

MEDA RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

For

SEELEY LAKE, MONTANA

September 19 – 20, 2016

In Partnership with: Seeley Lake Community Foundation, Montana USDA/RD, Montana Dept. of Commerce/Office of Tourism, Montana Dept. of Commerce/Community Development Division, Missoula Economic Partnership, Governor's Office of Economic Development, the Community of Seeley Lake, and Montana Economic Developers Association.

INTRODUCTION

It was a privilege for the MEDA Seeley Lake Resource Team to spend time in your community and experience this unique and beautiful area of Montana. Thank you for your hospitality, your time, and for sharing with the team the vision you have for your home.

Before digging in to the report itself, I would like to thank Montana Department of Commerce (MDOC) for its support of the Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA). It is a partnership between MDOC and MEDA that makes Resource Team Assessments available across the state.

Special thanks are due to the leadership of the Seeley Lake Community Foundation who supported the team's visit as well as countless thanks to Anne Beach, the foundation's Executive Director and President Carla Schade. Anne served as the champion behind this project and will continue her leadership role with the process through to completion. Anne tapped shoulders of town hosts who gathered community members together so the team could hear as many voices as possible during each visit. Local sponsors included Tamaracks Resort, Double Arrow Lodge, Cory's Valley Market, The Filling Station, Citizen's Alliance Bank, and Mannix Family Grass Finished Beef. Lee Boman served as a tour guide for the team's visit around Seeley Lake.

Finally, I applaud each and every team member who dedicated hours of work and volunteered their expertise in order to participate on the team: Lyle Coney, Kalispell Area Specialist, MT USDA Rural Development; Debi Davidson, Program Specialist, MT Dept. of Commerce/Office of Tourism and Business Development; Jenni Graff, Economic Development Associate, Missoula Economic Partnership; Richard Kanterud, P.E., Division Engineer, MT Dept. of Commerce/Community Development Division; Jim Smitham, Citizen of Seeley Lake and retired Executive Director of Butte Local Development Corporation; Eliud Uresti, Stevenson Center Fellow, Missoula Economic Partnership; and our liaison Andy Shirliff, Governor's Office of Economic Development.

Each team member's contact information is provided in the following report. Please feel free to call on any of us for additional information or support. It would be our pleasure.

The stage is now set for the future of the Seeley Lake area. There are a number of short term and long term accomplishable recommendations that the resource team has provided in this report. Each of you individually must decide what it is that you want to do—what kind of project you want to tackle. It is also important for the entire community and county to be involved in finding ways to accomplish its goals. A few celebrations at the successful conclusion of an activity that has involved a large number of citizens will lead to a feeling of accomplishment that will carry over into other activities. Look through the suggestions, pick out one, and get started. It can be done. It is your choice, your decision; you can do it!



Gloria O'Rourke, MEDA Team Coordinator

PROCESS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THIS REPORT

Leadership within Seeley Lake Community Foundation initiated the request for a Resource Team to visit. Anne Beach served as liaison and coordinator for the team's visit. Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) provided staff support for the coordination of a resource team to assist Seeley Lake in evaluating its assets and challenges and in developing suggestions for improving the environment, social and economic future of the area.

Under the direction of Anne Beach an agenda was developed, logistics arranged, as well as budgeting and publicity for the assessment. Resource Team members were selected to visit, interview citizens, businesses and community leaders to develop options for projects for Seeley Lake. The team members were selected based on their fields of expertise that local leadership indicated would likely be needed to respond to the problem or project areas identified.

Throughout the Resource Team Assessment on September 19 - 20, over 160 people attended listening sessions and made comments. All notes from all listening sessions as well as those submitted via email or handwritten are included in this report. The team was available for listening to the following groups: 1st Listening Session: Students of Seeley Swan High School; 2nd Listening Session: Educators; 3rd Listening Session: Seeley Lake Leadership; 4th Listening Session: Business, Retail, Chamber; 5th Listening Session: Healthcare and Emergency Services; 6th Listening Session: Senior Citizen Center; 7th Listening Session: Nonprofits, Service Clubs, and Churches; 8th Listening Session: Community Council, Land Management, Missoula County, and Pyramid Lumber.

Each participant was asked to respond to three questions designed to begin communication and discussion and to serve as a basis for developing recommendations in this report. The three questions were:

- What do you think are the major strengths and assets in Seeley Lake?
- What do you think are the major problems and challenges in Seeley Lake?
- What projects would you like to see completed in two, five, ten and twenty years in Seeley Lake?

Upon completion of the tour and listening sessions the team went in to a work session to identify main topics and issues. A Town Hall Meeting was held the evening of September 20th for the team to share its summary of all that was heard.

The team then agreed that each team member would carefully analyze the things said, synthesize what they heard with their knowledge of programs and resources, prepare their notes and suggestions, and forward these items to be combined into this final report to the people of Seeley Lake. The report is available on the MEDA website at <http://www.medamembers.org> under the Resources tab and the Resource Team Assessment tab.

A Town Hall Meeting is planned for November 10th. The purpose of the meeting will be to briefly review the report and guide attendees through a three step process to identify projects, set priorities and create working groups for action.

The team is always available for support and follow-up questions or resources. MEDA will check in on progress made by the working groups in six months and return to Seeley Lake in one year to celebrate successes.

**SEELEY LAKE
RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT**

September 19 - 20, 2016

TEAM ROSTER



**Local Team
Coordinator:
Anne Beach**
P.O. Box 25
Seeley Lake, MT 59868
(406) 677-3506
email@slcfmt.org

Lyle Coney, Kalispell Area Specialist
MT USDA Rural Development
450 Corporate Drive; Suite 111
Kalispell, MT 59901
(406) 756-2005 xt 110
Lyle.Coney@mt.usda.gov

Debi Davidson, Program Specialist
MT Dept. of Commerce
Office of Tourism and Business
Development
301 S. Park
Helena, MT 59601
(406) 841-2792
DDavidson2@mt.gov

Jenni Graff, Economic Development Associate
Missoula Economic Partnership
2501 Catlin Street Suite 205
Missoula, MT 59801
(406) 531-6430
JGraff@MissoulaPartnership.com

Richard Knatterud, P.E.
Division Engineer
MT Dept. of Commerce
Community Development Division
P.O. Box 200523
Helena, MT 59620-0523
(406) 841-2784
rknatterud@mt.gov

Jim Smitham
Former Director Butte Local Development Corp.
P.O. Box 561
Seeley Lake, MT 59868
jbsmitham@gmail.com

Eliud Uresti, Stevenson Center Fellow
Missoula Economic Partnership
2501 Catlin Street Suite 205
Missoula, MT 59801
(406) 541-6461
euresti@missoulapartnership.com

Special Liaison:
Andy Shirliff
Governor's Office of Economic Development
ashirliff@mt.gov

Gloria O'Rourke, Team Assistant
Montana Economic Developers Association
118 E. Seventh St.; Suite 2A
Anaconda, MT 59711
Ph: 406.563.5259 Fx: 406.563.5476
gloria@medamembers.org
www.medamembers.org



**SEELEY LAKE RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT
SEPTEMBER 19 – 20, 2016**

Noon: TEAM ORIENTATION Working Lunch; Double Arrow Resort, 301 Lodge Way Seeley Lake
1:00pm – 2:30pm TEAM TOUR Team will gather at the Seeley Lake Community Foundation, 3166 MT Hwy 83 N. (Bison Bear Center)

LISTENING SESSIONS

September 19

2:45pm – 3:15pm	Students/ Seeley Swan High School
3:30pm – 4:15pm	Teachers/ SSHS and SLE computer lab at the Elementary School
4:15pm – 4:45pm	Team check in; Tamaracks Resort Seeley Lake
5:00pm – 6:30pm	Working Dinner with Seeley Lake Leadership Tamaracks Resort

September 20

8:00am – 9:00am	Businesses, Retail, Chamber Working Breakfast, Double Arrow Resort
9:30am – 10:30am	Healthcare and Emergency Services- Seeley Swan Medical Center
11:00am – 12:00pm	Senior Citizen Center – Working Lunch
12:30pm – 1:30pm	Nonprofits, Service Clubs, Churches – brown bag lunch Location – The Barn, 2920 MT Hwy 83 N
1:30pm – 2:30pm	Community Council, Land Management, Missoula County Reps, Pyramid Lumber The Barn
2:30pm – 5:30pm	Team Work Session to prepare for Town Meeting; Working Dinner
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Town Hall Meeting – The Team shares what was heard. The Barn.

Three questions will be reviewed one at a time:

- 1) **What are the strengths and assets of Seeley Lake?**
- 2) **What are the problems and challenges within Seeley Lake?**
- 3) **What projects or vision do you have for the future of Seeley Lake in the next 2, 5, 10, 20 years?**

- *Please keep your comments to phrases*
- *Repetition is good – shows emphasis – just say “ditto”*
- *We will answer one question at a time, one person at a time – start over for second and third questions.*
- *Watch the time! Must get the questions answered!*
- *May speak on other subject other than this particular topic (i.e. Schools)*

TIME FOR TEAM TO ASK A FEW QUESTIONS

CLOSING LISTENING SESSION – [invite to Town Meeting! \(Tuesday night, 6:00pm, The Barn\)](#)

SEELEY LAKE TEAM ASSESSMENT ~ SUMMARY OF LISTENING SESSIONS

September 19 – 20, 2016

The Main Topics and Issues listed below are a summary of the comments, ideas and suggestions made during the Seeley Lake Resource Team. These topics and issues form the outline for the Seeley Lake Resource Team Report. Topics and Issues can be added when the team returns to Seeley Lake in early November.

<p>MAIN TOPIC: INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Sewer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All out education campaign ✦ Water ✦ Public Restrooms ✦ Roads <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Maintenance ■ Paved/safety ■ Speed Limits ■ Cross walks and traffic patterns ✦ Broadband Access <p>MAIN TOPIC: HOUSING ISSUES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Sewer ✦ Availability of quality rentals ✦ Sales ✦ Land ✦ Senior Living ✦ Multi-Family ✦ Workforce recruitment and retention barrier <p>MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNICATION ISSUES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Missoula County ✦ Linkage across organizations ✦ Business to business ✦ Service providers to clients ✦ Need for community resource directory ✦ Utilize web and social media ✦ Vision (common and unified) <p>MAIN TOPIC: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Dependent on Sewer ✦ Workforce development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Local opportunities (USFS) ■ Workforce and skills training ■ Mentoring/apprenticeship and succession ✦ Funding tools, i.e., resort tax, TBID, TIF, TEDD ✦ Economic Development and SBDC Support Systems ✦ Identify/inventory existing businesses and services, fill the gaps, job creation ✦ One-stop business resources ✦ Business training on start-ups, social media, Google analytics 	<p>MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM ISSUES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Wayfinding Signage ✦ Shoulder season activities and promotion – develop partnerships and packages ✦ Multi-use trail signage ✦ Tourist info centrally located ✦ Visually connect Seeley Lake - branding ✦ Slow traffic; cross walks ✦ Cooperative advertising ✦ Electronic media campaign ✦ Limited lodging (dependent on sewer) ✦ Hwy 83 - New name? Glacier By-Way? ✦ Community event center/Art Center (sewer dependent) ✦ Large tourism event venue ✦ Local lake access ✦ Community park on the lake and rest rooms ✦ Trail connectivity ✦ Promote community events <p>MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY NEEDS ISSUES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Dependent on Sewer ✦ Sports – track and field arena with bleachers ✦ Adult Education ✦ Community planning ✦ Community appearance, aesthetics, beautification ✦ Vision (common and unified) ✦ Community government structure? Incorporate? ✦ WiFi and Connectivity ✦ Community Pride – recognize and celebrate strengths ✦ Funding for Chamber <p>MAIN TOPIC: HEALTHCARE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES ISSUES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To Missoula for specialists, etc ■ In town – care-a-van type service ✦ Specialists available ✦ Extend coverage pharmacy/healthcare hours ✦ Mental Health ✦ Rehabilitation Services (Chemical Dependency)
--	--

REPORT BY: LYLE CONEY

Kalispell Area Specialist

MT USDA/Rural Development

450 Corporate Drive, Suite 111

Kalispell, MT 59901

(406) 756-2005 xt 110

Lyle.Coney@mt.usda.gov

<http://www.rurdev.gov/mt>

MAIN TOPIC: HOUSING

Issue: Availability of quality and affordable housing, Multi-Family Housing and Workforce Recruitment

Housing was a predominant subject in every listening session; from High School students, Educators, and business owners – all expressed concerns. Business leaders felt that a lack of housing for seasonal workers affects their ability to retain quality employees for permanent and seasonal work. There is a significant sense of pride about Seeley Lake within every group we listened to in the community. The present housing situation creates a lack of business development, stagnates community growth and limits community self-sustainment.

