Montana Horizons Program

TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

FROM STRIVING TO THRIVING

Northwest Area Foundation
Helping communities reduce poverty

HORIZONS
COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP TO REDUCE POVERTY

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Horizons Across Montana…

In 2004, Montana State University Extension began a partnership with the Northwest Area Foundation (NWAF) and communities across the state to address the growing concern of rural poverty in Montana. The general premise that directed this endeavor was if a delivery organization (MSU Extension) worked closely with a funding partner (the NWAF) in collaboration with local communities to identify and address issues of poverty, then positive results could be accomplished. This began a six-year partnership that was designed to create community dialog, develop local leadership, build on community assets, and move a community to visioning and action. To date, more than 35 communities have completed the 18-month Horizons program, with several additional communities participating in some elements of community dialog, leadership development and action planning.

This report details the work accomplished by 15 communities that successfully completed the Horizons III program during 2008-10 and provides a snapshot of their achievements. As examples throughout this report attest, the challenges in rural communities are significant but not insurmountable and opportunities abound. When community members focus on a specific outcome, join hands with collaborating partners and keep their eye on the future, the possibilities are never-ending. A new spirit and passion for community involvement is created when a common goal is identified and shared broadly.

The power of individual community members coming together for a common cause is not just an altruistic endeavor, but also a shared passion for positive change. Their work was, and is, about taking on small and big challenges to create communities that are more vibrant and viable places to live. They invested their time and talents so that others could enjoy benefits that grow from pride in "their" home town to a vision for the future.

Montana State University Extension is proud to be a part of the Horizons program in Montana. We would like to express our gratitude to the Northwest Area Foundation for providing funding support and being a valued partner in this program and to the thousands of people who have participated in this project and whose stories decorate the pages of this summary. May your continued work and successes create thriving communities across Montana.

Douglas L. Steele

Douglas L Steele
Vice Provost and Director of MSU Extension
Horizons Project Principle Investigator

HORIZONS
COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP TO REDUCE POVERTY

Northwest Area Foundation
Helping communities reduce poverty

Research and articles: Paul Lachapelle, MSU Extension Community Development Specialist,
Brita Graham, MSU Master of Public Administration Program
Layout: David Ashcraft, MSU Extension Communications
Special thanks: Joe Pioro, Jamie Vowell and the Horizons Community Coaches who provided information for this publication.

Horizons Quick Facts

Participants

Residents of 15 communities stretching from Alberton to Twin Bridges completed Horizons III. The smallest town had 302 residents and the largest had 3,105. Poverty rates ranged from 10.2% to 34.9%. An additional 20 communities participated in Horizons II and in a Pilot Program between 2004 and 2008.

Setting town visions

More than 2,996 local citizens helped create a vision for the future of their communities by participating in Horizons sessions at school assemblies, special meetings, and visioning rallies.

What is poverty?

Study Circles drew 670 participants over the course of the 6 session program with 126 community members trained as Study Circles facilitators. These residents joined in community conversations to discuss what poverty is, what it looks like locally, and what residents want to do to reduce poverty in their communities.

Who learned about poverty?

87.3% of community members who participated in these conversations report they increased their knowledge and understanding of poverty.

Who took action?

Action forums committed to specific projects drew more than 1,025 local residents who began taking specific steps to reduce poverty in their towns. LeadershipPlenty® Leadership training covered 9 modules and attracted 460 residents; 80.1% report the training enhanced their effectiveness in the community, 74.9% said they now have a greater awareness of their strengths within the community, and 94.1% report the training increased their leadership skills. Learn more at www.pew-partnership.org/lpinstitute.html

Horizons is a community leadership program aimed at reducing poverty in rural communities that have experienced significant decline or demographic change. The program's goal is to help communities understand poverty, help them commit to action to reduce it and then bring about lasting positive change in their community. It is funded by the Northwest Area Foundation (NWAF) and delivered by Montana State University (MSU) Extension. Participating communities were selected because they face economic decline and demographic change. Horizons requires a community to address these challenges and provides expertise and focus to help them do that. The program functions as an 18 month exercise and consists of five segments: Spotlights, Study Circles, LeadershipPlenty®, Community Visioning, and Community Coaching and Action.

Launched in 2003, Horizons is funded by the NWAF, whose mission is to help reduce poverty in eight states including Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. Also participating are towns in Minnesota, Iowa, North and South Dakota.

In each state, NWAF partners with experienced regional institutions that provide training, consulting, and technical support to communities committed to the 18-month-long effort. Montana State University Extension fulfills that role in Montana where 15 communities stretching from Alberton to Twin Bridges completed Horizons III. The smallest town had 302 residents, the largest, 3,105. Poverty rates ranged from 10.2% to 34.9%.

Montana State University Extension provides Montana communities with coaching and training and has assembled a network of other partners who stand ready to help Horizon communities. In Montana some 200 organizations have helped including banks, businesses, community organizations, schools, and hospitals.

Horizons explores perceptions about and sources of poverty. It isn't always just about lack of money, but is often the result of people in remote areas being unaware of public and private resources that could help them.

Horizons builds stronger community leadership—helping all participants learn ways to effectively lead, communicate, resolve conflicts, and work together—an asset some argue is as important as good roads, great schools, and clean water.

Horizons embraces the entire community. Everyone is needed and everyone has something to offer. For communities to truly thrive over the long term, everyone must be encouraged to share a voice and vision and a chance to prosper.

What's involved?

The 18-month program includes four required segments. Communities must meet thresholds for each segment within defined time frames before they can move forward. Each threshold is connected to skills and achievements that help strengthen a community.

All Horizons communities get the same resources and tools during the first three activities. Community coaches—many are MSU Extension educators—work with local steering committees to select additional resources customized to meet local needs. For one community, it might mean economic development training; for another, conflict resolution counseling or technical skill courses.

All Horizons communities participate in:

1. Community conversations and action forums focused on poverty. This segment is about 'moving from talk to action' and requires 12 hours during a three-month period involving at least 30 people. The goal is for community members to learn what poverty looks like where they live and consider what they can do about it. Momentum grows as community members build skills, involve more people, and become more strategic.
2. Leadership building using LeadershipPlenty® training. At least 25 people commit some 30 hours of time to individual leadership training. This segment is popular because it's practical and assumes every community member can lead.
3. Community visioning and planning focuses on leadership growth, poverty reduction, and getting community factions to pull together to achieve common goals. This involves the whole community. It's a great way to draw new people, including youth and senior citizens, newcomers and long-time residents, into civic problem solving.
4. Idea implementation. MSU Extension coaches and workshop leaders provide communities with support, coaching, and additional resources as they put their plans into action.

