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

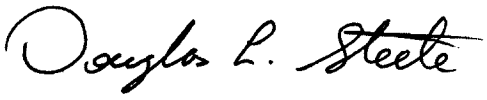
Horizons Across Montana…

In 2004, Montana State University Extension began a partnership with the Northwest Area Foundation 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. Beginning with pilot sites in Circle, Glendive, Sidney and Wolf Point, a comprehensive program has been designed that creates a community dialog, develops local leadership, builds on community assets, and moves a community to visioning and action. Sixteen communities were chosen to follow this program.

Following are descriptions of the sixteen communities that successfully completed the Horizons II program during 2007-08 which provide just a small example 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 importance of the work done goes far beyond the numbers reported. Perhaps the most important program outcome is that the communities have chosen to create their future by design and not default. That design brought individual people together within a structure that promotes the common good for all. Their work was, and is, about taking on small and big challenges to create a community that is vibrant and viable place to live. They invested their time and talents so that others could enjoy benefits that grew from pride in "their" home town.

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 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.



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Horizons Quick Facts

Participants

Residents of 16 communities stretching from Scobey to Anaconda completed Horizons II. Residents of four communities also completed the Pilot Program. The smallest town had 139 residents, the largest, 4,089. Poverty rates ranged from 11% to 41%.

Setting town visions

Over 4,250 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?

A total of 942 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% 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 1,233 local residents who began taking specific steps to reduce poverty in their towns.

LeadershipPlenty®

Leadership training covered 9 modules and attracted 501 residents; 74% report the training increased their leadership skills. Learn more at www.pewpartnership.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 change it and then bring about lasting change in their community. It is funded by the Northwest Area Foundation and delivered by Montana State University Extension. Participating communities are 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 program and consists of five segments: Spotlights, Study Circles, LeadershipPlenty, Community Visioning, and Community Coaching and Action.

Launched in 2003, Horizons is funded by the Northwest Area Foundation (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 16 communities stretching from Scobey to Anaconda completed Horizons II. Residents of four communities also completed the Pilot Program. The smallest town had 139 residents, the largest, 4,089. Poverty rates ranged from 11 percent to 41 percent.

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 take part in:

1. Community conversations and action plans 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.

Table of Contents

Horizons Quick Facts ii
Anaconda 2
Big Timber 3
Boulder 4
Brockway 5
Columbus 6
Crow Agency 7
Culbertson 8
Forsyth 9
Harlowton 10
Melstone 11
Roundup 12
Scobey 13
Terry 14
White Sulphur 15
Whitehall 16
Wibaux 17
Circle 18
Glendive 18
Sidney 19
Wolf Point 19

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.

Anaconda Horizons adds to local employment

Anaconda

- Population: 4,089
- Poverty rate: 16 percent in 1999
- Per capita income: $15,580
- Visioning participants: 958
- Percent of population involved in visioning: 23 percent

Horizons Outcomes:

- Certified Nursing Assistant training established locally
- Community beautification that included tree planting
- After-school program called Donna's House re-established
- Anaconda Community Foundation established

Anaconda is a city a few miles from the Continental Divide in southwestern Montana and the government center for Deer Lodge County. Historically, copper smelting was its primary industry, but the Smelter closed in 1980 and 1,500 jobs and 65 percent of the tax base were lost. Anaconda is becoming a recreational center, with the top industry being education, health and social services. About 43 percent of the people over age 25 have a high school degree, while 22 percent have some college education. Anaconda's population includes about 96 percent who consider themselves White, 1.8 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native, 1.6 percent are of two or more races, and less than one percent other.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicate:

- 19.4 percent of Anaconda's housing units are vacant
- 78 percent of individuals and 54 percent of households earn less than $30,000
- Income bracket with the largest number (15 percent) of households is l*ess than $10,000*
- 23 percent of individuals under age 18 live below the poverty line
- Unemployment in 2007 was 4.3 percent in Deer Lodge County.

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

- Expand educational opportunities for technical and trade skills training
- Expand cleanup opportunities
- Enhance/expand afterschool activities for youth
- Build volunteer coordination
- Create higher paying jobs with benefits

The community established a certified nursing assistant training program, beautified the area, re-established an after-school youth program called Donna's House and established a community foundation.

The Anaconda Community Foundation's goal is working to offer community educational opportunities and providing grants to local groups, including Donna's House. The foundation offered mini-grant opportunities that will be awarded in the spring of 2009.

