

an ECONOMIC STRATEGY for BLAINE COUNTY, IDAHO



Prepared for:
SUSTAIN BLAINE AND BLAINE COUNTY

Prepared by:



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acknowledgements

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executive summary

INTRODUCTION

the challenge > This plan provides guidance for ensuring the economic vitality of Blaine County. While Sun Valley is an “international brand,” and the county is seen through the prism of a successful tourist destination, important opportunities for growth have gone begging.

The goals and strategies that make up the plan seek to meet the following criteria:

- ensuring economic sustainability (by providing for higher wages, balancing growth and the environment, and ensuring varied employment options),
- providing responsible and creative development opportunities, and
- reflecting the values of the citizens of Blaine County.

These goals are attainable, but they require significant changes in the county’s perception of economic development. A welcoming attitude towards responsible growth is essential for the long-term viability of the Blaine County economy. The cost of inaction is stagnation. Without a diverse economic base, a dynamic workforce, and tangible development opportunities, the county will fail to achieve the quality of life expected by its residents. It will also fail to attract the talent and the companies that keep communities vital. This plan alone cannot accomplish those things. A determined leadership, however, can do so. This is the intent – and the challenge – of this plan: to establish strategies that ensure responsible and sustainable growth.

the background > Sustain Blaine provided the funding and oversight of the strategic planning process. The mission of Sustain Blaine is to promote an improved economic and societal future for Blaine County through strategies, programs, and policies that preserve and advance the region’s quality of life and economic well-being. While the environment and social equity had broad constituencies, there was a lack of clarity on the state of the economy, its weaknesses, and the threats it faced. Indeed, economic development had not been brought into focus.

Shortly after the planning process began, a number of severe shocks made national and international news. First, energy costs hit all-time highs. The discussion of “peak oil” that dominated one of the town hall meetings revealed how dependent our economy was on affordable transportation costs. Just as oil prices came down, however, the nation began slipping into one of the worst recessions in its history. The decline in energy costs was perhaps the only positive outcome of this continuing crisis.

In retrospect, these crises helped focus the plan. Recommendations that might have been made in the spring of 2008 would be suspect today. Every sector of the national economy has been affected in ways that may result in a permanent restructuring. Banking and credit markets, the housing industry, manufacturing, and tourism all look



very different today than in 2008. The ways in which Blaine County responds to these changed conditions is now the most important element of this plan.

During the early phases of TIP’s work, the primary concerns were:

- lack of housing options, especially in the mid to lower range,
- the ability to attract and retain young professionals, and
- the need to diversify the existing industry base.

While these goals remain relevant, the approach to them has changed. Strategies – and opportunities – must respond to tightening market conditions, much higher national unemployment numbers, and a general retrenchment of existing businesses.

Changes in the national economy and changing local conditions are putting significant stress on Blaine County. Prominent among these are the downturn in the housing sector, the likely closing and relocation of the existing airport, a significant weakening of the retail sector, continued aging of the population and out-migration of talented workers, and a limited supply of developable land. These stresses – both positive and negative – present Blaine with opportunities for economic development.

the response > Sustain Blaine and Blaine County selected TIP Strategies – an Austin-based economic development consulting firm – to craft an economic development plan that could guide and focus economic opportunity countywide. The findings and recommendations outlined in this plan should serve as a framework for making investment decisions, and for providing guidance in growth that is both realistic and sustainable.

During the research for this economic strategy, TIP sought input from various organizations, stakeholders, and subject-matter experts. Several public meetings and workshops were held, allowing community residents to participate in developing an economic strategy for the county. In addition, three task forces were appointed to contribute suggestions to the planning efforts in the areas of innovation, land development, and talent attraction and retention. TIP found great value in the task forces’ work and we incorporated many – but not all – of their ideas and recommendations into this economic strategy for Blaine County. The task forces’ final reports can be found in the appendices to this document.

TIP was committed to addressing goals for the county as a whole, in ways that all the communities – as well as agricultural interests – could benefit. To this end, it became clear that the organizational structure for implementing the plan would need to be a prime consideration. The role of the county, the municipalities, Sustain Blaine, and the Sun Valley Company would need to be factored in, as would nonprofit and other organizations, such as the Sun Valley-Ketchum Chamber, the Hailey Chamber of Commerce, and the Wood River Economic Partnership. We feel strongly that the county can leverage its brand and set a course for long-term economic vitality. The strategies that follow can accomplish that, but not without a formal mechanism and broad commitment to ensure they are enacted.



primary goals > TIP’s definition of economic development guided the planning effort: “the use of public resources to stimulate private investment.” This point of view was relevant before the recession, and it is especially relevant now. It argues on behalf of public investment that results in tangible results – results tied to the willingness of private sector companies, developers, and individuals to commit to countywide economic development efforts.

The goals that follow are in priority order. Strategies and action items are outlined for each goal, while specific tasks are included in the implementation portion of the study.

GOAL ONE > LEVERAGE THE SUN VALLEY “BRAND”

Blaine County is no ordinary place. It is, in fact, one of the most recognizable and desirable destinations in the United States. Any economic development plan that does not begin with that realization will sell the county short. Most importantly, this plan argues for seeing the brand value extended to both the mid-valley and the southern portions. Agricultural interests, industrial sites in Carey, and proximity to Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve and Sawtooth National Recreation Area are all important to the county’s overall economic opportunities.

GOAL TWO > DIVERSIFY DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Diversifying the county’s economy, beyond tourism and vacation home construction, may be an obvious goal but it is immensely challenging. High land costs, a limited workforce, and restrictive transportation options make traditional business recruitment a daunting enterprise. The consulting team focused on sites and development opportunities that could mitigate these factors.

GOAL THREE > SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURS

Finding the appropriate *scale* for business growth requires more than an expansion of existing businesses or the attraction of new companies. Innovation, through small business and entrepreneurial growth, represents one of the most tangible opportunities for the region.

GOAL FOUR > ESTABLISH A DESIGN INSTITUTE

A good plan is not just good housekeeping. It requires an element of boldness. Blaine County’s most conspicuous needs for diversification center on the lack of higher educational opportunities and a broad talent base. While the attraction of a college or university is a desirable long-term goal, a more concrete strategy could yield more immediate results. Add to that the opportunity for a high-profile, high-visibility initiative, and the idea of an *institute* takes center stage.



IMPLEMENTATION

GOAL FIVE > CREATE A COUNTYWIDE ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

Plans prove their worth through local commitment. It is the view of the consulting team that a formal mechanism for implementing the plan is required. Blaine County does not lack for dedicated and resourceful individuals. Nevertheless, neither the county nor Sustain Blaine has the resources (financial or staffing) to take on or coordinate the delivery of the many actions listed in this report. In addition, a formal awareness campaign in support of the plan is strongly encouraged. This, too, takes resources and time.

TIP examined a range of options for providing an implementation model. These included an economic development foundation (funded through private contributions as well as grants) and a private nonprofit board operating through corporate and private investment. Both of these scenarios have advantages, but neither has standing with existing political entities. In other words, we sought a model that would actively engage the county and the municipalities.

With these as a backdrop, we wanted to emphasize that *implementing* the plan and conducting a formal economic development program are closely linked. In fact, they are best seen as one and the same. As a result, this plan recommends the creation of a Blaine Development Corporation (BDC).

The BDC would be vested with the authority for the following:

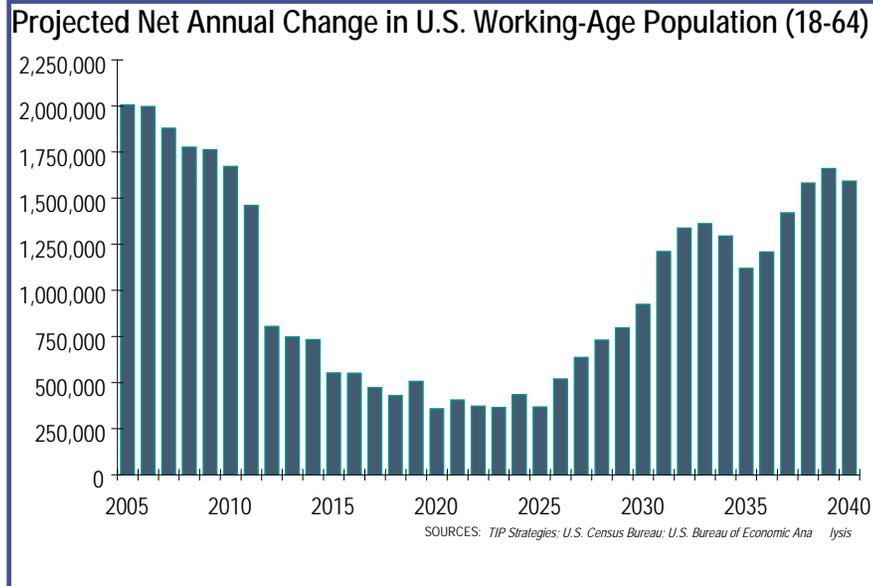
- to implement the Blaine County Strategic Plan,
- to provide general guidance on economic issues affecting the county and its municipalities,
- to raise funds on behalf of economic development, and
- to manage an incentive program, including a loan fund for business development.

In this scenario, the BDC’s organizational capacity would consist of an executive director, a marketing coordinator, and administrative support. A board of directors would advise the executive director. For the startup phase, one option would be for the county and municipalities to dedicate the staff. Other options would require a capital campaign be set in motion.

Prior to the establishment of an economic development organization, TIP recommends that Sustain Blaine formally adopt the plan. Once this step is taken, Sustain Blaine should encourage the county, its constituent municipalities, and other local nonprofit organizations to also adopt the plan.



strategic plan



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

TIP defines economic development as the application of public resources to stimulate private investment. This view supports the idea that neither the public nor the private sector alone can ensure a healthy economy. Land, labor, and capital – the traditional components of economic thinking – must be addressed through partnerships.

Talent > The concept of talent means more than just a labor pool. It means recruiting talented people as well as cultivating the talented individuals represented by groups as diverse as students, retirees, and entrepreneurs. It also means ensuring that the employees and companies that have been responsible for a community’s growth continue to see a reason to remain in the area.

National demographic trends, most notably the aging of the baby boomers, suggest that demand for workers may soon outstrip supply, even with an overall increase in population.

This will hold true in Blaine County, where the population is older than the U.S. average. As a result, competition for labor is expected to increase among companies as well as communities. Focusing on the development, attraction, and retention of talent should, therefore, be an important part of any economic development strategy.

Innovation > The U.S. manufacturing industry continues a transformation that has profound effects on the practice of economic development. It is forcing us to rethink what we mean by a primary job, how we measure economic impact, and how we design incentives. This is because, in large part, manufacturing employment continues to decline. It is no overstatement to say that you cannot build an economic strategy solely around manufacturing jobs.

The current economic recession has shown that a sustainable economy cannot be built on the construction and real estate sectors either. In the past decade, these sectors have become the primary industries in Blaine – larger than even the tourism sector. This has exposed Blaine’s economic vulnerability and illustrates the need for a diverse economic base in the county.

For this reason, our assessment of industry considers the full complement of economic activities – ranging from traditional industrial employers to advanced research to entrepreneurship – as well as the physical infrastructure (industrial parks, sites, transportation, etc.) and business climate to support those activities. Understanding the

THE PLAN



role of innovation, the opportunities for expansion of existing companies, and the best targets for recruitment are important building blocks of an economic development plan.

Place > Much has been written about the importance of quality of life to the site selection process. Communities throughout the nation have positioned themselves by touting their advantages in this regard – good schools, safe streets, pleasant weather. We agree these factors are important. We take issue only with the narrowness of the focus. Quality of life assumes that everyone thrives in the same environment and is attracted to the same amenities. It assumes that current residents' view of what makes a community would be shared by all.

By contrast, quality of place considers what is attractive to a range of residents, both old and new. The idea of quality of place accommodates growth and recognizes the benefits of change. It recognizes that one person's "good place to raise a family" might translate into another's "there's nothing to do in this town." Quality of place is about providing options, not just for current residents, but for those who will be residents in the future.



GOAL ONE > LEVERAGE THE SUN VALLEY “BRAND”

the challenge > With “Sun Valley” being a recognizable national – and, in many respects, international – brand, Blaine County has a highly marketable “product” most locales would envy. Yet, merely having a brand is just one step in economic development marketing. To achieve economic success, one must *leverage* that brand. Blaine County, however, has not seized the opportunity to build on the Sun Valley brand to create additional, diverse, countywide economic opportunities.

In economic development marketing, the “product” is a place. Because one doesn’t “buy” a place, however, places are marketed differently from consumer products. With economic development marketing, what one is actually marketing is the place’s brand. Branding can raise awareness of individuals and businesses considering relocation as well as of potential visitors or tourists who could become permanent residents or repeat visitors. The important elements of branding are:

- commitment to a particular message and theme that does not vary over time (or does so only minimally);
- clarity of image and message; and
- uniformity of use by all entities (e.g., references to the Sun Valley area should all use the same themes).

Historically, Blaine County was known primarily for alpine skiing at the Sun Valley Resort. The county successfully attracted a broad range of visitors, both young and old alike. Within the last few decades, the area has seen a demographic shift in the tourists it attracts. Now these tourists tend to be retired – or older – and affluent. Recently, Blaine County has seen an increase in summer visitors, which now surpass the number of people who visit during the winter. The growth in summer tourism has resulted in a broader awareness of countywide amenities and activities beyond skiing. Many of these activities and amenities – such as the mountain biking opportunities featured in an October 2008 story in the *New York Times* – appeal to young professionals. This group is precisely the demographic the area needs to attract to replenish its talent pool and help sustain its economy. Thus, this is a prime opportunity to reach a wider audience and expand the Sun Valley brand.

Long periods between the busy winter and summer months present another example of missed opportunities to fully leverage the Sun Valley brand. These “slack” periods are painful for area businesses, particularly retail, restaurants, and hotels. Some businesses close during slack. This affects Blaine’s economy and contributing to a loss of community, with closed doors, dimmed lights, and fewer people in the county’s core areas during these periods.



OBJECTIVES:

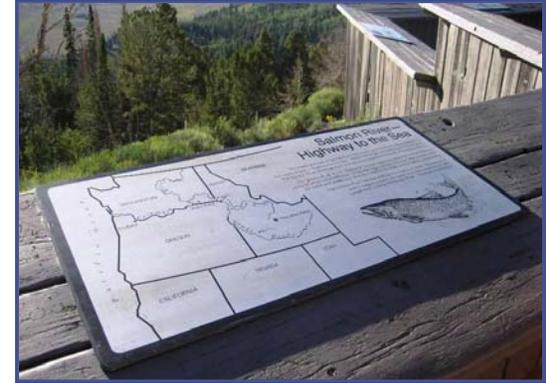
- Expand the brand.
- Leverage tourism to diversify the economy.
- Attract a younger potential talent pool.

goal 1:
LEVERAGE THE BRAND



goal 1:
LEVERAGE THE BRAND

Blaine’s difficulty in attracting conferences, conventions, and meetings extends beyond marketing. A lack of diverse accommodations and meeting facilities limits the number and size of events the county can host. For example, when the Sun Valley Resort is completely booked, no comparable meeting or accommodation space exists elsewhere in the county. Accessibility, particularly air service and capacity, also poses a serious impediment to a successful convention strategy. Flights to Blaine can be prohibitively expensive – especially for organizations paying travel expenses for large groups. Recent cuts in flight service have only added to obstacles one faces when travelling to the area. Even the *New York Times* noted that “the Sun Valley area is challenging to reach.”



The Sun Valley brand has not actually benefitted Blaine County as a whole. Instead, the north county experiences the lion’s share of the economic benefits. This is to be somewhat expected, given that the majority of the existing tourism attractions and marketing efforts are found north of Hailey. However, to truly leverage the brand, to reach deeper pools of potential tourists, talent and residents, and to improve the economic sustainability of the entire county, community and business leaders must get past any existing or perceived north-south county divide and include all corners of the county in economic development activities and strategies. Amenities countywide should contribute to – and benefit from – the Sun Valley brand.

the response > For decades, Blaine County’s ski-related tourism served as a magnet for workers who wanted a lifestyle that allowed them to intertwine time on the slopes around time at the office. Skiing remains a crucial part of Blaine County’s tourism sector and, thus, its economy. Fortunately, the county’s tourism sector is moving beyond an exclusive focus on skiing to achieve economic vitality. Blaine must also expand its marketing efforts and tools if it is to successfully leverage the “Sun Valley” brand for economic growth.

The region offers an enviable array of recreational, entertainment, and cultural activities and amenities. These span the entire county, from hiking, camping, rafting, and biking in the mountains in the north valley to birding, fishing, and visiting Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve near Carey in the southern county; from world-renowned symphonies at the Sun Valley Pavilion to the Trailing of the Sheep Festival to the Big Wood Folk Festival in Bellevue. Yet, many remain largely unknown beyond the county and its part- and full-time residents. Outside of Blaine, the area is primarily known for alpine skiing and the Sun Valley Resort. Therein lies the hook to attract additional tourists, talent, and business: “Sun Valley” is already a recognizable brand. Now, Blaine – the entire county, not just the north valley – must leverage that brand.

Blaine must continue to broaden its marketing efforts to use tourism as a means for stimulating economic growth. This includes more than recreation activities, but cultural arts and events, too. And, to help turn tourists and secondary homeowners into full-time Blaine residents and professionals, it’s imperative that business opportunities throughout the county are promoted as well. These efforts must be strategic, coordinated, and



goal 1:
LEVERAGE THE BRAND

countywide. Building on existing tourism-related websites to establish a one-stop Blaine County online portal should be the anchor of such marketing efforts.

The county also must expand the tools it uses to promote the “Sun Valley” brand. Cross-marketing, viral marketing, and social networking are all avenues to reach a wider audience of potential tourists, talent, and businesses. In particular, new media and social networking tools should be used to attract the interests of young professionals, a group that Blaine desperately needs to attract and retain to ensure the sustainability of its economy. This group, ages 25 to 40, is adept with new media and expects to communicate via such methods.

An aggressive convention and meeting strategy provides opportunities to expose new tourists and potential talent to Blaine. Targeting specific industries and focusing on shoulder seasons, or slack, would provide the best opportunities for immediate economic impact, particularly for restaurants, retail outlets, and hotels. To be successful, Blaine must ensure it has adequate and diverse meeting and accommodation facilities to meet an expanded and more diverse demand.

The myriad festivals and events held throughout the county offer additional options to leverage the brand. Blaine should expand and promote existing festivals as a means for increasing the duration of visitors’ stays and their local spending as well as for attracting new visitors, including during slack. Doing so exposes existing visitors to different activities in the county and draws new visitors to the area.



