



Soda Springs

Community Review Report

August 21-23, 2007

Cover photo by Dale Dixon

Soda Springs Community Review

August 21-23, 2007

A report presented to the
City of Soda Springs and its citizens by
the Idaho Community Review program

The Idaho Community Review is a collaboration of federal, state, tribal, and local governments along with the private sector through Idaho Rural Partnership.
For more information call 208-334-3131 or visit <http://irp.idaho.gov>.



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Acknowledgments

The Soda Springs Community Review Visiting Team and Coordinators wish to thank the citizens of Soda Springs for sharing their opinions and ideas with the Visiting Team. Your depth of caring for your community is obvious to us.

We also thank Mayor Kirk Hansen, City Clerk Tausha Vorwaller, the members of the Home Team who served as leaders for their respective focus areas – Trent Clark (Economic Development), Criss James and Lawrence Rigby (Community Design and Identity), and Tony Varilone (Civic Life and Community Involvement), and the rest of the Home Team. The professional, organized nature of this community review was due to your efforts. Thanks also to Senator Robert Geddes and County Commissioner Rudy Lloyd Rasmussen for participating in the August 22 public forum at Tigert Middle School.

The Soda Springs Community Review could not have been completed without the commitment, time, and knowledge demonstrated by the Home Team. These individuals coordinated the Visiting Team's time in Soda Springs, served as tour guides, shuttled team members, answered endless questions and, most of all, served as excellent representatives for the community. Home Team members included:

Special Thanks to the Soda Springs Home Team

Economic Development

Trent Clark
Arnell Walker
Kathy Ray
Mitch Hart
Todd Hunseker
Linda Anderson

Community Design & Identity

Lawrence Rigby
Criss James
Robbi Lamarr
Lee Godfrey
Doug Hogan
Randy Prescott

Civic Life & Community Involvement

Tony Varilone
Doug Foss
Gene Lish
Craig Shuler
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Gary Lemarr
Irv Christensen
Dave Chamberlain

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Bannock County Development Corporation ● Bingham County ●
Bootstrap Solutions ● Caribou County ● Caribou Mountain
Pizza ● CHAT-TV ● Clearstory Studios ● Office of Senator
Larry Craig ● Enders Hotel ● Greater Soda Springs
Community Development Committee ● Hailey Chamber of
Commerce ● Idaho Department of Agriculture ● Idaho
Department of Commerce ● Idaho Department of Environmental
Quality ● City of Idaho Falls Idaho Housing and Finance
Association ● Idaho Rural Partnership ● City of Jerome ●
City of Kimberly ● Kuna Juvenile Justice Council ● Lallatin's
Food Town ● Monsanto ● NRCS – Three Rivers RC & D
Association ● Partners for Prosperity ● Quick Stop ● Qwest
● Ravisant Restaurant ● Regional Development Alliance ●
City of Soda Springs ● USDA Rural Development

Summary of Review Activities

Working together, the Coordinating Teams representing the Idaho Community Review program and the City of Soda Springs did an excellent job of creating an agenda that gave the Visiting Team the opportunity it needed to experience first hand Soda Springs's assets, challenges, and opportunities while also allowing both planned and random conversations with Soda Springs residents. Review activities are summarized below. A more detailed review itinerary is included as Appendix F.

Day One – August 21

- Visiting Team Welcome, Orientation and Reception/Dinner with the Home Team at Enders Hotel
- Dessert, socializing, and historical presentation by 'Cariboo Jack' at Hooper Springs

Day Two – August 22

- Breakfast at Caribou Mountain Pizza
- Comments and Q and A with Bob Ward, restaurant owner and Chamber President
- Community tours
- Lunch at Corrigan Park
- Continue community tours
- Dinner Visiting and Home Team Dinner at Ravisant
- Public forum at Tigert Middle School, featuring addresses by Mayor Kirk Hansen, County Commissioner Lloyd Rasmussen, and Idaho Senator Robert Geddes (broadcast by CHAT-TV)

Day Three- August 23

- Visiting Team breakfast at Enders Hotel
- Report development
- Lunch at Monsanto
- Continue report development
- BBQ dinner at Kelly Park
- Public presentation and discussion at Monsanto multi-purpose room (broadcast by CHAT-TV)

Part I Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of a Community Review conducted in Soda Springs August 21-23, 2007. At the request of the City of Soda Springs, the Review was completed by a "Visiting Team" of 18 people experienced in various aspects of community and economic development. Biographical and contact information for each Visiting Team member is included as Appendix A.

Over the three day period, the Visiting Team listened to, learned from, observed, and asked questions of community leaders and citizens to understand Soda Springs's present assets, challenges, and opportunities.

The Soda Springs Community Review and this associated report will benefit the community in many ways. Like other communities in which a Community Review has been conducted, Soda Springs saw benefit in seeing their community through the eyes of others. Often, people visiting a community see something as an opportunity or an asset that locals might not recognize the same way. Also, there is significant value in having the good planning, capital improvement efforts, and existing amenities that Soda Springs has worked hard to create validated by outside professionals. As a result of the Review, City staff and other leaders now have new contacts or better understand that contacts they have known for some time within agencies and organizations that can provide funding and other assistance to advance projects in the future. Finally, this report, when combined with the City's new comprehensive plan and other planning documents, gives Soda Springs a clearer path to follow as it prioritizes and implements such projects.

The three focus areas for this Review were selected by the City at the time of their application to the Idaho Community Review program. These focus areas were:

- **Civic Life and Community Involvement**
- **Community Design and Identify**
- **Economic Development**

Each Visiting Team member was assigned to one of these three focus areas based on their expertise. Each of the three teams independently prepared a presentation and created write-ups for their respective focus area. An issue or recommendation repeated by more than one of the teams is an indication of the subject's importance. In some instances, two teams might identify the same issue but suggest different solutions. A brief summary of the issues and recommendations identified by the Visiting Team follow. Biographies for all Visiting Team members are found in Appendix A.

Visiting Team members and a brief summary of the issues and recommendations they identified are identified below. Biographies and contact information for all Visiting Team members are found in Appendix A.

Civic Life and Community Involvement

Visiting Team Members

- **Zella Johnson**
Former City Councilmember
City of Kuna
- **Dick Gardner**
President
Bootstap Solutions & RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurs
- **Polly Hulseley**
City Administrator/Clerk
City of Kimberly

Summary of Issues and Recommendations

This focus area is about building trust and social capital between individuals, organizations, and government. We found that the citizens of Soda Springs desire a more open and accountable city government that welcomes and values their involvement and communicates decisions being made and policies being enacted. We also noticed that there remains a lack of consensus regarding a few key initiatives. Successfully addressing these unresolved issues will result in a type of reconciliation between individuals involved, increasing both citizen involvement and the community's capacity to take advantage of future community development opportunities.

This report includes recommendations and resources to:

- increase the quality and quantity of communication between the City's leaders and their constituents
- reach consensus and forge sustainable agreements
- building bridges between diverse individuals and groups
- increase volunteerism

Community Design and Identity

Visiting Team Members

- **Erik Kingston** (Team Leader)
Housing Resources Coordinator
Idaho Housing and Finance Association
- **Paula Jones**
RC & D Coordinator
NRCS – Three Rivers RC & D
- **Melodie Halstead**
Zoning Administrator

Bingham County

- **Jan Blickenstaff**
Grant Administrator
City of Idaho Falls – Division of Planning and Building

Summary of Issues and Recommendations

We feel that Soda Springs's identity revolves around your historic place on the Oregon Trail, unique springs that made it a respite area for travelers, and the agricultural and mining that made it possible to stay. Your strong sense of community and the sense that nature and the recreational opportunities it affords are right out your backdoor are also important qualities that define live in Soda Springs.

We'd like to suggest that any effort to revitalize downtown include the addition of visual cues and signs at the entrances to town that make it easier for visitors to locate Main Street and the *downtown* geyser.

Part III of this report includes recommendations and resources to help Soda Springs:

- understand and reach consensus about growth issues and opportunities.
- incorporate recommendations in this report into your new comprehensive plan.
- improve information provided to permit applicants and citizens in general.
- encourage appropriate property maintenance among commercial and residential property owners.
- reach consensus and advance goals regarding the revitalization of downtown and the Highway 30 and 34 corridors within the city limits.
- celebrate your natural heritage.

Economic Development

Visiting Team Members

- **Jerry Miller** (Team Lead)
Economic Development Specialist
Idaho Department of Commerce
- **Eric Traynor**
Brownfields Program Manager
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
- **Gynii Gilliam**
Executive Director
Bannock Development Corporation
- **Marlin Eldred**
Economic Development Director
City of Jerome
- **Julie Oxarango-Ingram**
Executive Director

Hailey Chamber of Commerce

- **Tim Solomon**
Executive Director
Regional Development Alliance
- **Brian Buch**
Business Program Specialist
USDA Rural Development

Summary of Issues and Recommendations

The economic development focus area encompasses so much and is so important that we decided to break it up into the following sub-areas:

- Business diversification, retention, and entrepreneurship
- Tourism
- Workforce development
- Community infrastructure

Making progress on these fronts will allow highly educated folks to move into and contribute to the community and allow people who grew up in Soda Springs to return as adults. This report will help leaders, existing business, and other concerned citizens learn what they can do to:

- Increase business owner's awareness of existing sources of business assistance.
- Create a space to nurture emerging businesses
- Market economic development opportunities to businesses and investors (both within and outside of the community)
- Increase hotel/motel lodging and visitor information to bring more tourist dollars into the community
- Increase understanding of housing and other barriers that currently cause a high number of people working in Soda Springs to live elsewhere.
- Promote and improve the quality of education in Soda Springs.
- Plan for the capital improvement of infrastructure.

In addition to the preceding folks, the following Review Coordinators floated between the three focus areas:

- **Dale Dixon**
Executive Director
Idaho Rural Partnership
- **Tom Putnam**
Community Development Manager
Partners for Prosperity
- **Jon Barrett (Report Writer)**
Principal and Owner
Clearstory Studios

Part II Introduction and Overview

Coordinated by the Idaho Rural Partnership (IRP), the Soda Springs Community Review was a collaborative project of IRP, USDA Rural Development, Idaho Departments of Commerce and Environmental Quality, Partners for Prosperity, Idaho Housing and Finance Association, Office of Senator Larry Craig, Monsanto, and other federal, state, local, and private organizations.



The Community Review program provides objective observations, recommendations, and potential resources to Idaho communities with populations of 10,000 or less seeking to better understand how they might effectively approach long standing and emerging community issues and opportunities. This information is provided by a team of 15-20 professionals. These professionals are referred to as the “Visiting Team” and have expertise in various aspects of community and economic development. Hosted by a local “Home Team”

that’s roughly equal in number, the Visiting Team spends three days in the community learning about issues through tours, meetings, and interviews with community leaders and residents. The review concludes on the evening of the third day with an oral and visual presentation to the community.

The program can not instantly resolve all issues, but it has been evaluated as an invigorating, validating, unifying, and vision-creating experience by the communities who have participated. Community reviews additionally provide invaluable networking opportunities, setting the stage for future resource referrals and follow up activities. Additional information about the Idaho Community Review program can be found at <http://irp.idaho.gov> or by calling the Idaho Rural Partnership at 208-334-3131.

This report communicates and provides greater detail about the observations, recommendations, and suggested resources identified by the Visiting Team during the community review that occurred in Soda Springs from August 21-23, 2007. Soda Springs is the 17th Idaho community to participate in the Community Review program.

A community review is initiated when the community seeking participation submits an application. Soda Springs submitted its application in late March 2007. This application is included as Appendix B. Receipt and review of the application led to pre-Review planning through mid summer. At this point in the process the community more clearly articulated its needs. This discussion is important because it helps facilitate the creation of a Visiting Team that is tailored to the community’s issues. It was also at this time that the actual date of the community review was established.

In-Kind Value of the Community Review

While the in-kind value of each community review varies, it is always substantial. Imagine the cost of hiring 20 professionals in land use planning, transportation, civil engineering, economic development, arts and other cultural resources, communication, grant funding, and other fields of expertise for three 14-hour work days. Don’t forget to

include their travel and hotel costs. Add to this the value of the days and weeks spent on pre-review planning and post-review report writing.

At standard billing rates and travel and hotel costs, the in-kind value of community reviews generally falls in the neighborhood of \$50,000-\$75,000. As with other community reviews, the direct costs to the City of Soda Springs were limited to some staff time and food and transportation for the Visiting and Home teams during the actual review.

Community Description

Soda Springs is a small community of about 3,200 that serves as the county seat for Caribou County. Originally called 'Beer Springs', the community's name was changed and the city was incorporated in 1896. Two state-designated scenic byways cross paths at Soda Springs – the Pioneer Historic Byway (Highway 34) is the most direct driving route between Salt Lake City and Yellowstone Park. Oregon Trail-Bear Lake Scenic Byway (Highway 30) begins at the Idaho-Utah border on the west side of Bear Lake.

The Visiting Team enjoyed an entertaining, creative overview of the community's history within our first few hours in town. Following dinner at the historic Enders Hotel we were shuttled to Hooper Park, where homemade root beer made from the natural soda water was flowing. While enjoying the root beer and carrot cake, historical character "Cariboo Jack" (aka Tony Varilone) made an appearance to introduce us to some of the area's more colorful historic characters and events from the past.



The history of the community is a microcosm of the history of this part of the American West. Namely, original inhabitation by the Shoshone and Bannock Tribes, visits by fur trappers and prospectors, emigrants resting and enjoying the carbonated water of the springs as they passed through on the Oregon Trail, and settlement by primarily Mormon pioneers who engaged in agriculture, gold and phosphate mining, and construction of the railroad.

In addition to the springs, Soda Springs is also home to the world's only captive geyser. It was unleashed in the 1930's during an attempt to find a hot water source for a swimming pool. In 1937, the drill broke through and unleashed the geyser. Unlike most geysers, the Soda Springs geyser is a cold water geyser. The geyser is capped and controlled by a timer. It erupts every hour on the hour.

Like many rural communities, the population of Soda Springs has ebbed and flowed over the last few decades, increasing in the 1970's, decreasing in the 1980's, and increasing again from the early 1990's to the present. Growth is expected to continue at a modest rate.

Job opportunities are provided by nearby mining and manufacturing of phosphorus and shale, followed by agriculture, education, health care, government, and retail and

professional services. For several reasons addressed in this report, a significant number of folks working in Soda Springs commute from Pocatello and other close by communities.

Tourism and outdoor recreation also contribute to the quality of life and economic well being of Soda Springs. Nearby national forests, national parks, rivers, and other public lands make the area an attractive place for visitors and residents who enjoy fishing, hunting, camping, 4-wheeling, and snowmobiling.

Soda Springs seems to have all needed products and services a resident might need. The community feels 'complete' in this way. Visiting Team members took note of both an outdoor drive-in theater and a conventional sit down theater on Main Street. Many communities of this size in Idaho have neither.

Physically, the original town site of Soda Springs features a traditional, walkable downtown which is notably perpendicular to Highway 30 running east-west into and through town. At typically 800' on a side, block lengths in Soda Springs's original residential neighborhoods are long relative to many Idaho communities. Streets are also relatively wide. The neighborhoods include considerable park amenities and well kept schools.



The Visiting Team appreciates the extensive background material about Soda Springs compiled by the Home Team. It significantly helped the Visiting Team understand the community, served as an indication that this Review was a high priority to the City, and contributed to the quality of this report.

Community Dynamics, Expectations, and Motivations for Requesting a Community Review

Ask 10 residents in Soda Springs for their opinions about growth and you're likely to get at least five different answers. This is not unlike many communities. Still, the Visiting Team is comfortable saying that it seems the majority of folks in Soda Springs would support improvements that increase their quality of life by: (1) providing cultural, recreational, and community-building opportunities, (2) result in new job opportunities, and (3) enable sustainable population growth.

From the community's perspective, the timing of the Soda Springs Community Review was perfect. The City has been working on an update of its Comprehensive Plan for some time. The Draft Plan made available to the Visiting Team at the time of the Review did not include the required section on 'Implementation'. Through the Review and this report, the City now has the opportunity to incorporate in the Comprehensive Plan, as appropriate, the observations, recommendations, and resources identified by the Visiting Team. This information will be particularly helpful in the development of the 'Implementation' section of the Plan. Likewise, this Community Review will also benefit Soda's planned update of its Gem Plan.

During the Review, the Visiting Team learned about a few specific issues or initiatives that, from the outside, seem stuck or unresolved due to a lack of consensus. Underlying this pattern is a sense that citizens and leaders tend to shy away from openly discussing and resolving differences and healing old wounds, especially if friends, family, and neighborhoods are involved (which is often in a smaller community). It is the Visiting Team's sense that the community has an expectation that the Review will help resolve these issues. Specific areas of in some case long-standing contention are summarized in the following section.

More information about the community's motivations and expectations about its Community Review are found in the City's application to the program. The complete application is included as Appendix B.

Areas of Contention and Consensus

Soda Springs is like any community. Folks debate, discuss, agree, and disagree about community issues and the problems of the world on a daily basis. Over the three day period of the Review, the Visiting Team did learn about the following areas of contention and consensus:

Junk Cars and Other Property Maintenance Issues

We learned that the City has been working with business owners to draft an ordinance pertaining to the clean up and/or screening of areas used to store junk cars. It was clear that there was not consensus about the most appropriate ordinance provisions, whether the problem involves both residential and commercial properties, or about how to proceed.

Residential Subdivisions

Several people shared their perception that the City does not have a welcoming attitude toward new residential development. In response, City representatives voiced support for growth so long as it's managed well.

Permitting Issues Regarding Expansion of Commercial Uses

The Community Design and Identity team met with a few business owners who expressed exasperation and confusion about City-enforced requirements related to site design, construction, and signs in commercial areas. City staff, elected officials, and others cited specific examples where the City demonstrated its interest in supporting business growth and expansion. There was a frustration expressed by some that the City was not applying the requirements consistently. From the outside, it appeared that the City has no process of resolving such frustration and could probably do more to prevent it in the future.

Oregon Trail Community and Aquatic Center

Planning and fundraising progress has been made on this project since it was initiated in 1996 by the Greater Soda Springs Community Development Committee. However, we heard various opinions and perceptions about it. We heard some question the need for the Center, given existing swimming pools in Lava Hot Springs and Pocatello. Others saw it as something that would be nice to have but questioned the community's ability to fund and support it. Some expressed interest in a less expensive water park-type of amenity. In contrast, we heard other residents express unequivocal support, pointing out

that driving to pools in Lave Hot Springs and Pocatello can be hazardous during the winter. Citizens also told us the City Council does not support it.

Downtown Revitalization and Beautification of Highway 30 and 34 Within City Limits

The City applied for, then turned down a \$500,000 grant from the Idaho Transportation Department for improvements to the streetscape environment along Highways 30 and 34 through town. Theoretically, this multi-phase project could help stimulate a similar revitalization effort along the three block downtown business district. We heard diverse opinions as to whether or not the City should have accepted this grant, about why the grant was turned down, and about the actual improvements described in the grant application. If there is a consensus about the revitalization of downtown and the two highways, the Visiting Team didn't hear it. In fact, the members of the Civic Life and Community Involvement team was given considerable detail about the project that would have been funded by the ITD grant while the community identity and design team didn't hear anything about it until mid-way through the Review.

Future of the Airport

While perhaps not as controversial as other areas of contention, we were made aware that some community leaders feel the airport should be relocated to an unspecified site in Caribou County. At the same time, we heard reasoning that supports keeping the airport in place.

Four Day School Week

In the recent past the Soda Springs School District went from a five day school week to a four day school week as a money saving measure. We heard different views on whether this change was actually saving money, concerns about how it is or may be affecting the quality of education, and whether or not it is in the interest of Soda Springs's long term economic development. To this latter concern, some expressed that potential new employers might be reluctant to locate in a community with a four day school week.

Perceived Barriers Between Social and Religious Groups

Perceived barriers between different community groups is not an area of contention as much as it is a cultural dynamic. It is no secret that most residents and Soda Springs community leaders are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Residents of other faiths and others who choose not to attend church can at times find it difficult to participate in the civic life of the community in a way that values their contribution.

Previous Planning Efforts and Outcomes

For a community its size, the number of past and ongoing planning and community improvement projects in Soda Springs is impressive. The following specific examples are identified on the City's Community Review application.

Soda Springs Comprehensive Plan Update

The City retained Keller Associates to complete an update of the City's Comprehensive Plan. At the time of the Review, a July 2007 draft was available, though it did not include an implementation section or a land use map. As it has not been adopted, there remains

an opportunity to incorporate recommendations and resources from this report into the Plan.

Wastewater and Water System Plans

The City has recently completed a wastewater system master plan and is in the process of completing a capital improvement plan for the water system. However, the reasons for reconstructing the treatment plant had not been well communicated to all the residents.

Community Beautification

In early 2007 a community clean up was organized. The effort centered around a full week of road, street, and yard trash pick up and removal, as well as household hazardous waste disposal promotion.

Also in early 2007 a committee comprised of city staff, planning and zoning commissioners and business owners was established to address aesthetic and image concerns related to inoperable cars and other types of outdoor storage. At the time of the Community Review, a draft ordinance was being developed.



Community Forestry

The City has a Tree Committee that promotes tree care and planting in both public spaces and private yards. Soda Springs is also a 'Tree City' and organizes an annual Arbor Day celebration.