Housing development or expansion is affected by present County ordinances for septic systems and the lack of a sewer system. The lack of the sewer system limits future development and expansion of single and multi-family housing projects in which to house seasonal workers or new families to the community. This is due to additional costs involved installing a two-stage septic system.

Recommendation:

Seek funding assistance from the Montana Department of Commerce Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME programs as well as USDA Rural Development for low interest direct and/or guaranteed loans. Another excellent source of homeowner funding and grants would be Human Resources Council for both loans and grants. Rural Development Grants may also be available to qualified households for rehabilitation assistance.

For Business development, both Rural Development and the Montana Department of Commerce -Montana Board of Investments - have several grant and loan programs available to facilitate business growth within the community.

Resource(s):

Montana Department of Commerce

Home Division

301 South Park Avenue, Ste. 240

P.O. Box 200528

Helena, MT 59620-0528

<http://housing.mt.gov/Who>, or <http://comdev.mt.gov/Home>

Tom Atkins, Housing Director

USDA Rural Development

Bozeman Area Office

2229 Boot Hill Court

Bozeman, Montana 59715-7914

tom.atkins@mt.usda.gov

Rural Development – Business Programs

Brent Donnelly, Business and Cooperative Program Director

USDA Rural Development

Bozeman Area Office

2229 Boot Hill Court

Bozeman, Montana 59715-7914

brent.donnelly@mt.usda.gov

Rural Development – Community Programs

Steve Troendle, Community Programs Director

USDA Rural Development

Bozeman Area Office

2229 Boot Hill Court

Bozeman, Montana 59715-7914

steve.troendle@mt.usda.gov

Human Resources Council

Shara Carlascio

1801 South Higgins Ave.

Missoula, MT 59801

406-532-8238

Montana Department of Commerce

Montana Board of Investments

Doug Hill

Director of In State Loan Programs

406-444-1217; Fax 406-449-6579

<http://investmentmt.com/LoanPrograms/Programs>

MAIN TOPIC: INFRASTRUCTURE

Issue: Sewer, Roads and Broadband

Every group that presented mentioned the pending vote on the new sewer system along with the division between proponents and opponents for the project. The housing issue becomes more expensive due to the town being subject to Missoula County ordinances governing waste disposal. Present ordinances in place create a significant financial impact and burden upon the cost of repairing or replacing septic systems, along with new construction.

Roads were another commonly voiced concern throughout most groups. This ranged from road maintenance to speed limits. Road maintenance in winter was one of the frequently voiced concerns with streets and roads not being adequately cleared to allow passage. This concern was presented for streets within Seeley Lake and also County roads. Parents and students do not feel the County provides adequate road maintenance during winter months which creates attendance issues for school aged children and parents going to work. Additionally, town street maintenance varies by street, and concern was voiced over the poor condition of some streets and the poor level of repairs.

Broadband access was voiced from being excellent to pretty poor – depending upon where you lived. Local businesses did not express any concerns with the internet speed or connectivity issues within the town limits. This becomes an issue when some courses offered by the High School requires student access to internet connections to complete assignments. Unfortunately, some students expressed disparaging support for the present network in place which prevents them from completing and participating in education opportunities requiring internet access due to their residence being outside the town limits.

Recommendation(s):

The sewer system is up for vote in November of this year and this will determine whether or not this issue will be resolved. In the event it does not pass, then individuals could contact Human Resources Council in Missoula to inquire about available funding programs to upgrade residential waste systems.

Discuss with Missoula County Public Works – Road Department - about citizen issues with road maintenance and snow clearing for residents outside the town limits. It is not known how many of these county roads were under private ownership, which could be an underlying reason for non-maintenance or plowing issues. As for street maintenance within the town limits, this would be an issue for the Council to address and seek funding for those repairs.

Assess the internet connectivity issue with outlying areas and determine if services offered are available for students participating in coursework requiring internet connectivity, and if the provider needs to improve services and/or if remote equipment is an option. If expansion or improvements to the broadband services are needed, Rural Development - Rural Utilities Service has programs available for both loans and grants, including the Distance Learning/Telemedicine grant program.

Recommended Resource(s):

Rural Development – Community Programs
Steve Troendle, Community Programs Director
USDA Rural Development
Bozeman Area Office
2229 Boot Hill Court
Bozeman, Montana 59715-7914
steve.troendle@mt.usda.gov

Rural Development – Rural Utilities Service
Kim Jacobs
GFR, WY & MT
Telecommunications / Rural Utilities Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1149 Rd. 8, P.O. Box 686,
Powell, WY 82435
Phone & Fax: 307-754-9000
Kim.jacobs@wdc.usda

Missoula County - Public Works - Road Department
6089 Training Dr.
Missoula, MT 59808
(406) 258-4753

Blackfoot Telecommunications Group
1221 N. Russell St.

Missoula, MT 59808
(866) 541-5000

Human Resources Council
Shara Carlascio
1801 South Higgins Ave.
Missoula, MT 59801
406-532-8238

MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM

Issue: Trail Connectivity

Seeley Lake has had to transition from a logging to tourism community which has created a very limited window of opportunity period for many businesses to generate annual sales. Shoulder seasons are important to continue the income stream flowing into the community. One issue identified involves having motorized vehicle trails (commonly referred to as Off Highway Vehicles, or OHV's) for off road vehicles for all seasons, which may cross private, State and/or Federal lands. Depending on the trail site, this could create a myriad of laws and regulations to work through.

Recommendation(s):

Housing and lodging for tourists in the shoulder seasons also was identified as a concern which could provide the community with additional revenue. Planning for a lodging facility could take into account utilizing the same development and/or facility for seasonal employees as for shoulder season tourists.

Motorized off road vehicles – OHV's - generally run into issues with activists and impacts the land, which unfortunately results in a vehicle ban in certain areas. It is recommended to seek the guidance of Industry Associations to promote the good intentions with this type of activity.

Recommended Resource(s):

American Motorcycle Association
Government Relations Department
Steve Salisbury
Washington, DC
202-220-1394

The American Council of Snowmobile Associations
Christine Jourdain
Executive Director
271 Woodland Pass, Suite 216
East Lansing, MI 48823
Phone: 517-351-4362; Fax: 517-351-1363
State Representative: Jason Howell, 406-461-1023
info@snowmobilers.org

MAIN TOPIC: HEALTHCARE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Issue: Transportation, Specialists, Mental Health, and Rehabilitation Services

Community needs were identified during the discussion with members of local health care and emergency services. Those presents said a significant demand exists not only for traditional health and dental care, but also for medical specialists, transportation services to Missoula to see Specialists, mental health, pharmacy needs and rehabilitation services. The present clinic recently expanded and the consensus was that they need to expand again in the near future.

Local Emergency Services indicated that they could utilize another full time paramedic and that local law enforcement is provided by the County. The town has one full-time paramedic, and is need of a second one but is lacking funding to accomplish this, and is in need of additional equipment. Law enforcement is provided by the County Sheriff's Department. Both of these departments indicated there are several areas that are not being addressed within the community including: mental health, rehabilitation services and /or chemical dependency treatment. Transportation to see specialists in Missoula was another concern expressed by all parties.

Recommendation:

Many of the needs discussed that are healthcare shortfalls requiring transportation to see specialists or bringing in a specialist to the clinic represent a need for expanded services which could be evaluated by conventional visiting doctors, or determine if Rural Developments Distance/Telemedicine grant program through UDSDA's Rural Utilities Service would be an option. This grant program allows remote clinics and hospitals grant funding to assist in acquiring equipment to communicate with specialists to meet patient needs. One of the key elements here will be to determine who should be applying for the grant to better their chances of qualifying as an eligible applicant and for an eligible purpose.

Community Facilities funding is available for both loans and grants for a majority of the needs that can be utilized in conjunction with other loan and grant funding sources. For emergency services facilities and equipment, Rural Developments Community Facilities Loan and Grant program is a source of funding, and that this same program could also be considered in mental health facilities and chemical dependency treatment centers. Another program Rural Development has is the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) program which has a 0% interest rate for the identified recipient. A majority of Rural Development programs can be used with other state grant funding to increase the amount available for a specific project.

The Montana Board of Investments (MBOI) is another source of short-term funding for Fire Departments with low interest rates. Rural Development Community Facilities programs can be used for funding mental health and treatment centers.

Recommended Resource(s):

Rural Development – Community Programs
Steve Troendle, Community Programs Director
USDA Rural Development
Bozeman Area Office
2229 Boot Hill Court
Bozeman, Montana 59715-7914
steve.troendle@mt.usda.gov

Rural Development – Business Programs
Brent Donnelly, Business and Cooperative Program Director
USDA Rural Development
Bozeman Area Office
2229 Boot Hill Court
Bozeman, Montana 59715-7914

brent.donnely@mt.usda.gov

Rural Development – Rural Utilities Service
Kim Jacobs
GFR, WY & MT
Telecommunications / Rural Utilities Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1149 Rd. 8, P.O. Box 686
Powell, WY 82435
Phone & Fax: 307-754-9000
kim.jacobs@wdc.usda

Montana Department of Commerce
Montana Board of Investments
Doug Hill
Director of In State Loan Programs
406-444-1217; Fax 406-449-6579
<http://investmentmt.com/LoanPrograms/Programs>

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY NEEDS

Issue: Sports – Track and Field Arena with Bleachers; Adult Education

An improved sports track and field arena with bleachers was a need expressed by the school and students. Current student track and field practices are held on congested grassy areas which does not lead to student athletes being able to fully develop their athletic skills. High School students felt their school does not get adequate funding from the County to support the athletic facilities and receive a lower proportion in relation to the larger cities within the County.

Adult education is another area that was expressed in other groups that could be addressed with the Distance Learning/Telemedicine.