GOAL ONE IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS	LEAD ORGANIZATION	TIMELINE >>				
		ONGOING	0-6 mos.	6-12 ms.	1-2 yrs.	3-5 yrs.
STRATEGY ONE > BROADEN MARKETING MESSAGE AND EFFORTS TO LEVERAGE TOURISM'S IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY						
Action A >> Establish an aggressive countywide conference and convention strategy linked to target sector opportunities.	CHAMBERS	X				
Action B >> Broaden awareness and expand opportunities in other outdoor recreational activities beyond downhill skiing.	CHAMBERS	X				
Action C >> Expand promotion of the arts and entertainment, and special events and festivals in Blaine County.	CHAMBERS	X				
STRATEGY TWO > DEVELOP NON-TRADITIONAL MARKETING METHODS TO LINK TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.						
Action A >> Develop an online portal to increase awareness of business opportunities to visitors and residents.	CHAMBERS & BDC		X			
Action B >> Pursue cross marketing opportunities with companies whose brand could be aligned with Sun Valley.	CHAMBERS & BDC			X		
Action C >> Commence a viral marketing strategy to promote the area.	CHAMBERS & BDC			X		
Action D >> Continue to use social networking sites as a means for promoting Sun Valley and Blaine County.	CHAMBERS & BDC	X				

goal 1:
LEVERAGE THE BRAND



goal 1:
LEVERAGE THE BRAND

- STRATEGY ONE >> BROADEN MARKETING MESSAGE AND EFFORTS TO LEVERAGE TOURISM'S IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY.

Blaine County offers a wide variety of natural and cultural amenities that have drawn visitors to the region for decades. While the area's economy has clearly grown due to the long-term success of the Sun Valley Resort and other amenities, Blaine County has been unable to capture the full benefits of tourists visiting from throughout the world. In other words, the "Sun Valley" brand has not yet been fully leveraged. Doing so will require a cohesive approach that promotes amenities from the entire county that can be enjoyed throughout the year and attract a wide audience. This will require coordinated efforts from all major stakeholders, including the Sun Valley Company. A major goal of this new marketing message is raising awareness among professionals and younger talent that the area is more than a tourism and retirement destination. It also offers opportunities for entrepreneurship, innovation, and business.

- Action A: Establish an aggressive conference and convention strategy linked to target sector opportunities (See the *Target Sector* section of this plan). Attracting conferences, conventions, and meetings to the county year-round – but particularly during slack – could provide a boost to the economy and local business owners as well as bring potential new residents and talent to the county.

Specific Tasks:

- Coordinate the targeting of specific businesses and organizations for holding conferences and symposia in Blaine County.
- Establish a local volunteer program through which local business professionals and/or retired entrepreneurs could market Blaine County's asset to conference attendees.
- Create a brief profile and coherent and coordinated marketing message to assist these volunteers in promoting Blaine County's positive aspects.
- Create a formal mechanism through which the volunteers could refer potential business relocation leads.
- Include part-time residents who may also have business or civic connections in their other places of residence from which they could uncover potential leads.
- Consider supporting the development of new conference space in Blaine County to accommodate larger meetings.
- Support development of additional hotels and lodging facilities, including more variety of accommodations.



goal 1:
LEVERAGE THE BRAND

- Action B: Broaden awareness and expand opportunities for outdoor recreational options. According to local sales tax figures, trade at local retail establishments during summer months now outpaces that during the traditional ski season. This is not to say that the area should stop promoting skiing. It does, however, highlight the opportunity to increase tourism and spending throughout all seasons and across a wider range of activities. Particular interest should be paid to promoting recreational activities that will attract a more demographically diverse group of tourists.

Specific Tasks:

- Promote the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve. Explore options for Carey leverage its position as a “gateway city” to Craters of the Moon, which lies partly in Blaine County. More than 227,000 people visited the park in 2008, providing Carey a unique opportunity to harness the economic potential of these tourists. Carey should work with the National Park Service as needed and should also consult the National Geographic’s Center for Sustainable Destinations, which provides a “gateway communities toolkit” to help communities develop strategies to take advantage of a nearby park.
- Expand snow boarding options and amenities at Sun Valley Resort, such as building terrain parks.
- Continue to promote the world-class Nordic ski trails and amenities in the area.
- Continue to promote the Sun Valley Ice Rink as a premier destination for amateur and professional skaters.
- Increase promotion of other winter sports, such as sledding, snow-shoeing, and snowmobiling.
- Continue to promote the area as a destination for mountain biking and hiking by continuing to work with Big Wood Backcountry Trails and other groups to maintain and expand trail systems.
- Continue to promote the southern portion of Blaine County for fly fishing.
- Continue to promote the Sawtooth National Recreation Area as a destination for camping, hiking, ecotourism, wildlife viewing, and other activities. Partner with the U.S. Forest Service to promote the year-round range of activities and Blaine County as a gateway to the SNRA.
- Continue to promote other summer activities, including river rafting, golfing, and horseback riding.
- Continue to promote Blaine County as a world-class destination for road biking.
- Coordinate with federal land managers, such as the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and National Park Service, to promote their sites in coordination with Blaine-based activities and events.
- Continue to regularly contact nature, adventure, and recreation tour companies to update them on expanded activities and events in Blaine County, particularly during slack periods.



goal 1:
LEVERAGE THE BRAND

- Action C: Expand promotion of the arts and entertainment, including special events and festivals, in Blaine County. Arts and culture are magnets for tourists. A February 2009 study by the nonprofit Americans for the Arts noted that “communities that invest in the arts reap the additional benefits of jobs, economic growth, and a quality of life that positions those communities to compete in our 21st century creative economy. Whether serving the local community or out-of-town visitors, a vibrant arts and culture industry helps local businesses thrive.”

Specific Tasks:

- Promote the Sun Valley Pavilion as a major destination for live music and other performing arts.
- Establish new special events catering to a younger audience (e.g., live contemporary music, independent film/video, etc.), such as the Elkhorn Concert Series.
- Continue to promote and support existing festivals and events, especially those that draw people during the summer.
- Encourage the use of art in public places, including sponsoring public art at bus stops.
- Establish concurrent events and festivals within Blaine County to expand joint-promotional opportunities.
- Consider jointly promoting festivals with communities near Blaine County (e.g., Stanley) to increase overall traffic in the region.
- Expand regular art awareness events, such as the Sun Valley Gallery Association’s “Gallery Walks” in Ketchum, into other communities in Blaine. During these regular events, artists display their work and shops extend their hours on the first Friday of the month. Similarly, artists’ displays and extended shop hours can be held in conjunction with other county events. This gives visitors an additional option after their recreation or other event has ended for the evening.
- Expand the “Gallery Walks” concept to provide regular events for other types of arts and entertainment. For example, some communities host “First Fridays,” when local artists from musicians to painters to thespians provide free performances or extend their hours. The Wood River Arts Alliance could assist with planning and publicizing such events.
- Support local artists through publicly and privately sponsored events and other programs.
- Engage local students and youth in production of special events and festivals.
- Establish a “Blaine County History Trail” and “Blaine County Art Tour.”
- Continue to promote area museums, including the Blaine County Historical Museum, the Heritage and Ski Museum, and the Ore Wagon Museum.





goal 1:
LEVERAGE THE BRAND

► STRATEGY TWO >> DEVELOP NON-TRADITIONAL MARKETING METHODS TO LINK TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

The development of new media during the last decade presents both challenges and opportunities for marketing strategies. The availability of high-speed Internet service in most markets across the U.S. has enabled the spread of new nontraditional advertising outlets and has forced the rethinking of marketing strategies. Many older media, such as TV, radio, magazines, and newspapers, are struggling to retain their audience in the face of competition from Internet-based information sources. More recently is the emergence of Web 2.0, which is a second generation of the Internet driven by user-generated content, and more specifically, social networking technology. One prominent example of this is YouTube. Due to this shift toward interactivity, it is critically important for a marketer to engage its audience in such a way that the goal is to achieve the establishment of a community. Essential to this is a community in which the audience feels fully vested and empowered and, therefore, assists (directly or indirectly) in the overall marketing strategy. In other words, the audience is transformed into marketing agent as Americans become more immune to traditional advertising.

- Action A: Develop an online portal to increase awareness of business opportunities to visitors and residents. While both the Sun Valley/Ketchum Chamber and Visitors Bureau and the Hailey Chamber of Commerce have a well-established online presence, their websites focus on tourism, particularly in the north valley. To truly leverage the brand, these efforts should be expanded to encompass the whole of Blaine County and include more than tourism-related information. Offering information about business opportunities at the same site as tourism options exposes potential tourists to business activities in the county. This highlights professional opportunities in Blaine to an audience that might not otherwise know about these activities. Similarly, it exposes a business audience to the social, recreational, and cultural offerings in the county.

Specific Tasks:

- Develop an online community portal to increase awareness of business opportunities to visitors and residents. Consideration should be given to hosting this portal on area chamber websites or on the website of the Blaine Development Corporation (BDC).
- Compile a database of mentoring, training, employment, and business development opportunities in Blaine County.
- Include professional and continuing education courses offered in Blaine County for licensed professionals.
- List or link to higher education and continuing education classes offered at the College of Southern Idaho (CSI).
- Provide information about Blaine-area business organizations and their regular meetings, as well as any one-off or special events they have.
- Include the portal's address or URL on all marketing materials.



goal 1:
LEVERAGE THE BRAND

- Action B: Pursue cross-marketing opportunities with companies whose brand could be aligned with Sun Valley. Cross-marketing is the partnership of two entities to promote goods or services to a combined customer audience. For the purpose of this plan, this concept would include area chambers and/or the Sun Valley Resort partnering with private companies who offer goods or services that fit the local brand. One example is the partnership of the local area with a sport recreation company to promote both its goods and Sun Valley in national advertisements.

Specific Tasks:

- Consider conducting further research on tourists who visit Blaine County to assess their purchasing habits and identify potential partners (e.g., data mining operations, psychographic profiling, etc.).
- Consider partnering with local companies to increase awareness of their products, as well as Blaine County (e.g. SCOTT USA, Smith Optics, Rocky Mountain Hardware, Power Engineers, Sun Valley Bar, etc.).
- Consider targeting companies from outside the area whose brand, goods, and/or service is strong and is a fit with Sun Valley and Blaine County (e.g., a national outdoor sporting goods retailer).
- Consider sponsoring or co-sponsoring events that relate to the Sun Valley brand and could drive visitors to Blaine.

Action C: Commence a viral marketing strategy to promote the area. As marketing relies less and less on traditional methods, a viral marketing strategy becomes critical, particularly for reaching the young professionals (age 25-40) who expect to be communicated with via these nontraditional means.

Specific Tasks:

- Identify potential opinion leaders/brand champions who could assist in raising the profile of Blaine County through their activities. Consideration should be given to existing celebrities with ties to the area.
- Offer weekly podcasts that highlight upcoming events, weather conditions, Blaine County news, etc.
- Contribute periodic clips to existing podcasts for target sports, such as skiing and biking.

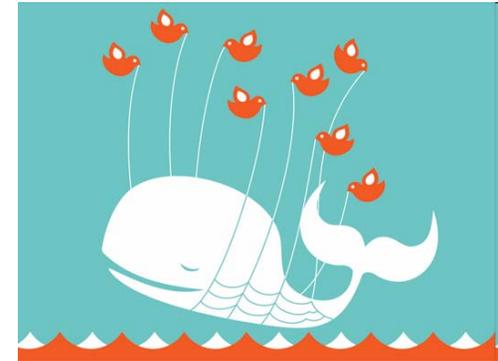


goal 1:
LEVERAGE THE BRAND

- Action D: Continue to use social networking sites as a means for promoting Sun Valley and Blaine County. Social networking sites are an essential weapon in any marketing arsenal today. They offer an unparalleled opportunity to reach a wide, diverse, and immediate audience. Yet, it is crucial to stay abreast of social networking trends, as what is popular one day may be outdated and passé in a matter of months.

Specific Tasks:

- Assist Sun Valley Resort in raising the profile of its Facebook page.
- Invite local residents and professionals to post positive messages about the area on social networking sites (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn).
- Recruit local celebrities or personalities with a Blaine affiliation – such as athletes, actors, or musicians – to promote Blaine County through their social networking profiles and activities.
- Send invitations through Facebook and other sites for Blaine-based events, such as the Sun Valley Food and Wine Festival, Spiritual Film Festival, Big Wood Folk Festival, and Sun Valley Sustainability Conference.
- Post photos from activities and events in Blaine County on networking and sharing sites, such as Flickr.
- Post video from activities and events in Blaine County on networking and sharing sites, such as YouTube.
- Coordinate with Blaine-area businesses and organizations to promote the Sun Valley brand on their individual sites.
- Coordinate with touring acts that visit Blaine County to post information about the region and their event on their social network sites and blogs.
- Convene an ad hoc committee to advise the county on new and popular social networking sites and methods.



The “fail whale,” an image displayed on Twitter when its network is down, has become an icon of social networking.

goal 2:
LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

GOAL TWO > DIVERSIFY DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

the challenge > The economic growth and sustainability that Blaine County seeks is stunted by a lack of affordable, developable land. This has contributed to skyrocketing single-family housing costs, particularly in the northern Wood River Valley. As a result, the cost of living in the county is beyond the means of many area workers. Today, a median-priced home in Blaine is out of reach for more than half of the county's population. Thus, workers move to more affordable surrounding counties, contributing to increased traffic congestion, and affecting local commerce and sales tax revenues.

OBJECTIVES:

- Provide mixed-use developments, including office, housing, retail, dining, and entertainment.
- Stimulate activity in city cores with private investment and infill development.

Housing costs also affect area employers' ability to attract and retain talent, particularly young professionals, who are in the early stages of their careers and typically live within a limited, modest budget. In essence, Blaine's cost of living serves as a barrier to supporting the workforce needed to diversify the local economy. Without access to labor, businesses cannot afford to stay in Blaine. For example, Icebreaker, a high-end clothing manufacturer from New Zealand, recently moved its U.S. headquarters from Ketchum to Portland, Oregon, partly because its expansion plans were more feasible in talent-rich Portland.

Land-use constraints – both physical and political – create an obstacle to increasing the supply of land available for housing and other uses. Many land-use decisions are out of Blaine County's control. For example, according to the Idaho Department of Commerce, 81.6 percent (1,380,235 acres) of the county is public land, including 77.7 percent owned by the federal government, 3.6 percent owned by the State of Idaho, and 0.3 percent owned by the county and municipalities. While this vast amount of pristine, undeveloped land provides recreation opportunities and outdoor experiences that attract people to the area, it also affects the land available for development. Some land constraints result from local quality-of-place decisions, such as ordinances that prohibit development along hillsides, protect open space, or prevent density. Although such policies reflect local priorities, they have an impact on the availability of medium- to large-size strategic sites. This, in turn, affects the county's ability to provide residential and commercial space for its growing population. Ultimately, this restricts economic growth in Blaine.



Blaine's housing stock is also limited. The typical housing unit in the county is a single-family dwelling, yet consumers' housing preferences are undergoing a shift nationwide. Retirees seek upscale yet low-maintenance housing and young professionals seek a more urban lifestyle near work and entertainment amenities. These groups represent a large segment of Blaine's current population (retirees) and a segment the area needs to attract (young professionals). Despite a current surplus of affordable rental units in the county, Blaine still lacks variety in the housing stock available for ownership. To attract and retain needed talent, the housing options these individuals want must be available.



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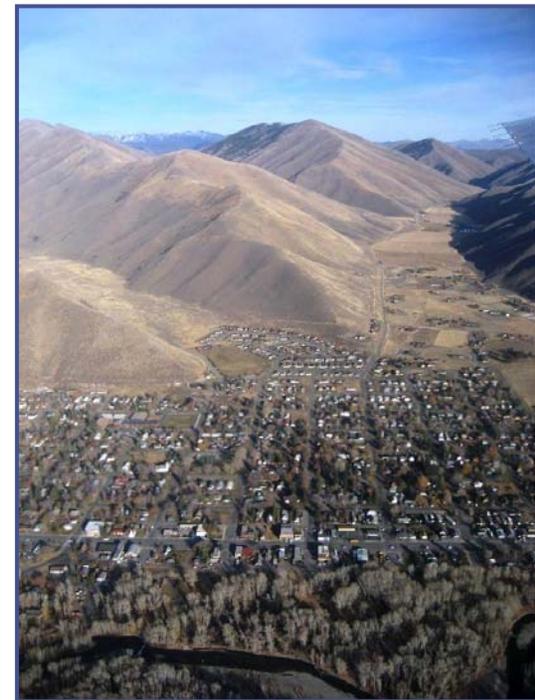
Retail and other amenities reflect the higher cost of living within the county. With its reputation as a high-end mountain resort area, Blaine County attracts a wealthy, mobile cadre of tourists, residents, and nonprimary homeowners. Many local retail-, personal services-, and food-related businesses cater to this niche, leaving few options for area professionals and other workers. As a result, many residents travel outside of the county – to Twin Falls, for example – for their shopping needs.

the response > To stimulate economic growth, Blaine must address the availability of affordable, developable land in the county. This can be achieved while continuing to respect local priorities, including those that make the area a desirable destination to potential talent, businesses, and visitors.

Targeting strategic sites in the county and assembling the land needed for development is critical. In doing so, the county should identify target sectors and land uses, such as health care, light industrial, and mixed use, that support existing and emerging sectors. One opportunity for large-scale development is the Friedman Memorial Airport, a site of about 211 acres. The location of the current airport has been deemed unviable by the FAA. While there is continuing controversy within the county, this plan operates on the assumptions put forward by Landrum and Brown. The results of their planning efforts – along with the Environment Impact Statement for the Friedman Memorial Airport Authority – are unambiguous (www.airportsites.net/sun-eis/default.htm): the airport must relocate.

While a new location for the airport has not been established, the closure of the current facility offers unprecedented opportunities to Blaine County. This large tract of land in a prime location can act as a cornerstone for future economic growth. Working with the airport authority, a model development at the site is a hoped-for outcome of this plan. Landrum and Brown has prepared preliminary land use designs currently under review by the authority and the county. They mirror many of the themes described throughout these goals and strategies.

The development of the Friedman Airport may take considerable time, but planning for a reuse cannot begin too soon. Discussions with the Friedman Trust are already underway. In fact, the designation of additional larger-scale development sites would certainly provide economic benefit to the county. While this goes beyond the scope of the existing plan, TIP feels that the land use task force recommended in Goal Five should be charged with the task of identifying other potential sites. It is, after all, unnecessarily limiting to suggest that Blaine consider only one major redevelopment project – especially one that will take many years to realize.



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Blaine County can learn from the experiences of other communities that have turned an airport closure into a major opportunity. At the same time, these communities have not restricted their growth exclusively to one redevelopment project. There is no reason for Blaine County not to be ambitious in its economic development efforts.

Blaine County and its constituent municipalities should review and revise their policies regarding density, particularly in the city centers and along major transportation corridors. Consideration for infill development should be given priority. Steps to further diversify the housing stock, especially in the urban cores, should be primary components of infill development. Maintaining zoning that encourages low density development will increase sprawl and contribute to increased housing costs. While no one would move to Blaine County in search of a high-rise loft, more diverse housing options, such as townhomes, condos, or accessory dwelling units would better support the needs of a more diversified workforce and help attract young professionals.

