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Doing more with Agriculture - Central Agricultural Region 1997 USA Study Tour Final Report

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doing more with
AGRICULTURE

CENTRAL AGRICULTURAL REGION 1997 USA STUDY TOUR

FINAL REPORT

*An Initiative of Monty House,
Minister for Primary Industry; Fisheries*



USA STUDY TOUR GROUP



*This report has been edited and compiled
on behalf of the USA Study Tour Group
by Christine Arnold, Agriculture Western Australia.*

MARCH 1998

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PART 1 INTRODUCTION

What is Doing More With Agriculture?

[The Doing More With Agriculture project is an initiative of Monty House, Minister for Primary Industry, Fisheries, designed to foster innovative approaches to diversification in agriculture and small town survival and revival within rural Western Australia. The project came about in response to concerns about issues such as declining rural populations and lack of employment opportunities for young people and what actions could be taken to reverse these trends.]

[A pilot program for Doing More With Agriculture was launched on the South Coast in 1996.] The success of the pilot program has led to the expansion of the project throughout the rest of the state at six month intervals with the project being launched in the Central Agricultural Region in July 1997.

Why go on a study tour?

[One of the most successful elements of the South Coast pilot program was a USA study tour in October 1996.] The benefits of taking a group of community members out of their own environment and exposing them to new experiences and ideas cannot be underestimated. In the words of Albert Einstein "The world we have created today as a result of our thinking thus far has problems which cannot be solved by thinking the way we thought when we created them". Subsequently, the study tour experience was repeated in the Central Agricultural Region with eleven community members visiting the USA for two weeks in September 1997.

[The study tour was centred around 5 states (Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Nebraska and South Dakota). These states were chosen due to their geographic, agricultural and economic similarities to the Central Agricultural Region, and their reputation for community development innovation.

The underlying goal of the study tour was to provide an opportunity that:

- challenged current thinking in terms of how to be smarter with agricultural and community development;
- provided insights into rural leadership, mobilisation and development;
- added new ideas, models and methodologies to revitalise our communities; and
- raised awareness and excitement about possibilities for revitalising rural communities and agricultural practices.

It was also with a clear view to ensure the future of rural Western Australia and that the advantages of life in the bush were maintained and expanded that the Central Agricultural Region study tour group embarked on a fact finding tour of the United States. In the words of Monty House, "In my view, the key to the future success of our rural communities and agricultural industries is directly tied to an investment in the people who live and work in the country".

Why is it important to maintain and revive rural Western Australia?

Since the time of European settlement in Australia, the perception and image of rural Australia has been held dear by many Australians and somewhat envied by those outside of our country. Many of our values and our sense of identity as a nation have originated in our rural areas, values such as mateship, working together, and standing by people in times of trouble.

In these changing times, many city folk are now starting to appreciate the advantages of rural life that their country counterparts have long known. Advantages such as the strong sense of community, a safe place to live, quality of lifestyle and the fantastic opportunity and richness of life in country areas.

Maintaining vibrant rural communities in Western Australia is essential. Dynamic and progressive rural communities with viable district and regional centres are critical. Successful and flourishing communities attract the personnel and business services required to support modern and technologically advanced agricultural industries.

It is a sad fact that rural development in Western Australia lacks behind urban development. 95% of the population live in urban areas and a few large coastal towns. The pressure has not been great to develop our rural areas because our cities are still comfortable to live in. This will not last, and while this continues, country areas are denied economic resource and social development in favour of cities and large coastal towns.

Tour Participants

Eleven community members from throughout the Central Agricultural Region were selected to participate in the USA study tour. Participants were selected in order to take a tour group representing a wide cross section of the region. Consequently, there was a range of ages, location, gender and occupations in the final group makeup.

Tour participants were as follows:

Roger Arnold Phone/Fax: (08) 9061 1017
(Farmer, Bruce Rock)

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Lindsay McNeill Phone/Fax: (08) 9641 1638
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Paul Michael Phone/Fax: (08) 9574 2741
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(Post Office/Clerical Assistant, Wyalkatchem)

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(President Northam Rotary Club; Project Manager Avon-Hotham, Agriculture Western Australia)

Tracey Slarke Phone: (08) 9865 1170 Fax: (08) 9865 1471
(Development Officer/Telecentre Co-ordinator, Lake Grace)

Fiona Steddy Phone: (08) 9736 1257 Fax: (08) 9736 1276
(Primary producer, Williams/President Australian Ostrich Association)

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PART2 STUDY THEMES AND QUESTIONS ANSWERED ON THE STUDY TOUR

During the study tour many valuable lessons were learnt and inspiring communities visited. The study themes and major findings that came out of the study tour can be broken into three main categories. These are:-

- A. Building Leadership Capacity
- B. Building Rural Communities
- C. Innovation in Agriculture

Each of the three categories is addressed individually in this report by listing and answering a series of questions that were considered during the study tour. Brief descriptions are given of some of the projects that were visited. Further details about these and other projects are found in the appendices.

A. BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

Building leadership capacity within a community is one of the key components of long term sustained community development. Strong leadership is essential if a community is going to take ideas and see them come to fruition. It soon became apparent during the study tour that those communities which were most successful in community development were also those communities which placed importance on leadership development.

1. How important is it to involve young people in leadership development?

The importance that was placed on involving young people was a common thread in communities visited that had strong leadership development. If young people are involved from an early age (starting at primary school level) and are acknowledged and encouraged as being important and valuable contributors to the local community, the development of leadership potential is a natural progression. Naturally, young people are the leaders of tomorrow and hence the greater the grounding they get in leadership training, the more successful they are likely to be as leaders in their own right.

A good example of this was the School-Community Revitalisation Program, an initiative of Dr Ed Nelson, whose workshop program was the motivational force behind a number of communities visited in Nebraska. The project provides the opportunity for teachers, school administrators, economic developers, community leaders and youth to plan together as change makers for enhancing the future of rural communities and their schools. The program is based on the following beliefs:

- Rural community revitalisation depends on visionary leaders of all ages who are empowered, united and committed to local initiatives and investments.
- Youth can be powerful and enthusiastic in promoting community revitalization when they become partners in contributing their ideas, their energies and their caring attitudes in planning for the future.

- The heart of the rural community is its school which appreciates its critical role in building the sense of community for young people and adults.
- The school curriculum must include units and projects in various subjects that help students learn about their community's history, resources, needs and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Participants in the Community/School Revitalization Project learn about community and economic development. They learn about the leadership which development requires. They become more aware of the potential of schools to enhance community well being. The importance of involving youth in leadership and community revitalization is summed up in this quote by Joseph K. Hart found in "Vital Speeches", Feb 1, 1970:-

"No child can escape his community. He may not like his parents, or the neighbours or the ways of the world. He may groan under the processes of living, and wish he were dead. But he goes on living, and he goes on living in the community. The life of the community flows about him, foul or pure: he swims in it, drinks it, goes to sleep in it, and wakes to the new day to find it still about him. He belongs to it: it nourishes him, or starves him, or poisons him: it gives him the substance of his life. And in the long run it takes its toll on him, and all he is."

2. Is training important for good leadership development?

Leadership development and training is taken very seriously in Nebraska, as evidenced by the Heartland Center for Leadership Development in Lincoln, Nebraska. "Heartland Center Research has shown again and again how important the attitude of the community is in determining survival. Leadership is the key to maintaining the community's attitude. Communities that resist change, ignore new opportunities, focus only on threats and refuse to take any risks are in serious trouble" (Heartland Center for Leadership Development, Nebraska).

The Heartland Center for Leadership Development is an independent, non profit corporation engaged in a variety of activities designed to help recognised and emerging leaders approach confidently the challenges associated with fundamental change. The Center is known internationally for its innovative research on rural leadership and especially for its study on clues to rural community survival. (See appendix 4).

Heartland Center programs include:-

- Training for leadership in communities, businesses and organisations to help them deal with change.
- Assisting communities with strategic planning.
- Helping policy makers clarify questions key to the future of communities and promoting broad scale participation in the search for workable and innovative solutions.
- Conducting research on leadership and its potential impact on quality of life, public policy and business and community prosperity.

3. Should communities be encouraged to question, support, replenish and broaden local leadership?

Feedback from the US study tour suggests that communities should be encouraged to question, support, replenish and broaden local leadership. It is important for local communities to support their leaders while not blindly accepting decisions. It is vital that communities also continue to both develop new leaders and broaden the horizons of those currently in leadership so that community leadership does not get stale. This is also important to ensure a continuation of strong leadership and to avoid the situation of long term leaders stepping down and having no one to replace them. This point was reiterated by Dr Ed Nelson during his address at Chadron, Nebraska.

During the study tour, mentoring was emphasised as an effective way of replenishing leadership within a community. Potential leaders were given the opportunity to gain exposure to, and learn leadership techniques from a mentor in a leadership position. In this situation, it is important that a mentor be someone who is culturally in tune with the person that they are mentoring. This was emphasised at the Pueblo Indian Interpretative Centre in Albuquerque, New Mexico where a strong mentoring program is in place.

The community builders program initiated in Nebraska and now operating in Western Australia was also seen as an important way for a broad range of community members to learn about leadership and develop leadership skills. The Nebraskan community builders is a rural, community development program affiliated with Nebraska Department of Economic Development. It promotes a leadership process designed to increase the number of available community leaders and to encourage greater economic development at the community level. The program has two simple goals:-

- To provide local residents with the necessary skills, information and motivation to support economic development activities in their communities; and
- To increase resident participation in these vital activities.

A cluster of communities serves as the basis for the community builders program. Eight to ten communities constitute a cluster, each being represented by its own community team of three to five residents. These community teams meet monthly over a six month period. These monthly meetings, each one in a different community, enable learning and discussion about community economic challenges, opportunities and options. Participants learn from each other; gain greater awareness of available resources; and discover the inter connections of their local and regional economy.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY IN RURAL WA

Recommendations to State Government

1. That the Community Builders program be expanded in Western Australia.
2. That a state awards program with the goal of promoting local economic development and community leadership in Western Australia be developed.
3. That leadership training opportunities in secondary and tertiary institutions be identified and encouraged
4. That the development of junior shire councils in local communities be encouraged through local government, the Education Department and the Office of Youth Affairs.

Recommendations to WA Rural Communities

5. That local skills and expertise be recognised, acknowledged and promoted to help generate local leadership eg the use of mentors and role models.
6. That resources and training be made available to existing small business leaders to assist them in their involvement in community activities.
7. That a Community School Revitalisation Program be encouraged in Western Australia. This would need to be a community and Education Department joint initiative.
8. That communities be encouraged to recognise and support the vision of individuals and the potential impact of their initiatives.

B. BUILDING RURAL COMMUNITIES

During the tour, our group met many inspiring people and visited communities which were living examples of what can be achieved when a community pulls together to work towards a common goal. Towns in the US which were in very similar situations to those in the Central Agricultural Region of Western Australia proved that small towns can survive and even thrive.

1. What potential is there for small town development?

It was continually reinforced during the study tour that small towns definitely have the potential to develop themselves. From our observations, towns which have been the most successful in development have the following characteristics.

- Motivation.
- Development of and support for good leadership.
- Promotion of broad participation from all community members, especially young people and women.
- They are pro-active in seeking new possibilities and opportunities for their town and in attracting new businesses and residents to town.
- Persistence and patience - "if it doesn't work, wait and try again".
- They promote effective exchange between indigenous groups and the broader community.
- Promotion of local entrepreneurship - "it is OK to be successful".
- A cheerleading newspaper that promotes good news stories and builds morale within the community.

2. How do rural communities make the most of what they have?

"No matter where you are you can succeed if you offer people something they need and serve up good humour, great service and good deals". These are the words of Ted Hustead founder of Wall Drug Store in Wall, South Dakota who has dramatically illustrated this point. He and his family took a small drugstore in a town of 600 residents which was barely breaking even in 1931 into a thriving "experience" which is now the largest drug store in the world and attracts up to 20 000 tourists per day in summer to a town which now has around 800 residents. The success of Wall Drug began by attracting travellers off the nearby interstate highway through the use of innovative signs advertising free ice water to hot and weary travellers - meeting people where their need was.

The importance of making the most of what you have was also demonstrated in Ainsworth, Nebraska, where a number of bed and breakfast businesses have developed around the magnificent scenery in the area. Similarly, the small community of Brewster, Nebraska, has an archaeological site where annual digs are held giving people the opportunity for a unique experience whilst also bringing tourists into the community.

It was emphasised on the study tour, that any individual business or community wishing to attract tourists must first understand the markets that they are targeting and establish the niche into which they will fit. It is not essential that a certain attraction or business be open every day of the year. This was illustrated at the Pueblo Indian Cultural Centre visited in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Here it was explained that many Indian Reservations use tourism

as a way of attracting income. However, during certain times of the year due to religious or cultural reasons, access to the reservations is restricted or prohibited.

3. How important is it for small towns to develop or create their own unique theme or identity?

The importance of an identity for small towns cannot be overstated, particularly from a tourism point of view. This was illustrated through towns such as Tombstone, Arizona which has developed an old West theme and Deadwood, South Dakota which has developed totally around gambling. Springview, Nebraska promotes its museum as being the best in six counties.

A theme is equally relevant on a regional scale such as the region of Nebraska which promotes itself as the Nebraska Outback, capitalising on interest generated by the Crocodile Dundee movies.

An identity can also be important in attracting residents such as the town of Baird, Nebraska which has promoted itself as a bedroom town. Employment opportunities are not large in the town itself but it is a wonderful environment in which to live and close enough to other employment opportunities that the attraction of the town is as a place to live and commute from, hence a bedroom town. Similarly Silver City, New Mexico, has promoted itself as a good place to retire. Having been lauded by the US Bureau of Meteorology as having the most ideal climate, the town now promotes itself under the "Four Gentle Seasons" slogan.

The identity of a town can also be important for community morale as illustrated by Cody, Nebraska which uses the slogan, "A town too tough to die". Willcox, Arizona uses "Weather, water, labour force" for attracting industry to town. The success of this campaign is evidenced by the recent arrival of a big Dutch horticultural company which has set up a 16 hectare greenhouse to grow tomatoes. The greenhouse employs 125 people year round and 250 during the picking season.

4. What need is there for rural communities to establish mechanisms for development?

A clear vision of how to achieve development came across as a very strong necessity during the tour. Communities visited which were developing most successfully had two major characteristics in common.

