been to Midwest and Edgerton for several years. As a result, these properties have deteriorated over time.

Contact/Solution: Beautification and economic development go hand-in-hand. The communities of Cheyenne and Evanston are committed to economic development and beautification of their city. Cheyenne is currently renovating the depot. Evanston holds a gala to raise funds for beautification. Cheyenne and Evanston have been successful in their efforts. I suggest contacting the mayor's office in Cheyenne and Evanston to get information on their beautification projects. For more information contact:

Mark Harris
Mayor
City of Evanston
1200 Main St.
Evanston, WY. 82930
307-444-3210
mayor@allwest.net

Jack Spiker

Mayor
City of Cheyenne
2101 O'Neil Ave., Room 310
307-637-6300
website: www.cheyennecity.org/mayor.htm

Recommendation: Implement an annual fundraising event like a dinner, gala or ball. Utilize these funds for beautification projects.

Recommendation: Create a six penny tax. The six penny tax may not be popular with all of the citizens and the community leaders will need to be prepared for negative reactions to the tax. However, the community leaders must take an aggressive approach and raise funds in order to start and complete beautification projects. If you already have the 6 penny tax, leverage the funds for beautification efforts and other community projects. Taking this approach means there is community involvement and it will lead to community pride.

Recommendation: Consider an annual clean-up day. Youth and adults can participate in the general clean-up of lots. I noticed in taking a tour through the school that the students are very artistic. Pavillion had an annual clean-up day in which the youth participated by cleaning lots and painting garbage cans with artwork. The garbage cans are placed across the community and are a part of their beautification efforts.

Recommendation/Contact: I am uncertain as to what is established in city ordinances in regard to responsibilities of property owners but I suggest the city start issuing fines to the owners for not taking care of their property. The City of Cheyenne will post a notice to property owners in regard to weeds and will give them 5 working days to take care of the lot. If the property owner does is unresponsive, the city has an independent contractor remove the weeds or mow the lawn. The contractor sends a bill to the city. The city then bills the property owner and adds a 50% administration fee. If the property owner does not pay the bill and the administration fee, the city turns them into a collection agency.

If the property owner has junk cars in the yard, the city will post a notice and give the property owner 5 working days to remove the vehicles. If the property owner does not remove the vehicles the city takes the landowner to court and has an independent contractor tow the vehicles. I am told this method has worked very well for the City of Cheyenne. For further information contact:

Jerry Hayes
Code Enforcement Officer
City of Cheyenne
2101 O'Neil Ave., Room 309
Cheyenne, WY. 82001
307-637-6477
jhayes@cheynnecity.org

RECREATION AND TOURISM

Challenge: The community would like to utilize the golf course and motor cross track. They would then like to advertise what facilities they have to offer in the community to entice people to stop and use the golf course and motor cross track.

Contact/Solution: Contact the Wyoming Business Council to see if they can assist the community in the tourism area. For more information contact:

Chuck Coon
Wyoming Business Council
Travel and Tourism
214 West 15th Street
Cheyenne, WY. 82002
307-777-2842
ccoone@state.wy.us

Wayne Jipsen
USDA
521 West Cedar Street
Rawlins, WY 82301
(307) 324-2424
wayne.jipsen@wy.usda.gov

I would like to start out by thanking the many Midwest and Edgerton community members that participated in the planning and execution of this Community Assessment. The quality of my experience during our April visit was greatly enhanced by the wonderful meals and accommodations provided and by a myriad of other "little things" throughout the visit. I look forward to working with the communities as the assessment process moves forward and as the implementation phase begins.

Challenge and/or Opportunity: Recreational Master Planning

The area is blessed with many wonderful recreational opportunities. A partial list of these opportunities, as identified in the listening sessions, includes: golf course, rodeo arena, motorcross track, shooting range, ball park, cooling pond, hunting, and fishing. With such an abundance of facilities comes the twin challenges of operations and maintenance (O&M). The infrastructure associated with each type of recreational opportunity requires proper maintenance for both safety and ascetic reasons. This type of maintenance typically requires a mixture of financial and human resources.

Organized recreational events can be a financial boon to the area, providing increased sales at motels, restaurants, gas stations, and convenience stores. However, operating these areas and conducting organized events typically requires a large input of human labor, spread out over the planning and implementation phases of each event.

Operating these facilities for the sole use of the local community would still require the commitment of financial and human resources but would not provide the added benefit of increased business for the local merchants.

Recommendation: While I will later enumerate a number of possible outside resources available for individual recreational projects and facilities, I think it would be a mistake to pursue any of these without first undertaking a serious Recreational Master Planning effort. Although there are many wonderful opportunities, most of them are currently in need of development, repair and/or renovation in order to be useable. Each will require a commitment of both short-term and long-term resources (financial resources, human resources, and/or natural resources). Utilizing a formal planning process, the communities will be able to identify and quantify these required resource commitments. Weighing

this information against the potential benefits of each facility, the communities can then better prioritize a list of projects.

One of the main challenges that small communities face is that getting money to build or restore something is only the beginning. Without proper planning and commitment for O&M, the new facilities will quickly become a burden to the community coffers or become run-down. In the latter case, they will then have quite the opposite effect upon the community that was anticipated.

As a member of the Historic Trails Resource Conservation and Development Area Council, the communities could request technical assistance to undertake this master planning process. As coordinator for this council, I could be available to facilitate planning sessions and to assist with the plan's development.

Wayne Jipsen, Coordinator
Historic Trails RC&D Area
PO Box 953
Rawlins, WY 82301
Phone: (307) 324-2424
FAX: (307) 324-8806
Email: wayne.jipsen@wy.usda.gov

General note for all recreation related projects: Once individual projects have been identified and planned the communities will inevitably face funding challenges. It is important to keep in mind that besides the typical governmental funding sources usually pursued, each individual sport has its own unique set of equipment companies with vested interests in the field. For instance: shooting range = gun and ammunition manufacturers & skate park = skate board and helmet manufacturers. Some of these corporations have grant programs, technical assistance programs, and/or equipment donation programs that may be accessed to assist with project implementation.

Challenge and/or Opportunity: Skate Park

The development of a skate park was identified during the youth listening session as one of the projects they would like to see undertaken by the community.

Recommendation: This is one specific opportunity that has been identified in many recent community assessments and which has been addressed successfully in a number of Wyoming communities. When designing a facility such as this, it is always best to involve the potential users involved from the beginning. After all, who knows better what is desired and what will be utilized. The three main things to consider when constructing this type of facility are construction cost; maintenance requirements; and insurance. One way to get an idea of these costs and concerns is to discuss the matter with those city officials that have recently undertaken the challenge.

Contact Information:
Evanston Parks and Recreation
275 Saddle Ridge Road
Evanston, WY 82930
307-789-1770

City of Sheridan
Richard Wright, Parks and Recreation Director
55 East Grinnell
PO Box 848
Sheridan, WY 82801
Phone: (307) 674-6483

Town of Wheatland
Jim Kahler, Parks and Recreation Director
600 9th Street
Wheatland, WY 82201
Phone: (307) 322-2962

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

Tony Hawk Foundation (Grant monies available for assistance with developing skate parks)
31878 Del Obispo, Ste. 118-602
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
Contact: Steve Hawk, Secy.- Treas.
www.tonyhawkfoundation.org

For more information on skate board parks and links to designers and builders:
www.skateboardparks.com

Challenge and/or Opportunity: Shooting Range

Historically, the communities have had a shooting range on land belonging to the Bureau of Land Management just north of Edgerton. This facility is currently in need of renovation.

Recommendation: For the most part, shooting ranges across the country are funded through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Federal Aid Program, specifically, the Hunter Education and Safety Program. The money for this program is derived from the national excise taxes imposed on the sales of firearms, ammunition, and archery equipment. This money in turn is provided to the states, through their fish and wildlife management agencies, to administer. The existing range is currently listed on the Wyoming Game and Fish's list of facilities. Therefore they know of its existence and should be willing to discuss renovation needs.

Contact Information: The best place to start in discussing renovations to the existing facilities and possible funding assistance would be:

Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Casper Regional Office
3030 Energy Lane, Suite 100

Casper, Wyoming 82604
(307) 473-3400

Or:

Wyoming Game & Fish Department Headquarters
5400 Bishop Blvd.
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82006
(307) 777-4600

Challenge and/or Opportunity: Cooling Pond

The topic of the "Cooling Pond" came up in many of the listening sessions and in many different contexts. It is considered an underused recreation site, an untapped economic development opportunity; and an underutilized natural resource. A quick tour of the site confirms all of these views.

Recommendation: Once again, my main recommendation related to this facility deals with planning. Development of an underutilized facility like this needs to be carefully planned so that all potential uses (current, short-term, and future) are considered. In that way the development can be phased as needs and resources allow and something accomplished early in the process will not hinder future uses.

To enhance fundability of many of the enhancements I would encourage a holistic approach to identifying potential uses. It is quite obvious that a few trees and picnic tables would improve the area's recreation potential. It may be less obvious that with a little development the entire area could be used as an outdoor classroom for local school children. This would provide an ideal wetlands and riparian training classroom. This possibility opens up an entirely different funding door. Divers for training currently utilize the warm water pond. This opens another potential funding door. Several hunting, fishing, and conservation organizations currently exist that provide financial assistance for projects related to their individual areas of interest. These might provide yet other partnership opportunities.

The Historic Trails Resource Conservation and Development Area has already accepted the cooling pond as a technical assistance project. When the town is ready to actively pursue a planning process, I will be happy to facilitate and/or assist in the endeavor. As individual projects are then identified and prioritized I will be happy to help in locating potential funding sources.

Contact Information:

Wayne Jipsen, Coordinator
Historic Trails RC&D Area
PO Box 953
Rawlins, WY 82301
Phone: (307) 324-2424
FAX: (307) 324-8806
Email: wayne.jipsen@wy.usda.gov

Challenge and/or Opportunity: Community Beautification

The desire for a cleaner community was expressed many times and in many ways during the listening sessions. Areas of public concern included: vacant lots; lack of trees and grass; "junk" in yards and along streets; and in the industrial areas of the two communities. On the surface, clean-up campaigns appear to be a relatively simple endeavor with potential for quick fixes to the problem. However, the

twin issues of personal property rights and "one person's trash is another person's treasure" frequently team up and either slow the progress of clean-up efforts or prevent them from even being initiated.

Recommendation: This challenge is generally best addressed through a phasing process. It is frequently best to begin with the public areas that everyone can agree need cleaned up. As the town begins to look nicer following community clean-up days and a more concerted effort to keep the public areas clean, then some of the residents will begin to clean their properties also. As the contagion spreads, peer pressure begins to build and influence individuals. The final phase of the process, if necessary, is to develop, implement and enforce town ordinances relating to the issue. Although this phase has the potential to be very contentious within a community and is not recommended as a first step, only the community in question can determine the final direction and extent of a beautification program.

Contact Information: The City of Rawlins had many of the same issues identified during its Community Assessment process in September 2001. In response to this challenge the City has worked hard to clean up its properties and to develop and implement appropriate ordinances for the storage and removal of "junk" or unused vehicles, the removal of unsafe structures, etc. Although this process takes time, the city is slowly but steadily beginning to gain control of the issue. The city manager has agreed to share lessons learned with the towns of Edgerton and Midwest if they are interested.

City of Rawlins
Dave Derragon, City Manager
521 West Cedar Street
PO Box 953
Rawlins, WY 82301
Phone: (307) 328-4500

Challenge and/or Opportunity: "Nothing for the youth to do"

This was a topic identified by many in the community from all generations. Since there are few local businesses, there are few opportunities for youth to get a job. And with most parents living in the area either working in the oil fields or in Casper, there are very limited opportunities for the youth to work with their parents. This hinders their ability to make money and to learn a good work ethic.

Recommendation: Although on the surface these circumstances may appear very different than those faced by inner city youth, in reality they are very similar. And one possible solution may come from emulating successful programs from that environment. One program that I am very familiar with deals with integrated horticultural and "urban agriculture" projects. In the case of Edgerton - Midwest a similar project could be established that would provide a wide range of benefits to the youth who chose to be involved and to the greater community as a whole.

A typical project of this sort can combine a few financial resources and disciplines to produce a broad array of outcomes. One scenario would be to build a hoop greenhouse in which to establish a garden, a worm culturing area, and a simple but effective fish rearing facility. The produce from the garden could be used at by the families of the youths involved; it could be sold through the local grocery store or a farmer's market; or it could even be contracted to and utilized through the local school lunch program. Excess organic matter from the garden can be processed through the worm farm to produce valuable worm castings. These castings could then be introduced back into the garden soil to increase productivity; used to improve the soils of home gardens; and/or bagged and sold. Worms could also be

harvested and possibly sold. The fish can easily be utilized on the students' home tables. With additional research and harvesting considerations, they could possibly be utilized in the school cafeteria, the senior center cafeteria, or local restaurants.