Recommendation(s):

The School needs to discuss the apportionment of funding for projects for a school athletic field and bleachers to promote and support school athletics program. If funding for the entire project cost cannot be obtained at the County level, then the Quality Schools Program (which unfortunately was not funded in 2016) could be evaluated as a source of funding for this project in future years.

Adult Education needs could be evaluated and the Distance Learning/Telemedicine Grant program would be a viable source of grant funding to bring Adult Education into the community.

Recommended Resource(s):

Rural Development – Community Programs
Steve Troendle, Community Programs Director
USDA Rural Development
Bozeman Area Office
2229 Boot Hill Court
Bozeman, Montana 59715-7914
steve.troendle@mt.usda.gov

Rural Development – Rural Utilities Service
Kim Jacobs
GFR, WY & MT
Telecommunications / Rural Utilities Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1149 Rd. 8, P.O. Box 686
Powell, WY 82435
Phone & Fax: 307-754-9000
Kim.jacobs@wdc.usda

REPORT BY: DEBI DAVIDSON
Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund Program
Specialist Montana Department of Commerce
301 South Park Ave.
P.O. Box 200533 Helena, Mt 59620-0533
<http://businessresources.mt.gov/BSTF>
406-841-2792
ddavidson2@mt.gov

MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM

Issue: Visually connect Seeley Lake – Branding

The areas strong points shared by participants that make up Seeley Lake’s identity are numerous:

- Diverse culture;
- Strong resource heritage
- Wildlife and scenic views of natural beauty
- Engaged and giving community
- Strong volunteerism
- Recreational opportunities
- Scenic Highway 83
- Outstanding winter sports opportunities

Recommendation:

Below are some opportunities that the Montana Department of Commerce Office of Tourism and Business Development could possibly assist the community by utilizing our programs for technical assistance and grant funding:

- We offer to assist through our tourism and branding workshops for communities to bolster interest and attract visitors to the area at no charge to the community.
 - Presenters from the programs offered at Commerce and other agencies attend this event, such as the Grant programs, Made in Montana and others.
 - Utilizing electronic media campaign to market Seeley Lake and sharing best practices is part of this workshop. All parties must be at the table to move forward with buy in.
- The MDOC Tourism grant program also offers assistance in digital development, including website development and enhancement. Grant cycle opens on July 1, 2016 and is ongoing until all funds are expended.
- We would encourage Seeley Lake to start the process of becoming a Montana Main Street Community. The tier system allows member communities to engage in long-range planning and downtown revitalization at three distinct levels. Participant communities enter the program into a tier system as an affiliate member with the capability of gradually progressing to a Designated or Certified level. This would allow Seeley Lake access to additional funding for projects.

Resources:

Sean Becker
Montana Department of Commerce Tourism and Business Development
Division Administrator
<http://marketmt.com>
406-841-2707

Carol Crockett
Montana Department of Commerce
Tourism and Business Development Grant Program
<http://tourism.mt.gov/MarketingDevelopment/TourismGrantProgram>
406-841-2796

Tash Wisemiller
Montana Department of Commerce Montana Main Street Program
<http://comdev.mt.gov/Programs/MainStreet>
406-841-2756

Issue: Shoulder season activities and promotion – development partnerships and packages

Recommendation:

Here are some ideas that could be utilized to promote shoulder season activities and develop partnerships and packages.

- Update and increase Seeley Lake's presence on the State websites that promote Montana <http://www.visitmt.com/>. This is a free service offered to the tourism related businesses. The site needs to have **current up to date information** and pictures of actual happenings, not just the lake or the beautiful mountains. Keep in mind that People sell people.
- Utilize the Wilderness Associations, Montana Wild Hike Guide. Seeley Lake has a great trail system and the Wilderness Association has a user generated tours.
- Capitalize on Glacier County's Guide by adding to:
 - Scenic Byways
 - Bob Marshall
 - Fall Foliage tourism
 - Golf
 - All cabins, resorts and hotels
 - All restaurants
 - "Bike it Out"
 - Winter Sports activities
 - Fishing and Hunting activities
- We encourage you to work with each of the businesses that are in Seeley Lake and the surrounding area to partner up during the shoulder season and package weekend or mid-week opportunities. You have awesome Nordic Skiing; work with Rocky Mountain Adventure Gear for equipment, one of the resorts for a cabin and a restaurant for a dinner, lunch or dessert. There are endless possibilities for this for all seasons.
- Another project that would bring more visitors through the Seeley Lake area would be to become a national Scenic Byway community. The National Scenic Byways Program provides grants to States and Indian tribes to implement projects on highways designated as National Scenic Byways, All-

American Roads, America's Byways, and State scenic or Indian tribe scenic byways. Eligible activities include the planning, design, or development of a State or Indian tribe scenic byway program; development and implementation of a corridor management plan; safety improvements to accommodate byway travelers; facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists, rest areas, turnouts, highway shoulder improvements, overlooks, or interpretive facilities; access to recreation enhancements; resource protection; tourist information; and byway marketing.

Resources:

Carol Crockett

Montana Department of Commerce

Tourism and Business Development Grant Program

<http://tourism.mt.gov/MarketingDevelopment/TourismGrantProgram>

406-841-2796

Kassia Randzio

Marketing and Grants Manager

Wild Montana

<http://hike.wildmontana.org/>

krandzio@wildmontana.org

406-830-6035

Racene Friede

Glacier County Montana Travel Guide

www.glaciermt.com

406-532-3234

Jan Wirak

Montana Department of Commerce

Tourism and Business Development Grant Program

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

406-841-2788

National Scenic Byways Program

Who is Eligible: States and Indian Tribes.

How to Apply: FHWA will solicit applications online

Link: <http://www.bywaysonline.org/grants/>

Issue: Develop an electronic media campaign

Recommendation:

- We suggest working with the Office of Tourism and Business Development Tourism grant program which offers funding in these categories:
 - Tourism Digital Development: Website development or enhancement; responsive website design; regional or statewide mobile app development and digital development initiatives.
 - Tourism Event Paid Media Advertising: National magazine advertising or national digital advertising
- Grant cycle opens on July 1, 2016 and is ongoing until all funds are expended.
- The BSTF planning program is also a possibility for planning the campaign; we are unable to assist with the actual implementation of the project.

Resources:

Carol Crockett

Montana Department of Commerce

Tourism and Business Development Grant Program

<http://tourism.mt.gov/MarketingDevelopment/TourismGrantProgram>

406-841-2796

Debi Davidson or Annmarie Robinson Montana Department of Commerce

Office of Tourism and Business Development

Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund Program

<http://businessresources.mt.gov/BSTF>

406-841-2792 - 406-841-2250

Issue: Cooperative Advertising**Recommendation:**

Once the community has identified their brand and developed an electronic media campaign, we would encourage the local business to work together to expand their advertising market and have their dollars go further. One option is to work with the Office of Tourism and Business Development to participate in the Joint Venture Marketing Program. <http://montanatourismcoops.com/>. This partnership will allow your dollars to go further, reach a broader audience and get your brand out in the public.

Work with the Chamber of Commerce to put together a community brochure that would promote each of the local businesses. These could be located at all the downtown businesses to hand out to visitors.

Recommended Resources:

Sean Becker

Montana Department of Commerce Tourism and Business Development

Division Administrator

<http://marketmt.com>

406-841-2707

Racene Friede

Glacier County Montana Travel Guide

www.glaciermt.com

406-532-3234

Issue: Wayfinding Signage**Recommendation:**

- Once you have developed your brand this should be incorporated into your wayfinding signage. To assist you with this the Big Sky Economic Development Planning Grant Program could assist with the development a plan for your signage.
 - BSTF Planning grant applications are through the local economic development organizations. For Seeley Lake this would be Montana Economic Partnership in Missoula. BSTF planning grants are available on an open cycle and are ongoing until all funds are expended.
- Tourism Infrastructure: Visitor way-finding signage production or installation. Grant cycle opens on July 1, 2016 and is ongoing until all funds are expended.
- Utilize Old Town Creative's "Wandering" app. This app is for curious and active people who want to get beyond the beaten path and explore a little further. For a small investment Seeley Lake working with the Chamber could promote the area to additional visitors.

Resources:

Debi Davidson or Annmarie Robinson Montana Department of Commerce
Office of Tourism and Business Development
Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund Program
<http://businessresources.mt.gov/BSTF>
406-841-2792 - 406-841-2250

Carol Crockett
Montana Department of Commerce
Tourism and Business Development Grant Program
<http://tourism.mt.gov/MarketingDevelopment/TourismGrantProgram>
406-841-2796

Nicole Rush
Grants manager
Missoula Economic Partnership
<http://www.missoulapartnership.com>
406-594-7874

Jenni Graff
Economic Development Associate
Missoula Economic Partnership
<http://www.missoulapartnership.com>
406-531-6430

John Frandsen
Old Town Creative
<http://oldtowncreative.com/products/wandering-app>
406-763-0332

Issue: Lake Access and Parks**Recommendation:**

We would encourage you to work with the US Forest Service, Missoula County and the local land owners to develop local lake access and the creation of a park. The opportunity to collaborate with the various organizations will help ensure the success of the project and allow access to additional funding sources.

Resources:

Montana State Parks
<http://stateparks.mt.gov/recreation/lwcf.html>
US Forest Service
<http://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/lolo/recarea/?recid=10263>

Issue: Traffic speed and cross walks**Recommendation:**

We would encourage you to work with Missoula County for them to request a speed/traffic study from the Montana Department of Transportation. I know it was mentioned that Seeley Lake had already contacted MDOT, however, if

you could get the backing of Missoula County this could help move this forward.

Resources:

Jean Curtis, Missoula County Commissioner
Email: jcurtiss@missoulacounty.us
406-258-3202

Issue: Other Planning Opportunities

Recommendation:

Other areas where the BSTF program may be able to assist in combination with other state and federal funding programs are listed below. Please contact Missoula Economic Partnership if you would like to set up a conference call to discuss any of these options for your project:

- An expanded business plan for any business that is ready to grow and diversify.
- Any sort of analysis-cost, marketing, operations, feasibility studies for a business or city needs.
- Marketing analysis and branding design for a business.
- All documents leading up towards approval of the creation of a Targeted Economic Development District.
- All documents leading up towards approval of a Business Improvement District /Tourism Business Improvement District.
- Industrial development, including a plan for an industrial park redevelopment.

Resources:

Nicole Rush
Grants manager
Missoula Economic Partnership
<http://www.missoulapartnership.com>
406-594-7874

Jenni Graff
Economic Development Associate
Missoula Economic Partnership
<http://www.missoulapartnership.com>
406-531-6430

Debi Davidson or Annmarie Robinson
Montana Department of Commerce
Office of Tourism and Business Development
Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund Program
<http://businessresources.mt.gov/BSTF>
406-841-2792 - 406-841-2250

MAIN TOPIC: HEALTHCARE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Seeley Lake is fortunate that they have the Seeley Swan Medical Center to provide medical and dental services.

Issue: The community also expressed the need to expand these services to include:

- Mental Health
- Specialists (pulmonologist, cardiac, orthopedic etc.)

- Rehabilitation Services (chemical dependency)

Recommendation:

We would encourage you to work with Providence Medical Group to see if it would be possible to have a specialist visit Seeley Lake once a month or every two months. Billings Clinic may also have visiting doctors that could come.

