

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 have 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 contribution 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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Wyoming Rural Development Council
2219 Carey Ave.
Cheyenne, WY 82002
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mrand@state.wy.us
www.wyomingrural.org

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Mills Resource Team **October 7-9, 2003**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Many of the elements are here for Mills to have a successful future. To become a growing, vibrant community takes only a few 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 big jobs, it is on small ones that can be achieved quickly. The big ones come later after Mills has seen the results of the smaller and sees that it can accomplish things.

There are number of short term, accomplishable and recommendations that the review 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.

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 Mill's goals. It can be done! There is no problem facing Mills that cannot be solved by the people living in the community. It is your choice, your decision, you can do it.

On behalf of the Mills Resource Team, I want to thank the community and our sponsors for the warm hospitality shown to us during our stay. The meals were incredible and accommodations were outstanding. We heard over and over in the listening sessions that Mills has caring and concerned citizens and we certainly can 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 information or provide more information and assistance.

The Wyoming Rural Development Council is here to help you in any way that we can.

Sincerely,

Mary Randolph, Resource Team Leader

PROCESS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS REPORT

The Wyoming Rural Development Council (WRDC) has provided a Resource Team to assist the town of Mills, Wyoming in evaluating the community's assets and liabilities and in developing suggestions for improving the environment, social and economic future of Mills.

The town of Mills requested a community assessment from the Wyoming Rural Development Council. Steve Kurtz served as the community contact and took the lead in agenda development, logistics and publicity in town for the assessment. Resource team members were selected to visit, interview citizens, business and community leaders; and develop a plan of recommended action for the town. The team members were carefully selected based on their fields of expertise that Mills officials indicated would be needed to respond to the problem areas identified.

The Resource Team toured the town and interviewed approximately two hundred and thirty people over a two-day period from October 7-9 2003. The team interviewed representatives from the following segments of the Mills community: Education, Human Services, Industry, Retail, Law Enforcement, Banking, Financial, Volunteer Fire Department, Youth, Healthcare, Senior Citizens, Lions Club and 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 Mills?**
- ❑ **What do you think are the major strengths and assets in Mills?**
- ❑ **What projects would you like to see completed in two, five ten and twenty years in Mills?**

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

The oral report was presented to the people of Mills on October 9, 2003 and many of the citizens of Mills who participated in the interviews were in attendance.

Following the oral report, a formal written report was prepared and presented to the town of Mills.

Mills Resource Team Members October 7-9, 2003

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Riverton, WY 82501
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yvette.wilson@wy.usda.gov

Diane Wolverton
Wyo Small Business Development Center
P.O. Box 3922
Laramie, WY 82071
(307) 766-3505
ddw@uwyo.edu

Community Contact:

Steve Kurtz, Town Planner
Worthington, Lenhart and Carpenter
200 Pronghorn
Casper, WY 82601
(307) 266-2524
wlcplan@wlcwyo.com

Town of Mills
Joe Dill, Mayor
Raeann Weber, Town Clerk
704 Fourth Street
P.O. Box 789
Mills, WY 82644
(307) 266-2524

Town of Mills Community Assessment
WORKING SCHEDULE FOR OCTOBER 7-9, 2003
Listening Sessions focused on groups, but anyone can come to any session
Resource Team Activities

Tuesday, October 7	Activity	Location
10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.	Orientation and Organization Meeting (Team Members Only)	Town Hall
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.	<u>Lunch with Resource Team Planners</u>	Mo's Dungeon Diner
1:30 p.m.	<u>Resource Team leaves from Town Hall for Tour of Mills</u> Steve, John C. and Tanise will also go on the tour.	
3:45 to 4:00 p.m.	Break – Refreshments	
4:00 to 5:00 p.m.	<u>Education Listening Session</u>	Town Hall
5:15 to 6:30 p.m.	<u>Human Services Listening Session</u>	Town Hall
6:30 p.m.	<u>Resource Team working supper</u>	Taco Johns
Wednesday, October 8	Listening Session Group	Location
6:30 a.m. to 7:30 a.m.	Breakfast	Busy B'z
8:00 a.m. to 9:05 a.m.	<u>Industry/Retail/Services Session</u>	Town Hall
9:10 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.	<u>Town, County, Law Enforcement Session</u>	Town Hall
10:15 a.m.	<i>Refreshments – Cookies and coffee.</i>	<i>Town Hall</i>
10:20 a.m. to 11:25 a.m.	<u>Town Employees Listening Session</u>	Town Hall
11:30 a.m. to 12:50 p.m.	Lunch	Peaches
1:00 p.m. to 2:05 p.m.	Break: Review of Listening Session.	Town Hall

2:10 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.	<u>Industry/Retail/Services Listening Session</u>	Town Hall
3:15 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.	Break: Refreshments	Town Hall
3:30 p.m. to 4:35 p.m.	<u>Banking and Financial Listening Session</u>	Town Hall
4:40 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.	<u>Volunteer Fire Department Listening Session</u>	Town Hall
5:45 p.m. to 7:15 p.m. Hall	<u>Youth Pizza Party/Dinner</u>	Senior Center in Town
7:30 p.m.	Mills Town Council Meeting	Town Hall
8:15 p.m.	<u>Open Listening Session for Community</u>	Town Hall

Thursday, October 9	Event	Location
6:30 a.m. to 7:30 a.m.	Breakfast	Kopper Kettle
8:00 a.m. to 9:05 a.m.	<u>Healthcare Listening Session</u>	Town Hall
9:10 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.	<u>Churches Listening Session</u> Four in Mills	Town Hall
10:20 a.m. to 11:25 a.m.	<u>Senior Citizens Listening Session</u>	Senior Center
11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.	<u>Lunch with Seniors, Lions Club, & VFW</u>	Senior Center
1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.	Team prepares for Town Meeting	Town Hall
5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.	<u>Team Supper</u>	McPherson's House
7:00pm to 8:00 p.m.	Resource Team Town Meeting <i>All are invited and welcome to attend.</i>	Fire Hall

RESOURCE TEAM MEMBER REPORTS

Debra Farris

Small Business Administration

P.O. Box 2839

Casper, WY 82602

(307) 261-6509

debra.farris@sba.gov

INTRODUCTION:

The Mills community enjoys the benefit of some tremendously dedicated city employees as well as the commitment of the volunteer fire department. In listening session after listening session, the assessment team heard continued praise of these individuals. After spending several days in this community, it wasn't hard to see that one of the most important assets of Mills is the people. The people that we had contact with were caring, committed and dedicated to making Mills a better place to live and work. I would like to thank the town of Mills and the community for their warm welcome and hospitality.

This report is organized around some of the major themes identified by the resource team.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Challenge: Challenge: Lack of developed recreation facilities. Lighting of parks, pathways, etc. Lack of access to existing facilities (in Casper). Challenge: The community would like to see more young people involved in leadership roles and more involvement.

Solution: Solution/Contacts: The Land and Water Conservation Program offers funding to acquire and or develop/renovate public outdoor recreational lands and facilities. A 50% match is required. For additional information on this program contact: Solution/Contacts: A number of private foundations serve the area and provide grant funds for a variety of youth programs.

Resources: Todd Thibodeau Herschler

Building 1 E 122 W. 25th

Cheyenne, WY 82002 307-777-6478

www.wyobest.org/recgrants.html

To obtain a catalog of Wyoming State Grant Programs contact:

Department of Administration and Information State Library Division
301 Capital Avenue Cheyenne, WY 82002
www.state.wy.us/sis/grants/index.html

The USDA, Rural Development offers Community Facility Loan and Grants for essential community facilities in rural areas. Funds may be used to construct, enlarge or improve community facilities for health care, public safety and public services.

Billie Kirkham Rural Development Manager
USDA, Rural Development
508 N. Broadway
Riverton, WY 82501 307-856-7524, Extension 4

Additionally the USDA, Rural Development's Community Facility Loan and Grant Program may offer assistance in the area of transportation as well.

The Wold Foundation
139 West 2nd Street, Suite 200
Casper, WY 82601
307-265-7252

Areas of Interest: Community supported cultural activities Human service organizations and youth programs Conservation and outdoor recreation that supports health, education, leadership training and youth services Projects and programs that benefit Wyoming citizens, particularly youth

The Daniels Fund
55 Madison Street, Suite 255
Denver, CO 80206
303-393-7220
email: info@danielsfund.org www.danielsfund.org

Burlington Northern Santa Fe Foundation
5601 West 26th Street
Cicero, IL 60804
708-924-5615
email: Sharon.Heft@BNSF.COM www.bnsf.com

National Council on Youth Leadership
www.nycl.org

Solution: Invite youth to serve on boards or committees with full membership and voting rights. Form a Teen Town Council to learn what youth feel is important and to teach them the operation of government. Develop your own leadership program. The program would provide both resource and leadership training at a very minimal cost to current and future leaders in the town. For example, the first leadership class of a dozen could meet over the course of a year to receive leadership and management training, learn about private and public sector resources and network with one another. Over the course of a few years, a large network of civic leaders would be generated. There are many different local leadership programs already in Wyoming. One of the very best exists in Park County. It was started in 1996 and already has over sixty alumni. For more information on the Park County Leadership program contact:

Contact: Steve Elledge East Central Regional Director
Wyoming Business Council
300 S. Wolcott, Suite 300
Casper, WY 82601
307-577-6012
email: selledge@wysbc.com www.wyomingbusiness.org

or

Leah Brusino Northwest Regional Director
Wyoming Business Council
143 S. Bent, #B
Powell, WY 82435
307-754-5785
email: lbrusc@state.wy.us

For more information on other leadership programs across the country, please visit:
www.communityleadership.org

Solution: One other consideration, as individual youth emerge as leaders, recognize them with a Youth Leader of the Year Award.

COMMUNITY APPEARANCE

Challenge: Challenge: Although the clean up campaign has begun, citizens are concerned about the timeliness (it's taking too long) of the campaign.

Solution: Solution/Contacts: Recognizing that the volunteer fire department is held in high esteem by the community, consider having the fire department issue a challenge to the community, sponsoring a clean up contest and/or having the city sponsor a free trash day. If there are areas that could qualify for Brownfield Economic Development Initiative (BEDI) grant funds,

apply to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. BEDI funds are used as the economic stimulus for local governments and private sector parties to commence redevelopment of brown field sites where either perceived or actual negative environmental conditions are known and redevelopment plans exist.

Resources: Contact: Steve Achter
Director Investment Ready Communities
Wyoming Business Council
214 W. 15th Street Cheyenne, WY 82002
307-777-2811

INFRASTRUCTURE

Challenge: Challenge: Comments were made many times about the need for better and additional roads and infrastructure in Mills.