Additional opportunities for consideration in such a project include:

organic gardening

hydroponics

business plan development

a wide range of construction experience available as the facility is built and expanded

sales and marketing experience

Any group of individuals could undertake a project of this sort.

Contact Information: I have personal experience with this type of project as well as some publications and website addresses. For further information, please contact:

Wayne Jipsen, Coordinator
Historic Trails RC&D Area
PO Box 953
Rawlins, WY 82301
Phone: (307) 324-2424
FAX: (307) 324-8806
Email: wayne.jipsen@wy.usda.gov

Challenge and/or Opportunity: Limited Financial Resources

The listening sessions identified a great many specific projects which the community is interested in pursuing. They also identified a perceived lack of human and financial resources to accomplish many of the potential projects.

Recommendation: There are many sources of funding available for most of the proposed projects. The real challenges are to:

Thoroughly plan and develop these project proposals

Turn these proposals into appropriate grant application packages

And finally, to connect the funders with the communities

One way to address this challenge is to develop a cadre of well-trained grant writers. The expenses associated with developing grant writing expertise is frequently recouped many times over through the successful funding of community projects by the grant writers. The Western Wyoming Resource Conservation and Development Council hosts an in-depth 4-day grant writing workshop each year that covers these challenges.

Contact Information:

Western Wyoming Resource Conservation and Development Area

Kurt Heaton, Coordinator

1471 Dewar Drive, Suite 106

Rock Springs, WY 82901-5851

Phone: (307) 382-3982 Email: kirk.heaton@wy.usda.gov

WHAT WAS SAID IN THE INTERVIEWS

The five-member Resource Team spent April 14-16 interviewing the local residents to hear what they had to say. Those being interviewed were directed to answer three questions:

What are the major problems and challenges in your community?

What are the major strengths and assets in your community?

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

We have listed below, without comment, what we heard from those who volunteered to be interviewed.

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

People: we need more instead of running them out of town

Need more places for people to stay

Need restaurants here or pizza places.

None.

No money here, no jobs.

Town has shrunk, oil fields shrunk.

Welfare community instead of what we used to have.

Taking up more vacant spots, filling houses, getting people to live here.

Reverse bedroom community – people live elsewhere, come to work here – bigger process than a council meeting to fix.

Businesses here get employees to live here rather than elsewhere.

Lack of pride.

Lack of community involvement.

Community involvement is a problem.

We've got a lot of volunteers as far as EMT, would be a benefit to community to have a registered nurse here.

Lot of jobs here but so many people that work here drive from Casper out here, convoy coming out every morning.

Way to get people to move here and to decide to live here.

Oil field industry – was a major business – has shrunk quite a bit in last few years.

Different businesses to attract some of the people.

Get people who care where they live and what kind of community they live in, or community pride or involvement won't change much.

When Amoco had big celebration, their goal was to deplete the oil in the field which is still our goal, one of our big problems: when they are gone, how will we survive?

Just moved here a few months ago, outsider looking in. First impressions of the town: cows gotta go.

Not acceptable to have cow crap in the yard and streets. Cattle guards or fencing.

Some of the empty lots – we need to make the owners responsible for cleaning up those lots, cutting weeds, getting rid of cow piles. This is a very poor community, maybe a lot of houses are rentals, still some owner responsibility to at least throw a few gallons of paint on it.

Take a little pride. It starts with each individual.

Volunteers are lacking. I'm willing to do some volunteer work to make it a better community. I bought a home here. I plan on staying here. Work at oil patch. Convenient for my family and myself not to fight the commute in Casper. It paid off this winter.

Town is really dilapidated. 50 years old, nobody has done things with it. Need community to come together.

Lack of employment for high school kids.

Lack of community involvement, volunteering, being involved in community – we have no place to go to be together. Nothing short of bars or bowling alleys to hold something as simple as a 5-year old birthday party. No common meeting grounds.

Everybody said basically what I had to say.

No employment for teenagers, huge one I never thought about because I don't have kids. Ton of kids running around, can't work, no opportunity at all.

The only place for kids to work in the summer - with the towns but there are restrictions. Are no jobs or are underage. Better self esteem or work habit. This has turned into a welfare town; people get by without work, not a good view for kids to see.

Where would we have a place to set up businesses to create jobs?; need a central area like a downtown.

Most businesses are in people's homes. Restaurant, ice cream parlor.

Very large lack of activity – rec center – what on earth are they going to be doing at 8 p.m.?; 8 p.m. - midnight is when it is open. Lack of activities.

Lack of people (x 3)

Too few girls.

Too many cows.

Not enough places to work. Rec center – little kids go there and are always on all the games. Older kids – nothing for us to do. 7th grade should be the limit.

Lack of interest. When people come here, nothing to make people stay.

Nothing for kids to do other than rec center.

When we do something – cops are always behind us making sure we don't do anything wrong even when we're not doing anything wrong. Adults do things every day that are against the law but don't get caught. If we want to drive around the oil field, we get in trouble.

Too many people are on welfare that come here because the housing is cheap.

Pizza Hut won't deliver.

Town is dirty.

Little kids.

Little kids running in the road, not watching where they are going, mother almost hit a kid.

Good fairies, tooth fairies and welfaries.

Lack of community, nobody cares.

Town could be cleaned up a little better. Cow manure everywhere, people's yards, street, everywhere.

New ordinance about 3 animal limits – I have a problem with that.

Get rid of curfew 10pm weeknights, 12midnight on weekends.

No one will take responsibility for Gas Plant Road – potholes and fixing it up.

Lack of support for this school from the school system. We have a pool with a leak. If that happened at NC, it would be fixed in a week. We will probably have to wait for a year. The pool won't be open for the summer. They think that no kids will come over the summer so they won't fix it.

Fix up the golf course and softball field – make it look better.

Anything that can be done for the museum.

Anything that can be done to the community – they can call me and I'll do anything I can do.

Our community would be a real joy if we could figure out some way to get ahold of the owners of the old houses, tear them down, and clean up the town.

Our youth need more to do – absolutely nothing here.

Small business of some kind – clothing store, hardware, general mercantile – there isn't any other town in the world out there where there is nothing. Comes from Kaycee – medical, store, mercantile, only 200 people.

Concerned about the bridge going to Gas Plant getting kind of dangerous – kids going to school in the Midwest.

Agree about the bridge and road to Gas Plant needs to be fixed.

Do something about housing.

The kids definitely do need something to do besides standing over here smoking, drinking, whatever.

They already said my thoughts – be a good town to be a small town, not try to be a big town.

I'm pushing toward more activities in the senior center, getting more involvement there.

Our little town needs more cleanup and more pride taken in our property – I don't know what the answer is but hopefully we can find out.

Lack of participation by community members is one of our biggest weaknesses.

Amen.

I agree with everybody. Our problems are large and small in our communities – everything they've said, everything last night that was said. One major problem – there isn't any.

Living out here, there is no transportation to town, if you don't have a vehicle. Some people have 2-3 people and keep 1 running – gives an excess of vehicles.

Some vehicles for sale – no place to put up that it is for sale.

I like our community because it is small but because it is small it is a problem. Too much bickering – people picking on each other. The support thing. People getting along better, support each other.

We had a clinic, didn't support it, people didn't pay the bills and we lost it.

Economic opportunity is necessary.

Infrastructure and resources.

Activities for both the older and younger people.

Wondering about the trees cut some of them down or trim them.

I have a problem with the snow removal – I know that they don't have much anyplace to put it but they pile it right in front of the curb in front of your car, can't get out. Some of us can't shovel. You do get it shoveled and it piles back up again. Don't shovel post office and cross walk.

Senior center – need more people. Tried everything we know to bring them in. Can't drag them out of their house and tell them to come and eat. Don't know how to solve that problem.

We could write you a page of all the problems but we don't have time. I could sit here and go on and we don't have time to type it all. If I could come up with something else you don't already know, I'll write it down and give it to you.

Could use a branch bank – have to go to town to cash checks – so they buy their gas and go shopping there. People go mostly to Casper but also Buffalo, Sheridan, Gillette, Rapid.

Snow removal – Edgerton – one guy to keep plowing the street. They had the street cleared out and the snow plow comes back and plows it back to his house. Needs to be cleared out – he's an older gentleman, doesn't need to be shoveling.

I own a small business and need a curb cut into my lower property – not a big deal but have to come through a bank building to come into my property.

I think we need more resources out here – we need a medical clinic, we need a bank, I think we need these things. We need more businesses, we need better housing. We're a small community and we don't want to get bigger. I think resources is the major problem – so we don't have to go to Casper.

Only been her two years – postmaster – the one thing I see in Edgerton and here that is a problem is it seems to me that we have a lack of resources for our younger people, both teenagers and younger kids.

We have a lot of sports oriented programs through the school year but not so much during the off times of school. I see a real need for some community involvement for children and youth.

I have no idea. I'm from Casper. I'm pastor working with World Changers. Hear from community if there are things we can do as neighbors to help.

Unification of community and the town

Community 8 years – I want to be able to give my input. I'm a part time musician and if there are any young people interested in piano, guitar, brass (trumpet and trombone) I'm willing to help – providing lessons at low cost or no cost for students.

We need to clean the town up.

Lack of pride and facilities that animals are in.

More community involvement in different organizations.

I'd like to see improved – the conditions of the homes. Being former mayor, helped bring World Changers out here. We have vacant lots that nice housing can be put on. Community pride, just keeping up the appearances of the homes. We have a lot of rentals. Not a lot of community pride in homes and yards.

Agree with most people. Community involvement is a big thing. Trying to get kids more involved in things, in more of our Spook Houses, Easter Egg Hunts, starting younger and getting kids to learn responsibility of donating your time.

The need for some community cleanup – in Edgerton in particular. Some pride in what we have.

I'd like to see more than the Council get involved in the community and the new positions we do have.

I just have to agree with everybody else.

What are we going to do after the oil runs out? It is the main business here.

Internet services – we do have it but it could be improved

We have a lack of people – our population is extremely low.

Lack of business which is why we have a lack of people – lack of employment opportunities.

Lack of jobs and there is a huge small town mentality out here. That this is all there is and that's okay.

We have a big lack of involvement on every level.

Poverty is an issue – issues dealing around poverty.

Involvement thing – the same people are doing everything. Not enough of us to go around.

I live in Casper but used to live in Midwest – had to leave because of lack of housing.

Transient population.

I have to second that poverty is an issue, a challenge that we face. This is my first year here but the school and community connection is not very connection – more between community and the school.

Land for expansion – BLM or federal land. If you can go to Gillette and work in the coal mine with a ranchette of 5-6 acres.

Fence-city mentality – allow someone to do all the work and very fast to criticize and not getting involved.

Company mentality – the company will always take care of us. Whether company is here or gone.

Recreational opportunities and the environment is not pretty. It's not an aesthetic place to look at.

Agree with both the poverty and the aesthetic.

I agree that poverty is a big issue. Only a few people in the community trying advance the community and make things better, not a lot of support.

The location – we're out here interstate is nearby but we are off the interstate so there is no business.

Located near a major retail center – hard for businesses to compete with Casper.

Healthcare – no healthcare out here for people. 40 miles from any healthcare.

FFA students – lack of activities for times out of school for the kids.

Fix the streets

More corrals and a water system to the corrals.

When I first moved here, I was concerned about the poverty level – never heard what oil fields had – the environmental issue was a concern for me.

There is the attitude of a closed mind – they don't want to move forward. "In the past we did..." We have a hard time looking forward.

The lack of cohesiveness between the community and the school – lack of support from the community for the school.

We're like the low end of the totem pole, times of the year herds of cattle wander through the town and up and down the streets. That is a real prevalent attitude. Hard to gain community support or spirit for anything going on.

Sometimes the school feels like there is a lack of school support. Community thinks that you've got the majority of people that work for school – making over \$20,000 and they all come from Casper. These people give a lot of time for our school but none of these people come back to the school to do Little League or teach tumbling class.

Lack of professional-style jobs.

Perception from a lot of the families in town that education is not as important as we as teachers would like it to be. Most families do not send their students to school with the idea that they need to do well in school. Several other options in life where you don't have to have an education and do just find.

Work in the oil patch. Several students have two parents who aren't working and they get the perception that they don't need to work.

I think the population is pretty mobile and transient and that is probably because of the job issues, they don't stay very long. There is a core group of people who stay here, but people who move in and out and then are gone.

