

THE WYOMING RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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

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

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

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

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

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October 5-6, 2004

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PROCESS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS REPORT

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

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

The Resource Team toured the town and interviewed approximately 45 people over a two day period from October 5-6, 2004. The team interviewed representatives from the following segments of Opal and surrounding community: industry, senior citizens, emergency services, businesses, agriculture, youth, community government and parents. Each participant was asked to respond to three questions designed to begin communication and discussion and to serve as a basis for developing the action plan. The three questions were:

What do you think are the major problems and challenges in Opal?

What do you think are the major strengths and assets in Opal?

What projects would you like to see completed in two, five ten and twenty years in Opal?

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

An oral report was presented to the people of Opal on October 6, 2004 and many of the citizens of Opal who participated in the interviews were in attendance. Following the oral report, a formal written report is prepared and presented to the town of Opal.

Executive Summary

The opportunity to participate in the Opal Community Needs Assessment on October 5th and 6th gave our team a chance to meet a wonderful group of people. There are many strengths that Opal can build upon to ensure a successful future. To become and maintain a vibrant, sustainable community takes only a few people willing to roll up their sleeves and go to work. Once this nucleus of dedicated citizens begins to exert effort; successes will become a reality. Then this nucleus needs to expand to include more and more of the community until the entire community is involved. The work is not on just the big jobs; it is also on the small ones than can be achieved quickly.

There are a number of short term, accomplishable recommendations that the assessment team has provided. The most important thing is to get the entire community involved in trying to find ways to accomplish its goals. A celebration at the successful conclusion of an activity, which has involved a large number of citizens, will lead to a feeling of accomplishment that will carry over into other activities. Look through short-term suggestions, pick out one that you know you can do and get started!

Each of you individually must decide what it is that you want to do – what kind of project you want to tackle. There are enough tasks for everyone, especially in a small community. Each small step, every accomplishment, no matter how limited, is movement in the right direction toward achieving Opal's goals. It can be done! It is you choice, your decision; you can do it! Good luck on meeting the challenges and visions you have for your community.

On behalf of the Opal Resource Team I want to thank the people of this community for the hospitality shown to us during our visit. Thank you!

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

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

Sincerely

Steve Achter
Team Leader

OPAL COMMUNITY PROFILE

Opal (pronounced O-Pal) was incorporated as a town in 1914. Separate traditions state how the town got its name. One implies that the community was named for the hue of rock in the surrounding mountains, while another says the name stems from a local shepherd who called his dog "O Pal".

Opal is another of Wyoming's early railroad centers for cattle and sheep ranchers and is said to be among the wealthiest in the state. The town ships more than 10,000 cattle each year to midwest and eastern cities along with about the same number of sheep and 250,000 pounds of wool. The town's name implies another of its assets. Opal is rich in minerals and precious stones. They are considered common property and can be had for the picking.

Opal is also the largest natural gas hub in the continental United States and supplies natural gas to the midwest and western United States. Enough gas to heat 13.3 million households passed through underground pipelines out of Opal last year.

Opal has had a population of up to 263 but is now currently at 104. Despite all of the surrounding activity, Opal's businesses are shuttered and the town is now listed on ghostowns.com. The Opal Mercantile Company, a two-story brick landmark that elsewhere would be the pride of the local historical society, is falling apart. Opal now appears to be a cluster of ramshackle houses between a two-lane highway and some railroad tracks that span southwest Wyoming's high desert.

Administrative Contact

Opal Town Government
135 Chrisman
Opal, Wyoming 83101
(307) 877-3919

Opal Statistics

County	Lincoln
Zip Code	83124
Elevation	6,908 feet above sea level
Latitude	41.76° N of the equator
Longitude	110.32° W of the prime meridian
Area	0.43 sq. miles
	Land Area: 0.43 sq. miles
	Water Area: 0.0 sq. miles

Population by Age (2004 Estimate)	
Population	104
Median Age:	37.8
0 – 14 years	22.0%
15 – 24 years	15.5%
25 – 34 years	8.8%
35 – 44 years	18.4%
45 – 54 years	18.1%
55 – 64 years	10.1%
65 – 74 years	5.4%
75+ years	1.8%

Marital Status (2004 Estimate)	
Age 15+ Population:	82
Married, Spouse Present	62.1%
Married, Spouse Absent	1.5%
Divorced	3.3%
Widowed	12.3%
Never Married	20.8%

Household Status (2004 Estimate)	
Total Households:	43
1 Person	25.3%
2 Person	33.1%
3 Person	16.0%
4 Person	10.5%
5 Person	12.1%
6 Person	2.4%
7+ Person	0.6%

Housing Units (2004 Estimate)

Total Housing Units:	58
Owner-Occupied	56.6%
Renter-Occupied	16.5%
Vacant	26.9%

Vehicles Available (2004 Estimate)	
Average Vehicles Per Household:	2.14
0 Vehicles	4.2%
1 Vehicle	11.0%
2 Vehicles	25.0%
3 Vehicles	34.4%

Income (2004 Estimate)	
Median Household Income	\$45,495
Per Capita Income	\$20,008

Households by Income (2004 Estimate)	
Total Households:	43
\$0 - \$14,999	14.7%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	9.3%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	11.7%
\$35,000 - \$49,000	19.8%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	24.3%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	11.4%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	6.6%
\$150,000+	1.8%

Educational Attainment (2004 Estimate)	
Age 25+ Population:	65
Grade KG - 08	2.1%
Grade 09 - 12	10.3%
High School Graduate	45.6%
Some College, No Degree	22.1%
Associates Degree	6.1%
Bachelor's Degree	9.1%

Graduate Degree	4.8%
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Medical (Hospitals/Medical Centers Near Opal) (2004)	
South Lincoln Medical Center	15.03 miles; Kemmerer, WY
Star Valley Medical Center	109.89 miles; Afton, WY

Opal Demographic Report

Population

The current estimated population for Opal is 104. The population in 1990 was 104 representing a 0.0% change. It is estimated that the population will be 107 in 2009, representing a change of 2.88% from 2004. The population is 53.03% male and 46.97% female. The median age of the population is 37.8, compared to the U.S. median age which is 36.2. The population density of Opal is 242.0 people per square mile.

Households

There are currently 43 households in Opal. The household count in 1990 was 36 representing a change of 19.44%. It is estimated that the number of households in will be 46 in 2009, representing a change of 6.98% from 2004.

The median number of years in residence is 2.76. The average household size is 2.44 people and the average family size is 2.94 people. The average number of vehicles per household is 2.14.

Income

The median household income for Opal is \$45,495, compared to the U.S. median which is \$45,660. The median household income in 1990 was \$31,684 representing a change of 43.59%. It is estimated that the median household income will be \$50,137 in 2009, which would represent a change of 10.20% from 2004.

The 2004 per capita income is \$20,008, compared to the U.S. per capita, which is \$23,504. The 2004 average household income is \$48,855, compared to the U.S. average which is \$61,246.

Race & Ethnicity

The racial makeup of Opal is as follows: 96.79% White; 0.00% Black; 0.36% Native American; 0.00% Asian/Pacific Islander; and 0.83% Other. Compare these to the U.S. racial makeup which is: 75.05% White, 12.29% Black, 0.89% Native American, 3.66% Asian/Pacific Islander and 5.53% Other.

People of Hispanic ethnicity are counted independently of race. People of Hispanic origin make up 2.62% of the current year population, compared to the U.S. makeup of 14.27%.

Housing

The median housing value in Opal was \$51,764 in 1990, compared to the U.S. median of \$78,382 for the same year. The 2000 Census median housing value was \$61,865, which is a 19.5% change from 1990. In 1990, there were 27 owner-occupied housing units in Opal versus 33 in 2004. Also in 1990, there were 9 renter-occupied housing units in this area versus 10 in 2004. The average rent in 1990

was \$250 versus \$326 in 2000.

Employment

There are currently 79 people over the age of 16 in the labor force in Opal. Of these 96.28% are employed, 3.72% are unemployed, 36.64% are not in the labor force and 0.00% are in the armed forces. In 1990, unemployment in this area was 3.86% and in 2000 it was 2.49%. There are 4 employees (daytime population) and there is 1 establishment.

In 1990, 23.40% of employees were employed in white-collar occupations and 76.60% were employed in blue-collar occupations. In 2000, white-collar workers made up 32.61% of the population, and those employed in blue-collar occupations made up 67.69%. In 1990, the average time traveled to work was 11 minutes and in 2000 it was 23 minutes.

Opal Consumer Expenditure Report

	2004 Estimate	2009 Projection	% Change 2004 - 2009
Total Households	43	46	7.5%
Total Avg Household Expenditure	\$43,388	\$47,770	10.1%
Total Avg Retail Expenditure	\$18,299	\$20,126	10.0%

Consumer Expenditure Detail (Average Household Annual Expenditures)

	2004 Estimate	2009 Projection	% Change 2003 - 2008
Airline Fares	\$295.47	\$325.72	10.2%
Alcoholic Beverages	\$411.27	\$452.75	10.1%
Alimony & Child Support	\$130.49	\$143.32	9.8%
Apparel	\$2,335.95	\$2,573.70	10.2%
Apparel Services & Accessories	\$301.61	\$332.96	10.4%
Audio Equipment	\$67.04	\$74.08	10.5%
Babysitting & Elderly Care	\$232.03	\$255.51	10.1%
Books	\$79.42	\$87.53	10.2%
Books & Supplies	\$117.81	\$129.48	9.9%
Boys Apparel	\$125.47	\$137.96	10.0%
Cellular Phone Service	\$70.65	\$77.73	10.0%
Cigarettes	\$361.44	\$397.69	10.0%
Computer Hardware	\$345.81	\$380.85	10.1%
Computer Information Services	\$34.60	\$38.34	10.8%
Computer Software	\$44.01	\$48.46	10.1%
Contributions	\$1,288.76	\$1,422.69	10.4%
Coolant & Other Fluids	\$10.06	\$11.08	10.1%

Rural Resource Report for Opal October, 2004

Cosmetics & Perfume	\$94.47	\$104.30	10.4%
Deodorants & Other Personal Care	\$32.01	\$35.21	10.0%
Education	\$740.46	\$813.76	9.9%
Electricity	\$1,295.21	\$1,424.83	10.0%
Entertainment	\$2,224.78	\$2,452.42	10.2%
Fees & Admissions	\$558.52	\$616.18	10.3%
Finance Chgs Exc Mort & Veh	\$192.17	\$211.68	10.2%
Floor Coverings	\$70.71	\$78.12	10.5%
Food & Beverages	\$7,095.48	\$7,810.51	10.1%
Food At Home	\$4,216.25	\$4,636.98	10.0%
Food Away From Home	\$2,467.96	\$2,720.78	10.2%
Footwear	\$427.66	\$471.12	10.2%
Fuel Oil & Other Fuels	\$84.85	\$93.09	9.7%
Funeral & Cemetery	\$107.13	\$117.12	9.3%
Furniture	\$424.34	\$469.13	10.6%
Gasoline & Oil	\$1,549.79	\$1,710.46	10.4%
Gifts	\$1,300.97	\$1,433.10	10.2%
Girls Apparel	\$152.80	\$168.05	10.0%
Hair Care	\$60.62	\$66.70	10.0%
Hard Surface Flooring	\$11.65	\$12.77	9.6%
Health Care	\$2,803.74	\$3,081.68	9.9%
Health Care Insurance	\$1,331.23	\$1,463.18	9.9%
Health Care Services	\$854.14	\$938.30	9.9%
Health Care Supplies & Equip	\$618.37	\$680.20	10.0%
Household Services	\$354.73	\$391.12	10.3%
Household Supplies	\$685.47	\$759.62	10.8%
Household Textiles	\$104.29	\$115.11	10.4%
Housewares & Small Appliances	\$914.79	\$1,008.50	10.2%
Indoor Plants & Fresh Flowers	\$70.81	\$77.77	9.8%
Infants Apparel	\$107.56	\$118.32	10.0%
Jewelry	\$107.63	\$119.06	10.6%
Legal & Accounting	\$95.37	\$105.13	10.2%
Magazines	\$48.69	\$53.61	10.1%
Major Appliances	\$196.01	\$216.16	10.3%
Mass Transit	\$89.64	\$98.85	10.3%
Men's Apparel	\$437.48	\$481.93	10.2%
Mortgage Interest	\$2,575.49	\$2,842.05	10.3%
Natural Gas	\$404.40	\$444.53	9.9%
New Car Purchased	\$1,094.08	\$1,202.07	9.9%
New Truck Purchased	\$825.79	\$908.18	10.0%
New Vehicle Purchase	\$1,919.87	\$2,110.25	9.9%
Newspapers	\$100.90	\$111.00	10.0%