Resources:

Providence Medical Group

<http://montana.providence.org/hospitals/st-patrick/>

Western Montana Mental Health Center

<http://wmmhc.org/>

Billings Clinic

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

Issue: Transportation

Recommendation:

This issue is two pronged in that Seeley Lake does not currently have any local transportation options to assist the elderly, ill or disabled to visit the local medical center nor to travel to Missoula if the need arises.

A couple of options:

- This could be a great opportunity for an entrepreneur to start a business that could offer transportation both locally and to Missoula.
- Seeley Lake needs to work with Missoula County to see if it would be possible to utilize the Resort and Local Option Tax to help fund local transportation or other economic development projects.
- Seeley Lake has completed the process and is approved by the Department of Commerce to enact a Resort Tax. These funds once collected can be used for various improvements to Seeley Lake such as the sewer project, transportation, way finding signage or other economic development projects.
- The County could levy a mill(s) to support transportation in the Seeley Lake area with voter approval.

Resources:

[Click here to review documents regarding Resort Tax approval.](#)

Non-urbanized Area Formula Grant Program (Transit Grants for Rural and Small Urban Areas)

Brief Summary: This program (49 U.S.C. 5311) provides formula funding to states for the purpose of supporting public transportation in areas of less than 50,000 populations. Eighty percent of the statutory formula is based on the nonurbanized population of the States. Twenty percent of the formula is based on land area. No State may receive more than 5 percent of the amount apportioned for land area. In addition, FTA adds amounts apportioned based on nonurbanized population according to the growing States formula factors of 49 U.S.C. 5340 to the amounts apportioned to the States under the Section 5311 program. Funds may be used for capital, operating, and administrative assistance to state agencies, local public bodies, Indian tribes, and nonprofit organizations, and operators of public transportation services. The State must use 15 percent of its annual apportionment to support intercity bus service, unless the Governor certifies, after consultation with affected intercity bus providers that these needs of the state are adequately met. Projects to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Clean Air Act, or bicycle access projects, may be funded at 90 percent Federal match. The maximum FTA share for operating assistance is 50 percent of the net operating costs.

Eligibility: Areas with population of less than 50,000 (nonurbanized areas); rural areas; Tribal territories.

How to Apply: Funding is apportioned to each State through a formula. See FTA Circular C 9040.1F, “Nonurbanized Area Formula Program Guidance and Grant Application Instructions”

http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6519.html

http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/grants_financing_3555.html

Brief Summary: The Buses and Bus Related Equipment and Facilities program provides capital assistance for new and replacement buses, related equipment, and facilities. Eligible capital projects include the purchasing of buses for fleet and service expansion, bus maintenance and administrative facilities, transfer facilities, bus malls, transportation centers, intermodal terminals, park-and-ride stations, acquisition of replacement vehicles, bus rebuilds, bus preventive maintenance, passenger amenities such as passenger shelters and bus stop signs, accessory and miscellaneous equipment such as mobile radio units, supervisory vehicles, fare boxes, computers and shop and garage equipment. Funds are allocated on a discretionary basis.

Who is Eligible: Public bodies and agencies (transit authorities and other state and local public bodies and agencies thereof) including states, municipalities, other political subdivisions of states; public agencies and instrumentalities of one or more states; and certain public corporations, boards and commissions established under state law. Private companies engaged in public transportation and private non-profit organizations are eligible sub recipients of FTA grants.

How to Apply: FTA will solicit applications on an annual basis through the Federal Register and online.

http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/grants_financing_3557.html

Overall Community Success and Development

The Heartland Center for Leadership Development is a fount of information for communities. If at all possible, attend a training that they offer on Helping Small Towns Succeed or Home Town Competitiveness.

<http://www.heartlandcenter.info/>. In addition, the publications they offer are reasonably priced and extremely practical. <http://www.heartlandcenter.info/publications.htm>.

MAIN TOPIC: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Issue: Economic Development and Dependent on Sewer

Recommendation:

I would like to share some possible economic development opportunities for the community once the sewer situation has been resolved. Most of these economic development possibilities are dependent on having water and sewer.

- Start an Aquaponics business. There are several empty buildings that could accommodate this type of small business.
- Invite the Job Service to come to Seeley Lake at least once a month, the Chamber of Commerce could house them to assist local businesses with recruiting new employees.
- Start a community garden, this helps get and keep the community involved.
- Start a ministerial association, this would assist with the “double dipping” that has been a concern in the past. The association would then work with the churches to assist the persons in need.
- Invite the County Commissioners to hold at least 1 meeting a month in Seeley Lake so that you have the opportunity to work together to move the economy forward.
- Invite a high school junior and senior to be a part of your community council. This gets the students involved in the community and they can see how the government process works.

REPORT BY: JENNI GRAFF
Economic Development Associate
Missoula Economic Partnership
2501 Catlin Street Suite 205
Missoula, MT 59801
(406) 531-6430
JGraff@MissoulaPartnership.com

MAIN TOPIC: INFRASTRUCTURE

Issue: Broadband

Internet and wireless access are not as ubiquitous in the Seeley Lake area as some residents would like. Broadband access is crucial for maintaining and growing businesses, educating youth, as well as maintaining connection with the digital economy. However, due to low population density, topographical barriers, and extensive geographical distances, deploying equal-access broadband service to all businesses and residences throughout the Seeley Lake area is difficult and expensive.

Recommendation:

Bringing Broadband to rural America is a priority for the Obama Administration, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the National Telecommunications Industry Association (NTIA). As a result, there are several funding programs that may assist with the assessment, planning and installation of enhanced broadband services in Seeley Lake. There are also several communities in Montana who are working on improving broadband access in their areas.

Resource(s):

1. Jenni Graff

Missoula Economic Partnership

Phone: 406-531-6430

E-MAIL: JGraff@MissoulaPartnership.com

Resource for: Facilitating broadband meetings with stakeholders and community members, survey creation, information on status of Missoula Broadband Initiative.

2. BroadbandUSA: Guide to Federal Funding of Broadband Projects

Website: http://www2.ntia.doc.gov/files/broadband_fed_funding_guide.pdf

Resource for: Federal funding. The report documents over 28 pages of federal funding programs available for Infrastructure Deployment, Adoption and digital literacy, public computer access, planning, and research. Some programs that may be particularly helpful to Seeley Lake include:

- Telecommunications Infrastructure Loan Program
- Farm Bill Broadband Loan Program
- Substantially Underserved Trust Areas Provisions
- Community Connect Grant Program
- Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grant Program
- American Job Centers
- Laura Bush 21 Century Librarian Program
- National Leadership Grants for Libraries

3. David Fine

Bozeman Fiber

PH (406) 582-2973

Email: dfine@bozeman.net

[https://www.bozeman.net/Departments-\(1\)/Administration/Economic-Development/Home](https://www.bozeman.net/Departments-(1)/Administration/Economic-Development/Home)

Resource for: Building a municipal network. Bozeman is undergoing a process of installing an open-access municipal fiber network that will provide broadband service to businesses throughout the city.

4. Telecommunications Program Mapping Tool

USDA Rural Development

<https://broadbandsearch.sc.egov.usda.gov/bsa/servlet/mainAction.do?pageAction=Home>

Resource for: An online resource for mapping out existing or proposed broadband service areas. This tool is used for those interested in applying for funding under the Infrastructure Loan Program, Broadband Loan and Load Guarantee program. This is a great tool to get started assessing broadband services in your area.

MAIN TOPIC: HOUSING

Issue:

Seeley Lake residents have identified the lack of a sewer system in the area as a direct impediment to economic growth. The effects of this missing piece of infrastructure directly impact the community's ability to grow, build, and develop the area in a controlled manner while maintaining high quality and clean water.

Recommendation:

While the sewer system installation will be determined by the vote this November, if the system does pass, there are several resources around the state who should be involved in the oversight and installation of a sewer system, so as to ensure a timely, on-budget installation of a sewer system.

Missoula County is aware of the affordability issue with workforce housing. A working committee has been assembled to include Missoula Economic Partnership, Missoula County commissioners, Missoula Organization of Realtors and other stakeholders in Missoula County. It may be beneficial for community members of Seeley Lake to work to identify areas that they feel this groups should discuss. Suggestions for specific areas related to Seeley Lake workforce housing may include programmatic and regulatory initiatives, financial assistance for workforce, housing cost burdens, etc.

Resource(s):

Sewer System:

1. John Vukonich

Town of Phillipsburg Public Works Director

Ph: 406-370-8105

Email: 406-370-8105

Resource for: Is currently involved with overseeing the installation of a new line to the water treatment lagoons in Phillipsburg, MT. Has an engineering background and is an excellent resource for overseeing engineering firms and project management to ensure the project meets expected deliverables and is completed within scope, on-time and on-budget.

2. Matt Donnelly

Gallatin Gateway and Sewer District

Email: gm@gatewaywsd.com

Resource For: Project Management Oversight/ Installation. Gallatin Gateway was recently awarded \$310,000 loan and a \$125,000 grant in USDA Rural Development's (RUS) Waste and Waste Disposal Grant Program) to install the

towns first centralized sewer system. Matt will be overseeing the project and is an excellent resource.

3. Greg Robertson

Missoula County Chief Public Works Officer

Ph: 406-258-4818

Email: grobertson@missoulacounty.us

Resource For: Seeley Lake Sewer District Plans and permitting

4. Amy Rose

Assistant Director of Public Works

Ph: 406-258-3723

Email: arose@missoulacounty.us

Resource for: Sewer District Plans and Permitting

5. John Dilliard, Bureau Chief of Public Water and Subdivisions

Public Water Supply, Montana Department of Environmental Quality

Ph. 406-444-2409

Email: jdilliard@mt.gov

Resource For: water and wastewater

Housing Committee Working Group

1. Sam Sill, Public Affairs Officer

Missoula Organization of Realtors

406-728-0560

Resource For: Workforce housing affordability conversations

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNICATION ISSUES

Issue: Missoula County

Several individuals mentioned that communication was difficult with Missoula County. There is a general perception that the permitting process is cumbersome and the county officials tend to be obstructionist.

Recommendation:

A working group should get together to specifically research and identify problems in working with Missoula County. Once these problems have been specifically identified and documented, invite departments from Missoula County to Seeley Lake for a forum. Conduct a two-way dialogue between County officials and individuals who have had problems working with them. The county is always looking for ways to stream-line processes and a healthy, productive conversation could help to break down obstructionist or unnecessary processes

Recommended Resource(s):

1. Jean Curtiss

Missoula County Commissioner

Email: Jcurtiss@co.missoula.mt.us

2. Missoula County Community & Planning Services Department

Phone: 406-258-4657

MAIN TOPIC: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Issue: Small Business Development

There are Economic Development and small business resources available to Seeley Lake. However, there is a significant lack of awareness of existing programs available to Seeley Lake residents and business owners. Raising awareness of these programs will help promote business start-ups and foster business ideas of local community members.

Recommendation:

Organize an entrepreneurs/ small business owners' symposium and training event in Seeley Lake to raise awareness about the local resources that are available to business owners and entrepreneurs. By launching an event/ training for business owners and aspiring business owners, community members will become engaged and informed about the local resources available to small businesses.

Resource(s):

1. Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program

<http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-microentrepreneur-assistance-program>

Grants are available to provide technical assistance to rural micro-entrepreneurs or microenterprises, up to \$205,000 annually. Funding at the requested level is not guaranteed, and at least 15% matching funds are required.