I think it is even deeper – because of the poverty level, we have people who are in and out for a variety of reasons. Some are just hiding out. That is the cycle of poverty.

Our school has been "threatened" to be closed every year, talking of closing down. We used to have a high percentage of turnover with teachers. If you look at our building, playground, workshed – not the most attractive. Some landscaping, something brighter and newer might help others help improve the community as far as beautification.

I would like to know what opportunities are available for people outside the school who can help participate in tutoring. I can offer music lessons – personal, private music lessons. Get them doing something would really make an improvement.

Our teachers and health employees and don't have much to do with the community – we have a problem with people who live out here who don't get involved. We just lack that. Lack of people donating time.

I lived out here for 15 years – in 15 years I was never invited to any community member's home ever. The community don't get involved with the teachers who live in the community.

I've never felt that Midwest or Edgerton community is lack for good ideas – but every good idea is "how much is that going to cost us" and "you do it."

I lived out here for 8 years – we'd invite a lot of people to our house but it was not reciprocal other than the other teachers. I actually drove up and down the streets – I've been in 3 houses that were not teacher houses and two of those were tutoring.

I've heard that they don't get invited into houses – I've lived here all of my life and I haven't been invited to dinner. We're in a different community – difference between the ag people and how they do things and the oil people. They take it as a criticism, that is just the way this community is. I don't think it is anything personal.

Going to Salt Creek Days and people ignore you because you are not from Midwest. There is that separation – this is the school, this is the oil field, and everyone else.

Teacher housing might cause separation. Already segregated before they even start.

A resource center for jobs and for writing a resume, finding a job, employment center – lack of a place to get information to really have someone work with you to figure out solutions to problems that you have for every day living here.

There is potential in the next couple of years for high growth here – and that is something that should be thought about.

One of the things we need to focus on is supporting our businesses right here in town instead of going to Casper – Edgerton grocery, Chapman contracting, Junction convenience store, branch library.

Cattle running through town tearing up my personal property. We already had one incident a child got stomped. My children were chased by a herd of cattle behind my house. This is supposed to be a residential area. There's not a fence around here to keep the cattle out. Do I charge this guy for his cattle coming in, tearing up my yard, eating up the grass?

Most cities when they have snow buildup – they try to push it out of the way instead of blocking you in. But building up piles where you can't see around the corners. Push it to the end of town.

Our population is slowly dying off here. Get more jobs around here to bring in more population, get school enrollment up.

We need to have some way to help communities show pride. One time it was a wonderful place. How can you have people come here if you're not?

We need to rejuvenate the youth here – I don't expect them to stay. They would need a reason at least to work. It would take older people like us to show them how to do it. The only thing that holds them back is that there is no one here anymore.

Money. Without that, community dies. If we lose this school, this town is done.

Supporting your local businesses, keeping business local.

I think jobs are important for this community.

I think one of the challenges that has been brought up several times – how do we attract businesses to our community – get them here and keep them here.

Housing – no keeping people in the area if there is no housing for them.

More jobs and more employment.

More long term jobs for people – this is such a boom and bust town. Maybe some people can work out on the oil field but in five years, who knows. Nice to see a permanent business brought in but not \$6 an hour but real-wage jobs that would attract our kids and get people who are here now to stay and retire in the community. You've got a few die-hards that will stay but most people don't hold that hope when they can't afford to buy groceries. Not boom and bust like oil field and coal mines. Denver Technical Center is a huge Mecca of offices and people working on computers all day long. Processing data entry as an example. Information technology.

New housing. The last new housing in either communities was built in the early 80s, some modulars.

Money to buy the houses.

Jobs – if they start taking people that don't understand something, want to learn, give them a chance to learn to get a job.

Sidewalk to connect the towns – a bike route. Something really nice and scenic.

Millions of acres of oil fields – use some of it.

We need a mechanic shop around here so people don't have to drive to Casper or Kaycee to get their vehicles worked on.

We need to address more feasible improvements around town – I realize cows are a problem, instead of fencing off the town, focus on something closer to home. Cleaning up some areas in town, opening more businesses, provide better jobs. Then focus on something that would cost more money.

Housing – when you rent a house for \$200 a month, what kind of quality person will you attract in?

Landowners – get them interested in renovating. World Changers but cannot contract for deed. See some sort of support for increase property value and collectively raise that around.

Ditto on what everyone is saying, housing, businesses.

Small business owner – one man shop – sometimes things don't get done in the area that you'd like to but we need a little leeway to run a business without too many stringent rules and regulations.

Ditto.

Just what people are saying?

I've got a concern with the school system. 90% of the people that work at the school right now are contract. Most of our teachers come out of Casper. They've extended the school year up to June 10th because of snow days. I believe that those people could lease houses for \$75/month and if those people teach here, they ought to live here. When they sign their contracts with the school system, should be obligated to stay here for 2-3 years.

My wife is going to college to teach and wants to teach up here but with problems. Nothing is done – to have a teacher belittle my child, called an asshole in school – I take that as a very personal issue. My wife's a member of the student school board – nothing is being addressed. Disrespect.

Housing being low income – in former years, welfare office in Casper was sending people out to our area, percentage of welfare is increasing.

An apartment building would attract people.

If you want to learn a trade, you own your own house and garage – can't hang a sign and make a living.

I wanted to start a business in my place – can't because of ordinance. Make money in community, keep in the community.

I own some apartment complexes in Edgerton – the people when they come out here – business as well as employees. There is no money for them which is why the rent is low and no one will put money into it because they are working from day to day.

Lack of money, poverty.

No facilities for kids to play in Edgerton.

Lack of things for teenagers to do in Edgerton.

Whole community needing to work together.

Ditto – lot of community things we have going same people doing the same things getting stretched so thin hard to get other people involved sometime somebody's going to burn out.

Cattle in the town.

All of the trash on the road to the dump.

Lack of jobs for students and adults.

Lot of community is transient, don't stay here being in the oil business – same core people end up doing most of the work.

More organized recreational thing for the kids.

Ditto on the cow thing.

Disheartening to see junk and people's lack of respect for their own property.

Lot of the ranch community people aren't known, need to get to know each other better.

Arena is unused – why not use it? Same three people organized horse shows every year and we got tired of it, so now we don't have a horse show anymore.

Housing is really cheap out here so we draw a lot of transients and lower income people and it seems like they rent, too, they don't own so consequently they don't have a lot of respect for their property, don't take care of it.

We don't have anything to attract people to move to this area. There's old parked cars everywhere and junk.

I work at the school and I've had people that have come in and register new students and have said it's on the internet that Midwest is the place to go if you're on welfare or unemployment to hide out – you're so far out of town you don't have to go in, legally, and look for work.

One of the major recreations around here is traveling the country for everybody in town and out a lot of driving around should be some way of marking boundaries of where people can and can't go causes friction because there's no boundaries.

Age of emergency equipment – quality might still be there but it is aging and is expensive.

Communications is a problem – sometimes it is internal out here because of the radio, sometimes it is dispatched from Casper. Sometimes sent to wrong location is a problem.

Numbers – every volunteer service, all the same people do things. Too few people, they burn out; somehow need to recruit more help for emergency people.

Need a local disaster plan. Natrona County has one. But nothing centralized out here for the community.

One of the major challenges I see, the youth of Midwest is sometimes challenged in things to do.

That's a problem. Equipment, getting people to help out. Another problem is the low income housing, the lack of jobs and the type of people who move out here for low income housing.

Community support – challenge for law enforcement. Just in helping us out to do our jobs.

Financing – being able to find money to replace or update old equipment. They still end up looking for grants; all equipment has to be replaced.

Some of the electrical problems in buildings coming up, all houses and buildings were built at the same time, we know what to expect. Fire hazards.

Disaster plan – we do need a disaster plan, talking about it in Edgerton for last 3 or 4 months.

We have really old fire trucks, when it comes to us looking for population. We also assist Natrona County. Midwest truck in worse shape than Edgerton truck.

Reiterate need for a new facility.

Ambulance services – you can't find your way around towns. No pride in houses, people don't mark them, trying to find an address, they all look alike.

Make a point to get more deputies into the northern part of the county – Midwest/Edgerton area – who are more familiar with geographical locations in the neighborhood.

Fire trucks – we were out fighting a fire and one truck overheated and shut down. It was 5 below and it overheated.

The response time when Gary and Mickey are not around is a problem because you've got kids tearing around in a vehicle at 10:45 at night, if you call SO, they will always send someone out but by the time they get here, the kids are gone.

Reluctance of people to volunteer. Often we ask if we can use the help – we say yes – and the people don't show up again. There are certain criteria and a lot of people don't want to put forth the effort to be trained. And it's not as if we can't use them. People think if you can't physically do it, we don't need you.

Training – towns and Midwest and Edgerton fund it - they do need more people but we don't have the money to cover the training to be EMTs to be firefighters – we don't have the money to train them. Edgerton does not have the financial base to hire any kind of law enforcement, fall back on Gary (town employee of Midwest) and on Mickey and they do well but if we had our own law enforcement of some sort, it would make things easier.

Money.

The school.

Adequate housing. An emergency services person gave the comment: "I don't want to raise my kids in a dump."

Small number of non-committed volunteers/personnel.

Financial status of towns.

Age of equipment; quality of equipment.

Communications problems.

Willingness of people to volunteer – reluctance.

Age of buildings and properties – impending doom.

Growth.

New housing.

New business.

Low income families and low property values.
Low self esteem and people caring about their property.
Nothing for kids to do.
Cops.
Trying to complete with big town.
Cleaning up yards. Not what people make a living from.
Clean up houses no longer livable in.
Need street lights replaced when they go out on streets or alleys.
Mayor trying to put in laws that is not there or other things.
Having too many cars on each property.
Having loud pipes or music in cars or pickups.
We also need the telephone wires fixed where cell phones and fax machines do not interfere with private lines.
Good housing for people.
Need curb cut into property at JR Sales lower lot.
Need grant money to build shop.
New businesses needed – will probably help getting ground to build on.
In my Salt Creek Museum, I need a ceiling fixed in foyer.
Getting people together to actually work on a project, to get it carried through.
Lack of communication.
Trees need trimmed
Snow situation – need to plow past office. Cross walks need not plow so people can't get cars out.
Bridge and road to gas plant.
No doctor.
No tire repair.
No mechanic.
Upgrade store.
Possible auto parts store.
We have nothing to enjoy after work and weekends.
For me, working at the Senior Center, I would like to see a better turn out. There are many seniors that need our help but won't participate.
Better informed.
The price of water.
Cooling pond water.
Junk houses – some kind of time limit for removal.
Hardware or dry goods store.
Getting people to help with the various organizations.
Plus all the citizens need to make our community more attractive and clean their yards.
Lack of activities for youngsters out of school.
Fix streets.
More corrals.
Water system to corrals.
Community pride.
People who work here live in Casper.
There are a lot of workers here who are not community.
No cohesiveness – no sense of supporting others.
Sense of apathy.
There is an overwhelming attitude about “what is in it for me”.
People are not willing to grasp change.

Grudges – people are not accepting of something if it is presented by someone remotely acquainted with someone they ever had a grievance with.

I have trailer lots (a trailer park) and there is only 1 meter to supply water to all of the lots. I am told that I will be charged the base fee (\$55.80 or higher now) per trailer on the lots, but I will not be allowed the usage (is it 18,000 gallons?) per trailer. They would allow only one gallon usage because I have only one meter. So why should I encourage growth? It will take all of my rent income just to pay the water.

STRENGTHS AND ASSETS

Potential growth in oil business, don't see a whole lot of major strengths.

The amount of people we do have who volunteer their time and livelihood to the community. Other than that, no strengths.

A lot of history in the area, could be capitalized. A lot of people come through the area but getting them to stop.

School is a very major strength. After we found our home, we saw some potential then we went to the school. Was impressed enough and our daughter has done great.

Only real strength our community has – schools.

Untapped assets – parks and recreation land setting around Edgerton – an asset but not being utilized. BLM land. Golf course, ball park, shooting range, motocross – all has good potential but not enough people interested in maintaining it.

The school.

This is a fantastic place to raise kids. Don't have a high crime area. Minor vandalism. Everyone looks out for everyone's kids. A huge asset. Attracts people to move here.

School, major strength.

School is one of the major assets – not only do they educate the students, open swim sessions, acted as a community center for meetings and stuff of that nature. I attended EMT training at night over period of 3-4 months. School is a major asset to this community.

I agree with the school. It is an asset to the community.

Also, I think there are a lot of jobs here – that is probably an asset. There could be more, with some development.

The open area around Midwest – BLM, Parks and Rec – that is probably an asset.

They have very strong volunteers – medical, fire.