Community Index

Alberton 2
Belt 3
Choteau 4
Cut Bank 5
Darby 6
Ennis 7
Eureka 8
Geyser 9
Harlem 10
Malta 11
Sheridan 12
Stanford 13
Stevensville 14
Superior 15
Twin Bridges 16

Alberton Horizons establishes food pantry

Horizons Outcomes:

- Started a Local Food Pantry
- Established Alberton Community Foundation and selected board members
- Sponsored the Walk for Awareness to support local programs that provide breast and cervical screenings for low income women

Alberton is located in Mineral County, in northwestern Montana. The town is named after Albert J. Earling, president of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St, Paul and Pacific Railroad. The most common industries in Alberton are construction, health care, food and beverage establishments, accommodations, and education.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicate:

- 17% of residents had no high school diploma, compared to 13% in Montana
- The city gained 64 residents from 2000 to 2006
- 45% of residents lived in a different county in 1995
- 80% of individuals and 52% of households earned less than $30k in 1999
- 28% of individuals earned income below the poverty line in 1999, compared to 13.1% in Montana
- 17% of women and 22% of men live below the poverty line
- The family type with the highest poverty rate is "Male-No Wife" with 80% under the poverty line
- 13.1% of housing units were vacant in 2000

Alberton embraced Horizons Program opportunities and identified the following action items:

- Develop a 501c3 non-profit to serve as an over-site umbrella for Horizons/Community activities
- Conduct a community survey to determine needs regarding economy, health, education, infrastructure and recreation
- Create a Community Newsletter
- Promote a Community Garden and open a Food Bank

Thanks to Horizons, the Alberton Community Foundation has been established and a board formed. The Horizons Steering Committee determined that developing a 501c3 non-profit corporation to serve as an oversight umbrella for all endeavors in the Alberton community would be the best course of action. Together with local governmental, civic bodies and other groups the Foundation aims to foster planning, development, and improvement of the Alberton Community and surrounding area. The initiative also aims to promote social welfare, provide relief for the unemployed or underemployed, and to secure adequate housing, community facilities and other related services and conditions for the welfare of the community. They will also conduct research in the form of a community survey to learn more about the community and aid in community development efforts.

The Foundation, with assistance from Horizons, the Corporation of Public Newspapers and the Clark Fork Chronicle, will be creating a Technology Center and bringing a newsletter into the community. In addition to providing production facilities for the newsletter, the Technology Center will offer Computer/Internet training to area residents. Eight students enrolled in the Community Journalism Class, through the Alberton School's Community Education Program have been integral to this effort.

The Alberton Community Food Bank opened as a result of local citizen dedication. A meeting as a result of Horizons to determine local needs in Mineral County identified a food pantry in Alberton as a priority. With guidance from the Montana Food Bank Network (MFBN), the committee approached the Frenchtown Rural Fire District about using the room at the back of their station. They agreed and brought it up to standards required by MFBN. Volunteers were mentored by MFBN, shelves and freezers were donated, supplies brought in and organized, mailings were done, and several local organizations donated money and food in the fight against hunger.

Alberton hosted the first Breast Cancer Walk for Awareness on October 24, 2009. The event had more than 100 registrants who were able to raise more than two thousand dollars for the Montana Breast and Cervical Program. This money has been designated to help with prevention awareness and will go to people who need financial assistance with mammograms. All participants left the walk with a tote bag filled with educational information about the importance of early detection, and contact information about local resources involving breast cancer awareness and detection.

Alberton

- Population: 374
- Poverty Rate: 19.6%
- Per capita income: $13,120
- Visioning Participants: 56
- Percent of population involved in Visioning: 15%

Belt Horizons focuses on wellness and beautification

Horizons Outcomes:

- Received a grant from Blue Cross Blue Shield Healthy Montanans program toward new wellness facility
- Built Information/ Communication Kiosk for the community which will allow for better communication regarding events, news, and resources
- Brought Belt Youth Leadership Group and Belt Horizons together to organize community events
- Provided weatherization improvements to the local Senior Center
- Developed a Community Beautification Program to enhance pride in the community and to eradicate 'visual poverty'

Belt is located in Cascade County, Montana and had a population of 591 as of the 2000 US Census. The town is named after the nearby Belt Mountains. Once called "Little Pittsburgh," Belt was primarily a coal mining town until 1930, when the coal market sank. The most common industries in Belt are health care, education, accommodations, and public administration.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicates:

- 12% have a college diploma or greater, compared to 24% in Montana
- The city lost 42 residents from 2000 to 2007
- 83% of individuals and 59% of households earned less than $30k in 1999
- The income bracket with the largest number of households was "less than $10,000"
- 20% of individuals under age 18 live below the poverty line, compared to 13.1% in Montana
- 17% of individuals over age 65 live below the poverty line, compared to 9.1% in Montana

Belt

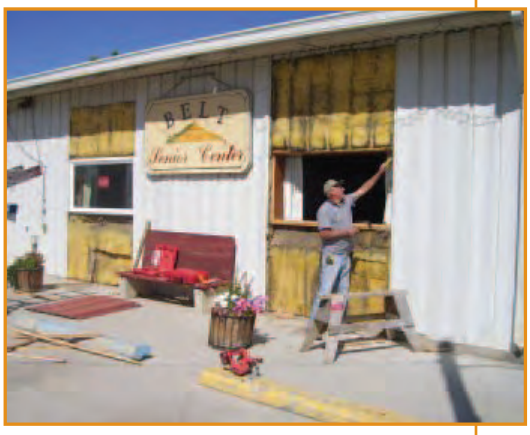
- Population: 591
- Poverty Rate: 10.2%
- Per capita income: 14,970
- Visioning Participants: 135
- Percent of population involved in Visioning: 23%

Belt embraced Horizons Program opportunities and identified the following action items:

- Improve Community Communications
- Develop Community Beautification
- Establish Community Development Events Series

The citizens of Belt are a community of conveners, ready to help their community in a variety of ways when a need arises. One important need was getting information out to the community. The revival of the school newspaper as a community-school collaborative has helped with communication, and the community calendar is a great existing resource. But how to display the information has been the biggest topic of discussion. To meet this need, the Belt Horizons Program built an information kiosk on Main Street. The Clean-Up Committee and the Communications Committee joined forces to coordinate the initiative. The committees feel that the improved communications will enhance development efforts in the community. Numerous volunteers helped to clean up the area and donated time and resources to build the kiosk.

Belt Horizons has also assisted the Senior Center, which is a community gathering point. Horizons participants realized windows needed to be replaced. Members worked hard to improve this important building in the community. Another one of the concerns for Belt was lack of a wellness center where people could get a cardiovascular workout without having to travel to Great Falls. More than 100 people attended an orientation meeting regarding the wellness center and have signed up for work out sessions in the newly constructed facility. On average, 40 to 50 people use the facility on a weekly basis.



Belt Horizons focused on how to use resources to benefit the most people in the community. Ideas ranged from park playground equipment to helping with the city pool to adding resources to the Boys and Girls Club, and improved communication networks. During the Belt Celebration Day in July 2009, Horizons members conducted a written survey of willing participants. The survey was used to evaluate the attitude about the community. The Horizons survey netted more than 70 completed surveys and 20 children's drawings. The Horizons Celebration Committee teamed with the City officials for a very well-attended event.