Rural Resource Report for Opal October, 2004

Oral Hygiene Products	\$28.64	\$31.50	10.0%
Other Lodging	\$802.02	\$870.45	8.5%
Other Miscellaneous Expenses	\$97.56	\$107.47	10.2%
Other Repairs & Maintenance	\$89.09	\$97.91	9.9%
Other Tobacco Products	\$38.43	\$42.33	10.1%
Other Transportation Costs	\$727.13	\$799.74	10.0%
Other Utilities	\$350.87	\$386.60	10.2%
Paint & Wallpaper	\$43.20	\$47.65	10.3%
Personal Care Products	\$167.97	\$185.16	10.2%
Personal Care Services	\$465.50	\$513.38	10.3%
Personal Insurance	\$500.22	\$551.54	10.3%
Pet Supplies & Services	\$240.51	\$264.94	10.2%
Photographic Equip & Supplies	\$108.11	\$119.18	10.2%
Plumbing & Heating	\$55.41	\$61.08	10.2%
Property Taxes	\$434.50	\$478.98	10.2%
Public Transportation	\$463.81	\$511.22	10.2%
Records/Tapes/CD Purchases	\$113.41	\$124.86	0.0%
Recreational Equip & Supplies	\$839.70	\$925.97	10.3%
Rental Costs	\$3,277.47	\$3,595.58	9.7%
Roofing & Siding	\$71.94	\$79.14	10.0%
Satellite Dishes	\$6.92	\$7.66	10.7%
Shaving Needs	\$12.85	\$14.15	10.1%
Shelter	\$7,815.07	\$8,586.35	9.9%
Telephone Svc Excl Cell	\$1,099.64	\$1,211.33	10.2%
Televisions	\$97.11	\$107.12	10.3%
Transportation	\$9,035.18	\$9,955.09	10.2%
Tuition	\$622.65	\$684.28	9.9%
Used Car Purchase	\$1,283.00	\$1,417.06	10.4%
Used Truck Purchase	\$730.71	\$805.51	10.2%
Used Vehicle Purchase	\$2,013.71	\$2,222.57	10.4%
VCRs & Related Equipment	\$43.70	\$48.16	10.2%
Vehicle Insurance	\$1,006.97	\$1,110.42	10.3%
Vehicle Repair	\$987.13	\$1,086.07	10.0%
Vehicle Repair & Maintenance	\$997.19	\$1,097.15	10.0%
Video & Audio Equipment	\$826.56	\$910.27	10.1%
Video Game Hardware & Software	\$27.94	\$30.74	10.0%
Watches	\$21.42	\$23.68	10.6%
Women's Apparel	\$783.37	\$863.36	10.2%

Lincoln County Profile

PERSONAL INCOME	2000	2001
Total Personal Income (000s \$)	\$307,953	\$331,436
Per Capita Income	\$21,041	\$22,505
Per Capita Transfer Payment	\$2,722	\$2,963
Per Capita Dividend, Interest, and Rent	\$6,420	\$6,557

RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN	2002 Estimate	% of Total
TOTAL	14,890	100.0%
White alone	14,602	98.1%
Black or African American alone	21	0.1%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	83	0.6%
Asian alone	53	0.4%
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander alone	3	0.0%
Two or More Races	128	0.9%
Race alone or in combination with one or more races:		
White	14,730	98.9%
Black or African American	34	0.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native	183	1.2%
Asian	68	0.5%
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	3	0.0%
Ethnic Origin:		
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	322	2.2%
Non-Hispanic or Latino	14,568	97.8%
White alone	14,311	96.1%

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

LANDOWNERS	Acres	Square Miles
United States Government		
National Park Service	7,438	11.6
Forest Service	901,026	1,407.9
Fish and Wildlife	6,029	9.4
Bureau of Land Mgt.	1,013,269	1,583.2
Bureau of Reclamation	25,032	39.1
Wyoming		
State Lands Comm.	212,095	168.2
Recreation Comm.	4	0.0
Game and Fish	2,181	3.4
Local Govt.		
County	0	0.0
City	0	0.0
School Dist. & Colleges	0	0.0
Other Lands	1,482	2.3
Total Public	2,064,138	3,225.2
Total Private	568,566	888.4
Surface Water	7,898	12.3
TOTAL LAND	2,729,157	4,264.3

Source: University of Wyoming, Department of Geography & Recreation

SALES TAX COLLECTIONS	FISCAL 02	FISCAL 03
Agriculture Sector	\$39,433	\$76,752
Mining Sector	\$1,329,742	\$1,188,655
Construction Sector	\$177,501	\$269,857
Manufacturing Sector	\$590,500	\$729,744
Transportation (TCPU) Sector	\$910,118	\$905,444
Wholesale Trade Sector	\$2,230,145	\$2,638,941
Retail Trade Sector	\$3,877,684	\$4,178,882
Finance (FIRE) Sector	\$25,016	\$22,322
Service Sector	\$1,456,005	\$1,541,196
Government Sector	\$997,093	\$876,409
TOTAL	\$11,633,237	\$12,428,203

Source: State of Wyoming, Department of Revenue

POPULATION BY AGE: 2002	
Population under 5 years	935
Population 5 to 17 years	3,242
Population 18 to 24 years	1,479
Population 25 to 34 years	1,348
Population 35 to 44 years	2,143
Population 45 to 64 years	3,900
Population 65 years and over	1,843
TOTAL	14,890

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

COUNTY EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS	
Labor Force (June 2004)p	7,904
Employed (June 2004)p	7,596
Unemployed (June 2004)p	308
Unemployment Rate (June 2004)p	3.9%
Ave. Weekly Wage - Covered Emp. (Q3_03)	\$584

Source: State of Wyoming, Department of Employment

p = preliminary

CRIME INDEX REPORT: 2004	
Assault	78
Burglary	38
Larceny	49
Motor Vehicle Theft	17
Murder	8
Personal Crime	34
Property Crime	45
Rape	54
Robbery	5
Crime Index Total	48

All values are displayed as indexed numbers (Base Average = 100)
given the Index Base File: U.S.

SELECTED STATISTICS SCHOOL YEAR 2001 - 02	
Number of School Districts	2
Number of Schools	14
Fall Enrollment, 2001	3,110
High School Graduates, 2002	240
Average Daily Membership (ADM)	3,081
Average Daily Attendance (ADA)	2,918
Certified Teachers	202
Certified Staff	26
Classified Staff	187
Administration	19
Students Transported Daily	2,016
Bonded Indebtedness, 6/30/2002	\$11,380,000
Total General Fund Revenues	\$24,273,102
Total General Fund Expenditures	\$23,732,214
Operating Cost Per ADM	\$9,915

Source: State of Wyoming, Department of Education

COUNTY FINANCE	
Assessed Valuation (FY2002)	\$591,691,214
Total Taxes Levied (FY2002)	\$36,416,566
Sales and Use Tax Distribution (FY2002)	\$6,201,102
Bank Deposits (12/31/2002)	\$53,541,000
FY2002 Ave. County Levy (mills)	61.547

Source: State of Wyoming, Department of Revenue, Audit Department/
Banking Division

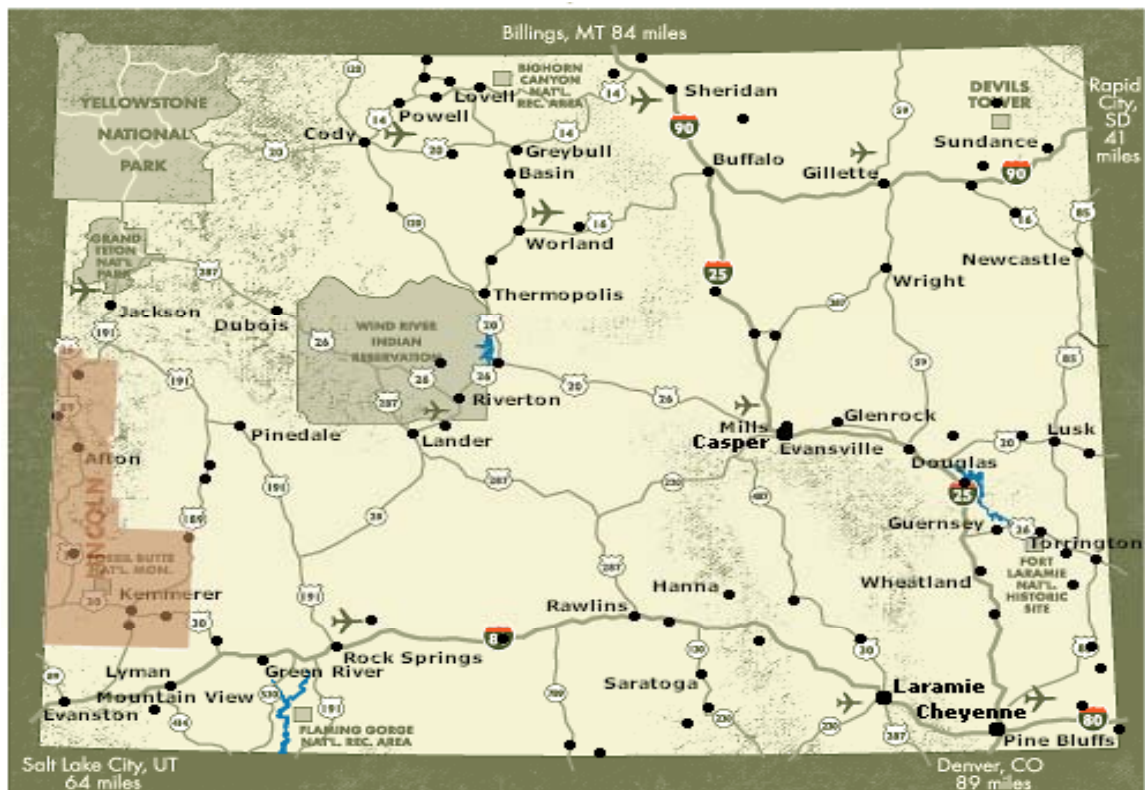
FULL AND PART TIME EMPLOYMENT	2001
Wage and salary	5,872
Proprietors	2,477
Farm	687
Forestry, fishing, related activities	84
Mining	439
Utilities	(D)
Construction	1,187
Manufacturing	420
Wholesale trade	(D)
Retail Trade	1,024
Transportation and warehousing	228
Information	133
Finance and insurance	242
Real estate and rental and leasing	264
Professional and technical services	217
Management of companies and enterprises	(D)
Administrative and waste services	(D)
Educational services	22
Health care and social assistance	(D)
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	130
Accommodation and food services	598
Other services, except public administration	336
Government and government enterprises	1,557
TOTAL	8,349

EARNINGS (000s of \$):	2001
Wage and salary	\$154,107
Proprietors	\$34,418
Other Labor Income	\$18,632
Farm	\$2,841
Forestry, fishing, related activities	\$1,114
Mining	\$27,612
Utilities	(D)
Construction	\$39,380
Manufacturing	\$11,455
Wholesale trade	(D)
Retail Trade	\$13,222
Transportation and warehousing	\$10,116
Information	\$3,246
Finance and insurance	\$4,748
Real estate and rental and leasing	\$1,618
Professional and technical services	\$4,832
Management of companies and enterprises	(D)
Administrative and waste services	(D)
Educational services	(L)
Health care and social assistance	(D)
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	\$2,336
Accommodation and food services	\$8,249
Other services, except public administration	\$4,967
Government and government enterprises	\$46,386
TOTAL	\$207,157

(D) - not shown to avoid disclosure of confidential information.

(L) - less than 10 jobs or \$50,000 in earnings.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), Regional Economic Information System



Workforce Training

1. Wyoming Department of Employment offers employers up to \$2,000 per employee for training. (<http://wydoe.state.wy.us/doe.asp?ID=34>)

2. Quick Start

Wyoming is the first state approved to license the State of Georgia's Quick Start program. The Wyoming Business Council and the Wyoming Community Colleges are partnering to provide training in:

- Customer Service
 - Manufacturing
 - Warehousing and Distribution
- (<http://www.wyomingbusiness.org>)

State Incentives

1. No corporate state income tax.
2. No personal state income tax.
3. Community Development Block Grants administered by Wyoming Business Council. (www.wyomingbusiness.org)
 - Provides grants to local governments for community and economic development projects.
 - Provides convertible loans to grants based on job creation.
4. Partnership Challenge Loan Program administered by Wyoming Business Council.
 - Provides low interest loans to community development organizations.
 - Provides gap financing for projects with the Wyoming Business Council participating with a commercial lender.
5. Industrial Development Revenue Bonds. Cities and counties may issue tax-exempt bonds to provide financing for manufacturing.

Taxes

1. No corporate state income tax.
2. No personal state income tax.
3. No inventory tax.
4. Lincoln County has a 5% sales and use tax (statewide base of 4% plus 1% optional county tax).
Source: Wyoming Department of Revenue, Excise Division (October 2004)
5. Unemployment Insurance – taxable base rate of \$14,700. Tax rates by industry grouping – WY Dept. of Employment. (<http://wydoe.state.wy.us/doe.asp?ID=575>)
6. Workers' Compensation – rates vary by occupation and can be found at <http://wydoe.state.wy.us>.
7. Property taxes. Average tax rate in Lincoln County is 6.6992%.
Source: Wyoming Department of Revenue, Ad Valorem Division (2004)

Tax computation:

Fair Market Value of Property * Level of Assessment (9.5% for Residential and Commercial Property) * Tax Rate

Example: Tax on a commercial facility valued at \$1,000,000 is as follows:

$$\$1,000,000 \times 0.095 = \$95,000 \times 0.066992 = \$6,364.$$

State assesses agricultural lands at 9.5% of agricultural value, residential and commercial at 9.5% and industrial at 11.5% of fair market value.