Parks and Rec land over by Edgerton – not even utilized anymore by anyone. Used to have motocross and rodeos. The will is not here – everybody is pretty much tapped out.

The selected group that volunteers is very strong – keeps things growing and functioning as well as we can. We are getting tired.

Everybody in this room – those who chose to attend – that's the family. This is what Midwest is raised on since I moved here 17 years ago. The core is here. The strength is the togetherness, cohesiveness.

The open areas – we do have an asset in Edgerton – the cost of rehabbing, manning, staffing, maintaining – have wonderful facilities, need to capitalize. Need to bring business in or recreation in.

We do have a Rec Center – a lot of towns our size don't even have one. Do a pretty good job as a place for kids to go. Rent it for birthday parties. We could use more stuff for kids to do but do have that as an asset.

Gym is open twice a week for recreation – keeps a lot of the kids out of trouble.

We have a really nice park out here – good basketball courts, tennis courts need work. Good playground equipment at school.

In the process of being developed – a fish pond – industry, BLM, Game and Fish. Should be open soon.

Huge oil field which might attract some people in the next few years – start looking at getting some other services. Based in a real central area behind Casper and Gillette – methane and coal mines. Cheap place to put up a shop for something.

The property prices – I moved from Powell, I got twice the house for half the cost. It's incredible. You can buy a home here for a third of what it would be in Casper. That's huge in today's market. When your truck payment is more than your house payment, that's pretty big.

Group of people that know each other and talk to each other are really close and welcoming of people. There are 30 places I could stay.

The school – small class size, small community – you can go to town meetings.

Walk outside of town and go shooting.

The park.

I like the size of the towns – that's why I lived here. Because it is small, somewhat relaxed, we don't have to try to be like some big city town. I think that most people that live here, we live here because of being a smaller town, you know most everybody – good or bad.

I agree with him – that's why we live here. We like it because it is relaxed and small and you don't have to keep up with the neighbors.

There's a multitude a strengths here – as an outsider I see it. The commitment of the people. The history of the oil industry. This is a unique community and that is certainly marketable.

The location – I could argue either way on that – it is a unique location. We have Yellowstone traffic within 30 miles.

The people in the community is one of our strongest strengths. Elderly lady – home burnt down – you wouldn't believe how many people helped out.

Our school, our kids, we have a golf course, ball field, cooling pond with bass in there, hot water well we need to utilize, our senior center, our bowling alley, our rodeo ground and our race car track, gun club and motorcycle track that could bring in a lot of people and tourism, they're not available and not open.

Our people because even those who do not involve themselves have something to give back to the communities if we could just figure out how to get them involved. They do care – we need to get them pointed in the right direction.

Our people, town government, our volunteers.

I agree with most of what they said. I'm here because it's home. I love it here. I've lived here for 30 years. The people are great. We do have things that aren't in use which is too bad its not.

I go along with everything they've said.

I have been here for 70 years – people are walking angels, without the people who are here. The people who come in the museum – I've had 100 people will come in and do whatever I want. It is a loving community. I have children who come in. You would guess living here 70 years how much it means to me. I will help wherever I can. Talk, talk, talk. I can't physically do everything but I want to help.

People are great around here. We do have a lot of things. We could have a greenhouse out here with the hot water valve that would probably raise some of the finest vegetables year round. All kinds of good things about the community. Some of us don't have enough energy to keep up.

Can't add any more – we like it here.

EMT and fire department, fight for life that comes in here.

Good Salt Creek Rec Organization.

Younger parents showing interest in younger children – Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4H.

We have the opportunity, we just need the commitment to keep them going.

Friendliness of the people. Wrote a letter to DMV – I can drive from here to Casper and pass one car. I came up here from San Diego.

I think our school is an asset. What we need though is to have more of the teachers living out here which is where the housing comes in at.

I think we have a great school, we really do. My kids went to school here. Eventually they grew up. My grandkids go to school here.

The senior center and park.

Everybody knows each other in a small town – sometimes that's good, sometimes that's bad.

More people are moving in that don't get involved in the community. Now you don't know. Nobody gets involved to know anybody.

We have the facilities – just need to create a way to use them. Motocross, playground, park – in certain areas we are beautiful. Some people do take pride and work hard to make sure their homes are still beautiful. We need to peel away the layers and let it happen.

4H and FFA are allowed to have livestock at the corrals – a learning process for the kids. The horse corrals allow the kids to experience that.

A good solid basis, lots of natural resources we can develop more of. There are a few people that get involved and are an asset to the community.

I agree with all of the above.

Swimming pool that kids use a lot.

School is definitely an asset in the community. Ability to use 2 gyms, opening it up to the community to use. We have the extra room.

Everyone has banded together at school and has a Thanksgiving dinner, Salt Creek Rec – get together and puts on a big feed and everybody just goes. A good way to know your neighbor.

The reason I've stayed here 8 years is it is so peaceful in this community. I haven't had one theft on my property. If we could let people know that this is a community where people can relax and just get to know one another. Meet people at the post office, say hello.

The motocross track – it has been there forever. They used to have races on it. Was one of the hardest tracks in the state of Wyoming. A lot of it needs to be fixed up.

The businesses that we have in the community – while I'm sure some of the people are really feeling the pinch of lesser tourist trade but I think this is an asset that we need to work on strengthening. I just know the community would have been a lot less attractive when we moved here if some of these things were not available.

We do have churches here – Methodist, Catholic, Baptist church – a lot of people don't have a need for that in their lives. There's a strength there that can be built on.

Yearly 3-day event – past graduates plan reunions because so much is going on, community gets involved. Salt Creek Days.

Potential for the future – some of the steady people who've grown up here – a big sense of caring. That caring isn't showing with the transient population. There is a lot of loyalty here among community members.

Strong school. This is a good thing.

The cool pond has a lot of potential to draw people in.

Fantastic school. We have opportunities to do activities with the Naval Reserve.

One thing mentioned previously was things for kids to do – lots of things for kids to do. Kids always say the same thing – I can't wait to get out of here – there's nothing to do here – no matter the size of the town. The lack of involvement of the parents contributes to lack of involvement of the kids.

Our school facility – we have a really nice pool when it has water in it. Definitely an asset to our school and our community.

Excellent climate – wind doesn't howl. It blows but not like most places in the state.

State rec and bass in the cooling pond.

Hunting.

Public lands available here – great opportunities, a resource not exploited enough.

One of the things that I've enjoyed and have done on my own time – there's a lot of historical things around this area that people who live here don't even know. I only know because I was introduced to some of those things by someone who grew up and lived in this area all his life. So many neat little things – little towns that used to exist, the power plant, the register cliff – those are treasures – even the Salt Creek Oil Field – somehow you could capitalize on those. A lot of history.

Small population should allow for greater support and hospitality – should be a group of people who take care of each other. I drive down the street and wave at everyone I see. Don't always get a wave back. I like being in a small community – give a chance to grow to know each other so well that there should be more support and hospitality.

The hunting and the recreation available here is a great asset. This whole entire area is full of fossils – it is a really neat thing, families could take their kids out.

I would like to see it go back to the way that it used to be when it was so neat. Little League team again, there is that potential because we always have our kids.

My stepson said recently how nice it would be to go to school in the same place. He loves it, gets a lot of good help, a lot of good teachers, like the boys.

Community and family support – I've got friends out here, 2 or 3 of them who have been lifelong friends of mine, I could go to anyone who lives here and ask to borrow something and they'd give it to you. There isn't a lot to do but enough to keep out of trouble if you want to stay out of trouble.

Biggest selling point is our school. I came from Colorado where we had dinner for the ball games but everybody supported it – the teachers and everything. I can't say it has got to be mandatory but could a real strength and an asset. Dinner or something to bring the community together.

We do have the areas we can go with – a little greenhouse is an asset to us if we use it correctly. Was told "it wasn't yours" but not in the middle of the winter. What's mine is mine and what's yours is yours – we're all here together.

The school.

Trained and professional EMS service that we have – provide service to community and outlying areas.

The cooling pond – we could really utilize that and make it a better facility.

The school is one of the biggest assets – not the building but the people in it. The kids are the reason we work here whether we live here or not.

We have a rodeo arena that could be fixed up. Golf course, ball diamond – not like there is nothing for anyone to do but community has to get behind it and support those things.

The school – my kids love it because it is a small school and they get a lot of one on one with the teachers – it is a small town and they can get out and explore a lot.

It promotes more family-oriented things – families are spending more time with their kids.

We have a nice little museum. We have 5 churches but maybe 2 go. They have darts and pool for entertainment. We used to have a bowling alley and we're going to have that again.

I think the major strength within the school and both communities is that we do have adults who care. We're all intelligent so we can solve some of these problems that existed. These people can help us with more ideas to put this all back together. People are our greatest asset.

Great place to raise kids. I raised my kids here. They are successful citizens. You know everybody in town, you know where they live and what is going on in the house. My kids loved living here. They left – there was nothing here in business for them. Everybody raises kids – neighbor takes care of that kid.

I like the small town – came from Denver. Came for a small town, raise our kids and get involved with the school.

Library in Edgerton – not every town has a library. Summer reading, get movies.

Great opportunity for students and teachers to walk to the post office, museum, senior center and park. The Rimrock (bar) for the teachers who go to Casper.

Excellent opportunities, peaceful community. I just think we can capitalize more on that and need to know one another a lot better.

Safety for sure. You can let your kids out in the yard, ride their bikes in the street.

The kids in the community – a lot of young families raising kids in the community. Maybe because it is a cheap place to do so. If it weren't for those kids, then maybe we wouldn't have the school and all that the school can provide to the community.

Diversity – there is a decent amount of diversity as far as backgrounds. The fact that it is somewhat of a transient place – that provides for diversity. This is my first year teaching here – would like to think I could draw off that diversity and bring people into my class who could expose our kids to more things that are out there. There are teachers in here who have been in amazing places and maybe we don't get the opportunity to draw on that.

The businesses that do exist here. Whiners is the only fast food place but you can't get a better patty melt than you can at Whiners. There are other businesses that this community could not function if those businesses weren't here – grocery store, Junction, Teapot, hardware store – those are certainly assets to this community because they provide a lot of things people need and don't have to drive 40 miles to get.

The people who live here that have been here are a great asset because they care and they are dedicated to this community. The people who live here long term do care, are the ones who are supportive and very giving.

Multi-age classrooms are an asset – allows us to get to know the families better. Because of the multiage classrooms – the teachers spend so much time with the kids that we don't just send them on to 1st grade and that's it. We do form some bonds.

For as much transients, it is a relatively crime-free town. We really don't have major crime, maybe a little vandalism but we really don't have crime here. I'll walk off, leave my house unlocked, don't ever think of anyone hurting me.

We have an awful lot of hidden talent in the community. We have professional photographers, we have artists, Unless you actually know what a person does, it is a secret – we need to draw on that. Set up a studio, we have sculptures, hidden, secret and I don't know why they are hiding.

Wildlife and open spaces. Deer, bunnies, eagles. They don't have that down in Denver.

Got approved by ASE for opening up a mechanic school in Edgerton and will let me certify anyone who goes. Building a building 80 wide x 120 long. Getting cars for students to work on. I'm going to start a used car lot, too. Has 8 students so far. Can teach up to 25. Will be able to hire 6-8 regular workers.

I've been an automotive machinist for 30 years – there is such a vast opportunity for people who can do automotive machine work. If you have a machinist and you have an avenue to train people, you can't go wrong.

Small lifestyle. Some people don't like big communities. We have to build on tranquility, smallness, the niceness of being small.

Park and Rec land – 240 acres of undeveloped Park and Rec land. Some of it has had a rodeo arena and gun club but most of it is inactive.

I've seen some of the facilities that used to be out here – some could generate some money – old race car track, BMX track, and old rodeo grounds – assets that haven't been used since I've been here in the big picture. But an event with one of the big BMX clubs, the race car thing – something not used.

We have hot water well and the cooling pond which have a lot of recreation potential and those are some of the strengths and assets of our community.

We are a small community in the middle of nowhere. People come out here for different reasons. Most of the time, they want to get away from the big city, the big city lifestyle. I worry that sometimes, it is starting to get big citified.

People feel safe out here. We want to grow but we don't want to explode and become a Casper.

We have a lot of talented people here.

Our law enforcement here is doing a good job. I think that we ought to back our law enforcement because they are doing their best.

Lower crime, I do like smaller population, small school – it has just gotten too small.

BLM land for the kids – it hasn't been developed enough. Every year something has to be done. If they don't, the towns are going to lose that. There is more land there than people realize. There is a certain responsibility for the town to maintain that.

Our local businesses and our natural resources – need to utilize those.

I agree with most everyone – I like the small town.