Choteau Horizons helps neighbors

Horizons Outcomes:

- Organized "Opportunities for All Scholarship, Inc." that will give financial assistance and reduced lunches to qualified individuals
- Re-established Neighbors Helping Neighbors, which aids those in financially challenging situations to help bridge gaps in their lives
- Strengthened the Pals of the Pavilion advisory group

Choteau is the county seat of Teton County. The town is named after the French explorer and fur-trapper Pierre Choteau, Jr. In 2000, the population was 1,781. Nearby Egg Mountain is considered to be one of the world's most important paleontology sites. The most common industries in Choteau are health care, education, construction, accommodations, and agriculture.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicates:

- 20% of residents had no high school diploma, compared to 13% in Montana
- The median age in 2000 was 45.9 years, compared to 37.5 in Montana
- The city lost 71 residents from 2000 to 2006
- 83% of individuals and 56% of households earned less than $30k in 1999
- The income bracket with the largest number of households was "less than $10,000"
- 31% of individuals under age 18 live below the poverty line, compared to 13.1% in Montana
- 18% of women and 17% of men live below the poverty line
- The family type with the highest poverty rate is "Female – No Husband – Children Under 5 Years" with 57% under the poverty line in 1999

Choteau embraced Horizons Program opportunities and identified the following action items:

- Creation of Opportunities for All Scholarships, Inc.
- Neighbors Helping Neighbors Program
- Local Business Support

Choteau now has an organization called "Opportunities for All Scholarships, Inc." that will give financial assistance to those meeting financial guidelines for free and reduced lunches. The scholarship committee will help pay for enrichment programs for youth and adults. For instance, if a young person is musically talented, but unable to afford lessons, the scholarship could assist with costs of that enrichment education. The group has received generous donations and has launched a fundraising effort and campaign.

The Choteau group, Neighbors Helping Neighbors, helps those in financially-challenging situations bridge gaps in their lives. From linking people to resources and assistance programs (such as providing baby cribs, and washers and dryers) to rental assistance, the Neighbors Helping Neighbors program has a direct link to those in poverty.

The group has applied for several grants, and has received multiple donations for services, and equipment.

The Retail Research Committee has partnered with the Choteau Chamber of Commerce to survey local retail businesses to learn what projects might help them sustain and grow their businesses in economically challenging times. This action has a direct impact on poverty since the community has already lost several businesses over the last decade.

The Pals of the Pavilion group is an advisory group for the renovation of the community hall in Choteau. The group is currently investigating a Rural Business Enterprise Grant and would like to see Choteau become a conference community. If more conferences are held here, with the Pavilion being a premier spot for large group meetings, then the hotels and food service industries may also generate greater revenue.

Choteau

- Population: 1,781
- Poverty Rate: 17.6%
- Per capita income: $14,999
- Visioning Participants: 407
- Percent of population involved in Visioning: 23%

Cut Bank Horizons promotes healthy living

Horizons Outcomes:

- Worked to beautify Cut Bank by revamping local businesses and was awarded a Community Transportation Enhancement Program grant
- Developed "Be Fit, Be Strong, Belong" Program to offer scholarships to low income families, students, adults, and senior citizens to enable them to use the civic center
- Created a 'Shop Local' media campaign and provided small business development training

Cut Bank is the county seat of Glacier County, in northwestern Montana. In 2000, the population was 3,105. The town is named after a nearby gorge along Cut Bank Creek, a tributary of the Marias River. The Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway operates a regional railroad freight yard in the city. The most common industries in Cut Bank are education, accommodations, and public administration.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicates:

- The largest age category is 10 to 14 years (313 people or 10.1%)
- The city gained 66 residents from 2000 to 2006
- 82.5% are White and 13.5% American Indian or Alaska Native
- 70% of individuals and 43% of households earned less than $30k in 1999
- The income bracket with the largest number of households was "$10,000 to $14,999"
- 16% of individuals under age 18 live below the poverty line, compared to 13.1% in Montana
- The family type with the highest poverty rate is "Female – No Husband – Children Under 5 Years" with 64% under the poverty line in 1999
- 15.3% of housing units were vacant in 2000

Cut Bank

- Population: 3,105
- Poverty Rate: 12.4%
- Per capita income: $15,977
- Visioning Participants: 573
- Percent of population involved in Visioning: 18%

Cut Bank embraced Horizons Program opportunities and identified the following action items:

- Create Healthy Lifestyles Program (low income families accessing public recreation facilities)
- Attract, develop and retain small businesses
- Invest in Community Beautification Program

The City of Cut Bank has been awarded a Community Transportation Enhancement Program grant through the State of Montana Department of Transportation (DOT). Horizons Steering Committee members stepped in and decided this would be a good project to enhance and unify the downtown area. Working with city officials, the project includes the use of old historical photographs to help beautify Main Street. These photographs are 8 x 8 foot panels, made of aluminum placed outside Cut Bank's historic downtown buildings. Working collaboratively, Horizons members, community members, city officials and DOT staff reviewed the photographs and determined which buildings to showcase. The project illustrates how diverse individuals can work together to preserve history and promote economic development.

Horizons members also developed the "Be Fit, Be Strong, Belong" Program to offer scholarships to low income families, students, adults, and senior citizens to enable them to use the civic center. This program helps low income families be part of the community through membership to the local civic center for family interaction and exercise, which will in turn help foster healthy lifestyles. The exercise program has been developed especially for children and young adults ages 10-18 through the 'Move Across Montana' initiative. For every hour of exercise they complete, they will earn 30 miles on the Montana map. There will be incentives to 'traveling' across the state to see who 'travels' the farthest.

Horizons community members also helped establish the Healthy Communities Group to assist the community recognize and partner with important resources available in the area. Part of this initiative was increased emphasis on the local Senior Citizen's Center. The Senior Center is a very important asset in the community as it has daily activities for seniors, including dances, and serves as a place to gather and share stories. The Senior Center also delivers Meals on Wheels daily to low income seniors in the community. The Senior Center is an established community resource that helps the elderly in the community and sustaining this gem through donations is a great thing to do.

Community members also created a 'Shop Local' media campaign and provided small business development training. Several members of the organizing group attended a nearby workshop to learn about grant writing. The workshop helped community members take the lead in community action by learning how to write grants.

Darby Horizons improves quality of life

Horizons Outcomes:

- Created Darby Bread Box/Food Bank to help many local folks in need of supplemental food resources
- Working to establish a Parks and Recreation District so that all community members can participate in educational and recreational opportunities for no/minimal charge
- Enhanced medical services necessary to provide improved quality of life for all community members

Darby is located in Ravalli County, in western Montana. In 2000, the population was 710 residents. The town was named after its postmaster, James Darby, and is located on the Bitterroot River. The most common industries in Darby are accommodations, wood products, education, agriculture, and construction.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicates:

- 18% had no high school diploma, compared to 13% in Montana
- The largest age category is 15 to 19 years (70 people or 9.9%)
- The city gained 144 residents from 2000 to 2006
- 35% of residents lived in a different county in 1995
- 86% of individuals and 64% of households earned less than $30k in 1999
- The income bracket with the largest number of households was "less than $10,000"
- 31% of individuals under age 18 live below the poverty line, compared to 13.1% in Montana
- 25% of women and 23% of men live below the poverty line
- The family type with the highest poverty rate is "Male-No Wife-Children 5 to 17 Years" with 67% under the poverty line in 1999

Darby embraced Horizons Program opportunities and identified the following action items:

- Food Bank/Darby Bread Box
- Parks and Recreation District
- Enhanced Medical Services

Horizons community members worked with community volunteers to create the Darby Bread Box/Food Bank to help local residents in need of supplemental food resources.