Telecommunications

Available Services:**All West Communications**

P.O. Box 588
Kamas, UT 84036

Phone: (435) 783-4361
Fax: (435) 783-4928
Website: www.allwest.net

Services offered (Afton, Alpine, Cokeville, Diamondville, Kemmerer, Opal, Thayne): Web Hosting

Contact Communications

937 West Main Street
Riverton, WY 82501

Phone: (307) 856-0980
Fax: (307) 856-1499
Website: www.contactcom.net

Services offered (Afton, Alpine, Diamondville, Kemmerer, La Barge): 56 & 64 Data Connections, Frame Relay, ISP, Network Security, PBX, Web Hosting

Net Wright LLC

P.O. Box 1747
Riverton, WY 82501

Phone: (307) 857-5800
Fax: (307) 857-1053
Website: www.netwright.net

Services offered (Afton, Diamondville, Kemmerer, Opal): 56 & 64 Data Connections, DSL, Frame Relay, T-1, Web Hosting

New Edge Networks

3000 Columbia House Blvd., #106
Vancouver, WA 98661

Phone: (360) 693-9009
Fax: (360) 737-0828
Website: www.newedgenetworks.com

Services offered (Afton): ISDN-BRI, T-1

Qwest Communications

103 North Durbin, Room #1
Casper, WY 82601

Phone: (307) 234-1107
Fax: (307) 235-2618
Website: www.qwest.com

Services offered (Afton, Diamondville, Kemmerer, Opal): 56 & 64 Data Connections, ATM, Centrex, Digital Switched Services, DSL, Frame Relay, ISDN-BRI, PBX, Private Line, Redundancy (Local), T-1, Web Hosting

Silverstar

104101 Highway #89
Freedom, WY 83120

Phone: (307) 883-2411
Fax: (307) 883-2575
Website: www.silverstar.com

Services offered (Afton, Alpine, Thayne): ATM, DSL, Frame Relay, T-1, Web Hosting

Union Telephone Company 850 North Highway 414 P.O. Box 160 Mountain View, WY 82939 <u>Services offered:</u> (LaBarge only)	Phone: (888) 926-2273 Fax: (307) 782-6913 Website: www.union-tel.com
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Visionary
 P.O. Box 2799
 Gillette, WY 82717
Services offered: Web Hosting.

Phone: (888) 682-1884
 Fax: (307) 682-2519
 Website: www.vcn.com

Source: Wyoming Interactive Business Center, Wyoming Business Council

Power Cost

Weighted Average Cost per kWh of Power	<u>2001</u>		
Cents per kWh of industrial power	3.44		
Cents per kWh of commercial power	5.21		
Cents per kWh of residential power	6.28		
	<u>Industrial</u>	<u>Commercial</u>	<u>Residential</u>
Bridger Valley Electric Association, Inc. (2000) 40014 Business Loop 80 Lyman, WY 82937 (307) 786-2800	4.80	7.34	7.92
Lower Valley Energy, Inc. (2001) 236 North Washington Afton, WY 83110 (307) 885-3175	5.26	5.65	5.21
PacifiCorp (2001) 825 NE Multnomah Portland, OR 97232 (888) 221-7070	3.24	5.14	6.44

Source: bizsitesDATA (U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration)

Cost of Living Index (Prices as of January 7, 8, and 9, 2004, Statewide Average = 100)

Food	Housing	Apparel	Transportation	Medical	Recreation & Personal Care
90	86	100	102	89	100

Source: State of Wyoming, Economic Analysis Division <<http://eadiv.state.wy.us/wcli/NewsRelease-4Q03.pdf>>

Average Price of Single-Family Home (2002)

\$126,611

Source: A Profile of Wyoming <www.wyomingcda.com>

Higher Education

Western Wyoming Community College: Campuses in Rock Springs and Green River
University of Wyoming Outreach Program

Transportation

1. Airports:

Jackson Hole (JAC)

7 miles north of Jackson

Commercial Service: Sky West, American, United, Air Wisconsin, Great Lakes (United Express)

Daily flights to: Denver, Salt Lake City, Dallas, Chicago

Runway: 6,305 x 150 ft., asphalt

Fixed Base Operators: Jackson Hole Aviation

Afton Municipal (AFO)

South edge of Afton

Runway: 5,218 x 75 ft., asphalt

Fixed Base Operators: Mountain Air

Cokeville Municipal (U06)

3 miles south of Cokeville

Runway: 3,400 x 60 ft., asphalt

Fixed Base Operators: None

Kemmerer Municipal (EMM)

2 miles northwest of Kemmerer

Fixed Base Operators: yes

Runways: 8,200 x 75 ft., asphalt

2,679 x 60 ft., concrete

2. Highways:

Distance from county centroid to nearest Interstate highway = 63.79 miles to I-80

U.S. 30

U.S. 89

U.S. 189

3. Railroad:

Union Pacific

Resource Team Members
Opal, Wyoming
October 5-6, 2004

Steve Achter, Team Leader

Wyoming Business Council
214 W. 15th Street
Cheyenne, WY 82002
(307) 777-2802
sachte@state.wy.us

Ashley Camp

Wyoming Rural Development Council
2219 Carey Avenue
Cheyenne, WY 82002
(307) 777-5812
acamp@state.wy.us

Pat Robbins

Sweetwater EDA
1400 Dewar Dr, Ste 205A
Rock Springs, WY 82901
(307) 352-6874
parobbin@wyoming.com

Karlene Sjoden

USDA Rural Development
PO Box 190
Afton, WY 83110
(307) 886-9001 ext. 4
karlene.sjoden@wy.usda.gov

Contacts

Osborne

3103



Community

Mayor Thomas

135 Chrisman Street
PO Box 130
Opal, WY 83124
(307) 877-3919 or 877-

Sara Hunt, Town Clerk

Agenda for Opal Community

Assessment

Tuesday, October 5, 2004

6:30 a.m. To 7:15 a.m.	Breakfast Busy Bee Café
7:30 a.m. To 9:00 a.m.	Orientation & Organization Meeting (Team Members Only) Town Hall
9:00 a.m. To 9:50 a.m.	Industry (Larry Burris, Williams) Town Hall
10:00 am To 10:50 am	Senior Citizens (Spencer Preece) Town Hall
10: 50 a.m. To 1:50 p.m.	Tour of Town and Facilitates/ Lunch Little America
2:00 pm To 2:50 pm	Emergency Services (Alice Osborne) Town Hall
3:00 pm To 3:50 pm	Businesses (Reliable Refuse Removal) Town Hall
4:00 pm To 4:30 pm	Break
4:00 pm To 4:50 pm	Agriculture (Alice Sears) Town Hall
5:00 pm To 5:50 pm	Youth (Andy) Town Hall
6:15 To ?	Break for Dinner Hams fork Grill

Wednesday, October 6, 2004

7:10 am To 8:00 am	Breakfast Busy Bee Cafe
8:10 am To 9:00 am	Community Government (Tom Osborne) Town Hall
9:10 am To 10:00 am	Parents (Lori Roberts) Town Hall
10:00 am To 11:00 am	Public
11:00 am To 12:00 pm	Open to Public Town Hall
12:00 pm?	Lunch and Team meeting Hams fork Grill
6:30 pm to 7:30 pm	Town Meeting/Dinner Town Hall

Opal Major Themes

Law enforcement

- Drugs, illegal activity
- Enforcement of local ordinances
- Enforcement of speed limits on Highway 30
- Emergency preparedness

Town cleanup and beautification

Infrastructure

- Water
- Sewer
- Drainage
- Paved Streets

Economic/ Community Development

- Rest area
- Convenience store/ gas station
- Four lane highway
- Town hall/ community center

Town Dissention

TEAM MEMBER REPORTS

Karlene Sjoden

USDA Rural Development
625 Washington Street, Suite B
P.O. Box 190

Afton, WY 83110

Phone (307) 886-9001, ext. 4

Fax (307) 886-3744

E-Mail Address karlene.sjoden@wy.usda.gov

Introduction - Many thanks to the Mayor, town employees, residents, those attending the listening sessions and town meeting for your generous hospitality. The meals, snacks, tours, and accommodations were excellent. Your frankness at the listening sessions was refreshing as well as informative.

300 Law Enforcement

Challenges - The Town of Opal faces challenges from

1. Drugs, illegal activity,
2. Enforcing local ordinances,
3. Enforcing speed limits on U.S. Highway 30 and,
4. Emergency preparedness.

Currently, the town depends on the Lincoln County Sheriff for law enforcement. We heard, at the listening sessions, illegal drug activity is the number one challenge in Opal. While the Sheriff's office can only enforce the Wyoming State Statutes, it is up to the town to enforce local ordinances. However, there is no local law enforcement directly in Opal. The speed limit on U.S. Highway 30 is sixty five miles per hour, unless otherwise posted. The Wyoming Highway Patrol monitors U.S. Highway 30. Emergency preparedness is important to the residents of Opal. Opal is the largest natural gas-hub in the continental United States and supplier to the mid west and western United States. The community profile states 13.3 million households, in 2003, received natural gas from this hub. Opal has one trained first responder for emergencies.

Solutions - Solutions are as varied as the Town of Opal itself. The Town could hire a law enforcement officer, contract with the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office, start and continue a neighborhood watch program, drug awareness and education programs, or do nothing.

Hiring a law enforcement officer or contracting with the Lincoln County Sheriff seems the most logical solution to counteracting illegal drug activity and enforcing town ordinances. In addition to that, the Neighborhood Watch Program is beneficial to communities because it brings

people together for the common good, helps reduce burglaries and robberies, and improves relations between the police and communities. Citizens participate in the Neighborhood Watch program with their law officer[s].

We all know or think we know about the illegal drug activity in our communities. Illegal drug activity can be tied to other crimes: against person and property, money laundering, terrorism. The saddest thing of all is the addiction to the drug itself. It affects every one of us. "What can we do to erase the illegal drug activity in our community?" Report the illegal drug activity to law enforcement. Meet with law enforcement officials to discuss the problem and develop a community-wide plan.

Town officials enforce town ordinances. As an example, if the ordinance states "vehicles left on property and not being used must have current vehicle licenses/tags, or within 30 days of this town notice that vehicle will be towed away and impounded at your expense. The towing fee and fine equals \$500.00, plus storage fee." If the vehicles are still on the property without licenses, within the time frame, tow it away, store it, and the owner gets charged the fine and fees. Everyone gets treated the same. The Town Clerk stated the ordinances are going to be re-codified [organized according to the classification of the ordinances]. This would be an excellent time to go through the ordinances to see what needs to be enforced in the Town of Opal.

The job of enforcing U.S. Highway 30 speed limits belongs to the Wyoming Highway Patrol. To the west and east of Opal is the 65 mile per hour speed limit sign. Residents are concerned about driving on and off U.S. 30 from Opal safely. Contact the Wyoming Department of Transportation for placement of a forty [40] or forty-five [45] mile per hour speed limit sign before each entrance to Opal.

Law Enforcement Resources

★ Grant Source to Hiring a Law Enforcement Officer

The Local Law Enforcement Block Grant Program [LLEBG] was funded in Fiscal Year 2004. Formula grants can be made to units of local government to hire, train, and employ on a continuing basis new, additional law enforcement officers and necessary support personnel.

Contact by Email AskBJA@ojp.usdoj.gov

Contact by Phone (202) 616-6500

Find additional information, contact the website at:
www.usdoj.gov/10grants/

★ Neighborhood Watch Program

The program was implemented in the Los Angeles Police Department to educate community residents regarding their roles and responsibilities in preventing crime and encouraging them to take active steps to prevent crime.

For more information contact:

Los Angeles Police Department

Crime Prevention Section

150 North Los Angeles Street, Room 818

Los Angeles, CA 90012

(213) 485-3134

Contact web site <http://www.lapdonline.org/> Then Search on Line. Then type Neighborhood Watch Programs.

★ Sources to Drug Awareness and Education

Contact web site for the Drug Free America at

www.drugfree.america.org/

Contact web site for the D.A.R.E. program at www.dare.com/

The above two web sites have excellent information for parents, children, and the communities affected by illicit drug activity.

★ Source to Contracting with the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office

Lincoln County Sheriff's Office

1032 Beech Street

Kemmerer, WY 83101

Contact by Phone (307) 877-3971

★ Installing highway speed limit signs

Wyoming Highway Department

Ted Wells, District Construction Engineer

Box 1260

3200 Elk Street

Rock Springs, WY 82902

Telephone Number (307) 352-3000

Fax Number (307) 352-3150

301 - Town Cleanup and Beautification

Challenge - The challenge in Opal is cleaning up and beautifying the Town. Government property such as rights-of-way and parks can be addressed directly. Privately owned properties present a challenge. Some landowners have

moved, thereby leaving their properties in disarray. Some of the properties facing U.S. Highway 30 are cluttered. Some of the properties have landscaping.

Solutions - Re-instate the Town clean up day! Let everyone know the town is having their annual clean up day. If need be, make it a week long event. Get everyone involved. Ask for volunteers for the clean up committee. Committees normally consist of three to five members; include your youth, too. The committee is responsible for seeing everything is done. The Committee reports at council meetings on what's been done up to that time such as flyers made and handed out. What help is available to those that are unable to participate, how many residents have been contacted, what residents can help cleaning up their own or others' properties, and/or furnish vehicles to clear trash from the properties and or makes dump trips. The committee keeps track of who volunteered for what, ensures the landfill is open during the clean up, hands out flyers, plans and sees the clean up day and celebration are successes. The celebration is the reward for all the hard work everyone has done! Town can send the flyers to the absent property owners before the clean up. After the clean up, send notices of property ordinance violations to property owners that haven't cleaned up their properties.

Individual homeowners may need repairs to improve or modernize their home, make it safe, sanitary, or remove health and safety hazards.

The town could include a bike and walking path, with trees along the way. Again, involve the youth and interested citizens. The National Arbor Day Foundation, Wyoming Department of Transportation, and Wyoming State Forestry Division have information and grants available for trees [landscaping], bike and walking paths.

Noise is part of the town clean up and beautification. Residents indicate the railroad horn is very loud, especially at 3:00AM. The reason locomotive horns are blown at highway-rail grade crossings is safety. However, the Town may want to establish "quite zones" or preserve existing quite zones. The Federal Railroad Administration [FRA] issued an Interim Final Rule December 13, 2003 requiring locomotive horns sound at all public grade crossings fifteen to twenty seconds before arriving at a

crossing. To establish or preserve existing quiet zones, contact the Federal Railroad Administration.