Heritage City Program

The City participates in the Heritage City Program. This program was created in 2002 by the Association of Idaho Cities and the Idaho State Historical Society to recognize Idaho cities that encourage preservation and interpretation of their cultural heritage. Designation as an Idaho Heritage City acknowledges Soda Springs' efforts to protect and make available information on buildings, artifacts, records, photos, and oral reminiscences that contribute to the educational opportunities, pride, and history of the community.

Downtown Revitalization Planning

From 2001-2005 the City completed preliminary planning and sought funding for streetscape and other improvements along Highways 30 and 34 through town, as described by the previous section on "areas of contention". An ITD Transportation Enhancements grant was awarded but not accepted by the City.

In the 1980's a revitalization study was completed for the Soda Springs Central Business District (i.e. Main Street). Under the leadership of the Chamber of Commerce, some recent thinking and planning has also been done concerning the revitalization of Main Street.

Community and Aquatic Center

Planning for this project began in 1996 with the formation of the Cariboo Development Foundation by the Greater Soda Springs Community Development Committee. Some funds have been raised, a city-owned location has been identified, and a preliminary floor plan and project cost estimate have been created. A greater degree of consensus and significantly more funding must be identified for the project to move forward.

Other Projects

Soda Springs' Community Review application also includes an impressive list of completed community projects. These include several park and recreation-related improvements as well as a community teen center, paving of the airport parking lot, and installation of the horse drawn bus exhibit in Corrigan Park.

Areas of Focus Requested by the Community

Community Reviews focus on three focus areas identified by the community on their application. The focus areas selected by the City of Soda Springs for this Community Review are summarized below. Specific questions posed to the Visiting Team by the Home Team under each of the areas are included as Appendix C.

Civic Life and Community Involvement

In its application, the City requested ideas and resources to encourage citizen participation in community affairs and improvement efforts. Facilitating consensus building and community "barn raising" across religious and other cultural lines was also identified as a need.

Community Design and Identity

The City asked the Visiting Team for help in understanding how complex planning and zoning objectives can be accomplished by both the City and the County using only volunteer committee members and limited professional resources. Also needed is advice about building consensus about community identity on which public projects and ordinances guiding development can be based.

Economic Development

As part of Soda Springs' ongoing economic development efforts, the City seeks help retaining and strengthening current anchor industries, growing and recruiting light manufacturing and retail businesses. The Home Team also requests ideas concerning development of the area's tourism and recreation opportunities, especially given Soda Springs's advantageous location within a major transportation corridor.

Pre-Review Planning, Coordination, and Publicity

The Community Review process started for Soda Springs when the City submitted an application in March 2007. The Soda Springs Community Review was then scheduled for the August date.

The call for Visiting Team members was sent to an extensive list of community and economic development professionals by the Idaho Rural Partnership in early July. Most of them have participated in previous community reviews. By the end of July, the Visiting

Team was set and the leaders for the Home Team communicated what they hoped the Review would accomplish.

The Visiting Team was divided into three teams, one for each of these focus areas. Individuals were recruited to serve on the Visiting Team because of their specific expertise in one of these focus areas. Each of the three focus area teams, then, was comprised of 4-6 members of the Visiting Team. Likewise, the Home Team (i.e. Soda Springs community leaders, business owners, and residents) were split into the same three focus areas.

The pre-Review planning done by the Home Team far exceeded a typical Community Review. Upon arriving in Soda Springs on August 21, each Visiting Team member was given a notebook full of background information about the community and other pertinent information. In essence, prior to the Visiting Team's arrival the Home Team completed its own written assessment of assets and needs for numerous issues associated with each of the three focus areas.

Pre-Review publicity consisted of a full page announcement in the Caribou County Sun on August 16. This announcement is a great model for other communities in which Reviews are conducted in the future. It included a full Review schedule and made opportunities for citizen involvement clear. This announcement is included as Appendix D.

Results of Pre-Review Community Survey

As with nearly all Community Reviews, Soda Springs made a survey available to its citizens in the days and weeks leading up to the Review. In this particular case, Partners for Prosperity went to every 2nd home in randomly chosen neighborhoods to distribute the survey in person. Residents filled out the survey and then Partners for Prosperity staff returned at a later time and picked them up. Residents also had the option of dropping completed surveys off at city hall. In all, 89 completed surveys were collected.

While the survey was not scientific, it did give the Visiting Team a valuable slice of community perceptions about qualities and amenities residents hold dear and the things about Soda Springs they think need improvement.

A few demographic qualities of survey respondents are worth noting.

- A large percentage (65%) was female.
- By a large margin (67%), most respondents have lived in Soda Springs for 10 years or more.
- 30% of the survey respondents reported they were retired. This is a high percentage relative to the portion of the community's population above age 65 (13.5%).

When asked about the ***strengths and assets*** that make Soda Springs a great place to live, people who completed a survey mentioned these most frequently (in no particular order):

- Quality of police protection, library, and airport
- Parks, playgrounds, and recreation opportunities for youth 12 and under.
- Appearance of downtown and public buildings

- Helpful, friendly people “willing to go the extra mile”.
- Small town atmosphere and sense of community
- Involvement of churches and businesses in community
- Annual community events
- Access to nearby outdoor recreation activities

When asked to identify the **problems and challenges** facing the community, these responses were repeated most often:

- Lack of consensus about growth and moving forward with community improvements
- Appearance of community entryways
- Availability and quality of local jobs
- Diversity of local economy
- Lack of public transit
- Predominance of one religious faith makes it difficult for some to fully participate and feel valued.
- Lack of recreation and other opportunities for teens
- Lack of shopping opportunities in town.
- Large number of people working in, but not living in, Soda Springs

A complete copy of the survey results is included as Appendix E.

Review Schedule

The Soda Springs Community Review officially began at 4:00 pm on Tuesday, August 21 when the 18 economic and community development professionals who comprised the Visiting Team met at the Enders Hotel for introductions and orientation. The Review concluded at about 9:00 pm on Thursday, August 23 with presentations to the community by members of the Visiting Team. A detailed itinerary is included as Appendix F. Highlights of activities for the three day review are as follows.

Tuesday, August 21

As noted above, the Visiting Team members arrived at the Enders Hotel at 4:00 pm. At 5:30, members of the Home Team arrived for dinner with the Visiting Team in the Geyser View Restaurant. Following dinner, the three focus areas talked amongst themselves to begin discussing expectations, the schedule, and issues specific to the focus areas. At approximately 7:00, all were transported to Hooper Park where homemade root beer and carrot cake were enjoyed while a talk about the colorful history of the Soda Springs area was offered by “Cariboo Jack”.

Wednesday, August 22

The Review’s first full day began with breakfast at Caribou Mountain Pizza. Host Bob Ward spoke to his experience and observations about Soda Springs and responded to questions from the Visiting Team. Following breakfast the Visiting and Home Team members were split up into their respective focus areas and left to tour the community and meet with various leaders and citizens. Tour highlights for each of the three focus areas are summarized below:



Civic Life and Community Involvement

- Teen Center
- Corrigan Park and all related amenities
- Pioneer Historic and Oregon Trail-Bear Lake Byways
- Site of proposed Oregon Trail Community and Aquatic Center
- Site of the Mud Bog Races
- Kelly Park and related trails
- Hooper Springs
- Lutheran Church

Community Design and Identity

- Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Newer residential subdivision
- Older residential neighborhood
- Ledge Creek Water Source and cross country ski trails
- Meeting with business owners and city officials
- Meeting with city council members and staff
- Walk to Farmer's Market and down Main Street for picture taking and conversation with citizens and business owners.

Economic Development

- Discussion about marketing Soda Springs featuring Todd Hunzeker
- Meet with Main Street business owners
- Public Library/Discussion about 'lone eagles'
- Hotels/motels and lodging
- Agrium
- Tronox
- Mt. Island Energy

After an excellent Wednesday night dinner at Ravisant, all were transported to Tigert Middle School where an audience of 60 people comprised of the Visiting Team, Home Team, and citizens not formally involved in the Review listened to Mayor Hansen, County Commissioner Rasmussen, and Senator Geddes give their state of the city, county, and legislative district addresses, respectively.

The evening concluded with an opportunity for citizens to share their concerns and ideas with each of the focus areas who took up temporary residence in three of the classrooms. This event was covered by CHAT-TV.

Thursday, August 23

After breakfast at the Geyser View Restaurant, the Visiting Team traveled the short distance to the Command Center at the Monsanto site to share observations and recommendations and develop presentations for the three focus areas. The Visiting Team became so immersed in this process that an offered tour of the Monsanto site was unfortunately not possible.

Following an enjoyable, laid back barbecue steak dinner with the Visiting Team at Kelly Park, all traveled back to Monsanto for the presentation to the community beginning at 7:00 pm in the multi-purpose AV room. As with the Wednesday evening program, the

final presentation was attended by about 60 folks, most of whom were Visiting Team members and Home Team members and their spouses.

Local Representation During Review vs. Community Demographics

As noted elsewhere in this report, the City of Soda Springs and the Home Team did an outstanding job of compiling information about the community and the region for the Visiting Team.



Compared to the overall population, the people participating in the Review as members of the Home Team as well as other citizens who attended the Wednesday evening public meeting and Thursday evening final presentation were in upper age groups. Otherwise, the Home Team was comprised of an excellent mix of elected officials, city staff, business owners, representatives of major employers, and citizen volunteers.

Citizen attendance (i.e. citizens other than Home Team members and elected officials) at both public forums was modest and lower at Thursday night's final presentation. While the multi-purpose room at the Monsanto site had the equipment and other qualities ideally suited to the event, the out of town location and requirement to pass through site security may have kept some people away. Attendance may have been higher at a school or other public building in town.

In all, the Review would have been well served by having more parents with school-aged children, people of color, and perhaps more people involved in development and real estate. In post-Review evaluations, at least two members of the Visiting Team said in hindsight that they wished more time could have been spent interacting with people and less time visiting different sites and learning about project histories.

Challenges and Opportunities Expressed by the Community

The Home Team made use of four opportunities to gather input and ideas from the citizens and leaders of Soda Springs. These include: (1) the pre-review survey, (2) information provided by the Home Team prior to the review, (3) random conversations with citizens throughout the three day Review period, and (4) the public forum held at Tigert Middle School on Wednesday night.

While conversing with citizens, Visiting Team members frequently asked for responses to the following three questions to focus the gathering of ideas and perceptions. Representative comments are summarized in the form of quotes under each one.

What Do You Like About Soda Springs?

- *"I am proud that all churches helped build Lutheran Church.*
- *"It's easy to get involved if you want to."*
- *"You can leave the keys in your car."*
- *"I like that I can feel comfortable letting my son ride his bike down the street."*

- *"People got all day to get nowhere."*
- *"If your kids are in trouble, other people will let you know."*
- *"I feel comfortable here. If I want a big city I can go to Poky or Salt Lake, then come home."*
- *"People here will go out of their way to serve, to go the extra mile."*
- *"We like the parks and trails and the City's recreation program for kids is great."*

What Would You Like to See Changed?

- *"I hear that the City is more supportive of large businesses compared to small ones"*
- *"Higher educated folks with kids want to live in Pocatello and commute because there's more to do there and the kind of homes they want are not available in Soda Springs."*
- *We do all these things (planning, talking) and say 'wasn't that fun?' We need to find a way to do this (the Community Review) and keep the snowball rolling before it melts."*
- *"People here are afraid of change."*
- *"I don't mind paying for a building permit, but I want to know I'm getting value for my money." (spoken by a business owner)*
- *"We need more businesses and more industry that provide jobs that pay comparable to the mines. We need more of our wealth to stay in the community."*
- *"We're like the hole in the doughnut -- a community that is not growing or prepared to grow in a sane way."*
- *"We seem to be good at small projects; we do a lot of them. For larger projects we seem to get bogged down."*
- *"There's not a lot for kids in junior high and high school to do. I think this could be a factor why more people from the mines don't live in Soda."*
- *"It's harder to live here if you're not LDS."*
- *"The entry to the city is appalling."*
- *"We need more retail and service businesses." (clothes, shoes, outdoor recreation, tourism, hotel, daycare, etc.)*
- *"I'd like to see the new community center/swimming pool."*
- *"It seems like the city adopts new ordinances but doesn't follow up to enforce them."*
- *"There is apathy in the community. Most folks, myself included, do not attend school board or city council meetings."*
- *"It seems like a lot of issues (like cleaning up "junky" properties) go on for years and never get resolved."*
- *"We need to clean up homes that are junky."*
- *"I think the change to a four day school week is not good for our kids or for our economic development."*

What is Your Vision for Soda Springs in 5 Years? In 10 Years?

- *“I’m hoping for an influx of newcomers.”*
- *“More jobs so kids can stay or come back here.”*
- *“Everyone is dipping into the same trough and if you dip too much or take too much the trough runs dry for everyone. Everyone has to work together or everyone will fail.”*
- *“Make this a town where all employees in the community want to live and their relatives and friends want to visit.*
- *“Variety of people and organizations doing stuff, but we do not want to rest on our laurels. A lot don’t want change, but we would die.”*

Part III Team Reports

Civic Life and Community Involvement

Description of Focus Area

How can Soda Springs increase active citizen participation in community decision-making and improvement? How can the community reduce or eliminate perceived barriers between social, religious, and other groups? How can community consensus be reached around both community needs and appropriate solutions? These are the questions Soda Springs posed to the Visiting Team under the civic life and community involvement focus area. At its heart, we feel this focus area is about building trust and social capital between individuals, organizations, and government.

Social capital refers to the collective value of all formal and informal associations between and among individuals and organizations in a community. The attitudes and relationships that arise from these networks facilitates cooperative, mutually beneficial action. Many researchers have documented a decline in social capital over the last several decades and feel that re-building it is key to a successful democracy.



The Visiting Team hopes that the recommendations and resources offered below will help the leaders and citizens of Soda Springs resolve some of the issues that have been lingering unresolved for, in some cases, years. Many of these initiatives or policy questions are described in the “Areas of Contention and Consensus” section of this report.



General Community Comments and Concerns

Folks in Soda Springs shared many comments and concerns with the Visiting Team that fall under the civic life and community involvement focus area.

The Visiting Team commends and congratulates the people of Soda Springs for all the projects you’ve completed through donations, volunteer effort, and government support when needed. Just a few examples include the teen center, restoration of the Conda bus and Yellowstone coach, biking, skiing, and walking trails, the skate park, and the new park pavilions.

As impressive as these accomplishments are, many people offered their perceptions about factors that limit citizen involvement in community decision-making and projects. Some expressed skepticism that the leadership of Soda Springs is genuinely open to citizen involvement. Several people referred to the “powers that be” who do what they think should be done regardless of citizen input. People with good ideas may not even articulate them if they believe they are just going to get shot down anyway. In such an

environment, there's little incentive to get involved. We frankly didn't hear a lot of optimism that this dynamic might change.

A comment put in different terms and using different examples was that the community tends to rely on a few stalwart volunteers to accomplish a lot, allowing the majority of citizens to sit on the sidelines and in some cases critique the performance of the people actually expressing their ideas and putting out the effort. One citizen told us "10% of the people do 90% of the volunteer work."

Others citizens shared their observation that the energy of volunteers and community organizations is dissipated among several projects. If all this social capital was more focused on one initiative at a time, a lot more could potentially be accomplished. Historically, small scale projects have tended to be very successful. Larger scale projects requiring more funding and long term commitment seem to get bogged down.

"We do all these things (like this Community Review) and say 'wasn't this fun.' We need to find a way to keep the snowball rolling before it melts."

-- Home Team Member

For a community of this size, park and recreation facilities and programs seem relatively extensive, well used, and supported by city staff. Still, the majority of people the Visiting Team spoke with supported the idea of some kind of indoor community center with a swimming pool and/or gym.

Another topic of concern was that the City is perceived to be not as responsive to citizen concerns as it could be and weak on follow through regarding improving city policy to meet emerging needs and enforcing existing ordinances in an equitable manner. City staff and officials responded to these concerns with mild defensiveness and uncertainty about the specifics of these concerns. One city staff person said "I think we try to bend over backward to try to help people do what they want."

Other comments and concerns expressed by citizens point to their relationship not with the City specifically, but with each other. Soda Springs is a close-knit community where a lot of people know each other through business, recreational activities, church, schools, community service organizations, and other networks. This is one of Soda's most loved qualities that residents hold dear. While admirable, this quality can also make it difficult to openly discuss differences of opinion about problems, needs, and appropriate solutions out of a fear of upsetting friends and family.

We also heard many people talk about the fear of change and fear of the unknown that exists in the community. Some folks thought this fear was relative to the length of time an individual has lived in Soda Springs. That is, the longer someone has lived in Soda, the more likely they are to fear or resist growth.

To conclude this summary of general community comments and concerns under the civic life and community involvement focus area, the people of Soda Springs have completed some truly impressive small scale improvement projects with little support from state or federal grant funding. Still, consensus regarding certain key high profile projects and policies must be established so that the current lack of consensus does not become a greater burden that limits community development. These projects include but

are not limited to the beautification of Highway 30 and 34 within the city limits, downtown revitalization, and the Oregon Trail Community and Aquatic Center. Successfully addressing these unresolved issues will result in a type of reconciliation between individuals involved, increase the community's capacity to benefit from future community development opportunities, and increase citizen involvement.

Visiting Team Observations

First, it is clear to the Visiting Team that the citizens of Soda Springs desire a more open and accountable city government that welcomes and values their involvement and communicates decisions being made and policies being enacted. At present, many citizens feel disenfranchised.

Opportunities for “bridging” between different community networks are limited. There are two kinds of social capital. “Bonding” capital occurs when you are socializing with people who are like you with respect to age, race, religion, income, and so on. It results in tight, close-knit communities, but with strong distinctions between “insiders” and ‘outsiders”. “Bridging” occurs when you make friends with people who are not like you, like supporters of another football team. Both types of social capital are important. In Soda Springs, strong bonding along religious lines makes bridging between different religious and other groups critical to building an inclusive community in which all residents feel equally valued. Bridging social capital also increases understanding of diverse points of view, opens the community up to alternative solutions, and helps build consensus.

Smaller projects like the new park pavilions can be completed with relatively few dedicated individuals or organizations. Larger, more involved initiatives like the community & aquatic center and downtown revitalization require full support and participation from a larger number of partnering organizations and agencies. While these initiatives have been talked about for years, it appeared to the Visiting Team that consensus about moving forward on either of them is still lacking.



We also observed signals that suggested strained relationships between certain community leaders. Because they perpetuate a divisive, distrustful environment, such relationships can harm the entire community by being an obstacle to the consensus building that's needed. Every resident has a contribution to make to the community if ways can be found to accept their gifts.

Issue 1: Communication between city hall & residents

Efforts to educate and involve citizens in community issues and alternatives often fall short of their potential because we tend to think we can teach adults the same way we remember being taught history by our 5th grade teacher. Conventionally, we try to fill people with information as if they were empty “banks” or “hard drives”, passively soaking in and retaining our every word. Perhaps because it seems easier and we think it requires less time and energy, we tend to talk at citizens, not with them. This is a commonly accepted convention and a hard one to unlearn.

This top down approach to involving citizens does not work because it fails to recognize important factors like: (1) the vast experience people have to draw upon and contribute, (2) citizens must decide for themselves what is important to learn and what alternative(s) are best for the community, and (3) people function best and learn more effectively when they are in a collaborative, we're-all-in-this-together environment.

To build trust in government, encourage citizen involvement, and reduce confusion, the City needs to reach out and connect with citizens through increased and improved communication. If only a few of the recommendations below are used, the choices residents have about how they receive information and participate will be increased. These strategies demonstrate trust and respect for the intelligence and goodwill of your citizens, enabling them to become active participants rather than passive observers. The goal is to build your civic infrastructure, not just your physical infrastructure.

Recommendations

- **Open Office Hours.** Create open office hours at city hall on Saturday mornings or on a weekday evening. This would allow ANY citizen to meet with the Mayor for, say, 15-30 minutes on any topic of interest. Alternatively or in addition, council members could take turns keeping open office hours. Either way, these opportunities must be well-publicized to be successful. Implementing one or the other or both of these ideas on a once-a-month schedule would give ALL residents an avenue for direct communication with city leaders that does not currently exist.
- **Create Live or Recorded Television or Radio Program.** The City could create a recorded or live radio program on one of your radio stations or television program on CHAT-TV to educate citizens about community issues, city policies, and opportunities for citizen participation. Such a program could involve interviewing community leaders and/or city staff. Once aired, the programs could be archived on the city's and/or other media outlet's website for future viewing/listening. If live, the program could include taking questions or comments by phone.
- **Produce Pamphlets Describing Permitting Processes and Other Policies.** The City should create short pamphlets explaining permitting requirements and processes for different kinds of proposed activities. These highly readable publications should be made available at city hall and on the city's website and are in addition to posting actual application forms. Assuming its adoption, the proposed ordinance regarding inoperable cars and outdoor storage is an excellent opportunity to create the first publication of this type.
- **Monthly Newsletter.** Create a monthly newsletter from the City and/or Mayor highlighting community projects and events, announcing volunteer opportunities, profiling special volunteers, city staff, and activities of the city council. The newsletter could be sent with utility bills.
- **Community Reader Board.** Erect a community reader board in a well-known, visible location. This would be read by people standing in front of the reader board (as opposed to driving by in a car). It would convey information about active projects, status, contact persons, next steps, and volunteer opportunities.