The generous donation of a building by a community member now houses the Darby Food Bank. The facility will be available at no charge as long as the Food Bank is in existence. The Darby Bread Box has become a source of pride for the community and the committee was awarded the Serve Montana Award from the Governor's Office of Community Service.

The Parks and Recreation Group has developed a comprehensive strategic plan for the formation of a tax supported district. They have worked with various Ravalli County officials in understanding how tax levies work and what they must do to get a proposal on the ballot. The Darby Parks and Recreation Committee and the Darby Ranger District are also in the beginning stages of starting a community garden. A community greenhouse is under repair but is able to accommodate plant starts for the community garden and also to be growing greens for the school lunch room. The Parks and Recreation Group also presented a call to action for Darby Beautiful Day, bringing volunteers out to help clean the town and improve community pride for the coming summer months.

The community is working on enhanced medical services necessary to provide quality of life for all community members. Horizons community members have been integral in this effort. The Darby Vision statement, crafted during their Visioning event captures the spirit and enthusiasm of the community: "A small town with a lot of heart that embraces our positive attributes to build and sustain a community that supports the needs of the people."

Darby

- Population: 710
- Poverty Rate: 24%
- Per capita income: $11,658
- Visioning Participants: 106
- Percent of population involved in Visioning: 15%

Ennis Horizons blazes new trails

Horizons Outcomes:

- Enabled Madison Byways to engage the Madison Valley Medical Center and Valley Bank to secure a path for a proposed trail system
- Funded the Big Sky Lift Program from donations by members of the Yellowstone Club which will give individuals a $1000 grant and a family a $2500 grant as long as they can demonstrate economic hardship
- Created the Madison Valley Coalition, a non-partisan group assembled to communicate about and act upon important issues affecting the broader Madison Valley

Ennis is located in Madison County, in southwestern Montana. In 2000, the population was 840 residents. The town is named after William Ennis, a settler who homesteaded the area that later became the town of Ennis. The town is located on the Madison River and is surrounded by three mountain ranges: the Madison Range, the Gravelly Range, and the Tobacco Root Mountains. The most common industries in Ennis are health care, construction, accommodations, and agriculture.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicates:

- The median age in 2000 was 43.1 years, compared to 37.5 years in Montana
- The city gained 165 residents from 2000 to 2006
- 27% of residents lived in a different county in 1995
- 75% of individuals and 49% of households earned less than $30k in 1999
- The income bracket with the largest number of households was "less than $10,000"
- 12% of individuals over age 65 live below the poverty line, compared to 9.1% in Montana
- 15% of women live below the poverty line
- The family type with the highest poverty rate is "Female-No Husband-Children Under age 18" with 57% under the poverty line in 1999
- 15.4% of housing units were vacant in 2000

Ennis

- Population: 840
- Poverty Rate: 11.9%
- Per capita income: 17,310
- Visioning Participants: 250
- Percent of population involved in Visioning: 30%

Ennis embraced Horizons Program opportunities and identified the following action items:

- Establish a Community Center
- Enhance the Madison Byways Community Development Program
- Create an Affordable Housing Land Trust

Madison Byways is a new non-profit group in town working on building a network of trails throughout the valley. The group formed out of the desire to create a safe and healthy transportation network in the Madison Valley. Some of the concerns of the group include a safe route from downtown to local shopping centers and to other businesses in that area as well as the creation of recreation walkways around the valley.

Madison Farm to Fork has embarked on its plan to build two community greenhouses, one of which will be devoted to providing fresh produce for local school lunches and teaching gardening classes. The other will eventually provide fresh produce for the community. The program featured "Dine for Dirt," a friendly, casual dinner to raise funds for the effort.

The Big Sky Lift Program has come out of the Big Sky Area and is intended to assist individuals and families who are experiencing economic hardship from the recent business downturn. Recently, the initiative raised more than $100,000. The Big Sky Lift Program will give individuals $1000 and families $2500 grants as long as they can demonstrate economic hardship.

The Madison Valley Coalition is a newly-formed, non-partisan group of landowners, residents, businesses, working ranches and legal resources assembled to communicate about and act upon important issues affecting the broader Madison Valley. With its presence in the Madison Valley in Montana and representation in Washington D.C., the goal of the Coalition is to create fact-based, constructive solutions that will, ideally, span interests of voters, taxpayers and employers and includes many of southwestern Montana's remaining working ranches as some if its cornerstone members. The Coalition's goal is to improve the efficiencies in which issues are recognized and proposals are created, and presented. Among additional initiatives that are being investigated include establishing a community center, and create an affordable housing land trust.

Eureka Horizons develops gardens and co-ops

Horizons Outcomes:

- Developed a community garden; The committee chose the Lincoln County Fairgrounds as a site to plant the garden
- Partnered with the Montana Cooperative Development Center to begin the introduction and establishment of marketing cooperatives
- Supported the funding of additional leadership training for 30 individuals to ensure the sustainability of leadership skills and community development

Eureka is located in Lincoln County, in the northwestern corner of Montana. The population was 1,017 in 2000. The town is in the Tobacco Valley, named by the explorer, David Thompson, after the native tobacco plant grown in the area. The most common industries in Eureka are wood products, health care, and tourism.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicates:

- 21% had no high school diploma, compared to 13% in Montana
- The largest age category is 10 to 14 years (84 people or 8.3%)
- The city gained 11 residents from 2000 to 2006
- 76% of individuals and 56% of households earned less than $30k in 1999
- Income bracket with the largest number of households was "less than $10,000"
- 34% of individuals under age 18 live below the poverty line, compared to 13.1% in Montana
- 27% of women live below the poverty line
- The family type with the highest poverty rate is "Female-No Husband- Children Under 5 Years and 5 to 17 years" with 67% under the poverty line in 1999
- 12.8% of housing units were vacant in 2000

Eureka embraced Horizons Program opportunities and identified the following action items:

- Lifeskills Training Program
- Seeds of Hope Community Garden

The community of Eureka chose to develop a community garden to address poverty. The committee that formed to work on this effort chose the Lincoln County Fairgrounds as a site to plant the garden. The garden features raised beds with vegetables and herbs. In addition, benches and trees will be added to beautify the area and make it an inviting location to gather and spend time. The community garden is managed by volunteers in the Extension Master Gardener program as well as the Community Garden Committee. All of the individuals involved are new to community leadership positions. Throughout the growing season, the fresh produce will be harvested and distributed to the local food bank, senior citizens center, and commodities programs thus supplying individuals with fresh and healthy produce. The long-term plan for the garden is to eventually incorporate plots that can be purchased to earn revenue for sustaining the program.