Solution: Solution/Contacts: The following contacts all have programs devoted to a variety of infrastructure projects (business prospects, water and sewer projects, etc.) Please contact them to see if these programs will fit Mill's needs:

Resources: Steve Achter
Director Investment Ready Communities /CDBG
Wyoming Business Council
214 West 15th Street Cheyenne, WY 82002
307-777-2811
email: sachter@state.wy.us
www.wyomingbusiness.org

Brad Miskimins
Grant and Loan Program Manager State Loan and Investment Board
Herschler Building
3 W 122 W. 25th Street
Cheyenne, WY 82002
307-777-7309

John Rogers
Regional Representative Economic Development Administration
Federal Building, Room 196
301 S. Park Avenue
Drawer 10074
Helena, MT 59626
406-441-1175

email: edrmteda@aol.com
www.doc.gov/eda/

SAFETY

Challenge: Challenge: Lack of addresses on houses makes emergency response difficult, substance abuse, lack of sidewalks, animal control.

Solution: Solutions/Contacts: The following organizations provide grants for substance abuse programs: The USDA, Rural Development offers Community Facility Loan and Grants for essential community facilities in rural areas. Funds may be used to construct, enlarge or improve community facilities for health care, public safety and public services. Eligible facilities range from nursing homes, dental clinics and community centers to libraries, outdoor theaters and animal shelters.

Resources: The Wold Foundation

139 West 2nd Street, Suite 200
Casper, WY 82601
307-265-7252

The Daniels Fund
55 Madison Street, Suite 255
Denver, CO 80206
303-393-7220

email: info@danielsfund.org
www.danielsfund.org

American Legacy Foundation

1001 G Street NW Suite 800
Washington, DC 20001
202-454-5555

email: grantsinfor@americanlegacy.org
www.americanlegacy.org

Billie Kirkham Rural Development Manager

USDA, Rural Development
508 N. Broadway
Riverton, WY 82501
307-856-7524, Extension 4

PLANNING

Challenge: Challenge: Growth, the need for quality low-income housing and where to build it. The need to clean up existing housing. The annexation of the north MountainView addition and infrastructure.

Solution: Solutions/Contacts: Develop a comprehensive master plan for the community and surrounding area. This plan could and should address the following issues:

- Infrastructure (water, sewer, roads, etc.) and future demand for services
- Types of development (commercial, residential, industrial) and locations
- Open space preservation and greenways/greenbelts
- Future annexation of county or other lands.

The cost of developing such a plan could be \$25,000 - \$50,000 however this would be an invaluable tool in address economic and community development. The Wyoming Business Council has in place a grant program that can assist in the costs of development of a comprehensive community plan. For more information:

Resources: Steve Elledge
East Central Regional Director
Wyoming Business Council
300 S. Wolcott, Suite 300
Casper, WY 82601
307-577-6012
email: selledge@wysbc.com
www.wyomingbusiness.org

Housing needs and concerns, contacts:
Chris Stearns
Department of Housing and Urban Development
150 East B Street, Room
1010 Casper, WY 82601
307-261-6250

Consider working with Habitat for Humanity:

Patrick Lewis
442 West Collins
Casper, WY 82601
307-234-1348

The small town of Sundance formed a housing authority and developed a small 12-unit elderly apartment complex. A contact to discuss their thoughts is:

Cindy Van Horn,
Manager Green Mountain Estates
Sundance Housing Authority
P.O. Box 831
Sundance, WY 82729
307-283-2948

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Challenge: Challenge: There is no economic development organization in Mills. Although there is a tremendous industrial base, there is a lack of job training and higher paying jobs. Additionally, the existing businesses in Mills would like to have access to high-speed communications.

Solution: Solutions/Contacts: Many of those we listened to wanted to see the Mills Area Community and Economic Development Association (MACEDA) or something similar started again. I would recommend that the community consider forming an economic development group of some sort and possibly partnering with CAEDA. I would also recommend that since many of the businesses are members of the Casper Chamber of Commerce, you have representation on the many committees of the Chamber and have your voice heard. This would also assist in the communication and collaboration area. Chris Holden is the Casper Chamber Director.

Steve Elledge may have additional suggestions in this area. Along with Steve Elledge, Regional Director, Wyoming Business Council, develop a list of 4 or 5-targeted industries that would be good additions to Mills (or that you would like to see in Mills). Divide the list by SIC code, number of employees, payroll and geographic location in the United States. Steve Elledge then has the ability to generate a list of prospects within the aforementioned parameters. This list would then show the name and contact information for the business. These businesses could then be contacted to see their interest in expanding or relocating to Mills. (An example would be, say you decided to target all the safety lock manufacturers in states east of the Mississippi River, with 10-50 employees, the Regional Director could generate such a list. From there, the community can contact these businesses and try and get them to look at Mills.)

Casper is in the process of looking at starting a business challenge program. This is a business competition program that can be tailored to existing business and/or start up businesses. It can help create a new company or expand an existing company. The program uses in kind donations and cash grant awards to assist businesses. Businesses interested in winning this competition submit full and complete business plans to an independent review committee. The business

challenge program has been implemented in Laramie County, Albany County, Carbon County and Goshen County. For more information on this program contact Steve Elledge. Don't forget that the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is located in Casper and can provide a variety of assistance as well as training and counseling. Your contact at SBA is: Deb Farris U.S. Small Business Administration 100 East B Street, Room 4001 Casper, WY 82601 307-261-6509 The Small Business Development Centers also offer free counseling, low cost training and services that include, accounting, advertising, cash flow, human resources, financial reports, market research, patents and trademarks, business plan assistance and much more. For more information contact: Leonard Holler Region III Director Small Business Development Center 300 S. Wolcott, Suite 300 Casper, WY 82601 307-234-6683 The Wyoming Department of Employment has workforce training grants available to new and existing companies. These grants are typically \$1000 -\$1500 per employee, depending on the after training wages. These grants are subject to availability and eligibility, for more information contact: Steve Elledge East Central Regional Director Wyoming Business Council 300 S. Wolcott, Suite 300 Casper, WY 82601 307-577-6012 email: selledge@wysbc.com www.wyomingbusiness.org

Resources:

Chris Holden
Casper Area Chamber of Commerce
500 N. Center Casper, WY 82601
307-234-5311

Casper Area Economic Development Alliance
300 S. Wolcott, Suite 300 Casper, WY 82601
307-577-7011

Steve Elledge East Central Regional Director
Wyoming Business Council
300 S. Wolcott, Suite 300
Casper, WY 82601
307-577-6012
email: selledge@wysbc.com
www.wyomingbusiness.org

SUMMARY:

In closing, I would like to again express my gratitude to the people of Mills. I believe the community recognizes that its greatest asset is THE PEOPLE OF MILLS. Thank you for your kindness and hospitality and a special thanks to the organizers of the assessment!

Milton Green

UW Cooperative Extension

P.O. Box 248

Cheyenne, WY 82514

(307) 332-2681

mgreen@uwyo.edu

INTRODUCTION:

It was a pleasure to have the opportunity to work in the Town of Mills. I sincerely appreciate the hospitality of the people and the warm friendly atmosphere given to all the Resource Team. Mills is a unique community. It is the only community in Wyoming that I am aware of where the manufacturing center of the area is the smaller town and support services are in the larger Casper. This situation represents some unique challenges as pointed out by those who participated in the listening sessions. This situation also creates the opportunity for some really creative approaches to community development.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Challenge: How Mills interacts with Casper is a very real challenge in building a growth economy that is sustainable for a long period of time. The Casper/Mills interface appears to be a contentious issue. Several components of this challenge were discussed in the listening sessions. One of the questions evolving from the sessions is how does the private sector compete with the City of Casper on retail development, recreation facilities and other services? The City of Casper has developed what appears to be an east side/west side conflict. It appears that Casper is directly competing with some businesses in Mills. In the area of recreation Casper has built several state of the art facilities with tax revenue and with those facilities came the expectations of multiple use and low use fees. The bulk of the new retail development has moved to east Casper and many of the retail businesses on the west side of town (including Mills) have had a difficult time surviving. The ultimate challenge with this is: How do the private sectors and public sectors of Casper and Mills join together in a collaborative effort to benefit both towns? There are a number of ways this can be done.

Solution: Some recent work at Kansas State University provides some insight to many of the problems small rural towns in the west and midwest encounter in economic development efforts. The work defines development as a sequential pyramid with firm attraction at the top. Community leadership combined with efficient local government is at the bottom of the pyramid and represents the foundation for all community development. In between the foundation and the top of pyramid are a number of options a community can consider. In ascending order those steps are building effective partnerships, creating a positive business environment, retain and possibly expand existing businesses, create new local firms and foster entrepreneurship, build local

linkages and improve the flow of outside dollars. After a community has accomplished all of these steps then is the time to attract outside investors.

The point is the basic foundation for this entire process is leadership development at the community level. A strong leadership base empowers the community to mobilize resources and capitalize on an opportunity. This is critical because the window of development opportunity is fairly narrow and smaller rural communities must be positioned to seize that opportunity. Most rural communities tend to bypass this community building process and move directly to firm attraction and most become very discouraged when those efforts fail.

How can this best be done? One of the solutions is to join forces with the larger Casper area development organizations. It is equally important for the town of Mills to retain their own identity in this process. Another option the Town of Mills may want to consider is the formation of a public/private partnership. The rationale here is the private sector has access to capital and for the most part the public sector does not. Many public agencies have access to funding sources but the purpose of the money is to increase business activity of private sector enterprises. The public sector, because of public funding, is positioned to conduct a number of services and provide a majority of the groundwork the private sector finds too time consuming and expensive. In the context of a small rural community the public/private partnership becomes a critical component of the development effort.

Resources:

Enhancing Wyoming Households and Communities
Cooperative Extension Service
University of Wyoming
c/o Roger Coupal,
Community Development Specialist,
Agriculture and Applied Economics

Wyoming Rural Development Council
2219 Carey Avenue
Cheyenne, Wyoming c/o Mary Randolph

PLANNING

Challenge: The number of times the clean up issue repeated itself in the listening sessions would certainly indicate that it is important to the residents. I observed some interesting dynamics taking place during the sessions. This issue can be regulated as a health and safety issue but is that what the Town of Mills wants to do? Private property rights need to be considered in this issue. If regulation gets too rigid this issue will most likely end up in litigation. Yes, this is an

issue and it is an important issue. The challenge for the Town of Mills is to accomplish or resolve the issue without infringing on the private property rights of the residents.

Solution: The young people interviewed in the assessment indicated an interest in helping make the Town of Mills a really great place to live. They indicated a definite need for recreation facilities and a desire to live in a clean community. A youth organization would be a very good project to consider. A Community Youth Council, Junior City Council, or Youth Civic League are just a few titles under which a youth organization could function. This gets young people involved at the planning and designing stages project as well as the maintenance and clean up stages. Based on some experiences in other communities the youth involvement will significantly reduce vandalism because when the young people are involved they do not hesitate to report property damage and they usually have a good idea who was involved in the incident.

Resources:

Natrona County Cooperative Extension Service
Cooperative Extension Service Office Casper, Wyoming

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Challenge: Job training and higher paying jobs is a real challenge in any state with and aging population. Wyoming is getting older. The state has enjoyed a wonderful education system that has done a tremendous job of keeping the human resource at the cutting edge of a global economy. This challenge is one of those "be careful what you ask for you might get it" scenarios. The education system has done a very good job of training young people to transfer to larger economies of scale in more populated states. Mills, like many of the communities across Wyoming is losing its young people. The question is: Should a community train a workforce for jobs that might exist or should the community create the opportunity and then train the workforce? Neither situation is ideal. The development of small business opportunities through entrepreneurial ventures has real potential for rural communities. The challenge is to educate the financial community and demonstrate the value of entrepreneurship.