Improving resident and visitor experiences also affects economic development. Efforts include linking downtown destinations, such as shuttles; improving pedestrian facilities, such as sidewalks; enhancing signage; and providing adequate transportation options from well-maintained roadways to reliable public transportation. Coupled with infill and increased density, these efforts breathe life into core places within the county and contribute to community cohesiveness, which is essential to stimulating countywide economic vitality.



goal 2:
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GOAL TWO IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS	LEAD ORGANIZATION	TIMELINE >>				
		ONGOING	0-6 mos.	6-12 ms.	1-2 yrs.	3-5 yrs.
STRATEGY ONE > INCREASE DENSITY WITHIN THE EXISTING URBAN AREAS THROUGH INFILL DEVELOPMENT.						
Action A >> Increase occupancy rates for existing commercial properties.	COUNTY & CITIES		X			
Action B >> Support public and private investment opportunities in downtown areas to create mixed-use anchor destinations and improved public places.	CITIES		X			
Action C >> Target specific locations for increased density (e.g., city centers, along transit routes, etc.).	CITIES & CHAMBERS			X		
Action D >> Develop policies for incentivizing denser development.	COUNTY & CITIES			X		
Action E >> Promote transportation mobility options linking urbanized areas and downtown destinations.	MT. RIDES & CITIES				X	
Action F >> Consider the establishment of a designated entertainment district in one of Blaine County's downtown areas.	CITIES					X
STRATEGY TWO > ESTABLISH A PROCESS FOR ASSEMBLING AND DEVELOPING STRATEGIC SITES.						
Action A >> Update information on preferred sites.	BDC			X		
Action B >> Determine level of public sector support.	BDC				X	
Action C >> Engage development community.	BDC				X	
Action D >> Develop area plans	BDC				X	
Action E >> Develop marketing and recruitment strategy.	BDC					X



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STRATEGY THREE > TARGET STRATEGIC SITES AND TRACTS TO PROVIDE LARGER-SCALE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

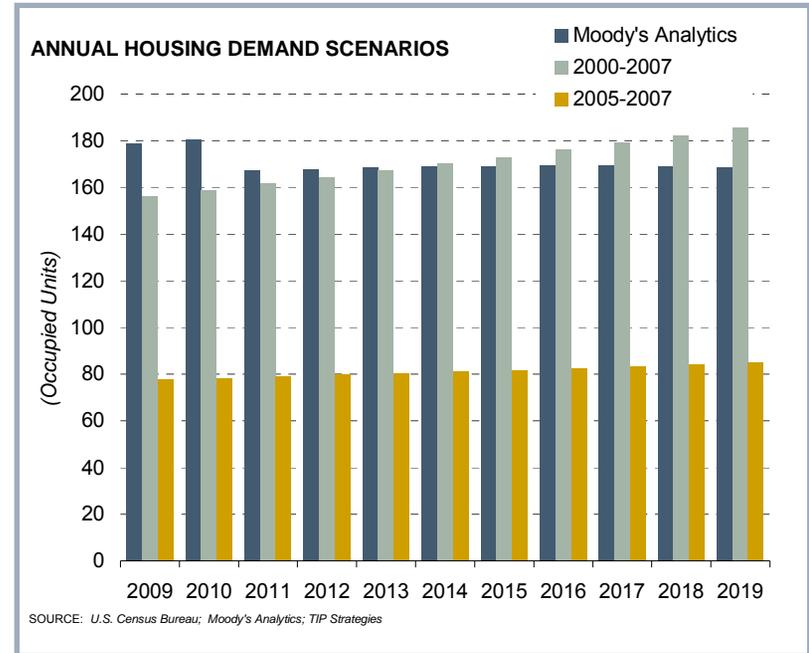
Action A >> Support the assembly and redevelopment of tracts in the South Gateway/McHanville area.	BDC & COUNTY				X	
Action B >> Begin planning for the redevelopment of the Friedman Airport site.	CITY OF HAILEY & BDC					X
Action C >> Leverage Carey's assets to promote industrial development in Blaine County.	BDC & CITY OF CAREY					X



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- STRATEGY ONE >> INCREASE DENSITY WITHIN THE EXISTING URBAN AREAS THROUGH INFILL DEVELOPMENT.

Developing a vibrant urban fabric can lead to both economic growth and community cohesiveness. Energetic, creative mixed-use developments in city centers can be functional, inviting, and sustainable. They can also engage residents and visitors in the community in ways that have a positive economic, environmental, and social impact. To achieve this, existing urban areas must be places where people live and work. This includes integrating workforce housing into the “urban” cores. Blaine has fewer units of workforce housing than its competitors. For example, Blaine County has just more than 100 units while Telluride has more than 600.



For the assessment portion of this study, TIP analyzed three scenarios to determine the potential demand for housing in Blaine County that would be generated by future full-time residents (see the *Economic Development Assessment of Blaine County* for the full findings). Obviously, these projections are subject to change depending on future economic conditions in Blaine County. In fact, current market conditions show a nearly unprecedented level of residential vacancies. Nevertheless, growth in the county can expect to return with improving business opportunities (nationally and locally). Rather than return to the previous imbalances, this report takes a more aggressive posture. According to this analysis, Blaine County can reasonably expect total demand for new housing units over the next 10 years to fall within a range of 900 to 1,900 units. This would represent a 10 percent to 20 percent increase in the county’s housing stock for permanent residents. Moreover, these projections do not take into account future demand for housing from potential seasonal/part-time residents. This latter source of demand should not be discounted, given that TIP estimates that approximately half of the 2,000 new units constructed between 2000 and 2007 were for seasonal use only. If this ratio remains constant, then the total demand for new units (for both full- and part-time residents) in Blaine County could range somewhere between 1,800 and 3,800 units for the next 10 years.



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- Action A: Increase occupancy rates for existing commercial properties. Key to vibrant, active city centers is ensuring that businesses are located in these areas. In addition to providing a presence during typical work hours, businesses in the city center also contribute to a livelier after-hours environment, as employees often stay in the area for dining, shopping, and other entertainment pursuits.

Specific Tasks:

- Develop a formal, public inventory of available properties.
- Create an information packet, including the inventory of sites, to provide to commercial brokers and individuals seeking to establish a small business in Blaine County.
- Maintain an updated inventory online. The Idaho Department of Commerce’s Gem State Prospector (www.gemstateprospector.com) is one online tool, but Blaine should use a locally managed online inventory to ensure the information is up-to-date and accurate.

- Action B: Support public and private investment opportunities in downtown areas to create mixed-use anchor destinations and improved public places. Stimulating development of quality public places requires commitment from the public and private sectors. One example is city-owned sites (e.g., surface parking lots) in the downtown area of Ketchum that could be redeveloped to increase housing density.

Specific Tasks:

- Review existing ordinances and zoning policies to ensure they allow for these types of developments.
- Distribute activity nodes and anchors across the core of downtowns such that pedestrian and vehicular traffic must pass other tenants when traveling between anchors. This location strategy will provide heightened visibility for other tenants located in the core.
- If new public facilities are planned, encourage them to be within or adjacent to a downtown core to serve as a primary employment anchor.
- Encourage development of flagship mixed-use projects that will include entertainment options, fine dining, office, retail, and residential units. These projects should be designed with the goal of promoting Blaine County’s downtowns as after-hours destinations. However, careful attention should be paid to attract tenants that complement, rather than compete with, existing downtown businesses.



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- Action C: Target specific locations for increased density (e.g., city centers, along transit routes). A key element of managing growth is increased density in high-volume or high-traffic areas, with traffic including pedestrians and bicycles.

Specific Tasks:

- Work with both public and private property owners and the cities to identify, inventory, and prioritize sites at highly visible or strategic locations suitable for redevelopment.
- Create an information packet, including an inventory of priority sites, to provide to commercial brokers, retail site consultants, and franchises seeking locations in Blaine County.
- Include redevelopment opportunity sites in marketing materials for Blaine County.
- Consider commissioning a study to determine Blaine professionals' housing stock preferences.
- Increase the range of housing options.
- Develop employment targets and related land-use and density requirements for city centers.

- Action D: Once specific locations have been finalized, develop policies for incentivizing denser development. Establishing specific criteria regarding design standards, employment and wage targets, density requirements, and other community goals would trigger incentives for desirable projects. Examples of incentives include a streamlined or “fast-track” review and approval process, waivers or reduction of the project's development-related fees, or in some cases, tax abatements or credits. Examples of policies include affordable housing targets in mixed-used projects.

Specific Tasks:

- Restructure zoning policies to allow alternative housing types, such as mother-in-law housing and mixed-use developments.
- Allow structures in certain areas (i.e., downtowns) to be taller (up to four stories).
- Investigate developing a “streamlined permitting process” for developments in desirable areas, especially if they include targeted sectors.
- Develop a baseline comparison of Blaine County's development review and permitting process with other Idaho counties. If no such baseline comparison already exists, then the county should begin tracking the review time for different categories of permitting (i.e., residential/commercial and infill/greenfield development). At the same time, the county should gather information from these benchmarks and begin comparing this data with Blaine County's.
- Encourage constituent communities to develop streamlined permitting process for desirable projects, including targeted industries. The degree of success that Blaine County enjoys is dependent on the functionality of the cities' permitting processes. For this reason, it is important for Blaine County to act as a liaison between prospects and the cities.



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- Hold monthly or quarterly meetings with the development community to review the benchmark data discussed above to obtain developer feedback. This qualitative information can often be more valuable than the comparative data in improving the development review and permitting process.
- Action E: Promote transportation mobility options linking urbanized areas and downtown destinations. To create a livable, vibrant, sustainable community, Blaine’s urban areas must be fully accessible based on diverse transportation options. This includes mobility links among city cores as well as well-maintained infrastructure within each downtown destination. Mountain Rides has taken some steps in this direction, and its efforts should continue to be supported.

Specific Tasks:

- Establish direct connections between high-density and popular locales within Blaine County.
- Continue to support Mountain Rides’ efforts to link urban areas with city centers.
- Continue to support the expansion of Mountain Rides.
- Assist in the development of a regional transit system connecting Blaine County with Shoshone and Twin Falls.
- Provide transit services during peak periods and special events to deter parking in the downtown areas.
- Designate downtown areas as primary destinations in the county’s transportation plan.
- Provide adequate pedestrian facilities, such as sidewalks, signage, and public toilets, within each urban area.
- Provide needed facilities to support cycling between and within city cores. This includes well-designated signage and bike parking racks.
- Increase connectivity between Wood River Trails and the downtown core areas.
- Research the possibility of a bicycle sharing system or community bicycle program whereby bicycles are made available for a low cost. The bicycles are made available at racks around the community and are released by token or coins. Users can pick up and return the bicycles at any of the racks. In other communities, both municipalities and nonprofits have provided the bicycles and managed the program. The structure of the programs, which are under way in communities worldwide, varies greatly. The Wood River Bicycle Coalition has worked toward this task and should continue to be supported.



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- Action F: Consider establishing a designated entertainment district in one or more of Blaine County's downtown areas. An entertainment district provides a concentrated area that can be a thriving home to an array of cultural, art, shopping, music, theatre, dining, and nightlife attractions. If fully leveraged, an entertainment district can draw visitors and residents to a common location, enhance the area's overall image, capture increased tourism spending, retain and attract young talent, attract baby boomer retirees, and protect private and public investments that have already occurred in the area.

Specific Tasks:

- Meet with property owners and area residents to gauge support for the establishment of an entertainment district in one of Blaine County's downtowns. If the proposal receives a positive community reaction, the following tasks should be considered.
- Identify the boundaries of the entertainment district.
- Designate the entertainment district with special zoning status (if necessary).
- Develop a conceptual site plan for the entertainment district as a means for promoting the idea to potential developers – both regional and national.
- Include conceptual site plan in marketing materials for Blaine County.

► STRATEGY TWO >> ESTABLISH A PROCESS FOR ASSEMBLING AND DEVELOPING STRATEGIC SITES.

Without a predetermined strategy for eventual development of the strategic sites, the BDC and its allies will likely run into several obstacles. This is especially true given the level of engagement by many of Blaine County's citizenry. TIP recommends following carefully the actions below prior to taking on the development of major sites. The process described should be applicable to any of the preferred sites. (See Strategy Three.)

- Action A: Update information on preferred sites. Understanding ownership, zoning, legal disposition, infrastructure, and other related issues should be the first step in the process.

Specific Tasks:

- Assemble/update information on number of parcels, ownership, and current asking price (for properties being offered for sale).
- Ensure that properties are annexed and/or zoned to allow for the selected uses. For example, ensure the selected property for a future medical district will support medical offices, ancillary, and support uses. (See Strategy 3, Action A.)
- Determine the status of infrastructure and transportation-related improvements that might be needed to support proposed developments.



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- **Action B: Determine level of public-sector support.** There are several different development options available requiring varying levels of public-sector involvement. These can be broadly outlined along two paths based on ownership of the land:
 - **City/county ownership.** In general terms, public-sector ownership of the chosen properties would improve the area’s ability to attract developers and provide significant flexibility in negotiating terms. If it is decided that the public sector should take an active role in developing specific properties, a long-term horizon for development is necessary. This typically occurs using one of two approaches (see text box): a master developer strategy or some form of *public-private partnership*.
 - **Private ownership.** In this scenario, the public sector serves primarily as a facilitator. For example, a developer agrees to make an investment in a property in return for city/county-financed improvements. While the level of cooperation varies dramatically, this approach is most successful when the public sector has a clear vision of how it wants the properties to develop and uses public improvements to guide private investment. This can be accomplished by zoning and codes, by design standards, and by the scale and location of physical improvements – from roads to water and sewer.

Approaches to Ownership

Under a **master developer** scenario, the public sector serves as a primary participant. The public sector acquires land, and then leases or sells land to a private developer and allows that party to develop the land according to pre-approved guidelines. In return, the developer is allowed to realize the long-term revenue streams. Under this approach, Blaine County or one of the municipalities would purchase the property, then set forth specific standards for the development and invite developers (through a competitive bidding procedure) to meet those standards. Area stakeholders (including existing citizens and companies) could then serve an advisory role to the city and developer.

Formation of a **public/private partnership** is another option. In this case, the public sector serves as both a participant and a facilitator. The city/county could choose to develop a portion of a development on its own or could confer the rights to a property in exchange for certain improvements.

- **Action C: Engage development community.** Engaging the development community early in the process can help ensure that a project incorporates the most current thinking. TIP recommends the consideration of one or both of the following:

Specific Tasks:

- Host a developers’ forum to discuss relevant issues regarding the design, construction, or positioning of a project in order to provide guidance in the planning process. The event could be organized using a round-table format, with developers leading the discussion, or a charrette approach (see text box), which emphasizes public input in the design of a specific project.



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- Issue a formal request for proposal (RFP) to local and regional developers for a site plan for one of the preferred development sites. TIP recommends that the RFP be used for both the medical district and airport redevelopment sites. The RFP should ask developers to provide a detailed concept plan that accommodates mixed use projects.
- Action D: Develop area plans. Once a concept is established for each development, the BDC and allies should prepare and implement specific plans to guide development of the projects. The planning process should include a broad range of stakeholders, including the public offices, citizens, other key stakeholders, and local employers, including those who may be prospective tenants of the developments. The following elements should be considered in the plan:
 - Barriers. Identification of barriers to development and, where possible, actions for alleviating them prior to marketing the property.
 - Market. A market-driven approach that considers the competitive environment and helps determine the appropriate mix of uses at the time of construction.
 - Funding. The full array of financing tools should be brought to bear on the projects. This includes the creation of a tax-increment financing district to bond issues to general fund appropriations. Additional details on options must be linked to specific projects.
 - Linkages. Consideration should be given to understanding the project’s relationship to the rest of Blaine County. Development plans must be coordinated with other relevant plans, including comprehensive plans.
 - Impacts. Performance standards should be developed for the projects, including an analysis of traffic impacts associated with the project, provisions for buffering of uses, as well as the protection of any natural areas. The plans should consider how these natural elements can be integrated into the development to create a “natural” feel and provide an amenity for tenants. Blaine County has demonstrated leadership in the area of environmentally sensitive development that should be brought to bear on these projects.

definition: CHARRETTE

A *charrette* is an urban planning technique for consulting with all stakeholders. Charrettes are typically intense, possibly multi-day meetings involving public officials, developers and local residents. A charrette promotes joint ownership of the solution and attempts to defuse traditional confrontation between residents and developers.

For developers and municipal officials charrettes achieve community involvement and hopefully avoid costly legal battles.



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- Action E: Prepare a marketing and recruitment strategy. While recruitment of new business is a viable option, the BDC should focus on the site as a means to encourage the expansion of existing businesses. The commercial/industrial center should be viewed as a way to create a “move-up” opportunity for existing employers and their supplier network. Once the needs of existing business have been met, marketing efforts should focus on the types of companies outlined in the Target Industry section of this strategy.

Specific Tasks:

- Prepare a strategy for marketing the selected sites, based on the recommendations of the specific plan and the expansion and recruitment targets outlined in this plan. The BDC should consider the preparation of marketing materials, including a brochure and website, or a webpage on the city’s existing website, specifically for the proposed development. Although the development is much larger in scale (1,600 acres) than anything recommended for Blaine County, the website created by the City of Tustin, California, for the Tustin Legacy redevelopment is a good example of how this approach could be implemented. (www.tustinlegacy.com/).
- Promote the sites creatively. The development should be positioned as more than another business park. The Tustin Legacy mentioned above accomplishes this through its mixed-use approach, its excellent website, and its vision of a master planned property.

► STRATEGY THREE >> TARGET STRATEGIC SITES AND TRACTS TO PROVIDE LARGER-SCALE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

Geography and policy has restricted the supply of developable land in the most desirable portions of Blaine County. It, therefore, only makes sense to establish a list of priority sites and coordinate their future development. TIP and Sustain Blaine solicited input from a range of local land use experts to better understand the options. This Land Use Task Force recommended three sites as priorities: South Gateway/McHanville near St. Luke’s Wood River Medical Center, Friedman Airport, and the Rinker-Scherer tract near Bellevue. TIP carefully considered these recommendations and determined that **South Gateway/McHanville**, **Friedman Airport**, and **Carey** should be the initial focal points for large-scale development in the county. Their selection as priorities was due to their value as uniquely strategic assets to Blaine County’s future economic vitality. In addition to these sites, TIP recommends the BDC and local municipalities continue to seek development opportunities at the following: Rinker-Scherer tract, Airport West area, and area adjacent to Warm Springs Road.

In addition to the process outlined in Strategy Two for each of the large-scale developments, the following actions should be uniquely taken for each:



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- Action A: Support the assembly and redevelopment of tracts in the South Gateway/McHanville area to support health and wellness sector activities in Blaine County. This area has the potential to evolve into a mixed-use medical and residential district, anchored by St. Luke’s Wood River Medical Center. Potential users include small healthcare service providers and private-practice physicians. (See Health and Wellness target industry sector for more information.)

Specific Tasks:

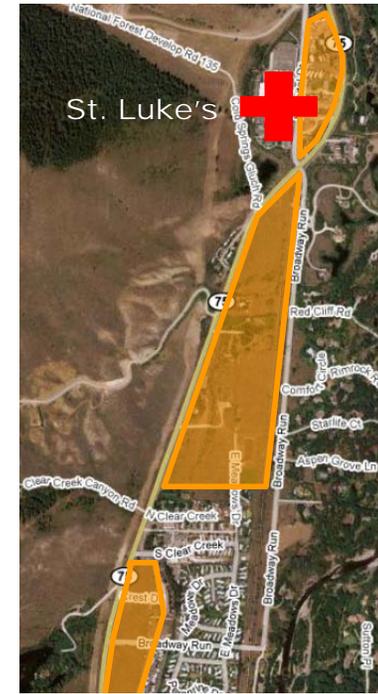
- Meet with St. Luke’s Wood River Medical Center and residential and commercial property owners to discuss the concept.
- Establish a comprehensive, formal vision for the redevelopment area as the *healthcare hub* for Blaine County.
- Work closely with residents of surrounding development to set the boundaries and potential restrictive uses for the development.

