

Buhl Community

Review

May 13-14, 2002



University of Idaho

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Preface

This document provides an overview of the Buhl Community Review as experienced by a group of 25 community development professionals from May 13-14, 2002 and in the subsequent months that followed. Its purpose is to describe some of the many observations, interviews, conversations, ideas, visions, hopes, and perspectives recorded throughout the process. It is our sincere hope that this information be digested, discussed, and used as a catalyst for continued community development in Buhl and the surrounding Twin Falls County region.

This report does not represent all of the ideas and opinions of Buhl's diverse community residents, and it does not hold all of the answers. It does contain some practical suggestions and resource recommendations. Please take what you can use, prioritize the next steps, find community consensus, set goals and objectives, take action, celebrate the small victories, and leave the rest.

Buhl's forward progress and effectiveness in achieving its vision of the future will be determined by the will, commitment, planning, and communication of those in the community who hold or assume a leadership role and motivate others to action behind a shared vision. Please call on members of the visiting team, your partners in community development, because we want to support your efforts. Our goal is to increase the wealth and vitality of Buhl and the surrounding region.



Members of the home and visiting economic development team walk downtown Buhl on May 13, 2002

The document is divided into four main sections:

Part One, Introduction and Overview, contains a brief description of the Community Review process and participants, why the review was requested, the approximate value of the in-kind

donations made by Visiting Team members, and a brief overview of the community and its history.

Part Two, Strategic Thoughts, Themes, & Team Reports, presents the heart of the review with a closer look at the requested focus areas. This section reflects the thoughts of the content experts in Local Economic Development, Housing, and Education, as well as some ideas for positive change.

Part Three, Community Surveys, Interviews, and Additional Resources, holds additional information related to the review such as the survey data and community interviews collected from community residents, a collection of tools and additional resources such as the community and economic development, business retention, and quality of life survey, and additional resource recommendations.



Education home and visiting team members engage with student leaders at Buhl High School on May 13, 2002

Part Four, Appendix, holds visiting team member bios and contact information, news articles pertaining to the community review, and the community review schedules.

Thanks so much to the Buhl community for your willingness to share ideas and information with the visiting team, and for keeping an open mind as you evaluate the resource ideas and information from the outside pairs of eyes represented by the community development professionals who visited your community. For more information about this document or the Idaho Community Review process, contact Michael Shaw at the Association of Idaho Cities: 1-800-344-8594, (208) 850-7494, or Mshaw@idahocities.org.

Introduction & Overview

On May 13-14, 2002, Buhl hosted 25 community development professionals as part of the Idaho Community Review. The visiting team's aim was to listen, observe and engage in dialogue with local leaders and residents about their community, its challenges, strengths and potential. It is our sincere hope that this process provides useful tools and perspective as the Buhl community charts and follows a course for its future.

The Community Review is a partnership project spearheaded by the Association of Idaho Cities, the Idaho Department of Commerce, the Idaho Rural Partnership, the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, the University of Idaho, and Idaho Housing & Finance Association. The Community Review program's goals are to provide objective recommendations and resources, and to supplement Buhl's effort in developing and implementing local community development strategies. Buhl community leaders demonstrated exceptional courage and willingness to share all aspects of their community, and have remained open to feedback, information and ideas from the visiting team.

With the exception of public survey data and interview results, the perspectives contained in this document represent the personal observations and perceptions of Visiting Team members based on their interactions with Home Team members, Buhl residents and other community leaders. Every community is complex and dynamic, with many layers, issues and facets. Visiting Team comments in no way mean to characterize or define Buhl categorically; they simply reflect a point in time visit with those participating in review activities and our brief tour of the community.

We hope that this document serves to generate thoughtful discussion and reflection, and facilitates progressive action that benefits the entire community.

Buhl Review Team Makeup and Contributions

Visiting Team members are a diverse mix of professionals from the public, private and nonprofit sectors. Team composition included federal, state, and local government representatives, trainers and facilitators, and community leaders with years of experience in housing, economics, labor, small business development and planning, and private consulting. All of the visitors' time was donated to the community for this effort, including travel and lodging costs.

As strong and committed partners in the process, the City of Buhl, Buhl Chamber of Commerce, Buhl Joint School District # 412, Clear Springs Foods, 8th Street Center, Clear Lake County Club, Buhl Moose Lodge and other community and civic groups provided meeting areas, refreshments and meals for for all participants, as well as the most valuable resource of all: time.

The conservative total estimated (in-kind) value of this review to the community of Buhl is \$23,000, reflecting approximately \$355 per day per visiting team member along with other preparation and follow-up time. Cost per day is based on average salaries (plus benefits), travel, lodging and per diem costs contributed by visiting team members and associated organizations.

Aside from the actual review itself, select Planning Team members also spent weeks coordinating the review, conducting site visits and producing the follow-up report. This significant investment represents an in-kind match toward a community's planning efforts and should be an incentive for community leaders and residents to make the best possible use of the Review process and product. This is the equivalent of hiring a 25-member consulting firm (for the cost of meals and local tours only).

The key Team Members for the Buhl Review included the following individuals: For background and contact information, see the attached Team Roster in the appendix.

Planning Team

Name	Title	Organization
Hank Ebert	Rural Development Specialist	Idaho Dept of Commerce
Michael Shaw	Human Rights Coordinator	Association of Idaho Cities
Erik Kingston	Housing Resources Coordinator	Idaho Housing & Finance Association
Brian Dale	Operations Specialist	US Dept of Housing & Urban Development
Dwight Johnson	IRP Interim Executive Director	Idaho Dept of Labor
James Nelson	Ag., Economic & Rural Sociology Dept.	University of Idaho

Local Economic Development

Cleo Cheney	Mayor	City of Heyburn
Larry Stachler	Rural Development Manager	USDA Rural Development
Greg Rogers	Regional Labor Economist	Magic Valley Job Service
Carleen Herring	Economic Dev. Division Director	Region IV Development Association
Jim Scott	Economic Development Facilitator	Rural Magic Valley Econ. Dev. Assn.
Vance Kirklin	Group Manager	CRI Advantage
Cindy Williams	Vice President/Community Development	U.S. Bank

Housing

Jane Pavek	Vice President/Community Development	Well's Fargo Bank
Richard Stallings	City Council/Neighborhood Housing Svcs	City of Pocatello
Sue Shadley	Associate Broker/State Instructor	Re/Max Homestead Realty
Becky Dean	Rural Development Specialist	USDA Rural Development
Gary Gillespie	Consultant	Retired

Education

Phil Homer	Consultant	Retired
Darrel McRoberts	Assistant to the Director	Idaho Dept. of Agriculture
Mandy De Castro	Program Specialist	Association of Idaho Cities
Lisa Edwards	Americorps Intern	Association of Idaho Cities
Gloria Galan	City Councilmember	City of Twin Falls
Ron Shopbell	Summer School & Enrollment Director	College of Southern Idaho
Sara Bott	Community Relations	Mini/Cassia HealthNet

Home Team Leaders

Barbara Gietzen	Mayor	City of Buhl
ED Steve Kaatz	President	Buhl Chamber of Commerce
H Tom Gannon	Planning & Zoning Clerk	City of Buhl
E Dr. Rick Hill	School Superintendent	Buhl Joint School District #412

Review Schedule

Tuesday, April 2, 2002

The Community Review Planning Team members conducted a pre-review site visit to meet with civic leaders and Home Team leaders and discuss logistics, areas of focus and to clarify mutual expectations.

Monday, May 13, 2002

After a welcome from Buhl Mayor Barbara Gietzen, remarks about Buhl's history presented by Lee Popplewell, team introductions, and an overview of the community review process and two-day schedule, the team separated into groups and focused on three core interest areas identified by Buhl's leadership: *Local Economic Development*, headed by Buhl Chamber of Commerce President Steve Kaatz, *Housing*, headed by Buhl City Planning & Zoning Clerk Tom Gannon, and *Education*, headed by Buhl Joint School District # 412 Superintendent Rick Hill.



Housing team members break for lunch on the afternoon of May 13, 2002 at the Clear Springs Food Visitor's Center

The home and visiting teams engaged in conversations with Buhl community leaders and citizens, toured the area, facilitated group discussions, and submitted written comments detailing their experiences. These comments reflected all phases of the review and included resources available to Buhl in effecting positive change, as well as thoughts about utilizing community assets.

Tuesday, May 14, 2002

Visiting Team Members met throughout the morning to discuss and distill the information gathered during the previous day's activities. Then each focus team prepared a brief outline of their observations and recommendations. At a civic club-sponsored public lunch at the Buhl Moose Lodge, the community was treated to a brief overhead slide show presentation reflecting an overview of Buhl and surrounding areas and thematic photos reflecting the areas of focus. Focus team members then presented their summary reports to the public and facilitated limited discussion among attendees about issues raised, challenges and next steps.

Analysis Areas Requested by the Community

Local Economic Development

Assess the community business climate for retention of existing businesses, bringing in new business to eliminate empty storefronts, creating more growth in the area of clean agricultural business development, and assessing Buhl's capacity for growth (infrastructure, zoning restrictions, availability of land, bandwidth, and location). The community was also interested in regional and national trends and profiles. Finally, Buhl requested some ideas about the mechanics of a strategy, which would enable the community to achieve its vision of economic development.

Housing

Assess the availability of senior housing options, rental housing options, homes to purchase, and housing on vacant lots, as well as the condition of owner occupied housing and rental housing. Buhl was interested in perceptions of the existing housing market, ideas to develop affordable housing for educators and others in a middle-income bracket, and thoughts about future development of a 9000-acre area near Buhl in Twin Falls County.

Education

Assess existing facilities, quality of education pre-school through 12th grade, and standards and accountability for administration, teaching staff, parents, and students. The community is also interested in perceptions in the school environment and current technological capabilities. Finally, Buhl would like some ideas about existing success indicators, measures, and other assessments that would help the administration determine how to evaluate the quality of education and teacher work in the district.

Early History of Buhl

In 1906, the Twin Falls Land & Water Company brought water to the barren, desert land in the Buhl area through an irrigation system derived from a dam on the Snake River.

In 1908 Twin Falls County Commissioners approved the Village of Buhl, which was named after Frank Buhl, a Pennsylvania businessman and philanthropist who funded construction of the F.H.Buhl School.

Buhl has a diagonal town site that is not oriented to the main compass points because its main original building, the Buhl Hotel, was already under construction at the time and was not oriented in that fashion. Twelve to eighteen inches under Buhl topsoil, excavators typically run into hardpan and solid rock, which increases costs for water and sewer lines and other excavation.

Trains first arrived in Buhl in 1907, and it became a primary shipping point with a bustling passenger depot. Buhl had five churches by 1908, and the Buhl Herald by 1909. Telephone service was established in 1909, and gold in nearby Nevada brought more people and commerce in 1910 when the water system was installed and trees were planted with increasing success.

Grains were a popular agricultural product by 1913 with the construction of numerous grain elevators and the onset of paved road construction. Buhl boomed with the state highway and its place on the chautauqua and automobile circuit and by 1918 had three banks, two newspapers, four grain elevators, a cheese factory, and two cream stations. The opera house and circus were popular attractions.

Later agriculture included condensed milk in 1927 when depression set in, and Rangen and the first commercial trout farm came along in 1928-29. The first canning and processing came to Buhl in 1944, leading to a long and successful agricultural processing industry.



Buhl's Ramona Theater, which opened in 1928, seated 700 and could once again serve as a cultural hub for the community through historic preservation support from the Idaho Commission on the Arts or Idaho Heritage Trust.

Strategic Thoughts & Themes

“Luck is the residue of design.”

Effective communication and relationship building, information sharing, ongoing dialogue, and planning will be essential to Buhl’s future community health. Inclusive communication makes everyone feel part of the team. Strong relationships weather storms in tough times. Quality communities are created by choice, not chance. Addressing short-term problems can create a constant ‘crisis mode’ for community leaders and make it seem impossible to find time and resources to plan. However, planning is a crucial investment in communities, and must be accompanied by pro-active thinking and a willingness to act.

Strategic planning involves the following procedural steps of development:

- core governing values
- a vision
- a mission
- working through issues & challenges
- creating goals and objectives
- taking action

In short, strategic planning is a guided path from the ‘dream’ to the ‘do.’ For comprehensive information and guidance about strategic planning, capital improvement planning and financing, writing successful grant applications, the city budgeting process, understanding revenue sources, and city case study examples, contact the Association of Idaho Cities at 1-800-344-8594 and request a copy of **Smart Towns: A Guide to Public Finance Strategies**. The manual is also available on the Idaho Department of Commerce website at www.idoc.state.id.us.

Moving from Vision to Action

Buhl leadership has taken numerous important steps to invest in its future and take a long term view of sustainability. One of the most important efforts in the community has been the push to support an effort entitled **‘Building Buhl’s Future: A Community Effort.’** Many communities never get this far, and some, like Weiser, are just beginning the process. The Buhl community team has developed a vision statement, which reads as follows:

In the future, Buhl will be a community that...

- Is unique in its image to reflect the historical, cultural, and social character of the community. Development will compliment the community’s image and support the community’s desire for diversity in residents, lifestyles, and high quality of life

- Includes a vibrant downtown area that is recognized as the center of social, cultural, historical, and economic activity for the community
- Offers education programs and school facilities that are of high quality, variety, and include programs that challenge every Buhl student
- Provides a high quality of life for Buhl residents that includes recreation opportunities for all ages and interests, facilities which support current and future activities and coordinated services to meet the needs of all interests and abilities
- Offers available and affordable housing opportunities for low, middle, and high income residents and that supports the attraction of new residents and employers to the community
- Is economically diverse and successful, supporting unique retail, appropriate commercial, industrial and tourism based businesses that reflect the unique character of the community and are appropriate within the economic environment and structure of the region
- Provides adequate public infrastructure and friendly, efficient and responsive governmental services to meet the various needs of today and tomorrow's community residents

This is an excellent vision statement, and clearly and unambiguously describes the community that Buhl wants to be by stating its core values. From this vision statement it is clear to the visiting team how economic development, housing, and education came to be core interest areas for the community review.

Questions the visiting team has related to the vision statement include how many community members were at the table and participated in the development of this vision, who currently knows about this vision, whether there are goals and objectives associated with this vision to make it achievable and measurable in small steps, and whether a broad-based network of support for this vision exists to see it implemented successfully. None of these steps should remain unresolved so Buhl's progress continues unimpeded. This is largely a matter of communication, prioritization, and building a strong base of community buy-in.

Interestingly, numerous citizens who were interviewed during the community review had no idea that Buhl had a vision statement or what elements of the vision might entail. When shown the vision statement and invited to participate somehow, some residents expressed disappointment and frustration at unsuccessful prior attempts to give input to city leaders about issues that concerned them. Several Buhl citizens made very direct statements when interviewed that input solicited by community leaders in the spirit of 'openness,' quickly resulted in strong resistance to change the status quo and left citizens feeling worse off than if they had never been asked their opinion because they perceived that their views had not been valued or were discounted.

Several local businesses who may currently harbor such perceptions and might decline to participate in Chamber membership, public meetings or community dialogues are of substantial concern and should be corrected immediately with dialogue and understanding to the extent possible as Buhl moves forward to realize its vision.

One method to address this perception might be for Buhl city leaders to work closely with the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Council to form a strong business retention plan with regular business visitations, consultation, management forums, socials, and recognition for excellence. We will explore these suggestions in greater detail in the local economic development section of the report.

This open line of communication will create a basis for trust, a consistent message, and a relationship built over time. An additional thought might be for community leaders to take to the streets for an hour each week to meet individually with businesses and gather additional information about thoughts and concerns, perhaps by making use of the community development and quality of life survey instrument incorporated into this document. This kind of one-to-one trust-building initiative will establish the degree of commitment by city officials to branch out and empower groups who might not yet have had an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process by seeking their genuine input and participation.

Prior Reports, Data, and Surveys

In the course of our preparation for the community review, the planning team reviewed a great deal of information from various sources which had already been compiled for Buhl leaders in recent years or developed in facilitated community meetings. Several of these documents, such as various surveys, questionnaires, the vision statement, and a Renaissance/Revitalization Plan prepared by Planmakers contain excellent recommendations related to streetscape improvements, building rehabilitation, parks and open space, downtown housing, parking, entryway beautification, tourism development, economic development, and other thoughts about enhancing Buhl's quality of life.

Individuals who have prepared or participated in the preparation of several of these documents for Buhl, such as John Bertram, Susan Riddle, and Mike Pepper, and those who have participated on several community review visiting teams in other communities, are outstanding community development resources to the state of Idaho. We can only underscore many of these recommendations and urge Buhl community leaders to move to develop goals and objectives and take action to realize them.

Many assets and corresponding concerns from those original documents continue to exist or even persist to this day. According to 165 Responses to the Downtown Buhl Renaissance Questionnaire (a 12% response rate) distributed to 1,350 city water bill addresses from April-June 1998, residents liked aspects of downtown related to flowers, planters, and trees, the small town/friendly atmosphere, close convenient shops, Farmer's Market, Sagebrush Days, Light Parade, friendly people, and historic buildings. Residents did not like empty/run-down buildings, the lack of shopping variety, parking, dirty/dusty town, bad sidewalks, Rangen's odor, the lack

of a left hand turn off Main Street, and diagonal parking as a traffic hazard. Individuals who responded saw grants/block grants as likely funding sources, or perhaps a local improvement district.



Senior Center at Main and Broadway, downtown Buhl

One recommendation by John Bertram in his 1999 plan included renovating the upper floors of the senior center into a residential complex to address community housing needs and bring more mixed use into downtown. Bertram additionally suggested that the IOOF Hall be rehabilitated for housing as well, and that the founding place of the city be re-established with a town park at the site of the original Buhl Hotel, built in 1906 on the west corner of Main Street and Broadway Avenue. Currently, there is inadequate open space and no central gathering place downtown. This has been an important step in downtown revitalization for numerous communities, and is an excellent suggestion.

If Buhl is struggling with the difficult process of setting clear goals and objectives as a community, call on any of the numerous visiting team members to help facilitate a community discussion to achieve this result or a willing cadre of statewide resources available as consultants or mediators.

Team members Becky Dean, Gloria Galan, Darryl McRoberts, Vance Kirklin, and Hank Ebert indicated willingness to follow up with Buhl in subsequent community sessions. Consultants Dick Gardner (389-1401 & DickGardner1@cableone.net) and Jim Birdsall (338-0983 & Jbirds@fmtc.com) are currently leading Weiser through a visioning process with an economic adjustment strategy as the intended result following a community review in March 2002.

Goals are the most substantive part of a strategic plan and must address issues, problems, and challenges. Goals are achievable, address long-term perspectives, are measurable through well-written objectives, and use language such as 'to increase,' 'to decrease,' or 'to maintain.' Ambiguous language such as 'improve' or 'better' is best avoided.

Sample goals might be ‘To increase public satisfaction in city recreation programs,’ ‘To increase motorist safety at railroad crossings,’ ‘To decrease drug use by high school students,’ or ‘To increase economic activity in the city’s downtown area.’ Reaching goals can take years, and progress toward goals can be measured through objectives, which may be determined on a yearly basis.