Solution: Recent research indicates that rural communities will continue to have a difficult time retaining jobs. Many of the retention strategies are becoming ineffective because of the global economy. Thus, the ability to foster entrepreneurship opportunities appears the have the greatest potential for the future. Some myths about entrepreneurship have labeled those who step out as risk takers or crack pots. Entrepreneurship is a learned skill. Those who engage in entrepreneurial activity are risk managers not careless risk takers. The financial community many times has a difficult time assessing risk for an entrepreneurial venture because the business many times does not have a proven history of success. Entrepreneurship education, financial literacy and other

programs that foster and encourage entrepreneurship are valuable tools that can assist small business in minimizing risk associated with new enterprise.

Resources:

Wyoming Small Development Center
NX Level Program
c/o Diane Wolverton
University of Wyoming
Laramie, Wyoming 82071

Wyoming Business Council
214 West 15th Street
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82001

COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

Challenge: Good old-fashioned communication or the lack of communication came up a number of times. Communication is a two-way process. The lack of citizen participation was mentioned as a problem for public officials. Finally, outreach opportunities appear to be lacking. These three combined add up to high-level tension between local government and the town residents. Everyone is busy so how do you get people committed to projects?

Solution: Community involvement needs to become a habit not an excuse not to participate in the development of the community. The benefits of membership in the community directly reflect the level of involvement by the residents. The Town of Mills is in the process of vacating a number of older buildings. The library has incorporated a number of improvements. So, what is missing? The Town of Mills might want to consider developing a community-learning center in one of the vacant buildings (old school-if a new one is built, old firehall or other building). The purpose of the community-learning center would be to provide a place where youth, adult, continuing and community education could take place. This is a facility that could serve the community as a place for public meetings as well as work force preparation and general education opportunities for the public. It would be easily accessible to those who cannot afford transportation to the community college or other outreach institutions.

There are a countless number of ways a community-learning center can be used. The infrastructure is the most expensive aspect of establishing a community-learning center but the Town of Mills already has the physical infrastructure in place to establish a center. The communication infrastructure and staffing would be the largest expense attached to the project.

Resources:

21st Century Community Learning Center
c/o Milton Green

University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service
PO Box 248
Fort Washakie, Wyoming 82514

YOUNG PEOPLE

Challenge: There is little doubt the young people in Mills need to become involved in the community. In other words, by their own admission, they are bored. The opportunities are there but the young people do not appear to be using those facilities. The challenge is to include the young people in the planning and design for the public/private recreation partnership recommended in this report. The young people interviewed indicated the lack of recreation facilities and open access to those facilities as a real problem. One of the young people interviewed indicated they wanted to play football in the park they did not have adequate lighting so they broke the cover on the streetlight. "We got in big trouble for it but we had a lot more light." Those interviewed indicated they did not like to travel to the east side of Casper to be able to do anything. Would they travel if facilities were more available? Base on the response during the listening session the young people indicated they would support local facilities.

Solution: The young people can literally make or break a recreation facility. They need to be an integral part of the planning and design. This is a process that takes of lot of work and effort. The history of teen centers has not been real successful. But, how many of those projects that failed involved young people in the project itself. There are several public and private facilities that are competing for the same market. A public/private partnership with the capacity to organize activities for young people that include young people for the mutual benefit of both public and private sectors seems to have some potential.

Resources:

Natrona County Cooperative Extension Service
2011 Fairgrounds Road
Casper, Wyoming 82604

Resource Conservation and Development
c/o George Cleek
100 East B Street
Casper, Wyoming 82601

Yvette Wilson

USDA Rural Development
508 N. Broadway
Riverton, WY 82501
(307) 856-7524
yvette.wilson@wy.usda.gov

Introduction: I would like to thank the Town of Mills for the friendliness and generosity that was presented during our visit. I truly enjoy the opportunity to learn more about the community, which I have passed through many times. The best part of these assessments is by far the people. It was apparent that the citizens are proud and appreciate the community where they live and/or work. We certainly hope that our resources will help you reach your goals. Ultimately, the success will be up to all of you, Good Luck!

HOUSING

Challenge: There were several comments on the need to clean up existing housing. There are a significant number of older trailer houses that are aging and some not even safe to live in, this is called substandard housing. Although there will not be a quick fix to housing problem, here is a possible solution.

Solution: WCDA has funds for the development of housing sites with a program called Home Investment Partnership. They also have new program called HOME Run Program. This is a new mortgage loan program developed by WCDA to address the need for affordable new construction in Wyoming. Their initial allocation is \$12,000,000. WCDA will utilize HOME funds to provide a 10-year interest subsidy for the homebuyers. Initially the program will have a step interest rate that starts at 3.625 for year 1-4 and goes to 5.625 for the 11th-30 year. The nice part about this program is you don't have to be a first time homebuyer. Unfortunately Rural Development's programs cannot be utilized in the Town of Mills due to proximity of Mills to Casper.

Resources: To obtain additional information about these programs contact: Cheryl Gillum
WCDA, Housing Programs Director 155 North Beech Street Casper, WY 82602 307-265-0603

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Challenge: The Town of Mills obviously has a tremendous industrial base. However, many residents feel that Mills could benefit from more retail type businesses and higher paying jobs. There are many existing businesses in Mills that rely heavily on computers and Internet, but do not have the access to high-speed communications. It was mentioned that Mills has the infrastructure to handle more industrial businesses, but you still have the challenge of these people not having any other choice but to live in Casper and the surrounding areas. You really have the best of both worlds; you have a beautiful small community with many basic services, and also have the access to everything, some things just minutes away.

Solution: The accessibility to high-speed communications will certainly be a great asset for existing businesses and also an incentive for new businesses wanting to relocate. Job training for new or current employees of any business may in the long run help them land a higher paying job. Here are just a few resources:

Resources: 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 info@wyomingbusiness.org Your area representative is: Steve Elledge East Central Regional Director 300 S. Wolcott #300 Casper, WY 82601 307-577-6012 Fax 307-577-7014

To obtain information on high-speed communications, you may contact: Jody Levin Quest - Public Affairs Manager 307-771-6843 Fax 307-771-7603.

The Wyoming Small Business Development Center is also a helpful resource. The SBDC services include: consulting, training programs, resource library and referral programs. They can also assist in providing information regarding starting a business in the community. More information can be obtained at their website which is sbdc@trib.com. Your area representative is: Leonard Holler Regional III Director 300 S. Wolcott, #300 Casper, WY 82601 307-234-6683 Fax 307-577-7014

The USDA Rural Development has a business and industry guarantee program. The B&I loan guarantee program guarantees loans by eligible local lenders to businesses to benefit rural areas. The program's primary purpose is to create and maintain employment and improve the economic and environmental climate in rural communities. This is achieved by expanding the existing private credit structure capability to make and service quality loans to provide lasting community benefits. The program typically guarantees losses on up to 80% of the original loan amount. Inability to obtain other credit is not a requirement. USDA Rural Development also offers the Rural Business Enterprise Grant to finance and facilitate development of small and emerging private business enterprises. Eligibility is limited to public bodies and private non-profit corporation. Because of the limited amount of money received each year, the funds are limited to Technical Assistance.

USDA Rural Development also offers the Rural Business Opportunity Grant. The purpose of this grant is to promote sustainable economic development in rural communities with exceptional needs. This is accomplished by making grants to pay costs of providing economic planning for rural communities, technical assistance for rural business, or training for rural entrepreneurs or economic development officials. The applicant must be a public body, nonprofit corporation, Indian tribe, or cooperative with members that are primarily rural residents. They must have significant expertise in the activities they propose to carry out with the grant funds and financial strength to ensure they can accomplish the objectives. They must also show that funding will result in economic development of a rural area. The project must include a basis for determining the success or failure of the project and assessing its impact.

Projects eligible for RBOG funding compete based on certain grant selection criteria. Most grants are expected to be \$50,000 or less. For more information on any USDA program contact: Billie Kirkham Rural Development Manager 508 N. Broadway Riverton, WY 82501 307-856-7524 ext. 4 Fax 307-856-2383 billie.kirkham@wy.usda.gov or log on to our website at www.rurdev.usda.gov

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 W. Midwest Casper, WY 82602 307-235-3294 jwilso1@state.wy.us

Introduction: I would like to thank the Town of Mills for their exceptional hospitality, participation, and honesty during our visit. You are all incredible people and I thoroughly enjoyed the experience. The Town has a great deal to offer, a small town being one of them. I am always amazed at the passion and dedication people who live in rural America have for their communities. We hope our resources will help you to achieve your goals and we look forward to hearing about your success!

PLANNING

Challenge: There were several comments on the need to clean up existing housing. There are a significant number of older trailer houses that are aging and some "not even safe to live in", this is called substandard housing. Obtaining funds is always the challenge when it comes to repairing and rehabilitating homes. Non-resident ownership of many of the occupied properties appears to contribute to the problems. Until a solution can be found to cleanup or remove these structures, the town is at the mercy of the absentee landowner/homeowner.

Solution: The Natrona County attorney's office can clarify the legal status of and provide a basis for removing and/or cleaning up the properties based on public health issues and/or fire hazards. The County attorney could suggest what the town needs to do such as notifying non-resident owners, condemning the structures, taking control by non-payment of taxes, etc. This may be a job for Dutch. Also, there are other programs that can provide assistance in clean up and affordable housing.

Resources: The Wyoming Business Council administers the Community Development Block Grant Program. This program funds eligible activities in economic development, community development and housing. For more information contact: Steve Elledge Wyoming Business Council 300 W. Wollcott, #300 Casper, WY 82601 307-234-6683

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 Ave. Cheyenne, WY 82002 307-777-6346 jdockt@state.wy.us

There are a number of innovative programs administered by Habitat for Humanity. One of their special programs is entitled "Youth Build". Habitat for Humanity is working with Natrona County School system. The first pilot project is for students to construct a home on the grounds of Kelly Walsh High School. For more information contact: Habitat for Humanity 442 W. Collins P.O. Box 2886 Casper, WY 82602 234-1348 wy-htf@trib.com.

INFRASTRUCTURE:

Challenge: Community infrastructure was a general category of concerns that were mentioned during the listening sessions. Some concerns were: Roads (Poison Spider), lack of developed recreations and public transportation.

Solution: Your County Planner seems to have a good handle on grant programs that are available for these types of projects; hopefully we are able to provide resources for some that he is not already aware of. Although the town has access to CATC, it seems as though the town would benefit from their own public transportation system. There are many different ways entities can be formed that may benefit their ability to obtain funding and operate the community type facility. The community needs to consider forming a non-profit organization or possibly forming a Joint Powers Board between the City of Mills and the County of Natrona. The Town of Mills could apply for loans and Grants.