In addition to the community garden, members of the Eureka Horizons Group have also decided to work with the Eureka Area Chamber of Commerce to enhance and expand the weekly Farmers Market and possibly move the Farmers Market to the Fairgrounds. Not only will this enhance the appearance of an unsightly portion of the fairgrounds, it will provide a gathering place as well as a venue for individuals to sell produce and other goods. Currently, many of the community members are making their living selling crafts, produce, art and photos. In addition, proceeds from the produce that is sold from the community garden at the farmer's market will also help sustain the longevity of the program. Consequently, this project enhances community as well as economic development by raising revenue and bringing community members together.

The Eureka Horizons Group asked for assistance from the Montana Cooperative Development Center. Originally, the Horizons group planned to develop an e-marketing store to assist cottage industries in the community. The group has opted to take the plan to a higher level and focus on education and life skill development for a broader range of individuals. As a result, the fairground area is slated to become a community and educational center offering an incubator for cooperatives, marketing, budgeting, food preparation, and food distribution.

Eureka

- Population: 1,017
- Poverty Rate: 19.5%
- Per capita income: $12,619
- Visioning Participants: 127
- Percent of population involved in Visioning: 15%

Geyser Horizons builds-up community resources

Horizons Outcomes:

- Established Town Upkeep and Beautification Program and had a Community "Spiff Up" which will continue on a regular basis with hanging baskets downtown and many buildings painted
- Produced and distributed Community Directory providing local resources and welcome baskets
- Founded Long-Term Vision Committee to survey community

Geyser is located in Judith Basin County, in central Montana. As of 2007, the town had a population of 302 residents. The town is named after a thermal mud spring located nearby. The promise of free land lured homesteaders to Geyser, many of them coal miners from nearby Belt. The most common industries in Geyser are agriculture, accommodations, public administration, and education.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicates:

- The median age as of July 2007 was 39 years, compared to 37.5 years in Montana
- 23% had no high school diploma, compared to 13% in Montana
- 34.9% of residents with income below the poverty level in 1999, compared with 14.6% in Montana
- 28.2% of housing units are vacant
- The largest number of homes were built in 1939 or earlier

Geyser

- Population: 302
- Poverty Rate: 34.9%
- Per capita income: $17,250
- Visioning Participants: 50
- Percent of population involved in Visioning: 17%

Geyser embraced Horizons Program opportunities and identified the following action items:

- Community Beautification
- Welcome Wagon Committee/ Tourism Promotion
- Job Creation/Sustainability

Community members worked together to create a Geyser/Raynesford Community Directory. This directory contains areas of interest, maps of the two towns, and phone numbers of local residences. A list of emergency numbers is also included as well as a school information page. A useful Business and Service Directory completes this handy reference. The directory can be updated and accessed online through the Geyser Community Blog website. The actual process of compiling the directory was very informative. The necessary research revealed several little known resources. The directory was distributed to all community members in the spring of 2009 after it was completed. It is included in the Welcome Baskets which are now distributed to all new residents to the area. The Geyser/Raynesford Directory will continue to grow and change to meet the community's needs.

The Geyser community has a number of citizens that are at a disadvantage when it comes to getting basic services such as seeing a doctor or buying groceries. The community has a large number of senior citizens that are no longer traveling independently. One of the problems is the lack of public transportation. Since the closest

grocery store and medical facility are 15 miles away, people without transportation depend on family and friends. A recent survey conducted by the Horizons Group showed that many people in the community would take advantage of a shuttle to the nearby town of Stanford on a regular basis and would be willing to pay a small fee for the service. The Horizons Group applied for and received a small grant from the Judith Basin Endowment Fund for a Main Street to Main Street transportation plan to transport people from Geyser to Stanford.

Several beautification projects are in the works, including sprucing up the cemetery and giving the former grocery store building a major whitewash. With local and small-scale successes in working together with other community groups, Horizons has made it possible to work with other government and community entities, expanding "horizons" from just the Geyser community to as far as the eye can see.

Harlem Horizons boosts housing and awareness

Horizons Outcomes:

- Established a 501c3 so that seeking and securing funds to support projects that will help address poverty
- Created a local website to allow for improved marketing of Harlem and Harlem Community Foundation activities
- Appointed a Low Income Housing Survey Committee to begin to address housing needs in Harlem

Harlem is located in Blaine County, in northern Montana. In 2000, the town had a population of 804 residents. Harlem was founded in 1889, the same year that Montana achieved statehood. The most common industries in Harlem are education, social assistance, public administration, health care, construction, and agriculture.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicates:

- 21% had no high school diploma, compared to 13% in Montana
- The largest age category is under 5 years (76 people or 9.0%)
- The city lost 44 residents from 2000 to 2006
- 76% of individuals and 54% of households earned less than $30k in 1999
- The income bracket with the largest number of households was "less than $10,000"
- 33% of individuals under age 18 live below the poverty line, compared to 13.1% in Montana
- 23% of women and 23% of men live below the poverty line
- The family type with the highest poverty rate is "Female-No Husband- Children Under 5 Years" with 67% under the poverty line in 1999
- 17.2% of housing units were vacant in 2000

Harlem embraced Horizons Program opportunities and identified the following action items:

- Establish 501c3 to address community development needs
- Low income housing
- Community website

Housing development in Harlem is a priority. Horizons members are working with the Montana Department of Commerce in developing their five-year plan for housing and community development. The plan will guide housing and community development policy and actions, such as housing needs, economic development, and public facility and infrastructure investment over the next several years. An additional part of that plan will be looking into the status of affordable housing throughout the region. Among the discussion points on this topic are methods of attracting potential homeowners to the area, the opportunities for subdivisions in the Harlem area, and dealing with blighted properties to make way for new ones.

In addition, discussion is focused on how the Harlem School can purchase property to build living quarters or "teacherages" in town.

Another main Horizons objective was to develop a community website to promote tourism, provide information on the local history, and advertise many of the local activities available to local residents and tourists. This website is also intended to provide job share and ride share listings. The site will be utilized to list senior citizens activities and list classified ads on the page to make money to run the website. Additionally, the goal is to publish a list of senior citizen grants or other programs available for seniors.

Horizons members are working to create two welcome signs at each entrance to the town. At least one of the signs will be digital and will serve to promote events and activities in real time that are happening in the community. Local businesses have agreed to help with paying the electricity bills and with performing the maintenance and upkeep of the sign. The local civic club will be responsible for the updating of the sign.

Horizons members also organized a clean-up day in Harlem. Plants were hung on the poles in the town and garbage was hauled out of town to the dump. The Harlem Volunteer Fire Department did the cooking for the "Cook-Off to Clean" breakfast, and the Harlem Civic Club paid for the food.