- Action B: Commence pre-planning for the redevelopment of the Friedman Memorial Airport site. Perhaps more than any other potential site, redevelopment of the Friedman Airport site would have the greatest impact on Blaine’s economy. This is largely due to the size of the potential acreage and its ability to accommodate a variety of uses, including mixed-use residential, light industrial, commercial, and civic functions.

Specific Tasks:

- Coordinate all tasks with the City of Hailey, which is currently working with a consultant on this action.
- Establish a vision for the redeveloped airport as a future mixed-use center for residential, commercial, educational, and recreational uses.
- Visit other passenger service airports that are currently being redeveloped as mixed-use destinations to better understand the process and potential uses. Two good examples are the former Stapleton International Airport in Denver (www.stapletondenver.com) and the former Robert Mueller Municipal Airport in Austin (www.muelleraustin.com).

Potential Sites for Mixed Use Medical Development



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- Continue a dialogue with the Friedman family, who deeded the original 100 acres for the establishment of an airport, to negotiate the potential terms for including their property with the publicly owned acreage in the redevelopment.
 - Consider the use of **form-based codes** in the redevelopment of the airport.
- Action C: Leverage Carey’s assets to promote industrial development in Blaine County. Among the few areas in Blaine County that offer sites for traditional industrial activity (i.e., west of the Friedman Airport in Hailey and adjacent to Warm Springs Road in Ketchum), there exists no business parks which provide large acreage tracts to support major users. Much of this dearth can be attributed to relatively high land costs in the upper Wood River Valley. Carey’s leadership, however, has demonstrated a strong desire to pursue population and business growth. TIP agrees that this goal should be supported. The community is located at the crossroads of two highways – U.S. 20 and U.S. 26/93 – and offers a relative abundance of flat, developable, inexpensive land.

On the other hand, Carey is located approximately 23 miles from the nearest incorporated municipality in the county (Bellevue) along the most direct route. This distance from the bulk of the county’s labor market could pose significant challenges for prospective businesses, until Carey’s population increases significantly. Moreover, much of the roadway connection between Carey and the Wood River Valley consists of Gannett Road, a narrow two-lane blacktop that has been reported to test drivers’ skills in winter months. Any major increase in traffic would necessitate the roadway’s improvement. However, some agricultural interests in the Bellevue triangle have voiced concern regarding potential improvements to the road, as this would detract from the area’s rural character and possibly increase development pressures along adjacent properties. The only other alternative is through the intersection of U.S. 20 and State Highway 75, which would require commuters to travel a distance approximately five miles longer than the Gannett Road route.

The lack of access to a labor market could present severe impediments to any potential business developments in Carey. As a result, TIP strongly recommends that Carey’s leadership continue to pursue strategies that achieve a balance of both business and residential growth at an incremental pace. Until the community has attained a critical mass of residents and businesses, it is doubtful that Carey will

Form-Based Code

Form-based codes address the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks. The regulations and standards in Form-based codes, presented in both diagrams and words, are keyed to a *regulating plan* that designates the appropriate form and scale (and therefore, character) of development rather than only distinctions in land-use types. This is in contrast to conventional zoning’s focus on the micromanagement and segregation of land uses, and the control of development intensity through abstract and uncoordinated parameters (e.g., FAR, dwellings per acre, setbacks, parking ratios, traffic LOS) to the neglect of an integrated built form. Not to be confused with design guidelines or general statements of policy, Form-based codes are regulatory, not advisory.

SOURCE: Form-Based Codes Institute.



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experience dramatically stronger demands for development. This statement, however, does not diminish the community’s potential as a future employment center for Blaine County. Rather, it is an acknowledgement that leveraging Carey’s obvious assets for industrial and business development should remain a long-term goal, supported through sustained and carefully calibrated efforts.

Specific Tasks:

- Identify appropriate sites for the development of a new business park in Carey and prioritize list of sites (evaluate infrastructure availability at each site, including electricity, natural gas, water/wastewater, road, and telecommunications). Consider properties located near the intersection of U.S. 20 and U.S. 26/93 as Carey’s prime business park development opportunity.
- Consider establishing standards for developments and industrial activities to complement existing residential and business establishments in Carey.
- Commence pre-planning for the eventual development of a business park with consideration for the site needs of Blaine County’s target industries in the pre-planning of the park.
- Work with the proposed BDC (see Goal Five), state and county leaders, and other potential stakeholders to identify potential funding sources for the business park. Consideration should also be given to contacting federal and state legislative representatives to solicit support.
- Work with appropriate parties to ensure roadway infrastructure leading to Carey and the potential business park meets future needs.



GOAL THREE > SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURS

challenge > Given the size of its working-age population, remote location, and accessibility (especially air travel), it is unlikely that Blaine County would garner success in recruiting large-scale enterprises, either industrial or white-collar. Instead, the county's best opportunities for diversifying its economy are based on strengthening support of small businesses and entrepreneurs, especially those that complement existing sectors or stimulate investment in emerging sectors.



To do this, Blaine County must provide a climate that supports small businesses, encourages startups, and fosters an entrepreneurial spirit. The area does not lack for leadership, as the myriad professional groups and business programs initiated by residents illustrates. Yet, diversifying the county's economy by relying on small businesses and entrepreneurs will not be successful because of the *quantity* of assistance available in the county. Instead, success will stem from support that is strategic, organized, and countywide. No such coordinated, countywide professional development or networking effort currently exists in Blaine.

The prevalence of seasonal and part-time residents poses one of the biggest challenges for Blaine's economy. Yet, it also presents a strong opportunity for stimulating growth and economic vitality. Many of these residents have experience managing successful companies or actively supporting entrepreneurial efforts in their cities of primary residence. Yet, Blaine's economy is not fully benefiting from their presence. The county should, therefore, engage these potential entrepreneurs by providing the physical and social infrastructure they might need. Similarly, many full-time residents live in the area because their jobs allow them to live anywhere. Indeed, half of the top 10 destinations for workers commuting from Blaine County are located in other states. Although their employers may be in another time zone, these freelancers or solo operators contribute to diversifying the county economy. Yet again, Blaine has not fully capitalized on this.

The county must also make retaining existing businesses a priority. Important at any time, this task is even more critical given the current national and global recession. As businesses look to consolidate and lending for startups becomes more elusive, Blaine County must ensure that existing businesses remain in the area. This is not an easy task, as even in good times, area businesses experience difficulty surviving, largely because of trouble recruiting and retaining talent. This task is exacerbated by local demographics. Blaine County's population, while more educated than the U.S. average, is also older. With the large generation of baby boomers nearing retirement, the need to replace them with younger workers becomes even more critical. The difficulty in retaining full-time professionals has ripple effects throughout the economy. For example, a lack of permanent, working-age residents heightens the dependency of local businesses, such as retailers and restaurants, on tourism, which in turn contributes to a lack of economic sustainability.

response > Supporting small businesses and startups should be a priority. The success of these efforts is critical to achieving economic diversity and economic sustainability. Many consider industrial recruitment to be the most important role for the economic development practitioner. We believe, however, that other avenues for economic growth and vitality are just as essential – especially in communities that are lacking some of the key attributes that

- Objectives:**
- Increase entrepreneurship and startup activity.
 - Retain and expand existing businesses.

goal 3: ENTREPRENEURSHIP



goal 3:
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

site selectors and recruitment prospects are seeking. In most communities, plentiful economic development opportunities lie closer to home if properly cultivated. “Economic gardening” is the most overlooked – yet often most important – process for stimulating local growth and vitality. Pioneered by the city of Littleton, Colorado, economic gardening is an economic development strategy that focuses on supporting local entrepreneurs and small businesses. Key elements include providing information, infrastructure, and networking or connections for local growth companies.

Blaine County boasts a greater number of self-employed residents – an indicator of entrepreneurial activity – than the national average. The multitude of local professional and business development organizations also points to the prevalence of small business owners and entrepreneurs. To stimulate economic development, the area must aggressively support these individuals and their efforts, as Blaine’s success in achieving economic vitality largely hinges small businesses and entrepreneurs.

Promoting entrepreneurship involves leveraging existing resources in the local business sector – including innovation, financing, know-how, and business and social networks – and matching those resources with investment opportunities. Investigating state and federal funding options, such as the Idaho Fund and federal stimulus dollars, and developing other resources for funding, including an angel investor network, would enable the county to support existing entrepreneurs while building a foundation to attract future entrepreneurs to the area. This could then lead to recognition of Blaine County as an entrepreneurial-friendly environment.

Providing an organized, countywide approach to supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs is essential. Efforts such as professional development and mentoring must be strategic. This will require cooperation among existing organizations. Blaine County should use a highly focused approach to business development efforts – an approach that embraces and reinforces the county’s existing economic strengths. The needs of existing employers in Blaine County must not be overlooked. Building awareness of the needs that existing employers have, and developing policies and mechanisms to support local business and industry, is a must. This calls for local leaders to remain mindful of the effects of policy decisions on the needs of area businesses, as well as providing a support structure in which they might thrive. The Workforce Development Alliance is in the process of implementing a community-based regionwide business retention and expansion (BRE) program. The agency has software that will record information gathered during BRE visits and generate reports.

The county would be remiss in its efforts if it does not aggressively seek and capture experience and knowledge from its seasonal, part-time, and full-time residents who have small-business and entrepreneurial experience that could benefit others in the county who are striving to start or maintain small businesses. Retirees should be engaged, as well, as they offer an untapped wealth of business knowledge and often are willing to volunteer their time to mentor others. Having such a support network will help attract and retain talent, particularly young professionals and entrepreneurs in the early stages of their careers. Connecting young professionals in Blaine with other young professionals is critical, too, as it exposes this talent pool to others in the same age range and similar circumstance. Creating more professional jobs by supporting a small business and entrepreneurial climate and attracting professionals to live and work year-round in Blaine will then stimulate other local businesses, particularly retail and restaurants, as the shoulder seasons and slack become less dramatic.



GOAL THREE IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

goal 3:
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS	LEAD ORGANIZATION	TIMELINE >>				
		ONGOING	0-6 mos.	6-12 ms.	1-2 yrs.	3-5 yrs.
STRATEGY ONE > STIMULATE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITY.						
Action A >> Establish an entrepreneurship program to facilitate startup activity in Blaine County.	BDC			X		
Action B >> Facilitate financing for small businesses, startups, and entrepreneurs.	BDC & KETCHUM CDC				X	
Action C >> Foster a countywide environment that embraces and celebrates entrepreneurship.	BDC, KETCHUM CDC & JIGSAW				X	
STRATEGY TWO > SUPPORT THE RETENTION AND EXPANSION OF EXISTING BUSINESSES.						
Action A >> Establish a formal business retention and expansion program.	BDC			X		
Action B >> Establish a program to support retailers, restaurateurs, and other firms adversely affected by "slack."	BDC			X		



en-tre-pre-neur
(ɔ̃n'trə-prə-nûr', -nöö'r') n.

A person who organizes, operates, and assumes the risk for a business venture.

French, from *entreprendre*, to undertake.

SOURCE: American Heritage Dictionary.

goal 3: ENTREPRENEURSHIP

► STRATEGY ONE >> STIMULATE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITY.

Across the nation, economic developers have embraced entrepreneurial development as a means of promoting diversification and stimulating growth. The reason for this interest in entrepreneurs is two-fold: 1) an economic transition in the U.S. that has created more market opportunities for entrepreneurs and 2) the recognition that entrepreneurs can be more deeply rooted in their communities, which increases both their economic and social impacts.

Entrepreneurial activity includes individuals attempting to start new companies or develop new business ideas. It also includes existing firms deciding to invest resources in new business opportunities.

Leveraging existing resources among Blaine County's business community — including innovation, knowledge, research, finances, and business and social networks — and matching those resources with opportunities should form part of the county's overall economic development efforts. Blaine's high quality of life and position as a major tourism and retirement destination should be treated as unique assets for fostering and enhancing a culture of entrepreneurship.

- Action A: Establish an entrepreneurship program to facilitate startup activity in Blaine County. Connecting entrepreneurs with the support structure they need to succeed includes providing information regarding funding options; introducing entrepreneurs to other entrepreneurs in the area; establishing networks with mentors; exposing entrepreneurs to professionals working in their industry; recognizing successes, no matter how small; and making sure entrepreneurs feel valued in the community.

Specific Tasks:

- Establish a local Entrepreneurs Forum where individuals can network and discuss key issues relevant to their efforts.
- Formally meet biannually with current and potential entrepreneurs to better understand issues affecting their business decisions and to provide networking opportunities.
- Develop a countywide mentoring initiative for business development, entrepreneurship, professional skills, leadership, and career advancement.

TRAINING CURRICULA

One popular entrepreneurial training program is FastTrac. Founded by the Kauffman Foundation of Kansas City, Missouri, FastTrac is a boot camp for entrepreneurs. According to the foundation, 70 percent of companies that go through the program succeed beyond three years – the oft-touted threshold by which the majority of small businesses fail. The program can be brought to any town provided there is an organization willing to become certified to teach the program. www.fasttrac.org

Another popular program is NxLevel, a curriculum developed by the University of Colorado at Denver. NxLevel includes seven different curricula tailored for different types of entrepreneurs. Since 1996, more than 80,000 students have participated in NxLevel trainings. A third-party evaluation of the program shows that over 90 percent of business startups that participated in the program were still in business after three years. The program is taught by certified trainers in more than 600 communities in 48 states. www.nxlevel.org



goal 3:
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- Focus efforts specifically on encouraging entrepreneurship related to target industries.
 - Offer entrepreneurship training courses, such as FastTrac or NxLevelL, that provide intensive training for potential entrepreneurs.
 - Assist entrepreneurs with locating office space, dealing with infrastructure issues, and handling other administrative concerns.
 - Ensure county and municipal policies do not hinder entrepreneurial activity.
 - Create a countywide innovation and entrepreneurship task force to advise the BDC, or the lead agency charged with implementing entrepreneurship goals.
 - Work with Idaho TechConnect (www.idahotechconnect.com) and Kickstand (www.kickstandidaho.com), a Boise-based entrepreneurial network, to incorporate their services into local entrepreneurial efforts.
 - Work with local residents who have interest and experience in leading entrepreneurial efforts. For example, Jigsaw, a local nonprofit, provides assistance to local entrepreneurs and small businesses.
- **Action B: Facilitate financing for small businesses, startups, and entrepreneurs.** The financing maze can be daunting to even the most seasoned entrepreneur or business owner. Connecting entrepreneurs and small businesses with and providing information about potential funding sources would be an invaluable resource.

Specific Tasks:

- Evaluate the Fund for Idaho (www.fundforidaho.org) for local opportunities.
- Determine viable funding resources for local businesses, startups and entrepreneurs (e.g., angel investors, business development corporation, local revolving loan fund).
- Support the formation of a formal angel investor network to aid entrepreneurs in raising seed capital by providing opportunities for entrepreneurs to present business plans and financing needs to an audience of local investors.
- Investigate the feasibility of creating a community-based revolving loan fund. A revolving loan fund, in which local financial institutions participate, would provide support for higher risk loans (startups and small) while spreading risk for the lenders.
- Sponsor financial literacy courses to educate entrepreneurs and business owners on the various types of financing mechanism, the pros and cons of each, and best practices for using them.
- Encourage local lenders to offer small business financing to assist startups and strengthen their Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) ratings.
- Leverage existing state and federal program that offer business startup assistance (e.g., SBDC).



goal 3:
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- Action C: Foster a countywide environment that embraces and celebrates entrepreneurship. Cultivating an entrepreneurial spirit countywide involves helping individuals and businesses with structural and tangible concerns, such as securing financing, locating office space, and maneuvering through legal issues. Yet, it also involves social and psychological factors, such as establishing relationships, receiving recognition for one’s efforts, and sharing experiences. Blaine’s entrepreneurship program should include all of these.

Specific Tasks:

- Continue to support the pursuit of a business incubator grant from the USDA.
- Sponsor an annual awards program for area entrepreneurs to provide an enticing incentive/award for the most innovative concepts and strongest business plans.
- Support the creation of an entrepreneurial program at CSI to teach key entrepreneurial skills in a case-based program.
- Consider developing and/or sponsoring workshops for would-be entrepreneurs. Topic may include developing business plans, raising capital, and managing growth. These may coincide with the Entrepreneurs Forum.
- Encourage entrepreneurship programs in Blaine County schools (e.g., Junior Achievement programs) which might be facilitated by local entrepreneurs and mentors.
- Develop a regional media campaign celebrating local entrepreneurial success stories.
- Explore mechanisms for a “Return to Roots” or “Come Home to Blaine” program to recapture young professionals who grew up in Blaine but now work or attend school elsewhere.
- Provide a stipend or scholarship for students or young professionals pursuing entrepreneurial projects.
- Consult with the Idaho Department of Commerce, the U.S. Department of Labor (which provides Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development grants), and other agencies and organizations that provide funding and support for entrepreneurial activities.

► STRATEGY TWO >> SUPPORT THE RETENTION AND EXPANSION OF EXISTING BUSINESSES.

Stimulating economic growth in Blaine County is not just about fostering startups and bringing new business to the county. A fundamental component to developing economic vitality in Blaine County includes keeping and growing those businesses that already are already established in the area. Indeed, ensuring the continued prosperity and survival of local employers is crucial to sustaining a healthy economy.

Simultaneously, an awareness of existing local business’ needs for remaining competitive in their respective industries is also a must. In other words, Blaine County and the area’s leadership should remain vigilant and responsive to the various issues that affect the profitability and competitiveness of existing employers.



goal 3:
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- Action A: Establish a formal business retention and expansion (BRE) program. A BRE program can help solve immediate or short-term problems, while also working toward the long-term goal of enhancing the competitiveness of local businesses. Through the BRE program, the county should assess the needs of and identify the barriers faced by local businesses trying to survive and grow in Blaine. This program should assist with the tools and information businesses need to address in their expansion efforts, including site location, state and local incentives, workforce development, statistical and demographic information, and business development.

Specific Tasks:

- Develop and maintain a comprehensive inventory of existing businesses.
- Place periodic calls with existing businesses to understand challenges local businesses are facing and to uncover potential expansion opportunities.
- Raise awareness of available technical and financial assistance programs, including workforce development and incentive opportunities.
- Consider establishing a formal internship/apprenticeship program to aid in the transfer of vocational students to entry-level positions among existing local employers and/or targeted sectors.
- Consult with the Workforce Development Alliance to identify ways its BRE efforts can complement a locally managed BRE program.

- Action B: Establish a program to support retailers, restaurateurs, and other firms adversely affected by “slack.” These businesses play an essential role in Blaine’s economy, from enhancing visitors’ experiences to providing residents with the quality-of-place amenities they need. Enhancing their year-round sustainability will lead to a healthier countywide economy.