Loans up to \$50,000 - \$500,000 may be used for establishing a Rural Microloan Revolving Fund managed by the MDO. Total aggregate debt is capped at \$2.5 million.

2. Jenn Stephens

Missoula SBDC Regional Director

Ph: 406-243-4770

Email: Jennifer.Stephens@mso.umt.edu

Resource for: new and existing business planning, trainings and workshops

3. Missoula Economic Partnership

Phone: 406-541-6461

Email: JGraff@MissoulaPartnership.com

Resource For: Assistance with job creation and business development in the following target industries: Information Technology, Advanced Manufacturing, Life Sciences, Timber Products, Financial/ Insurance, Back Office Operations and Creative Services.

4. Montana and Idaho Community Development Corporation (MICDC)

Phone: 844-728-9234

Email: betsy@mtcdc.org

Resource For: Small business lending programs

MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM

Issue: Promotion of community events

There is currently no single platform to promote community events in Seeley Lake. Seeley has a breadth of activities, but it is difficult to find information in a consolidated place. The creation of an online community calendar would be a great asset to aggregate events going on in the community.

Recommendation:

There are a number of online, Software as a Service (SaaS) solutions that would provide an economical solution to this issue. Montana communities such as Hamilton, Polson, and White Sulfur Springs have launched similar applications that meet this need. Costs for an online events calendar range between \$600- \$1000 annually. However, these expenses may be supplemented by grants and/or partnerships between community organizations and the Seeley Lake Pathfinder. There may be other free solutions that could be explored by looking into free online google drive products that could be maintained and shared with the public. These solutions are very economical, but may require more oversight by an individual administrator.

Resource(s):

1. Molly Bradford

Gatherboard

Phone: 406-880-0880

Email: maislnut@gmail.com

Website: gatherboard.com

Resource for: website calendars

2. Main Street Montana Grants

Community Development Division, Montana Department of Commerce

<http://comdev.mt.gov/Programs/MainStreet/RoadMap/Services>

Ph: (406) 841-2770

Resource for: Funding can be used to address long range community planning and revitalization needs as well as more specific prioritized projects. Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate the implementation of larger community vision and goals or as they relate to previous or concurrent larger planning efforts.

Communities are required to commit matching funds at a ratio of \$1 for every \$5 requested.

3. Tourism Grant Program

Department of Commerce

406-841-2796

Resource for: City government or private business to apply for tourism event paid media advertising. Projects must clearly demonstrate their role in the tourism industry and benefit the region and state by increasing capacity and enhancing the state's tourism industry.

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY NEEDS ISSUES

Issue:

The community of Seeley Lake struggles to communicate a unified Vision. In order to achieve quality economic development, a common and agreed upon vision that is easily explainable will be imperative. Seeley Lake as a community already has strong social capital, now is the time to move toward defining and communicating a shared vision that will promote positive community change.

Recommendation:

Begin the vision planning by conducting a SWOT analysis that is then endorsed and approved by community members. The Resource Assessment team has identified several components that would be helpful to start a SWOT analysis.

Next, a facilitator should be involved in a formal process to identify and define a vision for Seeley Lake. Be sure to include various segments of the Seeley Lake community and build consensus among many diverse interest groups.

While creating a vision is a great exercise, building a comprehensive strategic plan for economic development is an important product that will come out of the visioning process. Please see Recommended Resources below for an example of a strategic plan.

Resource(s):

1. Small Towns Big Ideas: Case studies in Small Town Community Economic Development

http://www.sitka.net/Downloads/Small_Towns.pdf

Resource for: Recommended reading for anyone interested in taking part in the vision creation process. Provides information on what can be accomplished in rural America.

2. Garrett County Economic Development Strategic Plan

[http://www.gcedonline.com/resources/gced/pdf/Strategic-Plan-\(Feb-2011---Website\).pdf](http://www.gcedonline.com/resources/gced/pdf/Strategic-Plan-(Feb-2011---Website).pdf)

Resource for: Good tool to use as a road map for your SWOT analysis, vision exercise and creation of a strategic plan for Seeley Lake.

3. Erinn Donnell

Marketing Coordinator, Made in Montana

Phone: 406-841-2757

Email: edonnell@mt.gov

Resource For: Organizing a community vision workshop and helping to mediate conversations around a community-wide branding initiative.

MAIN TOPIC: HEALTHCARE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Issue: Transportation

There is no form of transportation for Seeley Lake residents to visit Missoula to see a Medical Specialist or for caravan services in the area.

Recommendation:

The town of Seeley Lake should hold a community-wide discussion about the demand for transportation to and from Missoula for medical care and for potential commuting from Seeley.

There was a van service was run by the senior center in Seeley Lake that has been discontinued, but there is still a need.

Discussions should be formalized to determine what the demand is for transport and how it could be fulfilled. There may also be a possibility to organize vanpools from Missoula to Pyramid Lumber to accommodate workers that may help to supplement the service.

Resource(s):

1. Economic Impact Initiative Grants

<http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/economic-impact-initiative-grants>

To construct, enlarge or improve community facilities for health care, public safety and public service. Grants may be made in combination with other financial assistance such as a Community Facilities direct or guaranteed loan, applicant contribution or funding from other sources.

Grants up to 75% of eligible project cost based on need and funding availability

Applicant must be eligible for grant assistance, which is determined by the population and median household income of the service area

Grant funds must be available

2. Lynn Hellegard Executive Director

Missoula Ravalli Transportation Management Association

Ph: 406-327-8707

Email: mrtma2@montana.com

Resource for: Formalizing conversations for transportation, learning pricing and logistics around having transportation service.

General Economic Development Resources:

Best Practices in Rural Economic Development

http://www.smallbusinesshuron.ca/publications/edri/best_practices_report_final.PDF

REPORT BY: RICHARD KNATTERUD, P.E.

Division Engineer

MT Dept. of Commerce

Community Development Division

P.O. Box 200523

Helena, MT 59620-0523

(406) 841-2784

rknatterud@t.gov

comdev.mt.gov

MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM

Issue: Trail Connectivity

The importance of providing safe access for pedestrians and bicyclists was noted.

Recommendations:

Work towards extending shared use paths toward Big Larch campground and beyond. The Montana Department of Transportation's Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program replaced the funding from pre-MAP-21 programs including Transportation Enhancements, Recreational Trails, Safe Routes to School, and several other discretionary programs, wrapping them into a single funding source. The TA Program provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for the planning, design or construction of boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.

Another possible resource is the Recreational Trails Program, which is an assistance program of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration, administered by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks. The Recreational Trails Program provides funds to states to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses.

Resources:

Dave Holien

Acting TA/CTEP Engineer

Montana Department of Transportation

P.O. Box 201001

Helena, MT 59620-1001

(406) 444-6118

http://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/ta_application.shtml

dholien@mt.gov

Beth Shumate, Program Manager

Recreational Trails Program

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

PO Box 200701

Helena, MT 59620-0701

(406)-444-4585

[http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/
bshumate@mt.gov](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/bshumate@mt.gov)

Issue: Electronic Media Campaign

The importance of advertising the tourism opportunities in the Seeley Lake area was a discussion item at the listening sessions.

Recommendations:

The Montana Office of Tourism & Business Development Tourism Grant Program awards funds to projects that strengthen Montana's economy through the development and enhancement of the state's tourism industry. The Tourism Grant Program will assist projects that fall within the following categories: Tourism Digital Development, Tourism Infrastructure, and Tourism Event Paid Media Advertising. Eligible Organizations include Montana nonprofit organization, Montana tribal government, Montana city or county government, and Montana private business

Resource:

Carol Crockett, Tourism Grant Manager
Office of Tourism and Business Development
Montana Department of Commerce
301 South Park Ave.
P.O. Box 200523
Helena, Mt 59620-0523
(406) 841-2796
Tourism.mt.gov
ccrockett@mt.gov

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY NEEDS

Issue: Community Appearance, Aesthetics, Beautification

The appearance of the main business district in Seeley was brought up during the listening sessions.

Recommendations:

Seek funding from the Montana Main Street program and Community Development Block Grant program to prepare a Downtown Master Plan to give guidance and direction for Main Street priorities, including exploration of the possibility of creating a Business Improvement District. Preparation of a Downtown Master Plan would provide a mechanism to address the issues identified above, developing specific goals, objectives, and action items for 'downtown' Seeley Lake improvements.

Resource:

Tash Wisemiller, Program Coordinator
Montana Main Street Program and
Acting Bureau Chief, Planning Bureau
Community Development Division

Montana Department of Commerce
301 South Park Ave.
P.O. Box 200523
Helena, Mt 59620-0523
(406) 841-2771
comdev.mt.gov
TWisemiller@mt.gov

MAIN TOPIC: INFRASTRUCTURE

Issue: Sewer and Water

Sewer issues relate back to water quality of the lake and the inability to expand businesses due to small lot sizes and/or expensive alternative solutions for septic treatment. Water issues were more general in nature as a public water system already exists.

Recommendations:

The Seeley Lake Sewer District and the Seeley Lake Water District have previously received funding from the Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP) for infrastructure projects. However, maintaining and constructing infrastructure projects represent an ongoing, never-ending need for nearly all communities. Eligible activities for TSEP include water, sewer/wastewater, solid waste, stormwater and bridges. The Community Development Block Grant Program can also be a funding source for these infrastructure projects; Missoula County would have to apply on behalf of Seeley Lake for CDBG grants. TSEP construction grants can be awarded in amounts up to \$750,000 and CDBG public facilities grants can be up to \$450,000. USDA Rural Development can also be a significant funding source.

Planning grants are also available from both programs through the Division's Planning Bureau. Planning grants are typically awarded in the \$15,000 to \$50,000 range.

Resources:

Becky Anseth, Program Manager
Treasure State Endowment Program
Community Development Division
Montana Department of Commerce
301 So. Park Ave.
P.O. Box 200523
Helena, Montana 59620-0523
(406) 841-2865
comdev.mt.gov
BAnseth@mt.gov

Gus Byrom or Richard Knatterud

Planning Bureau
Community Development Division
Montana Department of Commerce
301 So. Park Ave.
P.O. Box 200523
Helena, Montana 59620-0523

(406) 841-2770
comdev.mt.gov
gbyrom@mt.gov or rknatterud@mt.gov

Steve Troendle
USDA Rural Development
2229 Boot Hill Court
Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 585-2520
Steve.troendle@mt.usda.gov
<http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices/mt>

MAIN TOPIC: HEALTH CARE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Issue: Extend coverage, mental health, rehabilitation services

The concept of expanding the existing medical services facility was brought up during the listening sessions.

Recommendation:

Discussion was held regarding possible expansion of the medical facilities in Seeley Lake. It is recommended that the Montana Facility Finance Authority be contacted. The Authority, which is administratively attached to the Department of Commerce, was created to assist health care and related facilities contain future health care costs by offering financing at low-cost, tax-exempt interest rates. Most non-profit care facilities, including hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, residential homes for persons with developmental or mental disabilities, and pre-release facilities are eligible to participate in the programs offered by the Authority. The Authority's financing process is designed to maintain and enhance access to the broadest range of financing alternatives to improve sustainability, effectiveness and efficiency of eligible health care and related facilities within the private and public sectors in Montana.