Harlem

- Population: 804
- Poverty Rate: 22.6%
- Per capita income: $13,295
- Visioning Participants: 256
- Percent of population involved in Visioning: 32%

Malta Horizons assists young and old

Horizons Outcomes:

- Provided comfortable benches for the many elderly people who use the public bus system in Malta
- Formed Infrastructure Committee to discuss feasibility of having a community pool re-established
- Organized system of "Malta Trails" in and around Malta, which will include the creation of a new non-profit organization to help manage the effort

Malta is the county seat of Phillips County, located in northern Montana. As of the 2000 census, the city had a population of 2,120 residents. Malta began as a railroad town, and still has an Amtrak station serving the Empire Builder rail line which runs from Chicago to Portland. The most common industries in Malta are education, agriculture, and accommodations.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicates:

- 18% had no high school diploma, compared to 13% in Montana
- The median age in 2000 was 42.8 years, compared to 37.5 in Montana
- The city lost 233 residents from 2000 to 2006
- 76% of individuals and 48% of households earned less than $30k in 1999
- Income bracket with the largest number of households was "less than $10,000"
- 15% of housing units were vacant in 2000

Malta embraced Horizons Program opportunities and identified the following action items:

- Community Benches for Elderly/others
- Job Mentor/Job Shadow Program for Youth
- Community Youth Center

The efforts of Horizons have included working on replacement of the swimming pool and community center. The current pool was built in 1956 and due to its age is deteriorating. A group was formed to discuss how young and old can benefit from a new pool. The group felt that an improved swimming pool would provide a great opportunity for youth that have parents that work during the summer months and would allow elderly the opportunity for physical therapy. In addition, part time or full time jobs can be created by this pool. It was discussed that any proposal should be a part of a larger recreational vision for the community including an adult basketball league. Opportunities to find long term funding for a recreational position to coordinate this and other activities including a pool are now being discussed.

The Community Service Action Team has worked closely with the local high school Future Farmers of America (FFA) Chapter to coordinate completion of community benches. These benches are located around the community in coordination with the public transportation buses. Benches are designed for the older population that uses this form of transportation.

The coordination and cooperation between the Action Team and the high school is a product of participation in the Horizon program.

Community members also came together to discuss creating walking trails in and around the Malta community. The discussion centered on the need to create healthy exercise options for all ages. The Horizons Infrastructure Committee felt this effort would dovetail well with broader community development needs in Malta. As a result, residents of Malta have gained an appreciation for what is now termed the "Horizon Way"

Community members have recognized the need and potential positive outcomes that result when everyone in the community is involved in a conversation and encouraged to participate in developing community plans.

Malta

- Population: 2,120
- Poverty Rate: 13.1%
- Per capita income: $16,405
- Visioning Participants: 300
- Percent of population involved in Visioning: 15%

Sheridan Horizons invigorates local pride

Horizons Outcomes:

- Worked with Sheridan schools to offer continuing education classes
- Worked with Twin Bridges and the Montana Community Foundation to establish the Ruby Valley Community Foundation.
- Sought and received a Vista Volunteer to increase the capacity and long term sustainability of Jackson's Garden, a new community garden.

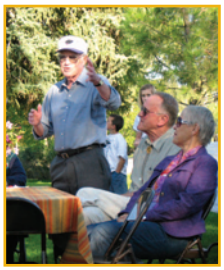
Sheridan is located in Madison County, in southwestern Montana. As of the 2000 census, the population was 659 residents. The town is named after Philip Sheridan, a Union civil war general. It is located in the Ruby valley, and serves as the business hub for this area. Seven mountain ranges surround the town, where the Ruby River flows to the west. The most common industries in Sheridan are construction, education, health care, and accommodations.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicates:

- The median age in 2000 was 48.3 years, compared to 37.5 in Montana
- The city gained 40 residents from 2000 to 2006
- 29% of residents lived in a different county in 1995
- 84% of individuals and 72% of households earned less than $30k in 1999
- The income bracket with the largest number of households was "$10,000 to $14,999"
- 43% of individuals under age 18 live below the poverty line, compared to 13.1% in Montana
- 23% of women and 28% of men live below the poverty line
- The family type with the highest poverty rate is "Male-No Wife-With Related Children Under age 18" with 75% under the poverty line in 1999
- 17.3% of housing units were vacant in 2000

Sheridan embraced Horizons Program opportunities and identified the following action items:

- After-School Program
- Adult Education
- Buy-Local Program
- Community Garden
- Leadership Retreats
- Community Foundation



Members of the Sheridan Horizon's group initiated the development of a local community foundation. After discussions with neighboring Twin Bridges, also a Horizons community, the communities decided to work together to create the Ruby Valley Community Foundation. The organizers of this groundbreaking partnership hope that the foundation will provide not only a vehicle for residents to give back to the community but also a source of sustainable funding for community development projects.

Continuing education was identified as a need through the Horizons process. Representatives of the Horizons Program worked with Sheridan School representatives to offer continuing education classes. Some course offerings included disseminating information supportive of living well such as cooking whole foods and financial planning. Community education was intended to offer the added opportunity for social interaction bringing people of various social groups together to develop support within the community and address the poverty of isolation. Tremendous partnerships have resulted from these classes. In working on this project, citizens of the area have recognized the need for leaders and have been provided many opportunities to learn.

Jackson's Garden, a budding community garden was significantly strengthened through the Horizons process. Jackson's Garden is an eight acre plot of land managed by committed volunteers. The garden's mission is "sustainably supporting gardening for production, education and enjoyment for our community." The greater awareness of poverty in the community has justified the need for the garden. This project offers an opportunity to work together with community members to grow food, learn about gardening, and practice positive group dynamics, and share important ideas. Ultimately, making the garden a resource for all community members is the goal.

The Ruby Valley Food Project (RVFP) is a partnership of Jackson's Garden and the Ruby Watershed Council. The RVFP has been awarded a slot to host a VISTA worker. The VISTA works to build the capacity of Jackson's Garden by developing a plan for long term sustainability as well as funding sources, policies and procedures. Educational programs for the schools will focus on supporting living well through a connection to the land and the rich agricultural heritage in the area. Students will have opportunities to do physical work in the garden as well as participate in activities to heighten awareness of heritage.