Specific Tasks:

- Survey consumers (residents and tourists) to determine their shopping patterns and retail needs, as well as their perceptions of Blaine County.
- Meet with existing retailers to better understand their product offerings, customer profiles, store traffic, as well as their needs and challenges in their present locations.
- Provide ongoing business workshops and seminars for existing retailers and restaurateurs to communicate a common interest in the retailers’ continued growth and success in Blaine County. Retail Opportunity Workshops should also be held for those entrepreneurial-minded persons interested in opening a retail business in Blaine.



GOAL FOUR > ESTABLISH A DESIGN INSTITUTE TO BUILD ON EXISTING AND EMERGING ECONOMIC SECTORS

challenge > Blaine County is rife with entrepreneurial potential. The area has considerably more self-employed residents than the national average. Self-employment – an indicator of entrepreneurial activity – accounted for 42 percent of Blaine’s total employment growth between 2001 and 2006. Yet, the county has not seized opportunities to translate this entrepreneurial potential into economic growth.

The area can boast a number of homegrown successful businesses, including Power Engineers, SCOTT USA, Smith Optics, Eye Safety Systems, Sun Valley Bronze, and Rocky Mountain Hardware. And, many seasonal, part-time, and full-time residents run successful small businesses or are successful entrepreneurs. However, the presence of these entrepreneurs and Blaine-bred businesses has not led to the deepening of local clusters or recognition of the area as a center for innovation. Instead, many area businesses – particularly home-based businesses – run autonomously and independent of each other, with few ties to and investment in the region.

While challenges to attracting and retaining talent plays a part in this, lack of a countywide mechanism to stimulate entrepreneurial activity and spur local innovation contributes heavily. Telecommunications infrastructure, including high-speed Internet service and unreliable cell phone coverage, plus the absence of home postal delivery in Sun Valley, are cited by local home-based business owners as substantial obstacles to conducting business in Blaine County. As a result, the area is limited in its current ability to support existing and emerging economic sectors that could contribute to the county’s overall economic vitality.

Blaine also has limited higher education opportunities, which are essential to fostering entrepreneurship, small businesses, a talented workforce, and a diverse, sustainable economy. The College of Southern Idaho (CSI) maintains a campus, housed at the Community Campus in Hailey, where students can work toward an associate degree and gain career skills. However, CSI’s presence in Blaine County does not include a significant research component, which is fundamental in developing entrepreneurship and encouraging economic growth. To stimulate local innovation on a deeper level, additional higher education options must exist in Blaine beyond the limited academic and enrichment courses and curricula currently offered.

OBJECTIVES:

- **Establish Blaine as a recognized center for research and innovation.**
- **Develop a larger presence of higher education in the area.**
- **Attract world-class researchers and innovators.**
- **Stimulate professional employment and entrepreneurial activity.**

goal 4:
INSTITUTE



response > To harness Blaine County’s latent economic potential through innovation and entrepreneurship, TIP recommends the establishment a center of excellence for design. This institute should act as a catalyst for both existing and emerging economic sectors and enterprises to stimulate innovation in product development and design.

A wide range of Blaine County businesses and residents are already heavily involved in design among a wide range of activities. The proposed design institute’s mission would be to foster innovation in local sectors through cutting edge design. Already, the area is blessed with a deep pool of design-related talent, ranging from architects and engineers to home furnishings and sports equipment designers. Four sectors in particular seem to have local strength. These include: 1) sports equipment and related apparels/products (SCOTT USA, SCOTTEVEST, Smith Optics, Eyes Safety Systems); 2) building and real estate (Rocky Mountain Hardware, Sun Valley Bronze, architects, green and traditional builders, and interior designers); 3) gallery industry and associated visual artists; and 4) electrical and mechanical engineering (Power Engineers and Galena Engineering).

A critical component of the institute’s success will rest on leveraging the “Sun Valley” brand – the institute’s focus and work must tie into the brand through the support of existing and emerging sectors. Working with local businesses and residents, the institute would create a climate of cross-sector cooperation and help them remain competitive in their respective consumer markets. Indeed, the establishment of this institute could reinvigorate, leverage, and export the “Sun Valley” brand by incorporating it into their myriad products and services and establishing a recognizable local aesthetic.

Achieving this goal would serve four strategic objectives. First, it would deepen existing local clusters by initially tying the institute to existing industry sectors, providing the potential for more immediate economic impact. Second, after the institute has traction and has attracted funding, its focus could expand to support research for innovative design. Next, creating an institute would bring additional design-related talent to Blaine County. This advances the institute’s purpose, adds broad-based credibility, links the institute to established networks, increases the potential for additional economic activity, and creates professional jobs in the county. These lead to the fourth objective, heightening the county’s visibility as a center for design innovation. Ultimately, achieving these four objectives would result in a more sustainable countywide economy by attracting talent, creating jobs, and leading to a more competitive economy.

SECTOR LINKAGES FOR DESIGN INSTITUTE:

- **Sports Equipment**
- **Green Building**
- **Clean Energy**

Design

“Design” encompasses a variety of product development and process improvements in a wide variety of sectors. Prominent among these is industrial design, which incorporates both function and form and considers the connection between product and the user.

Industrial designers do not design the gears or motors that make machines move or the circuits that control movement. However, they can affect technical aspects through usability design and form relationships. Typically, they partner with engineers and marketers to identify and fulfill needs, wants, and expectations.

SOURCE: Includes Wikipedia.



GOAL FOUR IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS	LEAD ORGANIZATION	TIMELINE >>				
		ONGOING	0-6 mos.	6-12 ms.	1-2 yrs.	3-5 yrs.
STRATEGY ONE > LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INSTITUTE.						
Action A >> Engage the local businesses, stakeholders, and the community at large to build support for the center.	BDC				X	
Action B >> Determine the long-term focus for the institute.	BDC				X	
Action C >> Plan for the institute's education functions.	BDC				X	
STRATEGY TWO > TARGET STATE, FEDERAL, AND PRIVATE FUNDS TO SUPPORT THE RESEARCH INSTITUTE.						
Action A >> Pursue public- and private-sector funding opportunities to establish and operate the institute.	BDC				X	
Action B >> Establish a development office within the institute to pursue ongoing public and private grant opportunities.	BDC				X	

goal 4:
INSTITUTE



institute
key elements

- Leverages existing industry
- Leverages existing brand
- Create jobs
- Attracts private investment
- Gains local support and engages public agencies
- Tied to state and federal funding

goal 4:
INSTITUTE

► STRATEGY ONE >> LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INSTITUTE.

The area should determine a course of action for the establishment of the institute. This should include engaging local businesses to achieve feedback and buy-in for the concept of a design institute.

- Action A: Engage the local businesses, stakeholders, and the community at large to build support for the center. Because a primary goal of the institute is to bring economic development, including supporting local businesses and increasing awareness of the region, achieving community support is vital to establishing a research institute.

Specific Tasks:

- Meet with local industry to pursue their support for an institute and its research activities.
- Meet with elected leaders from Blaine County and the five municipalities in the county to discuss the institute’s purpose, potential operations, and role within the community.
- Solicit input from local business organizations, community groups, and residents – both full- and part-time – regarding the institute’s mission and presence in the county.
- Communicate with legislative, higher education, and economic development leaders at the state level about establishing the institute.
- Determine a strategic location for the institute that provides convenience for local industry and research partners, as well as maximizes its impact in the community.

- Action B: Determine the long-term focus for the institute. At least in its initial stage, the institute should be tied to design. This allows the institute to gain traction in the short term by tapping into existing, proven businesses, sectors, and individuals. The industry focus of the institute should leverage the existing “Sun Valley” brand by being a natural fit with the county’s economic strengths and goals.

Specific Tasks:

- Work with existing local employers to determine their current research activities, future research needs, and how they could benefit from the research institute.
- Encourage and support the spin-out of products and research from existing industry.
- Facilitate the development of patents and other intellectual property.
- Serve as a mini-incubator for promising startup ventures.



- Action C: Plan for the institute’s education functions. Education is closely tied to innovation and research and should be a core component of the institute.

Specific Tasks:

- Discuss the role of higher education at the institute with CSI and other institutions of higher education.
- Provide a multidisciplinary learning environment that encompasses engineering and business.
- Work with public and private K-12 schools in the county to integrate students into the institute’s activities through methods such as internships.
- Determine visiting lecturers or public events to be held at the institute during the center’s initial 12 months to build credibility among industry experts, draw awareness to the institute’s establishment and mission, and garner support from the community.
- Promote the institute at conferences and other events tied to the institute’s industry focus.
- Promote internship opportunities with the institute at graduate programs related to the institute’s industry focus.

- STRATEGY TWO >> TARGET STATE, FEDERAL, AND PRIVATE FUNDS TO SUPPORT THE RESEARCH INSTITUTE.

Equal in importance to clearly defining the institute’s mission and research focus is the issue of the institute’s funding. While community support is essential to the institute’s success, establishing and operating a respected, productive, and thriving institute will not be possible without funding from sources beyond Blaine County.

- Action A: Pursue public- and private-sector funding opportunities to establish and operate the institute. To gain traction, recognition, and money needed to set up and run the institute, funding support from sources beyond Blaine County should be aggressively pursued from state, federal, nonprofit, and private sources.

Specific Tasks:

- Pursue grants and sponsorship by state, national, and international foundations dedicated to subject matters related to the institute’s research areas as well as general research and economic development.
- Investigate potential partnerships with existing research organizations, including public agencies, private businesses, and institutions of higher education.
- Evaluate I-Cubed (Invest Idaho Innovations LLC – see Idaho Department of Commerce) for potential funding or grant opportunities.



- Action B: Establish a development office within the institute to pursue ongoing public and private grant opportunities. Funding the institute’s operations and research efforts is a nonstop task and, thus, a permanent, appropriately staffed development office is critical to ensuring ongoing financial support of the institute and its mission.

Specific Tasks:

- Regularly network with state and regional organizations related to the institute’s focus area as well as general research, such as the Idaho Innovation Council (see Idaho Department of Commerce).
- Actively participate in conferences, meetings, and online forums dedicated to research and innovation funding. For example, the Idaho Innovation Council has a LinkedIn group that is a tool for expanding the discussion about how to enable, support, and enhance economic development in Idaho by leveraging innovation in all industry segments.
- Offer institute memberships to businesses and individuals that allow these members to receive information about the institute’s research, upcoming seminars and lectures, and other events.
- Establish a program of annual awards issued by the institute to recognize local innovation and successes to raise awareness of the institute’s research and to serve as fundraising events.



goal 5:
ORGANIZATION & COLLABORATION

GOAL FIVE > ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

challenge > This plan is only a beginning for Blaine County. The issues that the county faces today did not form overnight. In some cases, they have been building for decades and are the results (either intended or unintended) of past decisions. The area’s economic development efforts are still in their infancy. As such, the county and its allies should focus on managing expectations around this planning effort. While immediate action can be taken on many of the recommendations in this economic strategy, overall success hinges on sustained efforts leading to long-term opportunities. Diversifying the economy through high-quality development is a multistage process.

OBJECTIVES:

- **Raise internal awareness and support.**
- **Establish an economic development program.**
- **Develop tools and resources.**

The strategies and actions of this plan are designed to stimulate private investment in Blaine County. In addition, several recommendations in the plan reach beyond the traditional realm of economic development. These will require the support of partners from both the public and private sectors to ensure overall success. It is, therefore, of critical importance for partnerships and joint ventures to support the plan’s implementation.

From an organizational standpoint, Blaine County’s biggest challenge is the lack of a single economic development focus. Cities, chambers, advisory boards, and other parties have exerted influence over business investment decisions in the county – but without a countywide perspective. As should be expected, these multiple entities serve varied, and often competing, constituencies.

response > Blaine County needs an economic development organization that represents the entire county. It must be supported by the county commissioners, the municipalities, and existing organizations. Currently, no organization is positioned to communicate the importance of economic vitality overall. A common vision driving investment in the county requires a central, focused, and committed entity.

We recognize, however, that creating an effective economic development organization is no easy task. Too often, efforts are complicated by existing entities with overlapping missions – none of which may have adequate funding to carry out its duties. Alternatively, the lead organization may be understaffed, underfunded, or uncertain of its mission. Failure to address these concerns will dramatically decrease the ability to operate successfully.

Organizational issues arise in virtually any planning effort, particularly with a subject as far-reaching as economic development. This plan is no exception. Its purpose is to provide the county and Sustain Blaine with specific guidance regarding the commitment of resources for ensuring economic vitality. However, some issues raised in the plan affect other organizations and will require a coordinated approach. These issues are raised here — even though they may be outside the direct purview of Sustain Blaine — because we view them as central to the county’s economic future.



goal 5: ORGANIZATION & COLLABORATION

In this admittedly sensitive area, TIP recommends a commitment of resources to implement this plan. In arriving at this recommendation we have considered the ways in which economic development organizations should be assessed:

- The **authority** by which they conduct economic development.
- The **funding** that allows the organizations to carry out that authority.
- The organization’s **relationship** to other entities in the county.
- The **capacity**, including staffing and other resources, to execute a plan.

authority > Blaine County has no formal economic development authority. Various organizations have carried some of the responsibility, including the Wood River Economic Partnership, the Sun Valley/Ketchum Chamber, the Ketchum CDC, the Hailey Chamber, and Sustain Blaine. They are not, however, representatives of the county as a whole. We recommend that a new organization – the Blaine Development Corporation (BDC) – be created. The authority for this group will be vested by the county and the municipalities, and will be endorsed by other organizations throughout the county. Sustain Blaine should lead the charge to establish the BDC and should act as a transitional body until the BDC is up and running.

funding > Current funding under Sustain Blaine is insufficient to catalyze the plan. As a consequence, a funding initiative should be launched as early as possible. Sources to consider include:

- funding from the cities and the county
- private funding (corporations and individuals)
- regional initiative (cooperative agreements)
- foundations

Economic Development functions

Economic development organizations are expected to perform some, or all, of the functions listed below. Checkmarks (✓) indicate areas of special emphasis. They are based on the orientation of this plan and are, in varying degrees, essential if action is to be taken.

- marketing and recruitment (targeted industries) ✓
- business advocacy ✓
- business expansion and retention (targeted industries) ✓✓
- financial incentives (loan fund) ✓✓
- real estate disposition and improvements ✓✓✓
- land and buildings ✓✓
- bonding authority
- infrastructure improvements
- workforce and professional training ✓
- business startup support ✓✓



goal 5:
ORGANIZATION & COLLABORATION

- state and federal

A capital campaign should, of course, include all of the above options. Regardless of the options pursued, implementation of the plan will require a significant investment over an extended period of time.

relationship > A key consideration is clarity of mission across all organizations. This is what marks the strongest economic development efforts. In addition to Sustain Blaine, there are a number of groups with some relationship to economic development (see box on the previous page).

While it is not within the realm of this plan to address these organizations directly, we recommend that the Wood River Economic Partnership, the Sun Valley/Ketchum Chamber, and the Hailey Chamber play an active role in a new economic development organization. In order to sharpen the focus of economic development, we recommend: 1) creating formal interlinking board memberships and 2) engaging in joint promotions whenever feasible.

capacity > The current lack of staffing for economic development makes it difficult to address the many strategies identified in this plan. TIP recommends that the new organization operate with an executive director, supported by a marketing manager with responsibility for business development. This director should be supported by a marketing/administrative assistant.

The real estate and infrastructure needs of land development require additional support. While the means to accomplish this does not have to result in additional staff, resources must be committed. To this end, a real estate task force should be formed. The task force should consist of the new economic development director, two board members, one private developer, and one financial consultant.



goal 5:
ORGANIZATION & COLLABORATION

GOAL FIVE IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS	LEAD ORGANIZATION	TIMELINE >>				
		ONGOING	0-6 mos.	6-12 ms.	1-2 yrs.	3-5 yrs.
STRATEGY ONE > BUILD AWARENESS AND RAISE SUPPORT FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS.						
Action A >> Leverage existing events, leadership programs, and relationships to serve as a vehicle for communicating economic development efforts.	SUSTAIN BLAINE	X				
Action B >> Identify areas of collaboration for economic development.	SUSTAIN BLAINE		X			
Action C >> Celebrate successes in economic development.	SUSTAIN BLAINE			X		
STRATEGY TWO > CREATE AN ORGANIZATION TO LEAD COUNTYWIDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS.						
Action A >> Establish the Blaine Development Corporation as the formal economic development organization for the county.	COUNTY & CITIES			X		
Action B >> Provide the necessary funds for the BDC to conduct its mission.	BDC			X		
Action C >> Define the necessary relationships to ensure the BDC's success.	BDC			X		
Action D >> Build capacity within the BDC.	COUNTY & CITIES			X		



goal 5:
ORGANIZATION & COLLABORATION

► STRATEGY ONE >> BUILD AWARENESS AND RAISE SUPPORT FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

This economic development strategic plan offers a host of strategies and actions that the BDC should undertake to stimulate private investment activity. Several recommendations in the plan reach beyond the traditional realm of economic development and will require support of partners from both the public and private sectors to ensure the plan’s overall success. TIP also encourages Sustain Blaine to develop a public relations campaign to build countywide support in anticipation of the BDC’s establishment.

- Action A: Leverage existing events, leadership programs, and relationships to serve as a vehicle for communicating economic development efforts. Influencing local perceptions of economic development efforts will be critical to the success of this plan. The county’s public- and private-sector leaders can have the greatest impact on how Blaine County is viewed from the outside. For example, executives, residents, and second homeowners travel frequently and can serve as Blaine County’s best, or worst, marketing channel. If locals understand Blaine County’s assets and speak positively about local opportunities, this will have an impact equal to that of any traditional external marketing campaign.

Specific Tasks:

- Identify business leaders and other key individuals who can influence investment in Blaine County.
 - Meet quarterly with key individuals and other decision makers to provide opportunities for discussions and input regarding progress on improving Blaine County’s business climate.
 - Continue to support the enhancement and expansion of existing programs that identify and prepare young professionals for future positions of leadership in Blaine County.
 - Assist in the development of targeted networking opportunities (e.g., evening and weekend functions) for young professionals living and working in Blaine as a way of identifying emerging community and business leaders and enlisting their support.
 - Establish a CSI leadership series to link local retirees with professionals.
- Action B: Identify areas of collaboration for economic development. Momentum towards economic development must be sustained. As a result, dialogue among the county, its constituent municipalities, and others who might influence investment, should continue. Prior to the establishment of the BDC, these parties should come to a common agreement regarding the implementation of the plan.



goal 5:
ORGANIZATION & COLLABORATION

- Action C: Celebrate successes in economic development. Recognizing achievement is critical to raising awareness of the importance of economic development. While there are undoubtedly a number of public functions in Blaine County in which a recognition event could be held, TIP recommends the establishment of a separate meeting in which the state of the area’s economy holds center stage.

Specific Tasks:

- Establish an annual countywide *Economic Development Summit* to keep the county’s leadership and citizens updated on opportunities and challenges in Blaine County, including local, regional, and national economic trends and other business climate issues (e.g. local taxation, planning initiatives, business announcements). As part of the annual summit event, include recognition of individuals, businesses, and/or organizations that have had the most significant impact on Blaine County over the previous year. Invite regional brokers, retailers, and developers to this forum.
- Use the annual *Economic Development Summit* as a means for celebrating local economic development successes.