- **Roadside Signs.** Use portable roadside signs inviting citizens to important meetings and forums. These would have large letters so that they could be readable by people in passing cars.
- **City's Website.** Update and keeping the city website active, rather than static, in relation to community projects.
- **Mayor's Hotline.** Create a hotline that citizens can use to leave questions or comments in voice mail form for the Mayor regarding issues of concern.

- **Citizen Participation Advisory Committee.** Create a citizen advisory committee that you convene as needed to evaluate and develop some of these recommendations and/or devise an outreach strategy for a specific planning activity or project.



- **Field Trips.** Organize community field trips to educate citizens about infrastructure needs and other issues that can best be communicated and discussed on-site.
- **Child Care at Public Meetings and Forums.** Have childcare available at important public meetings to encourage participation by young parents (and announce childcare will be available in all pre-meeting publicity).
- **Work with School District to Create "Student Government Day".** The program would pair high school students with a local government official to learn about what the official does. They then participate in meetings along with their government counterpart, discussing what will be on the mock city council agenda. The students then conduct the mock city council meeting where issues are debated. Such a program would increase understanding and involve youth in local government.
- **Create a "Mayor's Youth Advisory Council"** to help get youth more involved in the community.
- **Meeting in a Box.** Use "Meeting in a Box" strategy to solicit input from citizens on a particular issue or proposal. This strategy literally provides boxes that include all the information and tools an informal group would need to discuss and record their comments and ideas about the issue. Such conversations would be held in homes and be facilitated by one of the citizens in attendance (i.e. not a city staff person or elected official).
- **Ask Your Citizens.** If in doubt about which of these recommendations might be most appropriate— ASK your citizens. Conduct focus group-type meetings with individual stakeholder groups and ask them how the City can better connect with them. Each group would be 6-10 people. Residents who are not part of the prevalent religious faith should be one of the stakeholder groups consulted.

Resources

- Association of Idaho Cities, www.idahocities.org, 208-344-8594. For help creating a Mayor's Youth Advisory Council, contact Mandy Decastro, MDecastrco@idahocities.org. Cities with Youth Advisory Councils include Rexburg and Caldwell.
- The City of Caldwell, <http://city.cityofcaldwell.com/index.v3page?p=33550>, 208-455-3021, P&Z@ci.caldwell.id.us has excellent citizen guides for different land use and development activities
- The City of Coeur d'Alene has similar citizen guides to various land use/development activities, 208-769-2240, planningdiv@cdaid.org
http://www.coeurdaleneidaho.org/index.php?module=pagemaster&PAGE_user_op=view_page&PAGE_id=108.htm#Informational.
- The City of Rexburg has an excellent monthly community newsletter available on the City's homepage, past issues are also available via archive, <http://www.rexburg.org/>, 208-359-3020
- Terri Schorzman, Communications Coordinator, Community Planning Association of SW Idaho, 208-855-2558, ext. 231, tschorzman@compassidaho.org. Has successfully implemented "meeting in a box" strategy.
- Senator Elliot Werk, 208-861-3041, elliotwerk@mindspring.com. Created recorded television program in which he interviews citizens and others called "Werk's World" on TVTV community access television.
- Council Members Elaine Clegg (208-890-5830, eclegg@cityofboise.org) and Maryanne Jordan (208-377-9636, mjordan@cityofboise.org). Created live call-in television program on TVTV community access television.
- CDA TV Channel 19. City of Coeur d'Alenes public TV channel with extensive meeting coverage and other city-related programming,
http://www.coeurdaleneidaho.org/index.php?module=pagemaster&PAGE_user_op=view_page&PAGE_id=171&MMN_position=277:277
- City of Canon City, Colorado has created "Student Government Day" program. Contact City Clerk at 719-269-9011.
- City of Boise has a Mayor's Hotline and Saturday Morning Office Hours, <http://www.cityofboise.org/Departments/Mayor/Hotline/page876.aspx> and <http://www.cityofboise.org/Departments/Mayor/NewsReleases/2006/page12495.aspx>
Contact Elizabeth Duncan at 208-384-4422, eduncan@cityofboise.org
- *"The World Café: Shaping Our Futures Through Conversations That Matter"*, by Juanita Brown with David Issacs, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2005. This is a book outlining an innovative approach to discovering collective wisdom through open civic dialogue. See this website: www.theworldcafe.com.
- *"Reframing Public Participation: Strategies for the 21st Century"*, an article published in the publication *Planning Theory and Practice*, Vol. 5. No. 4, December 2004. It makes the case that legally required participation methods in the US not only do not meet most basic goals for public participation, but they are also counterproductive, causing anger and mistrust. Here is a link to the article:
http://www.csus.edu/ccp/publications/Reframing_Public_Participation_Final.pdf.
- *"Governments are From Saturn.....Citizens are from Jupiter: Strategies for Reconnecting Citizens and Government"*. This is a document published in June 1998 by the Municipal Research and Services Center in Washington State. As advertised, it is full of strategies the City could use to reconnect with citizens. Contact information for all strategies is provided. Here is the link:
<http://www.mrsc.org/Publications/srcqtxt.pdf>.

Issue 2: Reaching consensus & forging sustainable agreements.

As described elsewhere in this report, it seems the community has some high profile elephant-in-the-corner-of-the-room issues and initiatives to resolve. Allowing them to continue unresolved will not make them go away and in fact will leave the community feeling stuck in neutral, so to speak. The community needs to use short and long term strategies to resolve any conflict between individuals, establish consensus and priorities regarding these issues, and create sustainable agreements and related work plans in which all stakeholders are invested. Sustainable agreements are ones in which everyone's point of view is incorporated.

The Visiting Team can not tell the community what your consensus might or should be on any of these issues. We can recommend strategies and resources that will help you arrive at them. So there is no confusion about these issues, they are described under the "areas of consensus and contention" section of this report and the most significant ones (in our judgment) are re-stated here:

- **Junk Car Ordinance.** A compromise affected parties can live with must be reached. Additional strategies that do not involve the ordinance should be considered.
- **Oregon Trail Community and Aquatic Center.** Agreement as to need, location, scope, and phases must be reached. We also recommend that proponents make sure they consider all possible alternatives. For example, we don't know if creating some kind of regular public transit service to the pool in Lava Hot Springs was considered. Such a service would allow kids in Soda to enjoy swimming in Lava without having to be driven by their parents.
- **Beautification of Highway 30 and 34 Corridors Within City Limits.** Adjacent business owners must play a major role in defining priorities, design concepts, phases, and funding. All citizens should be included in process.
- **Revitalization of Downtown.** Adjacent business owners must play a major role in defining priorities, design concepts, phases, and funding. All citizens should be included in process.

We could include other issues here, but these are the ones that stick out to the Visiting Team.

Recommendations

- **Review Recommendations Above.** Many of the recommendations found under "Communications Between City Hall and Soda Springs Residents" above and "Building Bridges Between Diverse Individuals & Groups, below, can be applied to the resolution of these issues.
- **Learn From Past Success.** Initiate a community conversation about past initiatives that are universally viewed as successes. Record these conversations on paper and create recipes for more success out of them. What made them successful? Why do people feel good about them? Learn what you can from what's worked for you in the past. The rebuilding of the Lutheran Church, the new park pavilions, the fishing derby, and the shooting range at the old city gravel pit are examples of successes that we heard about and visited. You are proud of them and you should be.
- **Benefit From Outside Facilitation.** Use the guidance of an individual or organization with extensive experience in facilitation, building sustainable

agreements, and conflict resolution. Several things could happen if you do not ask for outside support: (1) the community will treat a long-standing impasse such as the community and aquatic center as if it's a routine, everyday problem (if it were a routine, everyday problem, you would have resolved it long before now), (2) different "sides" of the issue will undermine each other, (3) you won't be able to create the momentum or commitment required for success (however you collectively define success).

- **Set the Intention.** Remember that before two or more people can heal old wounds and reach agreement, all involved have to have the intention of healing old wounds and reaching agreement. They have to see that reaching resolution is preferable to continuing the status quo. They must see that risk of continuing the status quo is greater than the risk of reconciliation.
- **Begin With What You Agree On.** A good way to begin a consensus building and prioritization process is to identify what you love about living in Soda Springs. Once agreed upon, these qualities can help guide prioritization.
- **Explore Creating an Urban Renewal District.** Urban renewal districts are used by many Idaho cities to help fund public improvements using tax increment financing in areas where revitalization is desired. Investigating formation of an urban renewal district is recommended in your draft comprehensive plan. Urban renewal works where sufficient tax revenues are expected from the improved value of vacant property to fund the public improvements.



- **Park and Recreation District.** If you want park and recreation facilities and programs to be truly regional, then consider forming a park and recreation district.
- **Increase Philanthropic Capacity of the Greater Caribou Foundation.** The Greater Caribou Foundation could establish one or more community

endowments to, for example, cover the operation and maintenance costs of a project like the Oregon Trail Community Center. The Foundation should also prepare itself to receive bequests and to promote same.

Resources

- Common Ground Conciliation Services's Partners for Lasting Solutions program. Common Ground is a Boise-based non-profit organization offering conciliation services at a low cost, 208-342-1810, www.commongroundcs.org/index.html, Bob Rainville (bob@commongroundcs.org) or Larry Hauder (larry@commongroundcs.org).
- Consensus Building Institute. CBI is a Cambridge, MA-based organization that has worked with hundreds of organizations to build consensus, resolve conflict, and produce mutually beneficial agreements. They offer training and direct consensus building services. Their new on-line course on resolving land use disputes is found here: <http://www.cbuilding.org/2007/08/28/consensus-building-institute-presents-online-course/>.

- Community at Work is a consulting firm in San Francisco, CA that offers training and on-site facilitation services. Owner/Principal Sam Kaner and staff are well known for their excellent book “Facilitator’s Guide to Participatory Decision Making”. www.communityatwork.com , 415-641-9773, Duane@communityatwork.com.
- Heartland Center for Leadership Development, a Lincoln, Nebraska based non-profit organization that helps local leaders respond to current and future challenges in their communities. Many services are provided including facilitation, strategic planning, and leadership development. General contact information: 800-927-1115, info@heartlandcenter.info. Among other things they are known for their publications, including “20 Clues to Rural Community Survival”, <http://www.heartlandcenter.info/publications.htm>.
- Hometown Competitiveness Initiative of the Nebraska Community Foundation. This program provides a framework for Nebraska’s rural communities, helping them identify reachable goals and strategies focused on the four pillars of reversing rural decline, including building leadership and community capacity, engaging young people, fostering local philanthropy and supporting entrepreneurship, <http://www.nebcommfound.org/HTC/HTC%20Kellogg%20grant%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>, 402-323-7330, info@nebcommfound.org.
- RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship and Bootstrap Solutions, Dick Gardner, 208-859-8878, dickgardner1@cableone.net.
- Many Idaho communities have urban renewal districts. The City of Driggs established one in 2004, http://driggs.govoffice.com/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC=%7B0618856B-48A4-4FF5-8BA1-AA2A4E718BA2%7D, 208-354-2362.
- Payette County has a successful park and recreation district, Payette Recreation District, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave., Fruitland, ID, 452-3542.



Issue 3: Building bridges between diverse individuals & groups

The City, churches, and various community organizations should develop new opportunities for social capital, trust, and mutual understanding to be built among the community’s residents. In other words, create ways for people with different backgrounds and beliefs to connect in meaningful ways.

Recommendations

- **Initiate Study Circles.** Study circles are small informal groups of citizens who meet in homes, churches, schools, and other comfortable locations (but not at city hall) to discuss community issues and alternatives. They are a good way to build trust and mutual understanding between residents who may not otherwise socialize. Other Idaho communities have used them to help identify strengths and assets as well as problem areas between elected officials and the citizens and can help outline a map for moving community projects forward, together as a community.
- **Interdenominational Circle.** Leaders from several of the community’s faith-based organizations could cooperatively facilitate an interdenominational circle as a way to develop understanding of each others beliefs and values. There could be both youth

and adult interdenominational circles. The interdenominational circle(s) could lead a community improvement project or create an annual interfaith event.

- **Community Dances.** Re-establish community dances that involved the whole community (people from all different faiths).

Resources

- Studio Circles Resource Center, www.studycircles.org, Nick Connell, 860-928-2616, nconnell@studycircles.org. The Study Circle process has been used successfully by citizens in Kuna, ID, Zella Johnson, 871-0696, zeltex@msn.com. The Horizons Project in Central Idaho is currently using the study circle format (<http://extension.ag.uidaho.edu/horizons/>, Mary Schmidt, mschmidt@uidaho.edu, 208-885-8949.)
- *“The World Café: Shaping Our Futures Through Conversations That Matter”*, by Juanita Brown with David Issacs, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2005. This is a book outlining an innovative approach to discovering collective wisdom through open civic dialogue. See this website: www.theworldcafe.com. Trainings across the country are available.
- The Interfaith Alliance of Idaho, Pam Baldwin, Executive Director, 208-368-6772, 208-888-2984, <http://www.idahodesigns.net/tiaidaho/index.htm>, info@tiaidaho.org.
- Religious leaders in the community.

Issue 4: Volunteerism

The community should find creative ways to develop and publicize volunteer opportunities, with special emphasis on recruiting and appreciating residents who have not previously been active.

Recommendations

- **Build Consensus/Create Agreements (see previous issue).** If you reach consensus and forge sustainable agreements as described under Issue #2, above, people will become more inclined to volunteer their time to a range of efforts, particularly if they are provided an opportunity to play a real part in the consensus building process. From our conversations with Soda Springs residents, we conclude that they want to contribute their time to projects that are going to materialize, not get bogged down by controversy and acrimony.
- **Appreciate Your Volunteers.** The City could recognize the efforts of volunteers by honoring them at an event such as an annual breakfast, lunch, or dinner. The meal would be served by city staff and elected officials. Does the community currently have a “Volunteer of the Year” or “Volunteer of the Quarter” program? If not, create one.
- **Develop a Clearinghouse for Volunteerism.** The clearinghouse could be located in the library or other central location. Individuals or groups seeking volunteers could post their needs. Individuals or groups wishing to volunteer their time could make their interests and availability known through the clearinghouse, to make appropriate matches.

- **Student Service Projects.** High school students could be encouraged or required to engage in some kind of volunteer project as an assignment and/or teens could become involved in volunteer projects through the teen center.
- **Calls for volunteers** should be incorporated into many of the strategies described under “Communication between city hall and Soda Springs residents”, above.
- **Mentoring in Schools.** Actively develop mentoring program in schools in which retired teachers and other interested business owners and employers could work with young students to help them learn. Job shadowing and apprenticeships are two good mentoring programs.
- **Create Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council.** Many cities in Idaho have used this strategy to bring young perspectives into community affairs.



- **Organized an Annual Walk to School Day Event.** The draft Soda Springs Comprehensive Plan (dated July 2007) identifies the need to increase the safety of students walking and biking to and from school. City council members identified the west side of the high school and in front of Thirkill Elementary as areas where pedestrian safety is a real or potential issue. International Walk to School Day is always the first Tuesday in October. Many school districts in Idaho participate in this event.
- **New Resident Welcome Program.** Create a program, possibly through the Chamber of Commerce, that welcomes new residents.
- **Encourage Intergenerational Exchanges.** We didn’t spend much time learning or talking about issues unique to the community’s senior population, but recommend activities and programs that facilitate intergenerational exchanges and relationship building. One program that has been instituted and shared across faith lines in many other communities offers help and services to homebound and elderly people; shoveling snow, delivering groceries, helping with small chores, and other tasks that allow people to maintain the dignity of staying in their own homes.

Resources

- Association of Idaho Cities’s Youth Engagement Resources, an excellent collection of available resources to involve youth in community decision-making and strengthen youth and their families. <http://www.idahocities.org/index>, 208-344-8594.
- Association of Idaho Cities contact regarding creation of Mayor’s Advisory Council is Mandy Decastro, MDecastro@idahocities.org. 208-344-8594.=
- Caldwell Rotary Literacy Program. Contact is Dr. Gerald (“Jerry”) Conger, 208-459-9655.
- Partners for Prosperity, 208-785-0059, <http://www.p4peid.org/>.
- International Walk to School Day, www.walktoschool.org.

- Safe Routes to School grant program, Idaho Transportation Department, Jo O'Connor, 208-334-4475, Jo.O'Connor@itd.idaho.gov.

Community Design and Identity

Description of Focus Area

Community design is the expression of local culture, history, landscape, and economy through the built environment. Ideally, the design process is inclusive and participatory and balances private interests with public responsibilities. Barriers to informed and inclusive design are all too common: they include a lack of vision, communication, unity, and capacity among local stakeholder groups.



The identity of a community may be defined by a unique synergy of history, geography and any dominant economic or social activities. In general, Soda Springs has a commonly understood identity revolving around its mining activity and the distinctive springs and water features that made it a transit point and respite area for travelers populating the West. The town name largely speaks to this identity.

Overall, Soda Springs is a wonderful place full of exceptional and talented people. Visiting Team members were constantly reminded of the strong social bonds cited by residents. Neighbors are generally willing to step up to the plate when someone needs help despite differences or disagreements that are common to any large, diverse social group.

General Community Comments and Concerns

The Community Design and Identity Team was asked by Home Team members to answer three questions:

- **How can we lessen unintended planning and zoning barriers to economic development?** There are many views on this issue: Some feel the city favors big businesses at the expense of small business owners; most agree that the goal should be balanced regulation that doesn't limit productive and entrepreneurial activities or allow development that would undermine the local environment and community values. Currently, the beautification committee's effort to develop policies regarding junk cars is representative of this question.
- **How do we accomplish sophisticated county and city planning and zoning work using only volunteer committee members backed by limited professional resources?** Like many rural Idaho towns, Soda Springs faces limits on the capacity of its local government to undertake complex and time-intensive planning. One answer has been to contract out the work of drafting the new comprehensive plan. The Community Review process also broadens the scope of professional resources and partners available to local government.

- **How can we build critical mass around a common community identity and design?** This is the big question for Soda Springs, and for many communities. The area has a lot going for it in terms of identity. The challenge is to find a way to reflect the key elements favored by a range of residents into a cohesive vision that future initiatives can tie into.

A comment from a local young professional stood out for us. “People here are afraid of change.” This could be an important concept to consider as the community charts its course forward. Despite several great accomplishments over time, we were told that indecision, conflict and a subsequent lack of follow-through had kept some key initiatives from moving forward. These are described elsewhere in this report. Although it may be counterintuitive, this inertia may represent a ‘comfort zone’ of sorts, since pushing forward involves some potentially contentious discussion. Overcoming that fear of change and of addressing differences as part of an effort to build consensus could well allow the community to open up a flood gate of productive activity.

Visiting Team Observations

As we observed Soda Springs in late summer of 2007, several of us noted the lack of visual cues that easily help a visitor locate downtown. We saw a townscape dominated by a diverse backdrop of heavy industry, auto-oriented businesses, the highway, railroad, and surrounding foothills. Several team members felt there was insufficient signage along the main routes to direct visitors to the city center available services and key attractions. We also noted entryways characterized in places by ‘clutter.’ (We should note that both junk and valuable treasures can appear as clutter; we won’t pass judgment.) Finally, what stands out is a wonderful city park with several unique historic exhibits where it borders the highway.



To our surprise, we learned of the proposal to complete beautification and pedestrian improvements with primarily state grant funding along Highway 30 and 34 in the city limits half way through the Review from our colleagues on the civic life and community involvement team.

We spent a decent amount of time visiting and learning about the City’s wastewater and domestic water facilities. We were quite impressed with the quality of the facilities and the proactive approach you take to planning for their improvement.

Monsanto is the dominant presence as well as being a model corporate citizen and the backbone of the local economy. The community and its residents clearly benefit in numerous ways from Monsanto’s generosity and community-minded leadership and workforce. At the same time, it is hard to escape the psychic impact of such prominent heavy industry on potential ‘clean’ industry or other new development. This is a fact of life for a community located atop unique mineral deposits; it is important to acknowledge the perceptions it may generate among outsiders in order to address them proactively.

Local comments and Visiting Team observations indicate that outside investors, retirees or young families may shy away from the area out of environmental concerns (real or imagined), the lack of a diversified economy, and limited access to cultural amenities. These same groups might otherwise embrace the recreational opportunities and small town aspects of Soda Springs. Some individuals might even represent potential business investment and job creation.

One issue reported to us by several locals, particularly business people and real estate professionals, was the irony of Soda Springs's housing market. In an environment of rampant real estate inflation throughout Idaho and the nation, Soda Springs' housing prices had remained relatively flat in the years leading up to our visit. The economic importance of housing availability as a recruitment and retention tool will be addressed in more detail in the Economic Development section: here we will focus on the relationship of residential development with other land uses.

Finally, it was clear to us that Soda Springs is a community that appreciates and lives *IN* its natural surroundings. This was communicated to us by the home team, by citizens we spoke with on the street, and in the pre-Review community survey. Not surprisingly, many of your recreation events (e.g. fishing derby, snow machine and mug bog races) and investments in recreation (Kelly Park) speak to this direct connection to the natural environment.

Issue: #1: Contemplating Change and Growth

We noted an interesting reality in Soda Springs: a simultaneous desire for and fear of change. We also saw obvious changes bearing down on the community. Change is inevitable. At issue is whether you want change imposed from outside the area (by industrial or development interests) or according to a local strategy. This can happen once the implementation section has been added to the Draft Soda Springs Comprehensive Plan and the entire document (with land use map) is adopted.

