

III. COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

1. Agriculture

- A. Encourage and nurture value-added agriculture production including potatoes, safflower, barley, sugar beets, wheat, alfalfa, barley, corn, beans, onions, etc.
- B. Support and promote sprinkler irrigation and conservation of our water resource production in Richland County.
- C. Support MSU-Eastern Ag Research and USDA-Ag Research stations in Sidney as they continue to expand and create additional jobs.

2. Business Expansion and Retention

- A. Examine all potential start-up businesses including home-based or cottage businesses.
- B. Investigate / interview Lambert businesses to launch small grocery store
- C. Write and/or assist writing economic development grants for locally proposed projects.
- D. Cooperate with local Chamber of Commerce and other organizations in sponsoring events to attract people to the area; which would encourage local purchase of goods and services.
- E. Work with the Richland County Commissioners and the Sidney and Fairview City councils in promoting tax incentives to encourage business start-ups and expansions.
- F. Support the use of local contractors and engineers for local construction job projects.
- G. Utilize the REDC Revolving Loan Fund or start-up fund for business expansion and new businesses.
- H. Stay in contact with the oil and gas industry partners to keep informed of the DEQ requirements, as well as keeping the revenue coming in from impact funding.
- I. Investigate the potentials for new developments in the oil industry such as composting, fertilizer development, etc.

3. Business Recruitment

- A. Utilize the new and updated Richland Economic Development website as the information portal for developers and businesses looking at Richland County as a place to establish
- B. Market our quality of life and quality of educational systems as a tool for luring people from bigger cities to Eastern Montana.
- C. Support our educational development, Dawson Community College Campus, Sidney School Systems, USDA and MSU, etc, to nurture partnerships with economic development.
- D. Cooperate and continue to demonstrate strong support of the Sidney Job Service to provide employment assistance as well as workforce training to address the labor market needs.
- E. Support the Sidney Health Center, Richland County Health Dept, The Lodge at the Lone Tree and the Fairview Clinic as they expand and increase their services and facilities.
- F. Continue our efforts to attract these additional businesses or services to Richland County: clothing stores for men and women, restaurants, lumber yards, hardware stores, appliance stores, daycares, vehicle repair businesses, and Laundromats.

4. Public Facilities

- A. Continue to support the efforts of the County, and community organizations to build new, updated facilities such as: disaster and emergency services building, indoor firing range, arena, and public library expansion, all in Sidney for countywide use.
- B. Support future upgrades to the water and sewers systems of Sidney, Fairview, Lambert, and Savage to include projects like the Dry Red Water Regional Water Authority.
- C. Assist with the feasibility of a new affordable assisted living facility in Fairview.

5. Recreation and Land Use

- A. Support the Richland County Commissioners and county planning board to keep the public informed of the new adopted growth policy and guidelines for Richland County.
- B. Partner with Fish, Wildlife & Parks and DNRC, etc, to establish additional recreational sites along Yellowstone River in Savage, Crane, Sidney, and Fairview.
- C. Encourage and expand hunting, walking and hiking, boating, fishing, camping opportunities.
- D. Continue efforts to identify recreational projects and opportunities for youth in all communities in Richland County.
- E. Support the efforts of the Fairview Bridge Committee with their endeavors.

6. Downtown Revitalization

- A. Support efforts of the Image Enhancement committee to beautify the identified areas of downtown Sidney, sidewalks, lighting, banners, and others as identified.
- B. Enlist joint coordination of efforts and pooling of resources from partnership organizations such as the Sidney Chamber, MonDak Heritage Center, and Midrivers to best accomplish objectives.
- C. Work to educate the business community in regards to the necessity of great customer service.
- D. Educate consumers about the negative effects of business closures, and the effects of shopping out of town.

7. Tourism

- A. Support activities of Travel Montana and Missouri River Country.
- B. Support “Superhost” program and other tourism projects sponsored by the Sidney Chamber of Commerce.
- C. Package and promote tours of the area to include activities such as: Yellowstone river activities, agate hunting, fishing, boating, camping, etc.

8. Public Relations

- A. Promote REDC as the advocate and leader in Richland County in economic development.
- B. Continue to educate public to look at projects with vision in terms of the whole community, rather than special interest groups.
- C. Promote Richland County's image and instill pride in residents for our quality of life and resources.

9. Infrastructure

- A. Exhaust any and all funding resources to address and upgrade the structures of sewer, wastewater, and water treatment systems due to the additional users moving into Fairview, Lambert, Savage, and Sidney, in response to the oil industry.
- B. Housing: Support the efforts to assure adequate, affordable housing for all communities in Richland County.
- C. Highway & Rail: Remain active in matters related to the highway and rail development and improvements. Examples: new truck route directing traffic away from downtown.
- D. Power: Fair treatment of rural power users with predictable, affordable prices in the face of deregulation. Keep informed of mercury regulations, etc.
- E. Water: Continue to assure the availability of clean drinking water systems and adequate storm and sewer systems to support current and future needs. Stay informed regarding the Yellowstone aquifer study as well as the Dry Red Water project.
- F. Telecommunications: Continue to support affordable and accessible telecommunications systems. Advocating improved telecommunication options and services such as additional cell coverage in rural areas.
- G. Air Travel and Airport: Maintain and expand air traffic access to Richland County. The Richland- Sidney Airport is continuing efforts to upgrade the all-weather capabilities, frequency of service, equalization of fares, and evaluating future development size and location to market new potential business. Stay informed on progress of TSA requirements since 9/11.