► STRATEGY TWO >> CREATE AN ORGANIZATION TO LEAD COUNTYWIDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS.

Currently, Blaine County has very little capacity to conduct basic economic development activities or implement this strategy. As a result, TIP highly recommends the establishment of the BDC to implement this plan. In addition to the establishment of an economic development organization, TIP recommends Sustain Blaine formally adopt the plan. After doing so, Sustain Blaine should encourage the county, its constituent municipalities, and other local nonprofit organizations to adopt the plan as well.

- Action A: Establish the BDC as the formal economic development organization for the county. Blaine County has no formal economic development authority. Various organizations have carried some of the responsibility, including the Wood River Economic Partnership, the Sun Valley/Ketchum Chamber and Visitors Bureau, and the Hailey Chamber of Commerce. They are not, however, representatives of the county as a whole. We recommend that a new organization – the BDC – be created. The authority for this group will be vested by the county and the municipalities, and will be endorsed by other organizations throughout the county.

The BDC can be formed only through the commitment of Blaine County and its municipalities. These elected officials must endorse this organization’s structure. Sustain Blaine should lead efforts establish the BDC by shepherding the establishment of this countywide organization through the appropriate agencies and organizations. In addition, Sustain Blaine should act as a transitional body until the BDC is up and running.

- Action B: Provide the necessary funds for the BDC to conduct its mission. Without significant resources (financial and otherwise), it is unlikely that Blaine County will achieve noteworthy economic development success. As a consequence, a funding initiative should be launched as early as possible. One example is



goal 5:
ORGANIZATION & COLLABORATION

the Business Plus Model developed by the Southern Idaho Economic Development Organization (www.business-plus.org and www.southernidaho.org).

- Action C: Define the necessary relationships to ensure the BDC's success. A key consideration is clarity of mission across all organizations. This is what marks the strongest economic development efforts. In addition to Sustain Blaine, there are a number of groups with some relationship to economic development.
- Action D: Build capacity within the BDC. The current lack of staffing for economic development makes it difficult to address the many strategies identified in this plan. TIP recommends that the new organization operate with an executive director, supported by a marketing manager with responsibility for business development. This team should be supported by a marketing and administrative assistant. In addition, the board of directors for the BDC should include the county commissioners and the mayors from each of the municipalities. Board members should include one representative from each of the following: Sustain Blaine, WREP, Sun Valley/Ketchum Chamber and Visitors Bureau, Hailey Chamber, Airport Board, hospital, College of Southern Idaho. Finally, the board should include one local developer and two private individuals who are unaffiliated with any of the above groups.

A *real estate task force* – consisting of the new economic development director, two board members, one private developer, one financial consultant, and one licensed realtor – would assist the BDC with the real estate and infrastructure needs of land development. The purpose of the task force would be solely to provide information to and advise the BDC. The task force would have no powers. It simply provides the BDC with informed, up-to-date knowledge about land-related issues in Blaine County.

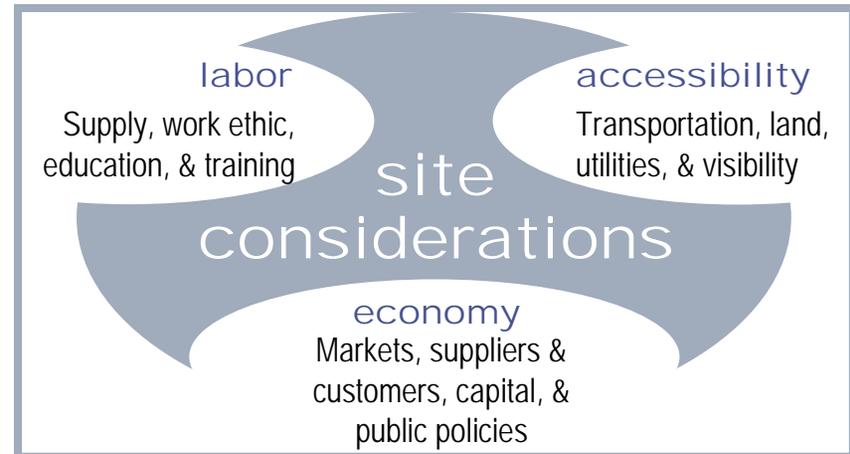


appendix

This appendix includes target sector descriptions and benchmarks for Blaine County.

TARGET SECTORS

The selection of target sectors is traditionally bound to an assessment of only a few determinant factors, such as access to an available workforce, industrial sites, and incentives. Our target sector recommendations are not based solely on these factors, but also on conversations with business leaders to better understand potential opportunities and challenges that might not be identified from secondary data sources alone. TIP also brings to bear its understanding and appreciation of broader socioeconomic trends such as consumption patterns/consumer spending, emerging



markets/international trade, and demographic shifts/aging workforce to better understand long-term recruitment and development prospects within emerging economic sectors. Finally, TIP also strongly took into consideration how the following targets fit within the overall framework of the strategic plan and how they will affect Blaine County’s sustainability while also leveraging the Sun Valley brand.

In sum, TIP identified target sectors for Blaine County using a three-pronged approach: *quantitative*, *qualitative*, and *strategic*.

Methodology > TIP determined that the following targets represent the best (both long- and short-term) opportunities for the Blaine County’s economic development efforts. We believe these represent the best opportunities for business startup, retention, expansion, and attraction activities. These sectors are selected for their ability to serve a dual purpose: 1) to bolster and diversify Blaine County’s economy over the short term by taking advantage of existing assets and 2) to provide a pathway to sustained economic vitality over the long term.

Selection Rationale > While an implicit goal of economic development is to increase local employment, Blaine County’s leaders should also strongly consider other factors in the determination of target sectors and specific employers, including increasing the local tax base (sales and property); protecting and enhancing the county’s economic sustainability; and the ability to enhance and leverage the brand.

Targets > The following list of target industries represents what we believe are some of the best opportunities for business retention, expansion, and attraction activities in Blaine County.

- DIVERSIFIED TOURISM, including retail, arts, recreation, entertainment, history/heritage activities, and leisure activities
- CLEAN TECH, including green building and clean energy
- HEALTH & WELLNESS, including healthcare, recreation, sports training, physical rehabilitation, and related business activities (e.g., life sciences, research and development, etc.)
- AGRICULTURE, including organics and additional options for large-scale agriculture.

DEFINITION:

The retail trade sector comprises establishments engaged in retailing merchandise, generally without transformation, and rendering services incidental to the sale of merchandise. Destination retail refers to those stores that attract customers regardless of the location, as opposed to a business that relies on convenience of location for its customers. In other words, these retailers do not solely rely on a local market but have the ability to bring in customers from a larger retail area and can, therefore, serve to bring in outside dollars to a community.

The leisure trade sector includes a wide range of establishments that operate facilities or provide services to meet varied cultural, entertainment, and recreational interests of their patrons. This sector comprises 1) establishments that are involved in producing, promoting, or participating in live performances, events, or exhibits intended for public viewing; 2) establishments that preserve and exhibit objects and sites of historical, cultural, or educational interest; and 3) establishments that operate facilities or provide services that enable patrons to participate in recreational activities or pursue amusement, hobby, and leisure-time interests.

TAR

RETAIL, ARTS, RECREATION, & LEISURE >

INDUSTRY TRENDS

The retail trade and leisure sectors have been among the leading national job creators during the last several years, driven by increased consumer spending and population growth, especially in locations with natural and/or man-made amenities. While these industries are not known for offering high-wage jobs, they remain important to local government for their contributions to sales.

In addition, retail and leisure are increasingly being viewed as amenities that a community can not do without. When searching for a new home, potential residents (both singles and families) strongly take the available shopping in an area into consideration. As a result, employers — who are interested in retaining and recruiting workers — have come to realize the importance of retail and leisure amenities. Similarly, the Arts can play a major role in building and sustaining economically vibrant communities. Arts organizations provide jobs, contribute to downtown revitalization, and attract tourists. Having a strong arts sector can complement recreation and leisure sectors, as well.

Retail and leisure amenities also strongly influence the attraction of visitors and, eventually, retirees. Increasingly, communities are coming to realize the potential for linking these two groups. Over time, a tourist who frequently visits a place begins to adopt a notion of brand loyalty for that community or destination which can, in turn, strongly influence retirement location decisions. Today's retirees are much more affluent than past generations and are more likely to increase consumer spending in the area, especially increasing demand for the region's health care economy. The leading edge of baby boomers is set to retire in the coming years, but analysts expect the nature of their retirement to be distinctly advantageous as they are anticipated to be more active community participants and more likely to start new business enterprises.

SITE SELECTION CRITERIA

- Access to population/consumers
- Quality of regional transportation network, especially interstate and airport
- Retail sites with high visibility
- Diversity of retail base
- Access to natural (e.g., lakes, national parks etc.) and cultural amenities (e.g., fine arts, performing arts, historical attractions) and other tourism destinations
- Concentration of hotels and restaurants
- External image of the region



NICHE OPPORTUNITIES:

- Baby boomer retirees/Zoomers (people in their 50s, 60s & 70s who want to remain socially and culturally engaged and active)
- Specialty retail boutiques in downtowns
- Cultural, recreational, and entertainment promotions
- Outdoor recreation, including: biking, ecotourism, fly fishing, golfing, horseback riding, snowboarding, etc.

RETAIL, ARTS, RECREATION, & LEISURE (cont'd) >

RATIONALE

- Increase visitor spending and sales taxes in Blaine County.
- Strengthen the status of the county’s downtowns as destinations for entertainment, culture, boutique shopping, fine dining, and the Arts.
- Assist in leveraging the Sun Valley brand.
- Linkages with health and wellness cluster development, especially in regards to outdoor recreation and healthy lifestyles.

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to support redevelopment and revitalization activities in and around the downtowns, including the consideration for the establishment of a designated entertainment district.
- Continue to support the arts.
- Consider conducting a retail leakage study to determine niches for targeting.
- Market Blaine County’s outdoor recreational assets and other fitness and wellness amenities.

TARGETS



DEFINITIONS:

Green building refers to the design, manufacture, and marketing of materials that promote efficiency and environmentally friendly technologies. Activities include the research and development of materials and systems, manufacture of building components, and final assembly of complete systems. Some definitions are also stretched to include building “systems” such as concrete, modular, and panelized products. In addition, “integrated” building systems tend to use a greater degree of information technology in the design and operation of new homes and commercial buildings.

Innovative technologies in the energy sector usually involve renewable or “sustainable” sources of fuel, but may also include applications to harness the potential of fossil fuels in much cleaner ways. Those power sources most commonly associated with “clean energy” potential include solar, wind, biomass, energy-from-waste, fuel cells, alternative batteries, and hybrid engines. The R&D, manufacture, and deployment of these types of innovations is grouped under the broadly defined category of “energy technology.”

TARGETS

CLEAN TECH (green building & clean energy) >

INDUSTRY TRENDS

GREEN BUILDING > As climate change emerges as a major policy priority, it is also rising as a priority for businesses seeking to capitalize on sustainability issues for profit as much as for their public image. Businesses increasingly find that “greening” the construction sector provides significant bang for the buck. In Britain, for example, construction and real estate-related activities make up just 10 percent of the economy, but these industries are responsible for half of the country’s greenhouse gas emissions. This has prompted property investors and developers to take a more serious look at sustainable building techniques and “green building” materials. In the U.S., the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification program has quickly gained acceptance. LEED certification is now actively sought by many developers as well as buyers and tenants. About 6 percent of commercial buildings constructed in the U.S. now apply for LEED certification and this percentage is expected to rise in the coming years. Similarly, the Energy Star Program, a joint venture between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy, has a certification process for new homes that meet strict energy efficiency guidelines. The program has developed energy performance rating systems for commercial and industrial building types and manufacturing facilities. In 2006, about 12 percent of new homes in the U.S. were built to Energy Star guidelines. Developers and investors do this for profit as well as for environmental reasons. Because energy accounts for one-quarter to one-third of a commercial structure’s operating expenses, reducing those costs can be a powerful incentive. As the trend toward sustainable building techniques and green building materials diffuses to more developers, investors, and individuals, the burgeoning market for green building products is poised for growth.

CLEAN ENERGY > The recent emergence of global warming as a serious political issue in the U.S. coincides with a major spike in energy prices and deregulation of many state electricity markets. This perfect storm of events has created enormous interest in environmental technologies. As recently as 1999, energy technology accounted for less than 1 percent of U.S. venture capital (VC) investments; by 2006, more than 9 percent of all VC investments were in this niche. And it is not just investors who are paying attention. Large corporations from Wal-Mart to Dell now plan significant steps toward reducing their carbon emissions. If investment capital flows into energy technology and if customers buy the products, then one thing is clear for economic development: new and expanding businesses can be anticipated in this sector. Those places that recognize and capitalize on this trend position their regions for future job growth.

SITE SELECTION CRITERIA

- Proximity to concentrations of energy-related customers and research facilities
- Access to educated workforce
- Availability of Class A office space, tech/flex space, and research and technology parks
- Access to power sources and transmission facilities
- Access to research and development
- Access to capital networks to provide financing for startups
- Light industrial, distribution space (green building); general purpose manufacturing for production, general purpose flex space for research and development (energy technology)



NICHE OPPORTUNITIES:

GREEN BUILDING:

- Materials research
- Energy efficiency systems
- Weather-proofing systems
- Computer systems integration
- Architectural design services

CLEAN ENERGY:

- Geothermal energy
- Applied technology development in alternative energies, especially as it relates to solar and geothermal
- Related goods and services, including design, small scale manufacturing, and consulting.

TARGETS

CLEAN TECH (cont'd) >

RATIONALE

- Strong local interest in the environment and sustainability (GREEN BUILDING; CLEAN ENERGY).
- Increased availability of federal funding in the form of economic stimulus spending (GREEN BUILDING; CLEAN ENERGY).
- Potential development of local expertise with the presence of Power Engineers (CLEAN ENERGY).
- Identification of southern Blaine County as high potential geothermal resource area by federal and state agencies (CLEAN ENERGY).
- Ability to develop upstream and downstream cluster of energy-related activities, including services, manufacturing, and innovation (CLEAN ENERGY).
- Strong presence of real estate development-oriented businesses locally, including architectural services, building materials, and construction, which could be leveraged to develop local expertise (GREEN BUILDING.)
- Clean tech, as an emerging sector, remains research-and-development intensive. R&D-related sectors tend to require more highly educated and skilled talent and, therefore, tend to pay high wages. Increased availability of federal funding in the form of economic stimulus spending (GREEN BUILDING; CLEAN ENERGY).
- Sector could provide opportunities for energy and other professionals in Blaine County to start new business enterprises, as well as generate new high-wage job opportunities. Increased availability of federal funding in the form of economic stimulus spending (GREEN BUILDING; CLEAN ENERGY).

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Encourage and support green building standards in the construction of new buildings (civic, commercial, and residential) to stimulate local market and investment.
- Embrace clean tech within all marketing materials, drawing linkages to sustainability and how it relates to healthy living and wellness.
- Pursue research from regional higher educational institutions.
- Investigate the Cascadia Region Green Building Council's Living Building Challenge program for application in Blaine County.



DEFINITION:

This sector includes establishments providing health care for individuals, including ambulatory health care services and hospitals. The services provided by establishments in this sector are delivered by trained professionals. All industries in the sector share this commonality of process, namely, labor inputs of health practitioners with requisite expertise.

Wellness refers to the healthy condition a person obtains through reaching a balance in lifestyle, whether through fitness, diet, emotional, social, and/or spiritual pursuits.

TARGETS

HEALTH & WELLNESS >

INDUSTRY TRENDS

Access to healthcare, both primary care and emergency care, is viewed as a quality-of-life issue for residents and an economic issue for communities. The presence of healthcare facilities is also seen as key in location decisions for most industries. While access to healthcare is an important factor in corporate location decisions (67.2 percent of respondents in Area Development’s annual corporate survey rated health facilities as “important” or “very important” in 2002 — up from 65.3 percent in 2001), it is less critical than other business-related factors, such as availability of skilled labor (90.9 percent) and highway accessibility (86.6 percent).

With the continued loss of manufacturing jobs, once the most critical driver in local economic development, communities are becoming more reliant on the healthcare industry as a source of employment and tax revenue. Growth in the U.S. healthcare sector is largely driven by two major factors: population growth and an aging population. As the Baby Boom generation approaches retirement age, a larger share of all consumer spending in the nation is being spent on healthcare related expenses. This increase is related to rising healthcare costs, which in turn, is partially related to the high number of insured persons in the nation (approximately 45 million).

According to Frost & Sullivan, the U.S. market for medical equipment exceeds \$55 billion and is expected to grow. Demographic shifts and technological advances are driving this growth. With the aging of the baby boomers, the demographics are favorable for longer term growth in the medical equipment industry. Analysts of this industry anticipate new product announcements in 2008 and 2009 that may propel further growth in the industry. In orthopedics in particular, knee-joint-replacement and spinal repair are expected to be prime growth areas.

SITE SELECTION CRITERIA

- Access to primary healthcare facilities
- Proximity to population growth centers and/or retiree destinations
- Availability of trained or trainable healthcare workforce (i.e., semi-skilled healthcare aides, registered nurses, healthcare technicians, highly trained doctors)
- Proximity to institutions of higher learning and medical schools (research and development and healthcare training facilities)
- Proximity to outdoor recreational opportunities
- Availability of medical and professional office space
- Quality of place



HEALTH & WELLNESS (cont'd) >

RATIONALE

- Leverage location of St. Luke’s Wood River Medical Center.
- Continued growth in healthcare is expected for the foreseeable future due to national and regional demographic trends, combined with increasing interest in spiritual and Eastern medicines.
- Produce job opportunities in high-wage sector.
- Potential for stimulating related manufacturing (e.g., equipment and supplies) and research.
- Linkages with the promotion of recreational activities, the local environment, and the sustainable ideals pursued through green building and clean energy.
- Consider supporting practitioners of alternative medicines as part of the wellness target.
- Over the long term, promoting investment in health and wellness might result in the successful recruitment of medical and orthopedic device manufacturers.

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Assist in the development of business plans for physicians and wellness experts as part of entrepreneurship as well as business, expansion, and retention programs.
- Stimulate the creation of medical office space in Blaine County to assist in attracting small healthcare service providers and private-practice physicians, especially near St. Luke’s.
- Continue to support the expansion of healthcare-related programs at CSI and Blaine County School District to supply labor for the healthcare services sector.

NICHE OPPORTUNITIES:

- Research and development firms that focus on chronic disease management and pharmaceutical testing.
- Biomedicine
- Adaptive sports programs

TARGETS



DEFINITION:

This sector comprises establishments primarily engaged in growing crops, raising animals, harvesting timber, and harvesting fish and other animals from a farm, ranch, or their natural habitats.

The establishments in this sector are often described as farms, ranches, dairies, greenhouses, nurseries, orchards, or hatcheries. A farm may consist of a single tract of land or a number of separate tracts which may be held under different tenures. For example, one tract may be owned by the farm operator and another rented. It may be operated by the operator alone or with the assistance of members of the household or hired employees, or it may be operated by a partnership, corporation, or other type of organization. When a landowner has one or more tenants, renters, croppers, or managers, the land operated by each is considered a farm.