Recommendations

- **Review Recommendations Under “Civic Life and Community Involvement”.** Many of the recommendations and resources under the previous section, especially with respect to “building consensus and forging sustainable agreements”, can be applied to help the community craft a vision about how you would like to guide and manage growth through the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.
- **Understand Outside Forces and Perceptions.** The housing industry professionals we spoke with indicated that change is afoot. Most calls coming into real estate offices are from out-of-area investors and developers and in some cases, potential residents. Other outside interests we heard of include the energy industry. We recommend you meet with representatives of these stakeholders individually or in small group settings to understand their perceptions about the emerging real estate market and economic trends. It would also be valuable to collect information regarding the development community's experiences and perceptions about working with the City of Soda Springs. To get as much information as possible from this effort, it may be advisable to have this information collected by someone perceived as neutral by all parties.

- **Identify Recommendations in this Report for Incorporation Into Draft Comprehensive Plan.** Add ideas in this report you want to pursue into the Draft Comprehensive Plan as goals, policies, or objectives. Solicit the Home Team’s help in this process.
- **Add Implementation Chapter to Comprehensive Plan.** Successful implementation of any comprehensive plan depends on commitment, leadership, and the identification of who is responsible for what and when. Good comp. plan implementation chapters accomplish the following:
 - prioritize the implementation of plan objectives and policies. This can be done by labeling each objective and/or policy as either a low, medium, or high priority. High priority steps would be taken in the first 18 months following adoption; medium priorities are addressed in the first five years; low priorities are five years out or more.
 - identify who (individuals, agencies, or organizations) has primary responsibility for implementation of each objective and who else needs to be involved as a partner.
 - identify resources needed for the implementation of each objective.
 - identify the objectives that require some change in current city policy or ordinance.
 - outline a process for completing an annual evaluation of the implementation process.
- **Increase and Improve Information Provided to Permit Applicants.** We perceive Soda Springs has some pent up real estate demand. We heard the comment “we are the hole in the middle of the doughnut” from more than one citizen. Real estate values are reported to be increasing. Seek ways to reduce the confusion we heard about permitting requirements and processes, along with unhappiness involving “red tape” and inconsistent application of requirements. These are important ways to lower the barriers to business development. See also recommendations about education and communication under the “civic life and community involvement” focus area.



- **Development Standards.** Do not give up insistence on curb, gutter, sidewalk and paved streets. If not built into the cost of the subdivisions, they will never get built. The City should accept the responsibility for maintaining them, but you shouldn’t subsidize their initial construction.

Also, maintaining (through appropriate zoning) an edge or boundary between urban and rural is an important part of protecting your identity. While you need a range of lot sizes in order to produce a variety of housing types and sizes, zoning that allows large areas currently in the area of city impact to be subdivided into 1-5 acre “ranchettes” is neither town nor country AND it is more expensive to service with utilities and other services on a per household basis.

- **Promote Continuing Education Among Council and Planning and Zoning Commissioners.** This is our response to your request for information about how to

engage in planning with volunteer lay leaders and citizens. First of all, The City should ensure that council members and planning commission members have adequate funding for training, subscriptions, conferences, and visiting seminars. Commit to setting aside time for education on planning and zoning commission meetings. Assign one or two planning and zoning commissioners to research a subject, and then present their findings to their fellow commissioners.

- **Partner with Surrounding Communities to Bring in Expertise.** The cost of bringing in experts in the field of land use planning, downtown revitalization, etc, can be reduced by partnering with other communities in the region looking for the same expertise.

Resources

- Western Planning Resources. This is the organization that publishes the “*Western Planner*” publication and hosts an annual conference. Has a western, rural focus. <http://www.westernplanner.org/>, 307-234-9442. In 2008 their excellent annual conference will be held Aug. 5-8 in Cheyenne, WY.
- “*Zoning Practice*”. A publication of the American Planning Association, <http://www.planning.org/ZoningPractice/>.
- Planners Web and Planning Commissioner’s Journal. Planner’s Web is a website; Planning Commissioner’s Journal is an excellent publication. <http://pcj.typepad.com/>.
- Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington. Their website includes an extensive database of sample ordinances, <http://www.mrsc.org/>,
- Planetizen, web-based information source for professional and citizen planners, www.planetizen.org.
- National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Main Street Program, 202-588-6219, <http://www.nationaltrust.org/community/resources.html> and <http://www.mainstreet.org/>, mainstreet@nthp.org
- City of Garden City Comprehensive Plan. Has an excellent chapter on implementation which won an award from Idaho Smart Growth in 2006. http://www.gardencityidaho.org/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={7B818D86-77BA-490C-AEE5-FB3A25DA14FD}, 208- 472-2921.
- Sonoran Institute. A Bozeman, MT.-based non-profit organization assisting communities with growth issues in and near the Yellowstone area. www.sonoron.org, 406-587-7331.
- “*Idaho Land Use Handbook: The Law of Planning, Zoning, and Property Rights in Idaho*”, a publication of Givens Pursley Law Offices, www.givenspursley.com, 208-388-1200
- Idaho Smart Growth is a statewide non-profit education and advocacy organization, www.idahosmartgrowth.org, isg@idahosmartgrowth.org, 208-333-8066.
- “*Main Street: When a Highway Runs Through It*”. Excellent book published in 1999 by the Oregon Department of Transportation to educate communities about pedestrian safety and community design associated with highways within city limits. <http://www.contextsensitivesolutions.org/content/reading/main-street/resources/main-street-when-a-highway/>
- “*True West: Authentic Development Patterns for Small Towns and Rural Areas*” by Christopher Duerksen and James Van Hemert. Well written book with a western focus. Published by the American Planning Association in 2003, <http://www.planning.org/apastore/>.
- Association of Idaho Cities, www.idahocities.org, 208-344-8594.

- Idaho Department of Commerce has provided funding to communities for growth management purposes in 2005 and 2006. Keep in contact with the Department to be aware of any future funding opportunities. Randy Schroll, 208-334-2470, randy.schroll@business.idaho.gov.
- Idaho Rural Partnership, www.irp.idaho.gov, 208-334-3131.
- Idaho State University's Masters in Public Administration Program, Dr. Mark McBeth, mcbemark@isu.edu, 208-282-2740. Contact about getting help from student interns.

Issue #2: Property Upkeep and Appearance

We noticed references to a 'Beautification Committee' in the Draft Comprehensive Plan prior to our arrival in Soda Springs. It was no surprise, then, when the work of this committee was discussed at two meetings involving city staff, council members, planning and zoning commissioners, and business owners.

Our understanding is that the committee was originally called the "junk auto committee" and was formed to address the problem of junk or inoperable cars in residential areas. Over time, the ordinance development process evolved to address inoperable cars in commercial areas as well. In our view, if your downtown and Corrigan Park represent your community's living room, then the entrances to town are like your front yard. We also realize the potentially sensitive nature of the subject. One person's junk is another's antique, raw material, or hobby project.

As of this writing, the Beautification Committee has given a draft ordinance to the city council. The council has identified some changes they would like to see made the draft.

Communities concerned about cars storage and property upkeep in general often have provisions in their zoning or other ordinance and non-regulatory tools to address one or more of the following:

- **Automobile repair** refers to situations where an individual continuously parks a number of basically operable vehicles in a front yard or on the street for the purpose of working on the vehicles. Many communities address automobile repair as a nuisance. If an individual's auto repair "hobby" takes on characteristics of an automobile repair shop operating from his property, the use may meet the city's zoning code definition of an "auto repair facility" which is generally not a permitted use in a residential zone.



- **Automobile storage** refers to the parking of vehicles outside of "driveways" or within required front- and side-yard areas. The key to enforcement of these types of regulations appears to be an adequate definition of "driveway" or "parking area" applicable to the residential zone, specification of required minimum front-, side-, and rear-yards, including landscaping; and prohibitions against parking vehicles outside of driveways or other allowable parking areas unless they are screened by appropriate fencing or other screening. It may be helpful to differentiate between

motor vehicles generally and recreational vehicles and to avoid the situation where vehicles being removed from private property end up being parked on public streets.

- **Junk Vehicles** are clearly inoperable. They can threaten the character and safety of neighborhoods. They may cause deterioration of neighborhoods partly due to visual blight which affects property values. Junked vehicles can create attractive nuisances for children, and provide harborages for rodents, insects and other pests. West Nile Virus is on the rise, and communities should take into consideration any sources of standing water that increase public health risks. Most municipalities have approached this problem through the adoption of junk vehicle nuisance ordinances that prohibit the storage of junk vehicles in open areas of private property.
- **Property Maintenance and/or Clean Up** protects adjacent property values and in extreme cases can prevent criminal activities. To protect a neighborhood from deterioration, a number of local governments establish property maintenance standards. There is a limit, however, on how far a jurisdiction may go in regulating unsightly areas on private property. If enacted, any such limits should focus on the protection of public health, safety, and welfare (not just aesthetic concerns).

In addition to ordinances, many communities also have non-regulatory programs and incentives to address both automobile storage and property maintenance concerns.

Recommendations

- **Memorize the three questions below.** They may appear rudimentary but many times we can get caught up in the issue and forget these key questions.
 - What is the problem we are trying to solve or prevent?
 - What is the behavior we want to encourage?
 - Why?

As a group, return to your answers to these questions whenever you become uncertain about the next step or about how to reach agreement.

- **Create Golden Arrow Award program.** This would be in recognition of business or home owners who have beautified their properties or find other ways to publicly appreciate property and business owners who take pride in the image their property projects and says about the community.
- **Apply Social Marketing Principles.** This situation seems ripe for an effort to encourage desired behavior by asking property owners to sign a pledge to clean up their properties. Property owners making this pledge would be publicly identified, then appreciated when they follow through. They could be given a sign to place on their property recognizing their commitment. You don't even need an ordinance to implement this recommendation. Social marketing principles also suggest you should fully understand the barriers that prevent people from keeping their properties cleaned up and the benefits they would receive if they cleaned up. Find ways to remove the barriers and increase the benefits.
- **Screening and Distance from Highways.** Encourage if not require autos and other large items to be stored behind attractive screening/landscaping OR a certain minimum distance away from state highway rights of way. Reduce cost of

screening/landscaping by, for example, locating low cost source of materials and potential grant funding.

- **Clean-Up Program.** Place dumpsters in front of homes and businesses whose owners request one. Owners fill the dumpster, then city crews return to haul away the dumpster away. Encourage neighbors to help each other clean up their properties.
- **Give Property Owners Some Time.** We heard the issue of unkempt properties and junk cars in Soda Springs has been going on for 20 years. If it helps achieve resolution, give property owners one year from the date of ordinance adoption before you begin enforcement activities. This is basically a grace period.
- **Establish Low or No Interest Loan Program.** Such loans would be made available to business owners to help them meet the costs of property clean up and/or screening. Pocatello has such a program.
- **Solicit Student Help with Beautification of Entryways.** Students in planning or landscape architecture could be approached to develop entryway plans as student projects. Locals informed us that Soda Springs has already had a group of architects from the U. of I. Community Design Team create such a plan, so consult and evaluate existing recommendations before requesting time and energy for a similar project. Most teams want to see evidence that outside resources and recommendations are valued by the community before committing additional time and energy. See resources, below.

Resources

- Municipal Research and Services Center, <http://www.mrsc.org/Subjects/Legal/nuisances/nu-autos.aspx>. This is the best source of sample ordinances and programs on this subject we know of.
- Western Planner Archives, www.westernplanner.org.
- American Planning Association, www.planning.org.
- Utah State University Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning, <http://www.usu.edu/laep/>, 435-797-0500, laepinfo@usu.edu.
- University of Idaho Community Design and Planning, <http://www.class.uidaho.edu/communityresearch/>.
- *"Fostering Sustainable Behavior: An Introduction to Community-Based Social Marketing"*, by Douglas McKenzie-Mohr and William Smith, www.cbsm.com. This book is available from New Society Publishers, www.newsociety.com.

Issue #3: Downtown and Highway 30/34 Beautification

Midway through the Community Review we learned of the proposed Highway 30/34 beautification project, the first phase of which was to be funded by a combination of city funds and a grant from the Idaho Transportation Department. We also notice that the Draft Comprehensive Plan supports "continued beautification of Main Street, main highways, and all entrances to the community." See "Areas of Contention and Consensus.

The first thing we want to address is the idea of finding a 'theme'. This is something we heard several people identify as a need. We want to dissuade you from "finding a theme"

if it means wrapping the community in an invented history or culture that is not authentic. In other words, be who you are. That said, we also observed that you (in our judgment) tended to downplay the uniqueness of the community's soda springs (your name sake!) and geyser. No other community has these features and your history, economy, and sense of place are all tied to them. Even if they're just passing through, no one visiting Soda Springs should leave without somehow being made aware of the springs and the geyser, even if they are just in town for a couple of hours. We'll even go so far as to say people in Pocatello, Idaho Falls and Boise should know about the springs and geyser at Soda Springs.

You seem to know this intuitively and enjoying root beer made at Hooper Springs was a highlight for us, but the community doesn't market it nearly as much as it could. Some times the things we pass by everyday, things we don't recognize as anything particularly special, are the things that visitors want to know the most about.



Being located at a historic crossroads that includes the Oregon Trail is unique. Being on the Trail AND having the springs and geyser is more unique still. Celebrate both equally and in a way that connects them together. .

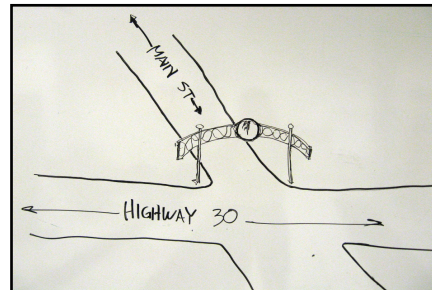
We encourage you to keep in mind that "beautification" can mean as little as adding flowers to Main Street sidewalks. The more ambitious "revitalization" is about physical renovation AND marketing downtown and recruiting new businesses.

Recommendations

- **Literature, Logos, Streetscape, Signage, and Other Design Elements.** Develop a variety of geyser logos with different backgrounds or borders to draw in the other identities. For instance: a wagon wheel border around the geyser, or the geyser logo on the side of a covered wagon. The O in Soda can be a wagon wheel and the I in Springs can be the geyser. Chamber members, the city, schools, and other businesses can use a logo in their displays, advertising, brochures, tourism campaigns, directional signs etc. The wider the use of the logo, the stronger the identity becomes. Put the logo on a tin or plastic cup people can use to take a drink from the soda springs.
- **City Entryways Need to Do More to Promote Soda Springs.** There is almost no advertising about the community and businesses on the three highways. A traveler (tourist, business, trucker) cannot anticipate what is available to meet their needs or likes/preferences; where to stop for refreshment, bathrooms, groceries, history, gifts, tours, repairs, sights or attractions. Anticipation is part of attraction. The closest thing we saw to a museum was the Ender's Hotel, but we saw a reference to another museum in literature we received.

The intersection of Highways 30 and 34 is an example of a location where additional directional signs would be valuable. Other signs that convey the community's identity are needed before you reach city limits.

- **Out of Town Marketing.** A tasteful advertising campaign of the community should be developed along the highways -- 15 to 20 miles out. At the very least, the Interstate style “services available” signs should be constructed and placed on the three entry highways.
- **Your Mining Legacy.** Mining is a big part of Soda Springs and should be promoted better. Kellogg, Idaho promoted their silver mining history and economy by providing a geologic/ mining display in the park with an ore pile for the rock collectors to stop and take an ore sample home with them.
- **Main Street Landscaping.** Sidewalk planters could be picked up in the fall and heeled in or banked in a city park so they survive the winter. This will help maintain the planters, eliminate a barrier to snow removal and protect them from snow removal chemicals.
- **Public Art.** Incorporate one or more public art pieces on one or both ends of Main Street or other visible location in close proximity to Main Street or (more specifically) the intersection of Main Street and Highway 30 or at either end of town. An arch over Main Street near the intersection was one idea brought up during the Review.



- **Conduct Visual Preference Survey.** This is a public forum at which participants view images and rank them for appropriateness and attractiveness. Typically, these are images of other communities like yours. This is a good tool to use with citizens who might have trouble telling you what they would like the downtown and major commercial streets to be like, but they can point to it when they see it. Following the event, results are tabulated, leaving you with a pretty good “picture” of public preferences.
- **Explore Formation of Urban Renewal District.** This recommendation is expressed in the Draft Comprehensive Plan. In essence, it provides a source of funding (tax increment financing) for downtown improvements.
- **Continue Development of Farmer’s Market.** Some of us visited your new market at the park. We were quite impressed.
- **Draw More Attention to the Geyser.** Create a “Geyser Days” annual event. Make more effort to make sure visitors know where the geyser is located and solicit design help (from university students?) in developing a plan to make the area surrounding the geyser more attractive and inviting. Name the geyser; maybe with a ‘name the geyser’ contest.

As it is, someone coming into town has no idea where the geyser or downtown is until they reach the intersection of Highway 30 and Main Street. This information needs to be communicated before they reach this intersection. We noticed the visitor

information center near the geyser, but saw no signs on Highway 30 directing us to it.

You don't just have a geyser. You have a geyser *in your downtown*. All signs and other information about the geyser should convey this information.

- **Have Fun with Your Stories.** Collect and publish personal stories, urban legends, and recipes all having to do with the soda springs. In 2.5 days in the community, we heard 4-5 different flavorings people enjoying mixing with the soda water (e.g. orange juice, kool-aid, etc). It was also suggested the water is good for certain physical ailments.
- **Create “Shop Soda First” campaign.** This recommendation picks up on an idea expressed by Senator Bob Geddes during the Review. Such a project would build community pride in supporting locally owned businesses. The Farmers’ Market should be included in this campaign. A project of this type in Bellingham, Washington distributes a bumper sticker that says “*Buy Local or Bye-Bye Local*”.

Resources

- Idaho Department of Commerce, Rural Community Development Block Grant program, [Pat Madarieta](mailto:Pat.Madarieta@idoc.state.id.us), 208-334-2650 ext 2144.
<http://community.idaho.gov/RCBG/tabid/369/Default.aspx>
- U.S. Economic Development Administration, 304 N. 8th Street, Rm. 146, Boise, Idaho 83702, Rick Tremblay, rtremblay@eda.doc.gov, 208-334-1521.
- Idaho Heritage Trust, Gaetha Pace, 208-549-1778, gaetha@mindspring.com. Inquire about conducting funding research pertaining to restoration of historic buildings.
- University of Idaho Urban Research and Design Center, Sherry McKibben, Director, 208-343-7851, sherrym@mckibbencooper.com.
- National Trust for Historic Preservation, 202-588-6219, mainstreet@nthp.org, <http://www.nationaltrust.org/community/resources.html> and <http://www.mainstreet.org/>.
- Idaho Commission on the Arts, www.arts.idaho.gov, 208-334-2119. Inquire about community development programs and grant funding.
- Congressman Mike Simpson; Megan Milan, Appropriations, 202-225-5531 megan.milan@mail.house.gov.
- Idaho Department of Agriculture, Farmer’s Markets and Direct Marketing, Mandi Thompson, 208-332-8538, mthompson@agri.state.id.us . “How-To” resources, list of Idaho farmer’s markets, etc., <http://www.agri.state.id.us/Categories/Marketing/FMmarketing.php>.
- Rural Roots, source of information about farmer’s markets, 208-883-3462, info@ruralroots.org <http://www.ruralroots.org/default.asp>.
- Utah State University Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning, <http://www.usu.edu/laep/>, 435-797-0500, laepinfo@usu.edu.
- Sustainable Connections, the “shop local first” project in Bellingham, Washington, www.Sconnect.org, 360-647-7093.
- Project for Public Spaces, <http://www.pps.org/>, pps@pps.org, 212 620-5660.
- “*Smart Towns: A Guide to Downtown Revitalization*”, Idaho Department of Commerce, 208-334-2470, www.idoc.state.id.us.
- Idaho Department of Transportation Enhancement Program - <http://itd.idaho.gov/planning/te/> Idaho Department of Commerce – Incubator

Construction Funding, Rodney Ashbey, Community Development Specialist,
<http://community.idaho.gov/>, 208-334-2470

- USDA Rural Development, Brian Buch, Program Specialist,
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/id/rbeg.htm>, brian.buch@id.usda.gov, 208-785-2092.
- Local Highway Technical Assistance Program, <http://www.lhtac.org/>, 3330 W. Grace Street Boise, Idaho 83703, 208-344-0565.
- Idaho Dept. of Lands - Community Forestry Program,
http://www.idl.idaho.gov/Bureau/community_forestry/home/index.htm, 208-769-1525 or 800-432-4648.

Issue #4: Celebrating Your Natural Heritage

In talking with citizens and members of the Home Team, it was obvious that enjoying activities in the natural environment surrounding Soda Springs is important to the community. Whether it's riding a bike out to Hooper Park, taking the kids out to catch some fish, or snowmobiling in the nearby national forest, it is a big part of your identity.