1. A shared, long term vision. This was particularly evident in Aurora, Nebraska, where the community had a clear vision of where it was heading in the long term and a good understanding of how to achieve their goals. This point was again emphasised by Dr Ed Nelson, from Leadership Seminars in Nebraska, who regularly conducts community planning workshops with rural communities throughout Nebraska.
2. Co-operative relationships between key players both groups and individuals. Successful communities are those that value the input of every sector of the community from youth to senior citizens. There is also good co-operation between groups. This was particularly apparent in Brewster, Nebraska, where the Community Builders Program began.

5. How necessary is it for small towns to focus their efforts on the creation of private sector jobs and encouraging community cohesion?

Dr Bob Tosterud of the University of South Dakota, indicated that the creation of long term jobs comes from the private and not the public sector. Hence, for a town or community to have job or career opportunities to attract people, it is important for that town to focus on the creation of private sector jobs. Long term job security will bring young people back to rural communities following education and make towns more viable and sustainable. This was illustrated in Deadwood, South Dakota, where the offer of long term job security is bringing past residents back to town rather than the recreational and entertainment attractions offered by a town based around gambling.

Similarly, the lifestyle offered by Silver City, New Mexico, coupled with ever increasing job opportunities are attracting young families back to the town. Attributes such as a mild climate, good recreational facilities, a well equipped hospital, a full range of specialist doctors, low cost housing and freedom from crime, with job opportunities as well, make Silver City very hard to look past for a family disillusioned with big city living.

Community cohesiveness within a community is a very honourable and desirable goal. A healthy community is one which has representation from all sectors of society and where each is respected and appreciated. Interestingly, an article published in "Science" Journal in August 1997 reported on the largest study ever undertaken of the causes of crime and delinquency. It found that by far the largest influence on limiting crime was the sense of trust, common values and cohesion in neighbourhoods, a shared vision and trust.

6. How necessary is it for small towns within regions or sub-regions to co-operate and form links?

When small towns within a region learn to co-operate and not compete all can benefit. This was illustrated on the study tour several times, especially in terms of tourism where communities co-operate to attract visitors to the region as a whole. A good example of this is the Route 66 project. Route 66 was the original highway linking the east and west coast of the USA from Chicago to Los Angeles. While this highway is not now used as the primary cross country link, it still has great historical importance. Communities along Route 66 in New Mexico have joined together in a Mainstreet Program which is aimed at encouraging visitors to come to the area and drive whole sections of the highway thus benefiting each of the communities involved.

It was emphasised during our visit to Willcox, Arizona that attracting tourists to stay overnight should be a priority as it is accommodation that really brings money into a community. The Nebraska Outback is an excellent example of this with a region of communities working together to attract tourists and to encourage them to stay overnight. The Nebraska Outback was established in response to the interest generated in the Australian outback through the "Crocodile Dundee" movies.

7. Do small towns and local businesses need to recognise and promote up-to-date technology and quality practices?

Information and communication technology is now such that practically anything can be done anywhere. This potentially puts small communities in the strong position of being on a level playing field with their counterparts in larger centres. It also puts the onus on business people in small communities to be up to date with the latest technology and competent in the use of this technology.

Small towns and local businesses also need to be up to date in practises relating to marketing, promotion and customer service. Wall Drug in Wall, South Dakota was a classic example of this. Innovative and extensive marketing, advertising free iced water to travellers on signs throughout the US, turned a small town drug store into an enterprise that now attracts up to 20 000 visitors per day.

Up to date technologies relate to business practises, and are environmentally friendly and energy efficient. This was illustrated at the Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development (CESD), Denver, Colorado. Operated by the US Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, the CESD works with communities of all sizes in sustainable development encouraging people to use solar and other energy efficient means. It works towards growing and retaining wealth within a community by lowering their energy costs. The CESD applies sustainability to economic development, buildings, land use planning, industrial development and disaster recovery.

Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the future community's ability to meet theirs. "Then I say the earth belongs to each generation.... fully and in its own right...no generation can contract debts greater than may be paid during the course of its own existence" (Thomas Jefferson, September 6, 1789).

Communities benefit from sustainable development as it:

- creates jobs
- saves money
- improves the environment
- improves quality of life
- gives a future.

8. How important is the support of an individual's dreams and initiative within a community?

The power of one person's dream and vision cannot be overestimated. The truth of this statement was demonstrated numerous times during the study tour. Local communities should encourage the dreams and initiatives of community members even if they seem far fetched at the time. Examples of this were the Black American West Museum, Denver, Colorado and the Crazy Horse Monument, South Dakota.

Paul Stewart established the Black American West Museum and Heritage Centre in 1971. He had grown up believing that there was no such thing as a black cowboy until he actually met one in 1961. From that time on, he dedicated his life to uncovering as much as he could about African Americans in the historic West. His research has uncovered the fact that over one third of cowboys were African Americans.

Over the years, he has collected some 35 000 artefacts, photos and items of memorabilia. Many of these are on display in the two-storey museum building that was once the home of Dr Justina Ford, Denver's first black female doctor. Through his dream and dedication to the cause, Paul Stewart has uncovered and preserved a part of history that has previously been ignored due to racial prejudice. Without his perseverance, this chapter in history may have died with the people who wrote it. Is there a danger of this also happening in Australia?

Polish sculptor Korczak Ziolkowski was approached in 1939 by Lakota Indian Chief Henry Standing Bear who said "My fellow chiefs and I would like the white man to know that the red man has great heroes too". He was asked to carve Chief Crazy Horse into the mountains of the Black Hills of South Dakota in a similar fashion to the presidential heads of Mt Rushmore. It was to be the largest sculpture in the world measuring 563 feet high by 641 feet long when completed.

Korczak was 40 years old when he accepted the commission in 1947. He knew that the project was much larger than any one man's lifetime so he made three notebooks of meticulous notes and detailed plans so the work could be continued when he died. When commencing the project, Korczak had \$174 to his name and still he was not discouraged by the task.

Korczak died in 1982 at the age of 74 having dedicated 34 years of his life to the project. This was not before he had fallen off the mountain three times, had four spinal operations and a quadruple bypass operation. Along the way he also found time to marry and have 10 children, seven of whom are still heavily involved with the carving of Crazy Horse.

This year is the 50th anniversary of Crazy Horse. It is expected that Crazy Horse's head will be completed in 1998 although it is impossible to predict when the full sculpture will be complete. Korczak once said. "The world asks you one question: did you do your job? The answer is not: I would have done it if people had been nicer....if I'd had the money...if I hadn't died, ifs don't count. The answer must be: yes!"

9. What is the value of involving young people in local economic planning and development?

The strongest communities visited in the US were those that recognised and encouraged the participation of young people in planning for the future. It is important to build a strong ownership and sense of community in young people. Ultimately, it is the young people who are the future of the community. They must see a future in their home communities before they will come back to live and work.

It is important that communities recognise the advantages that young people can gain from leaving their home towns for a period of time. It should not necessarily be the goal of a community to try and keep young people there forever but, rather to give them good community values which will encourage them to return to that community.

Examples of involving young people in local economic planning and development that were observed on the study tour included:-

- Linking local schools with development through programs like community builders.
- Establishing a school and community revitalisation program.
- Establishing and supporting junior chambers.

(See Principles of Effective Youth Participation as developed by Dr Ed Nelson on Page 19).

10. How important is it for local businesses to be community oriented?

Local businesses in the rural areas of the USA tended to be more community oriented than those in Australia. This was demonstrated through the willingness of local businesses to be involved in activities that would be of no direct benefit to the company. Such involvement assisted in creating a strong sense of community and cohesion between community members and local businesses.

Examples of local business involvement in community were private banks in Bassett, Nebraska and Aurora, Nebraska and the Coash fertiliser company in Bassett, Nebraska. The Coash management actively encouraged to be involved in community projects and contribute back to their local community. The owners of the Coash fertiliser company in Bassett have also purchased and renovated an old Philips 66 petrol station. The station has now been turned into a tourist bureau where visitors can obtain information about the town of Bassett and the surrounding area.

Related to this, business people in Aurora, Nebraska and Silver City, New Mexico were involved in town planning and showing groups, such as ourselves around the town. When questioned about this in Aurora the response was that spending time with groups such as ours and telling their story was good practice for when it really counted such as encouraging new businesses to move to town.

11. What need or value is there in small towns forming links with universities and appropriate government agencies?

A strong link between small towns and universities and colleges was witnessed on the study tour - an idea not so common in Australia. By forming strong links with universities and appropriate government agencies, many towns in rural USA have maximised benefits to their local communities. Universities and colleges exist in some towns in the US with populations much smaller than where a university would be found in rural Western Australia. Examples are Chadron College and University of New Mexico in Silver City.

The most obvious example of a close link between a rural town and university was the University of Nebraska through its Center for Rural Community Revitalization and Development. With a focus on strengthening Nebraska communities, the University of Nebraska's Center for Rural Community Revitalization and Development provides information and educates and assists people and communities in rural areas in a manner that contributes to improved decision making and an enhanced quality of life. Central to this mission is the capability of the University of Nebraska to plan, develop and implement high quality programs that focus on the opportunities and challenges of rural people and communities.

Programs run by the Center for Rural Community Revitalization and Development include:-

- The Nebraska Edge - the umbrella organisation for rural entrepreneurial training programs that are hosted by local communities, organisations and associations. The training courses are taught by entrepreneurs for entrepreneurs.
- Navigating the Net - designed to answer questions about what the Internet is and how it can be used in work or personal life.
- Rural Policy Research Institute - conducts research and facilitates public dialogue designed to assist policy makers in understanding the impact on rural communities of public policy choices.
- The W.K. Kellogg Collection of Rural Community Development Resources - a reference library containing hundreds of high quality print and video materials developed by universities, non-profit organisations and other agencies throughout the United States and Canada.
- Partnership for Rural Nebraska- a co-operative commitment by the State of Nebraska, University of Nebraska, United States Department of Agriculture and other stake-holders, to address rural opportunities and challenges identified by rural Nebraskans. The mission is to improve the effectiveness of resources that support local-based rural development efforts state-wide and to better utilise human and financial resources for rural development.
- Nebraska Rural Poll - aims to give local and state leaders a better understanding of the issues, challenges and concerns of Nebraska's rural citizens. This study is an annual effort that has focused on such issues as community, government policy, the environment, well-being and work. Core questions are included every year and over time will provide insight about trends and changes occurring in rural Nebraska.

12. What are some economic and enterprise development opportunities that small towns in the central agricultural region may be able to translate from the USA experience?

Many of the communities visited during the study tour are engaged in projects that have a definite application to the central agricultural region of Western Australia. Some ideas brought back from the study tour which could be translated here include:-

- The potential for an Aboriginal museum looking at their role in opening up the pastoral areas of Western Australia and Australia as a whole.
- An Aboriginal cultural, heritage centre and interpretative centre.
- Dude ranching
- Nebraska Project Networking Guide designed to help community leaders transform their ideas for a better community into reality through networking with other communities and learning from their success and mistakes.
- Bed tax from tourism to fund community economic development similar to that in Willcox, Arizona.
- Campaigns to attract tourists off major highways, like Great Eastern Highway and Highway 120, to stay overnight such as in Willcox, Arizona and Wall, South Dakota.
- Marketing towns to retirees (eg Silver City, New Mexico and Willcox, Arizona).

RECOMMENDATIONS TO MAKE RURAL COMMUNITIES IN WA STRONGER, MORE VIBRANT PLACES TO LIVE

Recommendations to State Government

1. That strategic community development planning be incorporated into leadership training such as through the WA Rural Leadership Program.
2. That a directory of community development planning personnel and organisations be compiled.
3. That the Small Town Economic Planning (STEP) and Community Opportunity Workshop (COW) programs be continued through professional facilitation, good preparation and follow-up:-
 - Audit and analysis
 - Vision building workshops and setting priorities
 - Strategic planning and ensure professional support, implementation of plans, monitoring of progress, public relations and evaluation.
4. That a tool kit be developed by Agriculture WA and the Department of Commerce and Trade with guides to: marketing a community; how to generate and regenerate community investment.
5. That cultural awareness (possible interpretative centre) and economic development opportunities be promoted through the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in conjunction with local Aboriginal communities.
6. That the study tour group members oversee the establishment of a web site to make available the concepts/information learnt during the study tour.
7. That partnerships be developed between tertiary institutions, communities and research bodies such as the University of Western Australia, Development Commissions and Agriculture WA.
8. That the feasibility of a Centre for Rural Development and Community Economic Development in Western Australia be determined.

Recommendations to WA Rural Communities and Local Government

9. That the role of women and young people in rural Western Australia be promoted through the use of case studies and sharing of experiences.
10. That community and regional planning processes incorporate elements that help make communities more sustainable such as energy conservation and quality of life issues.
11. That the development and maintenance of regional infrastructure be actively pursued.
12. That the promotion of regional tourism be expanded and enhanced. This would need to be a joint initiative between local communities and the WA Tourism Commission.

C. INNOVATION IN AGRICULTURE

The Central Agricultural Region of Western Australia is a very rich agricultural area. However, in most cases, raw agricultural products are sold off farms for someone further along the production line to make the profit. One aspect of the USA study tour was to look at ways in which communities in the mid west of America have value added their local products to reclaim more of the production line between the farm gate and the consumer to create jobs and retain wealth in their communities.

1. What ability do co-operatives have to provide a means for harnessing local and external financial resources for local economic development?

Locally run co-operatives have enormous potential within a community to assist in community development by retaining wealth in that community and providing increased job opportunities for its citizens. Two co-operatives seen on the study tour that were of particular relevance were the Rural Electrification Co-operative in Willcox, Arizona, and an ethanol plant in Aurora, Nebraska.

The Rural Electrification Co-operative in Willcox was formed to provide power in rural areas that were too sparsely populated for established power companies to want to provide them with power. Local people become shareholders in the co-operative by paying five dollars plus the costs of connecting power to their homes or businesses. After twenty years, shareholders are paid a dividend proportionate to the amount of power they used.

To assist community development, the Rural Electrification Co-operative uses 'Operation Roundup' whereby a customer's power bill is rounded up to the nearest dollar with the difference being donated to charity. New businesses are also given assistance through discounted electricity for five years and the youth of the region are supported through financial assistance to the secondary schools.