Town Clean UP and Beautification Resources

★ Grant Source for bike and walking paths, roadside landscaping, historic preservation

Transportation Enhancement Activities Local [TEAL] grants program is administered by the Wyoming Highway Department. Projects must be located off the state highway system, be transportation related, and commit environmental value to the transportation system. Examples of completed projects are bike and walking paths, roadside landscaping, and historic preservation. Grants range from \$100,000 to \$200,000. The grants require a twenty percent [20%] match. For more information contact

David Young

Wyoming Department of Transportation

5300 Bishop Blvd.

Cheyenne, WY 82009

Phone (307) 777-4384 or (307) 777-4275

Fax (307) 777-4759

Email Dave.Young@dot.state.wy.us

Tracy Williams

Wyoming Trail

Phone Number (307) 777-8681

Website Address:

<http://wyotrails.state.wy.us/trails/rtp.htm/>

★ Sources for trees and planting

Joining the National Arbor Day Foundation for \$10.00 could give the Town ten free trees and the opportunity to purchase more at an exceptionally very low price. For more information, contact their web site address at:

www.arborday.org/index.cfm

Office of State Lands and Investments Forestry Division has funds available to cities and towns, civic groups and organizations for community tree planting and education grants. Grants range from \$500 to \$3,000. There is a fifty percent match requirement. For more information contact:

Mark Hughes

Wyoming State Forestry Division

1100 West 22nd Street

Cheyenne, WY 82002

(307) 777-7586

★ Source for Recreation

Mary Moore, Grants Specialist
Division of State Parks & Historic Sites
2301 Central Avenue, Barrett Building
Cheyenne, WY 82002
Telephone Number (307) 777-5598
Email address: mmoore@state.wy.us
Website Address: <http://wyoparks.state.wy.us/L&WCF.htm>

Noise

★ Sources for reducing noise

Richard Hartman, Special Representative to the President
2424 Pioneer Avenue #301
Cheyenne, WY 82001
Phone Number (307) 778-3359
Fax Number (307) 778-3385
Website Address: www.uprr.com

The Federal Railroad Administration issued an Interim Final Rule on the use of Locomotive Horns at Highway-Rail grade crossings. There is an opportunity for the Town to establish a "quiet zone[s]" or preserve the quiet you may have. For more information contact their website at www.fra.dot.gov and for information on how to apply for the "quiet zone[s]" go into the Guidance on the Quiet Zone Creation Process section of their website.

★ Sources for homeowner repair loans and grants.

USDA Rural Development has a Loan and grant program available to assist eligible homeowners in rural areas repair their homes. Loans are available for up to \$20,000 maximum, with the interest rate at one percent [1%] and terms up to twenty [20] years to pay off the loan. Certain income limits apply. Loan purposes are to remove health and safety hazards, improve or modernize your home, make it safe or sanitary. Grants are made to eligible homeowners sixty two years or older. Certain income limits apply. Grants are available for \$7,500 maximum. Grant purposes are to remove health and safety hazards, such as repair or install a new roof, replace windows, insulation. For more information contact:

Linda L. Ziegler, Rural Development Manager
Or Susan M. Mizner, Rural Development Specialist
USDA Rural Development
625 Washington Street, Suite B
P.O. Box 190

Afton, WY 83110

(307) 886-9001, extension 4

linda.ziegler@wy.usda.gov or susan.mizner@wy.usda.gov

Wyoming Community Development Authority [WCDA] administers the Community Block Grant Housing Program. The program offers grants from \$25,000 minimum and \$250,000 maximum. Housing related activities that expand housing opportunities for low and moderate income households and upgrade housing in deteriorating neighborhoods are eligible. For more information contact:

Wyoming Community Development Authority

P.O. Box 634

Casper, WY 82602

(307) 265-0603

Web Site http://www.wyomingcda.com/Housing_Dev/Housing.html

★ Source for Brownfield Cleanup

Environmental protection Agency

Baxter J. Hill

Senior Architect, PSS/TSB

Telephone Number (202) 720-1499

Fax Number (202) 690-4335

Email Address: Baxter.hill@usda.gov

302 Infrastructure

Challenge - The Town sets the wheels in motion for these projects with the support of the community. The Town must have good planning, organization, and communication among all involved. The Town faces challenges for water, sewer, drainage, and paved streets.

Water - Opal residents' drinking water comes from a reverse osmosis system, EPA's current solution to Opal's water quality. In reviewing Ordinance #2004-001, the Town's Fiscal Year 2004-2005 budget and expenditures, water revenues do not cover the expenditures. Residents pay \$19.00 [3/4" tap] up to 10,000 gallons plus \$2.00 for each additional \$1,000 gallons of water. Water tap fees are figured at cost, plus 10%. The Town is doing what they can to provide potable water to the community.

Solution - The Town of Medicine Bow has installed a new water treatment plant. Opal's water system may be similar to the one at Medicine Bow. Both communities use wells for their water source. Funding sources from state and federal agencies are available to provide assistance for improving the Town's water system. Partnering of funding sources often takes place to complete the necessary items for water supply, transmission, distribution, and other elements of the project.

Consider asking for support from the gas companies who purchase bulk water from the Town. The companies may want to commit funds towards improvements to the water system to ensure easy access and availability of water. This could be from a one time sum for some of the project costs or annually to retire the debt.

Sewer - Some residents mention sewer upgrades. Technical assistance and funding sources are available to communities that need sewer upgrades.

Solution - Contact state and federal agencies listed in the Resources section of Infrastructure.

Curbs, Gutters, and Paved Streets - Technical assistance and funding sources are available to communities that need these improvements.

Solution - Contact sources listed in the Infrastructure Resources section.

Infrastructure Resources

★ Sources for water, sewer, and paved streets
USDA Rural Development loans and grants are available to eligible public entities to construct, repair, improve, expand or otherwise modify rural water supply, distribution, and treatment and facilities [water]. The loans and grants are available to eligible public entities to improve, construct, repair, expand or otherwise modify waste collection, pumping, treatment or other disposal facilities sewer]. The loans and grants are available to eligible public entities for essential community facilities for health care, public safety and public services including streets [community facilities]. Maximum loan terms for all loans are 30 years for municipalities [statutory limitation] and the interest rates are set quarterly. Currently, interest rates are between 4.5% and

4.625%. Grant funds eligibility is based upon the income of the Town in comparison to the State Non-Metropolitan median household income. For more information on the water and sewer loan and grant programs contact:

Jerry Tamlin, Business and Community Program Director
Or KayLyn Nerby, Business and Community Program Specialist
USDA Rural Development - State Office
100 East B Street, Room 1005; P.O. Box 1105
Casper, WY 82602-5006
(307) 233-6719

jerry.tamlin@wy.usda.gov or kaylyn.nerby@wy.usda.gov

For more information on community facilities loan and grant programs - including streets - contact:

Linda L. Ziegler, Rural Development Manager
Or Susan M. Mizner, Rural Development Specialist
USDA Rural Development
625 Washington Street, Suite B
P.O. Box 190
Afton, WY 83110
(307) 886-9001, extension 4

linda.ziegler@wy.usda.gov or susan.mizner@wy.usda.gov

★ State Agency resources for Water

Wyoming Water Development Commission [WWDC] has grants available for water supply projects including rehabilitation and construction. Grants range from fifty percent to seventy five percent of project costs. For more information contact:

Lawrence [Mike] Besson
122 W. 25th Street
Herschler Building, 4th Floor West
Cheyenne, WY 82002
Telephone Number (307) 777-7626

Email Address lbesso@state.wy.us

Web Site Address <http://www.wwdc.state.wy.us/>

The Drinking Water State Revolving Funds program assists with water and wastewater system improvements. Loans may be made up to twenty years. The interest rate is currently 2.5%. The interest rate is determined by the Wyoming State Loan and Investment Board. A loan origination fee of one-half of one percent [0.5%] of the loan amount is collected from the applicant. For further information contact:

DEQ/WQD
Brian Mark

DEQ/AML
Evan Green, Administrator

(307) 777-6371
bmark@state.wy.us

(307) 777-6145
egreen@state.wy.us

State Lands:

Jean Stephen

(307) 777-7453

jsteph@state.wy.us

Water Development Commission

Mike Hackett

(307) 777-6024

mhacket@state.wy.us

Wyoming Office of State Lands and Investments Board. The Board administers the Mineral Royal Grant program, Abandoned Mine Land Grant Program, and Wyoming Joint Powers Act Loan program. For more information contact Brad Miskimmins at (307) 777-7331.

The Wyoming Business Council administers the Community Development Block Grant program and Business Readiness Community Grant & Loan Program. Both programs can help infrastructure with some conditions. For more information contact: Steve Achter at (307) 777-2800 or Ray Sarcletti at (307) 382-3163.

★ Other Source for water

The Town of Medicine Bow is also listed as a resource because of similarities to the Town of Opal. Medicine Bow has received funds for a new water treatment plant. For more information about the water treatment plan contact the Town at (307) 379-2225.

★ State agency sources for sewer and paved roads

Wyoming Office of State Lands and Investments Board. The Board administers the Mineral Royal Grant program, Abandoned Mine Land Grant Program, and Wyoming Joint Powers Act Loan program. For more information contact Brad Miskimmins at (307) 777-7331.

The Wyoming Business Council administers the Community Development Block Grant program and Business Readiness Community Grant & Loan Program. Both programs can help infrastructure with some conditions. For more information contact: Steve Achter at (307) 777-2800 or Ray Sarcletti at (307) 382-3163.

★ Other possible source for streets and roads:

US Economic Development Administration [EDA] has grant funds available for infrastructure such as streets and roads. There does need to be some industrial development located in the area or proposed for the area when EDA funds

are involved. For more information and program guidelines contact:

John Rogers
Economic Development Administration
P.O. Box 10074
Federal Building, Room 196
Helena, MT 59626
(406) 441-1175

303 Economic/Community Development

Challenges - Addressed in this portion of the report is the Town Hall/Community Center along with other ideas for economic and community development. The Town is in need of a larger town hall/community center. Most small communities have a gathering place to hold community events, bazaars, bake sales, youth activities and the like.

Solutions - Town Hall - Some things can be done now to make the town hall work for the officials and residents. Consider taking down and storing the long tables. Work tables can always be set up when needed. There is then more room for chairs and people, especially for town council meetings. People coming in to the town clerk's office every time the door opens are literally in her/his face. Consider moving her/his work space elsewhere or away from the door.

What about purchasing the Mercantile Building? What about renovating the building - for the town hall and community center? You can see the "Opal Mercantile" from US Highway 30. Small cottage-type businesses could also be enticed to locate their businesses in the building. This project is not so far fetched as you think. It would make a terrific town hall/community center and cottage-type business area. It requires hard work, determination, leadership, and working together. Wow! Doing something like this could really help the Town and their future. There are funds available for feasibility, planning and technical assistance. There are funds available for purchasing and renovating.

Town Hall/Community Center/Cottage Business Area Resources

★ Sources for Feasibility, Planning, and Technical Assistance

USDA Rural Development has grant funds available through two programs. The first, the Rural Business Enterprise

Grant RBEG] program, is a grant to a public body or a non-profit corporation. The funds are used to assist small business enterprises by contracting or providing technical assistance. Examples of these are feasibility studies, business plans, training. Another program is the Rural Business Opportunity Grant [RBOG] program. Eligible entities are public bodies, non-profit organizations, Indian Tribes, or cooperatives to apply for grant funds. The RBOG funds may be used to pay costs of providing economic planning for rural communities, technical assistance for rural businesses, or training for rural entrepreneurs or economic development officials. For more information contact

Linda L. Ziegler, Rural Development Manager
Or Susan M. Mizner, Rural Development Specialist
USDA Rural Development
625 Washington Street, Suite B
P.O. Box 190
Afton, WY 83110
(307) 886-9001, extension 4
linda.ziegler@wy.usda.gov or susan.mizner@wy.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development loans and grants are available to eligible public entities for essential community facilities for health care, public safety and public services including town halls and community centers. Maximum loan terms for all loans are 30 years for municipalities [statutory limitation]. The interest rates are set quarterly. Currently, interest rates are between 4.5% and 4.625%. Grant funds eligibility is based upon the income of the Town in comparison to the State Non-Metropolitan median household income. For more information contact:

Linda L. Ziegler, Rural Development Manager
Or Susan M. Mizner, Rural Development Specialist
USDA Rural Development
625 Washington Street, Suite B
P.O. Box 190
Afton, WY 83110
(307) 886-9001, extension 4
linda.ziegler@wy.usda.gov or susan.mizner@wy.usda.gov

Before utilizing any state historic funds, the entity must achieve Certified Local Government [CLG] status from the National Park Service [NPS]. An advantage to becoming a member is the pool of matching grant funds state historical preservation offices set aside to fund CLG historic

preservation sub grant projects. For more information contact:
Sheila-Bricher-Wade, Registration Services Supervisor CLG Program
Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office
Phone Number (307) 777-6179
Email Address: sbrich@state.wy.us

Save America's Treasures Grants, National Park Service is available for preservation and/or conservation work on nationally significant historic structures and sites. Grants require a dollar-for-dollar, non-Federal match, which can be cash, donated services, or use of equipment. Units of state or local government can apply for a minimum grant of \$250,000 up to \$1 million maximum grant. For more information on historic property projects contact:
Telephone Number (202) 513-7270, ext 6
Email Address: NPS_treasures@nps.gov
Website address at
<http://www/2.cr.nps.gov/treasures/application.htm>

Wyoming Office of State Lands and Investments Board. The State of Wyoming has grant funds for planning, construction, acquisition, improvement of public facilities. The Board meets regularly on the third Thursday of each January and June to review grant applications. For more information contact:
Brad Miskimmins
Office of State Lands and Investments
Herschler Building, 3rd Floor West
122 West 25th Street
Cheyenne, WY 82002
(307) 777-7331

The Wyoming Business Council administers the Community Development Block Grant program and Business Readiness Community Grant & Loan Program. Both programs can help infrastructure with some conditions. For more information contact: Steve Achter at (307) 777-2800 or Ray Sarcletti at (307) 382-3163.