TARGETS



T · I · P STRATEGIES

AGRICULTURE >

TRENDS

During the last century, farming practices became increasingly technologically dependent, increasing productivity, yields, and diminishing the needs for manual labor. These technologies included pesticides and herbicides, large-scale irrigation projects, synthetic fertilizers, and genetically-altered crop varieties. The culmination of these agricultural practices – the “green revolution” – dramatically increased worldwide food production, which is often credited for enabling a massive increase in global population during the 20th Century.

Recently, criticism of these farming methods has resulted in a renewed interest in alternative, or more traditional, farming practices. One benefit of this is that the number of farms in the U.S. has grown four percent and the operators of those farms have become more diverse in the past five years, according to results of the 2007 Census of Agriculture. For example, nearly 300,000 new farms have begun operation since 2002. Compared to all farms nationwide, these new farms tend to have more diversified production, fewer acres, lower sales, and younger operators who also work off-farm.

The latest census figures show a continuation in the trend towards more small and very large farms and fewer mid-sized operations. Between 2002 and 2007, the number of farms with sales of less than \$2,500 increased by 74,000. The number of farms with sales of more than \$500,000 grew by 46,000 during the same period. Census results show that the majority of U.S. farms are smaller operations. More than 36 percent are classified as residential/lifestyle farms, with sales of less than \$250,000 and operators with a primary occupation other than farming. Another 21 percent are retirement farms, which have sales of less than \$250,000 and operators who reported they are retired.

Agriculture already provides a significant positive impact on the Blaine County economy. According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, agriculture employs approximately 500 persons in Blaine County, including both farm proprietors and farm workers. In addition, TIP estimates that the sector provided a \$7 million boost to the local economy in 2006, the latest year for which data were available. At 94.6 bushels per acre, barley is the largest commodity in Blaine County, according to 2004 statistics from the University of Idaho’s Agriculture Extension (<http://extension.ag.uidaho.edu/blaine/ag.htm>). Other major commodities (with their yields) in the county include alfalfa hay (3.89 tons), spring wheat (87.4 bushels), winter wheat (85.5 bushels), oats (85.0 bushels), and potatoes (250 Cwt). Also in 2004, 100 dairy cows and nearly 10,000 beef cows calved.

CRITERIA

- Favorable climate conditions
- Inexpensive, fertile land
- Abundant semi-skilled labor
- Proximity to consumer markets
- Abundant water/wastewater

NICHE OPPORTUNITIES:

- Organic and natural foods
- Greenhouse
- Expanded marketing efforts for existing farmers markets.
- Link agriculture more closely with the Sun Valley brand

TARGETS

AGRICULTURE (cont'd) >

RATIONALE

- Strong desire by local population to continue to support agriculture in Blaine County due to the area's long farming history in raising sheep and growing barley.
- In business, profitability typically is the result of efficiency and/or specialization. Agriculture is no different. Already, farmers in Blaine County have achieved a balance of the two. Most production is devoted to malt barley, which fetches higher prices than feed barley. In addition, most farms in the Bellevue triangle operate on a larger scale.
- The preservation of agricultural land assists the goal of leaving more open space in the Bellevue triangle area.

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to support agricultural interests in the Bellevue triangle and near Picabo, including preserving agricultural land uses and discouraging large-scale housing developments. This support should not be restricted to the county line, however, but should instead include the area of trade.
- Due to the short growing season and local weather extremes, agricultural production in Blaine County is somewhat limited in comparison to other regions of the country. Increasing the variety of food products grown in Blaine County will likely require an increase in the use of heated greenhouses. Consideration should be given to supporting their increased use through tax incentives and/or rebates from the county.
- The relatively high cost of living in Blaine County was cited by local agricultural producers as a hindrance to attracting low-wage farm laborers, which would be required for harvesting large-scale food producing operations.
- Consider linking entrepreneurial development strategies with agriculture to assist local producers, especially in organic and other small farmers. These groups are typically specialized, smaller operators working on smaller acreage. To be successful, they often must act as relationship builders, understanding the needs and desires of their individual customers.
- Continue to provide additional avenues for smaller farmers, such as community-supported agriculture, farmers markets, back-yard farming, etc.
- Include sector within economic development marketing materials. Consider developing a theme of sustainability to link agriculture, clean tech, health and wellness with outdoor recreational assets and the county's natural resources.
- Consider additional large-scale agriculture opportunities (e.g., rotating barley crops with legumes to lower fertilizer needs, grass fed beef, etc.)



BEST PRACTICES

As Blaine County moves forward with implementing economic development strategies, best practices from the following communities can serve as valuable examples.

LESSON: LEVERAGING TOURISM BRAND FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Orlando, Florida

<http://www.business-orlando.org/>

METRO ORLANDO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

In 2001, the Metro Orlando EDC introduced a new initiative designed to expand the brand of the area beyond its status as tourism destination. Disney World – one of the world’s largest tourist attractions – greatly influences the Orlando area’s economy, including the types of jobs, such as those related to the tourism and service sectors. The area’s image was also closely tied up in tourism. Yet, the region had an established high-tech sector, but had not leveraged this growing sector to expand Orlando’s brand in a way that would facilitate attracting business and talent to the area.

The EDC adopted several new media and technology sectors to diversify the economy, including strengthening and expanding existing businesses. By playing off Disney World’s “magic” theme, the EDC adopted a tagline and logo that was evocative of Disney’s efforts. This tagline was “Putting imagination to work.”

Since then, the EDC has been successful in recruiting and fostering growth in a number of creative and technology sectors, including digital media, film and television production, modeling and simulation, optics and photonics. And, some of the tourism-related businesses signed onto the EDC’s efforts by becoming involved in the region’s economic development activities.



LESSON: SUCCESSFULLY REDEVELOPING AN AIRPORT FOR MIX-USE DEVELOPMENT

Austin, Texas

<http://www.muelleraustin.com/>

MUELLER AIRPORT REDEVELOPMENT

During the 1990s, the City of Austin relocated its commercial air services from Robert Mueller Municipal Airport to a recently closed air force base to accommodate increased demand. This presented the city with a rare opportunity to redevelop the former airport site, which included 709 acres less than three miles from downtown.

With substantial public input, the Mueller site was redeveloped into a compact, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use community that is compatible and complementary to the established surrounding neighborhoods. From the onset, redevelopment goals addressed economic development, sustainability, diversity, and fiscal responsibility.

The project aims to reinforce Austin's role in an increasingly global marketplace and create a wide range of employment opportunities for diverse groups in the community. The development adheres to smart growth and sustainable development principles, such as promoting energy efficiency, reduced auto dependency, watershed protection, and green space preservation. Highlights of the redevelopment plan include:

- More than 4,000 new housing units, including small-lot single-family homes, townhouses, live-work lofts, apartments, and condominiums;
- Approximately 300,000 square feet of retail, dining, and entertainment uses.
- Up to 5 million square feet of commercial office space, including employment centers.
- A comprehensive network of public open space, neighborhood parks, and pedestrian ways.
- A vibrant town center in the heart of the community.

In addition, 25 percent of all housing units will be considered as reasonably priced housing. This housing will be offered to families with incomes of less than 80 percent of the median family income for the Austin Metropolitan Area. The program will be administered through a partnership between the city's Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Office and the Austin Housing and Finance Corporation.



LESSON: CREATING AN INNOVATION CENTER

Racine County, Wisconsin

<http://www.thecati.com/>



CENTER FOR ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION (CATI)

Traditionally dependent on heavy industry, Racine County, Wis., faced a critical threshold in the early part of the decade. With fully 25 percent of the county's workforce employed in the manufacturing sector, and numerous layoffs and plant closing announced, county leadership wanted to create a sea change in the local economy. Concern about job losses and the continued "brain drain" affecting much of the Midwest galvanized local governments, businesses, and economic development organizations.

Led by the Racine County Economic Development Corporation, local leaders took a multipronged approach to diversifying the region's economy. Key among the strategies employed was creation of the Center for Advanced Technology and Innovation (CATI). Formed in 2001, CATI is a strategic partnership of local and regional educational institutions, business development organizations, and local industries. The center's functions are organized under three primary areas: incubation, technology transfer, and education.

One of CATI's most notable successes has been its ground-breaking technology transfer program. Called the Commercialization Management Model (CM2), this program enables corporations to donate intellectual property (IP) to startup companies and existing businesses. The approach benefits both corporations (in the form of tax deductions and a reduction in IP maintenance fees) and entrepreneurs (who avoid the expense of costly licensing deals). CATI currently manages a patent portfolio valued at \$45 million and has acquired donated patents from companies such as Kraft Foods, International Specialty Products, and S.C. Johnson & Sons.

Racine County's efforts are guided by a formal economic development strategy, which has been formally adopted by 35 local governments and community-based organizations in the county. In addition to fostering entrepreneurship and innovation, the strategy addresses challenges related to social equity, infrastructure planning, and transforming the image of the region.

LESSON: LEVERAGING SITE BASED CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Pearland, Texas

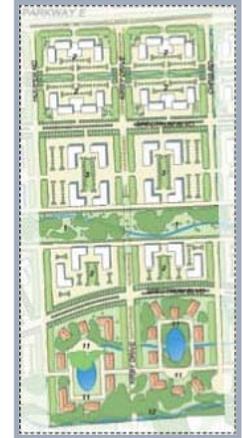
<http://www.thespectrumclearcreek.com/>

THE SPECTRUM AT CLEAR CREEK:

In its effort to position a premier biotech/lifestyle balanced business center, in close proximity to the world's largest medical cluster, the Pearland Economic Development Corporation (PEDC) engaged experts in regional master planning, development and marketing to form a vision that has now become The Spectrum at Clear Creek.

In 2004, the city adopted a revised Comprehensive Land Use Plan that set into motion the planning and development guidelines for a 1,031 acre area called The Spectrum District. Guidelines include a village district concept, where components of industrial flex, office and corporate campus uses transition into retail, leisure and other lifestyle components.

Also, in 2004, LNR Property Corporation, the primary developer of Phase I, received approvals for a Planned Development (PD) spanning 147 acres along Kirby Drive. The PD outlines construction materials, uses and other design guidelines to foster and promote quality construction within the district.



An overall vision was crafted by NBBJ Architects to express how the business and lifestyle components enhance the quality of place inherent in The Spectrum. In order to coordinate information pertaining to utility service within this district, the PEDC commissioned a planning level utility study. The results of this study analyze the associated costs for standard, but also highly customized redundant utility services.



LESSON: UNDERSTANDING SITES AND AVAILABLE INFRASTRUCTURE, USING A WEB-BASED GIS SYSTEM

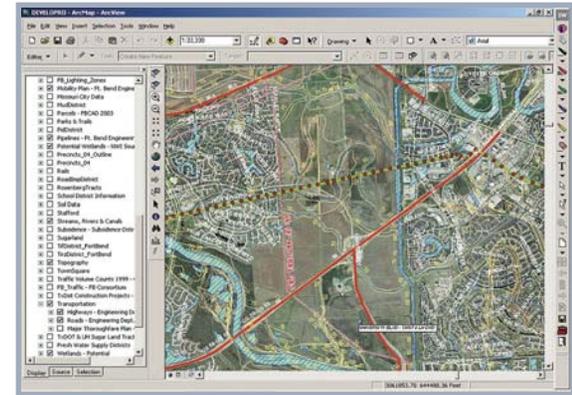
Fort Bend County, Texas

http://www.fortbendcounty.org/page_site_selection

<http://www.developroinc.com/>

GREATER FORT BEND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL:

Since 1986, the Greater Fort Bend EDC has assisted over 110 companies in relocating and expanding in Fort Bend County, creating \$1.4 billion in capital investment. Due to the rapid growth of the county, the Council needed a more efficient system for delivering information to assist developers. In partnership with Austin-based LJA Engineering, Council created an economic development tool—DEVELOPRO—based on ArcGIS Business Analyst.



DEVELOPRO is a customized application is displayed on a 72-inch, touch sensitive "smart" screen. Used in conjunction with ArcGIS Business Analyst, DEVELOPRO has greatly reduced the time for site identification and development, fatal flaw analysis, and demographic research. In addition, site consultants, brokers, corporate real estate executives, and developers can perform site selection and feasibility research with little assistance from Council staff.

The system's data are based on a digitized aerial photograph of Fort Bend County and provides more than 100 layers of information, including roads, topography, county mobility plans, municipality utility districts, and demographics. Sharing of this data is now more efficient and cost-effective for the government agencies, the County GIS Consortium, and the private sector. ArcGIS Business Analyst has made it easy for users in these different organizations to share maps and data. New layers of information are added continuously, and cost sharing has reduced the basemap burden on individual participants.

TASK FORCES

As part of the public input process, three task forces comprising Blaine County residents, professionals, and leaders served as advisory boards to Sustain Blaine on the topics of talent attraction and retention, land use, and innovation. Each task force submitted final reports to Sustain Blaine and TIP that included recommendations for strategies related to their subject areas. Many – but not all – of these recommendations were incorporated into the economic strategy for Blaine County. The task force’s full reports are included in this appendix.

Talent Task Force - Retention and Recruitment Subcommittee

RECOMMENDATION 1 – Professional Opportunity/Advancement/Mentorship

Inventory existing mentoring programs and development a broad-spectrum mentoring initiative from individual career counseling and development to business startup and other professional business assistance, using business-networking platforms as appropriate.

A well-rounded mentoring program will have three functions:

- Business development/entrepreneur mentoring
- Professional skills/leadership/career advancement mentoring
- Free or low cost short-term, informal skills and knowledge-oriented programs by local and visiting experts

A quality mentoring program will have several key elements:

- A stable of mentors with diverse skills and interests - male and female, with good coaching skills and available hours during several months of the year.
- A training program to transmit a core of working principles to all mentors.
- A program for attracting and selecting mentees for both entrepreneur and professional development mentoring.
- A program for attracting and selecting mentors for both entrepreneur and professional mentoring.
- A rationale for matching mentees and mentors.

- A monitoring and feedback process for both mentees and mentors to ensure successful matches and measurable (i.e. tangible) mentoring outcomes.
- A broad set of educational topics to assist individuals in business development and career growth.

Brief status of known mentoring and business education programs in the valley:

- Individuals who want business startup or professional/career mentoring have found mentors on their own.
- Jigsaw has a business development/entrepreneur mentoring program.
- Jigsaw has a yearly business plan competition providing startup entrepreneurs with the opportunity to present their business ideas to mentors with investing, financial, legal, and entrepreneurial experience.
- Brian Matsuoka of SBDC provides mentoring for small-business owners at Hailey CSI by appointment.
- La Alianza is working to develop a leadership program for Latinos.
- CSI plans a “Leadership Series” for the fall of 2009. Locals who have been or are leaders in their fields will be invited to share their leadership experiences at scheduled gatherings. This series will provide education, community involvement for local leaders, and potential mentoring hook-ups.
- Jigsaw offers brown bag and featured speaker lunches that provide skills-based learning and the business perspective of successful leaders in their fields. These also provide networking opportunities that can lead to mentorship.
- Various other local programs exist which are sponsored (or well-publicized by) Sun Valley Online, CSI, nonprofits, etc.

ACTION STEPS

Sustain Blaine (or successor agency)

- Fully inventory existing local resources and programming in mentoring, career development training, business education and business development assistance.
- Using this inventory, develop a calendar of business development activities. This and the following item should be developed in conjunction with or as a sublink to the “portal” that has been recommended by the Branding subcommittee .
- Work with Jigsaw and other local resources to create a centralized “clearinghouse” source for networking of mentoring, training and employment opportunities with potential candidates. This includes identifying



and working with an appropriate technological resource (i.e. Sun Valley Online) to create an appropriate web/social or business network-based presence.

- Establish a committee on an ongoing basis to work with Jigsaw and other participating agencies to establish and promote an ongoing valley-wide mentoring program with written standards. Research and take advantage of what has worked in other places in this regard.

College of Southern Idaho

Develop a Leadership Series that will help LINK the community resource of highly-talented and experienced retirees from major leadership positions in various industries WITH local community members who are in the early stages of their careers (in fields ranging from business to education to health care to the arts). The goals will be:

- To allow developing professionals in this rural community to learn from people with high-level, world-class professional experience
- To give the retirees more insight into the dynamics of our community
- To foster organic mentoring relationships which serve both ends

The Leadership Series would consist of a group that meets monthly for a 1.5 hour class. Class size would be limited to 25 participants to maximize the potential for dialogue and networking between participants, and between participants and the speakers. Each month, a different industry leader will speak to the group on the topic of her/his choice related to leadership and professional growth.

Implementation: Fall 2009

RECOMMENDATION 2 – Investment

Develop resources for funding and oversight of local start-ups/entrepreneurs/growing businesses.

ACTION STEPS

Sustain Blaine Subcommittee (or successor agency)

- Evaluate Idaho Fund to determine whether it presents viable local opportunities.
- Determine which of the following model(s) are most viable for Blaine County:
 - Clearinghouse to match local & part-time investors with local businesses/entrepreneurs

- Angel fund individuals in angel groups like Keiretsu Forum
 - Business Development Corporation
 - Local banks creating local revolving loan fund
 - Creation of pass-book loan system where locals can contribute to an account that provide seed loans
- Evaluate existing Business Development legislation in Idaho, and develop a plan to promote same if it is inadequate
 - Identify blue chip business leaders to make investment decisions and oversee funds.
 - Identify advisors available for guidance.
 - Identify and solicit potential investors.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATION – Business incubator grant opportunity

Sustain Blaine is aware that a USDA grant opportunity exists for the development of a business incubator project. It is recommended that a subcommittee be established immediately to meet with USDA representatives, prepare and submit an application for this grant.

Talent Task Force - Brand Subcommittee

The Brand Subgroup of the Talent Retention and Brand Task Force met four times during January and February of 2009. Through a process of distilling ideas obtained from the November 2008 community input meetings, to developing steps to take those ideas to strategies that can be implemented, the Brand team then refined its focus to three actionable strategies.

This report starts with a presentation of the three strategies. Also attached as pertinent background information, are the individual reports from each team meeting. The team’s objective:

Identify strategies which can expand the county’s “brand” beyond the traditional ski-resort driven identity to both widen the opportunities to attract a pool of potential talent to the county and broaden tourism development.

The team’s task was two-fold:

- Explore options for leveraging and building the county’s “brand.”
- Identify options to broaden and promote the tourism segment of the economy.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Develop a web based shared common portal to the “Sun Valley” brand – a comprehensive connection/link to everything we have (see attached “Sun Valley Brand” – Shared Common Portal map).

- Development of the portal will require outside professional expertise. Examples of such portals exist in the country.
- Careful and constant management the common portal will be vital. It was the consensus that the portal must represent the best interests of all participants in the portal.
- Control of the portal should be neutral, not maintained by a commercial or special interest, but rather operated by a representative valley-wide agency.
- The portal should have the ability to allow interested parties to sign up to receive e-mail from any and all participants linked to it.
- The portal should be allowed to expand to a broader area which could include the greater South Central Idaho region and the Stanley to Salmon area.