In Aurora, Nebraska, an ethanol plant opened in the fall of 1995. Ethanol is produced from corn at the plant and is mixed with petroleum on a 10:90 ratio for fuelling motor cars. There is no US Federal tax on ethanol in an attempt to encourage the use of energy efficient fuel. The ethanol plant operates as a co-operative with \$6 million raised from the local community to start the plant. The Aurora Development Commission were very pro-active in encouraging local people to invest in the ethanol plant and assisted by flying some potential investors to look at similar plants in other states.

Initial funds required were \$12 500 per shareholder with guaranteed sales to the co-op of 5000 bushels of corn per year. 250 farmers initially joined the co-op with the average contribution of each over time being \$25 000. The ethanol plant now uses one third of the corn produced in the district which produces up to 200 bushels per acre. The plant currently operates at a production level of 10 million gallons per year but has the potential to increase this to 25 million gallons per year.

2. What other examples of value adding were seen on the study tour?

One rapidly growing industry in the mid west of the US relevant to the Central Agricultural Region was dude ranching. Dude ranching, or entertainment farming, refers to a form of farm or station stay where visitors pay to stay on the property and be actively involved in the day to day activities of the property. Typically dude ranching packages would include accommodation, meals, horseback riding and most other ranch activities. Property owners decide when to open, what activities they will allow visitors to participate in and how intensive or "hands on" they would like the dude ranch to be.

In addition to their ethanol plant, Aurora, Nebraska was also home to a pet food factory. Once again, locally grown corn was used as the basis for the pet food.

A powder milk producing plant was visited in Freeman, South Dakota. The plant is part of a bigger co-operative covering six states. The plant collects milk from large and small producers.

3. What support was offered to groups or individuals wishing to manufacture value added products?

The Food Processing Center at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln has been providing individuals and companies with practical business development consultation since 1983. The center provides a wide variety of experienced technicians and food scientists to assist food processors in applied and basic food research and product development. Areas of focus include product safety, shelf life stability, product texture, taste, colour, portion size, cooking and packaging specifications. Assistance is provided in designing plant, equipment and process flow techniques necessary to deliver a quality product to the consumer. Technological assistance is offered to the private sector in the grain-based, vegetable, meats, dairy and specialty food product categories.

Market research, strategy and general business consulting are also provided to existing processors whose size may range from small family operations to regional manufacturers. Plant location and raw material sourcing are offered to companies wishing to build or expand operations in the state.

Other specialised assistance includes international market development for new food exporters and custom processing private labelling development for processors with excess capacity. These programs aim to help Nebraska food manufacturers sell more products with the quickest response to market changes and demands.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION IN RURAL WA

Recommendations to State Government

1. That a system be developed to guide potential projects through Government requirements and the planning stages to fast track innovative agricultural projects.
2. That the feasibility of establishing a Centre for Food Processing in a regional area in Western Australia be determined. Possible extension of services offered by Muresk Institute of Agriculture.
3. That communities be assisted to identify their resource potential and opportunities for marketing these.
4. That the concept of value adding be promoted and encouraged with primary producers and entrepreneurship be promoted through the Doing More With Agriculture project.
5. That support be provided to enable farm tourism opportunities to be developed. For example, involvement of tourists in tree planting on farms and other farming activities. The Avon Arc project incorporates this and is a good concept which should be extended throughout the State.
6. That education and training opportunities for primary producers in their own regional areas be enhanced through the greater use of technological advancements and services such as TAFE and Telecentres.
7. That an expo be established to promote agriculture as a career by promoting the diversity of options. Farming should also be promoted at key career expos across the state.
8. That quality of life in rural Western Australia be promoted to encourage young people to stay in or move to country towns.

PART3 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Participation should:-

- Be by choice.
- Be enjoyable, challenging and fun.
- Maximise decision-making by young people and their accountability.
- Promote maturity.
- Raise young people's awareness of social, political, economic, cultural and personal aspects that affect them.
- Create opportunities for young women and men to influence decisions.
- Involve experiences respected by young people, peers and the community.
- Make sense of and demystify adult structure and processes.
- Involve training and skills development.
- Involve planning, via the development of goals and strategies.
- Provide opportunities for building active support relationships between young women and men and the community.
- Provide young people with a sense of belonging and ownership in the process.
- Provide critical analysis and feedback of the experience and the actions within the process.
- Involve adequate resources including time, space, funding and information; and
- Encourage collective action at all times and assist the development of linkages between networks of young women and men.

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7. STATEMENTS ABOUT SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES

1. The future of the community depends upon its leadership. Leaders develop support groups to stir the excitement in moving toward the goals and the visions. They involve the citizens in planning and acting for the community's future.
2. Women are a driving force in community revitalisation. They are entrepreneurs, developers of ideas, and organisers of community efforts. The Small Business Administration projects that within a decade one half of America's small businesses will be owned and led by women. Women naturally possess many of the most important characteristics of successful leaders.
3. There are positive relationships between the schools and the communities. The teachers, administrators, and students participate in promotional activities and the communities are supporting the educational endeavours, fourth graders plant trees, middle school students are involved in clean-up and beautification, while high school students are conducting surveys and interviews, studying the history of the communities and helping to plan the future. Students are becoming leaders.
4. Economic development is usually the result of community development. Successful communities have good schools, churches, homes, main streets, and optimistic, entrepreneurial attitudes.
5. The Nebraska Community Improvement Program in the Department of Economic Development is furnishing outstanding guides for the revitalisation of small communities.
6. The rural community includes the population residing on the farms and ranches, as well as the residents of the village. It includes all who participate in the schools, churches, and social and business activities of the community.
7. Community leaders meet regularly to brainstorm, create and promote new ideas. Some are meeting weekly for wild idea sessions which are fun and productive.

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THRIVING COMMUNITIES ARE:-

1. Creating their future
2. Involving the youth, the school, and the elderly
3. Recognising emerging leaders
4. Celebrating successes
5. Having early morning meetings
6. Displaying optimism and enthusiasm
7. Utilising resource people
8. Constructing their vision of the future
9. Setting goals
10. Developing action plans
11. Forming lots of committees
12. Being creative and innovative
13. Taking risks
14. Promoting technology
15. Using the information superhighway
16. Showing pride
17. Enjoying rural life and small schools
18. Working with neighbours
19. Appreciating people and things
20. Showing positive attitudes
21. Shopping at home
22. Attracting new businesses
23. Beautifying the area
24. Retaining their population
25. Staying focused
26. Being persistent
27. Utilising the keys of leaderships - Vision, Communication, Planning, Commitment
28. Boasting about their achievements
29. Encouraging projects
30. Marketing their community
31. Having festivals and activities
32. Building and maintaining parks
33. Providing recreation programs
34. Renovating and maintaining homes
35. Applying venture capital
36. Inviting people to be involved
37. Encouraging attendance at functions
38. Providing incentives
39. Looking for opportunities
40. Maintaining infrastructure
41. Developing grant proposals
42. Forming partnerships
43. Believing in themselves
44. Knowing that no town has to die

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20 CLUES TO RURAL COMMUNITY SURVIVAL

1. Evidence of community pride.
2. Emphasis on quality in business and community life.
3. Willingness to invest in the future.
4. Participatory approach to community decision-making.
5. Cooperative community spirit.
6. Realistic appraisal of future opportunities.
7. Awareness of competitive positioning.
8. Knowledge of the physical environment.
9. Active economic development program.
10. Deliberate transition of power to a younger generation of leaders.
11. Acceptance of women in leadership roles.
12. Strong belief in and support for education.
13. Problem-solving approach to providing health care.
14. Strong multi-generational family orientation.
15. Strong presence of traditional institutions that are integral to community life.
16. Attention to sound and well-maintained infrastructure.
17. Careful use of fiscal resources.
18. Sophisticated use of information resources.
19. Willingness to seek help from the outside.
20. Conviction that, in the long run, you have to do it yourself.

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APPENDIX

WILLCOX, ARIZONA**Rural Electrification Co-operative - 15 September 1997**

Report compiled by Rhonda Phillips

Description

The Rural Electrification Co-operative was formed to provide power to the people in rural areas that were too sparsely populated for established power companies to provide power to on a financially viable basis.

The people in these rural areas become shareholders in the co-operative by paying five dollars, as well as the costs involved in connecting power to their homes or businesses. In twenty years, these shareholders are paid a dividend proportionate to the amount of power that they use in that time (i.e. The more power an individual uses, the higher the dividend and vice versa).

Key Issues

- Operation roundup - a person's electricity account is rounded up to the nearest dollar and the difference between the actual amount of the account and the rounded up figure is donated to charity, preferably within the region. It only costs and individual approximately \$6.00 per year and is an excellent way to help those less fortunate - a little from everybody going a long way.
- Sure pay system - automatic payment of electricity account from a person's cheque account.
- The Rural Electrification Co-operative provides assistance to new businesses by providing discounted electricity for five years.
- The Rural Electrification Co-operative supports youth in secondary schools so that they will have a more positive attitude towards their community. It has provided the finance, on loan, for students to construct a house, auction it and keep the difference to put towards the construction of another house. This gives the students practical experience.
- The Rural Electrification Co-operative does not aim to make a profit, only to break even.
- The Rural Electrification Co-operative encourages people to do their household activities that require electricity, during off-peak times (1-4 pm, 9 pm-6 am) providing electricity at a cheaper rate.
- The Rural Electrification Co-operative aims to really look after it's customers, carrying out everything in favour of the people and having a high level of customer service.
- Deregulation is approaching which will place the Rural Electrification Co-operative into unknown territory, possibly causing a threat to the Co-operative.
- Ultimately, the Rural Electrification Co-operative not only supplies electricity, but really aims to take care of it's customers recognising, particularly with deregulation approaching, that if it does then the customers will stay with the co-operative.

Applications

Operation roundup may be a useful idea that can be applied locally with the agreement of customers.

The concept of really looking after customers is a very important one. Look after the customer and they will in turn look after the business i.e. Retain it's services and tell others.

Contact: Mr Dennis Hughes

Willcox, Arizona

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND AGRICULTURE - 15 SEPTEMBER 1997

Report compiled by Lindsay McNeill

Brief Description

The chamber is an organisation funded 50% from a 2% bed tax imposed in the town.

Other funds are raised from:

- Membership fees ranging from \$125 - \$500 according to size of business.
- Remainder of funds are raised by things like a golf competition and dinners.
- There are 121 members drawn from an estimated potential membership of 200-25.
- 10-12% of members are farmers.
- The Chamber employs three full time staff.

Key issues

The Chamber has a formal agreement with the county to develop and implement business and economic development initiatives for the town and district.

The Chamber promotes co-operation between local business. Initiatives that are being used to achieve economic development (attract, assist, co-ordinate establishment of businesses and increase viability and employment are:

- A campaign to attract traffic off major highways and encourage tourists to stay overnight.
- Promotion of the area as a good place to retire.
- Farm tourism based on the concept of 'pick your own' produce. (There have been many repeat customers.
- Entertainment farming where tourists are welcome to participate in farming activities (Tourism initiatives attract 125,000 visitors to the area each year.)
- Campaign to attract large businesses to establish in the area. The basis for this is the slogan "weather, water, labour force". (This has succeeded in attracting a large Dutch owned hydroponic tomato production unit to the area.)

- Despite numerous job creation initiative young people are still leaving the area in large numbers.

Lessons learnt

- A co-ordinated, co-operative effort can successfully attract large business to rural area, improve viability of existing farms / businesses and create jobs.
- Towns / districts need well defined strategies with community support to achieve economic development.
- It takes more than job creation to keep young people in rural areas. (As yet, what more is needed has not been identified.)
- The retirement industry (attracting retirees to rural areas) is successful in increasing the economic viability of small rural communities.

- Farm tourism is a profitable way for farmers to diversify and improve viability.

Contact details: Executive Director, Eddie Browning, Willcox, ARIZONA, USA

Willcox, Arizona

Bonito Nurseries - 15 September, 1997

Report compiled by Lindsay McNeill

Brief description

- This company produces tomatoes for sale as fresh fruit using hydroponics.
- It is Dutch owned.
- There are 40 acres of land under an elaborate controlled environment greenhouse.
- At peak times 240 workers are employed. Of these, 125 are permanent.
- Wages are US\$5.50 per hour plus a bonus of up to \$80 per week.
- Seedlings are germinated in 'grow wool' blocks in Canada.
- Blocks containing germinated seedlings are then placed on 'grow wool' flats for growing on.
- Plants are trellised on strings to a height of about 2.4 metres. Plastic ring clips are placed around branches and attached to a string.
- These strings can be moved parallel to the rows to lean plants sideways for husbandry operations such as removal of lateral buds.
- Insect pests are monitored using sticky yellow strips run out between rows.
- A tiny predator wasp is released in the greenhouse if/when pests (such as aphids) reach a damaging level.
- To compensate for the exclusion of natural pollinator, bumble bee colonies are introduced to carry out pollination.
- As the tomatoes are picked, they are loaded onto trolleys that run on tracks between the rows. At the end of the rows, they are emptied into a channel of swiftly flowing water that delivers them to a conveyor belt and on to the packing floor.
- The track rails (made of 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ " pipe double as heating tubes by pumping hot water through them in freezing weather.

Key issues

The location of this major overseas owned business was won for Willcox by:

- Pro-active negotiation by the Willcox Chamber of Commerce which acted as facilitator in the cutting of red tape and help with the location of a suitable site.
- Promotion by the chamber of the area's cheap land, climate, water and cheap labour.
- Establishment of the business has not reversed the lack of employment for and loss of young people from the district.

- Most jobs are taken by older people from non-viable farms in the district and Mexican workers.
- Workers have had to be imported from Mexico due to a lack of local labour.

Lessons learnt

- A well organised Chamber of Commerce (or similar) can attract major business to a district by (amongst other things) working with the prospective investors to ensure that the required infra-structure and utilities are available
- Establishment of a large business such as this one does not guarantee retention of young people in a rural area.
- The overall impact of such a business is positive for employment and viability of a small rural community.

Contact details:

Willcox Chamber of Commerce
WILLCOX
ARIZONA USA

Willcox, Arizona

Ostrich Farm Visit - 15 September 1997

Report compiled by Fiona Steddy

Brief Description

We had a very brief visit to an Ostrich farm on the outskirts of Willcox. The property was small and the number of ostriches was average to Australian's size farms however America is in a fully commercial phase so the numbers represent a small farm.

The owner only had a few young chicks to show as he had concentrated on selling day old stock on to the breeder market in Brazil. Here he was achieving returns of US\$200-US\$300 per chick.