Sheridan

- Population: 659
- Poverty Rate: 22%
- Per capita income: $15,370
- Visioning Participants: 160
- Percent of population involved in Visioning: 24%

Stanford Horizons expands education and resources

Horizons Outcomes:

- Initiated Stanford Adult Education Classes as a result of the Horizons Study Circles program
- Helped to open "The Treasure Room," a local store that carries clothing, gifts and household items
- Instigated new leadership at Basin Health Organization Food Pantry with improvements including a new freezer and shelving

Stanford is the county seat of Judith Basin County, located in central Montana. Stanford was named after Stanfordville, New York, the hometown of the sheepherders that founded the town. The most common industries in Stanford are education, accommodations, construction, public administration, and agriculture.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicates:

- 25% of residents lived in a different county in 1995
- 80% of individuals and 56% of households earned less than $30k in 1999
- The income bracket with the largest number of households was "$10,000 to $14,999"
- 23% of individuals under age 18 live below the poverty line, compared to 13.1% in Montana
- The family type with the highest poverty rate is "Female-No Husband-No Related Children Under age 18" with 67% under the poverty line in 1999
- 17.3% of housing units were vacant in 2000

Stanford embraced Horizons Program opportunities and identified the following action items:

- Community Resources
- Elderly Services

The Stanford Adult Education Classes were initiated as a result of the Horizons Study Circle process. There were 29 community members who signed up for the Adult Education Committee. Through this program, community needs that were identified and addressed were requests for computer literacy, enhancing quality time together with family and other community members, and the need for basic home improvement, carpentry, and mechanical knowledge. Classes offered included, basic computer skills, aerobics, woodworking, and scrapbooking. New sectors of the community are now interacting with each other and forming positive relationships. A community support system that did not exist before is now in place.

"The Treasure Room" clothing store in Stanford was opened in a small building on Main Street. The store owner says she credits the Horizons program for providing her with the leadership tools and the confidence in herself to pursue a new business venture. She says that she was looking for a way to provide the community with an additional resource that was not currently available and thought a clothing store would be a valuable asset to the town of Stanford and the surrounding area, since people usually have to travel more than 45 miles to purchase clothing.

The Basin Health Organization Food Pantry housed in Stanford has seen some major changes and is under new administration. A recent graduate of the Horizons leadership program has recently taken over the food pantry. Improvements include a freezer and additional shelving that has been added to the food pantry, and increasing the availability of the pantry to meet the food needs of residents. The food pantry is available to any resident of Judith Basin County and there is no screening process for residents to receive assistance. Anyone who is in need may come in and receive food from the pantry. The Food Pantry has proved to be a valuable resource in a small rural setting like Stanford where economic hardship is a growing reality. The improvements made to the pantry and the partnerships with schools and other community groups have had a huge impact for the residents of Stanford and Judith Basin County.

Stanford

- Population: 454
- Poverty Rate: 13.8%
- Per capita income: $15,253
- Visioning Participants: 68
- Percent of population involved in Visioning: 15%

Stevensville Horizons provides information and vision

Horizons Outcomes:

- Created Information Outreach Directory Guide to provide resources for community members called "Helpful Resources for Tough Times in Stevensville"
- Re-implemented the Community Garden so community members have local food resources
- Worked with the All About Youth group and other local community organizations to provide a teen center

Stevensville is located in Ravalli County, in western Montana. As of the 2000 census, the town had a population of 1,553 residents. Stevensville was settled by Jesuit Missionaries in 1841, making it the first permanent settlement in the state of Montana. The town is named after Issac Stevens, governor of the Washington Territory, who established the town, then called St. Mary's, as the territorial capital in 1853. The most common industries in Stevensville are health care, construction, accommodations, and education.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicates:

- 16% had no high school diploma, compared to 13% in Montana
- The largest age category is 15 to 19 years (128 people or 8.2%)
- The city gained 361 residents from 2000 to 2006
- 34% of residents lived in a different county in 1995

- 77% of individuals and 55% of households earned less than $30k in 1999
- The income bracket with the largest number of households was "less than $10,000"
- The family type with the highest poverty rate is "Female-No Husband-No Related Children Under age 18" with 42% under the poverty line in 1999

Stevensville embraced Horizons Program opportunities and identified the following action items:

- Community Bulletin/Info Program
- Community Garden
- Community/Teen Center

The Information Directory Group was formed to share knowledge, culminating in the publication, "Helpful Resources for Tough Times for Stevensville." This guide details assistance in many areas including emergency contact, clothes/ household items, educational resources, employment resources, energy assistance, financial assistance, food, health care coverage, housing, low cost loans, medical resources, spiritual support, support groups, and transportation. This resource guide has been made available in many public locations and requests continue to come in for additional copies that friends and businesses can share with those in need. The Horizons group was also able to compile a directory of Stevensville businesses to encourage consumers to meet their service needs locally and build the local economy.

In the summer of 2009, the Horizons group did a survey of what the town wanted most and the number one response was a youth center. All About Youth was a group formed to help children develop socially and emotionally. This group will work with local youth to find role models and develop trusting relationships with adults as well as peers. The group plans monthly family events, volunteer work with local businesses, a youth facility, and access to structured social and academic events. Subsequently, the group has partnered with many individuals and organizations to establish the youth center which will enable youth to become informed citizens and be better prepared for life after school.

A local Community Garden Committee was formed to develop a community garden. The goal is to provide the community with food and a location to grow their own food. Produce from the garden will be donated to the local food bank, handed out through events at the public library, and donated to families in the community. The committee is now planning to partner with local schools to give fresh vegetables to the students via the school meal plans. The Community Garden Committee has also worked to submit a grant proposal to the USDA for a hoop-house. The 3-year program would promote more local food under the rubric of the "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food" Program and would leverage additional resources for this effort.

Stevensville

- Population: 1,553
- Poverty Rate: 10.4%
- Per capita income: $14,700
- Visioning Participants: 257
- Percent of population involved in Visioning: 17%

Superior Horizons celebrates heritage

Horizons Outcomes:

- Developed local Resource Directory available free of charge listing local information
- Built a five-sided information kiosk to display local information to the public
- Established "Honest Tom Day" to celebrate and gather the colorful history of the area

Superior is the county seat of Mineral County, located in western Montana. As of the 2000 census, the town had a population of 893 residents. The town was founded after a large gold strike occurred in Mineral County. The town is located along the Bitterroot Range and the Clark Fork River flows through downtown Superior. The most common industries in Superior are agriculture, health care, education, construction, and accommodations.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicates:

- The largest age category is 10 to 14 years (70 people or 7.8%)
- 28% of residents lived in a different county in 1995
- 82% of individuals and 57% of households earned less than $30k in 1999
- Income bracket with the largest number of households was "$10,000 to $14,999"
- 23% of individuals under age 18 live below the poverty line, compared to 13.1% in Montana
- 19% of women live below the poverty line
- 12.7% of housing units were vacant in 2000

Superior embraced Horizons Program opportunities and identified the following action items:

- Improved Communication (community events and job opportunities)
- Recycling Center

Superior Horizons developed "On the Horizon," a weekly newsletter for gathering information regarding community events, grant information and other information that would prove useful to the residents of Superior. They have also worked on forming a "Reader Board" and an information kiosk. The objective is to provide local information and promote current news and events. A "Resource Directory" is another item to inform residents of services available that may address their needs. A communications group is putting together this free resource list that will be available to all interested.

Horizons members also established and organized "Honest Tom Day." The purpose of this effort is to celebrate and gather the colorful history of the area. The objective of the celebration is to provide activities that highlight the past history of mining and logging through fun and competitive events. A

"Gather History" event will include interviews with those who were part or have knowledge of local history to share interesting stories through storytelling formats.