Me, too.

Small town, people that are here are our strength. Our strength is our small businesses.

Our strengths – the small businesses we have. These business owners do what they can when they can to improve, get the prices down – 40 miles that groceries have to be trucked. It is the price we pay.

Purchase locally – those businesses we do have need to be supported – financial end sometimes hinders it.

I spent some time elsewhere and came back to the Midwest. Its small, it's safe. It is where I want to raise my son. I'm glad to live here for that reason.

I would like to reaffirm our local police – they are friendly. You can allow your 6-year-old to ride in the park without fear of abduction.

The old Salt Creek – people will travel for miles to see an old ghost town. Improve the roads, get more tourists.

I'm from back east, Philadelphia. Come out here in Wyoming. I lived in Casper for three years, then Bar Nunn, and then I found a place I could get cheap here. I make decent money, I'm trying to renovate my place. I like to have my place nice. I don't have to worry about my kids (drugs). I'm kind of safe up here for my kids. I can take care of myself. But when you've got three daughters – I'd rather be in a community where I don't have to worry about some yo-yo grabbing my daughter. I feel safe up here.

Motocross, dirt track, Salt Creek – town is small but if it don't get some kind of help, there won't be a town forever. Rodeo once a year, motocross once a year, help the town out, help businesses survive. If you lose it, you lose it – it's gone and nothing is here.

The museum.

Public library.

Churches.

It's a small community good place for families to grow up.

Everybody knows everybody pretty much takes care of each other looks out for each other.

You can count on everybody here a lot don't know it getting the word out not everyone knows what is needed to do.

All the people are helpful and keep an eye out for each other's property and are a really good community.

I think that most of the people in this community if they feel that something is worthwhile they get together and make it work.

I think one of our strengths is the agriculture community here if we could get ranchers more involved in what's going on it would be an asset.

The way the older people stick together and try to get stuff done. There are some of us that have lived here awhile.

Our school is a major part of this community and also being from FFA and having livestock, the livestock end of it is pretty much helping out with this town. It will help our community get out around the nation.

I have to go with the school, too, there's not many kids so it's a one on one opportunity for students and teachers, not like Casper where there's tons of kids, out here it's like a one-on-one situation. Businesses.

Businesses get hit up time and time again to support activities.

We do a lot of things at the school, like community dinners, open gym, open swim if the swimming pool is working. It's an integral part of what goes on.

About the pool not working, it's been down since after Christmas break and they can't seem to do anything about it but it's an asset, it's open to community swim, there's staff to help with aerobic exercises, the pool employs lifeguards who are now out of jobs.

Agriculture is a big supporter of both towns. It's like the rest of commodities around here, we have to go to Casper for some things.

Sports. Boys' football brings in things for the community and also basketball; I noticed the community supports basketball – being a basketball player myself.

Our emergency services.

Howell – the petroleum company – a lot of the volunteer in the ambulance and fire dept do come from there and they allow them to respond during working hours. After 5pm when they go home it falls back to people who are here.

Spirit – this community and has not given up. They get cut short a lot. A lot of people don't appreciate what's up here.

The volunteers who help us in law enforcement is very strong. Gary is a one-man show but worth his weight in gold.

Community is small, very personable, but shut down a lot by low income housing and not fixing it up to attract other people.

Our size – in some ways it's a detriment. Considering it is all-volunteer, we have really good response times. People performing in those jobs do an excellent job. You can say a lot about the volunteers.

The working relationship between all agencies – hospital, Sheriff's Office, with Mickey – the relationship whenever we have to call for help, they've never denied us and we try never to deny them.

Emergency services all kinds of stars. Gary and Mickey respond if there is a call for the ambulance.

Financial end of it – the funding is a problem and I would like to pat all the emergency people on the back to find a way to make due with what they've got one way or another, find a vehicle.

Our people are so dedicated that we are most fortunate, they work well together and everyone supports everybody.

Everybody does try to support – especially emergency services. They give all their heart to it.

The quality of training that we provide and receive, law enforcement officers' part or volunteers' part, we don't settle for second best. Strict guidelines to meet. Only difference is we aren't paid and they are.

Core people that we do have are the ones who keep the town going. For a small community, they've done an excellent job supporting the volunteers of emergency services.

Committed.

Working relationship of all agencies.

Professionalism.

Quality of training.

Support of residences, business and industries.

People.

Edgerton 240 acre park and rec land that needs to develop.

People helping people – everyone knows everyone.

School – community people pulling together.

Salt Creek Days.

Oil field.

Grocery store.
Bowling alley.
Motel.
Restaurant.
Library.
Size and somewhat relaxed.
Know everyone – good or bad points.
Being a small community everyone knows each other.
Day care.
I prefer to live in Midwest because it is small, quiet, people are friendly, and you are not hassled by sirens, graffiti, and vandalism. A good place to raise children.
I feel as a majority, everyone who lives out here truly enjoys working with each other. Listening to different ideas..
Howell-Anadarko.
The Junction Store.
Churches.
The school.
Café.
Whiners.
Salt Creek Rec.
Motel and gas stations.
Community/family support.
School.
Xmas and community dinners.
Corrals.
Support for organizations – senior citizens.
There are some people that truly do want to improve the community.
Many industrial resources.

PROJECTS IN 2, 5, 10, or 20 YEARS

Capitalize on our history, putting up some signs, little towns have pictures or plaques outside the community showing what the places used to be, oil field equipment, and people like looking at that. Wouldn't be a tough thing to pull off.
Junction – been so many years since there was a valuable business, will take many years to get it done.
Getting a business area is a good idea – mini mall.
Bridge between Midwest and gas plant fixed.
Skate park for kids.
I would also like to see some of these run down homes either fixed up or demolished.
I'd like to see Habitat for Humanity come in and build one house and sue money from that to build another and keep the ball rolling that way.
We need a live-in doctor – we've lost a lot of seniors.
Housing for people – unless we have some decent housing, people aren't going to move into the community.
The stores that we have are good but we need more.
We need businesses and we need people to go to work to be able to get a better wage than what some of these people can get.
I would like to see the yucky house next to me torn down. It is an eyesore, and I mow it every summer for 13 years at our cost.

Want to get organized – like a spring cleanup – only have Town Halls and people see it as political and won't attend. A meeting area, common, would be really great.

I think back to when I came here – and it was a very close community – and it has gotten farther and farther away from that closeness. Through development, I think it can get back to that. Get rid of old houses, develop new resources. Like to see the golf course developed. Golf is a huge sport – we could gather from Casper, Sheridan. More developments and upgrades, we could draw those players. It is very challenging.

We have a natural water resource that can be utilized.

A recreation center and not just one for kids where they can go play games but a rec center with a gym, basketball court, racquetball court. Can use school 2 days a week and only certain times. Good job for kids, collecting money at the door while doing homework.

The housing is another major project – we need to do something with the old houses. Our biggest problem is what we can do – absentee landowners. They don't care, they're gone. Try to buy them and sell back to someone who wants to put a modular home on.

The golf course – I've talked to people in Wright about their golf course. How can we get water to the golf course and have greens. It sure would be nice to have a green pasture up there. We could get people here if it was green. Get water to the golf course.

Getting an Ag building where we could have our own meetings instead of using the Town Hall. Not a lot of places we can use. We have 8 kids in our group and are looking at a couple of more to join.

Streets and sidewalks more handicap accessible.

I moved my elderly mother here last Fall. I think they are working on improving the senior center. The other is that mom is diabetic and should walk but with the wind and streets, she cannot walk. I'd like to see a place where people could walk.

The other is just to Edgerton – our snow removal can create problems when we have heavy snows. I don't know how you'd improve it so your driveways weren't clogged with some of it.

In Edgerton – lots cleaned up, old tires gone.

Skate park – working with town council but it is a money thing.

Cooling pond – we have a wonderful resource for water, fishing out there, why couldn't we put picnic tables and trees, develop it into a rec area like Thermopolis.

We have tons of water but it is just there – we don't do anything with it.

Rec center – why can't we have a rec center with wonderful things. We have an old bar for a rec center – kids want more and they get board with the same old stuff.

Boys and girls club – why can't we start something like that. There some of these kids whose parents work in Casper and they come home to nothing after school. Have a boys and girls club out here.

Tutoring – after school, getting older kids involved in community to tutor younger kids and have a safe place to go until parents come home. 10th, 11th, 12th graders. They are out running around.

In the next 2 years, we have to decide we want people to come to the Midwest and like it.

When we decided to move over here we had specific things we were looking at – one was affordability of land which made it more attractive to us. Knew we needed more than 1 lot, needed space for other things. Looked for specific things. We found it difficult to find what we wanted because we kept coming back and asking questions, asking people, give us some names – were we able to find where we are. If somebody didn't have the lead time to figure it out, it would be very difficult to do.

Welcoming committee.

Water down at the corrals – they haul water. Some people want to put a tap down there but it goes to cost. It would be way too expensive. Not a rich community. The down side is dividing up the expense if it was there.

Get more area for more corrals – currently 10 corrals and that is all there is space for. At least two people are now looking. I think there are 2 acres we could move onto.

Our natural resources – water, building pools, getting tourists in here. And the golf course.

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If you drove around Edgerton – basketball hoop settings on our streets – only level place we have. Need funding for basketball and tennis court. Volunteers to level the land but need funding to help install it.

The real key agent for change is getting people to care about the community, think about it more and encourage them to care about the community.

Have to agree – in the next 2 years, make people wanting to come live here. Tear down a house, get a rec center, improving our cooling pond – there are fish in it. It is clear and they can dive in it all year. Moving some of our clean park water to the park – piping it up to the park. It may not be that much further to get water up to the horse trails. (Midwest water cannot be used for animals).

Some sort of a public health person who can come out and do diabetic tests, immunizations. Some kind of medical person. The EMTs can't give those shots and they are our medical people.

I agree – plant some trees, plant some flowers, anything to improve the town.

Water for trees.

Being a concerned citizen and town clerk – we need massive street repairs – repaving, repairs, roads ridiculous to drive across, could be a problem long term if we cannot get funding to get this taken care of. Both towns.

Would like to see it cleaned up.

The fence around the town – have been talking about fencing in the town – need project where high school kids do the fencing work. Fence town off. Local businesses and industry help with cattle guard. Strong boys could do some fence work.

Golf course is a giant money magnet – if you turned it green, people would drive to play. People go to Casper and wait an hour and half to get on the tees. Major major project – tough because of the water issue – keeping green and making it a good golf course.

Rodeo arena – my personal favorite – money issue and getting enough people involved to keep that going.

Short term – walk path get finished. A lot of people worked hard – hate to see efforts wasted. I think it will come to pass and a lot of people will use it rather than walk along the highway.

Would like to see us survive 20 years.

Community development as far as construction and remodeling houses.

Bring in some Habitat for Humanity – 1 new house a year is being built here. It is a seed and things grow from a seed.

20 years – that this is a beautiful little hamlet because of that development and because of everybody's pride in the town that we don't want it to just dry up and blow away. We want to set some roots here and make it a continual place to be safe for our children, great schools and grow our assets that we do have here.

Strict variances. You can't just build a crappy looking shed in your backyard or six junk cars in your backyard. We have standards here – that is how it will change. We have standards here and not allow junk in the town.

Some of the general cleanup and houses that should be condemned, torn down. Some of the houses that are not going to be rebuilt and have been vacant a long time – need to go.

Town has a hot water well refurbished – good supply of hot water that can be capitalized.

Larger community place where everyone can come. Used for movies or other things. Other than town hall.

Set higher standards for our community. Work harder so they understand. Have higher expectations how community could be. Pulling on all of the assets we do have. Rodeo grounds happening again, working to find something kids can stay busy with instead of analyzing it.

Near future – process to recover more oil could provide more capital and influx of more people as valuable as the ones we have – get a larger group that cares about the place.

Community type hall, reception of more than 150-200 people, hard to find a place to hold them. Kind of restricted on congregations of people. Acquire land either town has or old dilapidated property – acquire for cheap and find funding to do this. Community as a whole can manage it.

20 years – raise my daughter and have her graduate from here the way the rest of her family did and know the pride is still here. Safe haven for our kids – keep the community involved.

Amen to all. It has all been said. We really need a community center – something with individual rooms. Combine with senior center. Go in and enjoy yourself, have a gathering.

Rodeo grounds has always been an issue.

Cleanup is always an issue. If we clean up, people who move in won't bring those 6 junk cars. I'm all for the cleanup part of it. Rules are already there.

Short term – state owned rest top up in this area. Will be here 20 years from now even if the town isn't. We need something in this area. No service after 10 pm.

Some employees would like to move here if cleaned up. Attract some businesses outside of the oil field – like coal bed methane – putting up a rest stop.