Donna's House had lost its home in 2007. The community has located a new home for the after-school youth center, which is being renovated. It is temporarily in the Community Service Center.

Study Circles identified a need to expand technical and trade skills training. Horizons provided training to help businesses thrive and potentially create new jobs and in addition helped establish local Certified Nurse Assistant training, which has already led to expanded job opportunities for its first graduating class. MSU will offer a grant writing workshop in town that should help leaders find resources to support their goal-oriented programs.

Another outgrowth of the Horizons Program was a survey of citizens who indicated that they were concerned about their health and ability to stay in their homes. MSU Extension invited older woman to participate in a strength training program. Over 40 women filled two classes. Another program is planned for fall 2009.

Other outcomes of Horizons: A person who attended LeadershipPlenty was elected chairman of the County Communications Board. He has said his goal is to improve the communication with the police department and emergency personnel. Young people have worked to clean up and repaint buildings in downtown Anaconda.

With Horizons help, the residents of Anaconda have truly laid the groundwork for continued future successes in the community.

Big Timber Horizons grows food and caring community

Horizons Outcomes:

- Organized *Sweet Grass Food*, to help create a self-sustaining food system
- Began a food bank with food donation boxes throughout the community.
- Volunteer Community Care, a spin off of Horizons Study Circles, brought Manaia Youth Empowerment and Leadership Program to Big Timber twice and is planning a third visit.
- Published a book of local services, resources and organizations
- Put itself on the *Google map* by developing a community Web site
- Sponsored grant writing workshop

Big Timber is a city in south-central Montana and the government center for Sweet Grass County. Its name is said to have been taken from the journals of William Clark, who commented on the huge cottonwood trees that grew in the area. Historically, the area had a large sheep ranching industry and is still known for its agriculture. Today, the city's top industry is education, health and social services. About 38 percent of individuals over age 25 have a high school degree, 24 percent have a college degree or greater. Close to 97 percent of the population list themselves as "White" on the U.S. Census.

Big Timber had a low unemployment rate in 2007 (1.8 percent), but a high poverty rate (16 percent of youth under 18 live in poverty).

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicate:

- 75 percent of individuals and 49 percent of households earn less than $30,000
- 12 percent of women live below the poverty line
- Income bracket with the largest number (12 percent) of individuals is $15,000-19,999

Residents Horizons work can be seen in plans for continuing community development, better information delivery and the Sweet Grass Food program.

Sweet Grass Food developed from Horizons Study Circles to create a self-sustaining food system, whereby nutritious food is grown, processed, bought, sold, traded and consumed locally. It organizes the Big Timber Community Garden and has published a list of growers and producers of local foods and is working to create a food co-op. In addition, a Food Bank is growing from the planning done during Horizons.

Volunteer Community Care, a spin off from Horizons Study Circles, brought Manaia Youth Empowerment and Leadership Program to Big Timber. The program gives youth a voice in the community and the skills to become leaders.

In addition, Horizons in Big Timber sponsored a series of grant-writing workshops. Their new skills allowed residents to gather funds for community projects that would otherwise not be available.

During Horizons Study Circles, residents became aware that better communication was needed about the services and resources already available. Community members developed the Sweet Grass County/Big Timber Resource Book and a Web site to provide information about resources and community events.

Big Timber

- Population: 1,768 in 2006, up 7.2 percent from year-2000
- Poverty rate: 11 percent in 1999
- Per capita income: $17,569
- Visioning participants: 362
- Percent of population involved in visioning: 20.5 percent

During Horizons visioning, the idea was proposed for a community garden to help Big Timber be self sustaining. Residents provided materials, labor and support. There is a Web page that showcases photographs of the garden and provides regular updates (see http://sweetgrassfood.org/photos.html).