Resources: USDA Rural Development has a Community Facility Loan and Grant program that can be used to assist low-income rural areas and towns in the development of essential public community facilities. Loans and/or grants are available for public entities such as municipalities, counties, and special purpose districts. Non-profit corporations may also receive loan assistance when adequate plans for loan repayments are made. RHS loan funds may be used to construct, enlarge or improve community facilities for health care, public safety and public service.

Some types of projects the funds can be used for are: Public transportation, sidewalks, street improvements, animal shelter, telecommunicating lines, public buildings and improvements and much, much more. For more information contact: Billie Kirkham Rural Development Manager 508 N. Broadway Riverton, WY 82501 307-857-7524 ext. 4 Fax 856-2383 billie_kirkham@wy.usda.gov Or log on to our website at www.rurdev.usda.gov.

Local Banks have funds available for projects and the loan can be guaranteed by Rural Development. Contact a local bank or contact Rural Development at the phone # mentioned above. Any of the Bond Councils in the state can help set up bond elections and give advice as to the best bonding route to pursue if needed. Three bonding companies are:

1. Borthwick Law Firm, 1312 Capitol Ave., Suite 506, P.O. Box 1124, Cheyenne., WY 82001, phone 307-635-2433.

2. Herschler, Frudenthal, Salzburg & Bonds, 314 E. 21st St., P.O. Box 387, Cheyenne, WY 82003-0387, Phone 307-634-2240.

3. Wiederspahn, Lummis & Liepas, PC, 2020 Carey Ave., Suite 700, Cheyenne, WY 82001, phone 307-638-6417.

State Loan and Investment Board is another funding source, contact: Brad Miskimins. 307-777-6646. Private foundations can be found through the Internet at the Foundation Center. Their website is www.fdncenter.org

YOUNG PEOPLE

Challenge: Youth and adults report that there is not much to do in the form of recreation. It was brought to our attention that there is a substance abuse problem among the youth and even adults in Mills.

Solution: Plan to involve youth in the community through a variety of resources. Invite them to serve on boards or committees with full membership and voting rights. It is often surprising what they see as important and if they feel valued, they can make a valuable contribution. Evanston has had a Teen Town Council to learn what their youth feel is important and to teach them the operation of government. Get youth involved in the community, encourage volunteering and offer incentives for those that do volunteer.

Resources: Powell High School has a program that requires a portfolio to be written for each student. This is not an option, but a requirement for graduation. This includes community/family service. This service can include everything from sitting on the city council as a youth advisor, to clean up work for the city, work at the senior center, umpire or work at the baseball diamonds. The type of service would be up to the school board, students and the city as what may be included. Powell High Schools says there is more college scholarship money because of the volunteerism. Community service is only one part of the portfolio package they require. To obtain more information about his, contact: Powell High School ATTN: Joann Hirsig 160 N. Evarts Powell, WY 82434-2730 307-754-2215.

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 youth. For more information contact: 21st Century State Incentive Grant Christine Ricketts, 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, so Mills may need support from the Natrona County School

Districts Administration. The funding purpose is to prevent drug use and abuse by Wyoming children and youth. For more information contact: Dr. Paul O. Soumokil 307-777-7168 psoumo@educ.state.wy.us.

Again, I would like to thank everyone in Mills. The positive attitude of the leadership and citizens who were present at the listening sessions will certainly be a driving force to accomplishing the many goals you all have. Remember, as you achieve each goal, celebrate your success and make the whole community aware that you are making progress and working together!

Diane Wolverton

Wyoming Small Business Development Center

P.O. Box 3922

Laramie, WY 82071

(307) 766-3505

ddw@uwyo.edu

Introduction: What a wonderful warm welcome I received to the City of Mills! This is a City that has a lot to be proud of—the dedication of the City personnel, fire department, public works, and police department—Wow! Great people with lots of reasons to be optimistic for the future. Focusing on that optimism will be key — and setting forth a plan that will energize the citizens to work together to help the town become everything it has the potential to become. Thanks for the hospitality!

COMMUNITY APPEARANCE

Challenge: Mills residents exhibited a great deal of pride in the fact that the community has achieved a lot in the area of town cleanup. But they also indicated a realization that they still have a long way to go before the town’s appearance becomes one they can be proud of. There is also some tension about the way the cleanup is being enforced and questions about what is the best way to motivate people to action. One motivator has been the enforcement of codes and exacting penalties upon residents in violation. This has resulted in some anger, resentment and resistance among the citizens.

Solution: One possible solution is to create a community culture in which cleanup is something that people get excited about and they become motivated to action by their own sense of self-interest.

To illustrate this, I’ll tell two short stories. The first is about my experience at the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City. I attended the Luge event, which was held at a venue near Park City. This particular venue required attendees to park their vehicles in a lot located about a mile downhill from the event. The Olympic organizers recognized that the roadway from the lot to the event was not big enough to support the traffic required to provide shuttle busses for everyone attending the event. They needed to find a way to encourage people capable of walking to walk up the mile-long hill to the event. I suspect if they had decreed that every able-bodied person would be required to walk, there would have been a lot of unhappy people. Instead, they created the “Gold Medal Mile” and encouraged people to walk by rewarding them with souvenir “gold medals” for making it to the top of the hill. They also made the walk fun by providing blood-pumping walking music, such as Dancin’ in the Streets, on loud speakers along the way. When I arrived at the top, I was thrilled to receive my gold medal, and I still enjoy telling people that I “earned” a gold medal at the Olympics. This is an excellent example of how creative people

solved a problem by rewarding the behavior that they wanted to encourage. They accomplished their goal, with the crowd participating willingly and joyfully.

A second example comes from Brazil. In Curitiba, the capital city of the State of Paran in Brazil, city planners were tackling the problem of trash and litter in the poor, rural areas. In addition, they wanted to encourage use of public transportation to reduce emissions and traffic. Their solution was the "green exchange" employment program, which focuses on social inclusion, benefiting both those in need and the environment. Low-income families living in shantytowns unreachable by truck bring their trash bags to neighborhood centers, where they exchange them for bus tickets and food. This means less city litter and less disease, less garbage dumped in sensitive areas such as rivers and a better life for the undernourished poor. There's also a program for children where they can exchange recyclable garbage for school supplies, chocolate, toys and tickets for shows. Under the "garbage that's not garbage" program, 70% of the city's trash is recycled by its residents. Once a week, a truck collects paper, cardboard, metal, plastic and glass that has been sorted in the city's homes. The city's paper recycling alone saves the equivalent of 1,200 trees a day. As well as the environmental benefits, money raised from selling materials goes into social programs, and the city employs the homeless and recovering alcoholics in its garbage separation plant. By creatively looking at what appeared to be two problems, litter and poverty (lack of transportation and food), Curitiba's leaders were able to come up with one solution that resolved them both.

These two stories illustrate how when a problem presents itself, creative thinking can shift that problem around until it actually becomes a resource.

Resources: Some of the things that I saw as resources in Mills were a lot of very active, dedicated townspeople as well as youth with time on their hands (which can also be seen as a problem). Perhaps some of the dedicated people in town can have a brainstorming session that would look at ways that the resource of the youth could be put to use to do the cleanup. For example, taking from the Brazil model, people that worked to clean up certain areas might get rewarded with tokens for some form of service or product. One idea that comes to mind is to reward young people with tokens for admission to a skateboard park. At the present time the Town of Mills does not have a skateboard park – but it was a frequently requested project mentioned at the Listening Sessions. Residents feel a skateboard park would increase safety by getting the skateboarders out of the streets, provide a place for the youth to expend energy, and reduce damage to private property. Even though the town does not have a skateboard park, it has a tremendous resource in the Wagon Wheel Roller Rink. We heard from the owner of the Wagon Wheel and she indicated that she would like to develop and expand her business, but she is frustrated by competition from the City of Casper, which has funded a skateboard park there. The Wagon Wheel's owner would like to open a Skateboard park in Mills, however she is worried that if she makes the investment, it might not be supported by the City of Mills or the residents. So a potential solution would be that the city works out an agreement with the business that if a skateboard park is built, the city will contract with the business to redeem the tokens given to the youth.

At the listening session, someone mentioned that it is illegal for the city to give grants or to provide funding to a private business. However, it is not illegal for the city to contract for services with a private business. Obviously, this is done all the time when cities contract for legal services, purchases, maintenance work, construction, etc. In this way, a solution could be arrived at that solves three troublesome problems (cleanup, youth with time on their hands, government competing with business). This is just one idea, and brainstorming would reveal other possibilities and bring to light other resources that could be brought to the table.

A similar program could be established to assist low-income residents such as single mothers living in poverty. Perhaps these residents can participate by providing some service, such as cleanup or shared childcare, and they would receive tokens for transportation, or other needed goods or services. Retailers could also get involved by honoring tokens for clothing or food. The City could contract with the businesses to honor the tokens to pay for the clothing or food. Where will the City get the money to pay for the tokens and the goods they purchase? The City could look at grant programs that address cleanup, single mothers, youth, poverty, etc. In addition, the City could evaluate how much it currently spends for cleanup and perhaps re-direct some of those funds toward “reward” programs, rather than compliance programs. Community Development Block Grants CDBG (grants that address national objectives such as low income and blight.)

Resources:

Contact Steve Achter, Wyoming Business Council, 214 W. 15th St. Cheyenne, WY 82002, (307) 777-2810 sachte@state.wy.us

our own Steve Kurtz is an excellent resource for obtaining grants!

website resource for Brazil Story: Orienting Urban Planning to Sustainability in Curitiba, Brazil: www3.iclei.org/localstrategies/summary/curitiba2.html).

For assistance in establishing contracts between government and business, contact Wyoming GRO-Biz at (307) 637-4990, Rudy Nesvik, Director.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Challenge: During the human services listening session a resident commented that there is a problem in Mills with single mothers living in poverty. The resident indicated that the cycle of poverty continues as these women continue to have more children, without the benefit of two parents to support them.

Solution: The Wyoming Women’s Business Center recently received a grant from TANF to provide an infrastructure to support individuals in poverty through the establishment of home-based businesses. This program, called Sustained Income Through Entrepreneurship (SITE) will enable clients to earn sustainable income while caring for their children at home. To qualify, participants must meet TANF low income guidelines, which means their income must be at 185% of poverty or less and they must have at least one dependent child in the home. In addition,

participants must have a skill or an aptitude for a skill that can be translated into a business (pottery, sewing, leather working, word processing) and a desire to run their own business.

The program will provide training, financial assistance for startup, and marketing cooperative to help get products to the market. For example if a Mills mother is in her home and she is a talented potter, resources would be available to send her to training to improve her skills. She would be able to take business training to learn the skills needed to run a pottery business. If she needs to purchase a potter's wheel and supplies, this can also be accomplished through the grant. The marketing cooperative is for high quality artisan products that will be sold through a website, trade shows and perhaps a retail outlet. This will enable artisan workers from across the state to access markets outside of the state.

Resources: If there are low-income people in your community who fit this profile, please have them contact the Women's Business Center for an application for the SITE program. 307-766-3084. Enrollment is limited, so there will be an application and selection process to determine the candidates most suited for the program.