New oil and gas commission should guild their new facility out here but they won't do it. Good paying jobs, families. Could attract Game and Fish if we showed there was something here.

Small manufacturing companies – see if we can't find the property where they could build a facility where we could handle their needs. Hot water well, central location. Try to find a way to attract a business. No way we have time to do this. We need to find someone who needs a cheap place to build a facility.

Basketball court in Edgerton.

Something brought in that pays more than minimum wage.

Ditto.

Community center would be excellent.

School is an old school – needs a lot of maintenance and repair. Use to attract people, need to get after the district to keep the school going and improve it, not just let it lapse from year to year.

We don't have a tax base out here – until we find businesses to come out and people to live here, won't have a tax base. We have to make it attractive for people to move out here – until we find a way to do that, we will have a problem.

If the school ever closes, the town will die. It has been the core for the community for a long time.

Some parts of the school was built as a temporary facility, getting school district to change their mind is a tough sell. My kids have graduated but I'm still here. If that school closes, we'll have a problem.

Not a big advocate of the walk path but it will be a great asset when it is done.

Golf courses, rest stops – maybe a fairly inexpensive way is to try to attract some tourists. We are in between Gillette and Casper, off I-25 – like a KOA campground. Build a pond for the campground and make that a hub. Far enough away that people don't want to stay in Casper when they are RVing.

One project would be the rifle range straightened up and made operational. 70% of us are rednecks and own guns.

Motocross – one of the best anywhere – not just in the state. People will come in on the weekends – that will make you money. A lot of it is no headache for Monday morning – a little cleanup but a lot of money in your cash register.

Cleanup is a big thing – laws are in place. Enforcing laws we have.

School – keep separate as far as bitching at them about money. It's a vicious cycle – need enrollment to get the money to get the projects. How do you justify to the school district taking tax dollars and putting into the school when the kids aren't there. We can volunteer more and help out with any projects they have like capital construction. You won't get more money into the school by whining about it – got to get the kids first.

Sanford and Son thing – I want to see it go away.

They pretty well covered everything.

Big dump truck to get rid of the Sanford and Son Syndrome and a tractor to lift it up in there. We do need some better equipment.

The walkway – I was a very strong advocate two years ago when project started. We now know the amount of money we need for our share – with federal and state grants to match. A mile on highway. Would be great when completed, ought to be less than a year. Already a completed goal that people don't know about.

We worked on years ago and never followed through on – no signing anywhere in the community. If oil field booms, businesses need to advertise off the 2-lane from both directions. Cannot advertise from Interstate – a lot of rules and laws which is why I gave up. Got to be a little overwhelming what you can and can't do.

On the industry – a lot people overlooked is recycling things. Nobody else wants to do it. Do it cleanly and keep it out of sight, that's a really viable resource to take a look at.

Pizza Hut

Jobs – anything, fast food, restaurants, another grocery store.

More businesses and bigger, nicer houses.

Wal-mart

Cleaner community.

Have half of the people on welfare to quit doing that, it's a drain on the system.

More girls.

A bigger town, more people in the school, have the school rebuilt so it is nicer.

The houses that are abandoned be fixed up or torn down so other people can move trailers in or build new houses.

Open a bank here. Have to drive 40 minutes to a bank.

Get rid of the cows.

Have the bowling alley be open and stay open.

I think all the resources should be put in the senior center for the next 20 years.

Economic development – some kernel for something to latch onto.

If we can get grants to help us – one resource would be our museum. If we could get a nice building, there is a lot of history and stuff that should stay here. I don't know if that is available to us or not, but for this town that would be nice if we could get a real nice museum.

Museum is very important, tells us where we've been, Pauline has done a wonderful job over there, keep track of it. That is a major job. I guess we need to have some monies here to help people get places. We have a grant for a school – we need to find property to put that on for auto mechanics.

There are a lot of things that can happen here but need the property and the money to get support for. I'd like to see some kind of industry beside the oil that would pay more than minimum wage.

We paid over \$130,000 to get that water well up and running to make it safe and usable – find products or industry that could come of that – water park to bring in tourism and put us on the map. Fish farm.

As many things we could do on that water well that we can – get people to work there, to come as tourists – one of the major things we can do.

Next major thing done as a town – streets and saddle repaired.

Then the museum – I'd like to see a museum put up. Bigger building to utilize to put categories and things up.

I'm going to go back to the commons building – a community center. A facility enable us to have meetings other than town hall, community functions that could house more than 30 or 50 people. I think we just need one – a common building that the 2 towns can help maintain and utilize for everybody's benefit.

Fence the town, cattle guards around – I'm country but don't like to step in so many cow pies. Everybody says we can't fence his cattle off – I don't know what the laws are. I get tired of picking it out of my shoes.

I'd just like to see more businesses and more students in our schools over the next few years. I have 3 grandchildren when I get older I want to see something for them to stay here for, jobs, some kind of opportunity.

We have a lot here if they'd just utilize it. Crank up the brain of the people here, what a wonderful place this is to live. We need the people that care.

Activities – we've got it – but people need to participate.

A recreation place.

The grants are very interesting and are well worth looking into. That medical building in Kaycee is from grants. It is a metal building faced with a brick affect. It serves the Town Hall, extra nice meeting room and the medical side of it is leased to the medical clinic in Buffalo and that brings in the maintenance for the building on that side. There is a nurse in on Wednesdays and a doctor there every Thursdays.

I'd like to see that water where we could turn it onto our yards.

Hot water factory to raise tomatoes or any kind of vegetable. We don't have good vegetables. We have to go miles away to get good produce.

I think we don't need a fence around town as much as a road to Gas Plant and the bridge. You can shut your gate to keep the cows out of your yard. Cow pies are fertilizer.

In the future, I think I see some growth maybe and some stability. Something around a building that is multipurpose that both communities can buy into. I worry a lot about the kids leaving, something to keep them here is crucial. I fear that it is going to become a retirement communities.

Children are the future. We have six kids and they're not here, they all went away and found better jobs. Unless you have something here for them, they can't stay.

Housing is important here, if we could get better housing. Housing for Humanity.

We have a good school but if we don't have a good school, the school goes down. We need young people.

We need more businesses, more kids. Everything said here today fits together. Without some kind of businesses, without medical here and some kind of transportation for the old folks who can't drive any more or don't feel able to drive. Make a trip to Buffalo, Sheridan, Casper, wherever. We've got to get some kind of transportation for people of older age to get where they need to get.

Communications – our Internet is very slow. You can't get a Casper TV station unless you are on cable. Can't get local news if you are on a dish. People come in with businesses over the Internet if we had better services.

We need to draw people who can spend money. We have low income people here who can't spend money. Unless you have people who can generate money in the community, businesses will go under. Catch 22, vicious circle that we can't stop.

When I grew up here, Midwest was a nice clean town. Edgerton wasn't quite so clean but not so bad. My dream is to see the communities back to where they're pleasant to look at. They are pleasant to live in despite all of our problems. Where our community gets together. Everyone participated. To see it go back to the way it was in the 50s and 60s.

Used to come to Midwest and go to the movies. Come here to visit. I've just come here off and on for most of my life. So it's not really a new place to me either. Wasn't there a drugstore next to the theatre? It would be so wonderful to visualize something like that once more. To see it all pleasant instead of up and down the alley, 1000 old cars, motors and junk. What's the reason for it? Won't the dump take any of this stuff?

Just bring us all back together.

What made our town the way it is? It used to be if you worked in the oil field, the company owned it and you had to live here. Went by the wayside when we became our own town. No longer had to live here. School – teachers lived here. No longer live here because they are able to move to Casper and drive. So who lives here? Nobody. Our town has dwindled to where it is today. I want it to go back to the old ways. My kids went here like everybody else's. They got college educations and left to make a living.

I would like to see the yucky house next to me torn down. It is an eyesore, and I mow it every summer for 13 years at our cost.

I think back to when I came here – and it was a very close community – and it has gotten farther and farther away from that closeness. Through development, I think it can get back to that. Get rid of old houses, develop new resources. Like to see the golf course developed. Golf is a huge sport – we could gather from Casper, Sheridan. More developments and upgrades, we could draw those players. It is very challenging.

We have a natural water resource that can be utilized.

A recreation center and not just one for kids where they can go play games but a rec center with a gym, basketball court, racquetball court. Can use school 2 days a week and only certain times. Good job for kids, collecting money at the door while doing homework.

The housing is another major project – we need to do something with the old houses. Our biggest problem is what we can do – absentee landowners. They don't care, they're gone. Try to buy them and sell back to someone who wants to put a modular home on.

The golf course – I've talked to people in Wright about their golf course. How can we get water to the golf course and have greens. It sure would be nice to have a green pasture up there. We could get people here if it was green. Get water to the golf course.

Getting an Ag building where we could have our own meetings instead of using the Town Hall. Not a lot of places we can use. We have 8 kids in our group and are looking at a couple of more to join. Streets and sidewalks more handicap accessible.

I moved my elderly mother here last Fall. I think they are working on improving the senior center. The other is that mom is diabetic and should walk but with the wind and streets, she cannot walk. I'd like to see a place where people could walk.

The other is just to Edgerton – our snow removal can create problems when we have heavy snows. I don't know how you'd improve it so your driveways weren't clogged with some of it.

In Edgerton – lots cleaned up, old tires gone.

Skate park – working with town council but it is a money thing.

Cooling pond – we have a wonderful resource for water, fishing out there, why couldn't we put picnic tables and trees, develop it into a rec area like Thermopolis.

We have tons of water but it is just there – we don't do anything with it.

Rec center – why can't we have a rec center with wonderful things. We have an old bar for a rec center – kids want more and they get board with the same old stuff.

Boys and girls club – why can't we start something like that. There some of these kids whose parents work in Casper and they come home to nothing after school. Have a boys and girls club out here.

Tutoring – after school, getting older kids involved in community to tutor younger kids and have a safe place to go until parents come home. 10th, 11th, 12th graders. They are out running around.

In the next 2 years, we have to decide we want people to come to the Midwest and like it.

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I agree – plant some trees, plant some flowers, anything to improve the town.

Water for trees.

Have it cleaned up like a little Mayberry RFD community.

The number of employees in the area would be increased. I would hope to see improved housing. The empty housing removed and decent housing placed on the space that was available. More neighborhood pride – if not rentals but owned – would improve perspective.

It would be nice if there was some community development money available to fix up the property around here.

There are a lot of communities like Midwest all over Wyoming and the mid-West. A lot that are a little smaller, more stable without the same resources as Midwest. See that it is a community that continues to grow with the people that they have here.

Our kids all leave and very few of them come back, maybe in 20 years we could get the community going, get some improvements, they'll want to stay.

It seems like whether it is 5 or 20 years, a big issue comes to funds being available regardless what you want to accomplish here. Either the private companies contribute – but if they were to come in, it would be great to see them contribute even more to the community.

There is a lot of government money that does not get tapped – the school and community itself could tap into. Community center, bigger nicer school. Recently we had a newspaper article - \$150,000 out there for computers. Nobody wrote for a grant. A school in a community like this could be a guinea pig – if we wanted to try to change our public education system, maybe this is a good place to start that.

Try things that you cannot try in a big city.

Pattern of the future is to move more and more to city areas – things getting bigger and better and small communities get eaten by that. Open up your doors and try anything you can to try to preserve your small community.

I hope that we work back to maybe how it used to be – through this procedure tapping into those resources of people who are around here who could offer more things for us to do, maybe we need to open our doors. Think of the 20% that are failing, maybe a vocational type of program. Open our doors more.

Kaycee flood – what it gained for the town was remarkable – we were able to demolish all the old buildings, funds. Funds available to come into community and demolish all the old houses. People could buy 2-3 lots to have room to expand. Build new houses and other people who'd want to come and live would see a better place to live.

Major oil company – bring along and start a business related to the oil but bring in the workers. Trailer park, restaurant and other activities.

Cooling pond

Greenhouse, raising catfish in the wintertime.

Get some kind of industry besides just the oil well.

Get decent jobs – don't have to be high paying but has to be something to work.

More long term residents, people who want to come here, stay her and really make things of Edgerton and Midwest. It takes a dream to do those kinds of things. We've got to believe in ourselves.

I'm hoping the community grows with the development of the Co2, brings in more population and better housing to develop our commercial areas.

Right now cleanup is a big thing. There are funds available out there that town governments can offer to homeowners to fix up their homes – not being utilized.

Cooling pond has so much potential and not being utilized.

Beautification committee to work 2 towns together – make it a place where you want to start.

Get a PR committee – these towns do not toot their own horn. Need PR, needs to be a place where people can spend the day, go on a guided fossil hunt or tour of oil field. We can set up tourista traps.