America does not have a strong united industry base so many producers were competing against each other. The farmer suggested that small properties with low numbers of stock will cease to exist in the near future unless they become part of a fully integrated system. He suggested that 5 dominant players would survive and they would contract some of the small growers to be specialist facilities.

Meat was only being sold domestically and prices varied from US\$6lb -US\$12-50lb. Very little meat was being exported.

Hides were creating a genuine problem for the producers. This farmer was sending his hides to Mexico for tanning and then trying to market the hides him self. The quality they were achieving did not compare to the South Africans. The farmer placed a lot of emphasis on genetics in achieving the correct hide quality. Scaring and damage were a major concern however little relevance was placed on handling and facility design and these I believe are fundamentally instrumental in protecting hides from damage.

Diversification into the Ostrich Industry in America is questionable at this time. The success of any business depends on the marketing of the products and as America does not have unified marketing practises, unified meat language and a desire for existing major players to co-operate and establish best practises I believe that many small producers will cease to raise birds.

The lessons to be learnt for Australia is to maintain our strong unity and through the peak representative body - The Australian Ostrich Association, to continue to market and develop the ostrich products, encourage all players to come under the common meat language and quality assurance programs. Australia at this time is establishing itself to become one of the worlds major player in the Ostrich Industry.

Unity, promotion, marketing and the production of world class quality products is what this young industry is trying to achieve. The reality for primary producers if these goals are met, is a farm diversification that will allow them to earn extra income from their land.

SILVER CITY, NEW MEXICO

Sigred, Silver City, Grant County, Economic Development - 16 September 1997
Report compiled by John Hassell

Brief description

Sigred began after the realisation that the copper mine on which Silver City had been dependent was closing and hence it was necessary to look at other avenues to keep people in the town. Started in order to target older people into town and to stop youth outflow by capitalising on the attributes of the town. Also to achieve business retention and expansion by providing business counselling training resources and referrals and sitting through government red tape. For roads and buildings etc... NAFTA Institute is focusing on border trade with Mexico, helping with permits and methods of sale. Developing relationships with sister cities and networking. Growth of 5-7% pa for the last few years. Promote the city as much as possible through feature stories, climate eg; best climate in the world. Also use strategic planning. Looking at a community and working out where they want to be in the future, then developing a plan starting with base jobs then what it will lead into. Integrated efforts.

Key issue

Retirement youth business expansion retention. Reduction in duplication of regulation. Fundamental issue co-operation.

Lessons learnt

All places have something to offer, even those that don't appear to. We can capitalise on these issues by looking further than through our own eyes. We may feel that in our own areas that the place is dry and hot during summer with little or no beauty but this is not necessarily so. Likewise we may feel that our towns are too far from Perth and this may suit some people well.

There is a deception that if you don't have population you don't have business opportunities and vice versa leaving a catch 22 situation. We can encourage business through BEC equivalents and we can encourage loyalty to town through other ways and a shop locally campaign. More encouragement to business could be through using BEC and Shire council to help reduce duplication of services, reduction of restriction causing practices and fees.

Advertising of the town and local areas need not be through the expensive channels of doing brochures. There is the opportunity of capitalising on feature stories in newspapers and magazines. This is very effective. Also the Internet can be used.

Any town could set up a web site programming its wonders.

Strategic planning is looking at what a town can achieve using the attributes it already has. We start by looking at what we want the town to be by what time. By working out how many base jobs will be created from the initial investment and then the secondary jobs that follow on as essential infrastructure is needed to follow on.

- Overview of New Mexico Silver City.
- Getting away from traditional resources.

- 25 year shelf life.
- Scholarships - 2 available.
- Cheryl Pink - communities should be technically correct before embarking on a project so they don't mess up.
- Co-operation between education and community.
- Federal, state, county and town plans must match - wheatbelt development plan.
- Use regions to bring in NHT monies.

Silver City, New Mexico

Main Street Silver City Program

Report compiled by John Hassell

Main Street is a program to revitalise downtown shopping areas to make them more attractive. Socially and economically works together with the National Trust for historic preservation and revival of small town 'main streets' and aimed at keeping the character of the town.

Key issues

- Organisation of the community through involvement of community leaders, merchants, bankers, civic groups and government committees. Set achievable goals, local fund-raising to use in the area.
- Make a plan for co-operative and individual advertising campaign to attract shoppers, visitors, retailers and investors. Use of a particular logo to advertise uniformly.
- Encourage graphic and architectural design in order to create a good first impression, after all, we only get one first impression. Working together to encourage uniformity of style in window dressing and design of signs.
- Economic restructure - doing market surveys and implementing business retention and expansion programs to provide the best mix.

Lessons learnt

Capitalisation on a particular facet or a possible theme can galvanise a community to work together, e.g. York, Western Australia. In a situation like this layers of newer facades can be removed to uncover a common thread of the 1930s.

Another idea that appeals is if business owners can't be encouraged to 'do the right thing' it may be possible to purchase the facade (by the shire, county or council), renovate it and blend it into whatever the rest of the community feels is appropriate. The owner can do as they please behind the facade.

There is also the possibility of towns working together as in Route 66.

New Mexico

New Mexico Native American Indian Economic Development, Albuquerque 17 September 1997

Report compiled by John Hassell/ Bill Porter

Brief Description

The group visited the American Indian Centre in Albuquerque where Robert Johnson, a native American Indian of the New Mexico Economic Development Department, spoke about the issue of economic development among American Indians in New Mexico.

Barriers to economic development

Robert Johnson perceives the barriers to Indian economic development as:

- lack of capital,
- lack of infrastructure,
- lack of management,
- the Indian themselves, and
- the Federal Government.

Attributes of the Indians themselves which reduce the potential success of economic development are:

- Many tribal leaders do not understand profit. They try to create jobs without worrying about the bottom line.
- Indians are reluctant to disturb the earth because of their cultural and traditional values. As a result, they often see economic development as detrimental.
- Lack of knowledge of businesses which they would like to set up.
- Alcoholism is a common problem, though hopefully a lessening one.

There is no demand for food (e.g. corn) which was traditionally produced by the Indians.

Organisation

Robert Johnson has helped set up Business Development Committees and Business Enterprise Boards. These can be very valuable in assisting economic development by "shielding" decisions about economic development from excessive political influence from strong groups within the tribe.

Tribes have recognised they need to develop strategic plans to ensure their long term economic survival. This has been brought home particularly by the changes to the conditions for unemployment benefits (which will be paid only for six months), and the prospect that there may only be nine years of income from gambling left.

Training and education

Indians are discouraged from entering into businesses they have no experience of.

In the 1950s an attempt to train Indians was made by relocating many to major centres. However, they were 'scared to death' by the very different environment, and most did not stay long. There are a few who stayed and continue to work in industries like the automotive industry. Many tribes are focusing on education. In many cases professionals are setting up in communities to act as role models.

Indian ventures

Timber mills and oil transportation have been evaluated as potential ventures, however they were not proceeded with because of the lack of expertise among the tribes interested.

Ventures which have been followed successfully are described below.

New Mexico

Tourism

The Indians have come to realise that they need to control tourism. In the case of one tribe which lives on top of a mesa, the Indians bus in the tourist and provide guides. This allows them to ensure tourist intrusion into areas they do not want it is kept to a minimum.

It is important the initiation of tourist activity with involving any cultural group is initiated and implemented by that group.

Hotel ownership

The Pecory tribe own 51% of the Hotel de Santa Fe jointly with the owners of the land on which the hotel is built. This was eligible for an \$11m Federal loan because it benefited the Indians on the reservation nearby.

Cultural items

The Tulse Indians make and sell drums from cottonwood and Aspen trees.

Some tribes make Cachinas, spiritual figures, for sale. Other tribes frown on this, seeing it as trivialising an important cultural item.

Communications manufacturing

Laguna Industries is an Indian company manufacturing communication shelters for the military. This company used to manufacture wiring harnesses for automobiles. A senator on the military purchasing committee used his influence to get a large company (Rathion Corporation) to assist the tribe. Rathion mentored the tribe in putting together a manufacturing system and bidding for a military contract. Rathion pulled out of the role after training the tribe to manage the entire project. Motorola now work with the tribe.

Gambling

Gambling has provided a large amount of revenue to the Indians since about 1988.

Key points which came out of the discussion on gambling were:

- While about 10% of tribes are doing well from gaming, it provides only little to moderate benefits to most tribes.
- One tribe, the Piquads of Connecticut, earns about \$30m per month. One result is that each tribe member receives a payment of about \$100,000 each year.
- There are 11 Indian run casinos in New Mexico.
- Gaming revenue must go to social issues which would otherwise require Federal Funding.
- One New Mexico tribe have provided a golf course, fitness centre, police station and homes with the funds earned from gaming.
- A complex series of issues seems to surround the legality of gambling in Indian reservations, however it appears that, while the detail of the legality is sorted out, gambling which is technically illegal is allowed.
- There is a 9 year 'window' of opportunity for gaming, apparently based on life of the legislation which allows the gambling to take place.

Natural Resource Management

The Indians are very environmentally conscious. Two issues were raised in relation to natural resource management:

- Indians working in National Parks
- The requirements of Indians in managing the natural resources in their communities.
- Managing negative environmental impacts of non-Indians within reservations. For example, in one reservation in Texas the Army Engineers built a dam in the 1950s. Seepage from the dam 'ruined' land and the tribe successfully sued the Federal Government.

Assistance for economic development

Tax credits (\$2000 per person) and accelerated depreciation on plant were offered to businesses which employ Indians on reservations. There are a number of loopholes which have arisen, such as businesses in Oklahoma, which has no reservations, but many Indians, declaring themselves as 'in Indian territory' and claiming the benefits.

Some tribes operate a micro-loan scheme, where they lend at low interest of the order of \$500 to individuals to start small businesses.

Large Corporations often want to work with communities and be good corporate citizens. It is necessary to 'go on bended knee' to these corporations to request assistance.

To motivate Indian groups to the point that they want to develop enterprises, the Economic Development Department get successful people to talk to them, and get the Indians to visit successful businesses. Indians have a lot of entrepreneurial spirit, but are afraid because they do not know the market. There are a number of organisations that help Indians get into business.

Contact person

Robert Johnson, of the New Mexico Economic Development Department, is a native American Indian. He was raised on an Indian reservation. After a further two years on the air force he joined Lincoln Systems for 16 years. He then ran his own satellite navigation business for two years before working with the Federal Government promoting business with, among other groups, minorities. He now works for the state of New Mexico.

Background information on Indians in the USA

Of the 554 Indian tribes in the USA, there are 22 in New Mexico, 19 Pueblo, 2 Apache and the Navaho nation. Most Navahos are in Arizona, with others in Utah. There are about 70-100,000 in New Mexico, mostly in the North East area. Each tribe is a sovereign nation, with powers equal in level to the state laws, a status which survives continual court challenges. Under long-standing agreements, the tribes receive education and health care in exchange for the large areas of land taken from the Indians during European settlement of America. There was an expectation that Indians would become self sufficient over time.

Indian tribes are governed by a Tribal Council, under which is a Governor, and below which is the judiciary, etc. Under the Indian Reorganisation Act (1934), tribes could adopt a constitution. In New Mexico, some pueblos elect their governing bodies, while in others they are governed by an appointed spiritual leader. Law on the reservations is administered by the Indians themselves. About 98% of Indian judges are attorneys. There are occasionally jurisdictional problems between the Indians and the State.

Tribal membership is controlled through the issuing of membership cards by the Tribal Council. The Federal Government wanted to limit membership to those with at least 25% Indian blood. Some tribes (e.g. the Cherokees) accept 12.5%. To prove this, one of a person's grandparents' names must be on a roll of names held by the tribe.

Each tribe maintains its own dialect. Reservations range enormously in size, usually related to the productivity and value of the land (e.g. Tulsa reservation is 6,000 acres, Navaho is 2,000,000 acres and the Laguna Pueblo is over 400,000 acres). The reservations will not change in size, however the Indians often buy land to provide a buffer for religious areas. Indians manage most land to improve the wildlife (e.g. increasing the Bison herd).

Relationships between Indian tribes are generally good.

Living conditions of Indians is variable. Many have very poor housing. This is contributed partly by the impact of large extended families living in a small house. This puts a drain on any one member of the household who is earning an income. Some may have no electricity and no water. There is some vandalism in those houses, mostly by a few young Indians who are influenced by modern American culture. There are also some very affluent Indians.

Young Indians are involved in religious and cultural activities at a very young age. As a result they continue their involvement through their teen years and into adulthood.

Unemployment is very high among Indians. About 37-44% of 250,000 Navaho tribal members are unemployed. In future, unemployment benefits will only be paid for six months, after the recipient will have to get a job. Many elderly Indians are on pensions which they have earned as a result of working in hospitals etc.

New Mexico

New Mexico Department of Tourism, Santa Fe - 18 September 1997

Speaker, Paul Narbutas

Report compiled by Paul Michael

Brief description

Manager - Rural Economic Development New Mexico.

Tourism program (NW Dept of Tourism)(REDtT)

Lithuania extract - qualified economist.

REDtT - facilitates rural tourism by:

- Support and assistance for rural tourism.
- Advertising and promotion - domestic and international.
- Increasing awareness of tourism.
- Community tourism co-operation.
- Tourism operator guidance, training and education.
- Project support /backup, e.g. enhancement and revitalisation project.
- Co-ordination of festivals.

Based at College of Agriculture and Home Economics, New Mexico State University. REDtT administered by the US Department of Agricultural Extension System.

'Newsline' is New Mexico Tourism's regular publication.

Key issues

management through:

- Understanding the market niche marketing -e.g. ranch tourism becoming successful providing operators effectively manage seasonal cycles to blend in with peak tourism times - dude ranches don't have to be all year round. They can be as little as two weeks or so of the year.
- Slow and careful controlled planning e.g. Pueblo Indians, a slow, steady adjustment into tourism. They control buses, tours and the very land themselves and have achieved good assimilation of tourism and culture by steady timing and good control - don't jump in too fast. Can often make many mistakes by being too hasty.
- Training and using information - rural tourism operators need to research their market and be prepared for some training and utilising information which is now widely available through modern sources -e.g. the Internet, databases, regional studies and references.
- General promotion (as opposed to specific) need to be prepared to link effectively with regional tourism initiatives and attractions to help establish specific projects. Those rich links need not necessarily be nearby, e.g. Gallup is 400 miles from Tucumcari but is effectively promoting its own rural tourism generally with other towns such as Gallup, as they are at each end of Route 66.

Specific area or region promotion thereby not always suitable.