Resources:

Michele Barstad, Executive Director
or Adam Gill, Associate Director
Montana Facility Finance Authority
Montana Department of Commerce
2401 Colonial Drive
PO Box 200506
Helena, MT 59620-0506
406-444-0259
<http://mtfacilityfinance.com/>
mbarstad@mt.gov or AdamGill@mt.gov

MAIN TOPIC: HOUSING

Issue: Availability of Quality Rentals

The lack of affordable housing affects the capability of Seeley Lake to attract and maintain a viable work force, including service workers, school teachers, and health care workers.

Recommendations:

Seek funding assistance from the Montana Department of Commerce Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME programs, as well as USDA Rural Development, for low interest loans and/or grants to assist qualified low and moderate income households with home rehabilitation assistance as well as first-time homebuyer assistance. CDBG planning funds can also be used for preparation of detailed housing studies or for preparation of a preliminary architectural report in support of the possible rehabilitation of a major apartment building.

Work with the District XI Human Resource Council to undertake a housing rehabilitation program. CDBG planning funds could also be used to finance a feasibility study to investigate the unique characteristics of the Seeley Lake housing market and develop an overall housing plan for both new construction as well as housing rehabilitation.

In addition the Low Income Housing Tax Program of the Department of Commerce Housing Division could provide assistance with new housing construction for households earning less than 60 percent of the area median income. USDA housing programs may also be available, operating in tandem with Montana Department of Commerce programs, to increase the supply of affordable housing units in Seeley Lake.

Resources:

Jennifer Olson
Grants Bureau Chief
Community Development Division
Montana Department of Commerce
301 So. Park Ave.
P.O. Box 200523
Helena, Montana 59620-0523
(406) 841-2773
comdev.mt.gov
JeOlson@mt.gov

Tash Wisemiller
Planning Bureau Chief, Acting
Community Development Division
Montana Department of Commerce
301 So. Park Ave.
P.O. Box 200523
Helena, Montana 59620-0523
(406) 841-2771
comdev.mt.gov
TWisemiller@mt.gov

Tom Atkins, Housing Director
USDA Rural Development
Bozeman Area Office
2229 Boot Hill Court
Bozeman, Montana 59715-7914
Phone (406) 585-2551
Tom.Atkins@mt.usda.gov

Jim Morton
Executive Director
District XI Human Resource Council, Inc.
1801 South Higgins Avenue
Missoula, MT 59801
Telephone: (406) 728-3710
Fax: (406) 728-7680
<http://www.hrcxi.org>
jpm@hrcxi.org

Mary Bair
Multifamily Program Manager
Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program
Montana Board of Housing
Montana Department of Commerce
301 So. Park Ave.
P.O. Box 200523
Helena, Montana 59620-0523
(406) 841-2845
mbair@mt.gov

MAIN TOPIC: ALL

Issue: Grants

Recommendation:

Check out the website below, sponsored by MSU-Billings. The Library at Montana State University-Billings is one of five Funding Information Network Partners of the Foundation Center. The Funding Information Network is a network of libraries, community foundations, and other nonprofit resource centers that can be found across the U.S. and around the world. Network partners provide a core collection of Foundation Center publications and a variety of supplementary materials and services in areas useful to grant seekers.

Recommended Resource:

TyRee Jenks
Grants Collection Coordinator
MSU-Billings
1500 University Drive
Billings, MT 59101
406-657-1654
<http://www.msubillings.edu/library/grants.htm>
tjenks@msubillings.edu

REPORT BY: JIM SMITHAM
170 Drew Creek Loop
Seeley Lake, MT 59868
406-490-7399

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNICATIONS

Issue: Communication among Nonprofits

During many of the listening sessions there were comments on the number of non-profit organizations in the Seeley Lake area. It was also pointed out that there did not seem to be any coordination or communication between the various non-profit organizations. This can lead to overlap of efforts and not using valuable resources in the most efficient means possible.

Recommendation:

Establish a Seeley Lake Non-profit Coordinating Council. This would be a loose-knit organization with no by-laws or officers. The main purpose for the organization's meetings is to update each other on what they are currently working on, information on possible new funding sources, community needs that are not being met and how they could work collectively to address the needs. Many funding sources and foundations look favorably on grant applications that show coordinated efforts between local non-profit organizations.

Resources:

Butte recently established a coordinating council that includes many non-profits in the area. The group meets monthly. Since the council was established there has been a greater sense of a coordinated effort. A good person to contact for additional information Butte's Coordination Council would be Pam Haxby-Cote, Executive Director, Butte Local Development Corporation, 723-4349.

Issue: Missoula County Conversations

The problems communicating effectively with the various departments within the Missoula County government was mentioned at nearly every listening session. As the local residents of Seeley Lake described it, they feel like the "redheaded stepchild" of Missoula County. The residents, business owners, and students of Seeley Lake feel like Missoula County is a hindrance rather than a help in many aspects of governance and regulation. Several persons commented that when trying to work with the departments within the Missoula County government the first response is "no you can't do that" rather than "let's work together to see how we can get it done." This confrontational working relationship between the residents and businesses of Seeley Lake and the Missoula County government creates a "lose/lose" environment for all.

Recommendation:

Request a meeting with the Missoula County Commissioners to be held in Seeley Lake. The purpose of this meeting is to help establish a more effective working relationship between the community of Seeley Lake and the Missoula County government. One suggested means to help establish a better working relationship is to establish a Working Group with representation from the various service providers in Seeley Lake (i.e. Fire Department, Law Enforcement, Planning Department, Code Enforcement, School District, Community Council, etc.) and the Missoula County Commissioners, Planning Department, School District, etc. The Working Group should establish a regular monthly or every-other month meeting schedule. An agenda for the meeting should include discussing the current issues facing both Seeley Lake and Missoula County and how they can be addressed. There should also be presentations on issues that may present themselves in the future. As was

stated in the public meeting, “change is going to happen with or without you. It is better to help guide the change rather than let change control you.”

Resources:

Ask Andy Shirtliff to help you identify the resources within the Montana State Government or Montana University System that could help identify other communities that have identified a similar working group between small communities and local county governments. Identifying how other working groups have been established, how they work and contact persons within those working groups would help put the Seeley Lake/ Missoula County Working Group together.

Andy Shirtliff
Governor’s Office of Economic Development
ashirtliff@mt.gov

MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM

Issue: Traffic and Tourism

Many times during the listening sessions it was indicated by the community how important that tourism is to the local economy. Business owners stated that up to 50% on their annual income came during the 100 days of the prime tourism season. The main road going through Seeley Lake is U.S. highway 83. The main source of tourism information is at the Chamber of Commerce building (the barn) located on the south end of Seeley Lake. In fact, the Chamber is approximately one quarter of a mile past southernmost business (Cory’s Valley Market). Having the main tourism information source located outside the core business area does not provide tourists a good incentive to stop, shop, eat and stay in Seeley Lake. Visitors coming from the north will most likely not stop at the Tourism Information center nor will they turn around and backtrack into Seeley Lake since they are already past the town. Those tourists coming from the south have a high probability of missing the Tourist Information center because of its location outside the town and the speed limit in front of the Barn is 60 mph. It was mentioned during the listening sessions that the traffic on Highway 83 has increased dramatically over the past few years. Encouraging travelers on 83 to stop, shop, eat and stay in Seeley Lake will help increase the local economy.

Recommendation:

Locate the main tourism information center in the center of the core business district of Seeley Lake. Once tourists stop to get information about the town and area they are more likely to shop, eat and stay in town. The tourism information center could be located in a small portable building such as the one that houses the coffee shop by the Post Office. This building should not be very expensive to purchase. Also this facility should be staffed from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM daily during the main tourist season. Staffing for this facility could come from high school students at minimal cost. Additionally, since the posted speed limit within Seeley Lake’s business district is much slower, drivers feel safer making turns off the highway into the Tourist Information Center than at 60 mph.

Resources:

The Montana Department of Commerce is a great resource for information regarding tourism. They may have information on how other communities have located their tourism information center in the center of their community and the positive affects it has had on increasing tourism dollars.

Carol Crockett, Tourism Grant Manager
Office of Tourism and Business Development
Montana Department of Commerce

301 South Park Ave.
P.O. Box 200523
Helena, Mt 59620-0523
(406) 841-2796
Tourism.mt.gov
ccrockett@mt.gov

Issue: Tourism promotion and marketing

The tourism industry is extremely important to the Seeley Lake economy. As many Montana communities both large and small have faced, identifying a steady funding source to pay for community marketing campaigns has been a struggle. The Montana Legislature recently passed legislation that allows local communities to establish Tourism Business Improvement Districts (TBID).

Recommendation:

Seeley Lake should establish a TBID which will allow the local community to impose an additional nightly tax on motel rooms within the district. The amount of the tax is established and administered locally. Most TBIDs have a \$1.00 per night tax while others have set theirs at up to \$3.00 per night. The revenue generated in the TBID can be used for community marketing campaigns for prime tourist seasons and increasing visitation during the shoulder seasons. TBIDs have proven to be a very valuable source of funding and could help pay for Seeley Lake's community marketing campaign.

Resources: The Montana Department of Commerce Tourism Division would be a great source on information regarding the process to establish a TBID. Debi Davidson, a member of the Resource Team, would be a good contact within the Department of Commerce. Additionally, contacting the Missoula TBID or Butte TBID for guidance and assistance would be suggested. A good contact with the Butte TBID is Maria Porchavina, 491-5350. I do not have a contact with the Missoula TBID but the general number is 532-3399

Debi Davidson
MT Dept. of Commerce
Ph: 406.841.2792
Ddavidson2@mt.gov

REPORT BY: ELIUD URESTI
Stevenson Center Fellow
Missoula Economic Partnership
2501 Catlin Street Suite 205
Missoula, MT 59801
(406) 541-6461; 956.372.0456
euresti@missoulapartnership.com

MAIN TOPIC: HOUSING

Issue: Adequate and Affordable Housing

A large number of Seeley Lake residents mentioned that adequate and affordable housing was a major issue for both current residents and for potential employees. Housing for current residents is problematic in the form of high prices on permanent housing, and low quality and availability in terms of rental housing deterred potential employees that would find work in Seeley Lake, but had difficulty finding suitable housing.

Recommendation:

Seeley Lake could use funds from federal grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to improve housing availability and conditions of existing housing. Specifically, the HOME Program is a federal block grant program by HUD, administered through the Montana Department of Commerce (MDOC), whose purpose is to expand supply of affordable housing for low-income households, as well as improving the means of state and local governments to implement strategies to achieve adequate supplies of decent, affordable housing.

Resource(s):

Because Seeley Lake is unincorporated, the HUD funds would have to be applied for and disbursed through Missoula County. Therefore, I recommend two resources, one from the MDOC and one from Missoula County.

1. **Andrew Chanania, MDOC HOME Program Manager**, (406) 841-2551 achanania@mt.gov
2. **Nancy Harte, Senior Grants Administrator**, Missoula County Department of Grants and Community Programs, Community Development, (406) 258-4934 jharte@missoulacounty.us

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNICATION ISSUES

Issue: Linkage across organizations, business-to-business, community resource directory, utilize web and social media

Recommendation:

Discussion about lack of communication was mentioned frequently in both the context of business-to-business (B2B) interactions, as well as between volunteer organizations. Improvement in these areas can come in a variety of forms, including hosting bi-weekly, monthly, or bi-monthly meetings between businesses, volunteer orgs, or both. Additionally, creating a community resource/business directory and having a significant online presence will help facilitate communication between organizations.