Objectives have four primary components: They state a desired result, name the target group, indicate the amount of change, and provide a time frame for assessment. Examples of objectives might be ‘To increase downtown retail sales by two percent in 2003,’ ‘To decrease the number of railroad crossing accidents in the city from 8 to fewer than five in 2002,’ ‘To limit property tax increases to no more than one percent over the Municipal Cost Index, plus new construction and annexation, in 2003,’ or ‘To decrease juvenile vandalism incidents in the city from 74 to fewer than 60 during 2003.’

Recommendations

- Engage as a Buhl community to discuss and refine the community shared vision statement, prioritize and come to consensus on plans, develop measurable and achievable goals and objectives, and spring into action.
- Bring everyone to the table in an inclusive process to create this community buy-in, including seniors, youth, farmers, businesses, and any demographically under-represented leadership groups. There are hundreds of potential community volunteers in Buhl operating below the current radar screen who need only some clearly defined community consensus goals, a chance to serve, and a sense of hope and excitement about making a positive change for their community in an area they feel passionate about. Many are just waiting to be asked.
- Secure bi-lingual interpreters for community sessions and spread the word on Spanish-speaking radio stations so that members of the growing Hispanic community are well-represented in the planning and decision-making process. Such dual-interpretation sessions will take additional time but be well worth the effort when all community members are on the same page. This will also allow the community to increase its awareness of issues that the Hispanic community is concerned about, such as equal representation through Latino Vote 2002, immigration, bi-lingual education, and equity in employment, healthcare, and housing. Remember that engaging under-represented groups who are not part of the existing power structure takes time, commitment, and more than a ‘Y’all come to our meeting.’ Be mindful that Hispanics who have encountered or been preyed upon by corrupt government officials in Latin American countries may initially have dramatically different or suspicious views in their assessment of those who participate in public service in the U.S. Some Latinos have indicated that volunteerism is also not traditional to Latino culture, and must be introduced and fostered with small successes to build credibility.
- Increase communication efforts and strengthen interpersonal relationships among leadership teams through regular contact, dialogue, and team building exercises. Get past

small-town personality conflicts (Hatfield-McCoy syndrome) that hamper genuine progress. During dialogue sessions, preserve the dignity, compassion, and grace of all individuals in the conversation by attacking issues and fixing problems, not people. Egos and personal agendas leading to conflict and combat are best left out of the picture – preferably parked somewhere out in the desert.

- Build a shared sense of identity and community pride in Buhl by improving quality of life through increased arts and cultural projects and teaming up on clean-up projects that result in a win-win for businesses and the environment. Commission additional community mosaics and art projects from local artists and talented students. These public art displays can capitalize on aspects of Buhl’s rich heritage or follow themes of what the future will be from the vision statement. Beautification of all entryways and creating a sense of personal pride and responsibility on commercial and residential property is another excellent place to begin.
- Be sure to celebrate small successes along the way as an entire community to build momentum and reach the bigger goals.
- Strengthen and support Buhl’s numerous and under-appreciated assets.



One of Buhl’s many assets (not the dog!) waiting eagerly for increased utilization and recognition

Local Economic Development Team Report

During the first day of the review, on Monday, May 13, 2002, the Economic Development Group met with representatives of the city of Buhl, the Buhl Chamber of Commerce/Buhl Economic Council, Clear Springs Foods, Seneca, Rangen, and other local business executives. Group members were escorted through a portion of the downtown core during which time several team members interviewed small business owners or managers. During an evening listening session residents and city employees were asked several questions by some members of the Economic Development Group. The Economic Development Group compiled its findings and initial recommendations the following day, on Tuesday, May 14, 2002. A summary of its report was presented at a luncheon at the Moose Lodge that same day.

This written report is intended to clarify and expand upon our initial comments. The Economic Development Group divided its report into the following components – Assets and Opportunities; Challenges; Recommendations; and Summary.

Assets and Opportunities

Workforce and Rural Lifestyle

Our interviews and observations noted ample community assets. Among the assets most emphatically cited by large employers was the local and migrant workforce, whose work ethic was consistently praised. Buhl's Hispanic community, who, according to Census 2000 statistics, comprise approximately 16% of the total municipal population of 3,985, did not visibly participate in the community review process with the exception of a few interviews and one returned Spanish survey.

Several business representatives noted the rural lifestyle as conducive to attracting and retaining employees. Some employers mentioned the excellent quality of life, including access to fishing, hunting, boating, and year-round golf.

Small Business Vibrancy

The Economic Development Group noted the presence of several businesses and organizations that would be the pride of any community. For example, the Eighth Street Center, a Mexican panaderia or bakery, T&L Cedar Lawn Furniture, Smith's Dairy (and its hand-packed ice cream), Black Rock Clothiers, Grandstands, Gietzen Electric, King's, and Country Furniture are a few small businesses or organizations operating in or near downtown. We believe Buhl has the beginnings of a unique set of retail stores on which it could build a stronger downtown commercial core.

Prominent Location

The city's location at the junction of U.S. Highway 30, a portion of which has been designated as a Scenic Byway, and Clear Lake Road, is an exceptional asset. Moreover, many vacationers and visitors to casinos in Jackpot, historic gold mining town of Jarbridge, or other destinations in Nevada, have the option of traveling on U.S. Highway 30 to reach U.S. Highway 93. The mighty Snake River, several relaxing hot springs, Balanced Rock, Salmon Creek Gorge, the Oregon Trail, five historic barns in the vicinity, and numerous historic buildings beckon to travelers to stop in and spend some time in Buhl. Additional organizations such as the Idaho Department of Commerce and its various divisions, such as the Division of Tourism Development, South Central Idaho Tourism and Recreation Department Association, and chambers of commerce in other larger communities, may identify additional assets or resources to better develop tourism in the area.

The location of the Buhl Chamber of Commerce on the eastern edge of the city capitalizes on such traffic, but we believe more can be done to take advantage of Buhl's location to promote local businesses, attract tourists and direct them to local and regional attractions and recreational assets. Residents identified proximity to golfing, hunting, fishing, boating, skiing, sightseeing, hiking, and camping, and the rural lifestyle the area affords as significant assets. The golf course and country club are noteworthy amenities.



Youth tee off at the Clear Lake Country Club, an exceptional community asset available nearly year-round thanks to mild winter temperatures down in the Snake River canyon.

Downtown Core

The compact, well-defined downtown core is an asset to the community. Many communities do not have central downtown areas, and the vitality of their downtown cores have been adversely affected by commercial development on their periphery or along major routes into their communities. This has occurred in Hayden, Twin Falls, and Jerome, and is beginning to happen in Weiser. It may be happening in Buhl and should be carefully monitored. It is a delicate matter to balance the constraints of economic development and ensure healthy growth without negatively impacting the existing framework. The city may wish to carefully consider planning and zoning new commercial areas in order to discourage outlying commercial strip development, which may adversely impact the viability of the downtown business core. On the polar opposite of growth at any cost, however, is the presence of weighty regulations and excessive procedural

tangles which could contribute to stagnation.. In all things, balance. The revitalization is impressive, and will improve main community corridors for the benefit of all.



Streetlights enhance Kooskia's Theatre... ...and Weiser's Vendome Community Center

The downtown business core could be more clean and attractive, and immediate future priorities might be convenient parking and a central gathering place. A core downtown area must provide needed products and services at reasonable prices, be pedestrian-friendly for visitors, and be part of a master plan to complement planning and zoning and commercial development on the edge of town.



Zoning and signage will continue to be very important to Buhl's future

We identified vacant or underutilized storefronts and second or third story apartments or offices as potential sites for small businesses that fill niche markets such as those already noted, professional offices, and apartments for young single professionals. The group also noted 50+ buildings built from 1907-1949 of potentially historic value throughout the downtown core. If they are allowed to deteriorate, however, they will become a liability.

We applaud the community for undertaking a downtown revitalization project. We recognize that this is the result of many years of planning and raising funds, and that much more remains to be done even as some of the streets and sidewalks in the downtown core are being rebuilt. Cost estimates at \$1.4 million were low in comparison to the \$2.1 million bid, so efforts to find more reasonable bids make good sense if unreasonable delays can be avoided. We note good initial efforts to develop consensus among property and business owners, city planners, and economic development volunteers. Plans for the marketing of the downtown core and the recruitment of businesses to the downtown core might be polished in the near future with clear goals and objectives.

Industrial Sector

The presence of several large industrial companies – Clear Springs, Seneca, and Rangen – is one of Buhl’s many great assets. Any city would be proud to have major employers and good corporate citizens in their community. Numerous businesses spoke at length about their civic pride or were lauded for their community participation and support of critical infrastructure like Head Start. The companies provide a stable employment base, and, for the most part, have a commitment to community involvement. We recommend that the companies, their management, and their employees should be regularly recognized and appreciated for the contributions they make to Buhl and the surrounding area. For that matter, no business in Buhl should be taken for granted. City officials and those responsible for economic development should strive to remain aware of the companies’ challenges and those of their employees, and actively work to address their concerns whenever feasible, while remaining mindful of the needs and concerns of the community as a whole.



Seneca grows from 100 employees in the off season to 800 during corn pack

City Government

The mayor, members of city council, and city employees were considered valuable assets by many we spoke with in the business community. They were lauded for their vision, progressive attitude, and commitment to civic improvement. Some of our hosts pointed out that such leadership has not always been the case, and that Buhl’s infrastructure and downtown are paying

the price now for years of neglect. It is important to realize that conditions deteriorated over a long period of time and that it will take time to fix them. Buhl is making progress, however, due to the foresight and proactive attitude of its city and civic leaders, and we believe there is hope for Buhl's future as a result of the positive steps it has taken in the past several years.

To emphasize this point, Buhl's foundation is hardpan and solid rock under shallow topsoil. In general, issues related to water and sewer infrastructure are absolutely critical to economic development and growth for reasons related to coverage, capacity, and pressure. According to one member of city council, approximately 80% of Buhl's sewer lines have deteriorated and will cost upwards of \$2 million dollars to repair because of more expensive excavation and other factors. Since taxpayers are reluctant to float a bond to cover replacement and repairs, status quo prevails whether it is the most rational behavior or not. Options for developable industrial property decrease, and economic development business recruitment of a critical industrial 'foundation' employer becomes a moot point because there are so few (or no) options to choose from and capacity could not sustain the plant. Often, cities are criticized after taxpayers bind their hands to act. This is the basis for the argument for creating a vision, developing long-range planning, and communicating with and educating residents in order to achieve community buy-in for shared mutually beneficial goals.

The \$400,000 sewer project grant from the Idaho Department of Commerce will help complete the service road and sewer lines for the Kacy Meadows Housing project and enable the third phase of the project to move forward as a very positive community step.

One notable example of honest leadership was exhibited by a city council member who indicated that despite recent revisions, another look at the planning and zoning regulations is necessary due to concerns about its current limiting effect on business satisfaction, expansion, and recruitment. The comment comes following numerous revisions in an effort to more closely align regulations with larger communities, and the realization that many of these standards may need to be reworked to address issues specific to Buhl.

Buhl Chamber of Commerce

Another asset is the existence of the Buhl Chamber of Commerce with dedicated staff and an energetic board of directors. Buhl is fortunate to have a full-time executive director and a friendly, helpful person answer the phone and promptly respond to inquiries. Some larger communities cannot afford to maintain chambers of commerce, let alone fund full-time or part-time staff. Other chambers have difficulty recruiting volunteers and maintaining continuity. Balancing multiple objectives can be difficult. Buhl is to be commended for supporting a well-located visitors center and chamber office, and for successfully planning and conducting many projects and events. We encourage the president, board of directors, many volunteers, the executive director, and staff to continue their positive efforts to organize and promote educational programs and in-house events while also renewing and expanding their efforts to promote the community for economic and tourism development and assist existing businesses.

The Chamber can continue to build upon its excellent community gains with increased efforts to promote small business consultations, business of the month recognition programs, after hours

socials and networking opportunities, management forums, a partnership with the College of Southern Idaho to provide post-secondary courses and increase the availability of skilled workers, a promotional video to complement its excellent new brochure, a brochure specific to tourism, assistance with the development of industrial sites & business parks, expanding access to arts and cultural opportunities, and supporting efforts to clean up entryways, corridors, downtown, and improving signage.

Opportunities and Challenges

Economic Development

We were asked to assess the potential for attracting clean agricultural business development, which we interpreted to mean additional food processing plants or other industry. We were also asked to assess the potential for industrial development given current or planned infrastructure improvements. It appeared to the Economic Development Group that there is a lack of a cohesive vision and direction with respect to economic development. For example, does the community want additional industrial development? We could not get a definitive answer to this question, as there appeared to be a degree of dispute about the topic. Some of the individuals we interviewed wanted Buhl to continue to develop solely as a bedroom community; others recognized the need for a balanced tax base involving industry, good-paying local jobs, increased customers, and new sources of income.

Dialogue to conclude this issue, as well as the development of appropriate locations for such industry within infrastructure limitations in the event the consensus is affirmative, are proposed next steps. Also, Buhl's public works superintendent and engineer appear highly qualified to monitor and communicate current needs related to infrastructure capacity and the potential to accommodate industrial development.

Buhl Economic Council

It was not clear to the visiting team which community group was taking a lead role in economic development or how responsibilities and duties in this broad area were shared by the City of Buhl, the Buhl Economic Council, the Buhl Chamber of Commerce, the regional economic development specialist, or other groups or individuals.

The Buhl Chamber of Commerce mission statement reads: "The Buhl Chamber of Commerce is organized to enhance job creation, support existing business, promote community cultural growth, and develop comprehensive infrastructure plans that encourage economic expansion in the West end of Twin Falls County." The Chamber stated in the same document that it would accomplish its mission by "promoting economic programs that will strengthen and expand the income potential of all businesses within the trade area."

The Buhl Economic Council is responsible for "new business recruitment, [and] assisting local business expansion." It is unclear whether the Buhl Economic Council has developed and implemented measures to accomplish this vision or whether the Council's role is that of leader in coordinating all aspects of economic development in Buhl. While the chamber's role and the

Council's role with respect to economic development appear to be clearly stated, their responsibility appears to be divided and is confusing. Which organization is taking the lead on economic development?

One prominent business owner with whom some group members met expressed frustration that the Buhl Economic Council is ineffective. Unfortunately, the Economic Development Group was not able to meet with the chairman or entire board of directors of the Buhl Economic Council to discuss that organization's programs or activities and its progress toward the implementation of its goals.

The "**Building Buhl's Future**" document we were provided states that the mission of the Economic Development Work Group -- which appears to be yet another organization -- "is to develop and implement appropriate strategies for business retention and job creation that promote economic vitality and stability in Buhl." However, the presence or effectiveness of well-defined and viable business retention, expansion, and business attraction programs, in any organization, were not made clear to us.

In our opinion, it is essential that the Buhl Economic Council provides the requisite leadership in economic development and continues the process of setting and meeting goals and objectives to realize its vision for Buhl's future.

We recommend that the differing missions and responsibilities of the Buhl Chamber of Commerce and Buhl Economic Council be clearly defined and understood, not only by the players in those groups, but by the mayor, city council, and public. The distinctions are not clear in the information made available to our group. In our view, the BEC needs to be identified as the community's agent for aggressive economic development planning and implementation. If the Buhl Economic Council is willing to be the lead entity to foster economic development, its board needs to be re-invigorated and expanded to include local area government, business, and civic leaders. The BEC needs to implement the specific action items identified in its economic development plan. It should update its plan annually and report its progress on a quarterly basis, at a minimum, to the city council and Buhl Chamber of Commerce board of directors in order to be accountable for its actions and the public funds it receives.

For additional resource information and suggestions, we encourage that those involved in Buhl's economic development efforts utilize services and programs offered by the Idaho Department of Commerce, work closely with the regional economic development specialist (James Scott) on specific business development projects, as well as the area's representative to the Economic Advisory Council (Con Paulos), the Idaho Department of Labor and the Magic Valley Job Service, the Idaho Small Business Development Center (located on the CSI campus), Region Four Development Association (also located on the CSI campus), the Small Business Administration, the College of Southern Idaho, and USDA Rural Development.

Day Care and Education

Other critical issues mentioned by several large area employers included day care and education. One company representative mentioned that affordable, flexible day care is of paramount

importance. Another company mentioned that day care is a challenge for its largely migrant labor workforce.

Representatives of two large companies mentioned the quality of Buhl's educational system as a concern. We were told that some families residing in Buhl send their children outside the district to attend schools in Castleford, Filer, and Twin Falls. The reputation of local schools may be a deterrent to the attraction and retention of business and employees and an ongoing irritant to existing businesses and employees. We recommend additional dialogue and resolution in this area as well. Also we were told of need for more activities for youth. These topics will be addressed in greater detail in the Education section of this report.

Housing

One major employer noted the absence of suitable, affordable housing as an ongoing concern, although company executives indicated that the situation has vastly improved in the past few years and is not as large a concern as it once was. Seneca depends on a variety of housing options for approximately 650-700 additional seasonal employees, sixty percent of which are migrant workers, during its July through September full-time packing campaign. That is an enormous number of individuals to accommodate.

While the company provides dormitories for some of its employees, stores trailers for other employees, and arranges for the direct payment of rent to landlords for other employees, it appears that more might be done by the company and the community to reasonably accommodate its valuable, hard-working, and experienced employees, on whose availability the company and the community depends, with increased dignity in housing. Another concern is the quality and quantity of middle-income housing within the city limits, which will be discussed in the housing report.

Infrastructure

A Seneca representative identified an infrastructure-related concern that may present a win-win opportunity to the community. Seneca has been attempting to acquire a permit from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for three years, and negotiations might obligate the company to acquire or lease more land for the spreading and deodorizing of its effluent. (Presently the company owns 81 acres and leases 610 acres.) While Seneca representatives viewed land spreading and deodorizing as efficient and inexpensive for the time being, they realize that DEQ will continue to monitor the situation, odor will become a quality of life issue as the region becomes more populated, and assessed value of surrounding land may make leasing or purchasing adjacent land a less cost-effective solution.

Seneca's future ability to connect to the city's wastewater treatment system might benefit both the company and the City of Buhl. Dependent upon a cost-benefit analysis of the entire scenario, if Seneca covers all costs and overhead associated with the city taking in the plant's wastewater, the community avoids the odor and the city might have access to available land south and east of Seneca to develop into an industrial site or business park. The City would have to determine whether city wastewater services would need to be upgraded and whether the land can be

appropriately zoned and not adversely impact neighbors, but the possibility is there for a mutually advantageous result.

Zoning

Several visiting team members had interviews with developers and businesspeople regarding the perception that zoning laws are not conducive to business and cause unnecessary inefficiencies and legal expenses. There is also a clear perception that zoning rules and regulations are inconsistently applied and enforced. It is unclear if zoning goals, practices, and philosophy are well understood by the community, but this topic bears further review and discussion.

Transportation

Transportation was a major infrastructure issue brought to our attention by Seneca and Rangen. Both companies heavily depend on trucks for the delivery of raw materials and the shipment of finished products. Access to, and egress from, Rangen, in particular, seemed very difficult, as observed by one group member with significant trucking experience.