Recommendations

- **Conserve Important Open Space.** Pursue conservation easements through the NRCS Riparian Buffer Program and/or the Sagebrush Steppe Regional Land Trust. Talk to Rocky Mountain Power about a conservation easement on land they own adjacent to the river.
- **Signage.** Develop consistent directional and interpretive signs and printed city-wide trail guide that use the springs/Oregon Trail brand or logo.
- **Develop Regional Destination Trail System.** Pursue development of multi-purpose trail within railroad right-of-way from Alexander to Grace, then extend the trail to Soda Springs via the reservoir and/or river.
- **Kelly Park Nordic Center.** Develop a heated Nordic center at Kelly Park.
- **Provide Ways for Visitors to Enjoy Fishing.** Lots of folks who enjoy fishing may come to Soda Springs without their gear if they aren't aware of the excellent opportunities. Making fishing tackle available for rent by visitors.
- **Environmental Education.** Add educational signs in natural areas (e.g. Kelly and Hooper Parks) about both commonly seen and rare wildlife and plant species.
- **Integration.** All of these items listed above could be rolled together into a neat tourism package of outdoor activities with special events at each venue.

Resources

- The National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program provides technical grants to assist with planning, design and implementation of trails, <http://www.ncrc.nps.gov/programs/rtca/>.
- Rocky Mountain Power Foundation, 888-221-7070,
<http://www.rockymtnpower.net/Article/Article70492.html>.

- NRCS Riparian Buffer Program, Paula Jones, Three Rivers RC & D Association, 208-237-4628, ext. 104, paula.jones@id.usda.gov.
- Sagebrush Steppe Regional Land Trust, tlucia@idfg.idaho.gov, 208-234-4028, http://www.ltanet.org/findlandtrust/one.tcl?pc_id=163758.
- Idaho Foundation for Parks and Lands, 208-344-7141, ifpl@mindsprings.com, <http://www.idaholands.org/index.html>, 5657 Warm Springs Avenue, Boise Idaho 83716 (for protecting private lands and providing for public access).
- Idaho Fish and Game, Mark Taylor, mtaylor@idfg.idaho.gov, for info. about the Department's low cost interpretive sign program.
- Bill Chipman Palouse Trail (very successful 8 mile long paved trail within former railroad right of way from Moscow to Idaho), <http://www.pullmancivictrust.org/Chipman.html>, info@pullmancivictrust.org.
- Friends of the Weiser River Trail (unpaved trail within former railroad right of way from Weiser to Rubicon (near New Meadows), 208-887-2068 or 208-861-8614 <http://www.weiserrivertrail.org/>.
- Teton Valley Trails and Pathways, Tim Adams, Executive Director, 208-201-1622, pathways@tetonvalley.net, <http://www.tvtap.org/>.
- Idaho Ranch, Farm and Forest Protection Act, <http://www.idahoworkinglands.com/>. This is proposed legislation that would provide a tax credit to land owners who choose to conserve the value of their lands to fish, wildlife, and outdoor recreation. Info: Bas Hargrove, bhargrove@tnc.org, 208-350-2207.
- Mink Creek Nordic Center, Pocatello Parks and Recreation Department, Pocatello, Idaho, <http://www.pokyxc.org/7128.html>, 208-234-6232.

Economic Development

Description of Focus Area

Economic development results in job opportunities that allow new highly educated folks to move into and contribute to the community. It allows people who grew up in Soda Springs to return as adults. It also reduces dependence on residential property tax revenue to fund public services and infrastructure. In its Community Review application, the City expressed interest in help retaining and strengthening existing industries, growing and recruiting light manufacturing, retail, and tourism/recreation-based businesses, and capitalizing on Soda Springs' advantageous location within a transportation corridor.

The members of the Visiting Team devoted to the economic development focus area have much they want to share with Soda Springs. For the purposes of this report, observations, recommendations, and resources related to economic development are presented in these four sub-areas:

- Business Diversification, Retention, and Entrepreneurship
- Tourism
- Workforce Development
- Community Infrastructure

Issues, recommendations, and resources identified by the Visiting Team for each sub-area are provided following the general community comments and concerns below:

General Community Comments and Concerns

Soda Springs is a single industry town built around the mining and processing of phosphorus. Community members expressed concerns that environmental regulations, a decline in the demand for phosphorus based products and international competition could cripple the local economy. Residents expressed a desire to increase the number of “living wage” job opportunities outside the realm of Agrium and Monsanto. Locals expressed a desire for more restaurant, retail stores, and service providers. While local residents would like to see a modern lodging facility take root in their community, they expressed concern that a brand name motel would put several longtime local innkeepers out of business. Some residents expressed concern over certain state and federal actions that may impact the access and use of public lands.

Soda Springs’s largest employers (Agrium and Monsanto) face challenges in the recruitment and retention of engineers, technicians and other highly trained professional employees. Both companies identified a number of community barriers contributing to the workforce and retention problem. The barriers identified include the availability of contemporary housing, perceived weaknesses with respect to the local schools, second income employment opportunities, daycare and health care. Secondary to the workforce retention issue is the number of existing employees who reside outside of the county. Soda Springs is fortunate enough to have all of the infrastructure components to support heavy industry. Yet fluid environmental regulations have residents concerned that mandates may require expensive upgrades to their water and sewer infrastructure. Some business owners expressed a desire to see water and sewer services billed on a metered basis. Residents also expressed frustration in obtaining high speed internet service.

Economic Development Sub Area #1: Business Diversification, Retention and Entrepreneurship

Visiting Team Observations

The Visiting Team interviewed many business owners who were unaware of a wide array of financing and business support services available for little or no cost. Part of the problem is that most of these services are based in Pocatello and do not aggressively market their services to rural communities like Soda Springs.

Soda Springs lacks a central location whereby a “lone eagle” or home-based businesses can go to access business equipment and services. Furthermore, few if any options exist for the lone eagle business that has outgrown the home office or garage yet is not large enough to occupy standard commercial space. The public library attempts to fill some of this niche but lacks the space, staff and expertise to assist entrepreneurs and small businesses.

Soda Springs is blessed with an abundance of “shovel ready” industrial land. The State Highway 34 corridor north of town is chock-full of vacant parcels with good access to rail, power and other services attractive to manufacturing businesses. Yet the community

does little to promote this opportunity. Soda's marketing efforts are limited to tourism. The community's web page has buttons for the chamber and tourism but nothing promoting any other forms of economic development or links to business development resources

Issue #1: Resource Awareness

Increasing business owner access to information about current programs that support business development will help Soda Spring's existing businesses grow and support the creation of new businesses

Recommendations

- ***Create Ongoing Business Resource Summit.*** The City with help from its economic development professional should conduct semi annual business summits which bring together a wide array of service providers under one roof. Some of examples of perspective attendees may include the Idaho Department of Commerce – Idaho Business Network, Idaho Department of Labor, Idaho Small Business Development Center, Tech Help, Tech Connect, Southeast Idaho Council of Governments and the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Rural Business Cooperative Service, and Idaho State University Business College, to name a few. The Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce conducts a monthly *Small Business Resource Orientation* that may serve as model for a Soda Springs Resource Summit.

Resources

- Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce - <http://www.boisechamber.org/>, 208-472-5200.
- Idaho Department of Commerce, Jerry Miller PCED, Econ. Development Specialist, jerry.miller@community.idaho.gov, 208-334-2470, <http://commerce.idaho.gov/>.
- Idaho Department of Labor, Pocatello office, <http://labor.idaho.gov/>, 208-236-6710.
- Idaho State University Small Business Development Center, <http://www.idahosbdc.org/>, 208-232-4921.

Issue #2: Business Space

A physical location where “lone eagle” and home-based businesses can find support and resources would help such businesses learn best practices and develop opportunities for collaboration

Recommendation

- ***Form a Business Incubator.*** A business incubator is a space that provides small businesses access to services, office equipment, and temporary space in which to operate. A facility like the vacant Hooper Elementary School may be an ideal location for a business incubator. What makes Hooper so attractive is that it is “wired” and capable of accommodating high speed internet traffic.

Resources

- Idaho Small Business Development Center. Business Incubator Page, Idaho State University Small Business Development Center, <http://www.idahosbdc.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=content.view&page=90>, 208-232-4921.
- Idaho Department of Commerce – Incubator Construction Funding, Rodney Ashbey, Community Development Specialist, <http://community.idaho.gov/>, 208-334-2470

- USDA Rural Development, Brian Buch, Program Specialist, <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/id/rbeg.htm>, brian.buch@id.usda.gov, 208-785-2092.
- U.S. Department of Commerce – Economic Development Administration, Rick Tremblay, <http://www.eda.gov/AboutEDA/Programs.xml>, 208-334-1521.

Issue # 3: Economic Development Marketing

The City and economic development organizations should work together to promote the availability of industrially zone land (especially the Highway 34 corridor north of town) with excellent access to utilities and transportation services.

Recommendations

- **Create an Economic Development Web Page.** At the very least the City should add an Economic Development web page to its internet site. It should include an up to date community profile containing basic demographic, economic, utility and workforce information and links, available industrial and commercial properties and contact information for the community's economic development professionals, utilities and business service providers. The Idaho Department of Commerce has a dated Soda Springs community profile that if updated on a regular basis by the city or its economic development professional could provide the foundation or template for a local economic development profile. The Idaho Department of Labor puts out a monthly county labor market profile that should be included as a download on the city's economic development web page. The ultimate goal for the City should be a detailed website similar to the one offered by the City of Jerome.
- **Create a Printed Economic Development Marketing Piece.** The concept here is to create a printed brochure that contains some of the information found on the economic development website. At the very least the printed marketing piece should include two or three selling points and economic development contact information.

Resources

- Idaho Department of Commerce – Community Profiles. <http://community.idaho.gov/Portals/15/Profiles/Community/SodaSprings.pdf>, Susan Davidson, Manager, susan.davidson@commerce.idaho.gov, 208-334-2470.
- Idaho Department of Labor – Labor Market Profiles <http://labor.idaho.gov/lmi/pubs/CaribouProfile.pdf>
- Scott Hobdey, Regional Economist, scott.hobdey@labor.idaho.gov, 208-236-6710, ext. 3713.
- City of Jerome – Economic Development Website, <http://www.ci.jerome.id.us/econdev/>, Marlin Eldred, Economic Development Director, meldred@ci.jerome.id.us, 208-324-8189.

Economic Development Sub Area #2: Tourism

Visiting Team Observations

Soda Springs is ideally suited to increase visitor trade. The community is located on a U.S. Highway that serves as a secondary gateway into the Teton Valley and is a shortcut for trucks looking to avoid the congestion of the Salt Lake metropolitan area. Major employers like Agrium and Monsanto attract a significant number of business travelers and the area provides a number of opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts. At the

same time the community lacks a nationally branded contemporary lodging facility. Visitor dependent businesses operate on a cycle of “feast and famine”. Business is good during community events and the summer season and poor during the winter months. To the outside visitor there are few if any visible locations capable of accommodating a truck or an RV.

Soda Springs lacks contemporary lodging accommodations. None of the properties in town offer a pool, air conditioning or insulation from the ambient train and truck noise that fills the community. A member of the Visiting Team who lodged at a facility separate from the rest of the visiting team reported his room to be dirty, cramped and equipped with hazardous electrical wiring. Frequent visitors report that when possible they will forsake Soda Springs to lodge in neighboring communities with better accommodations.

Local storeowners, innkeepers and restaurateurs report that business is good during community events; the only problem is that these events are few and far between. Winter is an especially a difficult time with some lodging facilities simply shuttering their doors during the winter months. According to the chamber’s online events calendar nothing takes place between January and May. October is also a dead spot in the community events calendar. Sporting events, whether targeted towards youth or outdoorsmen, seem to draw the biggest crowds. The chamber website contains a list of community events. No events are listed on the city’s government website even though there is an “events tab”. Soda Springs does have a farmer’s market that allows home base businesses to sell their wares in the community. However, it takes place on Wednesdays.

Soda Springs is chalk full of hidden gems. The Geyser, Hooper Springs and the historic Enders Hotel, to name a few, have a lot to offer to visitors if they only knew that such attractions exist. The visiting team found the community’s signage lacking. Maps identifying trails and other recreation areas are available at the U.S. Forest office but that facility is off the main highway and closed on weekends. The library entertains a number of inquiries from visitors. It was unclear to the visiting team where one might be able to find an RV dump or park a semi trailer.

Issue #1: Lodging Facilities

There are three types of lodger: the business traveler, the destination traveler (someone who visits to be with family or to attend a specific event) and the motorist who is looking for a place to stay in between destinations. While business and destination travelers tend to be a captive audience, motorists are not. Soda Springs lacks contemporary lodging accommodations that appeal to the motorist and business traveler. A feasibility study funded by USDA-Rural Development concluded that Soda Springs could support a brand name lodging facility.

Recommendation

- **Develop a Brand Name Motel.** Soda Springs should pursue attracting a brand name lodging facility to the community. Ideally this facility should include a swimming pool, business center, exercise room and a ballroom capable of accommodating large business meetings, banquets, wedding receptions and other catered events. A nationally branded lodging facility will bring with it national and international marketing and reservation networks exposing Soda Springs to a new universe of potential visitors. Also, many of the bus tour companies are either owned by or

affiliated with national lodging chains which bring additional opportunities for business.

While existing inn keepers may fear such a facility, it should be noted that in communities like Grangeville, Orofino and Riggins the presence of a name brand facility actually increased business for everyone. The key is event planning and cooperation. Often communities with a brand name facility will host an event, sell out their rooms and steer the overflow to other neighboring facilities. Even with a new lodging facility there will always be a segment of the lodging market that will gravitate towards low price “no thrills” accommodation. Ideally, the best approach would be for a local Inn owner or a partnership of local innkeepers to own and operate this facility.



Resources

- US Small Business Administration 7(a) Loan Program, <http://www.sba.gov/services/financialassistance/7alenderprograms/index.html>.
Note: This program may be accessed through any bank.
- Southeastern Idaho Council of Government – Revolving Loan Program, <http://www.sicog.org/>



Issue #2: Community Events

Local community events serve several purposes. They encourage folks from out of town looking for a weekend get-a-way to eat, sleep, shop, and play in Soda Springs. They also celebrate and build your sense of community and place. January-May and October seem to be periods in which few annual events are planned.

Recommendations

- **Increase the Number of Community Events.** One idea might be to hold a valley wide summer and winter “Olympics” with some activities or contest being held in Soda with others taking place in Grace, Lava Hot Springs and Montpelier. Given the strength and vitality of Soda Spring’s faith community, it may be possible to have some sort of event organized around and celebrating faith. “Geyser Days” is also an event idea we think has potential. See “Community Design and Identity”.
- **Develop a Saturday Farmer’s Market.** The Visiting Team is aware of no other Farmer’s Market south of Pocatello. The community should consider moving at least some of the dates for the Farmers Market from Wednesday to Saturday. A Saturday market if properly promoted would attract more visitors from outside of the community.
- **Link Event Postings to the City’s Website.** The city should embed a link on its website that links into the chamber’s event page.

Resources

- USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program, <http://www.ams.usda.gov/FMPP/>
- Idaho Department of Agriculture, Farmer's Markets and Direct Marketing, Mandi Thompson, 208-332-8538, mthompson@agri.state.id.us. "How-To" resources, list of Idaho farmer's markets, etc., <http://www.agri.state.id.us/Categories/Marketing/FMmarketing.php>.
- Rural Roots, source of information about farmer's markets, 208-883-3462, info@ruralroots.org <http://www.ruralroots.org/default.asp>.
- Idaho Department of Commerce Travel Grant Program, <http://tourism.idaho.gov/TravelGrantProgram/ProspectiveGrantees/tabid/1200/Default.aspx>.
- Bear River RC&D Council, <http://www.bearriverrcd.org/staff.htm>, 435-753-3871, ext. 5.
- Caribou County Extension, (208)547-3205, caribou@uidaho.edu, <http://extension.ag.uidaho.edu/district4/caribou.htm>.
- USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Soda Springs Field Office, 208-547-4396.

Issue #3: Visitor Information

Soda Springs should make greater effort to make sure visitors can easily find information about all that you have to offer. The carbonated springs and the geyser, in particular, are extremely unique features that people can easily miss as they pass through town and stop for lunch.

Recommendations

- **The Soda Springs Chamber Should Work Towards Creating a Staffed Visitor's Center.** The center could be staffed by volunteers and operated during the peak visitor months (Memorial Day – Labor Day). Some communities like Kooskia, Idaho get help from the U.S. Forest Service to support their visitor's center.
- **Improve Signage Identifying Location of Tourist Attraction and RV Facilities.** A banner, arch, or other public art at the junction of Main Street and U.S. 30 would help identify your historic town center, drawing people down Main Street. If all the signs had one distinguishing feature that would help with the identification as well – people would begin looking just for the "logo" if you will (the geyser). The National Park Service has a technical support grant that could help in the development of the signage and the logo design.
- **Develop Walking Tour of Town, Highlighting Historic Attractions.** The tour could take the form of a brochure with a map demarking attractions and/or posted on the internet as an interactive tour. If prepared as part of a youth service learning opportunity, the community may be able to leverage grant funds to assist with the cost.

Resources

- City of Kooskia, 208-926-4684
- Idaho Department of Transportation Enhancement Program - <http://itd.idaho.gov/planning/te/>

- The National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program provides technical grants to assist with greenbelt/trail planning, <http://www.ncrc.nps.gov/programs/rtca/>.
- Utah State University Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning, <http://www.usu.edu/laep/>, 435-797-0500, laepinfo@usu.edu.

Economic Development Sub Area #3: Workforce Development

Visiting Team Observations

Agrium and Monsanto reported that close to 50% of their workforce reside outside of the county. While the visiting team deduced a number of reasons why this might be the case, neither company has surveyed its employees to determine why such a large percentage of their employees reside outside of the county.



Soda Springs lacks contemporary middle class housing. This observation is made in the city's draft comprehensive plan which characterizes existing housing stock as "degraded". When quizzed on this issue, city officials lay blame on county zoning requirements which discourage subdivisions with small lots. At the same time City leaders expressed reluctance, for reasons of costs, to extend the infrastructure needed to encourage housing development.

Recently, the Soda Springs School District adopted a four day school week. Implemented as a cost containment strategy, the four day school week comes attached with a stigma that fewer days translate into lower test scores and performance. Local residents also indicate that the school district is struggling to meet state and federal testing requirements which compels the district to forgo certain classes like art in favor of courses oriented towards standardized testing. The four day school week may be creating childcare issues. Local police report a significant increase in delinquency on Friday's when school is not in session.

The typical candidate for employment at Agrium or Monsanto is a professional or technically skilled person whom in many cases is married to a spouse with a professional or technical background. Part of the employee recruitment puzzle is directing employee partners to rewarding opportunities outside of the company. A candidate declined a lucrative offer to work at Monsanto on the grounds that combined household income may be greater elsewhere.

Soda Spring's three largest employers do not operate on a traditional 8-5 schedule. This scheduling creates problems in recruiting potential employees with dependents. Given the hazards associated with the products manufactured at both Agrium and Monsanto, onsite daycare is not a viable option. A comment from the city's librarian underscored this issue when she labeled her department the "community babysitter". There seems to be a "disconnect" between the need for childcare and the community at large. To

paraphrase an official from one of the community's large employers, someone with a need for child care is likely unable to live in this community in the first place.

Prospective employees looking to relocate their families to a community desire three levels of health care: preventative or family care, urgent care and care for chronic conditions. While it appears that these three levels of care are available in Soda Springs there is a perception to the outsider that they are not.

Issue #1: Workforce Residency

Decreasing the number of employees who commute by as little as 10% could have a significant positive impact for both the property tax base and local businesses.

Recommendation

- **Conduct Employee Needs Survey.** Working in cooperation with Agrium, Monsanto and other employers, the community should survey and conduct focus groups with current employees who reside outside of the county. This information should provide insight into some of the community-based obstacles drawing workers away from Soda Springs.

Resources

- University of Idaho Extension, <http://www.extension.uidaho.edu/resources1.asp?title=COMMUNITY%20DEVELOPMENT&category1=Community%20Development&color=5171A4&font=325DA2>
- Idaho State University. College of Business, Karma Morrison, morrkarm@isu.edu, 208-282-3585.

Issue #2: Housing.

A lack of housing choice is believed to be one factor contributing to the high number of people working, but not living, in Soda Springs.

Recommendation

- **Conduct a Soda Springs/Caribou County Housing Summit.** Soda Springs should conduct a housing summit to explore options and strategies for bringing new housing into the community. The housing summit should bring together developers, local elected officials, financial institutions and other resource providers. Topics that should be considered include land use, infrastructure, and finance, to name a few.

Resources

- Idaho Housing and Finance Association, <http://www.ihfa.org/>, 208-331-4882.
- Idaho Association of Realtors, <http://www.idahorealtors.com/>, 208-342-3585 or 800-621-7553.
- Rural Community Assistance Corporation, <http://www.rcac.org/>, Angela Sisco, asisco@rcac.org, 208-855-2310.

Issue #3: Schools

The Soda Springs School District recently adopted a four day school week. Implemented as a cost containment strategy, the change to a four day school week is not without contention. Lower student test scores, child care issues, and increased delinquency have all been raised as concerns.

Recommendation

- **Promote the Strengths of the Local School District.** The visiting team lacked the expertise to assess the impact that a four day school week has on student performance. In talking to local residents there are many qualities in the local school system that may prove to be advantageous when compared to other school districts. Our recommendation is for the school district to develop a marketing piece highlighting the strengths of the local educational system. The brochure could then be used by local businesses and economic developers in their recruiting efforts.

Issue #4: Secondary Employment

Highly educated and skilled candidates for job openings at Agrium or Monsanto often have highly educated and skilled spouses who need rewarding employment opportunities of their own.

Recommendation

- **Promote Business Diversification.** See Business Diversification Sub-Area above.