COLLABORATION/COMMUNICATION

Challenge: Many residents indicated a desire to get more community members involved in the community, to increase collaboration, and to work together to make Mills a more desirable place to live. Even though Mills has a very strong industry base, many people with the higher paid jobs within those industries live in Casper. Some community members indicated a desire to attract more industry, but this does not solve the problem of people working in Mills and living in Casper. The City needs to become desirable as a residential community, in addition to attracting more industry.

Solution: One idea for wholesale change of city image and to kick start community involvement and collaboration is to focus on winning a prestigious award such as the All-American City Award sponsored by the National Civic League. According to the National Civic League's website "The All-America City Award is America's original and most prestigious community recognition award. For over 53 years the All-America City Award has encouraged and recognized civic excellence, honoring communities of all sizes (cities, towns, counties, neighborhoods and regions) in which community members, government, businesses and non-profit organizations work together to address critical local issues." After a lengthy application and interview process, the finalists are judged on the following criteria:

- Participation of the public, private and nonprofit sectors and key constituencies to the maximum extent possible
- Recognition and involvement of diverse segments and perspectives (ethnic, racial, socio-economic, age, etc.) in community decision-making.

- Creative use and leveraging of community resources.
- Significant and specific community achievements.
- Projects that address the community's most important needs.
- Cooperation across jurisdictional boundaries.
- Clear demonstration of project results and impacts (i.e. dollars raised or number of people affected).
- Projects which have significantly improved the community within the last three years and have the potential to continue improving the quality of life.
- At least one project must document ways in which the lives of children and youth have been tangibly improved.

Resources: Wyoming has had two past winners: Powell in 1994 and Sheridan in 1958. Dave Reetz led the effort in Powell, and he would be an excellent resource for discussing how this process brought the community together, enabled them to accomplish enormous tasks, and has benefited the community for the past ten years.

Dave Reetz, PO BOX 907 245 East Powell, WY 82435 (307) 754-2201. National Civic League Website: www.ncl.org/aac/

COMMUNITY APPEARANCE

Challenge: Honky Tonk Image

Solution: A quick suggestion for reducing the Honky Tonk image: ask the Beacon to remove from their sign the quote, "Thanks for Sneakin' to the Beacon." Unfortunately that slogan conveys the message that people head for the Beacon (and Mills) to sneak around and participate in licentious activities.

Resources: The Beacon

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Challenge: Re-establish of Economic Development organization to serve the Town of Mills

Solution: Just do it! (Lots of help is available from the resources listed below.)

Resources: Wyoming Business Council, Steve Elledge, (307) 577-6012.

Wyoming Small Business Development Center, Leonard Holler, 307-234-6683

WEDA, Paula McCormick, 307-332-5546

Mary Randolph

Wyoming Rural Development Council
2219 Carey Ave.
Cheyenne, WY 82002
307-777-6430
mrando@state.wy.us

INTRODUCTION:

I would personally like to thank the community of Mills for hosting the resource team and participating in the assessment process. I was so pleased to be a part of this team and to feel a part of the Mills community for a few days. You are rich community in so many ways, including the proximity to so many resources and in the heart of the people who live there. I thank you for your hospitality and for opening up to us with your thoughts and ideas for your community.

COLLABORATION/COMMUNICATION

Challenge: We heard from many people that folks who live in Mills don't come to meetings, council meetings, etc. We also heard over and over how much everyone appreciates your city workers (police, fire, services, etc.).

Solution: I think you should plan an annual event to honor and thank your city workers. It could be a picnic, potluck, or banquet. I think you would have a great turn out! At this event, you could take an opportunity to inform citizens of events, projects or happenings.

Resources: I do not have any suggestions for resources, but I would put a committee together to plan the first celebration.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Challenge: One of the concerns we heard regarding economic development was the lack of access to high-speed communication.

Solution: I received the following e-mail and thought it might an idea to pursue.

"Our company FixedWirelessONE deploys hi-speed Internet service for cities, towns, tribal

communities and municipalities that want to offer broadband Internet service to their community. We do this using fixed wireless radio signal, and can provide a complete turnkey system, which the city owns and profits from. We can maintain the network remotely from our offices in MN, or teach city staff how to operate and maintain the system. A fixed wireless network involves mounting of radio antennae atop a high point such as an existing cell or water tower. A small receiver box-style antenna is then affixed to the subscriber's home or business, with Ethernet cable connecting this antenna to their computer or network. Installations are handled by a city staff member or local computer professional who has a basic level of computer and construction knowledge. FixedWirelessONE can handle some or all aspects of the service, giving the town another bandwidth option. A typical system runs just under \$50,000. We look forward to answering any questions you may have, or providing specific pricing information on a broadband Internet system for any of the communities you work with that are in need of a bandwidth alternative."

Resources: JP LaMere www.FixedWirelessONE.com

Ph USA Toll Free: 866-895-6888

COMMUNITY APPEARANCE

Challenge: Probably the most repeated concern expressed by citizens of Mills was the issue of clean up and beautification. This concern was expressed regarding signage, city and private property, etc. A major concern was how the appearance of the community has given Mills a reputation and people make assumptions about Mills.

Solution: I really think you are on the right track. You have hired a person to move the process of clean up forward and it will take time. I suggest you continue to move forward (which at times might seem slow!). It is important to stay on track, task and on time with notices and clean up efforts. I recently attended a meeting regarding "affordable housing". Two of the presenters were from a housing association in Idaho, Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc. They have 2 projects a year that struck me that Mills could do, maybe on a smaller scale, but still doable. They sponsor "Rake up Boise" and "Paint the Town". They have 1 day a year that individuals and organizations come together and with donations, and rake and clean up the town.

Paint the town is the same concept - through individuals, organizations and donations, they paint homes and buildings. The program has continued to grow over the years and is very successful!

Resources:

Tom Lay, Executive Director

P.O. Box 8223

Boise, ID 83707-2223

208-343-4065

layt@boisenhs.org www.boisenhs.org

YOUNG PEOPLE

Challenge: One of the sessions I always enjoy is the youth. Even though we did not have many young people show up for the session, the ones that were there really participated and gave us some great ideas. The challenge is to get these kids involved in today and the future of Mills. Since you are in such a unique position of being so close to Casper and high school kids go to school there, I think they feel somewhat disassociated with the community. Your challenge again is to get them involved!

Solution: I would recommend you begin a youth council. This is an opportunity for young people to be involved in government, in the decisions being made about their community and an opportunity to gain leadership skills. The Town of Lovell has a very successful youth council program. I've been fortunate to be involved in giving a grant to get their program started and have read reports that these students have submitted. I've also seen these students participate in the Wyoming Association of Municipalities conferences. It has been a wonderful experience for them. I suggest you contact Lovell Town Council or the Wright Town Council who also has a good program.

Resources:

Angel Montanez
Town of Lovell
P.O. Box 188
Lovell, WY 82431
307-548-6551

Or

Town of Wright
P.O. Box 70
Wright, WY 82732
307-464-1666

LAND USE PLANNING

Challenge: Many challenges arise when a community is growing and expanding. Many times it is difficult to visualize and understand the impacts growth or projects may have on the community. We heard many concerns voiced over infrastructure, transportation, housing, etc. which are all land planning issues.

Solution: I would recommend that the community and county consider utilizing Community Viz for planning and decision-making. Community Viz™ is a suite of software tools and services that allow you to create models of land-use scenarios, to quantify and compare their impacts and to visualize them in 3-D. Several partners have formed the Wyoming Community Viz™ Partnership, which will give some financial assistance and technical assistance to communities and counties in utilizing this software.

Resources: To find out more about Community Viz™ software, visit the www.communityviz.com web site.

For more information on how you can become a pilot community for the Wyoming Community Viz™ Partnership contact: Mary Randolph 307-777-6430

MISCELLANEOUS

Challenge: Many communities have difficulty after the assessment has been completed in organizing committees to move projects forward or to keep citizens informed of progress. It is important to keep any momentum up generated by the assessment to move projects ahead.

Solution: I ran across a great idea that the City of Forsyth, Montana did after their assessment. They completed their assessment last year. After the priority setting meeting, they developed "Phases" of completion. They took their assessment priorities and developed an action plan. To "kick" this off in the community, they developed a program they called, "Economic Development Kick-Off 2002", Phase I.

A person in the community that was talented in creating power point presentations, developed a presentation to show what the priorities were and in what Phase these priorities would be completed and how. They set up an evening program and invite the community. They show the power point, hand out a brochure (which I have attached a copy in the appendix) that lays the program out as well as a form they can fill out to help! The plan on holding this Kick off every year and just completed Kick off 2003.

Resources: City of Forsyth
247 N 9th Ave
P.O. Box 226 Forsyth, MT 59327
406-346-2521
Mayor: Dennis Kopizke

WHAT WE HEARD FROM WHAT WAS SAID

After listening to citizens of Mills, the Resource Team reviewed what was said and condensed the comments down to a few basic statements. These are in no particular order.

MAJOR THEMES IN MILLS

<u>MAJOR THEME</u>	<u>SUB-THEMES</u>
<u>Planning</u>	Growth Low-income housing Housing – where? Clean up existing housing Water, sewer, streets, roads, sidewalks Annexation
<u>Economic Development</u>	Economic development organization Tremendous industrial base Access to high speed communications Business incentives-ease of establishing businesses Job training Higher paying jobs
<u>Infrastructure</u>	Public transportation Water rights Lack of developed recreation facilities on the west side Roads
<u>Safety</u>	Post Office (safety and method of delivery) Poison Spider Road Animal control Weeds-fire loads and compliance Emergency Response/lack of addresses Substance abuse Trash and litter on property Skate boarders Lack of sidewalks

<p><u>Community Appearance</u></p>	<p>Timeliness Signage Garbage cans City and Private property Image, reputation and perceptions Dirt roads Absentee ownership</p>
<p><u>Ordinances</u></p>	<p>Enforcement Recodify existing Zoning Annexation of surrounding properties Jurisdictional boundaries</p>
<p><u>Collaboration/Communication</u></p>	<p>Area collaboration Lack of citizen participation Citizen communication Outreach opportunities Process of dealing with cleanup</p>
<p><u>Young People</u></p>	<p>Leadership Involvement Lighting – parks, pathway, etc. Lack of developed recreation facilities Access to existing facilities is difficult</p>

WHAT WAS SAID AT THE INTERVIEWS

The Resource Team spent three days 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/challenges in the community?
- ✓ What are the major strengths/assets of the community?
- ✓ What projects would you like to see implemented in your community 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.

Question #1: What are the major problems and challenges in your community?