Resource(s):

1. **Seeley Lake itself!** The resources for increasing communication between organizations in Seeley Lake must come from within to ensure effective and efficient communication, leading to improvement and growth for individual organizations and ultimately Seeley Lake as a whole.

2. **Anne Beach, Executive Director, Seeley Lake Community Foundation, (406) 677-3506, email@slcfmt.org** – Anne likely has the best knowledge about both businesses and volunteer organizations in Seeley Lake, and so can help facilitate the first meeting between leaders of the community to establish a recurring schedule for the meetings, as well as help develop the business/community resource directory.
3. **Seeley-Swan High School Students** – Provide the students volunteer opportunities to help businesses and volunteer organizations develop their websites and online presence. Using the internet is more intuitive to adolescents, and the students may provide a fresh perspective on social media outreach. Additionally, allowing the students to gather information needed for the directory may help establish better relationships between age groups and may help lead to the desired, successful mentoring/apprenticeship partnerships mentioned in Economic Development Issues.

MAIN TOPIC: COMMUNITY NEEDS ISSUES

Issue: Adult Education and Technology

Because much of the population in Seeley Lake is made up of older residents, adult education was a topic that was brought up by the groups we talked to. Specifically, technology was an area of education where many residents felt older citizens could use assistance. Furthermore, even for adult education in areas besides technology, it would be helpful to provide the computer literacy training, since so much educational material is available online for any topic.

Recommendation:

Like the discussion of the need for B2B communication and online presence for organizations in the community, I recommend volunteers also be used here. Technology is something that is involved in almost every facet of our lives today, and it is a lot more intuitive for a young adult to use a computer than it is for an older Seeley Lake resident. This would be a good way for older residents to learn from the students, as well as provide mentorship to the young adults, as was mentioned as a desirable relationship by the Seeley Lake residents we listened to.

Resource(s):

1. **HUD Public Housing Neighborhood Networks Program** (grant no longer provided, but model and funds from MHA can be used) - http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housingprograms/ph/ross/abouutnn - 1-800-955-2232
2. **Missoula Housing Authority** – Lori Davidson, Executive Director – ldavidson@missoulahousing.org – (406) 549-4113
3. **Article** – *Learning with Computers: The Theory Behind the Practice*- <http://www.ncsall.net/index.html?id=303.html>

MAIN TOPIC: TOURISM

Issue: Marketing Strategy (Cooperative ads/Branding/Electronic Media Campaign)

The Seeley Chamber website does a decent job listing businesses and activities located in Seeley Lake for potential visitors. However, a site dedicated exclusively to advertising businesses and events could be more

focused and streamlined, and therefore provide an easier experience for the user and increase the likelihood of them visiting Seeley.

Recommendation(s):

1. Develop a brand, image, slogan, etc. for Seeley Lake. What would you like tourists to feel, think, and know when they hear “Seeley Lake?” This can be done in coordination with the Chamber, so they may start to use the slogan as well, resulting in greater impact, exposure, and familiarity with the new brand. Forming a committee to identify, plan, and select the best “image” for Seeley Lake would be my recommendation to address this. Additionally, input from the community on the image can be gathered by volunteers through surveys, focus groups, etc.
2. The website used to advertise activities in Seeley Lake can doubly serve as a business directory, which will be important for visitors, residents, and B2B communication. The Chamber website already has this, but I feel the setup is more directed towards other business or residents. By having it on the “touristy” Seeley Lake website as well, visitors to the site will most likely be tourists and so the businesses will get exposure to that demographic as well.
 - a. Have a newsletter people can sign up for on the website. This will keep visitors constantly updated on fun things going on in Seeley Lake (even during shoulder season), thus it will give them *reason* to visit Seeley Lake rather than just opportunity. Additionally, you can have a survey in the newsletter that asks about former visitors’ experiences as well as potential visitors’ desired activities.
 - b. It would also be useful to have a business spotlight on this website. Perhaps a section of the website could be used to post a picture, highlight, or milestone of a local business with a short blurb explaining the moment, or just providing background on the business. This can be done on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis.

Resource(s):

Montana High Tech Business Alliance - The alliance is a membership association made up of more than 300 high tech and manufacturing firms and affiliates in MT. They have an online job portal that can be used to post the job, if created, to create and develop the website for Seeley Lake.

Montana Code School - The Montana Code School offers boot-camp type programs for developers. It may be worth reaching out to them to perhaps get in touch with current students or recent graduates looking for work. There are campuses in Missoula and Bozeman.

VisitBend.com - Bend, OR is a town that is significantly influenced by tourism activity and revenue, much like Seeley Lake. In addition to a city website and a Chamber of Commerce webpage, Bend, Oregon has a site dedicated to those visiting Bend, [Visit Bend](#). A similar website can be useful to Seeley Lake, not only to promote tourist activities, but also to provide information for individuals or businesses looking for a new home.

Issue: Shoulder Season, Highway Name Change

Because Seeley sees so much activity as a popular tourist destination, the absence of tourists means a significant decrease in economic activity during the shoulder season. As some of the community leaders mentioned, the businesses in Seeley Lake are forced to make an annual income based on making money “only 100 days out of the year.” Additionally, an idea was to lower the speed limit or rename HWY 83, to make passersby more aware of what Seeley Lake has to offer them.

Recommendation:

For the issue of decreased tourist traffic during the shoulder season, I would recommend that Seeley Lake use the above mentioned marketing strategies to promote activities during the shoulder season. Additionally, Seeley Lake may develop and host a seasonal festival with a particular theme that will attract visitors during times of the year that are typically low in tourist traffic.

In conjunction with this, lodging sites may offer reduced rates to attract more visitors during the shoulder season. Lodging site owners could even go so far as partnering with restaurants and other businesses to offer “package” type deals or guests. The idea behind these strategies is that if the visitors have a good experience during shoulder season, then they will definitely return during the typical tourism season, where they will do more and spend more, even bringing additional guests with them for their return visit.

Resource(s):

To change speed limit or rename highway: Lori Ryan, Transportation Commission Secretary, 406-444-7200, lryan@mt.gov

Transportation Commission meetings are held on a regular basis at the MDT Commission Room in Helena, and district meetings are held at various locations TBA\ . Must submit one month prior in advance to have item added to agenda. http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/trans_comm/meeting_schedule.shtml

STRENGTHS AND ASSETS ~ Seeley Lake

Below are the comments the team heard or received regarding the strengths and assets of Seeley Lake.

Students – Seeley Lake High School

- **Tight knit**
- **In-school help**
- **Teachers know you**
- **Incorporate science class to be out doors, i.e. creek monitoring**
- **More freedom than in a big city**

Educators

- **Mountains**
- **National forest, public lands**
- **A great community, sense of community**
- **Great schools**
- **Schools strive to reflect the community and be a part of the community**
- **Open to home schooled students**
- **Very diverse levels in our community that can bring many ideas to the table.**
- **Ditto**
- **We still have our identity even though new poeple keep coming and going. Our town isn't run by people who have a lot of money.**
- **We have world class resources.**
- **A great industry in Pyramid lumber**
- **Wildlife.**
- **A rare intact ecosystem**
- **Bob Marshall Wilderness**
- **Less than one hour from Missoula**
- **Very engaged community – on every level. Sometimes that does give us challenges, but...**
- **Many activities for kids to do all year round**
- **21st Century grant, summer lunch program, summer library program**
- **School is the center of the town**
- **We use what we have – for place-based education. 100 pairs of skiis, snowshoes, bikes, etc.**

Seeley Lake Leadership

- **The people**
- **There is something for everyone here**
- **Very involved community members**
- **Giving community**
- **A lot of experience exists here from all walks of life; different careers**
- **Natural Resources**
- **Desirable place to live – even though there are crappy jobs “this is a great place to starve”**
- **A lot of networking and pulling together**
- **Summers are almost too busy (ditto)**
- **56 active social organizations (most people are involved in at least three groups)**
- **Volunteers!**

Businesses, Retail, Chamber

- **Natural beauty, the lake**
- **We are quiet and small – a getaway place**
- **Retirees who live here**
- **Seemed to have more visitors than ever this summer.**

- Great demographic of visitors
- Great return visitors – it is a rendezvous spot
- Epicenter of outdoor recreation

Healthcare and Emergency Services

- This medical facility – and the expansion of the dental and treatment rooms
- People are involved and care about the services Seeley offers
- People with vision to look to the future of the medical needs
- Beautiful, peaceful town – for the most part
- Not enough funding for paid positions so volunteers back us up
- Great relationship with police/fire and the clinic
- We get the job done – law enforcement – top notch.
- Achieved emergency services that aren't always found in a small town.
- I love it here.
- So great to have the services we have – doesn't take time from work to travel farther away.
- Mental Health advocate
- Search and Rescue here is second to none.
- We watch out for our neighbors.
- Our high school students made a contribution to this clinic.

Senior Citizen Center

- Cordial, friendly town for new comers
- Lake, beauty, and many attractors
- Senior Center is within walking distance
- Walkability
- No stoplight
- Hunting/Fishing/Rec Opportunities
- Bears in town
- Community takes care of each other
- Natural resources
- Library bookshare
- Festivals and gatherings

Nonprofits, Service Clubs, Churches

- Our nonprofits, churches, and service groups contribute to our community's richness.
- Nonprofits provide our basic community needs when other services fail.
- Promote and preserve the arts in the valley – use education, outreach, and sharing to promote the arts
- After a concert, providers go into the schools for a day
- Festival that celebrates our literature heritage
- Church has benevolence fund that helps with propane, water bill – criteria has to be met; do not allow “frequent flyers” – need to fill out a budget together
- Our greatest asset is our generous compassionate people
- Churches and pastors in the area work together in many ways
- Schools are a great asset – work with churches and services organizations
- We have an extreme culture of caring – Food bank, giving programs, and organized informally, too.
- Lion's Club
- Beautiful scenery and setting
- Large percentage of part time residents who are affluent – stepped up for Change the Pace giving campaign
- Great sense of community

Community Council, Land Management, Missoula County Reps, Pyramid Lumber

- **Natural environment**
- **Group of dedicated citizens who volunteer – many are well educated and bring important skills**
- **Tangible private financial support from local residents**
- **An authentic western feel to a friend small town community**
- **Pyramid Lumber provides an economic base**
- **Weather – for some – Lot of snow in winter and very pleasant summers**
- **Excellent schools**

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES ~ Seeley Lake

Below are the comments the team heard or received regarding the problems and challenges of Seeley Lake.

Students – Seeley Lake High School

- Large tourism blast then fades away – disrupts life during the blast
- People who don't plow their roads in winter
- If you need stuff you have to go to Missoula
- Awhile ago we had more pizza than medical supplies
- Gossip gets around quick
- Isolated
- Have to go through the county to get anything – and they don't know us.
- I have one bar of cell coverage in my driveway.
- We are the ugly red headed step child according to the county – they give a multi million dollar track to Centinal and we run on a grass circle.
- Horrible access to the internet at school – and at home. Really is a barrer to accelerated online classes
- There is no future for me here, unless people want to work in a service job.
- Shoulder seasons –
- No opportunities – jobs, education, etc. Why would I stay here?
- High cost of living here.....a young person could not start here.
- Slow response time for police and ambulance.
- Favoritism in sports activities.
- The same people seem to do everything, i.e., trip to Costa Rica.