★ Source for business financing
Businesses may ask about funding in your area. The USDA Rural Development Guaranteed Business and Industry Program [BI] can assist businesses by providing a guarantee to the business's lender. The purposes of the loan can be used for business acquisitions, expansion, repair, modernization

or development costs, purchase equipment, machinery, supplies, and other business related expenses. For more information contact

Linda L. Ziegler, Rural Development Manager
Or Susan M. Mizner, Rural Development Specialist
USDA Rural Development
625 Washington Street, Suite B
P.O. Box 190
Afton, WY 83110
(307) 886-9001, extension 4
linda.ziegler@wy.usda.gov or susan.mizner@wy.usda.gov

304 Town Dissensions

Challenge - Residents vs. town officials? It was heard in the listening sessions that the reason for the community assessment was a "gripe" session. The panel heard many things the town officials were doing "wrong" and "that's not the way it should be done" or "that wasn't how it was when I was mayor - on the town council", and "people in Opal are always writing letters to the paper about the town's problems", or "this conflict and disagreement has been going on for a long time", and "this town is a dump, all people see from the highway is a mess", "we're listed on ghosttowns.com, that's not right," and "our reputation outside of Opal is bad."

General Observations of Opal - from driving by - a messy town. Yet, the Town has a peaceful feeling. The Mercantile Building stands out like a beacon. It has the words Food and Groceries painted on it. The words are faded. I wonder how many people stop to look at the building, perhaps wanting to buy an ice cream cone, soft drink, or sandwich. How many people are disappointed it is not open?

General Observations of Opal - after the listening sessions and town meeting. Opal has a history rich in agriculture and legends. Opal's claim for prominence lies in its importance as a previous shipping place for stock. Two legends are how Opal got its name. Supplied by the local residents at the listening sessions and Lincoln County Wyoming, Wyoming History by Wyoming Genealogy, the first legend is: 1) "Old Pal" - The story goes cowboys riding out from bringing livestock to ship on the Oregon Short Line would look back at their friends still waiting to ship and say "Goodbye, ""Old Pal", which would come out "O Pal"

by the time the wind carried it back to their friends. The second legend of naming Opal is: 2) Minerals and gemstones [Opal]. One story occurred in 1881 when an official of the Oregon Short Line and a newspaper man from Omaha, Nebraska were being escorted by Charles F. Robinson over his Ham's Fork ranch when one of the men picked up a stone. Mr. Robinson immediately identified the stone as an Opal. A year later the road was built through this place and the station was given the name Opal.* [**Story courtesy of Lincoln County, Wyoming History by Wyoming Genealogy*] I still wonder how many people are disappointed that the Mercantile Building isn't open.

There are also interesting facts about Opal in the book "Kemmerer, Wyoming, The Founding of an Independent Coal Town 1897-1902", written and compiled by Dr. G. Barrett. The book can be purchased at the Fossil Butte Museum in Kemmerer, Wyoming.

Other observations: The residents of Opal choose to live there. Their reasons are varied: it's quiet, nobody bothers me, and it's economical to live here.

Opal is struggling to find its identity. Residents are in conflict about things that happened in the past. Residents are disgruntled with the way things are now. Every community has disagreements.

Solutions - Get over the past! Until the residents and town officials work together, attendance at town council meetings will be very low to none. The town projects do not get completed because there is no support for them. Here are some suggestions for working together:

Communication between the town and residents is critical. There are tools to help. The Town is already posting the minutes of council meetings at the town hall and post office. Keep it up. The office hours of the town clerk and town officials, and date and time of the council meetings should also be posted at the town hall and post office. If you are not already doing so, when the town hall is closed during any office hours, leave a note big enough on both doors with the time of your return.

Leave a message on the town's telephone answering machine [or voice mail] what the office hours are, emergency

telephone numbers, date and time of the next council meeting.

The Town has an e-mail address. Send e-mails to residents that have computer e-mail access to notify them of upcoming special events, changes in office hours, council meetings and the like.

Send, deliver, or email town news to the local area newspapers.

Develop a Town of Opal website and keep it updated?

Have certain office hours for the Mayor and or town council at the town hall. The Mayor and council members can take turns. Publicize the hours in the area papers, post the hours at the town hall and post office, and send out emails. Whatever you do, let the residents know the certain hours and when you are not able to keep the hours.

For the citizens and others in the area - You live in and around Opal for good reasons. It is your community. If you have computer e-mail access, give the Town your email address so they can email you. Attend council meetings, participate in the town's activities, volunteer, and get your youth involved. Some want to come back to Opal.

Involve the companies near Opal. We heard at the listening sessions the companies support the Town of Opal.

Find Opal's identity. Hold a contest using the name legends - O'Pal and Opal. Local artists in your community come up with the drawings, perhaps one for each legend. One contest could be a coloring contest among your children up to age 12. Describe the two legends for the other contest. The other contest could be an essay for youth, ages 13 through 18. Have prizes for 1st, 2nd, 3rd for each category, and each participant. Photograph the participants and winners. Post the photographs at the Town Hall and deliver to the local newspapers with a short story.

The winners' pictures and essays could be utilized, with permission from the individual[s], for the town's business cards, stationary, and brochures. Billboards or signs could be done using the winner's pictures and some of the words of the essay [such as is it O'Pal or Opal], as well

as letting the public know Opal has public restrooms and town park. The billboards or signs could be placed at both entrances to the town. Ask for permission from the Wyoming Highway Department to place the billboards or signs in the high-way rights-of-way.

Town Dissension Resources

★ Town of Opal Residents

★ The Natural Gas Companies near Opal

★ Other Resources for Economic and Community Development

Mary Crosby, Executive Director Teri Picerno,
Executive Director

Lincoln-Uinta Association of Governments [LUAG]

Kemmerer/Diamondville Chamber of Commerce

Telephone Number (307) 877-3984 Telephone Number
(307) 877-9761 or 1-(888) 300-3413

Fax Number (307) 877-9762

E-Mail Address: chamber@hamsfork.net

★ Other Resources

Union Pacific Railroad Foundation funds a community-based grant program. The Foundation directs the majority of the foundation grants to The Principal's Partnership. However, the Foundation has set aside some funds for municipalities located on Union Pacific lines for one-time programs/projects provided the program/project benefits the entire community. For more information and an application contact the website address at:

Website Address: <http://www.up.com/found/grants.shtml>

Catalog of Wyoming State Grants was compiled by the Wyoming State Library. For the online list, contact the website address at:

Website Address: <http://cowgirl.state.wy.us/grantscat/>

The online Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance give you access to loan and grant programs available to state and local governments; quasi-public, and private profit and nonprofit organizations and institutions, recognized Indian tribes; and Territories and possessions of the United States. For the online list, contact the website address at:

Website Address: www.cfda.gov/

★ Local Area Newspapers

The "Little Chicago" Review

1300 Central Avenue
P.O. Box 933
Kemmerer, WY 83101
Telephone Number (307) 828-9520
Fax Number (307) 877-3632
E-Mail Address: editor@hamsfork.net
E-Mail Address: editor@kdis.net
Website Address: www.littlechicagoreview.com

The Kemmerer Gazette
708 JC Penney Drive
Kemmerer, WY 83101
Telephone Number (307) 877-3347
Telephone Number (307) 877-3736
E-Mail Address: kgazette@onewest.net [editor]
E-Mail Address: krosas@kemmerergazette.com [advertising]
Website Address: www.kemmerergazette.com

Patricia Robbins

Sweetwater EDA
1400 Dewar Dr, Ste 205A
Rock Springs, WY 82901
(307) 352-6874
parobbin@wyoming.com

Major Themes

Town Dissention

In order for Opal to accomplish any of the goals established they will need to resolve the conflict between the governing body and the opposing side.

I would suggest that they hold a facilitated meeting in which all sides are invited. At that meeting they need to set a mission for the Town of Opal, and a set of goals that include short (within the next year) and long term (five years).

If all parties can agree on a mission and a set of goals, perhaps the energies of the citizens can be focused on working together for the common good of the Town instead of spending energy fighting amongst each other.

Pacific Power has several highly skilled employees that would facilitate a town meeting and goal setting session at no cost. For information contact:

Craig Nelson
Regional Community Manager
Pacific Power
415 N Street, Rock Springs, WY 82901
307 352 5202 cell 307 360 7802

craig.nelson@pacificcorp.com

Also for more participation at Town Hall meetings, reconfigure the room to allow more public seating, with a less intimidating arrangement.

Law Enforcement

- Drugs

Contact with the Lincoln County Sheriffs department indicated that a deputy patrols Opal at least four times a week. I would suggest that the community invite the Sheriffs office to a town meeting and discuss their concerns. Establishing contact with the deputy would strengthen the ties with the town and could help increase visibility for the deputy.

Contact Sheriff's Office 307 877 3971

Neighborhood Watch

This organized program entails neighbors watching out for neighbors. The Sheriff's office will meet with neighbor groups and tell them what to watch for. Homes are then given Neighborhood Watch stickers that are placed on doors as a reminder that you are watching out for each other.

Contact Sheriff's Office 307 877 3971

Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI)

DCI has a great web page with information about methamphetamine use, the signs of a lab, and what to do.

See their web page at:

http://attorneygeneral.state.wy.us/dci/clan_labs.html

- Local ordinances

Does everyone know what the ordinances are?

I would suggest having a town meeting to review the town ordinances. Make sure that there are copies of the ordinances available.

- Speed limits on Highway 30

The Wyoming Highway Department suggested that contact be made with local legislatures concerning the speed limit on Highway 30. They are the only entity with authority to change that speed limit.

- Emergency preparedness

There was a concern about the community's ability to handle an emergency, specifically if the highway was blocked and the Kemmerer EMT's were unable to get to Opal. I would

suggest a meeting with the industries in the area to familiarize the community with their available resources. Exxon has an ambulance with trained personnel on each shift, and has a Homeland Security plan in place. Duke has first aid on site, but no advanced personnel, and has a company alert system in compliance with Homeland Security in place.

I would suggest contacting Kemmerer's EMTs about a training program for Opal residents to see if they can get anyone trained in basic emergency services.

Town Clean up and Beautification

Town wide cleanup effort

The City of Rock Springs coordinated a city wide clean up this past May for the second time. The designated an official clean up day and then used City map to assign team leaders to each section. The team leaders were in charge of getting other volunteers, including youth. The City supplied garbage bags and then hosted all of the volunteers to a picnic when the work was done. It was very effective in not only cleaning up the existing garbage, but increased volunteer awareness about cleanup. If you spend time picking up garbage, you become more conscientious about keeping the area clean.

One of the easiest ways to clean up the town is to enhance the private property. Homeowners can contact the University of Wyoming Agriculture Extension agent, Hudson Hill, about soil treatment for yards and for Xero-scaping techniques 307 9056 x410

Infrastructure

- Water
- Sewer
- Drainage
- Paved Streets

One of the issues was the need to eliminate the dirt roads. Paving is cost prohibited but alternative solutions are available. The Wyoming Department of Transportation district office has some milled asphalt stored near Granger that can be used for road base. Sweetwater County recently used this to pave a parking lot and it worked very well. Contact John Eddins, Rock Springs office at 307 352 3031

Economic/Community Development

- Rest Area on Highway 30

John Eddins, with the Wyoming Department of Transportation out of Rock Springs, reported that within 4 years, a rest stop will be built on the north side of highway with turning lanes for access. The project is on the list for funding.

- Making Highway 30 a four lane highway is been place on WYDOTs lists of projects to be completed within the next ten years, not has not been allocated funds yet

Tourism

Make sure the any historical sites in the area are identified with accompanying written document for distribution at the rest stop, once it is completed.
For identifying resources: Contact Cultural Resources Division 307 777 7013

For promoting resources: Contact Diane Shober of the Wyoming Division of Tourism 307 777 7777

For assistance with brochure development:

Contact: Terry Picerno, Kemmerer Chamber of Commerce 877 9761

Mary Crosby, Lincoln/Uinta Association of Governments 877 3984

- Convenience store/gas station Woods- WDTF for employees,
- Town Hall/Community Center

Ashley Camp

Assistant Director
Wyoming Rural Development Council
2219 Carey Avenue
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002
(307) 777-5812
acamp@state.wy.us

Introduction

I was excited to be a part of the Opal Community Assessment. The assessment gave me an opportunity to learn about the community, people and history of Opal. Opal has many fascinating aspects to explore, especially with the fossil fuels that are so abundant in the area. I commend the town of Opal for your hospitality and assessment preparation team. The community assessment ran very smoothly and that was due to the hard work and good planning of the community. I was very impressed with the honesty and openness of the community members during the listening sessions. I hope that the assessment will be a great motivator to the citizens of Opal to pull together and implement positive change! Thank you for your hospitality and the chance to visit with the people of Opal.

Theme: Law enforcement

Challenge: Stopping the use of drugs and illegal activities, enforcement of speed limits on Highway 30 and emergency preparedness.