Issue #5: Daycare

A lack of day care options is yet another factor that might be causing local employees to live elsewhere.

Recommendation

- **Conduct a Soda Springs/Caribou County Daycare Summit.** Similar to our recommendation for a housing summit, the community should conduct a child care summit to look at all of the child care issues affecting parents and the community. Topics for discussion should include after hours daycare, after school programming and recreation programs, permitting requirements for new day care centers, and the potential for a public-private partnership that would increase day care opportunities.

Resources

- Boys & Girls Club of Cache Valley, Preston Extension, 208-852-2050
- Idaho Department of Health and Welfare - Early Childhood Information Clearinghouse. <http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/portal/aliasRainbow/langen-US/tabID3444/DesktopDefault.aspx>, 208-547-4317.
- Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington. Model Day Care Ordinance: <http://www.mrsc.org/ords/daycrord.aspx>.

Issue #6: Health Care

It appears there is a public perception among those who do not live in Soda Springs that the community does not have necessary health care facilities and levels of care.

Recommendation

- **Promote Healthcare Services.** Similar to the recommendation for schools, Caribou Memorial Hospital and the community's other healthcare providers should pool their resources to develop a printed and on-line marketing piece promoting the health and assisted living services available in Soda Springs. Such marketing information could correct misconceptions that outsiders may have regarding the availability of health care in Soda Springs.

Economic Development Sub Area #4: Community Infrastructure

Visiting Team Observations

While existing city utility services are adequate to meet Soda Springs's current needs, city officials should be watchful of growth and federal requirements that could impact the provision of water and sewer services. While grants exist to help communities address infrastructure needs, funding for these programs is stagnant and will only partially cover the cost of major improvements. As such, communities need to be prepared to build reserve funds and levy fees sufficient enough to cover expenses.



Soda Springs bills its water and sewer on a user equivalent basis. While this method of billing saves administrative costs, it does little to encourage conservation and efficiency. Flat rate billing impacts seasonal businesses by assessing expenses at times when those businesses are not generating revenue. Metered systems promote fairness in that a four member household pays more, on a monthly basis, than a single person household. Finally, metered systems are better equipped to accommodate growth without costly capital improvements.

A number of residents expressed frustration with efforts to obtain broadband telecommunication services. It is unclear to the Visiting Team whether or not the issue is physical access or cost. Qwest does offer digital subscriber line or DSL high speed internet in Soda Springs but it is unclear whether or not the service is widely available or limited to select neighborhoods. Even if widely available, DSL may not be sufficient to meet the needs of telecommunication-dependent businesses. Soda Springs is blessed in that two separate broadband backbone network cables pass through the community, making the only barrier to affordable, competitive and redundant service hub or "last mile" technology.

Issue #1: Capital Budgeting

The City would do well to prepare itself to build reserve funding for infrastructure, particularly in the areas of water and wastewater.

Recommendation

- **Obtain an Infrastructure Management Audit.** The city should commission a comprehensive audit of its water and wastewater services. Such audits may be conducted at little or no cost by the Environmental Finance Information Center at Boise State University or by the Rural Community Assistance Corporation. Both organizations offer powerful software tools that inventory a system's fixtures and assets, calculates depreciation, analyzes cost and recommends rates sufficient enough to cover both operating and replacement costs.

Resources

- Environmental Finance Center, <http://efc.boisestate.edu/efc/>, 1910 University Drive, Boise, ID 83725, 208-426-1567.
- Rural Community Assistance Corporation, <http://www.rcac.org/doc.aspx?157>, Jim Phillips, jphillips@rcac.org, 208-855-2310.

Issue #2: Metering

Soda Springs bills its water and sewer on a user equivalent basis. While this method of billing saves administrative cost it does little to encourage conservation and efficiency. Metered systems promote fairness in that a four member household pays more, on a monthly basis, than a single person household.

Recommendation

- **Phase In Metered Billing.** Soda Springs should evolve from a flat rate to metered billed system. The City should require meters for all new construction and offer incentives for property owners to install water meters. The City could obtain grant funds to help defray the cost of meters and their installation. Eventually, the City should require that all water and wastewater customers are metered.

Resources

- Idaho Department of Commerce. <http://community.idaho.gov/>, Rodney Ashbey, Community Development Specialist, 208-334-2470, 700 W State Street, Boise ID 83720.
- USDA Rural Development. <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/2007funding.htm>, 725 Jensen Drive, Blackfoot, ID 83221, 208-785-2092.
- Idaho Department of Water Resources, <http://www.idwr.idaho.gov/waterboard/Financial%20program/financial.htm>, Stuart Van Greuning, 322 East Front Street, Boise, ID 83720, 208-287-4905.
- Idaho Department of Environmental Quality. http://www.deq.state.id.us/water/assist_business/pws/construction_loans.cfm.
- Pocatello Regional Office, Lynn Van Every, DEQ, 444 Hospital Way #300, Pocatello, ID 83201, 208-236-6160.

Note: Some housing programs can fund water meters for individual home owners.

Issue # 3: Broadband Telecommunications

To advance goals related to economic development, education, and overall quality of life, the City needs to assess broadband services, then identify and prioritize any needed improvements.

Recommendations

- **Publicize Available Broadband Services.** The city should have economic development or relocation information on its website listing local contact information and services available for all companies providing telecommunication services to Soda Springs.
- **Commission a Telecommunications Assessment.** With help from USDA Rural Development, the community could hire a consultant to assess the community's telecommunication needs, infrastructure and solutions.

Resources

- USDA Rural Development,
http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/wa/UTLbroadband_program.htm, 725 Jensen Drive,
Blackfoot, ID 83221, 208-785-2092.

Part IV Summary, Strategies, and Next Steps

The City of Soda Springs took an impressive step toward improving its long-term health and prosperity when it requested a Community Review in early 2007. Your next steps are crucial and will require community-based planning that engages all segments of your population.

Challenges and Strategies

The interrelated challenges we learned about in Soda Springs will continue over time. Without planning and leadership they could intensify and keep you in a stuck place that could force your young people to leave for employment, housing, and other opportunities. The challenges that stick out in the minds of the Visiting Team as well some thoughts about strategies to address them are summarized as follows.

Fear of Change, Growth, or Both

During our visit we heard about this fear from numerous citizens. Some said the City Council feared change. Others made more general comments like “people here don’t like change.” Either way, fear can become a reason to do nothing, to send mixed signals, or to avoid making important decisions. If you don’t want to make further quality of life investments because you are afraid they might attract growth and development, then consider making them for the current residents of Soda Springs. Make them so kids now in elementary school will want to come back when they have families of their own.

Need for Quantitative and Qualitative Information

We can think of two or three areas where clear information is needed in order to make more informed collaborative decisions. First, why do such a high percentage of workers at your largest industrial employers live outside of Soda Springs and in many cases live outside Caribou County? Secondly, how do builders, developers, and real estate professionals in the region view the potential for growth in Soda Springs and what are their perceptions about working with the City of Soda Springs? Third, your commercial area, including downtown, is the community’s living room. How do the people of Soda Springs want this “living room” to function and look? We heard plenty of opinions and anecdotes on all these questions. What we didn’t see was information that would help answer them thoroughly and confidently. Strategies for collecting this kind of information are contained in this report.

Lack of Consensus about (1) Downtown Revitalization and (2) Community & Aquatic Center

These are the two biggest areas of contention that we heard about. The community may find itself having a difficult time making progress on other issues and initiatives until any residual hard feelings and misunderstandings from past efforts are reconciled, all alternatives are fully considered, consensus is established in an inclusive way, and priorities identified.

In the experience of many facilitators, breaking through any impasse, healing past misunderstandings and reaching agreement on a path forward are often successful when the following prerequisites have been met:

The Situation Must Possess a Certain Ripeness

This often involves recognition that the status quo is not sustainable. Sustainability is typically thought of in environmental terms but it can also be thought of in terms of relationships between individuals and community organizations. These individuals and organizations must conclude that the status quo is no longer working. The risk of continuing business as usual must be seen as greater than the perceived risk of resolution.

Everybody Who Can Kill the Process is at the Table

If someone who should be at the table won't come, the process is pretty well hamstrung from the beginning. In other words, the situation has not yet reached the ripeness described above.

The Decision Makers Have Got to Be Willing to Ride Wherever the Process Goes

Decision makers do not have to unequivocally commit to following the recommendation(s) of the parties involved but they must be genuinely open to the outcome of the collaborative process, to let go of the process to let something happen.

Economic Dependence on 2-3 Major Employers

Soda Springs is fortunate to have two to three major industrial employers connected to mining and chemical manufacturing. The challenge is that the community is at risk should one or two of these employers shut down, leave the area, or lay off large numbers of people for any reason. Diversifying your economy, then, will make you more resilient to forces you can not control. It's also addresses a need to create employment opportunities for spouses of people who work for the industrial employers.

Protecting Your Small Town Character

This challenge is particularly important if and when Soda Springs starts to experience significant growth. As new people move into the community, how do we keep Soda Springs a place where people know, trust, care about, and help one another? We suggest that one way to do this is to make sure new residents understand how important this is to the community and are made to feel appreciated and welcome to contribute to this aspect of living in Soda Springs.



Need for Open, Honest Communication Between Leaders and Citizens

Misinformation, rumors, confusion and frustration will continue to hinder the community's progress absent efforts to ensure clear, complete information is provided to the people who need it, when they need it. Relying on citizens or business owners to come to their elected officials when they have a question or concern might work for people who have pre-existing relationships with the elected officials, but arguably not for others.

Improving communication with visitors and new residents is also an important aspect of this strategy. Simply providing quality customer service at local businesses and cultivating knowledgeable front-line employees goes a long way to improve relations and communication: a friendly smile, a warm welcome to a stranger, an offer to help, and the

knowledge to be able to do so. Signs directing visitors to information and attractions and services are also needed.

Inclusiveness

Many “outsiders” looking in see most rural Idaho communities as homogenous: they assume everyone looks the same, thinks the same, *is* the same. This is not the reality in Soda Springs or anywhere else in Idaho.

Soda Springs is home to a diversity of individuals: farmers, businesspeople, students, retirees; Mormon, Catholic, protestant, atheist; young, old, middle-aged; Caucasian, Hispanic, Native American; long-term residents and newcomers; those who look forward to growth and those who want to hold on to what Soda Springs “used to be.”

Like many communities, a few individuals end up doing much of the community work. This can lead to the “burn-out” of those volunteers, while also limiting the community vision to that of those few who are willing to do the work. The community should strive to include all members of the community in its efforts.

Enough people in Soda Springs commented on their experience of being part of a minority group (e.g. not part of the largest faith community) to convince us that this is a challenge that needs to be addressed. This process begins with creating opportunities for people of different groups (e.g. faiths) to talk about their experience of living in the community and to collaboratively develop ideas for improvements.

What Next?

Prioritize, Act, Evaluate, and Re-Focus if Necessary

The Idaho Community Review Program does not expect Soda Springs to follow through on every idea and suggestion all at once. To attempt to do so would be impossible. We suggest calling together the Home Team to go over this report together. Have the three focus areas read through their respective sections. The three focus area teams could then take turns sharing their recommendations as to next steps. This quick review process would lead to an immediate sense of direction and priority. Prioritize, act, evaluate and re-group if necessary. Make sure your objectives are timely, doable within your resources, and measurable. Remember that small, relatively easy successes lead to more success. Before committing to a course of action or when comparing one initiative to another, we recommend you consider the following questions:

- Have we done adequate planning for this initiative?
- How does this initiative fit into the big, long-term picture of where we want to go?
- How much will it cost? Can we afford it or otherwise obtain funding?
- What role can volunteers play? Where/how will we get volunteers?
- Who (e.g. an existing or needed community organization or government agency is responsible for the success of the initiative? Do they need anything before they are willing to take responsibility for this success?
- How long will it take to see the initiative through to completion?
- How quickly will we see the direct and indirect benefits?
- Who will benefit most? Who will see limited benefit?
- Does something else have to happen before we can complete the initiative?
- Do we have to complete the initiative before we can do something else?

- Are there external time frames we need to fit into (such as grant cycles)?



Continue Building Relationships and Partnerships

This Community Review has introduced you to individuals who can help you fund capital improvements, services, and cultural opportunities. Even if you knew these people before the Review, you no doubt understand them and their agency better. Use this new information wisely. Stay in touch with them. Make sure they know what you need and what you're working toward. Not only can they help

you with funding from their own agency or organization, they may also think of you when funding from a different source comes across their desk. Maybe we've all heard the clichéd because there might be some truth to it – 90% of life is about showing up.

Adopt Your New Comprehensive Plan

This report includes many recommendations and resources that could be incorporated into your draft comprehensive plan. It also contains specific recommendations regarding the yet-to-be completed implementation chapter. The July 2007 draft does a good job of describing your existing conditions and a decent job of identifying *what* you want to do, but is lacking detail about *how* and in some cases *why* you propose to accomplish various objectives. It also seems to be lacking the land use map required by the Idaho Local Land Use Planning Act.

Getting and Staying on Track

This report and other plans that could result from it are great tools. Once the “real” work begins, however, they can sometimes be relegated to some out of the way shelf to collect dust. Don't let this happen. Use plans as roadmaps. Refer to them when ever you're having difficulty choosing between two alternatives, whenever you sense an effort is starting to get off track, or if you're asking yourself “now why are we doing this again?” Perhaps this is the most important function of a plan – to establish the goal, the purpose a particular course of action is meant to achieve. A clearly stated goal or purpose shaped by a diversity of viewpoints will more often than not lead to the most appropriate, positive outcome. Continually compare your initiative(s) against your goals and objectives using the following criteria:

- Are we still working toward our goals and objectives?
- If not, do we need to refocus our energies or do we need to reconsider our goals?
- Are we using resources toward projects that don't lead us toward our goals and objectives?
- If so, how can we change that?
- Which objectives have we met?
- Is meeting our objectives getting us closer to our goals?
- Which objectives have we not met? Why?
- Do we need new or additional objectives to meet our goals?

Conclusions

Soda Springs is a city on the cusp. Opportunities abound. Use the recommendations and resources provided in this report. Expand upon them. Do not limit yourselves to these suggestions or resources, but always feel free to call upon any of your visiting team members for support.

People who related with each other with openness and integrity are capable of truly great things. Let each other know that these are the kind of people you are and intend to be from this point forward. Make this commitment to each other and hold each other accountable to this commitment. Your community needs you to be individuals and organizations who say what they mean and mean what they say.

We'll be back to check on your progress.

Good luck.



Appendices

- Appendix A: Visiting Team Biographies and Contact Information
- Appendix B: City of Soda Springs's Application to Idaho Community Review Program
- Appendix C: Pre-Review Questions Directed to Visiting Team from Home Team within Selected Focus Areas
- Appendix D: Pre-Review Publicity Published in Caribou County Sun, 8/16/07
- Appendix E: Soda Springs Survey Results
- Appendix F: Soda Springs Community Review Agenda

Appendix A

Visiting Team Biographies and Contact Information

Review Coordinators

Tom Putnam

Community Development Manager

Partners for Prosperity

(208) 785-0059 x 102 - Cell: (208) 251-2937

tomp@p4peid.org

625 West Pacific, Suite 1

Blackfoot, ID 83221



Tom has worked with Partners for Prosperity for the past four years, during which time he has been engaged in community development work and research at a grassroots level. His experience has been in researching and addressing the issues and indicators associated with poverty. His current job position requires community development work, especially organizing and developing viable working groups across Eastern Idaho. Tom then works with these regional groups to discuss and address the issues of poverty as it affects the region.

Dale Dixon

Executive Director

Idaho Rural Partnership

334-3131 - Cell: 272-0596

Dale.Dixon@irp.idaho.gov

821 W. State St.

Boise, ID 83702



Dale was named executive director of Idaho Rural Partnership in January, 2005. The organization joins diverse public and private resources in innovative collaborations to strengthen communities and improve life in rural Idaho.

Dale has 18-years of broadcast news and media communication experience working in radio and for CBS, ABC, & NBC-TV affiliates. Dale has traveled extensively covering a variety of stories ranging from humanitarian efforts in Romania to refueling B1 Bombers over Canada en-route to Bosnia. Dale is an Associated Press and Idaho Press Club award winner, was named an Idaho Business Review 2004 Accomplished Under 40 recipient and most recently named an Integrity Counts! honoree by the Better Business Bureau.

Jon Barrett

Owner

Clearstory Studios, LLC

343-1919 - 383-9687 - Cell:
clearstorystudios@cableone.net
2412 W. Bannock
Boise, ID 83702



Jon has been professionally involved in community planning, design, and development for 16 years as a city planner, consultant, and citizen advocate. He was the Co-Executive Director of Idaho Smart Growth from 1997-2006. In 2004 he was named Idaho Planner of the Year by the Idaho Planning Association. In 2007 he created Clearstory Studios to provide planning, design, and facilitation to Idaho communities. He graduated from Washington State University in 1986 with a degree in Landscape Architecture.

Steve Brown

Regional Director

U.S. Senator Larry Craig

236-6817 - Cell:
steve_brown@craig.senate.gov
275 South 5th, Room 290
Pocatello, ID 83201



Steven resides in Pocatello where he serves as the Regional Director for Senator Larry Craig. He has worked as the liaison between the Senator and his constituents, government officials at all levels, groups and organizations, business and industry. Steve also owns and operates a graphic design and marketing company which specializes in booklet and newsletter formats and production, direct mail, fundraising and political campaigns.

He currently serves as chairman of the Pocatello Development Authority, a board which stimulates and builds economic development in Pocatello. He is chairman of the Bannock County Republican Party, a member of the school board for the Academy Charter School and is a member of the Southeast Idaho Veterans Advisory Committee. Steve is currently being appointed to sit on the Board of Directors for the Bannock Development Corporation,

Economic Development Focus Area

Jerry Miller (*Team Lead*)

Economic Development Specialist

Idaho Commerce

334-2651 ext 2143 - Cell:

jerry.miller@community.idaho.gov

P. O. Box 83720

Boise, ID 83720



Jerry works for the Idaho Department of Commerce. He is editor of “Show Me The Money” a weekly statewide bulletin highlighting funding opportunities for rural communities and non-profit organizations. Additionally, he provides project development technical assistance to rural communities. Prior to his current assignment he spent four years managing Idaho Community Development Block Grant projects. He has a B.A. in Political Science and History and a M.A. in Urban and Regional Planning, from the University of Iowa.

Eric Traynor

Brownfields Program Specialist

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

373-0565 - Cell:

Eric.Traynor@deq.idaho.gov

1410 N. Hilton

Boise, ID 83706



Eric has worked for the IDEQ for 10 years. He has over 8 years of experience in environmental site assessments and performing environmental cleanups. He currently works in the Brownfields program which is designed to offer communities assistance with redeveloping blighted properties. IDEQ has funding mechanisms available to communities to help with blighted properties and addressing any real or perceived environmental concerns.

Gynii Gilliam
Executive Director
Bannock Development Corporation
gynii@custertel.net
1651 Alvin Ricken Drive
Pocatello, ID 83201



Ms. Gilliam is the Executive Director of Bannock Development Corporation (BDC). Her primary responsibilities are to help create jobs and diversify the economy in the greater Pocatello and Bannock County, Idaho areas through business recruitment, retention, and expansion programs. Gynii holds a Masters Degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and a Bachelors Degree in Political Science from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Since joining BDC in June of 2006, she has shifted local economic development efforts towards a 'team approach,' establishing a much stronger partnership with the City, County, Idaho State University (ISU), Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), neighboring rural communities, the region, and the state. Gynii and her husband Tony have been residents of Idaho for over 25 years, and are the proud parents of two sons,

Marlin Eldred
Economic Development Director
City of Jerome
208-324-8189 - Cell: 208-308-3194
meldred@CI.JEROME.ID.US
152 East Avenue A
Jerome, ID 83338



Marlin has been working in economic development for over five years of which three have been in Idaho. He is a Certified Community Developer through the NW Community Development Institute. He has completed a downtown business survey and is currently working on a SWOT analysis for the City of Jerome. Marlin is also the Gem team chairman focusing our efforts on the downtown area.

Julie Oxarango-Ingram

Executive Director

Hailey Chamber of Commerce

208-788-3484 - Cell: 208-309-3090

julieingram@cableone.net

210 West C Street

Shoshone, ID 83352



Julie was raised on Oxarango Sheep ranch which wintered in Rupert, ID and summered in Soda Springs and surrounding mountains. She's been married for 19 years to Mark Ingram (also raised on a farm in Rupert) who is currently the Lincoln County Magistrate Judge and the regional Juvenile Judge in Lincoln, Gooding, Jerome, Twin Falls, Camas and Blaine Counties. They have two children who are both starting their senior year at The Community School in Ketchum.

Tim Solomon

Executive Director

Regional Development Alliance

208-528-9400 - Cell: 208-709-6367

tim@rdaidaho.org

2300 North Yellowstone

Idaho Falls, ID 83401



Tim has served for the last 10 years as the executive director of the Regional Development Alliance, Inc., a regional business finance corporation in eastern Idaho near the Idaho National Laboratory (INL). He has spent the last 17 years guiding communities through the maze of economic growth and business development. He has worked in both the public and private sector.

Tim received both his Bachelors and Masters degrees from Utah State University in Logan, Utah. He is also a graduate of the University of Oklahoma's Economic Development Institute. He has received various awards and honors and has served in many professional organizations over the years. Tim and his wife Beverly live happily with their five children in the sleepy little town of Ucon, Idaho.