Family oriented, cultural, historical oriented – it would increase our business, instill pride in the community, then people will plant some grass.

Would like to see people put something into their houses. Our value of our property is null and void so you really can't put a lot of money in your home if you are going to have to leave it or walk away from it. Most people will sell their home when they get near retirement, that is where a lot of money comes from. People won't fix it up or not move on. All of our money is in our home. You almost feel like you are in the ghetto. You have to pick a home or pick a job.

You know your home is worthless when you go to get a 2nd mortgage or you want to buy the home and they redline you and refuse mortgages. Can get a car loan but not a house loan – not out here.

Short term, it would be nice if some of the companies do economic development in the oil field provide some alternative housing out here instead of housing them out in Casper. Put a man camp or two out here, get some people here.

If in 10, 20 years from now the town hasn't cleaned up, school and population dwindled – possibility of oil company buying all houses and demolish it all and make it a historical place, a recreational center. Let people have the opportunity to take those tours and make some money off them.

Dance, family function to serve alcohol, something community could go to – community center of some kind.

Walkway completed from Midwest to Edgerton.

Healthcare center – at least a couple times a week.

People want to drive in, first weed patch.

There's so much BLM land, there's nowhere to have a ranchette – no place around Midwest to live, or build a house or put down a modular; it's really difficult to find those locations where you can buy five acres or one acre.

Midwest is the bastard child of Natrona County School District – a lot of people feel they get slighted out there, but Midwest/Edgerton are the bastard towns of Natrona County. We went to Casper yesterday to sell ads for the yearbook and I can't tell you how many people said “we only support Natrona County schools” and we said, “but we're Midwest” and they didn't understand we're in Natrona County. Salt Creek/Midwest built Casper and we get nothing from Casper that I can see. It's very frustrating. To go in and write a check and be told “we don't take out of town checks” and it's on

a Casper bank! I live in Casper and I hope I'm not that way and I hope people don't perceive me as being that way.

We've had an image problem in this town – considered a garbage can of the county. We can change that if we really want to.

I'd like to see an attitude change. We always say "Howell or Andarco won't make their employees live out here." Let's give them a reason to live out here.

I would love to see the younger generation come back and really improve the situation here. That is the only way it is going to get bigger. The kids really love living here, it may be 5, 10, 30 years, they all seem to come back home. See the town become a great town, not a ghost town.

A little track for go carts for our young children – give them something to do. Keep them from being bored. I would build all the go carts for the place.

Trying to keep the town alive – charge reasonable prices. If someone has a problem, fix the problem. Keep money in the town to beautify the town.

Utilities – if we had a problem with a certain utility that the company would put forth effort to fix the problem or have reps within a reasonable drive to get here in a reasonable time. Power – we have to wait a long time for people to service. Phone company – pretty good time. Cable TV is shaky.

I'd like to see the rodeo arena fixed up – friends of mine and I in high school tried to get it.

Walkway completed so that if when my son is older and wants to ride his bike to Edgerton, it is safe. More businesses come to the Midwest, my own included.

A bank.

Why not utilize our wind – why not get some wind power – attract someone to this area to generate that.

Utilities – we were out of power for 6 hours. To be out of power is ridiculous kind of thing. This is supposed to be a community where we are supposed to be a town that functions.

Town and the power – if the oil field blows a substation – we are out of power.

I want to see us get to 1000 people around here to get our BMX tracks, rodeos, everything we had in the 70s. Right below 1000, keep it there, this town would prosper.

There's only 2 things to get things going – you and work. It takes everybody. If you're not willing to do that, then you're gonna get what you're gonna get.

We need to get our communities together, go back and use the facilities we have, maintain the ones that are in use.

Start a Chamber of Commerce to promote business.

Tourism – I would just love to have a water park to bring tourism in here so at least we could have a flow of money if we can't generate it by getting people to live here.

Nice building for museum.

Help with the school for mechanics going.

Hot water well, theme park, greenhouse – there are all kinds of possibilities. Cost \$130,000 to get it repaired – let's try to get something with it. Cooling pond is part of that. Greenhouse – all this could work together.

Something to attract businesses here and help businesses that are already here. Mini-mall. Something along those lines. Some places for businesses to set up shop and sell things. Help advertise what we do have out here. Small businesses work out of their garage and go to craft fairs – would be nice to do it here and not go somewhere else.

Grass outfield on our softball field.

See a real track put around the football field so we can have track out here instead of our kids going elsewhere for their home meets.

See our local grocery store updated and more variety of things – things had mold and mildew and had to carry it back. More quantity.

Growth. Maybe we should aim for our first stoplight. More long-term residency growth.

We have a racetrack. BMX track. Horse corral. Hot water could be turned into a water park like Thermopolis – huge money, big income. Would love to see those things.

For people in the community to stop cleaning up. Let's make a mess, get things done.

We need tourism. We need signs out on the interstate saying about our museum. Another way to pull traffic off interstate is a rest area. I am a business area and I would like traffic.

A pathway from here to Gas Plant.

Develop what we've got already here. Things here already that just need to be developed.

Truckers at the Junction – showers, washer and dryer, comfy chair and TV. My husband paid \$12 for shower and wait hours. Something simple to put up at the Junction.

Cell phone reception.

RV dump – people would stop, get out and spend money. Gift shop.

I would like to see a setup for some kind of child care. I'm going out of town for a job, my wife is going out of town for school. I have three children – what will I do. Who could take care of them?

Teenagers in Edgerton would like a basketball court over there.

Restaurant where all the truckers could park. Somewhere where they could have a hot meal.

Fix the BMX track, grade the motocross, bring money into the town and charge admission, town makes money, keep town alive.

Maybe just cleaned up a nice community when you drive through you maybe want to stop instead of just keep driving.

The compactor was here and they did take out a whole lot of junk cars.

I'd like to see more organization. It would be my really big hope that the CO2 thing goes well and we bring more people in and get to a stand, like have the arena, we could have like a multi-use complex with the arena and motocross track. It would be nice to have involved people move in rather than just have people move in.

Being from the FFA, I do show pigs, a show arena would be nice. We could have a local contest to show swine. That would be nice. Have a sheep show. Have a cattle show. Get more people interested in our community by that.

More business development.

I guess just a few of these things everybody's concerns a few of those are implemented all of them that we've heard today. Just whatever the community or the team comes up with that's most important for the community.

I'd like to see more jobs for everybody and have everything cleaned up decent.

See more of the same people more job stability or whatever seeing the same people year after year instead of seeing different people in a house year after year\

Businesses that keep young families the school is the hub young families and older families and some more stability

I'd like to see the community a little more cleaned up.

It seems to me like people would enjoy coming back to see a nice clean community where the energy and agriculture are both combined and everything's working.

We need a beautification program. We need to make it easier for businesses to come in. Right now it's next to impossible for a business to get started.

Go back to park and rec, 2, 5, 10, 20 years to get it back in shape again.

This is like an oil town. It's boom or bust, why can't we just grow slowly, work it all together and have something that stays. We have ups and downs and so our population goes up and down.

I think a lot of problem is if we're going to develop we have the town of Midwest and the town of Edgerton and there's no room to grow or move or whatever we can clean up what we have and even if we do that there aren't many vacancies some people who have bought up properties for back taxes and there they sit and just decline and decline. Would be nice if these people could get them to sell or

improve the property or tear it down. If they're not going to fix it tear it down and clean it up a vacant lot is way better. I would just love to see people care.

You get tired of seeing the windows boarded up on these old dilapidated houses, it's got to be a fire trap and what about snakes in the summer time.

A basketball court in Edgerton would be nice and improve our park for the littler kids. I like this park it's got a basketball hoop but if there were a basketball hoop over there I know our FFA chapter stands behind it 100 percent.

Something like a rec center like Harold Jarrard park up there at Kaycee that's a good facility for the town people and the kids.

We've already got the arena. We could just build out of that.

A lot of money that has gone out of here has gone to Casper and I hope if we boom we get a little something out of it.

If cleaned up and more stable it would be a world of difference.

Something I would like to see different you've heard how the school is the hub the school's handled out of the community it's hard to make it a community aiding project when it's handled by Natrona county they've asked for input but the input is minimal and not much good I would like in the future to see the school which is the hub of the community run by the community.

I think that's why our pool isn't fixed, out of sight out of mind.

There's a lot of tax dollars coming out of this oil field and there should be a way that we could keep some of that. The amount of money that comes out of this part of the county, we should have the best of everything here and we don't.

I still feel there is a real need for something like what's at the Harold Jarrard park, with an arena, a multipurpose building. One of the things they are doing over there right now is a living classroom through the Wyoming Department of Ag, a living classroom to take kids out to, to work with natural resources and conservation. Those are the things we miss in this community.

Down at the corrals which the community does sponsor some of it, I'm speaking on behalf of my mother, she's got a disability, so the days I have a basketball game she's not able to lift water buckets up to our pickup and pack them down to my games. I don't see why we can't get lights and water down there. Two water spigots and a light would make it much better for the community.

New fire station, new emergency services facility and equipment

We need a new fire truck, our ambulance is okay but we could be updated.

10-year – one centralized facility, we know there is some insurance obligation for each town for homeowners and business insurance

within 5-years – replace one or both fire trucks, replace ambulance (it will be 13 years old).

In next 5 years, support law enforcement officer in Edgerton, more security for the rest of us over there. If agreements, policies and procedures change, we would be in a bind.

Community cleaned up, something to attract businesses here, assist businesses to move here and the rest will fall into place, something to keep the young people here instead of shipping them out. As soon as they graduate from school, they are out – no reason for them to stay around here.

We have to bring the Salt Creek Area closer to Casper by means of communications – we have to approve communications. We do need to develop soon an emergency plan for this area.

Juveniles, kids – they do have a community rec only open 3 days a week – nice to develop something more for the kids to do – problem is even with the rec it doesn't pay for itself. That's a problem.

Something to get more kids interested in going to a facility such as that.

We have that hot water well – we need to utilize making jobs from that.

Upgraded equipment. We need to find a way to get people to move out here, if we could do that a lot of things would fall into place, we'd end up with more volunteers for emergency services. In order for a lot of these projects to come out here, the community needs to grow.

Our hot water well is the fulcrum of the whole thing – if we can develop that, everything will fall into place. Attract tourism, attract businesses, and pay our fire and ambulance person instead of volunteering. Attract a developer for the hot water well, it could be huge.

Community center support whole communities, increase organizations, have a meeting place. All facilities that exist fixed up and used, ag building at rodeo ground. Need to build. Provide facilities to attract people to the area.

Draw people in, keep young people here, give them the opportunity to do something other than oil field work, with population, you'll get the rest of it.

Need a central disaster plan for both communities.

We have all those facilities in Edgerton, racetrack, rodeo ground, BMX track, here baseball field – get them up and running, advertise events, get more people coming in here, tourism trade. Get people to promote those things.

Having a community center is a major request from the group and that would help out.

Build an “all-in-one” facility – school, medical, businesses, and community center – so community comes together, kids can learn from businesses,.

5-year – upgrading pumpers.

10-year – one large facility for all equipment to be housed.

5-year – replace ambulance – it will then be 12 years old.

2+ ongoing – increase in numbers of members.

New business.

New growth.

Rural health care.

Park and rec development – this patented land.

Teachers living out here.

Hot water park for the community using the water from the field.

Multi-use facility using the arena.

Motocross tracks.

A ranchette division with acreage.

Facility in Edgerton for the young generation such as parks or courts.

Mini golf course.

More homes built.

Rifle range rebuilt.

Motocross back in use.

Get rid of the mayor that is in office now.

See that the senior citizens have a bus to go to Casper in. See that they are treated a lot better than they have been.

Need more people to drive the ambulances and fire trucks when needed.

Get rid of petty bickering.

Get somewhere to sell the used vehicles for the one that need sold.

I also need the basement cleaned as it has been flooded 3 times and a lot of mud, etc. down there now.

I have large things coming in soon and need room.

Skate park for rollerblading and skate boarding.

A new community rec center.

Ice park for winter skating.

Fence-in town.

Streets need repaired.

Tear down or fix up old houses.

Roads re-serviced.

Gas plant road re-serviced.