Industrial citizen Rangen, Inc. has operated in the region since 1929, has 4 divisions employing 180 people, pays \$80,000 annually in property taxes, and is under 10% employee turnover rate.

Seneca additionally expressed concern that the widening of Clear Lake Road would adversely impact its ability to park its large tractor-trailer rigs in an already confined space. Several group members observed that it was very difficult for tractor-trailer trucks to safely turn at the intersection of U.S. Highway 30 and Clear Lake Road. We noticed that it was equally difficult – in fact, dangerous - for traffic to turn from the southern end of the truck route onto Highway 30, in either direction, because of the volume and speed of oncoming traffic, and poor visibility due to a curve in the highway. Large tractor-trailer trucks, in particular, seemed to experience delays safely merging with traffic. Such concerns would potentially magnify with increased truck traffic on Clear Lake Road or Highway 30.

Seneca representatives additionally mentioned difficulty with rail transportation. All incoming agricultural products delivered to the company from the mid-western United States for packaging arrive by rail. Company executives indicated Eastern Idaho Railroad was great to work with, but such was not the case with Union Pacific Railroad. Concerns related to notification of the availability of cars, as well as the timetable for shipping finished products to markets.

Seneca's Buhl plant has five days from the date of an order to deliver its products to market, and ships outbound products by truck for that reason. Many trucks return to Idaho from Seneca's markets without any loads. This drives up Seneca's costs and affects the competitiveness of Buhl's plant in a competitive industry. This issue is not unique to Seneca, and we speculated whether it would be possible to collaborate with other Magic Valley companies that require raw or finished products to be shipped from the same markets to which Seneca ships finished products. This may help alleviate such concerns and increase efficiency and effectiveness.

Medical Clinic

There are two health clinics in Buhl; the Buhl Medical Center with one doctor and dentist, and Family Health Service, with one doctor and one physician's assistant. Rangen executives mentioned concerns about employees and prospective employees regularly traveling to Twin Falls for routine drug testing. The time incurred traveling to Twin Falls delays hiring new employees by several days and adversely affects company operations. One option might be for Rangen to work with these existing facilities to resolve its concerns, or for companies in the area who require laboratory testing to consider sharing in the cost of hiring an employee or contracting with a service to conduct and evaluate pre-employment tests.



Family Health Services

There are enormous economic challenges currently facing rural doctors across the country. Medicare cut payments to doctors by 5.4 percent this year, and more reductions are predicted from 2003-2005. Recent trends have been driving up costs for malpractice insurance and

overhead, even as revenue per patient declines. Idaho has an extremely low primary-care physician ratio – estimated at 64 for every 100,000 people, compared to the national average of 92 per 100,000 people.

When Idaho’s rural communities can no longer support a physician, one of 360 statewide licensed nurse practitioners often steps in to fill the void, since they can diagnose, perform some surgical procedures and emergency work such as suturing, casting, and stabilizing patients and prescribe narcotics and medicine. Most practitioners have bachelor’s and master’s degrees in nursing. Idaho law requires national certification, which mandates a master’s degree. Idaho also has some physician’s assistants, who are overseen by the state Board of Medicine.

Fire Safety

Rangen executives mentioned concerns about fire safety related to an insufficient quantity of water to combat a major conflagration because of small water lines and distant hydrants. In the event of a catastrophic fire, company officials indicated Rangen would likely not rebuild in Buhl. During the evening listening session we had an opportunity to discuss this concern with the city’s fire chief and public works superintendent. The fire chief indicated his belief that the issue was one of communication, not a lack of adequate infrastructure. Nevertheless, we recommend that Rangen’s concerns over adequate fire flow and safety be fully investigated and mitigated, if necessary. It is essential that a constructive dialogue between the parties be established and maintained. Perhaps the Buhl Chamber of Commerce or the Idaho Department of Commerce could be asked to facilitate the first of an ongoing series of meetings if that would be helpful.

Burke Street

One small business owner mentioned dust from an adjacent unpaved street and the deteriorating parking lot of a nearby business adversely affects his business. Even though oil is applied to the street to reduce dust, he would like Burke Street to be paved.

Industrial Odor

Several visiting team members detected a pervasive odor in the community, which was attributed by many in the community to Rangen. Community residents indicated that the odor was not as bad as it can be on other days depending on weather and wind direction, and that they often alter evening walks or restaurant attendance based on wind direction. One resident indicated that particulate matter drifting over from Rangen eroded a nearby rooftop because of its quantity and concentration. Rangen representatives with whom visiting team members met acknowledged this quality of life concern and indicated they were not the only odiferous industry in the community. We are unsure whether Buhl is used to the smell, and some residents might be willing to accept the smell if it means retaining that industry and its jobs.

Rangen representatives mentioned that they receive complaints when other companies are operating processing plants in the vicinity. It was apparent to the visiting team that industrial odor is an irritant to both company and city leaders, and likely others in the community. It is quite possible that odor from industrial plants has affected the willingness of some businesses to

reside, own a business, shop, or work in the community. The situation may even become detrimental to Buhl's economic viability. However, the loss a corporate citizen and a large number of jobs if Rangen ceased operations in Buhl and relocated elsewhere, must also be considered. This may well be one of the more challenging issues the community revealed during the review process.

We recommend that the City actively explore odor control alternatives with all industrial partners. Determine if there is a mutual willingness to address this issue openly and frankly. If possible, determine sources, dates, amounts, types, and times of odors. Determine if there is any flexibility in the timing of processing to reduce odors in peak daytime and evening shopping/dining periods. Determine if technology exists to help mitigate odors. Determine what incentives may exist to upgrade plant equipment.

Buhl is not unique among Idaho cities for being impacted by odors emanating from processing plants, dairies, feedlots, and other industry. Lewiston has its Potlatch, Pocatello has its Simplot, Boise has its Micron Technologies, and Nampa has its Amalgamated sugar plant. Twin Falls and Jerome Counties have received requests from residents who live near two large-scale dairies. They say the smell has diminished their property values, and they make the point that they deserve a reduction in property taxes. The residents have been turned down and are appealing to the State Board of Tax Appeals.

Canyon County has even published a booklet called the 'Code of the West,' which outlines some of the critical differences between municipal and rural living for those who may be less inclined to know that emergency services take longer in the country, and some industry and farms operate 24 hours and create dust and odors. Some Buhl residents may see the existing situation as fundamentally incompatible, but the community is not helpless. City officials and company executives must be willing to dialogue and work together to determine if the pungent plant odors can be mitigated, in order to address concerns about business development, quality of life in downtown, transportation, or other solutions yet to be conceived.

City officials may also wish to consider contacting other cities to learn how they are coping with adverse industrial impacts and resolving conflicts. An August 21, 2002 article in the Idaho Statesman indicated that the largest polluter in the Treasure Valley, Amalgamated sugar factory in Nampa, was investing \$12 million in its plant to cut 2,260 tons of pollution of particulates, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, and sulfur oxides it releases into the environment annually and reduce energy use in its manufacturing process to seek new air quality permits. This occurred after it sought to limit the ability of neighbors to sue the company as a nuisance, and after Micron Electronics brought suit against the company. The pollution reduction effort is part of Amalgamated's 10 year, \$20 million effort to improve its plants in Nampa, Twin Falls, Paul, and Nyssa, OR and bring the company into compliance with state and federal environmental laws.

Pedestrian Safety

We noted another issue of concern: pedestrian safety. On several instances we were obliged to cross Broadway Avenue, the main street that runs through the city (which is also Highway 30), at

intersections not controlled by traffic lights. While most vehicles seemed to observe the posted speed limits, we noticed that some vehicles did not. Many vehicles did not appear to be yielding to pedestrians standing on corners or beginning to cross streets at block corners.

Inability of pedestrians to cross streets safely, and the resulting perception that a community is not pedestrian-friendly, might impact the willingness of residents and visitors to shop in the community. We noted the absence of visible pedestrian crossings and police officers. Some communities have well-marked crosswalks in their downtown areas with orange cones at intersections and signs indicating that pedestrians have the right-of-way; other communities have routine traffic patrols and an aggressive policy of ticketing speeders to underscore safety, particularly in school and downtown shopping zones. Some communities have a mandatory fine for speeding downtown that amounts to several hundred dollars and is an effective deterrent.

Other incentives for pedestrian traffic include ample curb cuts, lighting, trees and planter boxes, clean sidewalks, outside tables with awnings and heating devices for extended outdoor dining seasons, windbreaks, and pleasing storefronts. At a minimum, we encourage the city and other relevant jurisdictions to begin making pedestrian safety improvements as soon as possible. As indicated, improved signage may also be helpful.

Disincentives for pedestrian traffic include boarded-up storefronts, broken bottles on streets and sidewalks, unkempt or fading facades, dirty sidewalks, weeds, vacant buildings, deteriorating buildings, irregular or inconsistent hours of operation, unused second and third story apartments or offices, and other indications that some property owners or business owners were unconcerned about the poor visual impression their business made in their community. It may become important in the future to address tax codes that reward property owners for neglecting or abandoning their property instead of encouraging them to repair the buildings they own, and rent them at reasonable rates to business owners, professionals, and prospective residential tenants.

To its credit, one business told us it remained open on Mother's Day and did well with last minute shoppers. How many businesses in Buhl lose opportunities for sales on holidays? A customer who makes a purchase at one store downtown may go next door or cross the street to buy something else if he or she has a reasonable expectation that other stores will be open. Retail businesses and professionals that remain open longer to cater to the needs of commuters returning home from work may not only benefit themselves, but also their fellow merchants and the community. Merchants must be willing to do their part, individually and collectively, if they want to reap the rewards of the massive public investment in revitalizing the downtown core.

The upcoming downtown revitalization project that Buhl has worked so hard to organize and fund will address some of the public infrastructure needs in the downtown core. What can be done to entice property and business owners to improve and maintain the areas for which they have principal responsibility? Enhanced appearances downtown are vital and can result in hope and improved community pride, more customers, viable, profitable businesses, and a greater return on investment for property and business owners.

Several businesses, such as Black Rock Clothiers, and the Eighth Street Center, draw affluent visitors and arts patrons to the community, and, in the case of the Eighth Street Center, provide enriching entertainment programs and art classes. Smith's Dairy attracts customers from many

areas for its hand-packed ice cream, milkshakes, and other food products. Are other businesses in the area capitalizing on these assets? We noted the absence of moderately upscale restaurants and cafes. Would people eat outside or downtown if they were present? Are pervasive industrial odors a deterrent to capitalizing on small business development opportunities downtown? Motels or hotels would encourage residents and visitors to shop downtown. Existing motels rent space to migrant workers, and, as such, fill a vital need for temporary housing. However, corporate vendors, customers, executives, and guests do not stay in Buhl when in the area on business. Corporate executives stay in Twin Falls when they visit Buhl on business. Similarly, the visiting team was encouraged to stay in Twin Falls. One dollar spent in a community generally turns over eight times.

Entryways and Corridors

Entryways into a city provide a first impression to visitors about the town. Perceptions regarding investment, values, and amenities are often formed within the first few hundred feet as people travel into the area. Within minutes, visitors will decide whether they are interested in finding out more and may decide spontaneously whether to exit the main road and discover the treasures that lay deeper within the community. There is no second chance to make a good first impression.

The team observed that major entrances into and corridors through the city, such as those from Hagerman and Wendell, need to be enhanced. The eastern approach into Buhl on Highway 30 may be a model of what can be accomplished with vision and effort.



The entryway from Twin Falls and Filer where community development is most active (top) is beautiful and boasts easy access to the Buhl Chamber of Commerce. The entryway into Buhl from popular tourist attraction Balanced Rock (following page) does not create a good impression for visitors at first glance.



The Snake River entryway on Clear Lake is marked by contrasts depending on location

Business Visitation Program and Regular Dialogue

Regular, scheduled, frequent communication with, and visitation of, existing businesses is part of an effective business retention and expansion program. The Idaho Department of Commerce is available to assist with this effort. The economic development and quality of life survey and resource materials in the appendix of this document may also be helpful.

In addition, we recommend that community and company leaders discuss, prioritize, and resolve critical issues of mutual concern, such as fire safety, transportation access, housing, activities for youth, accommodations, infrastructure, and so on. These efforts may serve to retain existing businesses and encourage them to expand in Buhl, and nurture an important reputation to foster that Buhl cares about and is responsive to business needs.

As an example, it is important to recognize and honor the immense role Rangen has played in the community as part of the national and regional aquaculture industry, and to appreciate the company for the jobs it provides. It is equally important for Rangen executives to recognize the impact their company has on the city and to take positive steps to mitigate the negative consequences of their operations.

Downtown Revitalization

Some communities have merchants associations or downtown business associations and full-time or part-time managers to coordinate marketing, plan events, and resolve problems. We encourage Buhl businesses to determine if they have the interest in, and resources to, pursue this suggestion. Rupert has a full-time city employee dedicated to community and economic development. She works closely with a merchants association. Rupert, Jerome, Hazelton, Bellevue, Gooding, Kimberly, and Hailey have downtown areas that could be examined for their viability. Some are more effective than others at sustaining or attracting retail businesses to their downtown areas, and all of them have a story to tell that can aid Buhl and its journey. Tom Hudson, an excellent facilitator who specializes in the revitalization of downtown economies, is based in Moscow, Idaho.

We encourage the city to minimize the adverse impacts on downtown businesses and customers during revitalization. Jerome's downtown revitalization project might be reviewed to understand what lessons the community learned from that experience. Holding events downtown or planning sales that coincide with the revitalization can mitigate customer loss during construction.

Come Home Campaign & Tourism

One possible strategy that may encourage business growth is to invite former Buhl High School graduates to "Come Home." A well-conceived mailing campaign carefully targeted at those no longer living the area may be worth consideration. This program could include a specific message, "We can help you fulfill your dream to start or expand your business and we want you back in your hometown." Whether this approach is attempted or not, a business park or an inventory of available retail space, coupled with promotional or marketing literature, is essential to the success of a business attraction project.

Participation on the board of the South-Central Idaho Tourism and Recreation Development Association – a regional tourism marketing organization - is essential in order to cooperate in the development and funding of local and regional promotional activities. Development of a plan to promote tourism, recreational, and cultural amenities and services along U.S. Highway 30 might be considered.

Telecommunications

The group did not meet with telecommunications providers but spoke with a few local experts. We suggest Buhl continue with its history of strong support for technological capacity and improvements, and follow-up with CableOne, Qwest, Millenium, and other providers to consider primary options in delivering broadband, high speed internet access, DSL & cable modem. Existing T1 lines might not be cost effective for smaller companies

It is notable that the representatives from both government and business entities were unfamiliar with the current or future community availability of telecommunications bandwidth. It is not

enough to say that fiber optic “runs through the city.” It must be determined if it can be accessed and at what cost. Today’s businesses, from the “mom and pop” variety to industrial giants, are increasingly dependent on high-speed communications. “Clean” industry, such as call centers and voice or online technical service providers, are desirable additions to the community, but can locate only where bandwidth availability is available and well-understood. The nearby communities of Jerome and Twin Falls with success stories about recruitment efforts for Dell and other call centers are excellent examples of what can be accomplished through planning, diligent fact-finding, and dogged determination.

We recommend that the Buhl Chamber of Commerce, the Buhl Economic Council, and/or the city invite representatives of current and prospective local telecommunications service providers, such as Filer Mutual, Syringa Network, and Qwest, to discuss what technology already is available in the area. We recommend that area businesses, schools, government agencies, and other customers also meet with service providers to determine what additional services may be needed to support community and economic development. Representatives of the Twin Falls Area Chamber of Commerce, the Hailey Chamber of Commerce, the Jerome Chamber of Commerce, and the Idaho Department of Commerce may be willing to advise Buhl on conducting an assessment and following-up with telecommunications companies.

Youth Activities

If the community is to become known as a destination for businesses, it must be attractive to families and specifically for children. We heard comments about nominal activities for youth who do not participate in school sports, and recommend that such activities be developed. For example, high school students could be recruited to help develop programs for younger children, Boys & Girls Club organizational efforts could be more actively encouraged, and a recreation district could be formed. To further these efforts, guest speakers from other communities who spearheaded successful projects could be invited to discuss how they accomplished their goals. As with many other projects, excellent leadership, a well-conceived plan, effective volunteers, and organizational skills are necessary for success.

Other Opportunities to Enhance Business Development

Establish prominent locations to showcase a variety of area products, such as smoked trout, cheese, handicrafts, art work, ice cream, Seneca’s products, and more. Brochures could be available everywhere in town.

Regularly feature artists and performances at the Eighth Street Center. Plan and advertise exhibits, and coordinate evenings when restaurants and retailers could remain open to attract and cater to customers, in a manner similar to First Thursday in downtown Boise. The key is joint planning and execution on a consistent basis with the goal to promote Buhl as a place where things are happening.

Support niche businesses as they form and flourish. The Mexican bakery, T&L Cedar Lawn Furniture, Smith’s Dairy, Country Furniture, and other shops are prime examples of places for

residents and visitors to gather and relax. Woodworking, handicrafts, quilt making, candy making, and antiques are also possible.

The Magic Valley is fortunate that Mr. Con Paulos, of Jerome, is the region's representative to the Economic Advisory Council. Jerome has set an excellent example in the areas of business development, infrastructure improvement, and downtown revitalization. Con Paulos, Bob Richards, Rick Bernsen, Travis Rothweiler, and Greg Rogers are excellent contacts. They will be able to explain the elements of Jerome's success at the community and economic development. Rupert has set an excellent example of private-public sector organization and cooperation, public participation, private and corporate funding for community development, and an ongoing commitment to community and economic development. Sherri Miles and Chris Jackson, are excellent contacts in Rupert. In addition, Ms. Jackson resides in Wendell, where she serves as the Gem team's chairperson. Wendell's Gem team works closely and effectively with local city and business leaders. Their collective efforts, proactive attitude, and vision are worthy of notice.

Partnerships with other neighboring communities could be forged so that all might benefit from fairs, events, festivals, reunions, and other functions. Information used to be shared and calendars were circulated at periodic Chamber Network functions. These networking opportunities need to be rekindled. Area activities, such as the Thousand Springs Arts Festival, attract thousands of visitors from southern Idaho. With foresight, visitors could be attracted to Buhl and other communities in Twin Falls and Gooding counties.

Independent consultants and agency representatives will be able assist city and civic leaders identify external resources, but the community also will benefit from the talents and ideas of persons and organizations in and near Buhl. Buhl is fortunate to have an active chamber of commerce, various service clubs and voluntary organizations, several community-minded businesses, the Eighth Street Center, and a regional economic development specialist whose efforts are supported by Buhl and other communities in the Magic Valley.

City and civic leaders, and especially those involved in community and economic development, are encouraged to enroll in the Community Development Institute ("CDI"), co-sponsored by the Idaho Department of Commerce and the Association of Idaho Cities. More information can be obtained from either organization.