Lessons learnt

- We need to be more aware of time pressures and seasonal factors influencing our attempts at rural tourism establishment. We should also realise that it doesn't

have to be an all year round thing when promoting rural tourism. It can work around busy times.

- Complimentary side benefits can be achieved, e.g. one rancher quoted by the speaker "couldn't get over that people will pay him to work his ranch".
- Proper market understanding - possible rich opportunities, e.g. wildflower season can, in some areas coincide nicely with a quieter time on the farm (e.g. spring) with peak tourism activity.
- Take it slowly- a controlled steady approach taken a bit at a time is likely to be more successful than going in too fast.
- Access information on the market thoroughly, i.e. training courses in rural tourism, access regional economic data and utilising information technology such as the Internet.
- Ascertain if rural tourism promotion should be specific or generic, i.e. may be more advantageous overall to develop tourism with similar districts rather than specific promotion of one area or town.
- Tourism doesn't have to have direct impact on the particular site or area, e.g. turning cactus into dollars - local rancher's wife makes cactus jam and sells it locally without tourists visiting their property.
- Entry costs not necessarily high - can be low key but still functional and relevant to tourist needs.

Contact details:

- Paul Narbutas, New Mexico Department of Tourism
491 Old Santa Fe Trail
SANTA FE
NEW MEXICO 87502
- Rural Economic Development Through Tourism Program
College of Agriculture and Home Economics
New Mexico State University
PO Box 30003 Dept. 3HTS
LA CRUCES
NEW MEXICO 88003 -8003
- Newline - New Mexico Tourism Publication
Tourist Association of New Mexico
ALBUQUERQUE
NEW MEXICO
New Mexico

Main Street Program - 18 September 1997

Speaker, Elmo Baca

Report compiled by Paul Michael

Brief description

- Elmo is Director - New Mexico Economic Development Department. This is a state-wide program designed to help revitalise town and city central areas.
- Established 20 Years ago by the National Trust, many people were concerned that 'super retailers' such as Walgreens were affecting heritage in old towns.

- Program to help regain economic viability whilst enhancing and preserving culture and heritage and create positive attitudes and pride within communities.

Key issues

- Organisation - the community identifies leadership and improves the district's organisation through involvement of business, civic groups and city government. Committees formulate work plans outlining specific achievable goals and objections for each year of program. Program Manager is funded also.
- Design - each community has unique character that can be enhanced by preserving it's buildings and encouraging architectural and graphic design that complements existing buildings. Design also addresses window displays, commercial and public signage merchandising, landscaping, parking and public amenities.
- Promotion and Main Street Program markets the district as a unified shopping area to attract visitors, shoppers, retailers and investors. The community identifies the centre of activity district and promotes via co-operative and individual store advertising, logo development, special events and promotions.
- Economic Restructuring - Main Street towns examine current economic and market conditions affecting the district by utilising techniques such as consumer and merchant surveys, buildings, business inventory, focus groups. Based on this analysis communities implement business retention, expansion and recruitment plans to provide the best use of retail and business services.

Lessons learnt

- All towns need to be aware of the importance of main street focus. First impressions are often the last. Many tourism initiatives may be doomed to fail if the main street is shabby.
- If small communities lack a core of civic minded people, it may be necessary to simply focus on the design aspect rather than adopt the full organisational / design / promotion / economic restructuring program.
- Maintaining old buildings and structures of heritage relevance important for community identity.
- Special agricultural events can tie in well with main street revitalisation programs, thus achieving dual tourism development and promotion objectives as well as recognising agricultural contribution and enhancing city / country relations.

Contact details:

New Mexico Main Street Program - Economic Development Program
Joseph Montoya Building - 1100 St Francis Ave
SANTA FE

NEW MEXICO 87503

Telephone: 505 827 0200 Fax: 505 827 1645

New Mexico 18/9

**Interstate Surface Transport Enhancement Act (ISTEA) Program, Santa Fe
18 September 1997 Speaker, Elmo Baca**

Report compiled by Paul Michael

Brief description

ISTEA - goal initially to create and enhance other forms of transport - \$40 billion US program.

ISTEA funding and activities now cover:

- Cultural corridors
- Scenic byways

Route 66, the main program in New Mexico is covered under this.

New Mexico's route 66 is the State's longest (over 300 miles) and best known scenic byway and was immortalised in songs by numerous musical artists, namely Bobby Troop, Nat King Cole and the Rolling Stones. It runs from Gallup in the west to Tucumcari in the east and was originally the only road route from east to west in the USA.

In the period following WW2, a new sense of freedom compelled Americans to explore their own country and go west as pre-war fuel restrictions limited travelling freedom. Route 66 was the route they took and it became as much a part of United States culture of freedom and individuality as apple pie.

Although many sections of the highway are now gone or have been re-built (Interstate 40) old scenic sections have been preserved and maintained.

Key issues

Enhancement and Revitalisation of cultural corridors and scenic byways by signage:

- enhancing and completing road markers
- road kiosks
- integrated signs for historic/ cultural landscapes
- controlling billboards

Community based information projects:

- combining community and media information
- stand alone exhibits to be housed in visitor's centres, museums, libraries, city halls, etc
- community walking / driving tour brochures
- overview cultural brochure of promotions, events, and public art

Techniques / strategies / technical assistance

- sponsoring community workshops in design, (storefronts, architecture etc.), promotion, organisation, business development, retailing, merchandising, tourism/ hospitality, public art, special events, land use, historic preservation, oral history, publications, press relations, fundraising / grant applications.

Redirecting flow of transport to special interest country areas.

GIS - Geographical Information Systems

New Mexico

- computer based geographic and demographic software to aid tourism and economic redevelopment planning

Internet

- detailed, easily accessible information base for all information or revitalisation, coming events and even Real Estate.

Lessons learnt

- Welcome centres a good concept, necessitating some form of welcoming signage or information source at the entry point of towns. Some WA towns practice this well, others need attention.
- Promotion of scenic/ historic out of the way routes to direct tourist activity to areas needing it, e.g. Old Great Northam Highway/ Goldfields Road (York/ Tammin) Good examples of potential opportunities here.
- Inter - Community co-operation on common tourist attractions can benefit all concerned enormously with advantages well over and above what could be achieved singularly.
- Federal recognition and funding the obvious vital ingredient - lobbying necessary. WA has less access to rural funding.
- Communities need a vision a core of forward thinking civic minded people essential.
- Training a key component here.
- Fund-raising options - need analysing of various public and private funding possibilities.
- Regenerate and revitalise leadership / community civic cores. Continual "maintenance" and development of these groups vital.

Contact details

Elmo Baca

Director, New Mexico Main Street Program

PO Box 20003

SANTA FE

NEW MEXICO 87504 - 5003 Telephone: 505 827 0200 Fax: 505 827 1645

Gallup Convention and Visitor's Centre

GALLUP

NEW MEXICO (Brochure)

Sue Mann

Albuquerque Route 66 Association

ALBUQUERQUE

NEW MEXICO 87109

DENVER, COLORADO**Centre Of Excellence For Sustainable Development****(A Centre Set Up By The Us Department Of Energy)- 19 September 1997***Report compiled by Mike McFarlane*

US communities spend \$190 billion on energy each year and 50% comes from overseas. The Denver centre covers 12 states and communities that range from very large cities to small communities and neighbourhoods as well as national parks, industry parks.

Their mission is to assist communities with expert consultation on sustainable development and link them with other private and public programs. "Sustainable Development is a new planning approach by the US Government. Development must not only improve the local economy but local environment and quality of life.

The benefits that sustainable development will deliver for communities are:

- a) create jobs by keeping \$ at home
- b) saves money to individuals
- c) improves the environment
- d) improves quality of life
- e) provides a better future

The centre uses the Internet and has increased community contact through it to 70,000 per month. The centre believes in education and leadership and not regulation. It has designed decision making tools and kits for communities to use. They measure their successes by policies and use by communities.

Working examples of projects and technical assistance provided by the Centre include:-

- Extensive studies were carried out on a community that had trouble with flooding with the result being that the whole town was relocated to a more suitable site.
- Communities are assisted to recover from a national disaster.
- Encouraging the development of solar energy e.g. Atlanta first Solar City.
- Planning of efficient urban gardening.
- Encouraging energy efficiency such as a supermarket which had not needed to use its heating for nine years.

Key issues

- sustainable development
- marketing messages:
 - a) creates jobs
 - b) saves money to individuals
 - c) improves the environment
 - d) improves the quality of life
 - e) better future
- Government department - advisory
- No representatives from community

Application

- Need to find the messages that work in our community.
- Encouraging local politics / projects.
- Need for towns to create effective linkages to external resources.
AgWA, Telecentre, Wheatbelt Development Commission, Business Enterprise Centres.
Ensure action plans to establish and use mechanisms.
- Sustainability can be part of an attractive campaign.
- Value of strategic partnerships between key agencies.

Further detail is available on handouts and copies of overheads.

For more information, contact:

The Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development
US Department of Energy
Denver Regional Support Office
1617 Cole Boulevard
GOLDEN
COLORADO 80401

Telephone: 303 2754826 and 800 357 7732 Fax: 303 275 4830

Email: sustainable.development@hq.doe.gov

World Wide Web: <http://www.sustainable.doe.gov>

Denver, Colorado**Black American West Museum, - 19 September 1997**

Report compiled by John Hassell

Brief description

The Black American Cowboy Museum is the result of a man with a vision who saw that history had omitted a huge piece of what actually occurred. His vision was to tell people through the museum that Black Americans played a significant role in the development of the mid west. The museum is also a testament to the first black woman doctor in Denver.

Dr Justina Ford, who had to battle the dual prejudices of a white male dominated field, used the building as a surgery and hospital for 35 years before being awarded hospital visiting rights.

Key issues

A man with a vision who pursued it.

Cultural education between black and white community spirit.

Working with what we have, exploiting local asset, i.e.: Dr Justina Fords House.

Tourism with a local theme.

Ability to achieve without having government assistance being thrown at it.

Lessons learnt

That we need not necessarily accept what we are told by "The Authorities".

An aspect of this museum is that it can be used to help young black people identify that their forebears were instrumental in the development of the mid west. This can be applied in WA by incorporating youth into the planning of a native Australian

museum if they want to. This kind of project requires an Aborigine with a vision. It would also help community spirit and education for the non-aboriginal community.

Contacts:

The Black American West Museum and Heritage Centre.

Justina Ford House

3091 California Street

DENVER

COLORADO 80205

Telephone: 303 292 2566

The Institute For Cultural Preservation

c/- The Paul Stewart Collection

PO Box 7405

DENVER

COLORADO 80207

Telephone: 303 316 7131

DEADWOOD, SOUTH DAKOTA

20-21 September, 1997

Report compiled by Roger Arnold

Description

Deadwood is a town of 3000 people situated in the Black Hills of South Dakota. The town was slowly dying due to the fact that it's main economic base - the gold mine, was scaling down operations.

Jobs were being lost and people were re-locating elsewhere, where jobs were available. As a result, the town's economy was dying.

To combat this problem, the town looked to diversify it's economic base. The community chose gambling as it's alternate economic base.

As a result Deadwood's economy has become somewhat revitalised (only somewhat [I will explain later]).

Deadwood now hails itself as the 'Mini Las Vegas', boasting over 10 Casinos. As a result of the 5% of business profits, tax imposed by the Deadwood community, the town has been somewhat re-vamped/ revitalised. The building's facade is, typical of the late 19th century, gold rush and frontier architecture have all been restored to original condition and have since been filled with various tourist related businesses.

Deadwood also boasts a night life which towns literally 100 times it's size could only dream of. It has 1000's of people visiting daily to gamble, many styles of live music, casinos, hotels, late night trading every night and with all of this the safety and security of a small town (no muggings etc.).

Deadwood also has several ski resorts nearby, is in an attractive setting and has great camping and hunting grounds. Therefore, it is a centre for entertainment and tourism.

The town's tourism industry is thriving, however, it's casinos have had few flow-on effects throughout the rest of the community's economy. As a result, many of the jobs created by the casinos are not long-term 'career' jobs - such as bar hands, waitresses, bell boys, poker-machine repairers and service station attendants. Few of the jobs created offer anything more than minimum wage, seasonal employment.

Why? This is attributable to the facts that:-

The casinos are not locally owned, so a lot of the profit flows directly out of the local economy.

Tourism has become the town's only economic base. Therefore, although the town attracts millions of people each year, it's economy (barring the casinos and tourist related industry) is only that of a town of 3000 people.

NB: Meaning, Deadwood's non-casino/ tourist related businesses (eg. Banks, manufacturing industries, grocery stores, hardware stores, schools and hospitals, etc.) only receive business from the town's permanent live-in population of 3000 people. And thus, Deadwood's non-tourist economy is similar, if not worse, than other rural towns of it's size.

Although the tourist income is important to communities, very little money is passed on through the economy to non-tourist related businesses. And thus, non-tourist related businesses do not grow. As a result, long-term skilled jobs are not created.

The youth of Deadwood, (the future employees in the area encompassing 15 year olds, young adults, young families with children, young professionals... broadly, those looking to begin and develop a long-term career), can see that these types of career jobs are not available in the Deadwood community. Therefore, few of these people are choosing to live their lives in the community. Therefore, the main lessons learnt from the Deadwood economy and community are:

Long-term jobs and career prospects must be available in any community wishing to attract and retain youth.

Great entertainment alone (i.e. Deadwood), is not sufficient to attract and retain youth.

Our communities should be funding programs to create jobs, preferably skilled jobs with promotional possibilities which are long-term.

Contacts:

Deadwood County Council
BLACK HILLS
SOUTH DAKOTA

WALL, SOUTH DAKOTA

Wall Drug Store - 21 September 1997

Report compiled by Rhonda Phillips/Christine Arnold

Description

Wall Drug Store is a family owned and run business in Wall, South Dakota a town of around 800 people. The store was purchased by the Hustead family in 1931 in the middle of the depression. The family decided to give the store five good years and see how it went. By 1936 things still hadn't improved and December was the deadline for making a decision on whether to stay or not.

One hot day in July, Dorothy Hustead went to put their young son down for a sleep. She couldn't sleep for all the traffic going by on Highway Number 90 as people drove passed to the Badlands National Park, the Blackhills and Yellowstone National Park. The tourists looked really hot and dusty and Dorothy decided that they could offer free iced water to the tourists to get them off the highway into Wall and particularly in to their store.