Solution: Drug use was a major issue for everyone in Opal. The youth were especially unhappy about the problem and want to find solutions to stop it. The people were also unhappy with the lack of law enforcement in Opal and want to find a way to have more law enforcement presence. Upon speaking with the Lincoln County deputy sheriff, we learned that there is an officer that patrols Opal nearly everyday. A possible way to better connect with the sheriff is to invite the local law enforcement to a town meeting so that the people of Opal can meet and discuss Opal's relevant issues with the law enforcement. Another option is to enact a neighborhood watch in Opal.

Many citizens of Opal were very concerned with traffic and high speeds on Highway 30 that runs directly in front of town. There were even concerns that the school bus was being run off of the road by semi trucks. A possible solution to this problem is to contact the Wyoming Department of Transportation and discuss lowering the speed limit to a reasonable level through Opal. Encourage someone from WYDOT to come and observe the amount and type of traffic that runs by Opal everyday. Also talk with WYDOT about sending more highway patrols to the area as this is a significant safety problem for the citizens of Opal.

Lack of emergency preparedness was a large concern in Opal. There was concern about response time to emergencies and concerns about accidents with the nearby natural gas plants. Since Opal is the largest natural gas hub in the United States it is sensible to be concerned about emergency preparedness. I would recommend implementing a community wide plan of action in case of emergency or natural disaster and posting it at the town hall and sending it to all community members. I would also recommend contacting the local natural resource industries and find out what their safety and emergency plans include. They will have information that should be helpful to planning for Opal and may even offer assistance to the town for emergency planning.

Resources:

Wyoming Department of Transportation

5300 Bishop Blvd.
Cheyenne, WY 82009-3340
(307) 777-4375
www.dot.state.wy.us

Lincoln County Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Lee Gardner
1032 Beech St
Kemmerer, Wyoming 83101
(307) 877-3971

Theme: Town cleanup and beautification

Challenge: Cleaning up Opal as a whole, making it safer and more attractive for the community and visitors.

Solution: One theme that I heard often in the listening sessions was that the people of Opal made a choice to live there. The reasons were diverse, but a common reason was that they were free to do what they wanted on their own property without anyone bothering them. However, I also heard that the people wished that Opal looked more attractive driving by and through town. Opal is located in a semi arid region, so it is not practical to assume that it will be easy to have green lawns everywhere. What is possible is to capitalize on the natural beauty of your surroundings. Find out what plants, trees and shrubs are native to the Opal area and plant them. It may be helpful to talk to your local conservation district about what will grow in the area successfully and how to do it.

An issue that was discussed was that the water in Opal is very poor and is not easy to grow grass or trees. I did see a few green lawns in town and the owners mentioned that grass will grow with proper site preparation. Many people in Opal stated that they would like more trees in Opal to beautify the town. It was also stated by some community members that you can grow trees as well with the proper site preparation and care. Trees and shrubs in Opal would also act as a windbreak. There are grants that are available from the Wyoming State Forestry to plant trees and teach people about the proper site preparation.

A simple way to beautify Opal is to have a town cleanup day. Upon speaking to the youth of Opal, they stated that they would be willing to help, they just need some

leadership to get started. As there is no zoning laws in Opal it may not be possible to clean up every lot, but it is possible to cleanup the lots owned by the Town of Opal and encourage homeowners to cleanup their property or put up a fence.

A concern that was stated was the amount of weeds in Opal that are spread by the railroad tracks. I would suggest talking to the railroad about addressing this problem and possibly the local weed and pest about ways of eradicating the weeds in the town.

Resources:

**Wyoming State Forestry
District 4 Office**

100 Sage Street
Lyman, WY 82937
(307) 787-6148

Lincoln County Conservation District
110 Pine Street
Cokeville, WY 83114
(307) 279-3256

Lincoln County Cooperative Extension
Courthouse
Kemmerer, WY
(307) 877-9056

Lincoln County Weed and Pest
Scott Nield, Supervisor
PO Box 1117
Afton, WY 83110
(307) 886-3394 FAX (307) 886-5746

Railroad
Union Pacific Railroad
200 E. Railroad Ave.
Green River, WY 82935
307-877-4711

Theme: Town Dissention

Challenge: Getting everyone in Opal to get along and work together towards a common goal.

Solution: Town dissention was a major issue discussed in every listening session. It seems that there has been a feud in Opal since the town began. One thing that I found both interesting and encouraging was that the youth that we talked with all got along and liked one another even if their parents did not. If Opal will be able to move toward a common goal, then it is time to forget the ill feelings, move on and work together. This split creates a division in the town and creates a lot of unnecessary friction and ill will for Opal. Areas for improvement in Opal include; **communication**, cooperation and interaction. Something to think about may be to have a person who is trained in mediation and conflict resolution come to a town meeting to help improve the lines of communication among Opals citizens.

Develop a process for positive change in Opal that includes support and implementation of issues. If there is lots of ill will at town meeting, invite a facilitator to come and help with communication in the meetings. An issue that was brought up frequently was that projects get started and never finished. One cause for this may be the quick turnover of mayor and council members. It was stated that there is a new election every two years and that the position of mayor goes between the two feuding sides. Maybe think about changing the term to four years for the mayor and town council. This would allow more time for projects to be implemented and completed in Opal. Another way for the town of Opal to move forward and accomplish goals no matter who the mayor is would be to write a mission statement and goals for the town. A strategic plan of what the town as a whole wants to accomplish is a great step in the right direction.

At town meetings, focus on the positive aspects of Opal as well as the negative ones. Many times it is easy to only look at the negative things, however much can be achieved when you really discover the good things about your town and how to capitalize on them. Discuss the opportunities for change and get people excited about programs. Encourage and applaud positive attitudes and people who do good things in Opal. Maybe feature a citizen in a town newsletter who is doing good things for Opal. It was discussed that the citizens of Opal write to the newspaper in Kemmerer to complain about issues in Opal. Think about having the town of Opal submit a story about the positive

people or things in Opal, celebrate a person who does good work for the better of the town. Implement a program for the town that awards good citizenship. Maybe even hold a town event at the park to celebrate the town's citizens such as the Founders Day that has been held in the past in Opal.

Resources:

Wyoming Agriculture and Natural Resource Mediation Program

Lucy Hansen
2210 Carey Avenue
Cheyenne, WY 82002-0100
1-888-WYO-9278

Newspaper

The "Little Chicago" Review

1300 Central
Kemmerer, WY. 83101
307-828-9520
editor@hamsfork.net
<http://www.littlechicagoreview.com>

Newspaper

Kemmerer Gazette

708 JC Penney Dr.
Kemmerer, WY. 83101
307-877-3347
Kgazette@allwest.net
<http://www.kemmerergazette.com>

Theme: Economic/ Community Development

Challenge: The citizens of Opal identified four main goals for economic and community development. They include: a rest area, convenience store/ gas station, four lane highway, and a town hall/ community center.

Solution: It was discovered at the town hall meeting that a person will be opening a convenience store in the red building just east of the old mercantile. This is great to have an entrepreneur opening a business in Opal and will hopefully bring people off of the highway and into Opal. A convenience store to pick up the basic necessities was high on everyone's list of projects for Opal. It was also stated in the listening sessions that some people in the

community want a rest area in Opal. A concern to consider before pursuing this is that if a rest stop opened right on Highway 30, then people driving by may not pull off of the highway and give business to Opal's convenience store. From the listening sessions we heard many times how busy the highway is everyday, so the Town of Opal could possibly benefit greatly from people stopping off to purchase goods and use the restroom.

An issue that was brought up in the listening sessions was that the Town of Opal has no identity. Finding the towns identity will help to foster pride among Opal's citizens. For example, Douglas boasts itself as the, "Home of the Jackalope." In Opal, we heard three different stories about how Opal originally got its name and why it is pronounced O-pal instead of Opal. The town could hold a contest to find out how Opal really got its name. This could be a fun project to bring the citizens together and then from the outcome, come up with a tag line for Opal to use as a marketing tool to bring people in to town.

The history of Opal is both diverse and interesting with many aspects to explore. The town has a history in the cattle and sheep shipping industry, precious metals and stones, as well as in natural gas and oil. The town needs to find a way to invite travelers in Highway 30 to stop and look at the old Lincoln highway, the old Mercantile and the marker commemorating the pioneers. This could be accomplished with something as simple as a sign at both ends of town telling travelers what Opal has to offer.

When considering the concern of the traffic on Highway 30, the citizens stated that they would like for the highway to be four lanes. They stated that at the very least they would like a turning lane that runs the entire length of the town. This is an issue that can be brought up with the Wyoming Department of Transportation along with lowering the speed limit through Opal.

The people of Opal expressed the need for a new town hall and community center. This would be a great place for kids, families, and the elderly, really everyone in Opal to relax and visit with one another. The current town hall's location in a trailer house is not conducive to effective communication. In addition, the shape being long and narrow means that the townspeople must sit very close to the council and we heard that this makes people feel very

uncomfortable, a reference to the idea that no one wants to sit in the front row and at the current town hall that is the only option. One idea to solve this problem could be to use the old mercantile building. We learned at the listening sessions that it is structurally sound and is definitely a landmark in Opal.

There was some talk about tearing the building down, but turning it into new town hall/community center would provide a meeting place for the people of Opal and also save a historic building. I would encourage the people of Opal to utilize this building as it is a big part of the history of Opal. There may be a few different places to find funding for this such as the Wyoming Main Street Program, a part of the Wyoming Rural Development Council. I would also encourage the town to work with the Lincoln County Chamber of Commerce for economic development.

Another program that may be helpful is the Foundation for Rural Education and Development Ethyl Grant Program. The Ethyl Grant program focuses on improving economic conditions and the quality of life in rural communities. The Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED) was established by the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies. Now in its fourth year, the Ethyl Grant program provides matching grants to organizations that partner with OPASTCO member telephone companies for community projects. The grants, ranging from \$500 - \$2,500 are awarded bi-annually in October and May. An estimated \$10,000 in funding is available in 2004.

Resources:

Foundation for Rural Education and Development Ethyl Grant Program

FRED

21 Dupont Circle NW, Suite 700 •

Washington, DC • 20036 •

Phone: 202/659-5990 •

Fax: 202/659-461

To download the application please visit:

<<http://www.fred.org/FREDbrEthylSide1218B.pdf>.>

**Southwest Regional Director
Wyoming Business Council**

Ray Sarcletti

Office: 307-382-3163

Fax: 307-382-3217

RSARCL@state.wy.us

Wyoming Main Street Program

Mary Randolph

2219 Carey Avenue

Cheyenne, WY 82002

(307) 777-6430

Economic Development

South Lincoln County Economic Development

20 US 30 & 189 / P.O. Box 495

Diamondville, WY. 83116

307-877-9781

slcedc@yahoo.com

<http://www.kemmerer.org>

Kemmerer/Diamondville Chamber of Commerce

800 Pine Ave. Kemmerer WY 83101

PHONE: 307-877-9761

TOLL FREE: 888-300-3413

Steve Achter

Wyoming Business Council

214 West 15th Street

Cheyenne, WY 82002

307-777-2811

FAX 307-777-2838

sachte@state.wy.us

Introduction

The Resource Team would like to thank the town of Opal for the immeasurable amounts of honesty, hospitality, and friendliness that you gave during the Resource Team effort. The team has every confidence that the kind of effort and enthusiasm produced for the Resource Team will be responsible for and ensure future successes.

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

Any recommendations contained herein are not mandatory. The Wyoming Rural Development Council has not endorsed any recommendations and opinions contained herein. Neither the Wyoming Rural Development Council, nor any of its employees, contract labor, officers, committee chairs and/or members makes any warranty, express or implied, including warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose, or assumes any legal liability for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of this report or any information, recommendations or opinions contained herein.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Challenge: A challenge facing the community and pointed out at the listening sessions is the abuse of drugs and alcohol by not only the youth but also by adults.

Solution/Contact: A number of private foundations serve Wyoming and provide grant funds for a variety of youth programs and substance abuse prevention programs. In most cases the funds are provided to youth organization or non-profit organizations. The foundations also focus on other more broad issue such as wellness and mental health. A sample of the foundations includes:

The Wold Foundation

139 West 2nd Street, Suite 200
Casper, WY 82601
Phone: 307-265-7252
Fax: 307-265-7336

Areas of interest:

- Independent schools and private colleges;
- Human-service organizations and youth programs;
- Community-supported cultural activities;
- Preventative health and wellness programs;
- Preservation of historic sites and buildings;
- Conservation and outdoor recreation that supports health, education, leadership training and youth services;
- Scientific research aimed at improving the quality of life and conservation of natural resources; and,
- Projects and programs that benefit Wyoming citizens, particularly youth.

American Legacy Foundation

1001 G Street, NW
Suite 800
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: 202-454-5555
Fax: 202-454-5599
Email: grantsinfo@americanlegacy.org
Url: <http://www.americanlegacy.org>

Areas of interest:

The American Legacy Foundation provides grants to further its goal of creating tobacco-free generations. At the heart of Legacy's grant program is the effort to identify new and improved ways to develop effective tobacco control programs. Legacy's four goals are as follows:

- Reduce youth tobacco use;
- Reduce exposure to second-hand smoke among all ages and populations;
- Increase successful quit rate among all ages and populations; and,

- Reduce disparities in access to prevention and cessation services and in exposure to secondhand smoke on behalf of disadvantaged populations.

The Daniels Fund

55 Madison Street, Suite 255
Denver, CO 80206
Phone: 303-393-7220
Fax: 303-393-7339
E-mail: info@danielsfund.org
Url: <http://www.danielsfund.org>

Areas of interest:

- Child care/early childhood education
- Elderly seniors
- Mental health, alcoholism, substance abuse
- Physical disabilities
- Amateur athletics

Burlington Northern Santa Fe Foundation

5601 West 26th Street
Cicero, IL 60804
Phone: 708-924-5615
Fax: 708-924-5657
Email: Sharon.Heft@BNSF.com
Url: <http://www.bnsf.com>

Areas Of Interest:

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe Foundation supports nonprofit organizations in the company's area of operations only. The Foundation is a strong contributor to various United Way/Red Cross agencies across its system and includes as well the following categories in its giving program:

- Education;
- Arts & culture;
- Civic programs;
- Health & human service agencies
- Hospitals; and,

- Youth organizations.