An inventory of available property and needed services or products in the community are other excellent tools for business development. This survey should be conducted by the Buhl Economic Council if it is serious about economic development. Results should be shared with the regional economic development specialist, the city, the Buhl Chamber of Commerce, local and regional developers and realtors, Region Four Development Association, and the Idaho Department of Commerce.

Miscellaneous Recommendations

- Inventory available commercial space and applicable rents or sale prices. Landlords need to be persuaded to rent space to merchants at affordable rates in order to occupy vacant downtown properties. Available parking also needs to be inventoried. As previously suggested, this information needs to be shared.

- Creatively promote unique businesses through shared, common websites, earned media, shared advertisements and commercials in other Magic Valley or Wood River Valley media markets, and business networks.
- Continue to pursue a downtown park and develop other amenities or events downtown that will attract shoppers and visitors. Build on the Farmers Market.
- Overhead lines could be buried during revitalization to improve the appearance of the downtown area.
- Coordinate financing programs for small businesses and property owners to restore buildings and improve facades in conjunction with downtown revitalization.
- Determine if historic designation of some buildings would be beneficial.
- Improve the appearance of the building the Senior Center occupies. A mural or some other form of public art would enhance the space.
- Develop weekly or monthly promotions to bring shoppers into downtown Buhl.
- Publicize availability of an RV dump at the Visitors Center/Buhl Chamber of Commerce.
- Determine if there is a need for and feasibility of parking for large RVs in or near downtown and at nearby recreation areas.
- Utilize other means such as the weekly newspaper, community websites and newsletters, information fairs, and town hall meetings as tools to communicate civic and economic development. The Buhl Downtown Enhancement Newsletter is an excellent tool for this purpose. This would be especially helpful during the downtown revitalization project.
- The Buhl Chamber of Commerce website could be updated and expanded to include links to local businesses, information about local and regional attractions, events and activities, a map of and directions to the community and a hotel and restaurant directory. We noted that the chamber's email address is on its newsletter, but its website address is not.
- Conduct a community survey of medical, dental, vision, pharmaceutical, and wellness needs.
- Continue to build on the recommendations of Building Buhl's Future the Downtown Revitalization Plan, and this document. As appropriate, continue to take advantage of the talents of Susan Riddle, Mike Pepper, John Bertram, James Scott, Scott Bybee, and the many volunteers who have participated in the city's community and economic development planning and implementation efforts.

Summary

We believe Buhl is a community whose best days are still to come. Buhl has many assets. There are many opportunities to enhance local and regional economic development if the will, the energy, and the resources can be marshaled and sustained. To capitalize on its strengths, we encourage Buhl to continue to support and build on its impressive downtown revitalization project. We encourage the creation and support of building restoration and/or cleaning campaigns downtown to complement planned public infrastructure improvements. We recommend the beautification of all entryways into Buhl. We strongly encourage all possible measures to welcome and protect pedestrians – the customers, patrons, owners, and employees of downtown businesses. We recommend joint marketing efforts with and among businesses so that Buhl promotes them and they promote Buhl. We recommend continued strong community and business support for the Buhl Chamber of Commerce.

The Buhl Economic Council is encouraged to take the lead role in the community's economic development efforts with active participation from the city, the chamber, and regional economic development specialists. The formation of an effective Business Retention & Expansion Program is a good place to start. Address concerns proactively and before they become crises. If the BEC is unwilling or unable to lead and foster local economic development efforts, the city and/or the Buhl Chamber of Commerce should be prepared to fill the void.

Also we encourage city leaders, economic development groups, and business people to be resilient, creative, mutually supportive, willing to take measured risks and flexible enough to change directions if an initial approach is not working. Foster cooperation and cohesive attitudes. The mayor is well-respected and highly-regarded, even by some business leaders who criticized the city.

Building blocks for creative, proactive, inclusive, and visionary leadership are present in Buhl. We recommend local leaders and residents take time to celebrate accomplishments as they occur, and honor those who have contributed to each success. Communities that take these steps and that have the “fire in the belly” to succeed against all odds will flourish in the 21st Century.

Housing Team Report

As of the 2000 Census, two thirds of Buhl households were family households, and occupied housing units was at 92.4% with vacant housing units at 7.6%. Approximately 70% of housing units in Buhl are owner occupied, with 30% renter occupied.

Given Buhl's rich agricultural history, one effective way to honor its traditions and contributions is to welcome those who make this industry economically feasible. Agricultural jobs in Idaho pay an average of \$6.12 an hour, or \$12,729 annually. This is \$4,920 below the poverty level for a family of four. Many individuals living on Social Security/Disability typically receive \$525 per month, or \$6,300 annually. Without adequate and affordable local housing options, these individuals and families cannot be expected to add to Buhl's community or economy. For more information on poverty, visit www.povertyusa.org.

Federal funds are available to create high-quality assisted or subsidized housing, representing a direct reinvestment of federal income taxes in Buhl, creating jobs, and bringing further economic impacts to the local economy. Idaho Migrant Council also stands ready to assist communities in resolving affordable housing concerns. The bottom line is this: housing affordability creates an immediate wage subsidy for employers and a pay raises for workers; it allows households to invest additional income in local goods and services. It also provides stability to families, employees, children and their communities. We would encourage Buhl to consider this potential.

Recommendation: Take a look at the housing costs of all residents, not just agricultural workers. Consider teachers, social workers, public safety and emergency workers, service industry employees, the elderly or disabled, etc. Households that are paying more than 30% of their income towards housing costs are considered "housing cost burdened." They will have less income to contribute to Buhl's local economy, and are more likely to experience financial and emotional stress. If it appears that households in Buhl are in fact cost burdened, contact the Idaho Housing hotline at 1-877-438-4472 or USDA Rural Development to discuss options for addressing housing needs.

Growth, Change, and Identity

Buhl will continue to grow and develop, simply as a result of its proximity to Twin Falls, Filer, and the explosive growth occurring in the Magic Valley and surrounding area. 2000 Census statistics for Buhl indicate a population growth of 13.3% from 3,516 to 3,985 people since 1990. This growth is slow enough to be manageable in the housing market. Market value in Buhl in that same timeframe has increased 199.6% from \$39.8 million to over \$119.2 million. Some questions to ask about this growth which are crucial to Buhl's future identity include:

- **What role does housing play in Buhl's core values?**
- **What building sites are available for affordable housing?**
- **Are residents welcoming to newcomers and tourists?**

- **Will tourists stay overnight in Buhl in existing temporary accommodations?**
- **Which community assets are important to residents, tourists, or both?**
- **What keeps you living in or visiting Buhl?**
- **Will Buhl become a bedroom community for Twin Falls?**
- **How can Buhl partner with Twin Falls County to help manage growth and planning & zoning issues?**
- **Describe the ideal Buhl in the next five to ten years.**
- **What is important in or about Buhl that needs to be preserved, and what changes would make it even better?**

This kind of long-term thinking and consideration of strategic partnerships will serve Buhl well into the future. Balancing and managing sensible growth will continue to be critically important to Buhl to prevent the kind of traffic snarls at the east end of town which currently plague Twin Falls since its growth away from downtown toward I-84 on Blue Lakes Boulevard. Jerome has experienced similar difficulties, with a downtown businesses struggling and explosive growth out toward the Interstate exacerbating the concern by pulling business away from the central core of the community.

Zoning

Zoning was partially addressed in the economic development section of the report. From a housing perspective, Buhl currently has large lot size requirements with a minimum lot frontage of 120-125 feet. This makes it very expensive to build affordably priced homes. One of the visiting team members who is active in real estate in eastern Idaho indicated that there were numerous nice neighborhoods in Idaho Falls with 60-65 front foot requirements and homes which are ‘...cute and affordable.’

Through interviews, team members additionally learned that relationships between city government officials and local builders and developers had deteriorated to the extent that they no longer had any interest in building in Buhl.



Affordable housing at Kacy Meadows

Historic Preservation

Significant resources are required to stabilize and protect historic structures, and encourage residents and leaders to take immediate steps to ensure their safety until more extensive renovation can take place. While these structures represent Buhl’s history, they might well hold the key to its future as well. In this respect, Buhl can be considered lucky—by design.

Challenge. A major challenge for Buhl is the number and diversity of significant historic structures in need of protection. Those interested in historic preservation are spread thinly among the various focus points, and some coordination of efforts might be helpful.

One visiting team recommendation is to bring all interested parties together to form a comprehensive preservation strategy for the entire community: perhaps creating a “Buhl Community Foundation” to pursue and administer funds or coordinate strategic planning. This would allow for identifying imminent threats, prioritizing needs, scheduling work and allocating resources. It is worthwhile to determine what’s most important, although this process might be made easier with some outside (expert and objective) facilitation to help assess relative historic values and suggest priorities. Buhl might seek to actively develop a working relationship with the Idaho Heritage Trust on specific projects; it may also benefit from the following resources:

National Trust for Historic Preservation
www.nthp.org/about_the_trust/western.html

M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust
www.murdock-trust.org

Kongsgaard-Goldman Foundation
www.kongsgaard-goldman.org

PacifiCorp Foundation for Learning
www.pacificorp.com

Wells Fargo and Co.
www.wellsfargo.com/about/charitable.jhtml

Community Involvement and Energy

We would like to see increased dedication and enthusiasm of Buhl residents as they tackle community projects. From the enormous pool of seniors and youth to those who volunteer for community events such as Paint Magic and icons such as Sagebrush Days, Buhl should strive for pride and a can-do spirit to accomplish projects.

Challenge. Buhl, like many towns, could benefit from a more unified, community-driven vision for its future. A natural first step is to develop a strategic working plan reflecting grassroots support and involvement. This plan might be both descriptive (identifying key issues to be addressed, listing assets to be protected and identifying the tools and resources at your disposal) and prescriptive (specifying the desired goals and steps to implementation, and delegating

responsibilities). One of the plan's components could map out a strategy for recruiting new volunteers while retaining existing volunteers and avoiding burnout.

Observations

- Housing stock: There is a shortage of affordable, quality housing, whether it is rental or homeownership. This is evidenced by the low vacancy rates of existing rental housing and the waiting list at the newest affordable housing complexes. Also, interviews conducted with members of the community indicated that there were not many housing options for their employees and they were either living in substandard housing or commuting from Twin Falls.
- Buhl has a great deal of substandard housing in certain areas, coincident with areas of poverty and predominantly Hispanic neighborhoods.
- NIMBYism (Not In My Back Yard) is prevalent among residents who perpetuate stereotypes about 'those people' in affordable housing projects: Education on WHAT affordable housing is and WHO is affected by having quality affordable housing needs to be introduced to the community.
- There are several mixed neighborhoods with potential code violations, although we were told that Buhl is making progress in the area of zoning enforcement.
- There is a shortage of mid-sized affordable single-family homes for teachers, law enforcement and public safety workers, etc. The choices are smaller, older, run-down homes or newer homes priced in the \$200,000 range. Local wages for these jobs and lack of affordable housing are driving these professions out of the area to better paying, more affordable markets.
- There are dramatic differences between building codes and zoning in Buhl and surrounding Twin Falls County. There are large tracts of single-family development with one residence per one-acre lot; no sewer, sidewalks/curbing, parks or green space in many outlying areas. In Twin Falls County north of Buhl, 9,000 acres were recently approved for this type of development, directly over the Snake River aquifer that currently sustains the country's largest freshwater fish farming industry and one of the region's major industries. Although some downplayed the environmental impact of this occurrence, if planning were to occur now, it might prevent serious future concerns when growth catches up to the region.
- Buhl has the potential for downtown rehabilitation to create mixed-used development (commercial and retail at street level and residential/senior units upstairs). Many of the downtown structures are historically significant.
- Buhl currently houses hundreds of migrant line workers in a facility that might be considered substandard in modern times.

- Buhl has significant industrial odor problems impacting residential neighborhoods and the downtown core. It was not clear which industrial neighbor produced the bulk of the odor, but this factor most likely hinders Buhl’s community and economic development efforts.
- City, Planning & Zoning seem reluctant to allow the processes and vehicles in the housing arena that would allow Buhl to offer options to builders and developers. Local developers indicated they were discouraged from development because of restrictive planning & zoning guidelines. Members of the city council have already indicated an interest in addressing this concern, as many of the regulations are modeled after larger cities and can be scaled back to encourage business development and expansion.
- The city could develop a housing plan that would address the needs, ranging from affordable rental and homeownership opportunities to the larger, higher-priced homes.
- The lack of suitable housing stock impacts any new industry that might consider moving to Buhl, which limits Buhl’s economic growth and future.
- The plans for developing Melon Valley do not appear to have the full support of the citizens of Buhl. While this is a component of housing in Buhl, it is not the answer to all of the housing issues. It may be more prudent to concentrate on developing the city and improving city infrastructure before annexing Melon Valley.
- Some unscrupulous landlords may be preying upon migrant workers, raising rents to exorbitant levels during the time the migrant workers are in town and deducting costs from wages. Dunnia Burnham, farmworker monitor advocate for the Idaho Department of Labor, takes wage related complaints statewide and can be reached at 332-3570 or Dburnham@labor.state.id.us The Idaho Human Rights Commission also takes housing discrimination complaints at 1-888-249-7025 or by emailing inquiry@ihrc.state.id.us.
- Multi-family housing for subsidized and non-subsidized renters needs to be explored as well as the rehabilitation and updating of existing units and single-family rentals.
- Local lenders and the real estate community can hold Home buyer / Home seller seminars to familiarize the local citizens with new home ownership programs and their benefits to all.
- Work with citizens to take pride in bringing currently substandard housing up to par. They need to embrace positive changes and recognize that growth is essential to their survival.

Recommendations / Possible Resources

- The Housing Authority, a 40-unit facility established in 1968 as a low-income elderly housing project under the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, could take a more active role in the development of a housing plan in Buhl and expand its purview. The Housing Authority might be a logical umbrella for housing activities—coordinating funding applications; marketing to builders, developers, realtors, and facilitating educational outreach to the community on housing options.



Buhl Housing Authority, established in 1968 as a low-income elderly housing project

- If the Housing Authority is unwilling or unable to explore this option, perhaps the Chamber of Commerce, School District, and City can determine an appropriate leader for this initiative since all entities are impacted by the current lack of available housing.
- The City Council may need to take an active role in mending fences with builders and developers. As changes in zoning policies and procedures are discussed, these community stakeholders can be brought into the dialogue and assist with the decision-making process. The City Council may need to be the driving force to encourage the citizens of Buhl to take pride in their city and assist with the economic growth of the city—having adequate housing is one of the most important components of economic growth.
- Develop a “Housing Task Force” consisting of representatives from the community at large, the Housing Authority, and City Council to promote activities that meet the housing needs of Buhl. The Task Force could organize and gather information from local lenders and real estate representatives on programs and products that will promote homeownership and rehabilitation opportunities. Make this information available to teachers, police officers, corporate and government workers, Chamber members, and other interested community partners.
- Existing run-down motels could be converted to affordable apartments, which could provide decent housing alternatives for migrant workers, as well as new renters. The Task Force could actively recruit an investor or a franchise to build a new motel or hotel/conference center, which would provide business executives and tourists with a place to stay, as well as potential income for the local merchants. Current motels are not endorsed for tourists or community visitors, which causes a loss of tourism dollars for local businesses. As an example, the Community Review team was recommended to facilities in Twin Falls.

- Grant programs such as the HOME program should be explored. HOME funds could be used for low-interest rehabilitation loans, down payment assistance, senior and affordable housing options.
- Explore the programs offered by the Idaho Department of Commerce; Federal Home Loan Bank of Seattle; Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development; Idaho Housing and Finance Association; and Rural Community Assistance Corporation.
- The Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, Community Affairs Department is a great resource for housing programs and organizations that offer technical assistance.
- The City may want to provide highlights of the community review report to all citizens and sponsor several facilitated town meetings to discuss the report and prioritize next steps. Media (newspapers, fliers, radio advertisements) would be critical in securing adequate representation.
- The City's recent purchase of a \$1 home through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is an excellent opportunity to begin the neighborhood revitalization process.
- One realtor who has been doing business in Buhl for 25 years indicated there were no problems with senior housing, that rental housing was a landlord's market with vacancies of all degrees of quality, and that dwellings of all conditions disappeared very quickly. The realtor said that when teachers all arrive in July and August it is very difficult for them to find a place to live in Buhl. The realtor mentioned that he had tried to subdivide twelve lots that resulted in litigation with Buhl, and that he again got caught up with the city when he tried to build a duplex and was turned down for a reason he believed was due to ineffective and inefficient planning & zoning regulations. This presents a relationship building opportunity for the city.

Education Team Report

Overview

The team offers its sincere thanks to the Superintendent, Board of Trustees, staff, principals, teachers, parents, and students of Buhl Joint School District # 412 for their participation in the community review and the information given to team members through presentations, meetings, informal discussions, and interviews. We found numerous good things happening in Buhl schools, and it is operated and staffed by dedicated, caring professionals who are committed to providing the finest possible education for all students.

The Mission of Buhl Public Schools, in partnership with parents and the Buhl community, is to provide each student with a quality education that includes the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to be a responsible, contributing member of our changing world.

The Buhl Joint School District is located in Twin Falls County, and its Board of Trustees had the foresight many years ago to purchase 80 acres for school buildings. Thus, property for school expansion is not an issue for the district. Currently, three schools house approximately 1,400 students with a classified and certified staff of 140.



Buhl students

The District has experienced a decrease in the Anglo student population over the last several years, and an increase in the Hispanic population amounting to approximately 15% of the total school population since 1993-1994. Approximately 60% of all students are bused to school, and approximately 50% qualify for free and reduced lunch.

Buhl, as indicated by the market value supporting each student, is one of the wealthier school districts in the county with an \$8 million dollar budget. This translates to a cost of approximately \$6,000 per pupil.

Buhl is generally at expected state standard levels for core classes such as English, Math, History, and Government, but has struggled to offer more specialized courses such as robotics that are available in nearby districts in Twin Falls or Jerome with their improved funding.

In general, Idaho lags behind national figures for teacher and administrator salaries. While this may often cause teachers to initially look elsewhere for work when compensation is a substantial factor in the employment decision, many gifted and highly qualified personnel find themselves coming to and staying in Idaho because the quality of life ultimately supercedes salary as a higher priority. Idaho in general, and Buhl in particular, is fortunate to have a high quality of life.

This assessment addresses school facilities, educational quality, standards and accountability for students, teachers, and parents, school environment perceptions, technological capabilities, and thoughts about success indicators which may help Buhl administrators and educators in their ongoing evaluation and improvement of educational quality. In addition, we have added sections addressing community assets, challenges, and youth developmental asset building.