- Casper's perception of Mills
- Junk cars
- Not enough businesses
- More people participation in Mills government
- Consider incorporating Mt View
- Seclusion don't know the school exists
- School doesn't have an identity who do we belong to
- Transportation specifically bussing of the students
- Lack of retail outlets
- No participation index - less than 2 percent of the people get out and vote
- Unsafe surroundings of school, intersections, 3rd and Yellowstone no one will take ownership of the area and its very unsafe for the kids
- Industrial stuff not safe around the school
- Not enough fast food restaurants like McDonalds
- Not enough playgrounds
- Low social economic status of a large number of residents
- Perception of people in Mills, there are a lot of wealthy people that live in Mills
- Change the image
- Emphasize getting new blood in the council and leaders
- Younger people into leadership
- Town of Mills needs to be more progressive
- Perception, cleaning it up, the landscaping
- Perception is that it is a rough and tumble town people perceive it as being a honky tonk

- Lack of parks in the area
- Lack of parent involvement in the schools
- Lack of parent involvement in schools
- Lack of community participation in decisions and leadership
- Planning and zoning
- Dwelling on the negative
- The consolidation of Mills and Mt View and the building of a new school
- Mail system in Mills
- Mail system in Mills
- Mail system in Mills
- Loss of children in the community because of school of choice and it affects our local schools
- No bus that will take kids to Mt View school
- For parents that choose to take their kids to Mt View, there is no bus for those kids
- After school bussing problems
- Houses in need of exterior repairs
- Need of neighborhood codes enforcement
- Yards need to be cleaned up
- Mills is not an entitlement community
- Transportation – CATC bus – cannot offer discount tickets because Mills is not an entitlement
- Housing is a real challenge
- Transportation is a real concern
- Housing rehab in the 80s, have not been able to get additional funding
- Housing is a challenge
- Housing is a significant problem – ½ are mobile homes and you cannot rehab mobile homes
- Ditto housing and transportation
- Transportation – CATC is used, but at times is not timely for people
- Lack of jobs with good wages
- Houses – deteriorated. Some areas have stayed up nice others have not
- Ditto
- Jobs and job training – lack of
- Access to senior programs – centrally located in Casper
- Economic development – “Out of Reach” report shows that a person needs \$9.95/hour to purchase and maintain a house in the Casper/Mills area
- Finding an industry that will create jobs that will pay \$9.75 an hour
- Determining if it is a Mills address or county address (rural addressing)
- Vacant mobile homes – not just a Mills problem but a Casper problem too
- Property damage from skateboarders and bike riders because the industrial area is located so close to the residential area and there isn’t any place for the kids to go safety issue as well

afraid kids will get run over one of these times, be nice to have a skate park for the kids here in Mills

- Casper expanding east instead of using land available, lack of planning
- City facilities compete with skating rink, her biggest competitor is the city of Casper
- Lack of fast reliable internet service (only digital subscriber lines located in downtown Casper) fiber optic lines running on West Yellowstone why aren't we allowed to utilize them to obtain better service
- Lack of accessibility to the fiber optics that are available
- Give people more time to clean up their property, treat the citizens like they are valuable – the way they are going about cleaning up, giving them 10 days to change something that has been that way for 50 years
- Trying to stay alive with the way they are stringing Casper out, may have to build out by Hat Six – could probably double her business if she built on the east side of Casper
- Mills should have their own identity but we've tried to do economic development on our own and we can't do it, to fund it on our own we need more cooperation and work with Casper we part of the larger area – lack of collaborative efforts
- Ditto
- Accessibility to market sector (ages 12-15) – lack of a good working relationship with the schools because I'm a commercial vendor but the recreation center (non profits) allowed to solicit the kids in the schools
- Drug abuse (meth problem) and alcohol abuse
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Lack of funds, programs, to correct these problems (alcohol, meth, etc)
- Ditto
- Communication between the law enforcement agencies in the area
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Breaking and entering vehicles
- Drug abuse meth
- Not enough law enforcement present
- Lack of funds to provide police protection
- Drug dependency in children
- Ditto
- Lack of recreational activity for children
- Not enough for kids to do and they turn to drugs and alcohol
- Lack of funds to educate people about drugs
- Location of post office and the subsequent traffic problem (post office is leased and this is private property therefore the city cannot spend money to upgrade this area and the property owner is not cooperative, state didn't want to be involved and they just signed a new five year lease)
- Houses are not kept up as they should be

- Junk cars and weeds
- Mills reputation of being junkier than it really is, we need to clean it up to improve our reputation
- Lack of proper addresses on homes and faded signs on streets make it difficult to find people needing assistance
- Lack of citizen interest (trying to start neighborhood watch, hard to find people interested)
- Ditto
- Clean up Mills and the lack of funds to clean it up
- Lack of recreational activities for youth
(we stop at 6th and 7th grade and need to keep providing things for them to do after 7th grade)
- Lack of transportation especially for kids to be able to participate in the activities since they are mostly located in Casper
- Proper signage and a way to keep people from stealing signs
- Ditto
- Proper signage in school zones especially flashing lights etc.
- No sidewalks on narrow roads
- Vandalism at parks, i.e. restrooms
- Streets need redone
- Weeds
- Town of mills needs cleaned up
- Residential areas need cleaned
- Kids have idle hands
- Drugs and alcohol
- Streets and signs need updated
- Lack of interest of citizens
- Ditto on last 7 items
- Mills is a junk yard needs cleaned up
- Poison spider roads
- Casper takes priority on Npo funds
- 2nd street extension
- ditto
- clean up, clean up, clean up all of it
- need different approach to city government, need town manager, planner, friend
- weed problem in pendale area
- poison spider road
- ditto on everything
- ditto on everything
- clean up everything
- ditto
- ditto

- parking at post office
- ditto
- ditto on everything
- town crews don't know each other i.e.
- need new and younger blood
- need new business other than industry
- need business that will bring tax dollars in i.e. retail types
- ditto
- ditto
- Need Retail on west side and Casper won't cooperate
- Ditto
- Utilize land that is owned by Mills
- Utilize empty buildings
- Utilize land that is owned
- Ditto
- Need better benefit package for town employees
- Lack of funding for everything
- Don't want to lose our industrial base to the east side of town
- Poison Spider road and funding for same
- Community clean up
- Lack of retail businesses
- Mills/Casper relationship needs to improve
- Perception of Mills
- County needs to clean up area from here to the airport
- Lack of affordable nice housing
- Lack of mail delivery
- Traffic hazard at post office
- Need rail service back
- Better air service
- Lack of trucking service
- Sunny acres park needs improvement
- liability discrepancy between the skate park and the skating rink
- image of the community
- no draw to bring additional businesses
- technology especially internet service only one DSL provider and they raised the prices three times over infrastructure
- ditto
- ditto
- size of the community doesn't allow enough funding of equipment, etc
- ditto

- absence of an economic development group possibly partner with CAEDA
- ditto
- zoning issues prohibit you from getting a loan
- ditto difficult to get a mortgage in Mills
- recognition of Mills as a community that needs state, federal grants funding etc.
- develop a “center of town”
- west by pass loop will cut down the amount of traffic, but the real problem was they want the trucks to not go through town only about 1200 vehicles a day would be taking the by pass and Steve didn’t think this would really be a problem
- need more clean up
- lack of budget to perform town services because the community is so small small tax base and revenue stream
- Lots of empty houses and decision to raise or rehab should be made
- Workforce training
- Workforce in general, many people go to Casper to work
- Weeds
- ditto
- property cleaned up
- residential areas need cleaned up
- children having idle hands
- drugs/alcohol times five
- update of street traffic control signs
- money being spent on the wrong projects
- lack of citizen interest
- anticipated extra growth (more businesses,etc) as far as manpower, money etc how are we going to handle the growth
- ditto
- water lines that need replacement
- dead end lines and hydrants that don’t supply enough water flow
- fire department upgraded as needed
- ditto the last six
- more public involvement in town council
- lack of participation from community

- town is going to need a full time fire department funding
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Majority of the people don't help town government in making decisions how do we get them involved
- Community involvement
- Ditto
- Clean up the town
- Ditto
- Narrow streets may prohibit sidewalks being installed and everyone parks there now in lower Mills (about half the town)
- No sidewalks
- Nothing fun to do
- Too many cops
- Too many trailers
- Ditto
- Too much of a ghetto
- Too old – nothing new in the community (old buildings)
- Too much open space
- Lack of police coverage
- Too many cops
- Not enough business on west side
- We are too poor
- Not enough stores
- The kinds of products we need are not here, like basketballs, etc.
- Cops are too tough
- Too many skaters (punks)
- Ditto
- Too much drug use – only thing to spend money on
- Nothing to do
- All we can do is get movies
- Lack of parks that have room– can't play football
- No basketball court
- No place to play football
- Nothing for entertainment within walking distance
- Not enough entertainment for all ages
- Too many cops
- Not enough street lights
- We get in trouble for everything
- Bus transportation to school

- Students standing up in school busses
- All recreation centers are on east side
- Have to go all the way to Wal Mart to shop
- Prices are high here – no competition
- Need more clean up
- Unreasonable time frame to clean up property (10 days not enough)
- Dogs fighting in streets at 3:00 a.m.
- Ditto
- Ditto
- People turn dogs loose to run
- Speeding, loud mufflers, loud music from cars, a lot of traffic violations
- Need more clean up
- Need better trash cans
- Ditto on the dogs
- Ditto on the trash cans
- Ditto – dogs
- Communication problem – people get offended-rules need to be addressed
- Need more room in library
- Need internet access
- Dogs
- Traffic and dogs
- Vicious dogs should not be allowed in city limits
- Trash cans, painted
- Weeds, trash and junk
- Poison spider road to west Yellowstone redone
- Cat problem, but I know how to take care of that
- Sweeping streets
- Ditches at poison spider mowed further up
- Weed control
- Traffic at post office
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Public parks on private property (i.e. across from park)
- Sewer smell at Pendale ave.
- Cabin #1 has stinky vent pipe
- Traffic problem at Platte and 2nd street
- Weeds at poison spider mowed further up
- Post office traffic
- Lack of striped parking lot at post office

- Ditto on sewer smell
- Drug and alcohol program creating trash, i.e. Beer bottle, cigarette trash, needles
- Traffic at homes at all hours
- Drug and alcohol problem in community
- Vacant Mobile homes that are trashed
- Trashed mobile homes that are occupied – unlivable
- Aging in place and staying home – ability to not get out
- Druggies that live in the neighborhood
- Trash around houses and old cars
- Low wages/benefits for police so we end up losing them to other communities (Casper)
- We can't raise police wages without raising other town employees
- Snow removal and raking leaves for seniors
- Police not enforcing some of rules for example motor homes parking on the streets
- People in the community just don't get involved
- Kids don't use parks
- Park across the street from Jerry's market (Sunny Acres) – but it is improving
- Big, noisy business are going down Poison Spider, almost outside of town line – wonder what more is going to happen
- Businesses locating near homes
- No transportation to get kids to recreational activities in Casper
- Violations continue in the form of: speeding, noise, loud music, moving violations, exhibition driving and careless driving
- Weeds, trash, junk and unlicensed vehicles still exist in spite of the commendable efforts of the Code Enforcement Officer.
- Weed control along the street right of ways and sidewalks.
- Imminent need for street repair on Poison Spider Road beginning at West Yellowstone including eroding intersection junctures connecting with Poison Spider Road.
- Animal problems due to people turning them loose to roam after hours of Metro Patrols.
- Squirrels are ripping up the trees
- Squirrels are ruining the trees
- People move in and out and you can't get to know them
- Getting out onto Wyoming blvd in the afternoon
- Clean up committee in mills
- Run down properties – lack of pride
- Weeds and grass can be a hazards
- Continue the town cleanup, still a lot
- Start community development association-in other towns the town pays for the cd association
- Hard to get people involved in committees
- Cats
- Casper people bring unwanted animals into mills and turn them loose

- Politics
- Lack of infrastructure to support growth
- Not a satisfactory number of technical people
- Kids with the skills leave
- Rights on the river for water
- Need sidewalk
- If you got bigger industry you would have to have bigger fire department
- Kids have to walk and play in the streets because no sidewalks
- When kids go to skating rink, teacher has to walk them across street, no sidewalks
- Mail isn't out until 5:00 pm
- If more people came to town, town structure wouldn't be big enough

Question #2: What are the major strengths/assets of the community?