As a final thought, as individual youth emerge as leaders, recognize them with a Youth Leader of the Year Award.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Challenge: Public facilities and infrastructure such as water, sewer, roads and drainage were mentioned many times at the listening sessions. Many of these types of facilities may be paid for with the use of the special purpose sales tax. However, the recommendations are for grant programs

Solution/Contact: The Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) is another program that can be used to help pay the cost of constructing public facilities. Any project funded must be able to demonstrate that a CDBG designated National Objective can be met. One of those objectives is benefit to low and moderate income people. For more information about the CDBG program please contact:

Steve Achter, Director

Investment Ready Communities/CDBG
Wyoming Business Council
214 W. 15th Street
Cheyenne, WY 82002
Phone: 1-307-777-2811
Email: sachte@state.wy.us
Web: www.wyomingbusiness.org

Solution/Contact: The new Business Ready Grant and Loan Program can be used to help pay the cost of constructing public infrastructure that serves the needs of business. This includes infrastructure such as streets, water lines, sewer lines and commercial buildings. The program is also able to fund education infrastructure and recreation facilities. However, all projects funded must be tied to an overall economic development strategy. For more information about the program please contact:

Shawn Reese

Manager, Business Ready Community Program
Wyoming Business Council
214 W. 15th Street
Cheyenne, WY 82002

Phone: 1-307-777-2813

Email: sreese@state.wy.us

Web: www.wyomingbusiness.org

Solution/Contact: The State Loan and Investment Board (SLIB) provide grants for a variety of essential public facilities. For more information about SLIB programs please contact:

Brad Miskimins

Grant and Loan Program Manager
State Loan and Investment Board
Herschler Building, 3W
122 W. 25th Street
Cheyenne, WY 82002
Phone: 307 777 7309
Email: bmiski@state.wy.us

Solution/Contact: Grant funds for outdoor recreation projects are available from the Land and Water Conservation Program. These funds are available annually and require a local match; therefore, the town must plan now to insure funds are available. For more information concerning the Land and Water Conservation Program contact:

Todd Thibodeau

State Parks and Cultural Resources
Herschler Building, 1st Floor East
122 West 25th Street
Cheyenne, WY 82002
307-777-6478

Program guidelines and application information can be viewed by going to <http://commerce.state.wy.us/sphs/index1.htm> click on Land and Water Conservation Fund.

ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

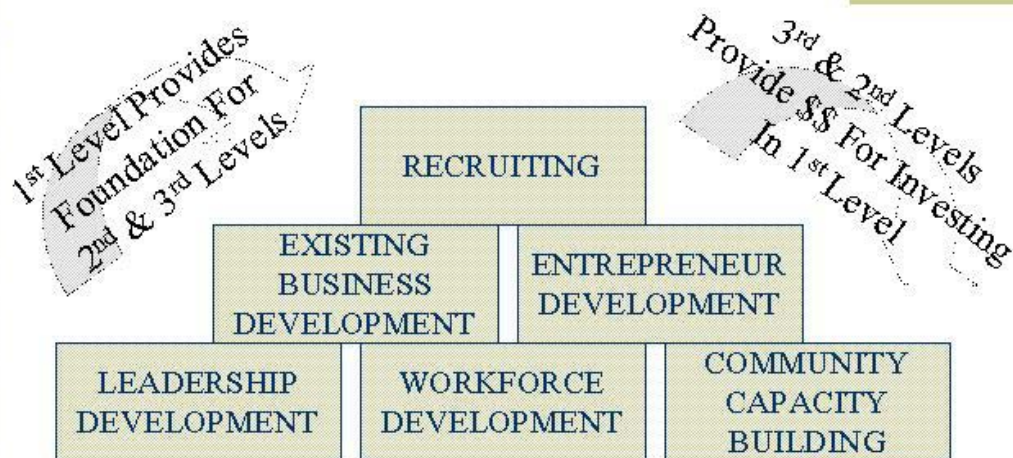
Challenge: Business development and job creation were brought up a number of times as a need in Opal. Not all communities are prepared for or have in place the necessary tools to be successful with a business recruitment or business expansion effort. In addition smaller communities such as Opal do not have sufficient population to realistically attract new business, particularly if it is

the type of business that would rely on the local population for its market. The citizens of Opal in this regard have a realistic view of the business development potential of Opal. The citizens that attended the listening sessions fully understood that new business development would occur as a result of the proximity to and the traffic along Highway 30. Also, as everyone is aware, Opal is the major hub of natural gas gathering and shipping. Due to the number of employees in the area this situation also creates business opportunities. Opal should look inward toward the entrepreneurial spirit of its residents. The team heard from citizens that have or would like to start businesses of their own.

Even if Opal had a greater population certain steps would have to be taken before true success could be attained with a business recruitment or expansion program. Considerable academic research has been completed to determine what needs to be in place to insure success. Below is an outline of an approach that has been proven successful. It is called "Economic Development Building Blocks, A Holistic Approach."

Also, listed are a variety of resources that can assist individuals that are contemplating starting their own business.

Cycle of Development



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

1. Leadership Institute
2. Active Civic Clubs
3. Community Leadership Recognition
4. Youth Leadership Program
5. Shared Community Vision
6. Volunteer Programs



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

1. Local Training Institutions (including Technology)
2. School-to-Careers Participation
3. Adult Literacy Curriculum
4. Local Work Force Development Participation
5. Human Resources Manager Network
6. Summer Intern Program
7. On-The-Job Training



COMMUNITY CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

1. Comprehensive Community Plan
2. Cultural & Recreation Opportunities
3. Adequate & Affordable Housing
4. Adequate Infrastructure
5. Strategic Community Health Plan
6. Good Schools
7. Adequate Police & Fire



EXISTING BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

1. CEO's/Plant Managers' Network
2. Community Business Advocacy Group
3. Main Street/Retail Business Development
4. Business Assistance Resources (SBDC, MAMTC, etc.)
5. Capital Resources Availability
6. Export Development



ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Community Based Venture Capital Group
2. Business Assistance Resources (SBDC, MAMTC, GRO-BIZ, RPC, WWBC)
3. Entrepreneurs Network Group
4. Business Incubators
5. Educational Programs
6. Mentoring Program
7. Business Challenge



RECRUITING

1. Local Economic Development Professional
2. Industrial/Business Park
3. Speculative Building Program
4. Marketing Program
5. Local Government - Anti-Red Tape
6. Local Incentives
7. Development Authority



For more information about implementing the building blocks in Opal contact:

Ray Sarcletti, Director
South West Regional Office
Wyoming Business Council
1400 Dewar Drive, Suite 208A
Rock Springs, WY 82901
307 382 3163
Email: rsarcl@state.wy.us
Web: www.wyomingbusiness.org

Solution/Contact: The Wyoming Small Business Development Center (SBDC) provides a wealth of assistance to business owners. The assistance includes business plan assistance, accounting, marketing, and government procurement and grant and loan application preparation to name a few. The SBDC office is located in Rock Springs.

The NxLevel entrepreneurial training is also offered through the SBDC and will be taught on-site in Opal if there are enough students that sign-up for the class. It generally takes about 12 students to make a complete class. However, if there are fewer than 12 students the class will

be taught if a sponsor can be found to help financially support the class.

For additional information regarding the Small Business Development Center's contact:

Bill Ellis, Regional Director

SBDC
1400 Dewar Drive, Suite 205
Rock Springs, WY 82902-1168
307-352-6894
Toll Free: 800-348-5205
Fax: 307-352-6876
E-mail: bellis@uwyo.edu

Solution/Contact: The community should utilize the expertise of the newly established Market Research Center (MRC). The MRC is a brand new creation of the Wyoming Business Council (WBC), the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), and the University of Wyoming's College of Business. It was created to provide Wyoming entrepreneurs and Wyoming communities with sophisticated and timely market research information. This will allow Wyoming businesses to obtain and analyze market information on products, industries, and customers. For more information about these programs please:

Ray Sarcletti, Director

South West Regional Office
Wyoming Business Council
1400 Dewar Drive, Suite 208A
Rock Springs, WY 82901
307 382 3163
Email: rsarcl@state.wy.us
Web: www.wyomingbusiness.org

Solution/Contact: Utilize free business assistance programs through the Wyoming Small Business Development Center (SBDC). The SBDC, in part funded by the Wyoming Business Council, can assist people wanting to start a business in Opal and those already in business in Opal. Topics that the SBDC can assist with include accounting, advertising, cash flow, human resources, financial reports, market research, patents and trademarks, business plan assistance, along with many others. For more information, or to schedule appointments to get small business assistance, contact:

Bill Ellis, Regional Director

SBDC
1400 Dewar Drive, Suite 205
Rock Springs, WY 82902-1168
307-352-6894
Toll Free: 800-348-5205
Fax: 307-352-6876
E-mail: bellis@uwyo.edu

Solution/Contact: Consider some of the services offered through the Wyoming Women's Business Center. The Center offers a business plan guide that is one of the best available. In addition, the Center has a micro loan program (\$2,500 and less) available to small businesses at rates far below prime and at favorable repayment terms. For more information, please contact:

Rosemary Bratton

Wyoming Women's Business Center

P.O. Box 3661
Laramie, WY 82071
Phone: 1-888-524-1947
Email : wwbc@uwyo.edu
Web: <http://www.wyomingwomen.org/>

Solution/Contact: Take a look at some of the programs offered by Gro-Biz (Government Resources and Opportunities for Business). Gro-Biz helps Wyoming companies secure profitable contracts with federal, state and local governments. In particular, examine one program called Bid Match, which utilizes email daily to notify registered Wyoming businesses of government contracting opportunities. For more information, please contact:

Rudy Nesvik
State Director
Gro-Biz
Laramie County Community College
1400 E. College Drive
Cheyenne, WY 82007
Phone: 1-866-253-3300
Email: grobiz@wyoming.com
Web: <http://www.gro-biz.com>

Solution/Contact: Local manufacturers should take advantage of the services of the Mid America Manufacturing and Technology Center (MAMTC). MAMTC can help Wyoming manufacturers become more competitive through programs that address quality, business systems, the manufacturing process, company assessment, marketing, and product development. For more information, please contact your local regional MAMTC representative:

George Twitchell
MAMTC
PO Box 727
Rock Springs, WY 82902
307-389-4856 ext 840
E-mail: gtwitch@uwyo.edu

Solution/Contact: Utilize the Wyoming Business Council's Trade Show Incentive Grant Program. This program will assist businesses in exhibiting their products at trade shows. It is a matching grant (dollar for dollar) up to \$1,500 /year. For example, if a company in Opal were to exhibit its products a trade show in Denver that costs \$3,000, the Trade Show Incentive Grant could cover up to \$1,500 of these costs related to the trade show itself. For more detailed information on this program, please contact:

Ray Sarcletti, Director
South West Regional Office
Wyoming Business Council
1400 Dewar Drive, Suite 208A
Rock Springs, WY 82901
307 382 3163
Email: rsarcl@state.wy.us
Web: www.wyomingbusiness.org

Solution/Contact: It's worth examining some of the other business programs available through the Wyoming Business Council, including the Wyoming First Program (available to help companies promote their products as "Made in Wyoming"), the Challenge Loan Program (a state revolving loan fund that participates with banks to provide lower interest rates to businesses, and human resource consultation (helping companies with HR challenges). For more information on these and other Wyoming Business Council programs, contact:

Ray Sarcletti, Director

South West Regional Office
Wyoming Business Council
1400 Dewar Drive, Suite 208A
Rock Springs, WY 82901
307 382 3163
Email: rsarcl@state.wy.us
Web: www.wyomingbusiness.org

Solution/Contact: The Wyoming Department of Employment has workforce training grants available to new and existing companies that create new jobs. These grants are available to companies for costs related to training new employees. Typically, the amount of these grants are \$1,000-\$1,500 per employee, depending on after training wages. These grants are subject to availability and eligibility, so for further information, contact:

Ray Sarcletti, Director

South West Regional Office
Wyoming Business Council
1400 Dewar Drive, Suite 208A
Rock Springs, WY 82901
307 382 3163
Email: rsarcl@state.wy.us
Web: www.wyomingbusiness.org

TOWN DISSENTION

Challenge:

Solution/Contact: The Heartland Institute, a community development think tank, has completed considerable research concerning what makes communities work and work well. As a result of that research the institute has come up with what they consider characteristics of viable communities. Take a look at these characteristics and see how Opal stacks up.

- Evidence of community pride. The citizens in a Midwest town rebuilt a dam that was vital to that community. The townspeople are proud that they pulled together, raised a large amount of money, renovated the dam and then fixed up adjoining parks and boat ramps. They now celebrate the achievement with a yearly "Water Over the Dam Days." Opal could use the same approach to

bring the community together to demonstrate community pride. Think about re-establishing "Founders Day."