In the spirit of providing the best possible education to all students in the Buhl School District, we offer these practical suggestions, resource ideas, and an outside perspective. Through positive leadership over time, more effective learning for all students may be achieved:

- The team recommends that the district develop a long-range plan to guide growth and development of the district over the course of the next five to ten years. Long-range plans from other districts could be reviewed and best practices could be shared between school districts to develop Buhl's vision.
- Ongoing professional development for teachers, administrators, and board members is crucial. Armand Eckert's departure from the Board of Trustees will leave a void in institutional memory and leadership of the district.
- Increase internal communication among staff, students, and parents, as well as external educational efforts to reach community members who have no school-aged children. A district-wide communication plan can be part of the long-range plan and be developed with the assistance of all school personnel, students, parent organizations, and other districts who have experienced successful efforts. Twin Falls and schools in Blaine County may be good resources.
- In partnership with the City and Chamber of Commerce, work closely with agencies such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. and Wells Fargo Bank community development officers, and Idaho Housing and Finance Association to assist in the development of affordable housing for teaching staff who are new to the community.
- Include all stakeholders in budget development, and be sure the budget reflects the financing of short and long-term goals.
- Continue excellent utilization of technology resources through internet availability in classrooms and computer labs, and continue to assess and revise the student computer learning curriculum.
- Make a computer lab available after school hours for student access. Computer oriented students can serve as aides in the lab

- Recruit bi-lingual teachers through the use of salary incentives to address the growth of Hispanic students in the district.
- Continue great curriculum alignment and assessment development on an ongoing basis to guide student learning improvement.
- Review data that indicated the district was below the state math assessment and utilize it to improve math scores.
- Review and recommend improvements for the two-way microwave program for advanced classes.
- Develop a staff/supervisor evaluation model, perhaps as a portion of the long-range plan.
- Work to provide the necessary financial support to maintain the quality of the automotive technical/professional academy.
- Explore methods to re-implement the construction academy it provided at one time.
- Explore options to offer pro-active prevention graduation programs to teen mothers
- Contact local and regional service clubs to see if they will offer scholarships for community service
- Explore possibilities of more senior involvement in schools to obtain additional buy-in and support.
- Continue economic development efforts to find new jobs for students to come home to in Buhl.

Facilities

One of Buhl's most important education issues that will be the linchpin for subsequent education-related decision-making in the community is the need to decide soon whether to remodel the middle school or demolish it and build a new school. According to some, this issue has been studied since 1979. If such is the case, it is certainly time to decide. The building does not present an imminent danger that would require its closure, but it does have numerous safety and usability issues.



Buhl Middle School

All three grade levels of the middle school currently occupy the building and it is at capacity. One part of the school, built in the 1920's, is not occupied. The 1950's section contains a beautiful gymnasium and classrooms.

Debate raged during the community review regarding whether the historic nature of the school justified its preservation and remodel at the cost of usability, or whether it should be demolished and the land utilized for other purposes such as parking or open space. Some speculated that the high school and middle school could swap locations and students would be better off based on commute times, safety, and convenience. Students frequently expressed that the long walk between the high school and middle school was a hardship in winter winds and with tight schedules.

For Demolition

In February 2001, Fourth District Judge Deborah Bail declared Idaho's system for funding school construction unconstitutional and ordered the Legislature to fix the problem. Idaho has left school building costs to local districts, which must fund them through local, voter-approved property taxes. Several bills have passed, but the issue seems largely unresolved at this point in time. Lawmakers passed legislation this year which would provide a small amount of assistance to all school districts that pass bonds after September 15, 2002, but far more assistance may be necessary due to the crumbling and deteriorated state of many schools.

Judge Bail is considering whether to order further remedies, and has cited testimony from Lapwai school district Superintendent Harold Ott, whose buildings are so infected with mold that employees and students have become ill. Ott's own office near kindergarten classes can only be entered while wearing a breathing mask. An engineering report showed it would cost \$9 million to fix the school and \$7.2 million to build a new one. The problem is that the school district's bonding capacity only adds up to \$4 million.

Judge Bail has reviewed scores of videos of crumbling schools with outdated wiring, ancient boilers, and mold-infected floors. She has been quoted suggesting that fixing schools wastes taxpayer money, saying, "...It's a system problem when local communities are forced to remodel these sorts of money pits rather than simply replace them."

For Renovation and Remodeling

Visiting team participant Darrel McRoberts grew up in Buhl and worked in Green Giant for over 20 years. He has indicated that he understands the building costs and other concerns associated with the middle school. He believes the school should be remodeled to fit today's standards and that Buhl High School should be moved back into the middle school the way it was in 1956 when he graduated from the facility.



Darrel McRoberts interacts with students at Buhl High School

Darrel states, ‘The present High School would make an excellent middle school. I really believe this could bring the Buhl community closer together, traffic would be much safer, and everything is already there for the High School. Most of the high school students already spend a big amount of their time at the middle school today. High school students could again become more involved with walking in downtown during the noon hour and help local businesses at the same time.’

District Leadership

In March 2002, the District voted to repair problems with the middle school roof and moisture/mold around the foundation. The District had a Pocatello marketing firm conduct a telephone survey with 380 respondents in Buhl from April 8-9, 2002. Questions related to quality of instruction in Buhl schools, the likelihood of supporting a bond issue for a new building, and to what extent voters would commit financially. Results were positive in terms of instructional quality and indicated the potential for a successful bond election in the event one was called.

Construction costs calculated for a new high school paid for by a 20-year bond at 4.9%-5.1% interest turned out to be approximately \$8.5-\$9.5 million dollars. At the time in April 2002, future middle school renovations including the roof and concrete work were on hold, with work being done to shore up roof joists at the middle school. Over the next month, trustees were split regarding how to proceed, with the majority favoring construction of a new school. The District moved to repair the middle school gym roof, install new doors and steps, and repair the rafters.

By June, the trustees were pursuing all costs related to building a new high school similar in design to the 1996 high school model and financed by a \$5 million dollar bond. The trustees additionally discussed costs associated with demolishing the middle school.

Middle Ground

Perhaps the best of both worlds can be achieved. If the Board of Trustees calls for a bond election and it is successful, perhaps the portion of the middle school built in the 1920s can be demolished and the available space used as a parking lot for the football field. The already partially repaired 1950's gymnasium and classrooms could be further renovated and remodeled with the assistance of federal and state grants and transformed into a centrally located community center housing the future Boys & Girls Club which residents are now working diligently to form. This could be another win-win, allowing the community to preserve a portion of its heritage and utilize existing infrastructure to create another safe place for youth to gather and engage in productive interaction.

Education Quality, Pre-School through 12th Grade

Education quality is partially determined by the District's ability to attract and retain qualified educators, and the lack of available or suitable owner or rental housing in Buhl has hampered the District's effort to do so.

The District has developed a very good relationship with the library, but the library is still an underutilized community resource. A plan could be developed that includes the entire community in use of the library as a tool to promote life-long learning for all of its citizens.

Some concerns were expressed about the lack of professionalism among some secondary staff members as role models for students and the lack of support for the concept of life-long education.

Overall, we heard tremendously positive comments and did not have an opportunity to speak with any individuals who had removed their children from the district or what their rationale might have been for doing so.

Technological Capabilities

The District is currently in excellent shape technologically, and was the benefactor of a substantial Albertson's Foundation grant that improved the ratio of students to computers to 1400:520 or 2.7 students per computer. The high school additionally has a distance-learning lab connected with the College of Southern Idaho, Jerome, Filer, Castleford, and Wendell. The school is well into a five-year technology levee, and there is strong community support for technology as well as the transition shifts from T1 lines to DSL and high-speed internet service.

Through its community education program, the District offers courses for senior citizens addressing life-long learning and computer and internet skills.

Standards

The following websites are an excellent source of information about standards:

<http://www.idahoachieves.com/> Idaho Achievement standards

<http://stills.nap.edu/readingroom/books/nses/html/> National Science Standards

<http://www.ncss.org/standards/toc.html> National Social Studies Standards

<http://standards.nctm.org/document/index.htm> National Math Standards

<http://www.elob.org/aboutel/principles.html> Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound Design Principles

http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/professional_resources/standards/natstandards National Art Standards

Case study: Anser Charter School, 1187 W. River Street, Boise, ID 83702, (208) 426-9840, Sgregg@anser-charter-school.org It has a current waiting list of around 200 students

Anser's mission is 'To educate the whole child in a collaborative learning community where individuals are inspired to be self-motivated and to feel a sense of connection and responsibility to the world.'

Through strong support of parents and community, Anser fosters learning that imagines a better world and works toward realizing it, promotes autonomy, creativity, and the ability to collaborate within each child, embraces the diversity which surrounds us, grows through discovery, reflection, and balance, and uses developmentally appropriate practices and real work experiences to educate and learn. Anser follows a Community Based Curriculum

Anser utilizes key instructional practices and strategies from Idaho State Standards, a strong character development program whose traits are responsibility, integrity, courage, compassion, and discipline, and community service throughout the curriculum. In addition, they utilize collaborative assessment conferences, student generated scoring guides which are based on exemplars, a revision process, a reflection process, standards based planning, teaching, and assessing, and comprehension strategies.

Accountability for Students, Teachers, and Schools

Students

Anser utilizes an expeditionary work sampling system that is project-centered, experiential, and monitors children's academic, social, emotional, and physical progress. Elements include student portfolios, literacy continuums and competencies, mathematics summary reports, expedition reports, and academic/social expectations. Student portfolios include models and exemplars, criteria and rubrics, and expectations for revision and reflection.

In addition, Anser uses embedded assessment practices, standardized testing, and no less than one public exhibition night per year to evaluate student progress. Iowa Test of Basic Skills is administered in grades 3-6, Idaho Reading Indicator is given at grades K-3, the Direct Writing Assessment at grade 4, and the Direct Math Assessment at grade 4.

Teachers

The three purposes for teacher evaluation at Anser are: Accountability to ensure teacher effectiveness in the classroom and within the culture of the school; Professional Growth to provide a focus for professional growth in an area that has the greatest capacity for facilitating student performance; and Cohesive School Structure, to increase and focus the dialogue within schools on the goals of improved services to students.

The process requires an examination of what students need to know to become independent and responsible learners, what the teacher has been doing to affect the learning, what is the degree of student success in achieving those objectives, and the implications for continuing employment and future professional growth.

Each year the teacher establishes goals with the director, engages in observations and data gathering, participates in evaluations, may submit a response letter to the director's final evaluation, is subject to contract renewal, and may be placed on a program of assistance for improvement.

Schools

Core Practices: Learning Expeditions, Reflection & Critique, School Culture, School Structures, and School Review

Each practice has multiple phases: Beginning, Implementation, and Realizing.

Other Trends

All across the nation, city public schools have become a national laboratory for reforms by for-profit managers. Some of Philadelphia's worst performing elementary and middle schools have been undertaking radical changes since reform panels awarded control of their failing schools to seven independent operators. Outside contractors are Edison Schools, who has 20 schools in Pennsylvania, Victory Schools in New York City, and Chancellor Beacon Academies in Coconut Grove, Florida. The following is a brief profile:

Edison: Founded in 1992, groups children by reading ability, allots more preparation and training time for teachers, and extends the length of the school day. This organization is currently experiencing dire financial straits and must keep its shaky relations with the teachers' union from preventing classroom progress.

Victory: Founded in 1999, a very structured curriculum emphasizes writing and combines phonics and literature to teach reading. In some schools, students are separated by gender. This organization has challenges convincing teachers to buy into its strictly ordered curriculum and quickly become proficient in its methods.

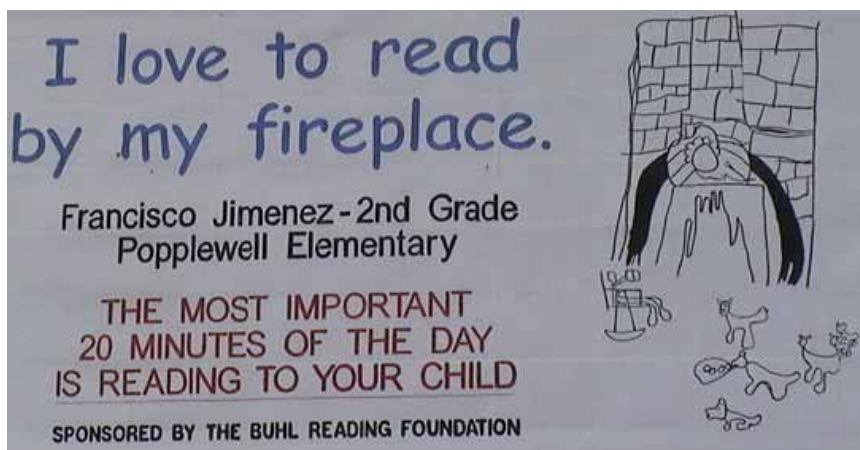
Chancellor: Founded in 2002, this school stresses core subjects, character education, and outreach to parents. Teacher training focuses on addressing different learning styles. This organization, which was accustomed to working within the flexible world of running charter schools and tuition-based private day schools, will now have to work with a vocal teacher's union, a big bureaucracy, and a student population it did not recruit.

Source: Time Magazine, October 21, 2002

Community Assets

Buhl has many under-recognized assets which contribute directly both to education and the high quality of life in the community:

- One of the best Head Start programs in the state. This pre-school has frequently only been recognized as a daycare but offers high quality programming for a group of 9-23 youth. Head Start has excellent support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the College of Southern Idaho, and corporate citizens such as Clear Springs, Seneca, Rangen, Smith's Dairy, and Cactus Pete's.
- A fantastic Buhl Public Library offering exceptional reading and bi-lingual educational programs for children year round. The library is fortunate to have had great leadership and vision from its directors in developing regional partnerships with school districts and information sharing with libraries in Filer and Castleford. The library offers annual library cards for \$25, and has been successful in securing a few endowments.
- The Buhl Reading Foundation, who emphasize reading a minimum of 20 minutes per day with youth and are promoting a 90% reading level by grade three. Numerous advertisements related to 'the most important 20 minutes of your day' were visible in the community.



Buhl Reading Foundation Billboard Advertisement

- The Buhl Arts Council and Eighth Street Center with year-round workshops, performances, and ongoing educational opportunities such as 'Let's Talk About It,' an adult reading project.

- The West End Theater Company, who perform in Buhl at the high school, middle school, and in the summertime.
- Dedicated community members in the Police Department and throughout Buhl who are working to establish a Boys & Girls Club so youth have more options for safe places and structured activities.
- A cadre of 1,136 youth who are under the age of 18, representing nearly 30% of Buhl's total population.
- An active pool of senior citizens as potential volunteers (Census 2000 statistics indicate Buhl has over 850 residents who are over the age of 62, over 21% of the total community population)

Challenges

Communities will always face barriers of insufficient resources and time, language, personality conflicts, insulation between cultural and ethnic groups, and learned biases, stereotypes, misperceptions, and racism. Yet, leaders are dealers in hope, and these challenges can and must be overcome.

Communities must be inclusive is to ensure their healthy growth and development. To date there appears to be a strong connection between leaders of Buhl City, the Buhl Chamber of Commerce and Economic Council, and Buhl Joint School District # 412. However, the perception exists in the community that these three entities are not welcoming of other, less powerful but no less important voices in the decision-making process. Numerous individuals in personal interviews indicated that they did not participate in opportunities for public input staged by leaders of these community entities because they had attempted to give input previously and did not feel heard or supported in their efforts to contribute. Although the current environment seems very calm and positive, visiting team members heard stories about community members who had stormy relationships and prolonged conflicts in years past and who may still harbor resentment and frustration.

Perception creates reality, thus these perceptions must be addressed and resolved in a thorough and respectful manner of community dialogue that strengthens the web of the community. This effort is not about confrontation and combat, but rather consensus and connectivity.

From a quality of life perspective, these are important considerations when we examine statewide trends such as 'youth flight,' in which young people are increasingly abandoning their home communities because of a lack of employment opportunities or a sense that they are not treated as the most precious commodity we have in our communities. These young people are leaving communities with an aging median population (Buhl's current median age is 35.8 years) as they obtain education and employment elsewhere, put down their roots, and do not return.

It was clear to the review team that residents perceive Buhl as a safe community. This attribute can be an asset; however, there were some side discussions about a potential drug problem. These positions are incongruent. If there is a drug problem, it should be addressed. If not, the perception should be corrected.

Addressing student drug use, Jill Chestnut, executive director of Drug Free Idaho, offers the following information related to concerns about youth and drug use. For additional information, contact her at 1-800-344-8594:

STUDENT DRUG-TESTING BOOKLET AVAILABLE

**** An Informative Guide for Educators, Parents and Community Leaders ****

In June 2002, the U.S. Supreme Court broadened the authority of public schools to test students for illegal drugs. The Court ruled to allow random drug tests for all middle- and high-school students participating in competitive extracurricular activities. The ruling greatly expands the scope of school drug testing, which previously had been allowed for student athletes only.

Medical research has shown that introducing chemical changes in the brain through the use of drugs can have serious and long-term adverse effects on adolescents. Testing, coupled with comprehensive treatment services, can reduce students' use of illicit drugs and remove a significant barrier to academic achievement.

Now it's up to individual schools and communities to decide whether drugs are a significant threat and testing is an appropriate response. While testing is a powerful tool in reducing drug use in schools and businesses all over the country, it involves many issues that must be fully understood and carefully weighed before implementation.

The Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) has created a booklet, "What You Need to Know About Drug Testing in Schools," to provide schools and communities considering a drug-testing program with a broader understanding of the sometimes controversial issue as well as solid, up-to-date information on which to base a decision.

The publication explains what drug testing is all about, who pays for it, who does the testing, what it shows about an individual's drug use and, equally important, what it does not tell you. The booklet is available by calling ONDCP's clearinghouse at 1-800-666-3332 or by downloading online at www.WhiteHouseDrugPolicy.gov.

Additional information about student drug testing in schools can be found on www.TeachersGuide.org, the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign's resource for educators. The site provides ideas for incorporating drug-prevention messages into the classroom, supplying educators with standards-based, interdisciplinary classroom activities, a list of government and organizational drug prevention/ assistance programs and a venue for teachers to share ideas and tips with other educators. The site was created and designed with input from veteran educators and behavioral experts.

This information comes from MEDIA CAMPAIGN FLASH: one source of the latest news on the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign.

ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN: The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy's National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign targets youth ages 9-18, parents and other adults who influence choices young people make to lead drug-free lives.

To get the word out across every economic and cultural boundary, the Campaign uses a mix of modern communications techniques to educate and empower young people to reject illicit drugs. The Campaign also teams up with civic and non-profit organizations, faith-based groups and private corporations to enlist and engage people in prevention efforts at school, at work and at play. For more information on the Media Campaign, check out www.mediacampaign.org.

With additional formidable barriers such as language with the Hispanic community, more proactive measures to build stronger partnerships and seek input from these underrepresented groups in Buhl are critical to its future. The visiting team stands ready to assist the Buhl community with this process, whether that is through additional training and educational efforts, group facilitation and conflict resolution, or seeking additional resources that may prove helpful as Buhl moves forward step by step.

One critical effort for the immediate future in all communities with a fast growing Hispanic population is stemming the number of Latino students who drop out of school at nearly three times the average of Anglo children. In some states such as Arizona and Florida, dropout rates are approaching forty percent of all Hispanic students. Reasons for this trend range from cultural to socio-economic, and it is clear from numerous success stories that early intervention and bi-lingual educational efforts may be effective initial remedies to this concern.