Bridge on Gas Plant Road upgraded.
Possibly cattle fenced out – it makes town smell like stockyard.
Fixing the streets but having the water line done before so it would not be torn up.
Possibility of putting in a Laundromat.
Cooling pond water for yards.
Type of entertainment for youth.
Clean up junk buildings and cars.
Repair the saddle on the waterline and repair the struts.
Somehow to resolve some of the problems that exist in the communities due to handling and street cleaning during heavy snows.
A basketball court in Edgerton.
Clean up lots.
Demolish and clean up condemned homes.
Putting up a fence around the town.
Beautification plan.
Anything that would encourage community and support youth opportunities.
I agree that there are a lot of homes with unserviceable and wrecked vehicles – if we could get rid of those. I think it is something that needs to be done.
Supporting your local organizations and local businesses.
Youth empowerment council – tried to get it going. It fell through the cracks. Would help with community pride and involve the youth.
This is a very rugged community but like everybody else, I'd like to see the property values increase, improvements made on the homes, but have to be some way to motivate people to want to do it. As employment grows, more people will want to live in the community. If we can encourage people to put nice manufactured homes on lots or tear down what's left, it would really make a difference.

Resource Team questions, and Community Answers

Do people use the library?

It's right across the street from my house – I don't frequent the library.

A lot of people go in and out throughout the day. Appropriating some money to put signs up on highway. People drive by and can't see it. Town Council in Edgerton for signs for people to see. It will have Town Hall, Library, Post Office.

How is the community's internet service?

I'm taking Casper College classes trying to get a teaching degree – took over 9 hours to get signed up, that much longer to load to get into it.

Is it a limited amount of private land that someone can buy?

What is plotted, yes. 80% of residential side is on north – never developed. For what is not zoned for residential and living, tough to expand out from there.

Is all of the land with dilapidated buildings – is it all privately owned or city ownership?

Majority is private ownership, 90% we have contact with landowners, 4-5 states away.

In terms of maintaining sidewalks and parking areas, does private land stop on the street?

Parking area in front of the residence is not owned by resident but they are expected to maintain to a certain degree. Town will maintain as best they can. Certain things resident needs to abide by. The way streets and parking area is setup is not convenient for town or us to accommodate.

The oil patch is going to be pumped dry, at some point that will happen. What is the environmental impact – what will the land look like 20-50 years from now?

They are responsible for reclaim – final reclamation – put back the way it was “allegedly” before they started.

You indicated you're wanting more seniors involved with the senior center – how many senior citizens in communities, how many are involved with center activities?

Approximately 90 people in community eligible to use the senior center; we have 7, maybe 9 registered members of the community center. We've also formed in recent past an advisory committee that is working very hard to get the senior center where it is a happy fun place to be. Changes have been made, some that will have to be made. In a year it will be a happy fun place to be again. There are about 10 people on and off. We also deliver meals to about another 5-7.

Where do you go for day-to-day medical care?

To town. Pray you don't get sick. Buffalo, Sheridan, Casper, Kaycee. We have the air ambulance come out when it is needed and we do get good fire support from the fire district which is a strength. We have a helicopter that can have us in town in 15 minutes. When you call 911, you get an answer right now.

What are the Senior Center's hours and activities?

Meals five days a week. 5 hours a day for hired people to be there. Open to other community use. We plan one extracurricular Sunday. We had a brunch that was a huge success. Played Bingo that was so fun. We have a meeting once a month where we get together and plan the activity for the next month.

They play cards after lunch – a few seniors will play cards. Open at 9am and open until quite late – sometimes 5pm. It is open to people if they want to come.

Is public health nursing or some other health care provider sending someone up from Casper on a regular basis?

For blood pressure – twice a month. Coming up for inoculations.

Public health nurse who comes to the senior center – is that person available to anyone besides seniors? Probably is but not every day. Wyoming Medical Center used to run people up here periodically – when the clinic was here. Clinic owned by community, family practice ran it. They supplied doctors. A non-profit board that contracted doctors. Residency program. No one was paying their bills.

Are there civic clubs of any kind?

Used to be VFW, Lions, Masons – but we have nothing now.

If money was not an issue and you could accomplish your heart's desire, what would you like to see if you had the resources to make it happen?

Flowers and trees. School full of classrooms of students – full grades with parents here supporting our community. Nice place to dine. Pizza Hut, KFC and Taco Bell.

Are trades all represented in the community?

We don't really have a plumber – Roto-Rooter guy. We do have an electrician. Individuals who do it in the evenings. We have an agreement with Natrona County to use their inspectors.

What about the pool? Have you heard why it hasn't been fixed?

Haven't found the leak. Haven't looked. Brought Natrona County School District plumber up – 9 weeks ago – but then they pulled them out and now we don't know. The pool was losing 9000 gallons of water a day – have no idea where the water went. We are forgotten a lot (by the Natrona County School District). A lot of people in Casper don't know we exist. We bring revenue into Natrona County and the state of Wyoming.

You mentioned poor living conditions – can you clarify what you mean?

Vehicles, nobody taking care of yards, people aren't planting trees or flowers, grass growing long, mow it down and weeds, not taking care of their property. I live next to a vacant house and one guy who doesn't own it mows it once or twice in the summertime. The people who own it live in Sheridan and have been here once or twice in 3 years. Some of the structures – half of the roof is hanging down. People are living in it. How safe is it? Especially if they have kids.

World Changers came to town but couldn't do much?

Several people were buying homes but World Changers can't do anything on homes that is contracted for deed. On trailer homes, there is an age limit. So many people are buying homes or land on a contract for deed. Can't get a loan from a bank here.

Have you ever had or have now a Welcome Wagon?

In 1981, when we moved here Welcome Wagon came around. Some of these people I wouldn't want to serve cocoa to. There is no money.

Have you talked to your extension office in Casper about flowers and trees? A lawn and garden club?
We have in the past. People would want to improve the property and don't know how or have the resources. Can't afford the water in the summertime.

We were hearing from the senior citizens in terms of the senior center and activities – if you could get your mother to come here – what could the senior center do to entice folks?

Due to financial and health problems it was better to bring her here – Mom feels very isolated. If somebody in with the senior citizens – invite her to join. Mom is not a joiner. People who move in might be similar. Transportation or someone hollering and say such and such is going on.

Why good DSL in school but not town?

School district takes care of the school.

What is the total attendance of the school? 157 How many students are from Casper? 30

Where do you get water to fight fires?

Chlorinated domesticated water from Casper.

Do you have an age limit on volunteers for emergency services?

You have to 18 to be active. There have been a couple of kids in the past, helping with truck but couldn't be involved until 18.

How many fire stations?

Fire station in Midwest – 2 fire trucks, 1 city, 1 county and 1 ambulance. Edgerton – rescue truck, fire truck and another truck. *How many calls a year?* 68 fire last year, average about 80 – wild lands are 60 percent to 70 percent of calls. EMS support is majority of other calls. Ambulance 89 calls last year.

Howell also fights fires? If there's a fire in field, small wild land fires, not tank fires. Lightening, lines go down, sparks. *And the BLM?* BLM will respond with county.

90% of structures are covered with asbestos shingles. From emergency response standpoint – added things to do to put that out?

Water puts out – wear breathing apparatus. *Extra environmental cleanup post fire?* Ashes – haul off and dispose. Dig a whole and bury. *Are ashes no longer an environmental problem?* Can't answer that.

Oil field – potential for H2S – special training for that?

The air packs we get – we swap equipment with Howell. They get the same training we get. If you have a full blown incident – greatest rate of exposure – there are some safety things to do there. Provide training. Most of us work at Howell and are familiar.

Who pays for or supplies disposables on ambulance?

We swap them out with hospital. Wyoming Medical Center – they get patient, we get supplies back. 98% choose to go to Casper. Transport to Buffalo and Gillette – no trouble swapping out. Non disposables they do own. *Refilling oxygen bottles?* That is done at the ER.

Have you talked to FEMA about fire or medical equipment?

We were awarded \$14,900 new bunker last year. The year before we were not awarded anything. 2 grants from BLM, 1% sales optional tax.

Are you pursuing bioterrorism money?

We're working on getting it, with Stu Anderson through the county.

You get a mini grant through Jim Mayberry for new equipment?

We get that every year – if you're talking about the EMS enhancement grants. We have been awarded 4 out of 5 times applied.

Where is county at in e911 addressing process?

It is here – did have a problem with that – there are a few address questions. We know pretty much where everyone lives. 911 calls from this area go to Casper and displayed. *Rural addresses versus in town – are they in the county's e-911 system?* The county does have locations, ranches – with a fire marker number. 5 digit number. There is a system to it. Usually when dispatched during an emergency – no one knows where that is other than ones affiliated with obtaining that number. A lot of landmarks are used to help out identification of an incident.

Highway patrol lives here?

One patrolman lives here.

GPS on ambulance and fire truck?

Yes

Appendix

From the Sunday, April 20, Casper Star-Tribune

Mounting a comeback

By MATTHEW VAN DUSEN Star-Tribune staff writer

For many of the teens in Midwest and Edgerton, the best thing about their towns is the high road to Casper.

"We just really have nothing to do," said Kelly Greene, 17, a senior at Midwest School and lifelong town resident. "We usually just drive around and the cops start to follow us, so we go to the oil field and then we get in trouble for that." When she graduates, Kelly hopes to head for the West Coast and become an oceanographer.

The adults of the towns complain about the same general things. Neither Midwest nor Edgerton has a bank, or a bank machine, and many houses are falling apart and the shopping is pretty limited. When they want to spend money, they go to Casper.

But people on the Salt Creek Flats still believe in the tiny twin towns, combined population 577, and that's why the town councils asked a team from the Wyoming Rural Development Council to come out. Midwest had a population of thousands at various times in the last century, and town residents want to reclaim at least a bit of the glory from those days.

The five-member team, which includes people from the Wyoming Business Council and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, among others, went to the towns on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday to ask three basic questions: What are your communities' strengths? What are their weaknesses? What projects would you like to see in the coming years?

The assessment group went to the school, the senior home and other community spots, and 160 citizens responded.

"I have been here 70 years and the people are almost walking angels," said one Midwest resident. The gripes, however, were more extensive than the plaudits. "Our community would be a real joy if we could figure out some way to get ahold of the owners of these old houses and tear them down," said one person. "Kids need things to do," another added.

The kids are important to the town for any number of reasons. For one thing, when they go to Casper College or someplace else after high school, they don't often come back. Second, the school is important to the town.

"The first sign of a town dying is closing the school," said teacher Roger Switzer, as his students played basketball on Tuesday. Consider the effect of the school swimming pool closing down last Christmas, after leaking about 100,000 gallons of water over two months.

During the summer months, the pool is open twice a week in the evenings for lessons, exercise and free swimming. If the Natrona County School District decides it cannot afford to fix the facility or the repairs drag on, the town's children will lose one of their major recreation spots, aside from the recreation center.

District maintenance personnel said the process could take a couple of months if the leak is small, and much longer if the damage is extensive.

School office manager Paula Chapman stood at the edge of the dark and empty facility on Wednesday. "It's so pretty when it has water in it," she said.

What is to be done?

The assessment team, led by Emily Quarterman, did a lot of listening in three days at Midwest and Edgerton. It will take from four to six months before the team completes a full assessment and set of recommendations for the town's future, but many citizens had their own ideas.

Cheryl Saul of the Midwest Town Council and Midwest's Public Works Planner Jaime Jones on Wednesday drove out to the town's artesian well that pumps out 168-degree water.

The town recently spent about \$135,000 fixing the well, and Saul thinks its time to put the water to good use, like in a water park or maybe a fish farm. It's safe and drinkable right out of the well, they said.

"There's other things you can use this hot water for," said Saul.

Another possibility is to think small, which is what Midwest resident Annie Robinson plans to do. Like other teens, Robinson, 19, left town for Casper after high school. A year later, she's back in town, looking for startup money for her own restaurant, to serve the high school kids and the oil field crowd. Robinson said a friend is looking at starting a mechanic shop in town.

The Anadarko solution

The residents of the two towns are also looking to the oil fields again.

According to company documents, Anadarko Petroleum Corporation will spend \$200 million on the Salt Creek field to get oil out of the ground using carbon dioxide. Much of that money will go to companies outside Midwest, but the citizens are hoping the investment can also bring business to the local contractors and restaurants.

"The monetary advantages to the town will be there," said Midwest Mayor Sandy Schutte.

Anadarko's literature also stresses the company's commitment to charity and involvement in events such as Salt Creek Days.

With projected production of 200 million barrels of oil from the new recovery activity, the town might look to squeeze more than a few thousand dollars out of the company here or there.

The recommendations

After listening for a few days, the team reported back to the community on what they heard and made some preliminary suggestions.

Team leader Quarterman, for example, said she would look into a federal program that might be able to provide a full-time primary care clinic. USDA employee Wayne Jipsen suggested developing some of the towns' recreation spots and resources and said he would try to find consultants or funding.

Quarterman stressed that most of the ideas for reviving the towns came from the citizens. The team, in some respects, will just give suggestions for making the ideas work.