- Emphasis on quality in business and community life.
- Active economic development program.
- Willingness to invest in the future. This is demonstrated by voluntary contributions of time and money and the approval of bond issues and tax levies for schools, utilities, streets, town centers, recreation facilities, etc.
- Participatory approach to community decision-making. Do people feel that they have input into community decisions? Do local officials regularly inform the public about upcoming decisions and events and encourage public discussion and involvement?
- Cooperative community spirited people and organizations believe that "we're all in this together." Cooperation is expressed through attitudes like: "If I help you now, you'll help me later. Better yet, I know if I help you now, I'll benefit in the long run. If we disagree on something, we can still be friends. I can give in to you on this thing that you really want, knowing that in the future you'll do the same for me." The team did not hear much of this attitude expressed by the citizens of Opal.
- Realistic appraisal of future opportunities. Not every town will be able to attract a substantial new business, and even for those that do land a "plum," their problems are not solved, just different.
- Awareness of competitive positioning.
- Deliberate transition of power to a younger generation of leaders. Communities can't wait for the transition to happen magically. Young people and newcomers must be encouraged to participate and given the experience and training necessary to help them. Also, the more people who are involved in leadership, the less a burden it is on any one person or group. The more open local government and organizations appear to be, the more energy and ideas that will be generated.

- Acceptance of women in leadership roles. And not just in "behind the scenes" and minor parts without power or recognition.
- Strong belief in and support of education. Even though the majority of citizens in rural communities no longer have children in school, they recognize that the whole community benefits from well-educated young people.
- Problem solving approach to providing health care. Communities must approach this problem from the view of providing health care for citizens, not simply how to attract a doctor.
- Strong multi-generational family orientation.
- Strong presence of traditional institutions that are integral to community life. Traditional institutions such as churches, school and civic organizations (PTOs, Kiwanis, Rotarians, Lions), and youth groups (girl and scouts, 4-H) play an essential role in the community.
- Knowledge of the physical environment.
- Attention to sound and well-managed infrastructure. Included here are parks, swimming pools, streets, sewer systems, electric and water utilities, civic buildings, etc.
- Careful use of fiscal resources. With lots of money, it would be much easier for towns to have great parks, schools, utilities, etc. However, almost all local governments are experiencing a scarcity instead of an abundance of resources. The trick is, then, to make hard choices, run government efficiently, and find ways to provide essential maintenance and upgrades even in times of shortage. Easier said than done.
- Sophisticated use of information resources.
- Willingness to seek help from the outside.

- Conviction that, in the long run, you have to do it yourself. Communities can get help from the outside. However, responsibility for survival and enhanced quality of life rest ultimately with the people who live in the community.

Are these characteristics of a viable community evident in Opal? It became evident to the team that many of these characteristics are not evident in Opal. In particular work needs to be done on community pride and community cooperation.

USEFUL WEB SITES AND GRANT INFORMATION

State grant information through the State Library:

www-wsl.state.wy.us/sis/grants/index.html

Federal Catalog of Domestic Assistance:

www.cfda.gov

Information about private foundation assistance:

www.fdncenter.org

There are publications that provide information on public as well as private grant opportunities. One of the better publications is the Federal Assistance Monitor.

Subscriptions may be obtained by contacting:

CD Publications

8204 Fenton Street

Silver Springs, MD 20910

301-588-6380

Web-site address: www.cdpublications.com

WHAT WE HEARD FROM WHAT WAS SAID IN THE LISTENING SESSIONS

Every indicates and a persons agreement to the statement, i.e. *** =
three people agree*

Major Problems and Challenges

- Water situation, not drinkable, everyone has to have reverse osmosis installed in home or business
- Lack of businesses*
- Lack of services, sheriff, etc.*
- Lack of growth*
- Lack of interest for financing, grants for businesses*
- Lack of information on available programs for business financing*
- Not preserving historical brick building*
- Lack of communication between citizens and town government
- No initiatives to improve the town that last
- No paved roads
- Drugs in community*
- Need more interaction with law enforcement*
- No natural gas in community, have to use propane*
- Lack of follow through for projects
- People do not take action
- Lack of information/communication
- Inaction of community leaders
- Need four line highway, two lane is dangerous**
- Need more highway patrol for Highway 30*
- No resources for financial assistance*
- Weeds are out of control
- People buy property in Opal to store their junk, cars, etc.
- Poor town reputation- illiteracy, big drug problem
- Lack of involvement by law enforcement in Opal problems
- Dangerous highway, too many semis moving too fast
- Insufficient number of highway patrol on the highway

- Highway approaches need to be lengthened into Opal (or turning lanes)
- Poor (ineffective) town governing, good old boy system, "old families fighting for control"
- Questionable town government practices, conflicts of interest
- Majority of residents are apathetic in regards to town government
- Poor appearance- People move away and leave their junk**
- Property values decrease because of all the junk
- Ordinances are not enforced*
- Drug abuse*
- Tired of trying to make a difference with a governing body that doesn't listen and are the biggest offenders
- Boom and bust cycle greatly impacts the town
- Lack of interest on behalf of the actual residents on Opal
- No retail/agricultural supplies available*
- No gas stations, services, groceries, and no effort to recruit
- No employment other than natural gas services to attract people
- Poor water quality
- Defined separation of the community "in-fighting" one group against another (not project based- personality based)**
- Lack of town ordinance enforcement
- Lack of facilities and programs for young families and children
- Two or three families control the town and run down others with opposing ideas and opinions and burn out of the others who want to help
- Poor appearance leads to reduced property values
- Drug problem -at least 2 or 3 drug labs in town that are not shut down by the law enforcement*
- Underage smoking is tolerated
- Youth violence- threats of violence
- Highway traffic makes it difficult for school bus to enter highway, and speeding problems
- Trains block the intersection and delay the school bus making them late for school in Kemmerer
- Nothing to do in Opal- you have to make your own fun
- Only two teenagers in town

- No emergency response system in Opal**
- It is hard to get to towns due to busy highways*
- Lack of involvement of citizens with the town*
- Lack of activities for kids, so they get in trouble*
- Lack of communication between Opal and Kemmerer for emergency services*
- Lack of adult involvement not kids, don't want to be bothered but are first to complain when something does not go their way*
- Resistance to change**
- Poor infrastructure for town maintenance**
- Complacency
- Unattractive in appearance, dirty***
- No law enforcement
- Drugs, traffic and manufacturing
- Weed control*
- Keep weeds down along the railroad tracks so they don't spread around the town
- Location, far away for necessities, too close to attract businesses
- Getting people involved and working together for the good of the town
- Town has very small tax base, more taxes go to the county
- Finding funding for projects to improve Opal
- Water, reverse osmosis is not a permanent fix for the town*
- Planning for the future is hard to get the citizens to do
- Developing a hook for tourism for Opal
- Getting the people to come to the town meetings
- Dissension in the town
- Nothing is accomplished, just nitpicking
- Rules are set in the town but not followed
- Mayor does not always work well with the citizens
- Too much nepotism in Opal
- Drug problem is number one
- Never see law enforcement
- Town accounts are not balanced every month
- Town did not want gas station when it was offered a long time ago
- Need to be more cohesive
- Do not like the current water system
- Safety for children playing in Opal

- Commute to Kemmerer is too far, need a convenience store
- There is a water problem here, smells
- There is no community support to accomplish projects
- There are group bickering, personality conflict
- How the town government is run*
- Drugs*
- Water
- Lack of tax base
- People do not come to the town meetings
- People are divided*
- Lack of law enforcement*
- Has trouble finding their identity
- Lack of communication between town and town council

Opal

Major Strengths and Assets

- Location, Highway runs right by Opal**
- Development of oil and gas, Jonah fields**
- High traffic, lots of people pass by*
- Like terrain, open spaces is an asset
- Land available at a reasonable price for businesses
- Would have support from the industry for new business
- Mineral, fossil deposits attraction
- Property is very affordable
- Historical aspects is an asset
- Citizens, nice people
- Are incorporated, have mayor and town council
- Location is good for developing businesses
- No pollution
- Pretty country, nice mountains*
- Fresh air*
- Good people
- Good location for businesses with highway traffic
- Cheap housing costs and low property values
- Less restrictive ordinances than a city, in regards to nuisance issues
- Good people
- Wide open spaces
- Hub of gas industry in western United States that could be capitalized on*
- Great ranching families

- Railroad with available spurs and sidings for new industry to use**
- Industrial activity
- Location on highway*
- Good water and sewer system and community services*
- Good location for a truck stop with the port of entry in Kemmerer
- Three phase power available
- Isolated from the problems of city life
- No cable television
- Able to drive go-cart all over with wide open spaces
- Wyoming rural lifestyle*
- Friendly community, you know everyone*
- Incorporated township, eligible for funding
- Opal gas plants and hub of gas industry
- Good location (highway 30) and potential for growth, railroad goes through the town**
- Good for ranches in the area, come to Opal for mail, etc.**
- Cost of housing, very cheap*
- Town has a lot of history, older than Kemmerer and other surrounding towns
- Safe community
- More freedom to do what you want
- The people are an asset, they have diverse backgrounds that could accomplish a lot*
- Highway 30*
- Town employees are an asset, great town clerk, water operator and equipment operator
- People chose to live in Opal, they want to be here
- Good maintenance for the water and sewer systems, streets are in good shape
- Room for expansion for low or no cost to business*
- Can get grants for new development
- Quality of life, good hunting and fishing
- Opportunities for the youth here
- Do not have many assets in this town
- Small community
- There are not any strengths and assets to Opal
- Close proximity to industrial worksites
- Good place to raise kids
- Small community

- Town will come together in time of a crisis

What projects would you like to see accomplished in Opal in the next two, five, ten and twenty years?

- Water for short term goals, homes and businesses*
- Historical building
- Utilities to attract businesses
- Rest area on Highway 30 with bathrooms, lighting, grass and semi parking, playground*
- Gas station/convenience store***
- Restaurant, motel in town**
- Beautification**
- Street lights, trees
- Housing- need better quality more affordable, maybe apartments
- Town park with trees and benches, playground
- Law enforcement
- Safety with train tracks, better access to homes across train tracks***
- Convert highway 30 to four lanes for better safety
- Restaurant to make people want to stop in Opal
- Study on what businesses would work for Opal
- Study on air quality
- Four lane highway
- Paved roads in Opal*
- Need a four inch water pipeline from Kemmerer to plant in Opal*
- Get a decent town hall
- Find out if there are any wells drilled by the Little Colorado project around Opal as a water source for Opal
- Talk with railroad about turning down horns on the trains, some are too loud, they are too loud
- Work on noise ordinance
- Town cleanup
- Convenience store
- Drainage system for the town
- Paved streets
- Better street lighting
- Old mercantile building needs to be torn down or restored
- Community wide beautification that gets people involved
- Convenience store, gas, groceries, restaurant, etc***

- Clean town with enforced ordinances and dressed up entrances utilizing federal and state dollars, including a fence along highway*
- Large truck stop with other services*
- Large community storage area for vehicles
- Nicer, affordable, housing available so more people would live here*
- Hire person to write grants for town projects
- Activities and events for children to attract and retain families
- Actively encourage local officials to get highway expanded to 4 lanes
- Work with UPRR to develop sites here
- Town would use donated lots to encourage development and growth
- Community members working toward a common, constructive goal*
- Outdoor paint ball facility*
- In door Hockey rink
- Highway expanded to four lanes with turning lane*
- Paved roads*
- More activities, facilities and events for youth
- Law enforcement in Opal**
- Gas station
- Businesses, shopping
- Community Center, for multiple use (seniors, law enforcement)*
- More trees, beautification**
- Water infrastructure
- First response unit, ambulance, fire department based in Opal***
- Curb, gutters and paved streets
- Park improvements
- Water and sewer upgrades
- Housing, retirement housing, apartments for construction workers*
- Hard to get homeowners insurance
- Major truck stop, service center
- School for K-12
- Stables for horses
- Laundromat
- Restaurant, a chain like Cracker Barrel

- Growth for the town
- Rest stop with museum
- Four lane highway
- Tourism draw with Oregon Trail, history of Opal and access to the river
- Replace the town hall for a larger one*
- Convert old sewer lagoon to equipment storage
- Make park restrooms ADA accessible and heat them for use year round
- Sprinkler system at the park to make it more enjoyable
- Need sewer extensions for future building possibilities
- Paved streets and storm gutters
- Better water system for Opal
- Attract businesses
- Law enforcement
- Dependable generator for the lift station
- Better source of water for Opal
- Would like a summer program in the park for the kids, to teach respect, introduce the arts.
- Drug program, to help stop the problem in town
- Town cleanup day with the kids, adults need to make the effort for the benefit of the children
- Family oriented activities, parents need to give the guidance to the children
- More trees
- Need to cleanup property and empty lots
- Need to have drug intervention
- Law enforcement needs to be here more often
- Businesses to generate tax dollars*
- Rest stop
- Convenience store
- Social center to bring the town together
- After school activities for children
- A bus for Opal kids only
- Community Center

1. Evidence of Community Pride:

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

2. Emphasis on Quality in Business and Community Life:

People believe that something worth doing is worth doing right.

3. Willingness to Invest in the Future:

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

4. Participatory Approach to Community Decision Making:

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

5. Cooperative Community Spirit:

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

6. Realistic Appraisal of Future Opportunities:

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

7. Awareness of Competitive Positioning:

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

8. Knowledge of the Physical Environment:

Relative location and available natural resources underscore decision-making.

9. Active Economic Development Program:

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

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

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

11. Acceptance of Women in Leadership Roles:

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

12. Strong Belief in and Support for Education:

Good schools are the norm and centers of community activity.

13. Problem-Solving Approach to Providing Health Care:

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

14. Strong Multi-Generational Family Orientation:

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

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

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

16. Sound and Well-Maintained Infrastructure:

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

17. Careful Use of Fiscal Resources:

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

18. Sophisticated Use of Information Resources:

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

19. Willingness to Seek Help from the Outside:

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

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

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

*Reprinted from Heartland Center Leadership Development, Spring 2002 *Visions Newsletter*.