Students must experience success to build self-esteem. One professor at Boise State University who was consulted with questions about bi-lingual education efforts and language loss cited research indicating that mono-lingual children who are immersed into a bi-lingual school program where they have an opportunity to make conceptual connections between the language they know and the language they are trying to learn experience success learning the language in four to seven years, while children who hear only the language which is unfamiliar to them take as long as seven to ten years to achieve the same level. Buhl's Head Start program is already a valuable regional asset and may be a leader in this area, as well as bi-lingual educators already working for the Buhl School District.



Making connections

Tapping into Buhl Youth

We met many articulate and thoughtful high school students during our visit. Students reported their appreciation for Buhl's small-town atmosphere, while lamenting the lack of youth-oriented activities and employment options. Several felt there was no economic future for them locally once they had graduated from high school. There is obviously the danger that this could be a self-fulfilling prophecy. These same young adults represent potential entrepreneurs that may someday return to Buhl, bringing jobs and capital to their hometown.

We can't stress enough the gold mine of ideas and energy represented by youth; they could be invited to participate at all levels of community development and made to feel like the valuable community stakeholders they are. Think of them as potential partners in historic preservation, social services and as future business or civic leaders. Based on the comments we heard, students would like to have someplace locally to see movies. If this feeling is widespread, put them in charge of researching potential sites and strategies, exploring costs, and securing revenue. Giving a group responsibility (along with support and mentoring) is the best way to learn their abilities and priorities. The more Buhl's young people feel invested in the community and its future, the more likely they are to remain a part of it.

Asset Building in Idaho

What are the essential ingredients that all children need to grow up as healthy, contributing, and responsible citizens?

Thirteen years ago, Minnesota-based Search Institute identified 40 critical factors for young people's growth and development. Factors such as parental involvement, community support, civic engagement, and safe places with structured activities, all contribute to the healthy development of young people. Research clearly validates the important roles that families,

schools, congregations, neighborhoods, youth organizations, and others in communities play in shaping young people's lives.

As many Idahoans are discovering, creating a youth-friendly city benefits the entire community. Businesses are attracted to cities that place a high value on families and children. Juvenile crime is significantly lowered when youth are actively engaged and perceive that they are valued. Asset-rich youth are less likely to enter the social welfare system, more likely to succeed in school, and will pursue long-lasting career goals and return to their hometown where they give back what they received. Communities that invest in children and youth also see a return on their investment when citizens participate in community service projects and civic improvement initiatives.



Visiting team members interviewed a number of youth individually and in the classroom setting

Here's the good news – Everyone can build assets anytime, any place. The responsibility does not rest alone with families, schools, schools, social service agencies, or other institutions. If you are willing to make a difference in a young person's life then you are one step closer to making a difference.

Creating healthy communities begins with building and strengthening authentic relationships.

External Assets

The first 20 developmental assets focus on positive experiences that young people receive from the people and institutions in their lives. Four categories of external assets are included in the framework:

- **Support**-Young people need to experience support, care, and love from their families, neighbors, and many others. They need organizations and institutions that provide positive, supportive environments.

- **Empowerment**-Young people need to be valued by their community and have opportunities to contribute to others. For this to occur, they must be safe and feel secure.
- **Boundaries and expectations**-Young people need to know what is expected of them and whether activities and behaviors are "in bounds" and "out of bounds."
- **Constructive use of time**-Young people need constructive, enriching opportunities for growth through creative activities, youth programs, congregational involvement, and quality time at home.

Internal Assets

A community's responsibility for its young does not end with the provision of external assets. There needs to be a similar commitment to nurturing the internal qualities that guide choices and create a sense of centeredness, purpose, and focus. Indeed, shaping internal dispositions that encourage wise, responsible, and compassionate judgments is particularly important in a society that prizes individualism. Four categories of internal assets are included in the framework:

- **Commitment to learning**-Young people need to develop a lifelong commitment to education and learning.
- **Positive values**-Youth need to develop strong values that guide their choices.
- **Social competencies**-Young people need skills and competencies that equip them to make positive choices, to build relationships, and to succeed in life.
- **Positive identity**-Young people need a strong sense of their own power, purpose, worth, and promise.

Twenty-one communities across Idaho will host an Association of Idaho Cities' AmeriCorps Promise Fellow, VISTA Promise Fellow, or Youth Asset Builder starting October 2002. AmeriCorps members have performed over 20,000 hours of service since their term began in October of 2001. More than 17,500 youth have been impacted through their service, over 3,200 adult volunteers recruited and more than 8,374 volunteer hours served. The \$3,750 cash match for an AmeriCorps member is a more than fair exchange for 1,700 hours of service they provide the host community.

Idaho's Promise Fellows enhance the well-being of children and youth in Idaho by involving the whole community in pledging measurable commitments to the five fundamental resources identified by America's Promise and Idaho's Promise. The five resources include: 1) Ongoing relationships with caring adults; 2) Safe places to go with structured activities; 3) A healthy start

in life; 4) Marketable skills through an effective education, and 5) Opportunities to give back to the community through service.

Idaho Youth Asset Builders will assist communities in creating asset-rich environments for youth by increasing youth developmental assets while creating and securing opportunities for youth involvement. Members will perform a variety of activities including mentoring youth, planning and developing Youth Action Councils, facilitating training on asset development, promoting youth-adult partnerships, and encouraging the inclusion of youth on community and city councils and boards of directors. This statewide program places members with local organizations serving both large and small communities.

Twenty-one host sites have been approved with a total of 36 AmeriCorps Members serving a one-year term from October 2002 through October 2003. Congratulations go out to the following communities:

- * Ada County Juvenile Court Services – Boise
- * Benewah County Community Coalition – St. Maries
- * Blackfoot Bingham County Youth Coalition – Blackfoot
- * Bonner County Alliance for Youth and Families – Sandpoint
- * Bonneville Youth Development Council – Idaho Falls
- * Clearwater Youth Alliance – Orofino
- * HealthNet Mini-Cassia Coalition – Rupert
- * Healthy Community *Healthy Youth of Ada County – Boise
- * Kootenai Alliance for Children & Families – Coeur d’Alene
- * Lemhi’s Promise to Youth & Family – Tendoy
- * Lewis Clark Coalition for Families & Youth – Lewiston
- * Lincoln County Juvenile Probation – Shoshone
- * Madison County Community Council – Rexburg
- * Mountain Home Community Action Coalition – Mountain Home
- * Project Safe Place of Kootenai County – Coeur d’Alene
- * Project Starfish – Emmett
- * Shelley Youth Solutions – Shelley
- * St. Luke’s Wood River Medical Center – Hailey
- * The Walker Center – Gooding
- * Twin Falls County HealthNet Coalition – Twin Falls
- * University of Idaho/Latah County Extension – Moscow

Contact any of these organizations and communities to hear about the impact that is energizing Idaho, and consider an asset builder or promise fellow for Weiser!

AmeriCorps is a network of national service programs that engages more than 50,000 Americans each year in intensive service to meet critical needs in education, public safety, health and the environment. Since 1994, more than 250,000 men and women have served in AmeriCorps, providing needed assistance to millions of Americans. An AmeriCorps Member serves 1,700 hours within a year in exchange for an education award of \$4,725.

Would you like a Promise Fellow or Asset Builder in your community? Contact Deb Krum or Mandy DeCastro at the Association of Idaho Cities: 1-800-344-8594.

Additional Resources

Community Mapping, Michael Green (CO); United Way; Tyler Norris with Search Institute

Youth Community Corps

Community Garden, Farmer's Market; American Community Gardening Association (www.communitygarden.org), Erik Kingston (erikk@ihfa.org)

Buhl Community Survey Results

Buhl residents completed 184 of the “what’s good about your city” surveys. The majority of the surveys were filled out by citizens prior to the community review and collected by city staff.

Survey questions cover a wide variety of topics, from infrastructure, schooling, and safety concerns to quality of life, housing, and employment. On the survey, questions are grouped into major interest categories, starting with public works and ending with employment opportunities.

The 184 respondents gave a very balanced account of opinions on the various topics. Each of the 60 survey questions allowed for a response of “good”, “fair”, “poor”, or “do not know.” The total number of “good” responses was 2,628, or 23.80% of the total. The total number of “fair” responses was 3,924, or 35.54% of the total. The total number of “poor” responses was 2,136, or 19.35% of the total. The total number of “do not know” responses was 2,077, or 18.81% of the total. There were also 275 unanswered questions, or questions marked invalidly (multiple answers to a particular question were a common reason for invalidating responses).

Review of the results shows a fair number of discernable trends. With an overwhelming number of good responses, residents showed a strong preference for the Banking and Financial Services available in the city (134 “good” responses). Residents also were favorable towards Buhl’s: Library (123), Fire Protection (113), Ambulance Service (104), Churches Active in Community Projects (101), Water Supply (98), and Community Parks and Playgrounds (93).

Results demonstrate a few areas of citizen concern with the community as well. With the following shows of “poor” responses, residents expressed concern about Buhl’s: Recreation for Teenagers (112 “poor” responses), Night Life (109), Recreation for Adults (97), and Hotel and Motel Accommodations (89).

Numerous “do not know” responses to several questions indicate an opportunity to educate Buhl citizens about: Flood Control Measures (113 “do not know” responses), Availability of Drug and Alcohol Treatment (93), and Planning and Zoning (90).

Respondents also gave a middle of the road reception to: Appearance of Neighborhoods (113 “fair” responses), Appearance of Downtown (111), Streets and Roads (104), Appearance of Public Buildings (100), Parking Downtown (94), Condition of Owner Occupied Housing (93), Variety of Local Industry (92), Traffic Conditions (90), Friendly and Neighborly People (89), and Appearance of Gateways into the Community (88).

Through the survey, Buhl residents identified a number of things they feel good about, other things that concern them, and some items about which they may need additional information.

What's Good About Your Community? Here is a list of items. Be honest and rate your community.					
	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know	N/A
1. Streets & Roads	5	104	66	0	9
2. Traffic Conditions	77	90	8	2	7
3. Parking Downtown	31	94	55	1	3
4. Police Protection	55	66	32	28	3
5. Crime Prevention Programs	36	58	31	55	4
6. Fire Protection	113	32	2	31	6
7. Garbage Collection & Disposal	98	39	4	43	0
8. Water Supply	73	56	18	35	2
9. Sewage Collection & Disposal	70	31	7	72	4
10. Flood Control Measures	21	28	16	113	6
11. Community Parks & Playgrounds	93	59	16	13	3
12. Long-Range Planning	9	50	30	90	5
13. Planning & Zoning	17	56	33	71	7
14. Night Life	3	30	109	39	3
15. Recreation for Adults	6	46	97	31	4
16. Recreation for Teenagers	12	30	112	26	4
17. Recreation for Children 12 & Under	23	62	66	29	4
18. Library	123	42	2	15	2
19. Arts & Cultural Opportunities	58	76	22	22	6
20. Ambulance Service	104	34	11	33	2
21. Availability of Emergency Care	84	46	29	20	5
22. Access to Hospital	56	81	33	12	2
23. Availability of Doctors	49	84	40	10	1
24. Availability of Dentists	65	71	27	17	4
25. Avail. Drug and Alcohol Treatment Prgms	16	27	43	93	5
26. Availability of Senior Services	57	67	4	52	4
27. Availability of Senior Housing Options	29	64	12	73	6
28. Availability of Rental Housing Options	18	64	38	60	4

	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know	N/A
29. Condition of Rental Housing	9	47	58	62	8
30. Availability of Homes to Purchase	47	76	16	39	6
31. Condition of Owner-Occupied Housing	27	93	19	33	12
32. Condition of School Buildings	16	64	74	19	11
33. Quality of Elementary Education	65	59	21	33	6
34. Quality of Junior High & High School Ed.	52	69	24	33	6
35. Vocational Ed.-Job Trng. Opportunities	27	55	39	58	5
36. Adult Education Opportunities	17	70	53	41	3
37. Appearance of Neighborhoods	17	113	39	4	11
38. Appearance of Downtown	15	111	50	1	7
39. Appearance of Public Buildings	53	100	21	2	8
40. Community accessibility for the disabled	17	74	28	59	6
41. Appearance of Gateways to Community	20	88	52	14	10
42. Welcome Given to Newcomers	31	60	40	53	0
43. Friendly & Neighborly People	72	89	13	9	1
44. Acceptance of Minorities	40	75	31	34	4
45. Progressive Community Spirit	30	82	34	31	7
46. Responsiveness of Local Government	27	77	28	46	6
47. Community Civic Organizations	68	55	9	49	3
48. Cooperation in Community & Civic Grps.	63	51	10	56	4
49. Community Involvement in Decision-Making	19	59	47	53	6
50. Diversity in Community Leadership	19	58	48	58	1
51. Churches Active in Community	101	50	5	25	3
52. Availability Day Care for Children	37	58	27	60	2
53. Number & Quality of Eating Places	29	79	69	2	5
54. Variety & Quality of Goods in Stores	25	86	63	3	7
55. Banking & Financial Services	134	45	0	3	2
56. Local Newspaper Service	67	75	30	12	0
57. Hotel & Motel Accommodations	11	64	89	18	2
58. Variety of Local Industry	13	92	53	23	3
59. Business Involvement With Community	55	84	6	35	4
60. Quality of Available Jobs	4	79	77	23	1

Buhl Community Interview Responses

What are our strengths and assets that make Buhl a special place to work, live, play, and raise a family?

- History, old buildings, scenic route, good honest people
- Beautiful new homes being built around town limits.
- Night opportunities are increasing
- Community support
- Small community People friendly, know everyone
- Good schools
- Diverse economic base
- More relaxed
- Know your neighbor...friendly!
- Atmosphere of a small, rural county.
- Youth recreational program all thru volunteer
- Large group of people willing to give freely of their time
- Small enough to be personal, small community
- All children have opportunities
- A lot of pride
- Recreational opportunities
- Golf, fishing, hunting, etc
- Public library and kids program
- Low crime, feel safe
- Children born and raised here
- Good climate, easy winters
- Accessibility to produce
- Plentiful water
- Nice people
- Low crime
- School system
- Recreation-good volunteer program for youth sports programs
- Golf course
- Good people who step to the plate
- Cost of living

What are the problems and challenges facing the City of Buhl in the short run? Long run?

- Activities for youth who are not into sports.
- Some rental properties are unlivable.
- City leaders have kept Buhl from growing for the past 15 years.
- Revitalize the downtown-----improve store fronts-bring in new business

- New housing subdivisions would increase the population who would in turn be willing to spend on consumer items.
- Businesses are closing because people do not shop Buhl like they used to.
- Attitudes need to become more open
- The streets.
- No newly generated businesses.
- People here don't like change. 'It's the way we've always done it.'
- There is no place to shop, live, or for children to play. My job is threatened with every drop in attendance.
- Buhl will either grow or die. Let's grow in some logical areas.
- My visual impressions from this community are unkempt!
- The smell from Rangen's.
- I had problems finding a suitable rental home. I like what I'm renting now, but there are lots of places to buy and nothing to rent.
- Local prices for goods can't compare w/large chains & warehouse stores
- No work or limited seasonal work.
- A home I might buy has no potential resale value.
- I will not build in Buhl because the city is restrictive and unfriendly.
- There is too wide a gap between the very small and the very expensive.
- Buhl feels very rural and undeveloped.
- Buhl is not an attractive city.
- Attracting new businesses Housing inventory poor w/o adequate stock, will not see growth. Need growth for vitality
- City fathers have been unresponsive & regulatory
- City father need to be more visible and diplomatic
- Infrastructure starting to deteriorate
- Need to add housing stock between \$60m to \$200m
- People will be leaving if improvement isn't done
- Willing to grow or die
- Create subdivisions for housing-build on availability and land available at city limits
- Generate new business
- People don't like change
- Get some news in the newspaper and bring the owner along.
- Need a younger population base
- Need more open attitudes
- Bedroom community, people commute to Twin Falls 2-3 times/day
- new business
- Old school buildings
- Incentive for young people to stay here
- People could compete as a mom and pop but Buhl is a bedroom community and people are willing to drive into Twin Falls two to three times a day.
- WalMart was going to come in and business owners threw a fit because of competition. How can we attract new business when existing business won't make room for it? There

is a sense of hypocrisy about wanting new business and still wanting things to stay the same.

- School buildings are all old and we have trouble passing bonds.
- There is no incentive for young people to stay in this community.
- Most of our teachers live in the Twin Falls, Gooding, or Filer areas.
- Many people are not aware of the cell program for new home financing.
- There is too much delinquency in the schools. Hispanic kids in Buhl, raised by U.S.-born Hispanic parents, don't have the discipline and respect that the Mexican-born/raised Hispanics have. I send my kids to school in Castleford.
- Education, losing students. External problems with administration
- Power struggles
- Limiting infrastructure

What would you like to see the City of Buhl accomplish in the next five (5) years?

- Improve Hispanic Community participation and communication to bring in those adults who will bring others along.
- Clean UP!
- Widen the streets
- Plan more consciously.
- New High School
- Nicer rentals and homes for sale in the middle price range.
- I would like to see a downtown where I could find everything from groceries to items in a department store.
- The Buhl School District will be considered one of the best in the state
- Business people will locate in Buhl because housing has been approved.
- I want a nice, clean modern neighborhood in the \$90,000 range with streetlights and sidewalks.
- A community housing forum for teachers and a packet of materials that informs people about their options.
- Better tech/trade education in H.S.
- Stay small and hold on to our small town values.
- Business growth through the growth of housing developments
- Hire part-time grant writer &/or researcher
- Add housing stock
- Clean industries
- A basic clean-up for the whole town.
- Underground – replace the sewer, find fresh water, and increase treatment plant capacity
- Form a recreation district – there is a population of less than 8,000 in the city.
- Provide middle income low end housing
- Complete the jr. high dangerous/outdated 1920's fire safety plan
- Advance the ability in the community to feel like a person can make a difference and help others raise their children
- Create more productive time for youth after school.