- Bus lane at school accomplished by partnership
- People
- People and leadership responsiveness
- Small community
- Everyone knows each other
- Volunteer fire department
- Good neighborliness
- Sense of pride
- Lots of history
- Small town community
- Friendliness
- Everybody knows each other
- Stability
- Stability of leadership not a lot of problems with the political leaders
- Ability to let go of the purse strings, people letting the council spend the money to upgrade and develop the community
- Police department
- Putting up the Mills signs and the landscaping appearance
- Freden park
- Having two schools in the community
- Utility rates are very reasonable
- School improvements because of the annexation
- The richness of some of the commercial businesses located in Mills

- New businesses that moved in and the old ones
- In Casper there are many agencies that help people and agencies work together well
- Community that does know people and will help each other
- Ditto
- Caring and giving in the community to each other
- Neighbors helping neighbors and agencies help too and people give to agencies
- Sense of community – sense of its own identity
- Improvements made to community (streets, housing, etc.)
- CATC – Mills has been very helpful in financially assisting Mills
- Interactions with Mills leadership has been very positive
- Mayor of Mills cares about work being done in this community and shows his appreciation (World Changers)
- Volunteer Fire Department – very active with kids
- Ditto
- Fire Department Halloween hot dog roast
- Volunteer Fire Department
- Public Works Department
- All Town Service employees are great
- We have a lot of businesses here that make a lot of money (manufacturing base in Mills)
- Hard working, strong, honest families
- Golf course is going to help Mills
- Our youth (but we stop at 6th and 7th grade and need to keep providing things for them to do after 7th grade)
- Volunteer fire department
- There are caring people in the community
- The fact that it is a small community and everyone knows each other
- The community (including Casper and Evansville we rely on each other but we could use more collaboration)
- Ditto small town
- Beautiful location
- Industrialized community
- Clean industry
- Town of Mills employees including law enforcement and everyone that works for the town
- Small community so law enforcement can stop and talk to people and know people
- Volunteer fire department
- Ditto
- Community relations strong asset
- Interagency cooperation Mills PD and Natrona County
- Town pride in every department and all department heads and they work together to solve problems

- Business and industry 113 businesses and they are the backbone of our community
- People
- Small Town atmosphere
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Law enforcement
- Fire protection
- Public works
- Administration
- Law enforcement
- Fire protection
- Town is easy to work with i.e. waived tap fees for businesses coming in
- ditto
- Business friendly
- Ditto
- Town has flexibility in capabilities
- Mills newsletter
- Quiet town
- People
- Town services
- Library
- Friendliness of town folks
- Quiet
- Low crime rate compared to Casper
- Town services, i.e. police and fire
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Trained officer for everything
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Mills volunteer fire department, trained & qualified
- Community relations, always out there talking to people
- Business and industries
- Education and training standards
- Open door policy with chief of police
- People caring about town of mills
- Town employees
- Town councils, open and proactive that doesn't micro manage
- Town employees
- Ditto

- Public buildings, fire station, town shop, town hall
- Attitude by residents and employees – work well together
- Citizens know and like the services they are receiving
- Citizens not afraid to let you know
- Town council – does not micromanage
- Low cost of utility rates
- Water system
- The people of Mills
- Great to work with (the people)
- Industrial community (and don't want to lose the industrial community to the east side)
- Lots of empty buildings with available utilities and infrastructure many are county owned
- Small town advantage
- Town willingness to help businesses start in Mills, permitting process etc.
- Business sector is assets
- Good community relations
- Police force and their community relations
- Friendly business environment
- First Interstate Bank, Credit Union and CPA in Mills
- Good professional support
- Hard working people
- Industrial area of Natrona County
- A lot of small independent businesses and large companies as well
- Friendly people
- Stability of town government
- Sense of community
- Financial stability
- Ditto last three
- Existing town government gets it done, pro business
- Small community you know your neighbor, businesses and employees
- A lot of opportunity here, land around, resources available
- Ditto
- Lots of real estate available and infrastructure in place and reasonable prices
- Mills Volunteer Fire Department
- Community relations
- Community relations
- Community relations
- Community relations

- Community relations
- Business and Industry
- Education/Training standards are held at a higher standard
- Open door policy
- People care about the Town of Mills
- Small community and most everyone knows each other
- Community responsiveness when you ask for help
- Ditto last two
- People aren't afraid to ask for help
- Friendly small town
- Terrific clerk's office
- Police Department
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Ditto
- They are working on the clean up
- Working people of Mills
- Low water rates
- Fire department and police department and city employees
- Highway that goes through the middle and easy to get to Mills
- Lots of people and houses
- Paintball field (it is like a desert and we can dig holes) Roosevelt Field
- Bike trail (Pathway)
- History of Mills
- Quiet
- People that have lived here for years
- Quiet when the cars are screaming by and dogs aren't barking
- Smallness, has gotten better over 16 years
- Mighty fine town
- Reasonable rates
- Operating in the black
- Good employees
- Elevation exceeds population
- Good employees
- Emergency response team
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Police department
- Ditto

- Ditto
- Wind blow the odors right out
- Police department cooperative
- City employees cooperative
- Difficult to find help on short notice problem
- Police officers
- City employees
- Descent water rates
- Good enough to vote no when Casper wanted water
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Ditto on everything
- City employees
- You can knock on city employees door
- City employees personable with the people
- Quality water
- Affordable water and sewer
- Small town atmosphere
- School, principal and children
- Walk way
- Library
- Pathway is clean
- The wind keeps pathway clean
- Taxes
- Newsletter
- People are cleaning up their yards and houses
- Hired a person to clean up yards
- New people on police force
- Pride in the community and their independence
- Small community atmosphere
- Ditto
- Good workforce
- Fine police force
- Fireman are second to none – they are there any time day or night (dedicated people)
- Proud of this town and I wouldn't live any place else
- Good town workforce
- Ditto
- The town has done a lot of clean up and it is improving
- Variety of services, senior center, community hall, fire department (scope of services)
- Everything is going pretty good – I like living here

- Putting in our streets
- Reasonable rates for utilities for water, sewer and garbage
- Peaceful community
- River and location of services
- Access to skiing, golf – it combines small town with big town
- Good parks
- Getting some retail businesses
- Excellent fire and Emergency Response teams, Police and Water Departments
- Reasonable water rates
- New town shop and new fire hall
- The new modern support facilities to include the Mills Town Hall and Office Complex, new maintenance building and fire hall under construction
- Clean up efforts
- Asset was that we did not let Casper buy our water
- Things are pretty good here right now
- School system are cleaning up the goatsheads has been the best in years
- Nice friendly small time atmosphere
- Speed is down
- Not so much traffic
- Everybody is friendly
- The town cooperative of businesses new and old
- Friendliness
- Not so much traffic
- Fire department available if there is a medical problem
- Good place to raise kids
- Mills has an excellent school
- Community supporting the lions club breakfast
- Small community
- River
- Water treatment plant
- Parkway/pathway
- People like going to the post office
- Mail is locked up so can't get stolen

Question #3: What projects would you like to see implemented in your community in the next two, five, ten, or twenty years?

- Nice parks
- Strong education system
- Strong education system
- Mills will be tied to the Amoco park and we'll see more people – closer tie between Mills and Casper
- Streets paved and annex in Mt View
- Streets paved and annex in Mt View
- More beautification on highway going to airport
- Community center, senior center and pool with the combining of the two schools
- Community center, senior center and pool by combining the seniors will be involved in the kids lives too
- Businesses held accountable for landscaping their property more face lifts
- A new first interstate bank
- Town of Mills acquire enough water rights to support growth
- More businesses moving in
- Make Mills more attractive so we can recruit more businesses
- Be able to provide more financial enticements to recruit more business
- Bring the school in to Mills so we have an identity
- Increase work force in Mills
- Subsidized transportation
- Jobs that bring in an hourly wage so people can rent/purchase a house (at least \$9.97 an hour)
- See mobile homes cleaned up
- North Mt. View paved and annexed to Town of Mill (**we feel like dirty cousins**)
- Invest money into permanent housing repair – continue to repair housing stock
- Fixed route service for transportation – regular route service
- Industry that would pay affordable wages (service sector jobs don't pay very well) Would like to see \$12.00 per hour
- Affordable housing
- Technology jobs
- House keeping
- Service organizations do more outreach into the Mills community
- Single women and women with children that have no place to go and move in with anyone – women and children's shelter
- Community Center for kids (safe place for kids to go and even talk to someone)

- Cooperative effort between the town of Mills, Evansville, Casper, Bar Nunn, through representation with the Chamber or CAEDA some sort of Coalition of towns they are Casper chamber membership (there is not a chamber in Mills)
- Representation in other organizations that already exist in area
- Expand my business indoor/outdoor skating rink or combining my rink with putt putt golf or go carts or something like that
- Instead of expanding east, use our vacant lots and use what space is here for expanding for more completeness in the community
- Improve internet service by providing us accessibility to the fiber optics that are right out our front doors this could also help draw companies into some of these vacant buildings Need to get there technology wise
- A new post office or better access to the existing post office
- Major clean up and changes within the next five years
- Ditto
- Weeds and clean up with not just the residences but everything
- Clean up run down mobile home areas
- Within 2 years street signs you can read and addresses you can read
- Within 2 years, video conferencing for arraignments
- Within 2 years have Mills go to a city manager form of government to remove the burden from the Mayor and Town council
- Within 5 years sidewalks in areas
- Relocate Mills post office
- 10 years celebrate the clean up process
- 20 years I'd be like to come across the bridge and not be able to tell that you'd left Casper and entered Mills and increase population from 5000
- Within 2 years I'd like to see joint jurisdiction so that police officers can help each other – has to be a legislative change right now this is a long detailed process
- Drug task force within five years
- Ditto street sign comment, need signs you can read and addresses you can read
- Within 2-3 years enhanced communications between all law enforcements including Casper who is on the 800 mh and no other department is
- Video conferencing for arraignments
- Expansion of jail to allow 400 inmates
- Effective treatment for alcohol and meth or drug use
- More police officers and law enforcement population grows but police force doesn't
- Weeds cut
- Younger council, sad when you have to check to see if there breathing
- Accessibility to river, i.e. Fishing pier for handicap or elderly
- Rec park for children
- Update street signs