Over the next few days they made up signs offering free iced water and spaced them out on the highway so people could read them as they drove by. People started calling in straight away. Not only would they get a glass of free water but once there they would by an icecream or some other product from the store. By the next summer the Husteads had to hire eight girls to work in the soda shop to keep up with demand. To offer free ice water all year round the Hustead's had to collect it during winter by cutting blocks of ice out of frozen dams and lakes and keeping it all through summer.

Today the Wall Drug Store is much more than a Drug Store, it is an experience. The store has grown to now be the largest drug store in the world and also incorporates a library that covers hard to find books and other shops such as a jewellery shops, gift shops, clothes store, museum and nickelodeons. It also has a restaurant which can serve three busloads of tourists in just 15 minutes. 2 000 000 people visit Wall Drug each year at up to 20 000 people per day in summer. The store now employs 80 people full time most of whom are locals with 240 employed during summer.

The major success of Wall Drug can be attributed to its amazing advertising. The idea of using signs on the highway to advertise free ice water and the store has expanded so that now there are over 3 000 highway signs in 50 states of the US and around the world. The Hustead's offer free signs to anyone who will take them and use them. There were 127 Wall Drug signs in South Vietnam during the Vietnam War. Wall Drug is also advertised on London's double-decker buses and on road signs in Paris, Amsterdam and Rome to name a few. Two people are employed solely to maintain the signs.

The Hustead's have also appealed to people where they are at the time. At a time when most people were shunning Vietnam veterans, Wall Drug Store had signs advertising free coffee and do-nuts to all Vietnam vets. At another time it may be free coffee and do-nuts for skiers.

The attitude that has helped Wall Drug get to where it is today is best summed up by Ted Hustead:-

"No matter where you are you can succeed if you offer people something they need and serve up good humour, great service and good deals".

Key Issues

- They advertise for miles around and advertisements are kept fresh and up to date.
- Aim to specific markets
- Family owned and run.
- Caters to everybody with everything.
- So few residents doing so much.
- Provide hospitality training.
- Customer service is very important.
- One family's dream.
- Smaller shops in the town "ride on the back" of the big business.
- Marketing correctly can make a business grow.
- Immaculate rest rooms.

Wall, South Dakota

- Reasonably priced.

Applications

- Even though our towns are small we can achieve something huge.
- We may be in the country but we can still have up to date, city standard marketing strategies.
- We need to learn how we can cater to different groups of people in our areas.
- We need to keep things as reasonably priced as possible. That way people are more inclined to buy locally.
- We can advertise in more than just our own town. We have a whole district and for some things we can advertise over the whole state and beyond.

Contact

Mr Bill Hustead
510 Main Street
PO Box 401
Wall

South Dakota 57790

Phone: 605 279 2175

Fax: 605 279 2699

Wall, South Dakota

Wall Grassland Visitor's Centre- 21 September 1997

Report compiled by Bill Porter

The US Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USDAFS) runs this visitor's centre. The centre focuses on interpreting and providing information on National Grasslands. The 20 National Grasslands centres in 12 states originated from the federal government's purchase of land in dust-bowl areas in the 1930s. They are now managed for multiple uses and sustained yield of renewable resources, such as water, forage, wildlife and recreation. (USDAFS information sheet. There were 50,000 visitors / year recently with only 10 - 20% interested in seeing grasslands. The remainder were interested in general tourist information.

The Centre is open 7 am - 8 pm (peak season) and 8 am - 4.30 pm (off season).

Key issues

- The Visitor Centre was established as a result of a process which included of the Wall Drug Store. It appears to be at least partly aimed at adding an attraction to the town of Wall which bring more people to the town. The USDAFS also benefit from the large number of people who come to Wall to see the drug store.
- The layout of the centre was visually stimulating, including an inviting entrance.
- Short videos were available for showing in a comfortable theatre. These provide a lot of information to some visitors and leave themselves free to attend other visitors.

The staff suggested that getting community ownership of grasslands is not an easy thing to achieve. ("Anyone can love the mountains, but it takes soul to love the prairies.")

Lessons learnt

- Government agencies with a public education brief can be useful partners for towns in both attracting visitors and providing services, eg tourist information, to all visitors. The advantage to the agency is that their message is exposed to large numbers of people.
- A community may need to be actively involved in negotiations to attract such government agencies to their town.
- Short (5-10 minute) videos can be a useful way of providing detailed information to more interested visitors.

Contact details:

National Grassland Visitor's Centre

USDA Forest Service

708 Main Street

(PO Box 425)

WALL

SOUTH DAKOTA 57790

Telephone:(605) 279 2125

South Dakota**Pine Ridge Reservation - 21 September 1997**

Report compiled by Fiona Steddy

Description

Pine Ridge Reservation is a 1.7 million acre American Indian reservation in South Dakota. The land is generally cleared, medium/light soils and average rainfall is 18". 38,000 Indians live on the reservation in about 100 different small town locations.

Facilities on the reservation include 4 main high schools, a community college and basic shopping facilities.

The standard on housing is basic with little pride displayed in homes and communities. On going government support in new housing was evident. Water supply had recently been upgraded and expanded to cover the majority of the communities on the reservation.

The majority of the land titles are owned freehold by individuals. 80% of the operators are Indians. The main income is derived from agriculture - cattle and production of wheat, sunflower and corn.

80% of the residents are unemployed and receiving government welfare. Many social problems exist and are displayed by vandalism, lack of motivation, limited personal goals and direction.

Farm land appeared to be largely under utilised. Stock grazing rates are low and farm land is not being utilised to generate employment or profit.

Youth leaving the reservation and youth gangs are a problem. The introduction of cultural programs being implemented into the school curriculum has begun to try and address some of these issues and give the children a sense of pride.

The towns do have a low skill and trade base. Added to this is the unwillingness of many residents to create employment. This equates to the reality that very little potential for new industries and businesses being introduced onto the reservations exist.

If revitalisation and community growth is underpinned by job creation and the communities ability to develop and nurture it's own growth - fundamentally, major problems will continue to exist on the reservations. The Indians have achieved land rights, they occupy and own the land however they have not been able to develop, farm or attract industry into their communities. This had resulted with the majority of reservation Indians existing on government supports and benefits.

Understanding the cultural differences is a necessity to improve working relationships between the Indians and the White man. If a community attitude could be created where everyone who wants to work and employ people benefit over those who choose to be unemployed, the harbouring of self respect, community pride, growth and development may occur.

South Dakota**Mount Rushmore and Crazy Horse Memorials - 21 September 1997**

Report compiled by Leigh Hardingham

Crazy Horse and Mount Rushmore are situated in the Black Hills National Forest.

Mount Rushmore is situated 25 miles southwest of Rapid City, South Dakota, and 3 miles from Keystone. The project includes the carving in granite of the four American Presidents; Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and Roosevelt.

Started in 1923 to attract tourists and with a total cost of \$1,000,000 the final head was dedicated in 1941 several months after the sculptor Gutzon Borglum died.

The memorial can be viewed 24 hours a day, year round. An orientation centre is open 8am to 5pm. There is a sculptors studio and amphitheatre. A bookstore, gift shop and food service area are provided for visitors.

The public facilities are under redevelopment however our study group felt that the entry buildings detracted from the monument. Although development is vital we believed that the Nation Parks should be maintained in a manner that did not contrast nature

Key Issues

- Tourist potential of historic interest
- One man's dream and what can be achieved

The Crazy Horse Memorial is located close to the Mount Rushmore Memorial. A Lakota Indian Chief, Henry Sitting Bear approached sculptor Korczak Ziolkowski and asked him to construct a monument to show that "red man has great heroes too". Although this approach was made in 1939 it was 1947, with only \$147 to his name, he arrived on the mountain to commence his lifetime work. Over the decades he refused to accept a salary and battled racial prejudice, injuries and advancing age. A strong believer in the free enterprise system he believed the Crazy Horse Monument should be a non profit project built by interested public and not the tax payer. He twice turned down ten million dollars in potential federal funding. He knew the project would outgrow his lifetime so he prepared his family to carry on the work after his death in 1982.

The Crazy Horse Monument when complete will be much more than a monument. A community cultural centre for Indians has been developed at the site and there are also plans for an Indian University to be a part of the overall complex.

Key issues:

- Tourist potential - How it can be cultivated.
- Native American recognition and involvement
- One mans dream can make a difference - The Latoka Chief had a dream. The sculptor Ziolkowski took that dream, made it his own and carried that dream to the next stage. Ziolkowski's family will fulfil the dream and many people have contributed in the process.
- Government Funding does not determine the success or scope of any project.

Contacts:

Mount Rushmore National Memorial,
PO Box 268,
Keystone, SD, 57751-0268
Phone: 605-574-2523
Internet: www.nps.gov/moru/

Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation,
Ave. of the Chiefs,
Crazy Horse, SD 57730-9506
Phone: (605)673 4681 Fax: 605/673-2185
Email: memorial@crazyhorse.org

CHADRON, NEBRASKA

Dr Edwin Nelson, 21 September 1997

Report compiled by Rhonda Phillips

Description

Dr Nelson grew up in a small town within rural America called Newport. After becoming a qualified teacher, he then taught in other small rural towns with school populations of sometimes as little as 30 children.

With this background, Dr Nelson knows the plight of rural communities having a declining population. As a result, he is now working with a community leadership course, although he is focusing his efforts more on the Community/ School Revitalisation Project.

The purpose of this revitalisation project is to provide the opportunity for teachers, school administrators, economic developers, community leaders and youth to plan together as change makes for enhancing the future of rural communities and their schools.

Key Issues

- Page two of the handout titled "Community/School Revitalisation - A Project at Chadron State College, Nebraska" and/or
- Children and young adults need to be involved in community development.
- People should be invited along to committees and the committees need to be constructive with these people.
- Schools are the heart of rural communities.
- Youth can be very powerful.
- Communities cannot have too many committees, however, they should have different people within them and should come under one umbrella.

Applications

Community meetings can be carried out to inspire and motivate people and get things happening.

Outsiders are best as facilitators of community meetings due to politics within small towns.

We can help the children and young adults love and appreciate their communities and encourage them to be involved in committees.

The communities need to promote the small towns to teachers. They will think better of the town and will be more positive towards it. They will therefore pass this attitude onto the children they are teaching.

Contact

Dr Edwin C Nelson

Leadership Seminars

PO Box 858

CHADRON NEBRASKA 69337

(308) 432-2190

Nebraska**Bus Trip with Dr Ed Nelson from Chadron to Ainsworth, Nebraska****22 September 1997***Report compiled by Kevin Binning*

Dr Ed Nelson travelled on our bus with us on a trip out to meet with the school principal of Cody. During the trip, we passed through a number of towns. The following reports are comments made on the towns that we passed through.

CHADRON - was turned into a shopping centre town with a Walmart supermarket and other stores finding a niche. There was also five machinery dealers as well as a farm trade museum.

HAY SPRINGS - was a bedroom town of 693 people. The community made a decision to work together and formed Seridin County Pork, a group of farmers who formed a marketing alliance which allowed them to survive. Haysprings people were caring and kept a close interest in their youth particularly with developing technology in their school with the interlinking of the internet. Dr Ed mentioned the importance of regional magazines and the Saturday night trading brought communities together socially. He also mentioned local tourist trap of a green lake monster. The comment was made that schools must be flexible enough to directly relate to communities. The farming enterprises were corn, wheat, alfalfa and sugar beet.

The town of Clinton was mentioned with the enterprises of stuffed toys, a sand blaster and also an enterprise called Tillerey sandwich distributors where a lady had started selling prepacked sandwiches to local towns and service stations. This business now goes across the state.

Dr Ed made the point that auction on a regular basis had helped the town of Gordon and that people were coming back to rural areas. The importance of stimulating communities with guest speakers was a point mentioned.

MERRIMAN a town of 151 had allowed its school to go and it then died as a community. Dr Ed also emphasised the need to create industry back into the communities.

CODY 177 people with 85 students attending its school the school had a \$30 000 computer room, a modern gymnasium and agricultural workshop all of which had been funded by the school board and Cody community. The school children had also completely restored an old theatre, a commendable example of what community pride and effort can achieve even with 177 people.

BREWSTER, NEBRASKA**Dinner with Community Builders - 22 September, 1997***Report compiled by Tracey Slarke*

Brewster is a small community 42 miles north of Ainsworth, Nebraska, boasting a population of 28 people. It does, however, draw from the surrounding district which comprises of approximately 400 people.

We met with the community builders from Brewster, Ainsworth and Basset and dined at Uncle Buck's Lodge. This establishment was owned by local ranchers who had built it only recently. Although it was a wonderful entertainment venue, it had unfortunately caused the closure of the hotel in Brewster.

Following dinner and networking with community members, a general discussion was held on various aspects of the Community Builders Program. The key outcomes of that discussion are as follows:

- Our Nebraskan counterparts in Community Builders were established about four years ago, however they only existed as a social discussion group for the first two years. There are six towns within this cluster who met regularly for 7 am breakfasts.
- After two years they decided to promote their towns and regions within "the Nebraska Outback" magazine, a project they worked on as a group.
- There appeared to be several differences between the two state programs in that
 - a) the Western Australian Community Builder's Program ran for six months compared to nine months for the Nebraskan one. It was felt that the lesser time created a sense of urgency and thus a greater desire to achieve measurable outcomes in most WA clusters.
 - b) The WA Community Builders Program was primarily aimed at skilling leadership within the younger population, thus most participants were in the 25-35 year age group. The Nebraskan Community Builders were more mature and there was a distinct lack of youth representation at our dinner.

Fundamental objectives that are being achieved by both groups is the interaction achieved surrounding communities within each cluster, highlighting the desire by Community Builders to address and achieve revitalisation and survival in rural areas.

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AURORA, NEBRASKA

23 September 1997

Report compiled by Tracey Clarke

Aurora has a population of 4,000 people, and amongst the businesses in town it lists 3 banks, 2 grocery stores and 2 new car dealerships. The average farm size is 1,000 acres with land prices averaging \$2,300 per acre, and corn production costs at \$150 per acre. Corn and soy bean are predominant crops with Aurora producing 30-45 million bushels per year, one third of the county's total. The agriculture sector of the community pays 75% of the tax to run the school, however only 25% of the children are from that area, proving that the urban and rural sectors must work together to better serve everybody. The school has no bonded indebtedness - they own all facilities on a 45 acre campus, with grades from kindergarten to 12th grade with multiple learning options available.