- Get a school bond passed in the community
- Reverse the low wages community wide so folks don't have the perception that it is okay to be paid less because they live in Buhl.
- Create more recreational opportunities nearby.
- Build a new middle school
- Continue to support our good city council who is moving away from band-aid solutions and more toward cures with things like the underground infrastructure.
- Improve city council/citizen relations
- Fill in places in city which could be developed
- Good moderate growth
- New business
- Clean up old neighborhoods
- Middle class housing for middle income families
- Lot of places to go for help, but nobody knows about them
- More retail store, but not WAL-MART, big cooperation
- Remain small, keep small town values
- Business growth, thought the growth of housing developers are more likely
- Downtown revitalization
- Downtown Sr. Apt's
- More stores open on Sunday
- Youth activities which are lacking
- Better street infrastructure, roads, streets, sidewalks

Buhl Development, Retention, & Quality of Life Survey

Buhl

Community & Economic Development, Business Retention, & Quality of Life Survey

1) Size of your firm (please provide the exact number of employees if known):

Large Firm _____ (50 or more employees)	Intermediate Firm _____ (26-50 employees)	Small Firm _____ (0-25 employees)
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- 2) Number of employees who live in Buhl: _____
- 3) Number of employees who live in Twin Falls County: _____
- 4) Number of employees who live outside the county: _____

- 5) Employment, in the last three years is:
 - A) Increasing
 - B) Decreasing
 - C) Same
- 6) Sales, in the last three years are:
 - A) Increasing
 - B) Decreasing
 - C) Same

- 7) Goods are primarily sold:
 - A) In Buhl or Twin Falls County
 - B) In Idaho
 - C) Outside Idaho

8) Number of years in operation: _____

9) Stability of business: No opinion Poor Fair Good Excellent

10) Overall opinion of Buhl as a place to do business:
 No opinion Poor Fair Good Excellent

11) Satisfaction with Business Climate Factors:

	Improve	OK	Pleased
Permit Processes			
Tax Rates			
Building Codes			
Planning & Zoning			
Labor			
Proximity to Suppliers			
Proximity to Customers			
Land & Site Costs			
Other Business & Professional Services			
Financial services			

12) Factors Important to Choosing and/or Remaining in the Community:

	Unnecessary	Convenient	Essential
Permit Processes			
Tax Rates			
Building Codes			
Planning & Zoning			
Labor			
Distribution/Collection Costs			
Proximity to Suppliers			
Proximity to Customers			
Land & Site Costs			
Business & Professional Services			

13) Quality of Public Services:

	Poor	Adequate	Good
Arts & Cultural Activities			
Recreation			
Schools/Education			
Community Appearance			
Police Protection			
Fire Protection			
Telephone			
Natural Gas			
Electricity			
Waste Disposal			
Sewer			
Water			

14) Cost of Public Services:

	Low	Fair	High
Arts & Cultural Activities			
Recreation			
Schools/Education			
Community Appearance			
Police Protection			
Fire Protection			
Telephone			
Natural Gas			
Electricity			
Waste Disposal			
Sewer			
Water			

15) Quality of Transportation Services:

	Poor	Adequate	Good
Air			
Rail			
Truck			

16) Cost of Transportation Services:

	Low	Fair	High
Air			
Rail			
Truck			

17) Of the community features listed below, please rank the FIVE features that are the most important to you as part of your community. *Only choose five.*

1 = most important, 2 = next most important, 3 = next, 4 = next, 5 = least important of your top five	
___ Arts & cultural activities	___ Employment and advancement opportunities
___ Medical services & facilities	___ Salary and wage level
___ Parks and recreation facilities	___ Citizen participation in local government
___ Low local tax rate	___ Youth activities and opportunities
___ Low crime rate	___ Level of local public services
___ Water quality & supply	___ Condition of roadways & sidewalks
___ Air quality	___ Shopping opportunities
___ Open spaces	___ Public education
___ Community appearance & beautification	___ Housing

18) Please rate the following subjects as you perceive them in your community.					
	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good
A) Air quality					
B) Quality of drinking water					
C) Supply of water for household & business use					
D) Condition of Streets					
E) Parking in retail areas					
F) Parks and recreation facilities					
G) Availability/affordability of housing for sale					
H) Availability/affordability of rental housing					
I) Opportunity for citizen involvement in local government					
J) Level of community safety					
K) Employment opportunities					
L) Availability of leisure activities					
M) Availability of health services					
N) Open spaces and green areas					
O) Sewer treatment/disposal					
P) Fire protection					
Q) Public education					
R) Police protection					
S) Land use planning					
T) Noise level in you neighborhood					
U) Overall quality of life in your community					

19) Additional Thoughts:

Thank you so much for your time and effort invested in improving your community!

Appendix

Advice, Assistance, & Available Community Funding

The following resources can be supplemented by referring to the Idaho Department of Commerce's (IDOC) Advantage Handbook available online at www.idoc.state.id.us in the publications section under community development or in the 2001-2002 Small Business & Community Development Resource Directory available through the Association of Idaho Cities and the Idaho Rural Partnership.

In addition, the website cited above has application rules and forms for the Idaho Community Development Block Grant program, a Downtown Handbook to assist with downtown and main street revitalization projects, fire plans, public finance strategies, news updates, and other important community and economic development information and resources.

A community review coordinator will contact you periodically following the community review to determine what additional assistance the visiting team may provide to you in realizing your community development objectives. Please feel free to contact members of the visiting team if you have follow up questions, comments, or require assistance in any way.

Infrastructure:

- Small Business Development Council (SBDC)
- Idaho Department of Commerce (IDOC)
- Association of Idaho Recyclers
- Idaho Transportation Department (ITD)
- Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
- Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR)
- Idaho Department of Health & Welfare (IDHW)
- Department of Parks
- Environmental Finance Center
- Consulting Engineers of Idaho
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- United States Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA)
- United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development
- Division of Rural & Community Development
- ITC Grant Program
- National Main Street Program
- Idaho Rural Water Association (IRWA)
- Idaho Rural Partnership (IRP)
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

- University of Idaho Cooperative Extension
- University of Idaho Department of Agricultural Economics
- Association of Idaho Cities (AIC)
- Local Chamber of Commerce
- International Conference of Building Officials
- Idaho National Guard
- Small Business Development Loans

Land Use & Community Design:

- Idaho Department of Transportation (ITD) Transportation Enhancement Program
- U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)
- Jerome County
- Highway Districts
- Chamber of Commerce
- Historic Tax Credits
- Low-Income Housing Tax Credits
- Community Action Agency - HOME funds
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Housing
- Community Development Block Grants
- Idaho Housing and Finance Association (IHFA) Multi-Family Division
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Multi-Family Division
- Idaho Department of Commerce (IDOC)
- University of Idaho Cooperative Extension
- Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Idaho Department Environmental Quality (IDEQ)
- Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC)
- Economic Development Administration (EDA)
- Panhandle Area Council (PAC)
- TEA-21 funds
- Idaho State Independent Living Council (Idaho SILC)
- Association of Idaho Cities (AIC)
- Idaho Association of Counties
- Other Cities

Civic Life & Community Involvement:

- Idaho Council on Aging
- Idaho Department of Commerce (IDOC)
- Association of Idaho Cities (AIC)

- National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC)
- Serve Idaho
- Search Institute's Healthy Youth Initiative
- America's Promise: the Alliance of Youth
- Youth Action Councils
- Governors Council on Aging
- YMCA - YWCA
- Gem Community Improvement Grants
- Service Club - Youth Activities
- Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- University of Idaho Forestry Lab
- University of Idaho Department of Art & Architecture
- University of Idaho Cooperative Extension
- Idaho Commission on the Arts (ICA)
- Advantage Club in North Idaho
- Idaho Transportation Department (ITD)
- Community Action Agency
- Idaho Department of Health and Welfare
- Senior Housing
- Economic Development Administration (EDA)
- Local School Districts - Computer Labs
- Annenberg Foundation
- Qwest Education Fund
- Micron Foundation
- Albertson's Foundation
- Planning - Health Districts
- Economic Development Administration (EDA)
- Association of Idaho Cities (AIC)
- Idaho Parks and Recreation

Community Potential Matrix

Attached is a matrix developed by Dr. Dick Gardner demonstrating numerous ways in which a community might add jobs to its economic base and assess its potential in comparison to other communities in the region or neighboring states.

Such assessments are intended as rough, qualitative guides to define regional and community strategic economic development objectives. This matrix and the subsequent description of each component can give local leaders a sense of the many different strategies that a town may employ to add jobs to a struggling economy. We hope it helps communities define in general terms how a given town's potential measures up against others in the region. The matrix can become a tool for productive community discussion about the future.

Some of the underlying criteria that determine potential, such as telecommunications infrastructure, community culture, and business recruitment, may be within the community's control. We invite community leaders to creatively devise ways to increase their potential. In addition, the matrix reveals patterns of potential for various ways to add jobs. This offers a sense of the kind of region we may move toward should funding for action steps become available. As reliance on the economic engines of natural resource industries lessen in the Inland Northwest, this matrix helps map progress toward a new West of more sustainable local economies.

COMMUNITY MATRIX					
	Community A	Community B	Community C	Community D	Community E
DIVERSIFICATION STRATEGY					
1. Value-Added Agriculture					
2. Value-added Forest Products					
3. Value-Added Mining					
4. Business Retention and Expansion					
5. Plugging Retail Leakage					
6. Business Recruitment					
7. Entrepreneurship Dev.					
8. Local/Regional Tourism					
9. Pass-Through Visitor Services					
10. Destination Tourism					
11. Transportation Hub/Warehousing					
12. Attracting Retirees					
13. Attracting Lone Eagles					
14. Telecommunications Business					
15. Environmental Restoration					
16. Health Care					
17. Bedroom Community					
18. Attracting/Retaining Government Offices					
19. Culture/Arts/Historic Center					
Each Community may be ranked in ‘potential’ according to qualitative criteria.					
Each community score should be validated by local economic development practitioners and leaders.					

Diversification Strategy Detail

1. Value-Added Agriculture

Definition: Jobs can be created in agriculture by creating enterprises or new profit centers that add value to regional exports by 1) adding new crops or livestock, 2) creating new products, 3) addressing or developing new markets, or 4) lowering production costs.

Criteria To Measure Potential: Diversity of crops, amount of irrigated row crops, number of farms in county, relative size of agriculture in local economy

Implied Implementation Actions: Marketing cooperatives, direct marketing like farmer's markets, training on alternative crops, revolving loan fund.

2. Value-added Forest Products

Definition: Jobs can be created in the region's forests by creating enterprises that add value to regional forest exports by 1) harvesting new forest products, 2) creating new products, 3) addressing or developing new markets, or 4) lowering production costs.

Criteria To Measure Potential: Relative size of existing forest industry.

Implied Implementation Actions: Inventory special forest products. Form secondary wood products manufacturing network. Organize demonstrations of new technologies. Feasibility studies. Marketing cooperatives. Awareness of environmental concerns.

3. Value-Added Mining

Definition: Jobs can be created in the region's mineral sector by creating new enterprises that add value to regional exports by removing new substances from the earth

Criteria To Measure Potential: Presence of existing mining industry.

Implied Implementation Actions: Explore mineral inventory, conduct feasibility study. Lava rock, silica sand, semi-precious stones, etc offer opportunities to add value. Compare costs and benefits with environmental concerns.

4. Business Retention and Expansion

Definition: By analyzing what all existing businesses in a community need to thrive and expand, communities can find ways to grow new jobs.

Criteria To Measure Potential: All communities have good potential from this strategy. The only limiting factors are how long ago an interview program was done and the vigor to which follow-up actions were pursued. Larger communities will have a deeper set of businesses with which to work.

Implied Implementation Actions: Conduct & analyze business interviews, make needed infrastructure improvements, fill specific employee training needs, develop business finance resources

5. Plugging Retail Leakage/Import Substitution

Definition: By identifying the extent to which residents are leaving the community to purchase goods and services, communities can plug leaks and increase the circulation of economic activity within town.

Criteria To Measure Potential: Isolated communities pay a higher travel cost for securing goods and services and may have more potential. Larger communities may also have more potential here.

Implied Implementation Actions: Conduct and analyze consumer surveys. Targeted recruitment of needed services.

6. Business Recruitment

Definition: A combination of push factors from the existing location and pull factors towards the new will sometimes lead businesses to move or expand to a new community, instantly bringing new jobs.

Criteria To Measure Potential: 1) Good access to markets, 2) Educated, skilled labor force, 3) ready, affordable industrial sites, 4) High quality infrastructure and amenities, 5) Financing, and 6) Appreciative, pro-business attitude (Source: *Harvesting Hometown Jobs*). Land costs, labor costs, labor availability, utility costs, transportation costs (distance to markets and to critical inputs), education, health care, and community amenities.

Implied Implementation Actions: Commercial property or building survey, inquiry response package, targeted recruitment, advertising campaigns, industrial park development

7. Entrepreneurship Development

Definition: Entrepreneurs are the creative spark that brings labor, capital, technology, and market information together for a new business venture. Most entrepreneurs have particular strengths, e.g. engineering or sales, but not all the skills needed for a successful business. Entrepreneurship programs may both increase business startup rates and decrease failure rates.

Criteria To Measure Potential: More potential to fill classes with larger communities. All communities have potential entrepreneurs. Increased potential with number of diversification options.

Implied Implementation Actions: Organize business start-up classes. Target women and minority populations under-represented in business community. Business planning technical assistance. Various development finance programs. Peer lending programs. Individual Development Accounts.

8. Local/Regional Tourism

Definition: All communities have some potential to help visitors linger longer in their town, and thus make local purchases. Tourism is called the 3rd largest industry in the US.

Criteria To Measure Potential: Proximity to and capacity for leisure and recreation resources.

Implied Implementation Actions: Tourism inventory. Better signage to attractions. Create local lodging facilities. Interpretive materials for attractions. Develop joint marketing materials. Community celebrations. Sports tournaments. Organizing group reunions. Farm and ranch recreation. Feasibility studies. Rails-to-trails. Industry tours, environmental tours.

9. Pass-Through Visitor Services

Definition: Some towns are situated where many people are passing through. Jobs can be created by providing things these people need to help them stop, pass time, and make purchases.

Criteria To Measure Potential: Location on transportation corridor, size of visitor stream

Implied Implementation Actions: Survey and analysis of needed visitor services. Develop public restrooms, parks and picnic areas.

10. Destination Tourism

Definition: A few communities have the natural or man-made attractions or some event that creates a destination for visitors.

Implied Implementation Actions: Feasibility studies. Farm and ranch recreation. Outfitters and guides services.

11. Transportation Hub/Warehousing

Definition: Where goods are transferred from one transportation mode to another, opportunities exist to add jobs by expanding the presence of transport firms and warehousing functions, e.g. Reno, NV.

Criteria To Measure Potential: On major transportation corridor, a natural stop in isolated country, adjacent to larger city

Implied Implementation Actions: Survey and analysis of transportation patterns. Targeted marketing to transportation firms and potential wholesalers. Assess zoning needs and infrastructure impact.

12. Attracting Retirees

Definition: Roughly 5% of new retirees move between states to re-locate. An additional several million retirees have no permanent address and live in recreation vehicles. Retired migrants tend to have higher income, more education, and better health than average for their age.

Criteria To Measure Potential: High natural and cultural amenities, desirable climate (defined as four seasons, long growing season, high number of sunny days, low numbers of extreme days of heat or cold) low cost of living, access to health care, sense of personal security, walkable downtown, friendly small-town atmosphere, access to commercial airlines

Implied Implementation Actions: Targeted marketing to individuals familiar with community, e.g. relatives or friends of residents, alumni, military service, repeat tourism visitors. Response kit development. Targeted advertising. Use of local retirees as ambassadors. Partnerships with developers.

13. Attracting Lone Eagles

Definition: Increasing numbers of people have the education, skills, and contacts to carry their living wherever they are and are limited only by proximity to a shipping/packaging facility in their region.

Entrepreneurs related to information technology have drastically increased the numbers of Lone Eagles, as has telecommuting.

Criteria To Measure Potential: 1) Accepts newcomers and is open to change, 2) demonstrates community pride and optimism, 3) Access to open space and recreation amenities, 4) Access to cultural amenities, 5) Interesting personality or standing, 6) Good housing at reasonable rates, 7) Sense of personal security, 8) Good K-12 schools, 9) Access to post-secondary ed and training, 10) primary health care and access to higher levels of care, 11) Small business friendly, 12) Minimizes tax and regulatory burdens, 13) work-ready labor force, 14) Advanced telecomm, 15) wireless telephony, 16) Cable TV, 17) Access to Internet, 18) Overnight express mail, 19) Access to commercial airlines, 20) Same-day delivery of major national newspapers (Source: Center for the New West)

Implied Implementation Actions: Community telecommunications assessment. Targeted marketing to individuals familiar with community, e.g. alumni, military service, repeat tourism visitors. Response kit development. Targeted advertising. Development of ancillary services Lone Eagles require. “Smart” building or business incubator development

14. Telecommunications Business

Definition: Businesses that rely on information technology are increasingly footloose. They can either be attracted to a community or home-grown.

Criteria To Measure Potential: Same as Lone Eagles, with greater emphasis on work force and high speed telecomm services.

Implied Implementation Actions: Community telecommunications assessment. Response kit development. Targeted advertising. Development of ancillary services telecommunications businesses require. “Smart” building or business incubator development. Development of broadband telecomm service.

15. Environmental Restoration

Definition: Fires, forest and range health, mining, and brown field sites create opportunities for employment in environmental restoration.

Criteria To Measure Potential: Forest health, range health, mining, fire damage, Superfund sites.

Implied Implementation Actions: Marketing restoration contract opportunities locally. Retraining workers. Organizing workers and businesses into networks to meet contract opportunities. Grant applications. Partnering with higher education or agencies.

16. Health Care

Definition: The provision of health care can be a major provider of jobs, as well as a key condition for businesses and individuals to locate. Local hospitals are often among the top employers in a community. A doctor may support as many as 5-8 other jobs.

Criteria To Measure Potential:

Implied Implementation Actions: recruitment and retention of primary care providers, loan repayment programs, health clinic improvements, EMS improvements, pharmacist recruitment

17. Bedroom Community

Definition: Some communities are so close to larger cities that their natural niche is building a base of residents who will bring income home to their communities.

Criteria To Measure Potential: Distance to larger city, transportation links, size of neighboring community

Implied Implementation Actions: Consumer survey to identify what goods and services are preferred locally, links to construction and financing firms in development industry, develop local recreation programs, strengthen schools, parks and trail development

18. Attracting/Retaining Government Offices

Definition: District and regional offices of state and federal agencies can be a major source of professional and stable jobs. Keeping them open can be as important as getting new ones.

Implied Implementation Actions: Work with political decision-makers

19. Culture/Arts/Historic Center

Definition: Communities can systematically build on cultural/historical attractions and arts businesses to create jobs and build unique identity.

Implied Implementation Actions: Ethnic celebrations, B&B development, arts fairs, arts cooperatives, cross-marketing in local stores. Historic re-creations/living history exhibits. Development of e-commerce for arts products.

Buhl Community Review Visiting Team Members

Community Review Coordinators:

Hank Ebert

Rural Development Specialist
Idaho Department of Commerce
(208) 334-2470

Hank has a B.A. from Rutgers University, and is earning a Masters in Public Administration degree at Boise State University. He coordinates the Idaho Gem Community Program and works with Gem teams and other organizations throughout Idaho to assist rural communities enhance opportunities for economic and community development.

Michael Shaw

Human Rights Coordinator
Association of Idaho Cities
(208) 344-8594

Michael has a B.A. from Colorado College, an MBA from Northwest Nazarene University, and has worked as a child therapist, civil rights investigator, human resource specialist, and consultant. He currently facilitates statewide inter-cultural events and provides leadership, conflict resolution and facilitation, community building, hate crime, racial profiling, and diversity training to city officials, schools, and human rights groups across Idaho.

Erik Kingston

Housing Resource Coordinator
Idaho Housing and Finance Association
(208) 331-4706

Erik created and manages IHFA's Housing Information & Referral Center, a research and referral resource for the state. He is currently involved in Boise's Open Space planning and the Treasure Valley Partnership. Formerly, he was with Boise Public Works, and Executive Director of Wasatch Fish & Gardens (Utah), and on the Utah Arts Council's Performing Arts Tour and Folk Arts Program.