- Implementation and marketing of the portal and re-branding will be vitally important. This may necessitate the hiring of a marketing company.
- The attached “Sun Valley Brand Portal Map” is an example of how the portal could act as a comprehensive connection/link. This is an example and may not be complete.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Expand an existing festival or event into a series of events with county-wide participation with perhaps one mega event as an anchor.

- The team determined it is important as a strategy to expand two existing events from different seasons each into a series of events or a week-long event.
- One of the two events to be expanded should be during the winter season; the other should be during the September/October time period.
- As an alternative to the fall (September/October) time period, the second event could be expanded in the May/June timeframe.
- A third alternative, depending on availability of resources, would be to expand three existing events in the timeframes mentioned above.
- Key criteria for expansion of events should include utilizing a variety of venues throughout the entire valley, making the events inclusive, diversifying the events to add music, recreation, arts, and cultural and educational components into the larger series of events.
- The events should also focus on a diversity of activities to attract all ages and families with youth activities and night life throughout the larger events.
- Consideration should be given to expanding those events which can be guided by those who are passionate and will incorporate their enthusiasm to drive the success of the expanded events.
- Examples of possible existing events which could be expanded to larger, more diverse series of events include: The Sustainability Conference, Trailing of the Sheep, Boulder Mountain Tour, Northern Rockies Folk Festival, Wellness Festival, etc.
- Attention should be given to surrounding regional festivals and events and available entertainment.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Expand the opportunities for cross marketing of existing conferences and visitors.



- Seek out and develop channels to connect local efforts with out-of-area opportunities. Develop educational opportunities of what the “Sun Valley” brand has to offer.
- Utilize the shared common portal for cross marketing opportunities.
- Familiarize those who are connected to conferences and conventions outside the area with the “Sun Valley” brand and portal (i.e. create “Sun Valley” Ambassadors – the Governor, our Congressional delegation, business leaders, nonprofit leaders).
- Create and expand “viral marketing” approaches.
- Improve communications connectivity infrastructure to make conference and visitor experiences easier, more productive and connected to the rest of the world while they are here.



Land Use/Development Task Force

The Land Use/Development Task Force met January 9, 16, and 30, and February 6 and 13, 2009, with 11-15 people in attendance representing the cities, county, airport, development, real estate, transportation, land conservation, smart growth, and general interest. The basis of the discussion was the purpose/objectives outlined by TIP Strategies in a memorandum to Sustain Blaine dated December 16, 2008. The Task Force was provided with the notes from the November 2008 Community Workshop held at the YMCA in Ketchum and directed to the information/PowerPoint presentations on www.blainecounty.org from the prior workshops/meetings with TIP to gain knowledge of the Sustain Blaine efforts. The members were directed to the assessment on the website to understand the baseline developed by TIP in the Discovery Phase of the project.

During this Opportunity Phase, initially the Task Force identified and discussed current zoning for commercial and industrial uses, vacant land, current land use applications and the availability of sites for long term economic diversity and stability. Sites not currently zoned as such were also identified and discussed.

A matrix was developed to assist in evaluating the sites. Criteria given consideration included the following:

- the need to develop versus the existing availability of infrastructure, including transportation,
- natural gas, electricity, information systems, sewer, water,
- the relative costs of land,
- jurisdictional issues,
- the players needed in acquiring, planning and development,
- the level of support from jurisdictions and groups,
- environmental constraints, and
- availability of the site(s).

After consulting with TIP Strategies by telephone at its meeting February 6, 2009, the Land Use/Development Task Force proceeded to consider the various sites under the categories of land uses identified as health care, institute, light industrial and mixed use. The full matrix of uses and locations and the accompanying criteria was considered to be more detailed than TIP called for at this point in the process.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS – The following are not prioritized or offered in particular order.

1. Relocation of the Friedman Memorial Airport presents compounded opportunities for economic diversity and stability for Blaine County. From the Statement Purpose and Need/Alternatives Working Paper Draft by Landrum & Brown, July, 2008: A new airport doubles enplaned passengers in 15 years; generates as



much as \$32 million in additional direct and indirect/induced revenue; generates as much as \$10.3 million in additional direct and indirect/induced earnings; generates as much as 496 additional direct and indirect/induced employment. If this analysis proves out after the current studies are completed, the existing approximate 200-acre airport site, known as the Friedman Site in the matrix, presents opportunities for the broad spectrum of industry, business or institution(s) being considered in this planning process.

2. The continuation of viable agriculture in Blaine County is supported through implication by the fact that none of the sites including the potential green-field development of a new town at Spring Creek Ranch, for example, utilizes "prime agricultural land" as defined for Blaine County by the USDA. The concentration on infill sites within the incorporated cities primarily for shorter term solutions and green-field development in the County or Carey for long term opportunities is consistent with the preservation of agriculture and the derivative open space and wildlife habitat as well as transportation goals.
3. The City of Carey is open to and ready for economic development and diversity that would support its existing expanding residential opportunities. Carey is interested in becoming a community where residents not only live but work at jobs and professions that support them and their families. Spring Creek Ranch, or another "new town site" would be an additional lower land cost alternative available for all types of development, with the ability to start with a "clean slate" and be conscientiously developed.
4. The City of Bellevue is considering land use applications currently that will contribute to commerce and industry. Annexation of land to the south along Gannett Road, known as the Rinker/Scherer property, is of interest to Bellevue and would support higher densities of residential, various housing options, and commercial venues supported by infrastructure that exists and may be extended. A transportation center including park and ride and bus transit terminal is being examined within the current city limits. Bellevue recently amended its zoning ordinances allowing higher densities within the city limits and created a Light Industrial / Business zoning designation. Bellevue enacted an Urban Renewal Area and Agency which will support and provide tax increment financing from revenue allocating areas to be directed to site specific locations for reducing infrastructure costs, housing or other associated costs as an incentive for developments that provide for increased employment, business / industrial development and related housing components. The Rinker/Scherer master plan approved by the City of Bellevue provides an opportunity for development for 561 acres for residential, commercial, light industrial and public uses in the city limits or on adjacent lands in an area that is ready to utilize available infrastructure including, power, gas, water, sewer, connection to the Wood River Trails, preserving wildlife corridors and within walking and biking distance to the proposed ITD transportation center.
5. The City of Hailey is anticipating the future uses of the existing (Friedman Site) airport once the airport is relocated and operational. Having commissioned a report in 2006 documenting goals of the Comprehensive Plan, convening a city-sponsored panel, and cooperating with the land use consultants associated with the airport administration, the city is preparing itself to make decision about the appropriate amount and types of land use to meet the needs of the community.



6. The City of Sun Valley is primarily focused on the resort and recreation with its plans and land use regulations. However, the City understands and supports the relationship between the various entities in the county and interconnected necessity for long term stability and diversity.
7. The City of Ketchum has many infill sites of various sizes, in particular approximately 40 acres in Warm Springs currently zoned for residential use. Hotel developments are in the entitlement process and the City is actively seeking hotel applications. The River Run/Sun Valley Company property is expected to be annexed. Ketchum is open to smaller businesses and is ready for economic development..
8. The South Gateway/McHanville areas south of Ketchum and Sun Valley is being considered through land use code revisions to accommodate high density residential, medical, and limited commercial with the intent to address the non-conformity of uses existing in McHanville and the needs for affordable housing at the north end of the Wood River Valley.
9. Infill of vacant land or redevelopment of underutilized land within the cities was discussed as being a viable short term opportunity for a contribution to economic stability and diversity since these sites are zoned and served by infrastructure. However, the concept of infill from the perspective of the cities of Carey and Bellevue is quite different from the Cities of Ketchum and Sun Valley. The northern cities have a much more limited land area, constrained by surrounding public land and mountainous topography. The city of Hailey has identified sites inside or immediately adjacent to the City that may be considered "infill" due to their relative small size and distribution around the city. The prospect of the relocation of the existing airport, most of which is inside the city limits, presents a much more expansive opportunity for infill that could satisfy much different needs. The Cities of Bellevue and Carey have overtly expressed the desire for new development as well as redevelopment that will contribute to a more stable and diverse economy and therefore sustainable, all-round community.
10. Among the issues the Task Force grappled with was whether it was looking for one big hit – a home run, or several base hits and would either contribute enough to the long term economic diversity and stability, or would it take both. The discussion, though, was primarily centered on the availability of sites. As specific land use needs or directions were not readily available from either the Institute or Talent Task Forces, there was little discussion of the practical realities of the cost of land, available services, transportation issues, etc. associated with any site’s economic viability in accommodating their particular needs.

RESULTS OF RANKING

The numerical outcome is inserted below for reference and is also found on the sheet in the matrix labeled "Ranked Properties". More detailed descriptions of each of the properties listed below can also be found in the matrix.

A few members of the Task Force were not able to be present at the February 6, 2009, meeting during the initial ranking and as a result were not part of the discussion during the rating session. However, recognizing the



importance of including all jurisdictions and interests that had been consistently participating in the Task Force meetings, they were given the opportunity to rank the properties. Their numbers were incorporated into the totals. The "member participation" page indicates who attended the meetings, what they represented, and who participated in the ranking exercise.

As stated earlier, the Task Force struggled with how to identify land that may be appropriate to support economic stability and diversity in the future without knowing what particular uses were being considered and how much land may be needed for those uses. On the recommendation of TIP, the categories of land uses were considered in very general terms. While attempt was made to consider the criteria listed in the matrix when ranking the properties, the interdependence of the elements affecting land use decisions resulted in a list of issues and concerns that were not and could not be fully explored by this Task Force nor in this time frame. One of the most critical elements was cost of the land. While a very general understanding of the relative costs of land and availability of infrastructure in the various geographic areas of the county was understood, specific costs and financing issues were not considered as criteria for ranking the properties. The list of issues and concerns appears later in this report below and is offered in conjunction with the following ranking to assist TIP in reaching its conclusions in the Opportunity Phase and later in the Implementation Phase.

Short Term: 1-5 years. The land use/zoning codes and land availability were expected to accommodate the stated uses fairly immediately.

Long Term: 5 years or more. Land use codes could be modified through the necessary public processes and/or the land could become available through acquisition or redevelopment for these purposes to serve the more distant future.

HEALTH CARE: hospital, medical office buildings, rehabilitation, clinics

Short Term

1. South Gateway/McHanville area, Blaine County – The hospital exists in this location and the County is considering changes in land uses that may possibly include health services in the McHanville portion of this area. Some Task Force members felt that the part of this area south of the traffic signal on SH75 is not as appropriate for health care uses as the area north.
2. Airport West area within the City of Hailey's SCI (Service, Commercial, Industrial) area, Hailey. Infrastructure availability, existing health care facilities being built currently, and Hailey's population base were considered.
3. Area of the proposed Croy Canyon Ranch Foundation continuing care facility in Croy Canyon west of the City of Hailey, Blaine County – Application has been made for a conditional use permit to construct a continuing care facility in this location that will accommodate independent and assisted living for seniors



and skilled nursing. It was also noted that the areas immediately west of Hailey are undeveloped at this time.

Long Term

1. Airport West, Hailey – Infrastructure availability, existing health care facilities being built currently, and Hailey's population base were considered.
2. South Gateway/McHanville area, Blaine County – Since the hospital is expected to accommodate long term needs, the area north of the traffic light was seen useful into the long term. The same concerns over whether the area south of the traffic light is appropriate for health care were expressed.
3. Existing Friedman Memorial Airport site, Hailey – Recognizing at least 2 current efforts toward planning for this property upon relocation of the airport out of Hailey, the 200+ acres was identified with health care on the list. Note: Without identifying the specific uses, little attention could be paid to how much land is needed and what current codes allow or future codes may be needed.

INSTITUTE: R&D, wellness, technical, business, academic

Short Term

1. Airport West, Hailey
2. Sweetwater area in mid-Woodside, Hailey – Existing limited business zoning and access to infrastructure as well as housing supported this site.
3. South Gateway/McHanville, Blaine County

Long Term

1. Existing Friedman Memorial Airport site, Hailey
2. Spring Creek Ranch, Blaine County and the Rinker and Scherer properties, Blaine County tied as the second most opportune site for an institute in the long run. Spring Creek Ranch is a 2,840 acres parcel that includes approximately 700 acres within the bowl of the south side of Timmerman Hill fronting on SH75 approximately 1 mile south of the intersection with Highway 20. The Rinker and Scherer properties, south of and adjacent to the City of Bellevue total 567 acres. These properties are located on Gannet Road.
3. South Gateway/McHanville area, Blaine County – An institute related to the existing hospital and or light industrial uses in this area may be appropriate here.

Note: Without knowing the type of institute it was difficult to identify site(s) for either short- or long-term. For example, an agriculture-oriented institute may not be appropriate at any of the top three sites but should be located where agriculture is the primary land use.

LIGHT INDUSTRIAL: clean, business park

Short Term

1. City of Carey
2. Glendale, Blaine County – This area, off of SH75 and south of Bellevue already has light industrial use. Additional light industrial uses may therefore be appropriate.
3. City of Bellevue

Long Term

1. City of Carey
2. Existing Freidman Memorial Airport site, Hailey
3. Glendale, Blaine County

Note: Each of these areas was identified in the matrix as either having existing industrial zoning or the jurisdiction would be willing to consider zoning and infrastructure to accommodate light industry.

MIXED USE: commercial (small office, small retail) and higher density residential

Short Term

1. City of Hailey
2. South Gateway/McHanville, Blaine County
3. City of Carey

Long Term

1. Existing Freidman Memorial Airport site, Hailey
2. City of Carey
3. South Gateway/McHanville, Blaine County



Innovation Task Force

THE INSTITUTE FOR VIBRANT COMMUNITY

A hub of innovation and best practices for transition to sustainable economies through research, development, application and education.

Communities worldwide are facing the problems of competition for limited resources, stress on environmental systems and lack of economic diversity.

This institutional hub connects the divergent economies of energy, food, transportation, education, culture and health into an integrated pathway to sustainable, vibrant community.

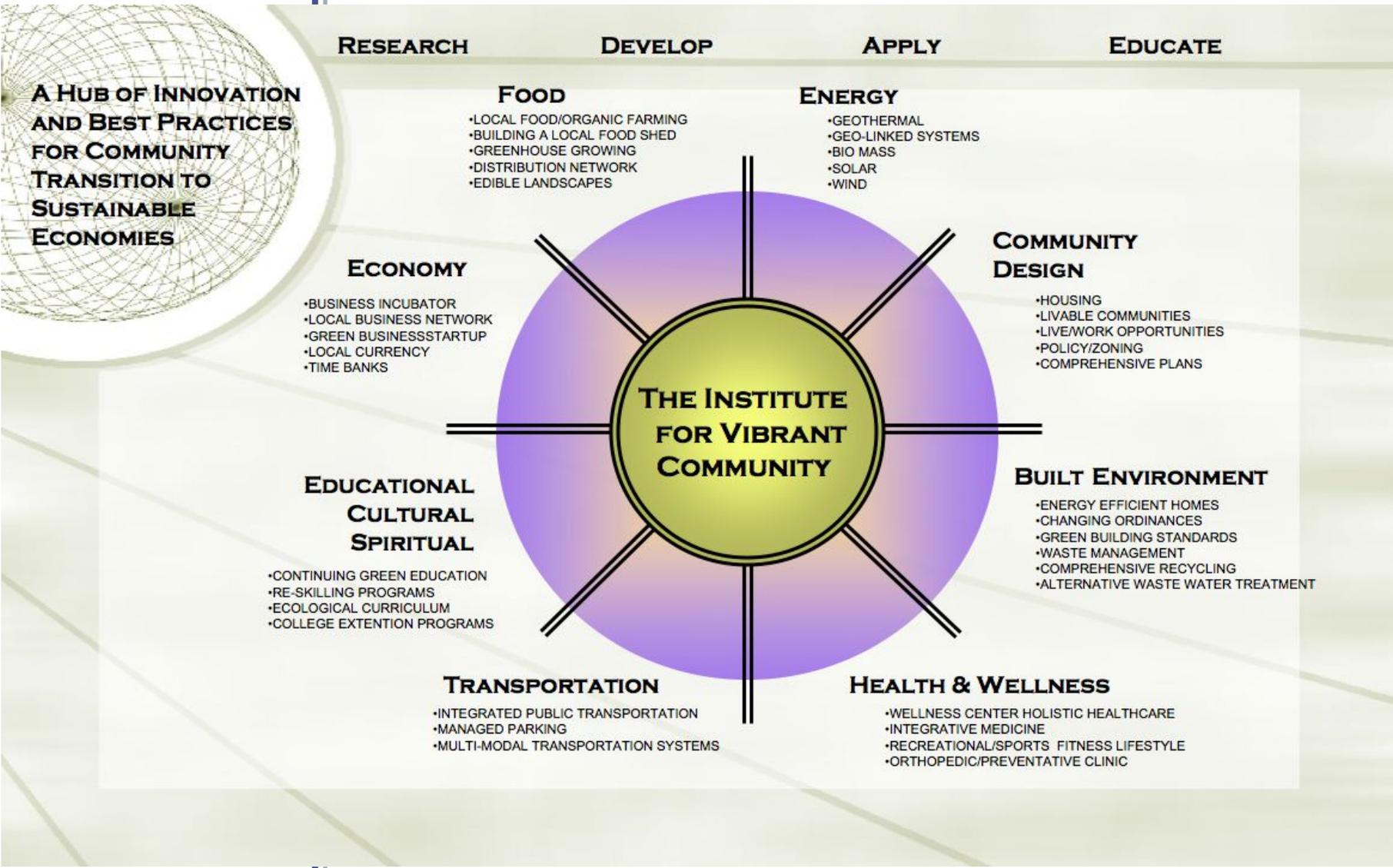
WHAT THE INSTITUTE DOES. The wheel and spokes symbol depicts the concept and reality of working together in dynamic community so that people see even the familiar in a new and more integrated way. It graphically demonstrates that we have a vision of our community as a whole, and that we are dynamically assessing balance.

WHAT THE WHEEL/SPOKES SYMBOL DOES FOR US.

- Logo – It will be a strong, memorable symbol or logo. Colors can change as it progresses beyond the working diagram stage.
- Reality map of our community – It is also a working map for assessing the evolving dynamic balance in our community.
- Consistent branding identity – The wheel and spokes graphic will retain branding identity even as the Spokes gain strength & balance. - Website home page, interactive. The wheel and spokes symbol will be a strong, innovative home page for the Institute-Incubator website – the home base to which we invite everyone, here & abroad, from the outset.
- An early product of the Institute. If we choose to develop this method and graphic community map, and perhaps license it under a Creative Commons license to other communities. A CC license typically specifies that one “can use and modify non-commercially with attribution.” Usually the exact attribution is provided with the CC license. It would be worth much more to our startup visibility and newsworthiness as a CC license than it would on a fee basis.

This observation is vis-à-vis 1) funding and 2) being of service.





**THIS INSTITUTIONAL HUB
CONNECTS THE
DIVERGENT ECONOMIES
OF ENERGY, FOOD,
TRANSPORTATION,
EDUCATION, CULTURE
AND HEALTH INTO AN
INTEGRATED PATHWAY TO
VIBRANT SUSTAINABLE
COMMUNITY.**

FACILITATE

INTEGRATE

RE- CREATE

TRANSFORM