The Horizon's Steering Committee has also moved forward with the installation of an electronic reader board. The Horizon's Steering Committee approached a local bank to assist in the purchase and installation of an electronic reader board on bank property. The proposal is that the Steering Committee will assist with the purchase and the bank will handle the construction, installation, maintenance, and upkeep of the reader board on their property and the operation and updating of the information displayed. In exchange, the reader board will be available for advertising of school and community events at no cost. Providing for better communication in the community has been a top priority for citizens and the reader board will prove to be an effective means of providing current information.

Superior

- Population: 893
- Poverty Rate: 17%
- Per capita income: $14,154
- Visioning Participants: 156
- Percent of population involved in Visioning: 18%

Twin Bridges Horizons encourages local businesses

Horizons Outcomes:

- Established Twin Bridges Community Association
- Hosted a grant writing workshop and a business planning course to promote successful businesses and community projects.
- Established the Ruby Valley Community Foundation in partnership with Sheridan and the Montana Community Foundation.
- Developed plans and infrastructure for the Twin Bridges Senior and Community Center Board

Twin Bridges is located in Madison County, in southwestern Montana. As of the 2000 census, the town had a population of 400 residents. The Beaverhead, Ruby, and Big Hole Rivers converge at Twin Bridges, forming the Jefferson River, a tributary of the Missouri River. The town is named after two nearby bridges spanning the Beaverhead River. The most common industries in Twin Bridges are construction, agriculture, health care, mining and extraction, and manufacturing.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicates:

- The city gained 24 residents from 2000 to 2006
- 29% of residents lived in a different county in 1995
- 78% of individuals and 57% of households earned less than $30k in 1999
- The income bracket with the largest number of households was "less than $10,000"
- The family type with the highest poverty rate is "Family-No Husband-Children 5 to 17 Years" with 22% under the poverty line in 1999
- 19% of housing units were vacant in 2000

Twin Bridges embraced Horizons Program opportunities and identified the following action items:

- Community Center/Assisted Living/ Affordable Housing
- Economic Development and Job Creation
- Tourism/Quality of Life

The Twin Bridges Community Association (TBCA) is a not-for-profit organization that formed near the conclusion of the Horizons program. The TBCA strives to enhance the lives of people who call Twin Bridges home, as well as those who visit, through beautification efforts, promoting local amenities, and planning for and supporting events and activities that provide economic growth and entertainment for the community. Organizers of the TBCA were facilitators of Study Circles and LeadershipPlenty® and have used the principles from these core Horizon's educational programs to build this new organization.

Twin Bridges worked with Sheridan, a neighboring Horizons community, to create the Ruby Valley Community Foundation. The organizers of this groundbreaking partnership hope that the Foundation will provide not only a vehicle for residents to give back to the community but also a source of sustainable funding for community development projects.

The Horizons Steering Committee decided that a Grant writing workshop and a Core Four Business Planning Class would give residents the tools they need to be successful with new business or community development projects discussed during the Horizons process. Attendance at both courses exceeded expectations. Instructors for the class were very well-received and course materials were valuable tools for participants.

Twin Bridges is working to become known as a premier bicycling community and destination. A group successfully constructed a "Bike Camp" that provides services to cyclists traveling through the town in an effort to promote the town as a stop for cyclists. Other projects proposed include an Artists Co-op and Education Center, a river webcam, a Main Street beautification program, and increased support for the Floating Flotillas and Fish Fantasies Festival. This important event has been a major source of tourism revenue for the community. Horizons members continue to partner with local organizations to promote these and other community development projects.

Horizons Steering Committee members assisted a group exploring the creation of a Senior and Community Center. Many elderly in the community are participating in a meal delivery program, and are meeting on a regular basis to address these and related needs in the community. This group explored creating a local Community Center and not just a facility to accommodate the needs of elderly. Architects have drawn up some options on retrofitting existing properties and establishing new constructions projects.

Twin Bridges

- Population: 400
- Poverty Rate: 12.9%
- Per capita income: $13,171
- Visioning Participants: 95
- Percent of population involved in Visioning: 24%

Montana HORIZONS Program

MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box 170525
Bozeman, MT 59717-0525

Tel: (406) 994-6680 • Fax: (406) 994-1905

www.horizonsmt.org

COMMUNITY BLOGS
http://montana.communityblogs.us

Montana HORIZONS Leadership Team

Betsy J. Webb
Community Resouce Specialist
MSU Local Government Center
elizabeth.webb@montana.edu

Dan Clark
Director
MSU Local Government Center
daniel.clark@montana.edu

Paul Lachapelle
Community Development Specialist
MSU Extension
commdev@montana.edu

Douglas Steele
Vice Provost and Director of MSU Extension
Horizons Project Principle Investigator
dsteele@montana.edu

Dave Young
Community Resource Specialist
MSU Extension
dyoung@montana.edu

MSU Extension Community Development

P.O. Box 172240 • Bozeman, MT 59717-2240
Tel: (406) 994-3620 • Fax: (406) 994-6692

www.msuextension.org/cd

Paul Lachapelle
Community Development Specialist
MSU Extension
commdev@montana.edu

MSU Local Government Center

P.O. Box 172240 • Bozeman, MT 59717
Tel: (406) 994-6694 • Fax: (406) 994-1905

www.msulocalgov.org

Dan Clark
Director
MSU Local Government Center
daniel.clark@montana.edu

Betsy J. Webb
Community Resouce Specialist
MSU Local Government Center
elizabeth.webb@montana.edu

Douglas Steele
Vice Provost and Director of MSU Extension
Horizons Project Principle Investigator

Montana State University
Culbertson Hall • Bozeman, MT 59717

Tel: (406) 994-6647

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Montana State University and the Montana State University Extension prohibit discrimination in all of their programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. Issued in furtherance of cooperative extension work in agriculture and home economics, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Doug Steele, Vice Provost and Director, Extension, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT 59717

MONTANA HORIZONS IN PARTICIPANTS' OWN WORDS

"**Horizons has made us look at the positive** and not concentrate on the negative."

"I think there's a lot of small groups that are pretty fragmented, like the Chamber and the 'let's clean up the town group.' But, to my knowledge **there has never been a 'let's all get together and think about it' group."**

"**I have to admit, I went in a little bit skeptical** about here's another one of the many attempts to do something … lots of talk but no action. At the end … I was very pleasantly surprised by the experience … I would do it again, in a minute. And was very excited about the next step."

"… to me, **LeadershipPlenty® is like a treasure chest.** If we can teach these kids who are staying here that they are the leaders … for this community … that their input can make the difference in the lives that the families they're going to raise live … I don't think that we can present a better treasure."

"**It has broadened my … It would really seem ironic if I said horizons, wouldn't it?** … this process went a long way towards reminding me of that and my obligations to the community."

"I had never seen, quite frankly, a community respond, in this fashion … I was shocked the first night at how many from the community showed up … from every segment of the community."

"It kind of opened my eyes to the different components that make up poverty … Once you started verbalizing those things out loud it started to make sense to us why this was a bigger issue."

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY | EXTENSION

PUBLISHED AUGUST 2010