Brian Buch

Business Program Specialist

USDA, Rural Development

208-785-5840 ext. 118 - Cell:

brian.buch@id.usda.gov

725 Jensen Grove Drive, Suite 1

Blackfoot, ID 83221



Brian has had the opportunity to be a business program specialist for USDA, Rural Development (RD)for the past three years. RD Business Programs focuses on economic development and job creation in our rural areas. I have administered our programs to enable rural communities throughout the State of Idaho enhance their economic situation.

Brian appreciate the opportunity to participate in a community review, especially a community that is in my service area.

Community Design & Identity Focus Area

Erik Kingston *(Team Lead)*

Housing Resources Coordinator

Idaho Housing and Finance Association

331-4706 - Cell:

ErikK@IHFA.ORG

P.O. Box 7899

Boise, ID 83707



IHFA provides funding for affordable housing in Idaho communities. Erik created and manages IHFA's Housing Hotline and the Housing Information and Referral Center. He has coordinated statewide strategic planning and reporting efforts for housing and community development throughout the State of Idaho since 1999. Erik is a board member of the Idaho Task Force on the Americans with Disabilities Act and Idaho Families with Children from Asia, and was formerly employed by Boise Public Works. Originally from Utah, he previously served as Executive Director of Salt Lake City's Wasatch Community Gardens, with the Utah Arts Council Performing Arts Tour and Folk Arts Program, and the Canyonlands Natural History Association. Erik's diverse background includes driving thirsty cattle through dry country and working in a Central Idaho hardrock mine.

Paula Jones

RC&D Coordinator

NRCS - Three Rivers RC&D

208.237.4628 ex. 104 Cell:

paula.jones@id.usda.gov

1551 Baldy Street, Suite 2

Pocatello, ID 83201-7117



As a RC&D Coordinator, Paula works closely with rural communities on many community/economic projects and natural resource concerns. She has been a coordinator in Idaho for 15 years facilitating project planning processes with the communities that include many of the NGO, local, state and federal governments/agencies that provide technical and financial support to the communities.

Melodie Halstead

Zoning Administrator

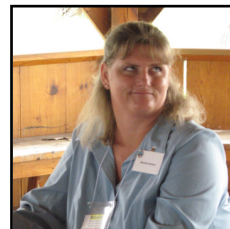
Bingham County

(208) 782-3181 - Cell:

mhalstead@co.bingham.id.us

310 N. 1100 W.

Blackfoot, ID 83221



Melodie has 13 years experience with City Government and 2 years with County Government. During this time she has gained extensive knowledge of Idaho Code, zoning and subdivision applications and processes, conducting meetings, zoning ordinances, budgets, and collaborating with other governmental agencies.

Melodie was responsible for the Tree City USA program in Kuna for 12 years. She was also the project manager for the Kuna Skatepark, which included fundraising and construction management.

Jan Blickenstaff
Grant Administrator
**City of Idaho Falls - Division of
Planning and Building**
(208) 612-8323 - Cell:
jblickenstaff@ci.idaho-falls.id.us
PO Box 50220
Idaho Falls, ID 83405



Mr. Jan Blickenstaff has over 30 years experience in rural community planning and development. He has served Idaho and Montana communities as city-county planning director, regional planner, CDBG manager, and division administrator for rural and community development. He is currently the Idaho Falls CDBG manager. Soda Springs is his third Community Review.

Civic Life & Community Involvement

Zella Johnson (*Team Lead*)
Former City Councilmember
City of Kuna
871-0696 - Cell:
zelttext@msn.com



When Zella and her husband moved to the Kuna community in 1993, they became immediately involved and served on several committees. Over the years she has further participated in several levels of community decision making, giving her extensive experience in several areas.

As a former City Councilmember and having to balance a city that had a growth rate that was 1st in the State of Idaho and 3rd in the nation for a period of time, was very challenging and educational. We had to enforce a building moratorium to bring back balance to an aging sewer system. We worked head on with a city that had growth and political issues that were very difficult at times to resolve. Most of these were completed with much needed communication. We had recreation needs that was a priority to the citizens. We started a process for a Boys and Girls club that it is just about completed.

As director of the Kuna Juvenile Justice Council and a School Board Director for Falcon Ridge Public Charter School, Zella has helped promote many opportunities that help our youth become quality citizens and our future leaders. Zella has become a certified Community Developer through the NW Community Development Institute and was a Home Team member for the community review in Kuna in 2004.

Dick Gardner

President

**Bootstrap Solutions & RUPRI Center
for Rural Entrepreneurs**

859-8878 - Cell:

bootstrap1@msn.com

752 E. Braemere Road

Boise, ID 83702



Dick is the principal consultant at Bootstrap Solutions, a firm specializing in rural development, economics, strategic planning, and group facilitation. Dr. Gardner spent ten years as executive director of the Idaho Rural Partnership. For the prior nine years, Dick was a policy economist in the Idaho Division of Financial Management, working on agricultural, natural resource, rural development, and tax issues. Gardner is widely published and has participated in over 300 workshops on rural development. He has facilitated the creation and delivery of numerous rural programs and projects. Dr. Gardner received USDA's top achievement, the Honor Award for Public Service, in 2000 for his work with IRP. Dick was given the Ron Shaffer Award for Collaborative Leadership by the National Rural Development Partnership in 2001.

With degrees in resource economics from Colorado State, Minnesota, and Michigan State, Dr. Gardner has more education than is normally good for a person.

Polly Hulsey

City Administrator / Clerk

City of Kimberly

208-423-4151 - Cell:

phulsey@cityofkimberly.org

P.O. Box Z 132 Main North

Kimberly, ID 83341



Polly is the City Administrator for the City of Kimberly. In addition to her role as City Administrator, she also fulfills the roles of: City Clerk, Finance Officer, Benefits Coordinator, Human Resource Director and Economic Development Officer. Her prior background included over sixteen years in banking, in addition to managing an accounting firm. She earned her Master's Degree in Business Management Organizational Leadership from George Fox University in 2003. In addition, she has also graduated from the Caldwell Chamber of Commerce Leadership Program, as well as the Boise Chamber of Commerce Leadership Program. In July she completed her first year at Northwest Community Development Institute (NWCDI). Polly has been instrumental in contributing her time and efforts through holding various offices in numerous Community Service Organizations throughout Jerome, Caldwell, Mountain Home, Boise and most recently in Kimberly.

Appendix B

City of Soda Springs's Application to Idaho Community Review Program

Community Review Application of Soda Springs

About Soda Springs

	City of Soda Springs (see attached map)
	Tausha Vorwalter, Soda Springs City Clerk
	9 West 2 nd South Soda Springs, Idaho 83276
	Voice – (208) 547-2600 Fax – (208) 547-2601 E-mail – taushav@sodaspringsid.com

Names/phone numbers/Email addresses of the three Focus Area Team Leaders:

	Trent Clark, (208) 547-4035, tclark@sodasprings.com
	Cris James, (208) 547-1930, crcjames@gmail.com
	Lawrence Rigby, (208) 547-4428, lrigby@idocentral.com
	Tony Varilone, (208) 547-4722, tvarilone@sodasprings.com

Focus areas for this Community Review

- Local Economic Development
- Community Design & Identity
- Civic Life and Community Involvement (including history and heritage elements)

In the focus areas identified, what specific issues does your community want to address?

Local Economic Development	<p>We would be interested in finding information on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How to retain and strengthen our current anchor industries? b. How to grow and recruit supporting light manufacturing? c. How to expand and retain the existing local retail business to meet local needs? d. How to build compatible recreation and tourism businesses? e. How to capitalize on Soda Springs positioning within a transportation corridor?
Community Design & Identity	<p>We would appreciate answers to these questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How can we lessen unintended barriers to economic development in plans and zones? b. How do we accomplish sophisticated county and city planning and zoning work using only volunteer committee members back by limited professional resources?

Community Design & Identity (continued)	c. How can we build critical mass around a common community identity and design?
Civic Life and Community Involvement	How can we: a. Increase active citizen participation, etc. b. Reduce or eliminate the perceived barriers between social, religious groups? c. Foster community identity for developing projects?

What is the best possible outcome resulting from a community review in your town?

Soda Springs will become sufficiently attractive, both from aesthetic and economic standpoints, that a sustainable population growth will enable the community to support essential services, a diversity of arts and culture, and world-class educational opportunities.

What strategic planning, business development, enhancement, revitalization, clean-up, contracted or consulting efforts have occurred in your community in the last one to three years? (attach additional sheets, documentation, brochures, or report summaries as necessary)

- Partners for Prosperity Asset Map
- The City of Soda Spring Comprehensive Plan is undergoing revision. Several aspects of the plan are being updated and have been the topics of city council discussions over the past year. Two public hearings will be held in the coming months. The updated plan is targeted for completion by July of 2007.
- A Community Beautification Project is planned for early May, 2007. The project will include a week of intensive road, street and yard trash pick-up and removal. Excess dumpsters and accelerated dumpster removal will be made available during that time. Indoor trash removal will also be emphasized, including a hazardous waste disposal promotion.
- A new ordinance on junk has been developed.
- Soda Springs is a member of Tree City, USA, and regularly participates in the National Arbor Day Celebration. The City's Recreation Department has a "Tree Committee" responsible for promoting tree planting on both public spaces and in private yards. A new program of memorial trees and park benches is currently being developed.
- Soda Springs is a Heritage City under the Heritage City program of the Idaho Association of Cities and the Idaho Historical Society.
- The City of Soda Springs maintains contracts with consulting engineering and planning firms as follows:
 - o Forsgren and Associates – for preparation of the city facilities plan; and

- o Keller and Associates – for conduct of the city comprehensive plan and upgrading of the city's waste water treatment plant.

What other projects has your community completed in the last one to three years? (ATTACH additional sheets or information as necessary)

- Opening and successful kick-off of a new Soda Springs Community Teen Center.
- Erection of a new "Tally-Hoe" horse-drawn bus exhibit building in Corrigan Park.
- Updated the signage at the Corrigan Park informational kiosk.
- Expansion and modernization of Soda Springs Shooting Range.
- Addition of new trails to the Kelly Park Nordic Ski system.
- Expanded the City Roller Skate Park.
- Updated and beautified City entrance signage.
- Installed new restrooms at Octagon Park.
- Asphalted parking area of City airport.

Has your community completed and implemented a Gem Plan? If so, please describe to what extent and attach a copy of the Gem Plan to this application.

The Gem plan for Soda Springs is currently outdated. We anticipate incorporating an update to our Gem Plan as part of the community review.

What possible dates do you propose for a community review?

2nd or third week of June.

Mayor's Signature: Karl Utterstrom Date: 3-26-07

Please complete this application and return to:
Idaho Rural Partnership
821 West State Street, Boise, Idaho 83702 -- (208) 334-3131

Appendix C

Pre-Review Questions Directed to Visiting Team from Home Team within Selected Focus Areas

Economic Development

1. How to retain and strengthen our current anchor industries?
2. How to grow and recruit supporting light manufacturing?
3. How to expand and retain the existing local retail business to meet local needs?
4. How to build compatible recreation and tourism businesses?
5. How to capitalize on Soda Springs positioning within a transportation corridor?

Community Design & Identity

1. How can we lessen unintended barriers to economic development in plans and zones?
2. How do we accomplish sophisticated county and city planning and zoning work using only volunteer committee members backed by limited professional resources?
3. How can we build critical mass around a common community identity and design?

Civic Life and Community Involvement

1. Increase active citizen participation, etc.
2. Reduce or eliminate the perceived barriers between social, religious groups?
3. Foster community identity for developing projects?

Appendix D

Pre-Review Publicity Published in Caribou County Sun
8/16/07

8 Caribou County Sun, Soda Springs, Idaho

Thursday, August 16, 2007

SODA SPRINGS:



ARE YOU READY FOR CHANGE?

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY REVIEW?

If a community were a person, a "Community Review" would be a very thorough physical exam by an MD-ND general practitioner. Cities and towns that undergo the Idaho Community Review process by themselves reap the benefits of a professional investigation and critique of what is working well...and what is not. The Review is composed of a Review Committee (including a representative of local residents and a Visiting Team (qualified from knowledgeable leaders in federal, state and national government, as well as community-minded foundations and non-profit organizations). An anonymous amount of funds goes into every review, so only 2-3% communities in Idaho can be reviewed in any given year. With 100% citizen participation in Idaho, that means having your community reviewed may be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Challenges of the Idaho Community Review have called it an "inspiring, enlightening, enlightening, enlightening experience" for the entire community.

When the City of Soda Springs first applied for a Community Review, it was required to list its top three areas of interest. The Review and Visiting Teams will be directed to committees working in each of these three areas:

1. **Economic Development** - How can we attract and strengthen our current and/or future industries? How do we grow and recruit state light manufacturing? How can local retail business expand to meet local needs? Can we develop competitive recreation and tourism businesses? How can Soda Springs capitalize on its position with a key transportation corridor? Team: Lander Trust Club.
2. **Community Heritage & Identity** - How can we leverage established heritage to economic development in place and around? How do we ensure that plans are based on the broadest possible interest of varied level of community are with us from? Team: Lander - Lawrence High and City-James.
3. **Child Care & Community Involvement** - How can we increase active citizen participation in community projects and decisions? How do we connect economic, religious, or social leaders to analyzing our community that could be reduced or eliminated? How do we build "vertical issues" in the community around key projects? Team: Lander - Lucy Wallace and Doug Post.

What Can You Do?

- Citizens are encouraged to volunteer for a team.
- Participate in the community meetings either Wednesday night, Aug. 22 (to talk to the Review Team), or Thursday night, Aug. 23 (to talk to the Review Team's recommendations).

For more information about the Idaho Community Review or to volunteer, call City Hall at 543-2600, or you can go to Idaho Rural Partnership website: www.idruralpartnership.com and select "Community Review" from the left-hand menu.

Schedule

Day 1 - Friday, August 21 - Orientation & Community Review Session

4:00 pm. Visiting Team Orientation - Introduction - to Soda Springs, Idaho Springs
6:00 pm. Visiting Team/Review Team meet and greet (introductions, dinner and activities planned by Soda Springs)

Day 2 - Saturday, August 22 - Community Review Team

7:00 a.m. Meet for working breakfast with living team, presentation on Advanced Soda Springs
8:00 a.m. Visiting and Review Team shared activities
• Site visit to businesses, interaction with community and youth, visiting town's "walk tour" of historic
12:00 pm. All teams meet for lunch
1:00 pm. Team activities
4:00 pm. Break
5:00 pm. All teams meet for dinner
7:00 pm. Community meeting and hearing session (hosted by Idaho Rural Partnership at Upper Middle School, 200 East 2nd Street, Soda Springs)
















- Meet, Share, Communicate, and Collaborate together. The State of the City, State of the County, and State of the District address.
- Visiting Team positioned throughout town to introduce citizens and gather information with emphasis on the following team questions:
 - What are the major strengths and needs of your community?
 - What are the major professional challenges in your community?
 - What projects would you like to see accomplished in your community in the next 1, 3, 5, 10 and 20 years?


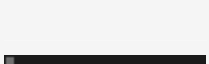
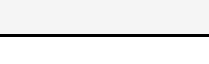
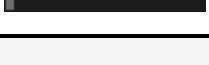


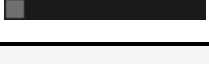

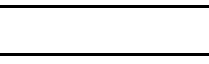

Day 3 - Thursday, August 23 - Visiting Team Focus Area Work Session




7:30 am. Breakfast for Visiting Team
8:30 am. Visiting Team/Review team members to prepare recommendations, recommendations and approval documents by evening community meeting
• Do final presentation (highlight)
• Focus group discussion to identify key recommendations
8:00 am. Dinner - Visiting and Review Team
7:00 pm. Community meeting/Visiting Team presentation, discussion and approval session, 1803 Highway 24, Soda Springs. (open to public parking)

Appendix E









Soda Springs Survey Results

<u>1. Gender</u>				
Female		65%	58	votes
Male		32%	29	votes
No Responses		2%	2	votes
			89	votes
<u>2. English as first language</u>				
Form Response				
Yes		100%	89	votes
			89	votes
<u>3. Number of persons in household</u>				
2		47%	42	votes
3-5		30%	27	votes
1		11%	10	votes
5 to 7		7%	7	votes
more than 7		3%	3	votes
			89	votes
<u>4. Age</u>				
20-39		31%	28	votes
40-59		26%	24	votes
69 and older		22%	20	votes
60-69		13%	12	votes
19 and under		3%	3	votes
No Responses		2%	2	votes
			89	votes

5. Ethnicity				
White non-Hispanic		87%	78	votes
Hispanic Latino-Latina		5%	5	votes
No Responses		5%	5	votes
Native American Indian Alaska Native		1%	1	votes
			89	votes
Comments:				
<p>Hispanic Latino-Latina Polynesian white also No Responses white white White non-Hispanic white white</p>				
6. Years lived in Community				
10 years or more		67%	60	votes
2-4 years		11%	10	votes
23 months or less		10%	9	votes
5-9 years		10%	9	votes
No Responses		1%	1	votes
			89	votes
7. Do you live in Soda Springs?				
Yes		100%	89	votes
			89	votes

8. Do you work in Soda Springs?				
Yes		59%	53	votes
No (if No, where?)		31%	28	votes
No Responses		8%	8	votes
			89	votes

Comments:
 Retired (15 responses)
 disabled (2 responses)
 Grace (2 responses)
 No work
 Rock Springs, Wyoming
 We own our own long-haul trucking company

9. Current Occupation				
Retired		30%	27	votes
Trades		19%	17	votes
Other		17%	16	votes
Service		15%	14	votes
Civil Service		5%	5	votes
No Responses		5%	5	votes
Professional		3%	3	votes
Student		2%	2	votes
			89	votes










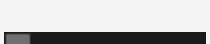

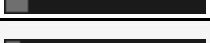

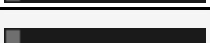

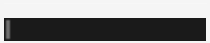

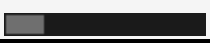



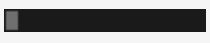

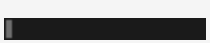
Comments:
 homemaker (3 responses)
 disability (2 responses)
 farmer (2 responses)
 correspondent
 daycare
 fish hatchery
 miner
 professional truck driver
 risk/safety administrator
 security officer
 technical
 Federal government
 volunteer tourism projects






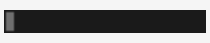

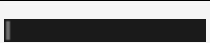

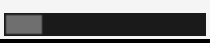

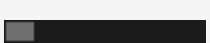
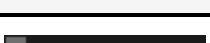
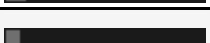

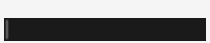

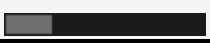





maverik
student
unemployed


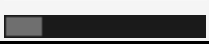





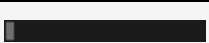
10. Condition of city streets and roads				
5		35%	32	votes
4		21%	19	votes
3		14%	13	votes
6		14%	13	votes
2		5%	5	votes
7 - Very good		5%	5	votes
1-very poor		2%	2	votes
			89	votes






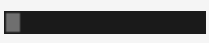


11. Access to airport				
7		29%	26	votes
6		19%	17	votes
No Responses		13%	12	votes
5		12%	11	votes
3		10%	9	votes
4		6%	6	votes
1		4%	4	votes
2		4%	4	votes
			89	votes


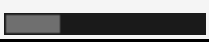



12. Traffic conditions				
6		41%	37	votes
5		24%	22	votes
7		19%	17	votes
3		5%	5	votes
4		5%	5	votes
No Responses		2%	2	votes
2		1%	1	votes
			89	votes

13. Parking Downtown				
6		28%	25	votes
5		24%	22	votes
4		17%	16	votes
7		17%	16	votes
2		4%	4	votes
3		4%	4	votes
1		1%	1	votes
No Responses		1%	1	votes
			89	votes
14. Availability and/or Access to Public Transit				
1		37%	33	votes
No Responses		13%	12	votes
2		12%	11	votes
3		8%	8	votes
4		8%	8	votes
6		8%	8	votes
7		6%	6	votes
5		3%	3	votes
			89	votes
15. Bicycle lanes and pedestrian crosswalks				
5		23%	21	votes
4		20%	18	votes
6		19%	17	votes
3		10%	9	votes
7		8%	8	votes
No Responses		7%	7	votes
1		5%	5	votes
2		4%	4	votes
			89	votes




16. Police protection				
6		26%	24	votes
7 Very good		21%	19	votes
5		17%	16	votes
4		13%	12	votes
2		6%	6	votes
No Responses		5%	5	votes
1 very poor		4%	4	votes
3		3%	3	votes
			89	votes
17. Crime prevention programs				
4		19%	17	votes
6		19%	17	votes
5		17%	16	votes
No Responses		15%	14	votes
7		11%	10	votes
3		8%	8	votes
2		5%	5	votes
1		2%	2	votes
			89	votes
< >				
18. Quality of City Library				
7 Very good		40%	36	votes
6		24%	22	votes
5		19%	17	votes
4		7%	7	votes
No Responses		3%	3	votes
2		2%	2	votes
3		2%	2	votes
			89	votes

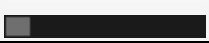

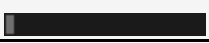


19. Local Arts and Cultural Opportunities				
5		21%	19	votes
4		19%	17	votes
3		12%	11	votes
6		12%	11	votes
No Responses		11%	10	votes
2		8%	8	votes
7		8%	8	votes
1		5%	5	votes
			89	votes