Educators

- Sometimes a logging community and a retirement community can clash; challenge is to find sweet spot in the center.
- Some people do not want any change, others see great potential.
- Lack of sewer system
- City water is almost maxed out.
- Old vs New is a daily struggle - change vs no change
- Because of lack of infrastructure some of our quality of life will fade
- We have a lot of public land.
- Difficult to make a living here – easier to go on welfare
- Drug problem – huge drug problem here – according to law enforcement
- Challenge to find a second job for a spouse

Seeley Lake Leadership

- 90 miles of rural areas
- How do we get people to stop
- Need a united community front
- Limited number of resources for your needs
- Lack of jobs keep us small; hard to live here
- Infrastructure – need structure in place to support new businesses
- Aging population
- Home health care needs
- Seasonal employment
- Sewer needs (ditto)
- Signs are needed in and out of town
- Affordable housing (ditto)
- Clean up mess behind the post office
- No place for little old ladies to live.

Business, Retail, Chamber

- Difficult to find restaurant employees – not enough people want to work
- Housing – very diverse community
- Hard to make a living here – need multiple jobs
- The kids that grow up here can't stay here
- Mix of services is difficult – need right businesses to keep people shopping local
- All of the permits required to start a business = excessive
- Missoula County seems to look for reasons to *not* do a project
- Missoula County makes the building process very difficult. It is easier to do business permitting in Phoenix than here.
- Missoula County sends us the “You can't” attitude instead of “Can do”
- How to generate revenue to benefit businesses.
- Missoula County is our number one problem – there are more barriers (DITTO)
- Businesses depend on making an annual income on 100 days.
- Prices here are high – high to rent, purchase property, i.e., need to buy 10 acres of land to put in a septic system
- Businesses seem to have grudges against each other. I have heard numerous complaints from different employees from different businesses about other businesses. As a community these businesses need to partnership, get along for the betterment of the community. The sum of all parts can be so much larger. Also – a town divided will break apart and fail. Partnerships = success.

Healthcare and Emergency Services

- Need for senior housing and elder care
- Lack of infrastructure (sewer) preventing senior housing and services
- Not enough funding for paid positions so volunteers back us up
- Distance – distance from specialists and specialized care; cost of gas can prohibit people getting care, too.
- Personal care assistance
- Lack of housing - ditto
- Lost the bus that used to transport elderly to Missoula
- Senior housing – surveys have shown interest but don't want to give up their house
- Need the sewer system in
- Need a mental health provider – lost ours; housing is an issue
- Diversity of jobs – take away the mill and the government – there are no jobs.
- Major drug problem; people come here to hide. Impacts the medical community; balloons across the community.
- Transient services – churches help when they can. Come with medical and drug problems, often.
- No one place to disseminate social service information.

Senior Citizens

- Missoula County – does not pay attention to this area
- Workforce doesn't care and doesn't have a work ethic
- Sewer is a limiting factor
- Workforce loyalty and low wages
- Affordable housing
- Limited access to affordable/quality housing
- Drug problem
- Not incorporated
- Housing for aging people
- No viable government
- Garbage being dumped in the middle of the night – bears get into it.

- We have to rely on the county – and the county is not responsive.
- Low wages – if your landlord doesn't provide trash services the renter has to do it and pay for it.
- Red tape
- Work force doesn't have a good work ethic
- Can't raise a family on \$8 per hour
- Now have to have three lots to put in septic tanks

Nonprofits, Service Clubs, Churches

- Disconnect between service providers or churches – better grasp of who has been helped
- Disconnect between businesses working with the community – we all do our own thing
- Winterfest – used to be coordinated by the Chamber but now up in the air
- Tension between motorized and non-motorized recreation
- Trails are very expensive – to build and maintain
- Huge housing rental problem
- Job readiness – huge problem
- People who could be being helped by public resources don't know about them or need help to access them.
- Alpine Artisans started Alpine Talent Review –talent show at the community hall; need a larger gathering spot for performances. The high school is adding a stage – which will help.

Community Council, Land Management, Missoula County Reps, Pyramid Lumber

- Lack of Infrastructure (sewer) that threatens economic vitality. Cannot develop new affordable housing, recreational infrastructure without a sewer (ditto many times)
- Community is not incorporated – restricts access to grant funding
- U shape demographic – few young people stay or return to town because of lack of jobs
- Segmented community – difficult to gain consensus on important issues like zoning, vision for community, growth, change
- Economic division – many long term residents are challenged economically while many new retirees are comfortable economically
- Many local businesses are struggling. Profit margins do not support expansion and many businesses are currently listed for sale
- Some residents are highly skeptical of any change and want nothing to do with it.
- “Dog Town” (west side of Seeley)

WRITTEN COMMENT:

As a former resident who grew up here and now has moved back, I can say that I have never felt this community be MORE divided. There is a large portion of retired folks who are not from Seeley promoting activities that locals and long time residents do not like. There is no promotion of mechanized (ATV, dirtbike, snowmobile, bicycle) anymore. Instead, wilderness is being shoved down our throats with nothing in return for giving up that land. We have a vast area for advancement of a trail system and I know from personal experience that WILL bring people to stay and spend money.

VISION AND PROJECTS ~ Seeley Lake

Below are the comments the team heard or received regarding the vision/projects for Seeley Lake.

Students – Seeley Lake High School

- Paved roads
- All weather track and field
- Not dependent so much on tourism –
- Need the sewer system to sustain what we have.
- Jobs that sustain families (a bartender job won't do it)
- Get better internet that is affordable, too

Educators

- Sewer in place
- Water capacity increased
- Downtown pedestrian and biker friendly; cleaned up
- Beautify our downtown
- Ride or walk from Double Arrow to Tamaracks Resort
- Beautification – property owners and renters take items to the dump
- Promote Nordic Ski culture
- In 20 years – have Capitalized on our natural resources and a viable lumber mill
- Federal and state policies adjusted for reasonable resource harvesting
- State lands – with housing on it – policies adjusted
- If sewer comes in, and we are an attractive community, we would lure small businesses, i.e., technology jobs.
- **IF YOU DON'T PREPARE TO CHANGE, PREPARE TO DRY UP AND DIE.**

Seeley Lake Leadership

- Increase our shoulder season business
- Identify resource user groups and get them together. i.e., Motorized vs NonMotorized trail usage and get them to agree on what they can.
- Deal with the price of limited land
- Explore becoming incorporated
- Need CPA's, bookkeepers, etc., but need the infrastructure to support them
- A united front – with a united vision
- Seeley Lake used as the stop over place to Glacier
- Establish a nonprofit network
- Encourage start-ups
- Community park where people have access to Seeley Lake
- An Art gallery
- A fitness Center
- Assisted living
- Sustainable stability
- Glacier Parkway with a bike trail
- We are one community – not Double Arrow area, Seeley Lake area, etc.
- Host winter Olympic Nordic event

Business, Chamber, Retail

- Explore ways to generate money for the business community – i.e., flower baskets, beautification, store fronts
- Greatly improve access to internet and speed of internet (lots of dittos)
- We need a plan to improve our services

- It is not about changing Seeley Lake, it is about making it stronger.
- Consider a cooperative advertising campaign.
- Work together to maintain the businesses here – shop local
- Fill the business gaps- don't just open a new business, figure out what our needs are and attract the right business!
- Utilize better the local advertising and opportunities that currently exist
- Invite the world to come to Seeley Lake to shop at Christmas time
- Coordinated communications effort - i.e., make sure all businesses are aware of a group of bikers coming to town, and recruit those customers.
- Build a program to recruit people who lived here and have left – identify the business niches and ask them to fill them.
- Mentoring program for our youth to either stay or return; learn soft skills now
- Consider a resort tax, local options tax that would provide funds to support businesses
- New Welcome to Seeley Lake Sign in the works
- Way finding signs are in process
- Again promote snow mobile trails in this area – seems to have declined
- Promote trail system for all – bikes, hiking, unmotorized, motorized
- Social Media and Branding – of Seeley Lake
- Community Reunion – bring folks back and celebrate; All Class Reunion – try it again
- Explore student workforce programs – new MDLI program

Healthcare and Emergency Services

- Purchase additional land to add medical disciplines: eye doctor, specialists available several times per month, etc.
- Senior Housing – which can't happen unless the sewer system is installed
- Consider using Fire/EMS services for senior citizens and needy in town – put need to be paid and not all volunteer.
- Explore transportation grants for rural transportation needs – working on right now
- Explore Distance Learning Program (RUS)
- Sewer system in place
- Drug problems addressed
- Fire and EMS services – 5 to 10 years have paid fire and EMS positions to advance the level and consistency of care. Do have two ambulances now – uncertain of how they are “staffed”
- Consider making Seeley Lake an incorporated town (ditto)
- Another expansion is in our near future – medical center
- Denmark has a model: isolated seniors are paired with younger couples who have child care needs. Special campus for this purpose. Why not be the model for the nation in creating this campus?

Senior Citizens

- Across the nation: Consider indexing cost of living increase
- Better care of streets- Missoula County maintain the roads they are responsible for
- School Lane – above where the pavement ends – acknowledged and maintained by Missoula County
- Outdoor recreation and natural resource management and timber should be thought of as one issue in many ways. The community can and should maintain strong relationships with land managers and help them through these transitions as well.
- More help for our elderly, nursing, assisted living homes, access to Missoula...more steady jobs available.

Nonprofits, Service Clubs, Churches

- Continue to draw upon the asset of our part-time, affluent retirees: communicate, communicate, communicate

- Communication is needed throughout the community – at all levels.
- Continue to work with skilled facilitator to ease tension between motorized and non-motorized recreation
- Explore public housing options
- An entity that helps with our job readiness pool
- Look at our human capacity – and best utilize the volunteers we have
- Stable mental health assistance
- A youth center or teen facility
- Alcoholics Anonymous is here as well as Alanon – but bring in additional programs that deal with addiction.
- Change name of Hwy 83 to Glacier Parkway
- Public bathroom facility in Seeley Lake thanks to our new sewer system
- Bike path between Seeley Lake and Condon.
- Entry signs need to be updated or changed. Seeley Lake Community Foundation is working on this!
- Be family oriented in our community planning
- Capitalize on our tourism; provide a regional center that could promote all of the communities in the region Condon, Ovando, Lincoln,
- Raised bleachers that are handicap accessible for our school.
- Adult Education offered here
- One place to go to learn about all of the events here and in the region; post them on a webpage (Should be the Chamber site?)

Community Council, Land Management, Missoula County Reps, Pyramid Lumber

- A sewer in the next several years
- Growth of affordable housing (given the sewer), several new hospitality assets (restaurants and lodging) that will keep visitors in town overnight and improve visitation in the shoulder season
- Seeley must grow in order to remain viable but this growth must be planned and supported by a community vision
- Outdoor recreation will remain the primary driver of economic vitality. The community should focus on developing a range of recreational opportunities and embrace the culture of gaining economic benefit from visitors.
- Cross country skiing and mountain biking development
- Maintaining strong relationships with government agencies in formulating sound natural resource management and timber harvesting policies in support of Seeley Lake's historic economy.
- Capitalize on the "maker space" which provides for entrepreneurs – a co-working space
- DNRC - Recognize historic and emerging uses in the area and work in lockstep with the community to facilitate sound natural management in the area