Brian Dale

Operations Specialist
U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development
(208) 334-1990

Brian has a B.A. from Westminster College (in Missouri), has worked with many local and national disability councils, advisory committees, and coalitions, and has directed work of the Utah Statewide Independent Living Council and Salt Lake Impact 2002 Olympic Committee.

Dwight Johnson

Interim Executive Director, Idaho Rural Partnership
Public Affairs Manager, Idaho Department of Labor
(208) 334-6402

Dwight has a B.A. in Political Science from Brigham Young University, a Masters of Public Administration from Boise State University, and has worked on the Governor’s Welfare Reform Advisory Council and Workforce Development Council. Dwight has experienced legislative successes in Workforce Development, Employment Security and Wage and Hour law, Farmworker Minimum Wage law, and Farm Labor Contractor Licensing.

Dr. James Nelson, PhD

Ag., Economic & Rural Sociology Dept.
University of Idaho
(208) 885-5217

Jim has been an agricultural economics professor at the University of Idaho since 1990, and is the Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology. He has degrees in agricultural economics from Texas Tech University and Oklahoma State University. Jim also has extensive experience in areas such as Farmland Values, Economic Development, Economics of Rural Community Services, Impacts of Higher Education on State and Local Economies, Rural Economic Analysis of Alternative Irrigation Systems, and Economic Impacts of Agriculture on State and Local Economies.

Local Economic Development Focus Team:

Cleo Cheney

Mayor
City of Heyburn
(208) 678-8158

Mayor Cheney is a retired oilman from Coastal Corporation in Houston, Texas. He has supervised a gas plant and field measurement projects in Wyoming and Utah, and became Mayor of Heyburn in 2000.

Larry Stachler

Rural Development Manager
USDA Rural Development
(208) 733-5380 x 120

Larry has a B.S. in Agriculture from the University of Idaho, has 30 years of credit experience in commercial & government sectors, and oversees 20 different loan and grant programs for rural community infrastructure and economic development in the 8 Magic Valley counties.

Greg Rogers

Regional Labor Economist
Magic Valley Job Service
(208) 735-2049

Greg has a Bachelor's Degree in Business Management and an MBA from the University of Idaho. He spent twelve years as a branch manager and commercial loan officer with various banks and two years as an Asset Protection Manager for Sears Roebuck. He was born and raised in the Magic Valley and now lives in Twin Falls.

Carleen Herring

Economic Development Division Director
Region IV Economic Development
(208) 732-5727 x 3010

Jim Scott

Economic Development Facilitator
Rural Magic Valley Economic Development Association
(208) 837-4522 or (208) 539-7473

Scotty's degree is from Northern Arizona University in Forest Land Management. His 25-year Forest Service career included supervisory, administrative, planning, resource program management and operations duties. After retiring from the Forest Service he served as a Trimble Navigation certified GPS mapping systems instructor for two years and operated a facilitation/planning/consulting business for two years. He has served as a City Councilman in his hometown for over four years and is currently employed as an Economic Development Facilitator for the Rural Magic Valley Economic Development Association.

Vance Kirklin

Managing Director, Consulting
CRI Advantage
(208) 343-9192 ext. 115

Vance is the Managing Director of Consulting for CRI Advantage, a technology Technology Consulting and Managed Services firm based in Boise. A 25 year veteran of the technology field, Vance's responsibilities include strategic technology planning for CRI's largest clients. He has taught Computer Science at the college level as well as working in administration at the same school. Vance is currently working with several state and local government and education related agencies on strategic technology plans.

Cindy Williams

Vice President/Community Development
U.S. Bank
(208) 383-7707

A 24-year employee of U.S. Bank, Cindy administers the Charitable Contributions program and Community Reinvestment activities for the State of Idaho. She actively represents the bank in community and economic development initiatives by developing and maintaining strategic alliances with governmental agencies, community groups and organizations representing diverse community interests. Cindy is currently serving on the boards of Mercy Housing Idaho, Idaho Financial Literacy Coalition, Idaho-Nevada CDFI and Idaho Partners for Homebuyer Education, Inc.

Housing Focus Team:

Jane Pavek

Vice President/Community Development
Wells Fargo Bank
(208) 393-2061

Jane has a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Boise State University, majoring in Finance, and has years of private sector experience in affordable housing development and lending and credit analysis. Her current position involves the implementation of Wells Fargo's involvement in the Community Reinvestment Act throughout Idaho. Jane is also active with Boise and Nampa Neighborhood Housing Services, Image de Idaho, Idaho Financial Literacy Coalition, and as a member of the Board of Directors for Idaho Partners for Homebuyer Education.

Richard Stallings

City Councilmember, City of Pocatello
President, Pocatello Neighborhood Housing Services
(208) 232-9468

Richard holds a B.S. from Weber State and an M.S. from Utah State. He taught history and government for 15 years at Ricks College and represented Idaho in the U.S. Congress for 8 years. In 1995 he accepted the position of Executive Director of Pocatello Neighborhood Housing Services and during his tenure his organization has helped nearly 500 families purchase homes and 250 families rehab their properties.

Sue Shadley

Associate Broker, State Certified Instructor
RE/MAX Homestead Realty
(208) 529-5600

Sue was born in Budapest, Hungary and came to the United States as a refugee. She has lived in Idaho Falls for most of the past 35 years, and was the 1991 Realtor of the Year. Sue has taught pre-license classes at Eastern Idaho Technical College, is a certified Home With Diversity trainer for the National Association of Realtors, and is the Equal Housing Opportunity/Fair Housing Chair for the Greater Idaho Falls Board of Realtors. Sue is a Certified Residential Specialist, a Certified Residential Brokerage Manager, and an Accredited Buyer Representative. She and her husband Don have three children and three grandchildren.

Becky Dean

Becky Dean
Multi-Family Housing Specialist
USDA, Rural Development
(208) 733-5380 (ext. 119)

Becky has a B.S. from the University of Idaho and has worked in both federal and private industry in the areas of ag lending, commercial lending, single family housing lending, and promoting rural development in affordable housing. She is currently managing the central Idaho affordable multi-family housing portfolio for USDA, Rural Development.

Gary Gillespie

Consultant
(208) 327-0507

Gary has a B.A. from Eastern Washington University, a M.S. from the University of Idaho, an MBA from Seattle City University, is a retired USMC Colonel, and was a manager, director, economist, and market analyst for the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development for the past 30 years prior to his retirement from public service.

Education Focus Team:**Phil Homer**

Consultant
(208) 788-4368

Phil has a B.S. and M.S. degree from Utah State University, and has served as a Teacher in Soda Springs, Pocatello, and Hailey, and as a Principal and School Superintendent in Blaine County. He is active in civic organizations such as the Blaine County Jail Advisory Committee, Criminal Justice Council, Crisis Hotline, Rotary Club, and Library Board, as well as professional organizations such as the Idaho Association of School Administrators and Idaho School Superintendents' Association. He has received awards for Blaine County Citizen of the Year, several Distinguished Service Awards, and an Education Leadership Award.

Darrel McRoberts

Assistant to the Director
Idaho Department of Agriculture
(208) 332-8666

Darrel, a Buhl native who retired from Green Giant, was the Buhl plant manager from 1980 to 1995. He served 35 years with the food processing company. Darrel was elected an Idaho State Senator in 1984 and served two terms representing Twin Falls County. He was U.S. Senator Dirk Kempthorne's Idaho agriculture & natural resource representative from 1995-1998. In late 1998, Governor Kempthorne brought Darrel to Boise as his Agricultural Policy Advisor and after two years, the governor asked Darrel to work in the State Department of Agriculture office in Boise to assist the agency in the critical rural issues facing Idaho today.

Lisa Edwards

Americorps Intern
Association of Idaho Cities
(208) 344-8594

Mandy De Castro

Program Specialist
Association of Idaho Cities
(208) 344-8594

Mandy de Castro serves as a Program Specialist, for the Association of Idaho Cities' statewide asset-building initiatives with Deb Krum. She works to equip and support communities to build assets for youth.

Gloria Galan

City Councilmember
City of Twin Falls
(208) 734-4203

Ron Shopbell

Director of Dual Enrollment, Summer School, and Adult Evening Programs
College of Southern Idaho
208-732-6268

Ron has a B.A., M.A. and Special Degree from the University of Idaho in Vocational Administration. He is Director of Summer School, Dual Enrollment (Credit) Programs, and Adult Technical Short Term Training.

Sara Bott

Community Relations
Mini/Cassia HealthNet
(208) 436-0481

Sara is nineteen years old and loving every minute of it. She has a twin sister who is her best friend and two younger sisters named Danielle and Jennifer. She has lived in the Minidoka area all her life and graduated from Minico High School in 2001. She is attending the College of Southern Idaho, trying to better her education. Sara loves spending time with the youth in her community and has been present every Monday night at the Juvenile Detention Center for the past year. Sara hopes to someday have a career that involves the youth in her community.

News Articles

Community development professionals to visit Buhl

April 18, 2002

Association of Idaho Cities Creating Quality Cities Newsletter

A diverse group of 20-25 community development professionals will visit Buhl May 13-14, 2002 to participate in the 'Idaho Community Review,' a joint project spearheaded by the Association of Idaho Cities, the Idaho Department of Commerce, the Idaho Rural Partnership, and the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development.

These talented and experienced visiting team members, who will tentatively include Heyburn Mayor Cleo Cheney, Pocatello City Councilman and former Congressman Richard Stallings, and Association of Idaho Cities Youth Asset Building Coordinator Deb Krum, will generously donate time, travel, and accommodation expenses to the project. Team members will also hail from state agencies such as the University of Idaho and Job Service, federal agencies such as USDA Rural Development and HUD, and will include private sector professionals with a wide range of expertise, such as real estate in Idaho Falls and family & community development in Sandpoint.

On May 13, Buhl Mayor Barbara Gietzen and a home team assembled from the Buhl community composed of leaders such as Chamber of Commerce President Steve Kaatz and Buhl School District Superintendent Dr. Rick Hill will welcome the visitors. Following an orientation about Buhl's community history, team introductions, and an overview of the community review process and two day schedule, the teams will separate into groups and focus on three core interest areas identified through an application process by Buhl's leadership: Local Economic Development, Housing, and Education.

The teams will engage in conversations with Buhl community leaders and citizens, tour the area, facilitate a town meeting at a luncheon on May 14th to present their observations and recommendations, and will provide a subsequent written report detailing the experience. The written report will include information collated during all phases of the review, interview summaries and a survey of Buhl residents, and resources available to Buhl in effecting positive change.

The Community Review program's goals are to provide objective recommendations, resources, and supplement Buhl's effort in developing and implementing local community development strategies. The community of Buhl will arrange meeting sites, provide meals and transportation for the visiting team, develop a tour schedule, promote the review to foster excitement, and secure commitments to participate from local leaders and citizens. Hats off to Buhl city leaders and all other home team members for their willingness to share all aspects of their community, and being open to feedback, information, and ideas from the visiting team.

City leaders interested in scheduling a review in their community or seeking additional information may contact Michael Shaw of the Association of Idaho Cities at 344-8594, Bob Ford of the Idaho Department of Commerce at 334-2470, or Brian Dale of the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development at 334-1990.

Business Team Assesses Buhl

By Mary Lou Potts

May 17, 2002

Twin Falls Times-News

BUHL – The city has a friendly, small-town atmosphere but needs to work on economic development, housing and education, members of an Association of Idaho Cities assessment team said this week.

After a whirlwind tour of Buhl on Monday and Tuesday, the team gave the city a progress report that accented the many resources the city has and ways to improve.

“We found the town to have a sense of spirit and grace,” said group leader Michael Shaw.

Monday evening was spent interviewing Buhl residents about what they want to see happen in the city. Here are some of the findings:

Housing – This issue was a great concern, as many believe the school district can’t keep valuable teachers, businesses have a difficult time hiring daytime workers, and new businesses avoid coming to Buhl because of a housing shortage.

According to real estate agents, there is some housing for sale in town, but most of the homes have small lots or are too costly for potential buyers. The team saw a need for low-interest loans, a possibility of a hotel to accommodate about 45 people and more low-cost housing projects.

Migrant workers occupy a lot of rentals during working months, and some stay permanently.

“Keep in mind that empty houses become available through divorce and bankruptcies also,” said Erik Kingston, team coordinator with Idaho Housing and Finance Association. “Right now the market is tight, which drives the cost up.”

Development – The downtown revitalization program will benefit businesses and the tourist trade, Kingston said. And there are structures to be restored to original designs which would draw tourists through promotion and should be an economic boost.

The east end of town is starting to build up with the addition of the Kacy Meadows housing complex. Tacomaker/Jake’s Hamburger is about to open next to Subway.

Cenex is planning to build a super store, and a McDonald’s Express store is planned.

“That end of town will look like ‘Little Blue Lakes Boulevard’ if the city doesn’t plan for growth,” said Dave Bremers, owner of Arctic Circle on the east end of town.

Downtown parking is not sufficient now, but city officials have taken steps in the revitalization plan for additional parking, Kingston said.

“If the downtown revitalization program takes as long as the stoplight east of town, businesses will go broke as two of them did two years ago,” Bremers said. “The town will be in an uproar if the project takes too long.”

“People avoid streets under construction,” added Realtor Judy Hoffman.

Clint Uptain, who lives on Main Street and has been a homeowner since 1949, told the committee that when the city was installing new water pipes, the street was torn up so long that he and his wife almost decided to sell and move out of Buhl.

“We stuck it out, and now we really enjoy the new water pressure, so we’re glad we stayed,” Uptain said.

Vance Kirklin, who led the economic development team said that even though Buhl “has three large businesses in Clear Springs, Seneca, and Rangens, they are not the center of the hub. The businesses downtown are just as important,” he said.

He suggested that entrances into town be made attractive enough for visitors “to remember what they saw and where they saw it.”

And developers should be made aware of zoning changes in the city and “provided an incentive to want to come to Buhl, capitalizing on the assets the city already has,” Kirklin said.

Schools – The education assessment team visited all three schools in the district and checked curriculum, test scores, technology, administration, teaching staff, and parental involvement.

“Many districts in the state are not where Buhl is today,” said Darrel McRoberts, education team leader. “You have a lot more going for you than you thought.”

The condition of the middle school building is the city’s biggest education dilemma, McRoberts said.

“According to the facts given me, the middle school problem has been ongoing since 1979, and it’s time to get down the road, decide what to do to solve the problem and do it,” he said.

“If the school problem is not settled, economic development will not come to Buhl. People go where the schools are good, academically and buildings,” said Ron Shopbell, team member from College of Southern Idaho.

The assessment team’s visit was “the beginning of a process,” Shaw said.

“This is the seventh assessment the team has completed, and with follow-up reports, the towns we visited have progressed greatly,” he said. “This is not an overnight venture – it takes time.”

A written report will be sent to the city in 60 days, and recommendations will be noted as to how some of the problems can be fixed, Shaw said.

Buhl Community Review Agenda

Monday May 13, 2002

- 8:00-9:00 Continental Breakfast at Buhl City Hall
- 9:00 Welcome by Mayor Barbara Gietzen
- 9:05 Brief Community History by Lee Popplewell
- 9:15 Visiting Team Introductions, Team Logistics
- 9:45 Education Team Overview
- 10:00 Economic Development Team Overview
- 10:15 Housing Team Overview
- 10:30-5:30pm Individual Team Tours – Luncheons
- 5:30-7:00pm Dinner at 8th Street Center provided by Clear Springs Foods, 8th Street Center, Clear Lake Country Club
- 7:00-9:00 Open Public Session at City Hall

Tuesday May 14, 2002

- 7:00-11:30am Visiting Team Session at AmeriTel Inn, Twin Falls
- 12:00-2:30pm Luncheon at Moose Hall, Buhl, provided by Buhl Moose Lodge

Economic Development Team Tour Agenda

- 10:30-10:50 Windshield Tour of Buhl
 Broadway East to Fair
 Fair – West to Truck Route to Clark’s
 Main to City Center
- 10:50-11:20 Walking Tour of Downtown
 Senior Center to Idaho Youth Ranch (SW Main)
 Duffy’s to Grandstands (SE Main)
 Grandstands to Langdon’s (SE Broadway)
 Parnell’s to City Center (NE Broadway)
 North to U.S. Bank
 Cleverly’s back to City Center
- 11:20-12:00 Split up to interview downtown businesses
 Western Auto: Mercantile Store
 SAV MOR Drug: Pharmacist
 Primrose Lane: Flower Shop
 Black Rock: Women’s Clothing
 Gietzen Electric: Electrical Contractor
 Arctic Circle: Fast Food Restaurant
 J & L Lawn Furniture: Light Industry
 Mexican Panaderia: bakery
 Grandstands: Restaurant
 Middlekauff Ford: Auto Dealer
- 12:15-1:00 Working lunch at Clear Lake Country Club with local bankers
- 1:15-5:00 Site Visits – with management teams
 Clear Springs
 Seneca
 Rangen’s
- Time Permitting: City Sewer System: Gary Winn, Pete Pledical
 City Water System: Gary Winn, Steve Heybarger
- 5:00-5:30 Down Time
- 5:30-7:00 Networking Dinner at 8th Street Center
- 7:00-9:00 Community Input Session at City Hall

Housing Team Tour Agenda

- 10:30-11:00 Introduction to Buhl Housing: City Hall
Residential Zoning
Demographics
Real Estate Overview
- 11:00-12:00 Bus Tour
Parnell Senior Apartments
Eastman City Park
Parnell Low Income Apartments
Colony North First Addition
Melon Valley
Kanaka Rapids
Jane George
- 12:00-1:00 Lunch at Clear Springs Food Visitor's Center
- 1:00-3:30 Bus Tour
Clear Lake Road: Area of city impact
Meadow Brook Apartments
Seneca Foods
Kaycee Meadows Apartments
McCollum Addition, Urban Renewal, Area of city impact
Courtyard, Grove, and Homestead Subdivisions
Moonglow Subdivision
Fruitland Ave., Area of city impact
Lincoln Courts
- 3:30-5:00 Meet with Teachers, Popplewell School
- 5:00-5:30 Down Time
- 5:30-7:00 Networking Dinner at 8th Street Center
- 7:00-9:00 Community Input Session at City Hall

Education Team Tour Agenda

- 10:30-11:00 Meet with Buhl High School Student Council
- 11:00-12:00 Meet with Terry Adolfson, Buhl High School Principal, and tour of campus
- 12:00-12:30 Lunch at Grandstands
- 12:45-1:15 Armory for ARTEC Tour
- 1:30-2:15 Meet with Barry Espil, Buhl Middle School Principal, tour of campus
- 2:20-3:00 Meet with Helen Brown, Popplewell Elementary School, tour of campus
- 3:00-4:30 Meet with Bill Fields, Mike Gemar, Doug Scott, Brian Bridwell to discuss technology, special services, transportation, and central services
- 4:30-5:30 Meet with Rick Hill, Superintendent, and Armand Eckert, Board Chairman
- 5:30 Dinner at 8th Street Center
- 7:00-9:00 Public input meeting at City Hall