Charitable organisations have been set up due to resources left to the community by benefactors, and it is these organisations that run the hospital, library and other infrastructure with a total of \$22-\$23m in charitable assets.

The Aurora Development Corporation (ADC) was initiated in the 1960's and is a private for-profit corporation with 240 members who paid \$50- \$75 per share. ADC purchases land and buildings, trades properties, works with government utilities and existing businesses and industry as well as prospective ones. Some representatives from surrounding communities sit on the ADC in an effort to encourage regional co-operation. They act as a facilitator and have a board of 15 elected directors as well as 15-20 non-elected advisory directors many who have been long serving elected directors. They meet twice a month and have four committees:

1. Existing business and industry
2. Community development
3. Acquisition of sites
4. Housing

The Aurora Chamber of Commerce work closely with the ADC - in fact many members serve on both boards. The Chamber is made up of 13 or 14 committees, some of which are retail, transport, government, education, and agriculture.

For three years Ken Wortman pushed for housing in the town as he saw that more housing would result in accommodation for more labourers. In the end he started a business, manufacturing homes. The ADC saw the advantages and the Housing Development Corporation, a non-profit corporation, was created. They have contracted work out to Aurora Construction Enterprises, a for-profit limited liability company, who have built on 66 building lots in McBride's Subdivision, with homes averaging \$150,000. The head works costs were \$18,000 and were paid by the ADC.

Three years ago a co-operative was formed to initiate an Ethanol plant in Aurora. They researched other ethanol plants, and liaised with communities that had been in the same situation, resulting in the production of a prospectus. Producers and media visited an ethanol plant in Aberdeen, South Dakota in order to sell the idea to the community.

Key Issues

- Private enterprise can take control of a community's destiny - don't wait for the government gravy train to initiate the funding.
- "It is desirable and acceptable to be profitable and it is profitable to share" - Ken Wortman.
- One man with a vision and persistence does make a difference ie Ken Wortman's housing initiative.
- It is vital to look long term, have a vision and act quickly while the idea is positive.
- Work with what you have within your community - corn, water, infrastructure.
- "Don't buy industry - it does not work". Provide land and utilities and invite industrial companies to town.
- Different facets of your community will never be equal - concentrate on what is good for the entire or majority of the community and work out how everybody can benefit. Community policy is the first step in community development - is it right for the community?
- The family process of fostering business creation has been replaced by Development Corporations.
- Giving time to talk to others polishes your presentation for when it counts
- Community work pays indirectly due to community growth.
- Fortnightly meetings mean you are on top of what is happening.

Contacts:

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The Nebraska Natural Resources Commission - 24 September 1997

Report compiled by Tracey Starke

The Nebraska Natural Resources Commission is a state agency with responsibilities for long range planning and management of land and water resources.

The State of Nebraska is divided up into 23 natural Resources Districts (NRDs).

The Governor appoints a director to supervise the various programs. Sixteen commission members help make policy decisions on the allocation of funds, approve reports and advise the Director. Most commission members are selected for four year terms by NRD directors residing in Nebraska's 12 river basins. NRDs are not regulators. Any disputes are settled between parties through the courts.

Programs in the NRCs

- Soil and Water Conservation Fund - financial assistance to individual landowners.
- Resources Development Fund - State \$ for programs that preserve natural resources.
- Small Watersheds flood Control Fund - acquisition of land for flood control projects.
- Soil Survey Fund - soil surveys, GIS information.
- Floodplain Management - non structural program of floodplain management.

At the local level, the Commission has a partnership with Nebraska's 23 NRDs. Local Natural Resources District memberships vary from 5-21 and are elected democratically at times of state elections. District budgets vary from \$300,000 to \$18 million. All district membership are community members with Agencies playing an advisory roll only.

Local Boards receive funds from federal, state and 2% of their local land tax. Federal support is more in the form of technical and engineering. US Army is involved with some of the major engineering.

Local priorities are water quality and water quantity.

Key issues

- Communities become more aware and involved with natural resources management through the election process.
- State is not a regulator - land can be degraded and no action taken if no second party involved.
- Local Boards funded from local land tax.

Lessons learnt

- Open election of district representatives. The use of state elections to elect district representatives to regional resource management groups, eg Swan/Avon ICM, Blackwood.
- Local or regional resource management groups being funded from local land tax to administer resource management.

<http://www.nrc.state.ne.us>

Lincoln, Nebraska (continued)

Food Strategy Centre, University of Nebraska, 24 September 1997

Report compiled by Lindsay McNeill

The Food Strategy Centre is housed in the Lincoln University of Nebraska. It is a marketing and developmental program for industries processing value added food for human consumption.

In 1980 the government put forward a proposal and funding to establish value added products. The pilot plan attracted \$11,000,000. funding from state legislature. This provided training and facilities to establish the centre. The program is now staffed by over twenty technical support and 10 marketing support staff.

The success of the program can be measured by a report stating that in 1983 there were 260 companies producing foods in Nebraska, this increased to over 400 companies in 1997.

There are two arms of the program housed in two universities in Lincoln. One campus deals with grain and dairy products. The second campus supports animal and meat products.

Over half the companies using the facility employ less than 50 people, with most employing less than 10.

Marketing support has many facets, however it may be as simple as just renaming a product. An example given was microwavable popcorn which is nothing more than regular popcorn packaged and marketed differently.

Product support is offered in the form of product testing for bacteria, determining shelf life, sample line processing, packaging evaluation, naming of product and much more. Examples shown were the spray drying plant used to produce packet soups, the fermentation laboratory where soya bean protein levels were being manipulated and the cheese making facilities.

Small producers could hire the facility to run small batches of their product. This was relatively inexpensive and well accepted.

This centre also ran workshops for people considering setting up value added enterprises. This was from the initial business start-up to record keeping and management.

Ongoing funding is achieved by one third from the Federal USA Department of Agriculture, one third from the state of Nebraska and one third is self generated from fees charges, contracts and market research and development for established companies.

Key Issues:

- Support for small rural based business
- The link between universities and business
- The encouragement and practical support for value adding

All the above have very relevant applications in small rural communities. We need to establish what if any similar services are available in Western Australia. If they are available we need to promote this forum of assistance. If they are not available we strongly suggest a pilot program be implemented.

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Lincoln, Nebraska**The University of Nebraska**

Department of Economic Development, 24 September 1997

Report compiled by Kevin Binning

The University of Nebraska, Department of Economic Development operates and funds six programs aiding to Rural Economic Development.

EDGE Program:

EDGE stands for Department of Economic Development, Government and Education.

Education

Established in 1992 by the University of Nebraska as a result of:
Growth in the number of small businesses.

Growth in the failure rate amongst Nebraska's small businesses.

The Nebraska Edge Program is the umbrella organisation for rural entrepreneurial training programs that are hosted by local communities, organisations and associations. The training courses are taught by entrepreneurs for entrepreneurs. The Nebraska Edge Program is supported through a grant from the US WEST Foundation, the Nebraska Department of Economic Development and USDA Rural Development.

Courses are held for between five and 35 people.

Costs: \$10,000 to \$14,000 for course funding, if community raises half the cost of the course, the government will contribute the other half.

Who decides the content of the course?

- Rural Liaison Officers in Nebraska.
- Nebraskan Technology Centres.
- Nebraskan Bankers.
- Nebraskan Government.
- Nebraskan University.

700 people from 19 communities have been trained through the EDGE Program. Some banks will not loan money to small businesses unless they have completed the program.

Participants that have been trained, are then encouraged to do a 40 hour follow-up 'Next Level Training Program', created by (insert figure 1), from 14 different states, thus encompassing a wide range of business' best practices and ideas.

On completion, participants are given an instructional manual - a 'community based training program'. The participants then go back to their communities and train other small business people.

These courses teach businesses how to make basic business decisions, eg:

How many people to employ.

Wage structures.

Simple micro-economic guidelines.

Rural Poll

Established in 1996, the University of Nebraska Department of Economic Development sent the first rural polls to 8.7 counties (five metro and 82 rural), in the state of Nebraska. This poll was aimed at giving local, state and federal leaders of Nebraska an idea of what the Nebraskan rural community's thoughts and concerns were on various issues. (Giving advisory information to leaders.)

eg: What they thought about the consolidation of county shires and schools.

How would they feel if their communities increased in population, and if so how would they feel if the increasing population was due to:

more single parent families

more elderly and retirement aged people

Lincoln, Nebraska (continued)

The poll consisted of questions created by the:
Nebraskan Department of Economic Development.
Rural Development Commission,
and dealt with current issues concerning Nebraska as a whole and questions specific to Nebraska's rural population.

7000 participants were involved in the 1996 rural poll, conducted through a mail survey, with a 51% response.

So far, there have been no specific policies and laws made that are directly attributable to the Rural Poll.

Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI)

Directed and funded by:
The University of Nebraska
The University of Iowa
The University of Missouri

Program is in it's sixth year.

Statement: Government policies affect rural and urban households and communities very differently. E.g. There are more people over the age of 65 in rural areas than in urban areas.

Changes to the Medicare system will impact rural and urban communities differently.

RUPRI studies the extent of these differences, and seeks to inform the policy makers (e.g. US Senators and Federal Parliaments) of the likely effects on urban and rural communities to changes in existing policies.

So, like the rural poll, RUPRI acts as an advisory panel to the policy makers on both State and Federal levels.

Nebraska Community Modelling Program

This program aims to develop a community modelling tool, that will show the effects that various economic changes will have on rural communities. It is, in essence, an 'IF-THEN' program: if this happens, then this will be the outcome on the economy and town.

E.g. If the school's attendance grows, then the school will have to employ more staff, then more rental housing must be made available in the community to house the new staff, then rents will rise as a result of the increased demand for rental housing, then...

The Nebraska Community Modelling Program shows the ramifications on a community's economy of an event.

The program is still in it's infant stage of development and a completion date is yet to be set (so stay tuned).

'Navigating the Net' Through the 'Master Navigator Program'

References to the Internet are everywhere: in magazines, on television, and in the daily newspaper. Yet, most people do not understand what the Internet is or how it can benefit individuals and communities.

The Master Navigator Program provides an opportunity for citizens in your community to learn how to navigate the Internet and share these skills with others. After attending a series of classes and workshops, Master Navigators will help others in the community learn how to use the Internet. Each Master Navigator is asked to donate at least 30 hours in approved teaching and helping activities as partial payment for their training.

Lincoln, Nebraska,

Master Navigators can work with libraries, schools, city and county agencies and other community groups to develop educational opportunities for the residents for your community. Examples of activities in which Master Navigator may engage include answering questions on Internet use on help lines or public access sites, giving demonstrations and presentations on Internet use an access, and building and updating community World Wide Web pages.

Costs: \$35 per participant.

Partnership for Rural Nebraska

The three largest players in the Economic Development of Rural Nebraska are:

- The Department of Agriculture and Economic Development (Federal level).
- The Department of Agriculture and Economic Development (State level).
- The University of Nebraska Department of Economic Development.

In the past, these three bodies were independent of each other. And thus, the overlapping programs and resources occurred (as each body did it's own separate research on the same areas).

However, a partnership has now been formed between the three bodies. This will ensure that the three bodies will work in together, exchanging data, co-operating in programs and collaborating existing and future ideas.

As a result, funds will not be wasted on the duplication of work on the same programs as it was in the past.

Specialist in each specific area of expertise within the three bodies, can meet and work together - both studying rural economies and creating policies to best strengthen and help rural communities.

More effective policies will be created.

Key Issues

- Making use of a University or other small business consultancy related agencies to aid rural communities' economic development.
- Many small business people have great ideas and excellent intentions, however, their expertise in marketing and micro-economic decisions are insufficient to succeed in the modern market place.
- University Department of Economic Development and all other small business consultancy related agencies have this expertise.

- If small businesses take advantage of these services, it will aid to their profitability, growth and longevity.

Training the Trained To Train Others

Training people in any area is very costly. Many small business people have not got the money to spend on training courses which will benefit their businesses. However, a community can afford the cost of training one person.

Once this person has been trained, he/she then can be trained to teach this skill to other people.

Result: All small business people in a community can be trained by this one person at a far less cost to them.

The information has been passed onto everyone in the community.

To increase viability, profit, longevity, growth etc. Businesses must make use of, and keep up with modern technology:

Use of the Internet and E-mail facilities rapidly decrease communication time (at the speed of light rather than x number of days in the past) aid quicker business decisions.

Lincoln, Nebraska

Greatly increase the potential marketplace for their products. (E.g. From one town to the whole world).

Courses can be taken through this facility.

Businesses can keep right up to date with 'best practice' methods.

Use of modern technology in businesses can increase the efficiency of these businesses, thus increasing profit.

Creating and establishing a database of what rural people want, feel about policies...etc. is essential for informing policy makers of what the community wants. E.g. RUPRI.

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Lincoln, Nebraska**Heartlands Centre for Leadership Development - 24 September 1997**

Report compiled by Lindsay McNeill

Description

An independent, non-profit organisation which started in 1985 as an organisation calling itself Vision for the Heartlands.

The organisation was an initiative of community leaders from the 'Heartlands' (Great Plains) area of Nebraska centred on Lincoln. It was formed in response to a farm crisis in the 1980's and a massive downturn in the rural economy.

It's function was to work with small towns looking for ways to help them survive the economic crisis.

The centre made case studies of towns that were surviving and doing better than others. The aim was to identify what these were doing to survive and which might be used as examples for towns that were doing poorly. The centre has five full-time staff and two University students working as interneers. It draws funds from foundations, contracts with local government, grants for specific projects and uses volunteer workers.

The Centre now provides technical assistance and leadership training for resource dependant, small rural communities (90% of it's work is now done outside Nebraska, involving 1500 community leaders in 45 states and in Canada). In conjunction with University of Nebraska (Lincoln) the centre maintain a collection (the Kellogg's Collection) of manuals from all known rural community development organisations for community groups to access.

Key Issues

- Centre is a private, non-profit organisation providing a service similar to Community Builders. (Perhaps unnecessary overlap?)
- The organisation grew out of a need but has now greatly expanded it's scope. (Has it lost sight of it's original purpose?)
- The resource collection is a time saving innovation that gives communities access to most community development programmes already developed. This should avoid the need for community development groups to start from scratch if they want to implement a similar programme.
- The centre presents two workshops to help communities generate the optimum economic development using the resources they have.

Lessons Learnt

- The Heartlands Centre has a community development programme collection available for access on the internet.
- There is a need for co-ordination of community development programmes to avoid costly, divisive, unnecessary overlap between provider agencies.
- A study of a successful community can provide strategies to help others develop and progress.