20. Condition of School Buildings				
5		25%	23	votes
4		19%	17	votes
6		15%	14	votes
7		12%	11	votes
2		10%	9	votes
No Responses		8%	8	votes
3		6%	6	votes
1		1%	1	votes
			89	votes


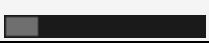

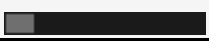



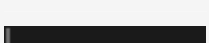
21. Community Parks and Playgrounds				
6		29%	26	votes
5		28%	25	votes
7 Very good		25%	23	votes
3		11%	10	votes
4		5%	5	votes
			89	votes

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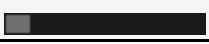




22. Recreation for Children 12 and under				
6		25%	23	votes
4		20%	18	votes
7		16%	15	votes

5		13%	12	votes
3		10%	9	votes
2		5%	5	votes
No Responses		4%	4	votes
1		3%	3	votes
			89	votes


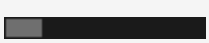

23. Recreation Opportunities for Youth and Adults

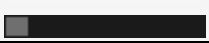

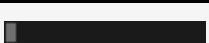


6		19%	17	votes
5		17%	16	votes
4		16%	15	votes
3		15%	14	votes
2		10%	9	votes
7		8%	8	votes
1		7%	7	votes
No Responses		3%	3	votes
			89	votes

24. Responsiveness of Local Government









4		24%	22	votes
5		21%	19	votes
6		14%	13	votes
3		13%	12	votes
No Responses		8%	8	votes
2		6%	6	votes
1 Very poor		5%	5	votes
7 Very good		4%	4	votes
			89	votes

25. Cooperation Among Local Government and Civic Groups








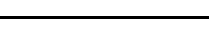
5		24%	22	votes
4		19%	17	votes
6		17%	16	votes

3		12%	11	votes
No Responses		12%	11	votes
2		6%	6	votes
7		4%	4	votes
1		2%	2	votes
			89	votes




26. Community Involvement in Decision Making

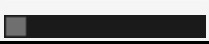

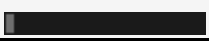


5		23%	21	votes
3		21%	19	votes
4		21%	19	votes
2		8%	8	votes
No Responses		8%	8	votes
1		6%	6	votes
6		4%	4	votes
7		4%	4	votes
			89	votes

27. Effective Community Leadership


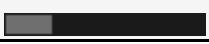





4		24%	22	votes
5		19%	17	votes
6		15%	14	votes
3		13%	12	votes
No Responses		8%	8	votes
7		6%	6	votes
1		5%	5	votes
2		5%	5	votes
			89	votes

28. Appearance of Downtown


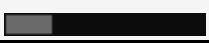





6		28%	25	votes
4		22%	20	votes
5		21%	19	votes

7 Very good		11%	10	votes
3		8%	8	votes
2		5%	5	votes
1 Very poor		1%	1	votes
No Responses		1%	1	votes
			89	votes


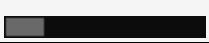



29. Appearance of Public Buildings

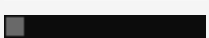

6		31%	28	votes
4		24%	22	votes
5		22%	20	votes
7		10%	9	votes
3		7%	7	votes
2		2%	2	votes
No Responses		1%	1	votes
			89	votes

30. Appearance of Neighborhoods




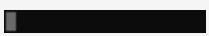



5		35%	32	votes
4		24%	22	votes
6		22%	20	votes
7		7%	7	votes
2		3%	3	votes
3		3%	3	votes
No Responses		2%	2	votes
			89	votes

31. Appearance of Entryways into the Community






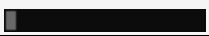

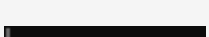
5		23%	21	votes
4		20%	18	votes
1		19%	17	votes
6		11%	10	votes
2		10%	9	votes

3		10%	9	votes
7		5%	5	votes
			89	votes


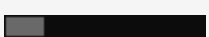



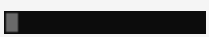


32. Friendliness of Residents




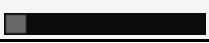

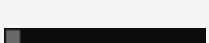



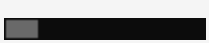

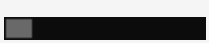

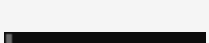



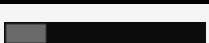



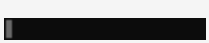


6		31%	28	votes
7 Very good		30%	27	votes
5		20%	18	votes
3		6%	6	votes
4		5%	5	votes
1 Very poor		4%	4	votes
2		1%	1	votes
			89	votes










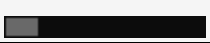







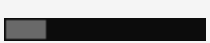





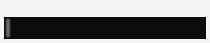
33. Progressive Community Spirit






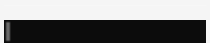
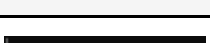


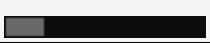






6		29%	26	votes
4		19%	17	votes
5		19%	17	votes
7		11%	10	votes
3		7%	7	votes
2		6%	6	votes
1		3%	3	votes
No Responses		3%	3	votes
			89	votes

34. Welcome Given to Newcomers

5		26%	24	votes
4		20%	18	votes
6		12%	11	votes
3		8%	8	votes
7		8%	8	votes
1		7%	7	votes
No Responses		7%	7	votes
2		6%	6	votes

			89	votes
< >				
35. Acceptance of Minorities				
5		29%	26	votes
4		14%	13	votes
6		13%	12	votes
7		11%	10	votes
2		10%	9	votes
No Responses		8%	8	votes
1		6%	6	votes
3		5%	5	votes
			89	votes
36. Involvement of Churches in Community				
6		39%	35	votes
7		17%	16	votes
4		14%	13	votes
5		14%	13	votes
3		4%	4	votes
No Responses		4%	4	votes
1		3%	3	votes
2		1%	1	votes
			89	votes
37. Availability of Local Jobs				
4		26%	24	votes
5		21%	19	votes
3		16%	15	votes
2		14%	13	votes
1 Very poor		10%	9	votes
6		4%	4	votes
7 Very good		3%	3	votes
No Responses		2%	2	votes

			89	votes
38. Quality of Available Local Jobs				
4		23%	21	votes
5		16%	15	votes
2		14%	13	votes
6		13%	12	votes
1		12%	11	votes
3		12%	11	votes
No Responses		4%	4	votes
7		2%	2	votes
			89	votes
39. Diversity of Local economy				
4		26%	24	votes
3		17%	16	votes
2		14%	13	votes
5		14%	13	votes
No Responses		8%	8	votes
6		7%	7	votes
1		6%	6	votes
7		2%	2	votes
			89	votes
40. Business Involvement with Community				
6		26%	24	votes
5		21%	19	votes
4		14%	13	votes
7		14%	13	votes
3		8%	8	votes
2		5%	5	votes
1		4%	4	votes
No Responses		3%	3	votes

			89	votes
41. Overall Community Quality				
5		43%	39	votes
6		17%	16	votes
4		13%	12	votes
7 Very good		10%	9	votes
3		7%	7	votes
No Responses		3%	3	votes
2		2%	2	votes
1 Very poor		1%	1	votes
			89	votes
42. City staff response to challenges in Soda Springs				
5		34%	31	votes
4		20%	18	votes
3		8%	8	votes
6		8%	8	votes
No Responses		7%	7	votes
2		6%	6	votes
7		6%	6	votes
1		5%	5	votes
			89	votes
43. What are the strengths and assets that make the City of Soda Springs a special place work, live, play and raise a family?				
1 pay scale of some jobs: i.e. Monsanto, Agrium, Washington, Degerstrom				
2 low housing costs, taxes, utilities				
3 fairly good school system				
4 small town flavor-safe (most of the time)				
5 great hospital & satellite medical services				
4th of Jule and Christmas celebrations are excellently done				
accessibility to recreation, small town atmosphere friendly neighborhood				
alot of good people school doesn't work well with the community and we are not progressive enough in the city				

clean and cooperative community leaders. overall good appearance and atmosphere
everyone knows everybody. if your kids are in trouble they will let you know
friendly loving people willing to go the extra mile
friendly loving people willing to go the extra mile
friendly people, rural atmosphere, good schools, show respect to senior citizens. good hospitals and physicians.
good law enforcement, low crime
good people good location
good quality of people
good school system, we have good outdoor oppurtunities, good hospital
great place to raise children
great schools, parks, churches. beautiful surroundings, clean air, water.
i feel very comfortable here. if i want big city i can go to Poky, IF or SLC and then return HOME. Thank you for letting me participate.
i just moved here so i don't know much about the area
i like a small town and once you are accepted into the community the people are great
i like raising mt children here because if they're up to no good i find out and can deal w/ it.
i like that we are a smaller town, that there is no gang violence and people are friendly. But i do think there needs to be a improvement for children and teenage fun
i think that the schools & parks are wonderful. it's great that there is pride taken in this area
it feels safe here we're glad to live in soda
it is a friendly quiet town. on the whole most keep attractive yards. the work places are good to work for.
it is better here than were I was, especially no traffic, I have no idea how it could be improved otherwise
it is nice to live in a small town, there is an atmosphere of friendliness here. it is beautiful town and generally pleasing to look at.
it is small enough to feel fairly secure for children and grownups. you do not need to keep that close of an eye on your children
it's a close knit community
it's a nice quiet town
it's a safe enviroment-low crime; annual community events are great (4th, truck or treat etc.)
it's a small town, family oriented, everyone helps everyone. we get involved with everything
it's a smaller community. that has excellent law enforcement. they do have some great programs in the schools for kids
it's beautiful and i don't know about now but it was very good to raise a family and you felt safe and peaceful
it's small so not alot of problems. everyone knows each other.

its a nice place to live I have lived here for 47 years. we like it here
low crime is a postive, good recreation/activities for children
most people are very friendly and helpful
natural enviroment. good recreational facilities, plants, mines contribute. good library collection/periodicals
NONE!
open space accessf to outdoor activities, good people, low crime, friendly people, small town atmosphere
people
people are friendly and they help alot but they need more stuff for kids to do and to help with problems
people are very friendly, go out of their way toserve. wonderful city sports programs for children
quiet neighborhoods-not alot of traffic-resevoirs close by
quiet town, friendly
rural life/outdoor living
safe friendly beautiful surrounding but entry to city is appalling
small community
small community
small community, not as much crime as biger cities
small tight community
small town atmosphere
small town life
small town, good people. good baseball,softball leagues.
soda has a good location for hunting and fishing and other activities-fair community to raise family and low crime rate
soda is a great community with wonderful people. its small and people can work together comfortably. some people are really trying to make things better.
soda springs is a great location people are for the most part nice
soda springs is a nice place, the residents are good people. Always willing to help out in times of need.
soda springs is a wonderful place to raise children. there are many activities available to kids, with low cost. parks & rec, dance classes, kids movies & schools are great
the friendliness and access
the people are so friendly. everyone is positive.
the people are the strengths of the city. parks and rec do a wonderful job, the churches are a huge asset

the people here are very friendly and helpful. the city seems pretty safe for kids and there are lots of sports
the relative low crime rate, tight neighborhoods-will help each other
the small town "everyone knows everyone" climate makes for close knit loving communities
the variety of recreation, churches, sports, good hospital, court house, police department, schools. most yards are nice and homes also. the ? and businesses are so helpful to the community.
the winter carnival is wonderful. we love the activities for families, and sports for our children. prople here are wonderful to with, for, and around
There is an overall safe feeling for those of us with children and everyone almost knows everyone else. plus its not overly populated or crowded.
this city provides many activities that are family oriented, it is safe and has the basics available
very good local community, good mix of educated, professionals and farmers
warm family oriented, good business section, clean business area
we are very united and willing to help others no matter the religion or race
we like the small town and are excited to rise our family here, we like our neighbors
we like the small town feeling. just wish thier was a pool, more activities for teens. overall we like it very much here
we love the small town friendliness
you can shop, go to movies, eat and many other things so you don't have to drive a distance to do.
< >
<u>44. What are the problems and challenges facing the City of Soda Springs?</u>
1 ability to retain existing businesses 2 getting community "buy-in" for development of "anything" 3 inability to start small w/new projects- seems that some community proponents want it all right now (Tony Varilone) 4 \$\$\$ 5 making it attractive for new development-lots of resistance to new housing subdivision
1 community entrance cleanup 2 new business/industry development 3 resistance to change
a little concerned with the suicide rate here. maybe we need to think of some options for that
a mine shutting down, or another big business leaving town. we need our town to grow and prosper, not die!
a small town can be the best or the worst. i feel our is tetering on the worst. i wish we had more city wide involved activities not just the 4th of July & I think soda is a great place to bring a tourist attraction for all kinds of things-winter sports, our springs, a hotel. change the

appearance of our entries into the city. what a crap yard-it's embarrassing. soda could be a succesful place w/more business oppurtunities & I think a great unity of poeple. It seems quite divided on most issues that could be agreed upon & all be satisfied. I know this does not give a great description but you get the gist. thanks to senator geddes for getting the ball rolling.

The plant above the ??????(sorry i am unable to read her handwriting here) subdivision's smell is terrible. when they are doing what they do. this issue has been brought forth to the city council and nothing much seems to change this needs to be eleminated. why would anyone want to live among that & especially anyone that would want to buy a home up in Finlayson-let alone keep their homes nice and manicured if they think they won't stay long

alot

business owners along the main road that are "trashy" don't make a good impression of the city

city, lack of willingness to change

dog/owners, run down housing, run down businesses (entering town from w & n) a few people have the most say. lax or no enforcement of some laws/reg. e.g. junk vehicles building codes, ect.

dominant LDS religion-no acceptance of citizens who are not LDS. This community is ruled by the LDS. It's hard to live here if you are not LDS Especially for the teenagers to be accepted

drugs

everyone needs to work together to better the community. cleaning up junk areas, old cars, eyesore areas, weeds and old, old, unused buildings falling apart. it would be good if more local people could live in soda springs that work at the plants. it would help the community build, the schools would grow and it would help the business community also. so many commute to work here.

growing and expanding community services, water, sewer ect.

growth

i feel if you are not mormon you don't fit in

i think right now soda springs biggest challenge is growth, we need to find ways to draw more people to soda

i think that the sewer systems were not planned well for the future growth of the community

i think there needs to be more job openings, higher wage increase, minimum wage for a family to survive here or anywhere else in the world should at least be 10.00 at the rise of housing, gas, grocery's etc.

there needs to be some more business in this town for people to survive here. to many people have to leave town to work to survive. i also think there needs to be more programs that are volenteer work for counseling for problem children in this town that can't afford to pay for such service. to many suicides by teenagers here. something needs to change, more places for them to have fun, such as a skating ring or a arcade, a pizza hut etc. swimming pool for children and family to go too. recreation areas are a problem for teens there are no places for them really to go enjoy to keep them out and about

if you are an outsider you will never fit in. Job oppurtunity "SUCKS" here and no one wants to address the drug and alcohol problem here. there is very little help for those in need. we need to be in tune with our real problems. OPEN YOUR EYES
industry- when you apply for a job that is advertised in the paper you don't get the job but they still advertize for it for months that is wrong. they need to look at the applications more and get the jobs filled. also they need to update their parks better. better grass so it don't look burnt all the time. also update the skate park for the kids make it look better and appropriate to the times
invirement
it's this little phos-place. the soda springs phos. place behind are trailer court north of us. when they start it up at night it smells and dusty!! thats the only thing we have
jobs to keep kids to stay, slowing down the thru traffic
kids need more choices of things to do- drinking and drugs is a problem; lack of support for local businesses & we need more; entryways and downtown areas could use some fixing up
lack of help for drug and alcohol addictions
lack of jobs
lack of shopping oppurtunities
little oppurtunity for children 18 and under who don't play sports. we need a latch-key program for after school and thru the summer months. need volunteers to help these children.
Many, but I'd hate to see this lovely town changed. I like it
money
mosquitos "please spray" be sturner on curfew laws
need more & different jobs to keep people here. better acceptance of minorities (especially non-mormons)
need more motels, resturants, need more acceptance of diversity, LDS dominates and makes non LDS families feel inferior
need to enforcement of city laws and carry out with the fines etc. need to have more oppurtunities for youth to work
needs more business oppurtunity (hotels) frnachises-promotions fo the community-utilizing sodas beautiful surrounding resources
no growth- primary industry is one sided-phosphate- need more diversity
no jobs, not much recreation, not allowing outside bisness to move into soda without being a family name.
no one sells property(1 acre, 2 acre lots etc.) very old homes available only
no quality motels available, people who visit for business either stay in Pocatello or Montpelier. Very sad! should try to encourage a new chain to come to town and get rid of existing motels. they are all run down and look terrible. support of all new business is very important! laughing behind the backs of business owners gives a feeling of exclusion and

absolute non-support. how do we expect to be supported as a city when individual businesses have closed due to non support?
no shopping. have to travel to buy shoes, clothing, household goods and even good prices on groceries
no shopping. have to travel to buy shoes, clothing, household goods and even good prices on groceries
No work, people leaving area, no activity for youth High suicide rate, poor support for social activities High city bills
not enough for the teens to do
not enough things for teens to do in this town
not many good career choices unless you work for one of the big corporations, but those corporations sponsor alot of stuff for families so we love them
nothing for children and teenagers to do-no swimming pool-need more summer activities
nothing for the kids to do
nothing for the youth, they build jails instead of recreation gives them nothing to do besides get into trouble
our schools are to small and the district doesn't have enough money
over reliance on industrial plants, not enough economic diversity. too many junky looking businesses & lots on entrance to town
people willing to take leadership positions and the conservative nature of those making decision. money is always the issue.
road maint. limited shopping ability. need to enforce housing and neighborhood deed restrictions in junky areas. cost of living, maintianing a capable and available city and county workforce. if we could get the citizenry to participate in a "let's clean up soda springs" project property values would go up and we all would benefit
sewage system and water system needs upgrading
sewer and water treatment, community to clean up street cleaning for winter, not such vigerous law enforcement for people traveling through
social problems, drugs, gangs
the cost of electricity, sewer, street repair to citizens on fixed income. when you are faced with the choice of lights, sewer, medicine, heat or food, it is a great problem. most of us on fixed income do not meet the requirements for seica and we still have to pay our taxes in order to have a place to live
the economy
the only way you can raise a family comfortably in soda is if you work out at one of the mines
the police force. we have to many and some crooked cop prosecuting attorneys government need improved
the police officers of soda need to be evaluated for job quality, the city of soda springs is afrade of change and growth that does not profit high city officials or the chamber of

commerce
the school board
the utilities are almost double to other surrounding towns and communities, it makes it hard to live when you have a set income and the food banks are not as well equipped as other towns to help the poor
there is know recreation place for teenage kids such as a place to hang out, pool hall, snack bar & games ect in one building
there is no growth, no jobs and what there is people that don't live in soda come here and take the jobs and live somewhere else, there for our schools pay the price! I think businesses like Monsanto should hire localy and not from Pocatello or Montpelier
There isn't much to do for the youth to keep them out of trouble and the adults really only have bars to go to at night which can make the night lige a little crazy for others.
there needs to be more focus on youth to prevent negative behaviours
they don't let new or big business in, soda springs phosphate needs to be cleaned up, the curbs gutters and sidewalks need to be fixed weeds need to be sprayed, have some of these blind corners trimmed trees and weeds
water repairs
we need a swimming pool, the city fathers have quit trying to get one
we need more recreation and things for our children to do. instead of new police cars every couple of months. and the police need to stop hasseling our kids all of the time. spend our money on our children not the police using the new cars for their personal vehicles
we need the city fathers to make things a little easer for new busines to locate here
we need to be able to grow. bring new businesses and oppurtunities, more jobs, better wages for those who do not work in a plant. we could also make the downtown area look nicer & also some of the parks
we should clean up the residential homes that are junky
well rounded, not too many challenges or problems. the only problem is main street being the only accessible road for semis
while we don't want to see alot of growth in soda springs it would be nice to see things cleaned up a bit on hwy 30 and maybe a nice hotel somewhere
would like the city to try to get more businesses and think they could do more to encourage this

Appendix F

Soda Springs Community Review Agenda

Tuesday, August 21

- 4:00 pm Visiting Team meets for orientation
- 5:00 pm Dinner with Gem Team at Enders Hotel
- 6:00 pm Reception with Home Team
- 6:45 pm Board bus to Hooper Springs for entertainment

Wednesday, August 22

- 7:30 am Breakfast at Caribou Mountain Pizza & Grill
- 8:30 am Community tours/interviewing/discussions
tours led by home teams
- Noon – 1 pm Lunch at Corrigan Park Gazebo catered by El Toro
restaurant
- 1 – 5 pm Tours continue
- 5:15 pm Dinner at Ravisant Restaurant (visiting and Gem teams)
- 7 pm Public Forum with Mayor Kirk L. Hansen's *State of the City*,
County Commissioner's *State of the County* and Sen.
President Pro Tem Robert Geddes *State of District 31* at
Tigert Middle School

Thursday, August 23

- 7:30 am Breakfast at Enders Hotel (immediately following VT
drives/carpools to Monsanto)
- 8:30am Visiting Team groups work on reports at Monsanto business
center
- Noon – 1 pm Lunch & driving tour of Monsanto
- 1 – 5 pm Visiting Team groups work on reports;
- 6 pm Dinner at Kelly Park with City Council
- 7 pm Public Forum at Monsanto