- Visible addresses
- Repave older streets
- Public restrooms in parks
- Solution on vandalism
- Sidewalks in lower mills
- Town of mills property clean up
- Enhance benefit package for town employees
- Upgrade to 800 mg. Radio
- Skate park
- Bmx track
- Recreation open to public
- Town clean up
- Annex surrounding areas
- Wyoming wildlife based zoo
- Purchasing land to attract large bus
- Widen poison n spider road
- Clean up
- New sidewalks
- Transportation for elder
- New policy facility
- Combine schools to centralize
- New traffic control signs
- Better housing
- Commercial Indus
- Clean up
- Community center
- New traffic control signs
- Population expansion to city rather than town
- Drug and alcohol crimes to mini
- New schools
- Annex the rest of mountain view
- Cultural statues
- Clean town in 20 years
- 20 Police officers
- ditto everything
- ditto everything
- more police officers on streets – 2-3 officers per shift
- ditto on everything
- have weeds cleaned up next to river to general public can utilize
- ditto on everything

- more for youth to do
- more jobs and opportunity for youth
- More public relations and marketing of town
- Benefits for town employees
- Clean up
- Expansion of city limits
- Chamberlain and Johnson roads to be incorporated into Mills-Dempsey Acres
- Ditto
- Development –actively pursue industry at any level
- More parking in town of mills
- Exemplary codes and enforcement on mobile homes – no grandfather clauses
- Larger police force
- Larger industry
- Municipality needs to expand to pursue more funding
- 20 years – hope jerry can retire
- Sewer issues in next 2 years
- Upgrade Sanitation
- More Street signs
- More personnel in public works without expansion of town
- Affordable housing
- Change trend from mobile homes to stick built currently 50% are mobile homes
- A cleaner town of mills
- Educate public on the town of mills
- Ordinance books brought up to date, corrected and readable
- Ditto on everything
- Additional water rights within 20 years
- Continue to upgrade water plant as needed
- Ditto on everything
- Ditto on everything
- Move or enlarge post office
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Expand library
- Automatic sanitation trucks
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Ditto

- Ditto on everything
- Full time qualified building inspector
- Younger town council
- Market and advertise senior center
- Make meter reading easier
- Mail delivery get rid of the post office if we have to but we need to have mail delivery
- Want mail delivery but still keep post office and why do we have to choose
- Find out why we have to make a choice between delivery and keeping our post office
- Extend rail service from the center of town to the airport (it would bring in more business if we had extended rail service) we still have BN find out if BN could extend to the airport lots of businesses out there would use it
- Expand skating rink to include a skate park
- Find out why there is a liability discrepancy between skate park and skating rink (why don't the kids have to wear protective gear at the skate park in Casper)
- Incentives of some kind for kids that are wearing protective gear when riding bikes and skateboarding (free coupons from businesses, etc)
- Poison Spider road repaved and widened from 7th clear to Robertson Road and in 10 years I'd like to see it all full of businesses clear to Robertson Road
- Re-establish economic development group
- Mills Chamber of Commerce
- Some type of business merchants group
- Town continue with clean up and beautification
- Determination on what to do with existing housing
- Investigate CDBG money to help
- Develop a skateboard park
- Develop center of town so there is a true downtown
- Ditto last five recommendations
- More parks
- Community center for kids, more activities for kids especially in summer, recreation program
- Ditto, Mills doesn't have a swimming pool either
- Build up infrastructure, improve technology, streets, sewer, alley ways, pave them curb and gutter installation
- Be attractive to small businesses by completing all these projects and getting the word out that Mills is a great place for businesses to relocate to, actively recruiting businesses
- Good education system
- Appoint someone to contact CAEDA to help recruit businesses
- Get community college on board to have more of a presence in Mills
- Recreational park for children
- Update street signs
- Visible address numbers

- Repave older asphalt streets
- Bathrooms in parks
- Sidewalks in lower Mills area
- Town of Mills property clean up
- Enhance the benefit package for employees
- Upgrade to 800 mgz radios
- Skate park
- BMX park
- Upgrade streets more to include sidewalks and curbs throughout town
- Community or recreation center open to public
- Town clean up
- Annexation of surrounding areas
- Zoo Wyoming wildlife possibly more
- Town of Mills purchasing land to attract larger businesses
- Poison Spider road widened and reconstructed
- Code enforcement of building residences limit age of trailer, standardize lots
- More police officers
- Two fire departments at least one paid
- Emergency alert system
- Fire department if not full time at least partial paid because of the high volume of calls always with volunteer support
- Ditto fire department and police department
- Move senior citizen center out of the basement, build a new senior center
- Combining schools to central location
- New police department facilities
- Upgrade parks to encourage more use, like install BBQ pits to encourage family use
- Transportation system
- New sidewalks
- More family oriented things to do
- New traffic control street signs throughout town
- Light up the walk way
- More things for kids to do
- Skate park
- Ditto last three suggestions
- Police department having its own building
- Housing that is more upscale to improve property values
- More commercial industry
- Clean up river banks for public
- Teach everyone how to drive and respect emergency vehicles
- More property developed for businesses and community

- Community center pool recreation center
- New traffic control signs
- Population expansion for a town to a city in 20 years
- Drug and alcohol crimes to a minimum 20 years
- New schools 20 years
- Expansion of annexed areas of the town west
- Cultural statue
- Clean town
- Police department having 20 employees
- Gym
- Update Park equipment – it is torn up or vandalized
- A place to play paintball (outdoor)
- More entertainment and more things to do for young people
- Movie theatre
- Drive in movie theatre
- Putt Putt golf
- Park
- Basketball court
- Jr/Sr. High School
- Arcade
- Open gym at schools
- Recreation center with gym, basketball courts
- Renovating the Wagon Wheel skating rink
- Skyscrapers
- A place to ride dirt bikes
- Recreation Center
- Bigger grocery store
- Sports center (recreation center) – could just be a gym with track
- Arena (multi-purpose center) – basketball, rock climbing, gym, etc.
- Get people here
- More curbs
- Organization of volunteer groups to help with clean up and painting the trash cans
- Get youth involved with clean up
- Pendle ave. continues with yellow lines, but white paint stops
- County wide spraying program to keep mosquitoes down – WEST NILE
- Ditto
- Plenty of water to keep the desert green in 20 years
- Major road ways improved, turn lanes, fences
- Volunteers to clean up
- More accountability and responsibility with children i.e. help clean up

- Mills view shopping center enlarged
- Amber valley #1 and #2 property turned into the park it was supposed to be
- youth council
- internet access
- teen center within library
- small water park
- utilize old humane society to house stray dogs and cats
- ditto
- ditto
- ditto
- utilize existing programs rather than creating
- Contact appropriate authorities to solve problems
- Annexation of the North Mountain view
- 800 hotline for people in trouble
- House for people to go to if in trouble
- Neighborhood watch program
- Design incentive program to retain mills police officers
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Neighborhood watch program
- Encourage people through newsletters to contact appropriate authorities
- Increase fines
- Show appreciation for people in community who show random acts of kindness
- Utilize newsletter to give tidbits on home maintenance, gardening
- Rather than asking the gardener ask max.
- Have 2 fully funded metro animal control officers assigned to Mills area and give them power to do something
- Complete striping of the 600 block of Pendell Boulevard for diagonal parking in front of the residences (by October 2004)
- Involve people in community especially youth
- Review of the Mills Post Office location, traffic volume and parking area striping.
- Study reinstating the Neighborhood Watch Program
- Design of an incentive program to retain Mills Police Officers that would enhance long term service (beginning with more money)
- More retail businesses
- K-Mart or Target on CY Ave. would help Mills
- Get more people eating at Senior Center
- Ditto and we have many programs we could offer seniors if we could get them to come
- Swimming pool for kids

- Shuttle that would get kids to pools/recreation areas in Casper
- Review a system of more severe penalties for nuisance police responses to control loud music complaints
- Continue with clean up
- Poison Spring road needs to be repaired while waiting for construction
- Shake out the federal money to get the Poison Spider road fixed
- Annexation of North Mountain View
- Merging of the schools – explore the option and make sure Mills is involved in the decision
- Large grocery store
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Kmart
- Ditto
- Clothing store
- Community garden or areas for seniors to plant and not have to do the watering
- Get acquainted with somebody you went to school with
- Boeing aircraft factory
- Jobs
- Bigger library
- Side walks
- At home mail delivery
- Get mailmen on the ball to get mail out before 5:00 pm
- Gradual growth of town hall as town grows in population
- Equitable sales tax
- Take tax off food

APPENDIX

20 CLUES TO RURAL COMMUNITY SURVIVAL

1. Evidence of Community Pride:

Successful communities are often showplaces of care, attention, history and heritage.

2. Emphasis on Quality in Business and Community Life:

People believe that something worth doing is worth doing right.

3. Willingness to Invest in the Future:

In addition to the brick-and-mortar investments, all decisions are made with an outlook on the future.

4. Participatory Approach to Community Decision Making:

Even the most powerful of opinion leaders seem to work toward building consensus.

5. Cooperative Community Spirit:

The stress is on working together toward a common goal, and the focus is on positive results.

6. Realistic Appraisal of Future Opportunities:

Successful communities have learned how to build on strengths and minimize weaknesses.

7. Awareness of Competitive Positioning:

Local loyalty is emphasized, but thriving communities know who their competitors are and position themselves accordingly.

8. Knowledge of the Physical Environment:

Relative location and available natural resources underscore decision-making.

9. Active Economic Development Program:

There is an organized, public/private approach to economic development.

10. Deliberate Transition of Power to a Younger Generation of Leaders:

People under 40 regularly hold key positions in civic and business affairs.

11. Acceptance of Women in Leadership Roles:

Women are elected officials, plant managers, and entrepreneurial developers.

12. Strong Belief in and Support for Education:

Good schools are the norm and centers of community activity.

13. Problem-Solving Approach to Providing Health Care:

Health care is considered essential, and smart strategies are in place for diverse methods of delivery.

14. Strong Multi-Generational Family Orientation:

The definition of family is broad, and activities include younger as well as older generations.

15. Strong Presence of Traditional Institutions that are Integral to Community Life:

Churches, schools and service clubs are strong influences on community development and social activities.

16. Sound and Well-Maintained Infrastructure:

Leaders work hard to maintain and improve streets, sidewalks, water systems, and sewage facilities.

17. Careful Use of Fiscal Resources:

Frugality is a way of life and expenditures are considered investments in the future.

18. Sophisticated Use of Information Resources:

Leaders access information that is beyond the knowledge base available in the community.

19. Willingness to Seek Help from the Outside:

People seek outside help for community needs, and many compete for government grants and contracts for economic and social programs.

20. Conviction that, in the Long Run, You Have to Do It Yourself:

Thriving rural communities believe their destiny is in their own hands. Making their communities good places is a pro-active assignment, and they willingly accept it.

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