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Lincoln, Nebraska**Community Meeting, Garden Cafe - 24 September 1997**

The Central 'Doing more with Agriculture' group attended a meeting at the Garden Cafe, Lincoln, Nebraska. Present were; Dr Ed Nelson, Tom Hansen, Don Mackie, Executive Director Rural Development Commission, Jon Fox, Jo Lowe, Doug Gibbs Deputy Executive Director RDC, Barb Gordon, Economic Development Corporation.

Don Mackie opened the meeting with the comment that development fails or succeeds at the local level. He went on with the following address that the community should look and learn what our neighbours need.

The Government of the people should in turn listen to the grass roots on what their hopes and dreams are, and in turn build their programme on what their needs would be.

In 1991 the Rural Development Commission was created. Prior to this, it was comprised of rural citizens from across the state to identify critical issues in rural economies. Their Government did not have a rural economic development focus. There had been 1000 different programmes and 150 different groups. With the RDC creation, a network was formed and now involved 500 public and private groups. These groups network with the idea of how to become more efficient.

In 1990, the Government undertook a programme of down-sizing, and at the same time they began to look at the whole area of philanthropy and what was discovered was the USA was in the midst of the greatest inter-generational change in history, and so they needed to frame what they saw as an opportunity. In 30 years a lot of wealth had been created by the tremendous economic expansion after the Second World War and into the 1970s. It was thought that some of this wealth should be used for inter-generational change.

In 1993 the Nebraska Community Foundation was started with the idea of attracting money i.e. Ford foundation to rural communities for community development. The foundation works for rural communities, and to get the past generation to leave some of the generated wealth to strengthen rural communities and try to hang onto Nebraska's big export - their youth. The foundation has 125 community organisations and 15 million dollars has been raised for community betterment. It is seen as a major key that can help communities raise the dollars.

In 1994 it was realised that the economic development programmes did not help small business. A large part of this problem had been that three groups; the University of Nebraska, State of Nebraska, USDPAG had all been competing for different programmes but had not been working together. Out of this realisation came a commitment by these groups that by working together they began to network ideas and information and provide a working base to help rural communities, which in turn, attracted more working funds and capital.

The result of this today is a successful rural resource and advisory group that is contributing to community development.

Don Mackie concluded that the following factors were key points for the group to take on board:

- take time to listen
- a need to act with smartness
- a special emphasis on best practice
- learn from neighbours
- the need to invest money and time in networking

Don Mackie's talk brought what we had seen in Nebraska to a focus explaining that with Government Co-ordination of resources, they were able to go out into communities and help them adjust to change and to re-develop.

The meeting then opened for general discussion and the following were some of the points which came out of this.

Good meetings were essential to holding community interest and they must finish on time.

An importance of listening to the people in the communities.

A need was seen to break down the barriers within communities and regions. The way this is done is by taking 3-5 people from each community and meeting at the

different towns, and looking at them and what they have, which in turn allows people to look at their own communities more objectively.

The point was made that this form of community leadership allowed people to, and or, gave permission to individuals to become involved in the decision making process of even the most established communities. A comment was made that in community meetings with Government people, it was more constructive to allow a very small period of time for the Government representative to talk, to in turn, allow the communities freely to speak.

It was stated that the biggest and most productive investment is in our youth. It was found that surprisingly when surveyed, young people and the older people within a community listed similar points as the important elements that would develop a community's future.

It was seen as being important, and where possible, to include school children in community activities i.e.

Representatives on Shire Council or Chamber of Commerce.

Through Science, a lake clean up was organised and the children were also able to study ecology.

Children should have the opportunity for mentors and role models i.e. Contact with doctors and Justices of the Peace. The comment was made that women were a greatly under-utilised resource, and with help could contribute a lot more.

The importance of a town working together was re-enforced with the example that one town of 600 could do a little, five towns of 600 each could do a lot. When a town is motivated and looking to develop, it is important to get the community to do a vision for the future meeting which will help to focus.

This report is long and it touches on a lot of areas, some of which would have been covered at other community visits. What it is, is an overview - a checklist if you like. Many of these points may have been adopted in part by our communities, but individually or in a small part. They may not have met their objectives but as a complete programme they will.

The other key factor is the networking of our technical resources to allow community information and financial support to develop programmes for population and economic development of towns and regions.

The region that there are groups within the community that are under-utilised and given the opportunity should greatly contribute to the future planning of communities.

SOUTH DAKOTA

University of South Dakota - Mr Bob Tosterud - 25 September 1997

Report compiled by Rhonda Phillips

Description

Mr Bob Tosterud is a firm believer in small towns and in entrepreneurialism. Community development is very important to him. Through his work he has developed strategies and models in which economic development can occur in small towns.

Key Issues

A small community must have potential to be able to 'save' it. Generally an average age that is more younger than older and a community that is planning around the next generation are good initial indicators of this.

- Change is good, but it must be carried out accordingly with the community.

- The most fundamental function of any economy is job creation.
- CASE method of economic development: Creation, Acquisition, Strengthening, Expansion.
- Private enterprise is absolutely essential.
- CAFE program is: Community And Family Enterprise.
- Communiversity - are resources sharing partnership of community and university for the purpose of mutual economic, social, cultural and intellectual enrichment.

Applications

We have to realise that we may not be able to save every town that we want to. Not only does it have potential, but the residents also have to want to save it.

We can use "communiversity", however, it will be the school's working with the communities and also communities working with communities. (E.g. Community builders.)

The instigation of change needs to be carried out carefully, but it does need to be carried out.

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Holder, Freeman Chair of Entrepreneurial Studies
Professor of Economics

FREEMAN, SOUTH DAKOTA

25 September 1997

Report compiled by Kevin Binning

Definition

The Central 'Doing More With Agriculture' group met with members of the Freeman community in one of the town's dinners.

We were welcomed by Sharon Schamber, Enterprise Coordinator and Norman Holten to the mid-west South Dakota. Freeman has a harsh climate with a cold winter and a hot summer.

In early days when the Freeman area was being developed, people were allocated 160 acres per family. Part of this development was that 40 acres per family. Part of this development was that 40 acres had to be put into crop each year and at the end of a five year period and if this condition had been met, the land would be given to the people.

Freeman was taken up mainly by Russians who were originally from Germany, migrated to Russia but met with cultural resistance so then migrated to America. The main rural enterprise are corn, soybeans cattle. It was felt that the strong German tradition had had an influence in giving the community stability and identity.

The community had embarked on a 10 year plan to attract more industry to Freeman. This was called the 'enterprise facilitation help project'. Some of the businesses in town were a specialist saddlery, AMDI milk drying plant, machinery dealers, tourist shop and nursery.

The community is predominantly Mennonite and it was felt that the attitude of the people was important. The key factor in this was that Freeman's strong cultural background had helped keep it's strength, combined with planning to attract more business to the community.

Freeman, South Dakota

Heritage Hill Museum - Curator, Cleon Graber - 25 September 1997

Report compiled by Kevin Binning

Description

Freeman, South Dakota is a regional trade centre located centrally 5 - 80 km away from three other centres with populations of 14, 15 and 10 thousand and is 40 - 60 km away from two interstate highways.

Heritage Hill Museum was built by the community with community funds and is run by volunteers. A list of charter donors that raised an initial \$66,000 is displayed in the entrance.

The museum is made up of four sections:

1. Local family and community records are kept in a separate room that had climate control to preserve all archives.
2. Fine arts room which displays paintings, sculptures, musical equipment / instruments.
3. Artefacts - large shed type area that contains a very wide range of artefacts from the very small to large light aircraft. The progression from smaller items to large was well done. One wall area contained a wide range of stuffed local animals, birds, fish - all well displayed. This display was donated by a local taxidermist. (All items were donated to the museum.)
4. Four buildings have been moved to the site and fitted out with artefacts in a way that appears that the buildings were still being used. The four buildings;
 - Bethel Mennonite Church.
 - Diamond Valley School Room
 - Pioneer home - Deckant house with a central chimney to heat the whole house.
 - Johannesthal Reformed Church

Key issues

- Asset to the community being a good display, a record for the present and future generations.
- Value of bringing the personal and community history to one place, thus helping to bond the community.

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Freeman, South Dakota

AMPI- Associated Milk Producers Inc.

Definition

A milk powder producing plant in Freeman is part of a bigger Co-operative that is not based in Freeman and covers six states.

Key Issues

- The plant collects milk from large and small producers over an area of 150 miles by 50 miles.
- Two grades of milk are received from the producers, Grade one and two. Grade one produced milk has Government inspected properties of a high standard.

Mike Schultz Saddlery - 25 September 1997

Report compiled by Kevin Binning

Description

Mike Schultz, who is also the Mayor of Freeman, operates his Saddlery from his home on the outskirts of the town. He makes about 72 saddles a year, wholesaling them for \$890 to \$1000 each, sending them via a national parcel service.

Key Issues

Saddlery

- Mike Schultz does not rely on a local market for his product. Anywhere the UPS delivers is his market.
- He is not interested in expanding as he does not want the problems of employing extra staff, buying more machines, etc.

Mayor

- A major new initiative of the city council is the provision of natural gas reticulation throughout the town. This resulted from pressure being applied to the council by community members who were frustrated that an earlier joint proposal of the NW Public Service and a local business had not been implemented.
- A group of private citizens recently completed a plan for the town. The process was initiated by the mayor who convinced the people to be involved. Mr Schultz thought the plan plotted a future course not very different to the current direction.

Lessons Learnt

Saddlery

- With good freight/parcel services, a business can access markets far removed from their location.
- A successful business may not grow if the proprietor has values other than maximising income or creating jobs.

Mayor

- New initiatives in towns do not have to originate in the formal decision-making groups.
- Long-term planning by a private group separated from the local government can be consistent with local government's key role in implementing plans.

Other Visits

Rural Manufacturing Co.
Manufactures livestock equipment (for hogs and cattle).

WELCOME CENTRES

Report compiled by Roger Arnold

Wyoming State Welcome Centre

Ainsworth Town Welcome Centre - 22 September 1997

Lincoln City/Regional Welcome Centre - 24 September 1997

Definition

A welcome centre is a building devoted to tourists and visitors (both local, interstate and international?) It provides tourists and visitors (T+V) with travel, historic, economic environmental and accommodation information.

Wyoming State Welcome Centre

Description

This centre, established in 1995 is actually called Wyoming Welcome Centre (author inserted the 'State'). Well sign-posted and situated at the entrance to the State of Wyoming it is the first point of information for visitors and tourists entering the state. It serves to provide information to its customers on a **State** level, providing them with a broad overview of the whole State of Wyoming, e.g. maps of the State, lists of airports, pamphlets on tourist attractions throughout Wyoming. The Centre:

- Employs two full time staff, 2.5 part time staff.
- It is funded and was built by the Wyoming State Government.
- It is open every day from 9 am to 5 pm including most public holidays.
- Well facilitated - toilets, drink fountain, undercover picnic areas and bar BBQ, lawn to sit on. No refreshments sold.
- Features and displays:
 - Interactive*
 - A computer that can be used to access lodgings in Wyoming.
 - Staff who are willing and able to talk about Wyoming.
 - Static:*
 - Stuffed displays of animals native to Wyoming, flower displays.
 - All the normal brochures.
 - A 3D image of the State on the wall with major cities, rivers and mountains marked on it.

Contact details:

Wyoming Welcome Centre
Bureau of Land Management
5353 Yellowstone Road
CHEYENNE
WYOMING 82009

Telephone: 307 775 6256

Lincoln Welcome Centre

- Well sign-posted and situated inside the Lincoln Rail Museum in a historical part of the city, this centre provides T+V with information on a city/ regional (within 100 km of Lincoln) level. The Centre:
- Employs two full time staff, 3-5 part time staff depending on the season.
- Funded by the Lancaster County Board (Lincoln City Council).
- Established 1996 and open every day of the year.
- 25,000 people through in 1996.
- Some information provided; museums, libraries, vineyards within the immediate Lincoln region.
- Well facilitated - the museum complex has with it toilets, cafes and restaurants.
- Features and displays:
 - Static*
 - Mostly the normal brochures, bus timetable etc.
 - Staff are very helpful.

Interactive

- Computer to find and book hotels.

Contact details:

Lincoln Welcome Centre

<http://www.lincoln.org/cub>.

Ainsworth Welcome Centre

Situated in a park in the main road through Ainsworth, in the middle of town, it is well placed for its purpose and Provides information on attractions of the local shire / town. It is also Ainsworth's museum which adds to getting V+T through its doors.

- Employs one full time , four hours a day, five days a week (20 hours week).
- 15,000 V+T per year,.
- Established in 1992, it is funded by the Town Council.
- Well facilitated - toilets, outdoor picnic area, grassed, but no food or drink.
- Features and displays - normal brochures and maps.
- Has brochures, but no booking facility for local accommodation.
- A great museum.
- A lady who knows the local history well.
- Not inter-linked with city/regional and state welcome centres.

Key issues

- Attracting the tourist \$ is an important part of economic development in the US. These centres increase the awareness of V+T, by providing them with information on the State, Regional and local areas. Thus, V+T are more likely to spend time and \$ in the state, city or town by looking at the features that are advertised by the welcoming centres.
- Positioning of the centres is in each case very strategic in drawing in V+T (signposts on interstate highway, in museum etc). The tourist if looking *will* find

one of these centres.

- Facilities in the centres make them worthwhile stopover points (good picnic areas, interesting displays etc).

Lessons learnt

- Tourist information must always be readily available to V+T, particularly on weekends and public holidays.
- Areas must be easy to find if you are not familiar with the area.
- Combining information, history and culture add to the interest of V+T and thus they are more likely to spend time in your community checking out the various attractions advertised in the centre.
- Interactive displays add to the interest.
- Must work to combine tourist centre with refreshment shop (or have one nearby), toilets, picnic area.
- A refreshment shop will help pay for the centre.
- Making the centre full of all different kinds of displays - pamphlets, computers, stuffed local flora and fauna, historic displays - all work to stimulate interest in what the state region and community have to offer. T+V will stop instead of driving on through.
- Internet web-sites are very valuable tools in the tourist industry. Many T+Vs visit the Internet when planning where they will visit.

Contact details:

Ainsworth Welcome Centre
C/- Ainsworth Chamber of Commerce
PO Box 112

AINSWORTH

NEBRASKA USA

Telephone: 402 387 2740