Boulder Horizons boosts affordable housing

Boulder

- Population: 1,445 in 2006, up 11 percent since 2000
- Poverty rate: 16 percent in 1999
- Per capita income: $14,657
- Visioning participants: 241
- Percent of population involved in visioning: 16.7 percent

Horizons Outcomes:

- Formed Boulder Community Development Organization
- BCDO sponsored a grant-writing workshop
- Boulder brought in a historical preservation specialist to discuss potential rehabilitation of buildings at the former Boulder River School campus
- BCDO plans to apply for grants to fund a structural assessment of BRS buildings
- Published a community resource guide
- Boosted a preexisting farmers market and affordable housing project.
- Partnered with Whitehall to offer free spay and neuter clinics
- Partnering with Whitehall work toward an animal shelter

PHOTO COURTESY OF JAN ANDERSON, BOULDER MONITOR

Located in a valley in southwest Montana about 40 miles northeast of Butte, Boulder is the government center of Jefferson County. Established as a stagecoach station, in 1888 it became a stop of the Great Northern Railway. Now a farming, ranching and mining center, the largest industries are education, health and social services. Boulder has low unemployment (2.8 percent in 2007) but a high poverty rate, with 20 percent of women and 18 percent of children living below the poverty line.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicate:

- Median age is 38.4 years, compared to 37.5 years in Montana
- 94.2 percent White, 2.3 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native, 2.2 percent two or more races, less than one percent other minorities
- 35 percent of individuals over 25 have a high school degree; 26 percent have some college education
- 77 percent of individuals and 51 percent of households earn less than $30,000
- 13 percent of households are in the "less than $10,000" income bracket

Horizons inspired the establishment of the Boulder Community Development Organization to improve community communication as one step toward reducing poverty. In addition, Horizons Study Circles identified a need for more educational opportunities. The first classes offered were parenting and safe child care. Horizons also sponsored a grant-writing workshop.

Boulder Community Development Organization invited a historical preservation specialist from Boston, who led a group in discussing possible potential preservation of and uses for the buildings at the former state schools for the deaf, blind and developmentally disabled in Boulder. Three of these early 20th Century classroom buildings are owned by Jefferson County. They are structurally sound, though unused and deteriorating. The buildings have great potential to serve the town, so the committees now plan to apply for a grant to finance a structural assessment of the building.

The after-school program received additional support due to an increased understanding of needs coming from Horizons Study Circles. The community won a grant to help youth and their parents learn about gardening, food preservation and nutrition. Run by the after school program, it has partnered with Boulder residents in use of garden spots. This is feeding further development of an already-established farmer's market.

Another existing program that received a Horizons boost was expanding affordable housing. The town formed the Boulder Housing Advisory Board, and five houses are being built for families in need.

Boulder Horizons also published a community resources guide describing services available in the community and is working with Whitehall toward an animal shelter. The communities have already held free spay and neuter clinics.

The impact of Horizons is seen in people's comments on the community blog:

"There are people involved in helping to build our community coming from all sects of the community . . . by using community workshops, we have recruited and trained many new leaders. The community is quicker to recognize that a wide range of input produces a better result."

Brockway Horizons builds on community values

Horizons Outcomes

- Redwater Community Foundation raised over $50,000 to benefit the area
- Worked with the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority to bring more and safer household drinking water to town.
- Helped expand the broadcasting license of the Circle radio station so that it can now reach Brockway and beyond.
- Worked to improve the rodeo grounds

Celebrating its 100th birthday in 2010, Brockway is a community in northeastern Montana's McCone County. Nestled along the Big Sky Back Country Byway, Brockway is in the middle of the vast expanses of prairie and sky that fully reflects Montana nickname, "Big Sky Country." Historically, Brockway was a successful livestock shipping point. Today, it continues strong livestock and grain production. The town is most famous for the Broadway Dairy Day Rodeo

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data about McCone County and Brockway indicate:

- 13.9 percent of individuals over 25 have no high school degree; 16.4 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher
- Population decreased by 8.7 percent from 2000 to 2005
- Number of jobs decreased by 15 percent in McCone County between 1969 to 2004
- Median age is 45.9 years, compared to 37.5 years in Montana
- 17 percent of households have children under 15

As a result of Horizons, Brockway created the Redwater Community Foundation, which raised over $50,000 to benefit the community. It mobilized people to work with the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority to bring more and safer household drinking water to town. Because of Horizons, the community was able to help the Circle radio station expand its broadcasting reach to Brockway. Through Horizons, the community also improved its rodeo grounds, site of the annual Brockway Dairy Days Rodeo.

To celebrate its history, residents erected a highway historical sign, which also served as the first visible sign that Horizons was bringing the community together.

Community members wrote on their Web blog:

"This project showed us that we can still come together as a community, decide to do something and get it done."

Horizons-inspired events included improving the community park by adding a basketball hoop, fixing swings, improving the bathrooms and mowing.

Another result of Horizons was the creation of the Redwater Community Foundation. The purpose of the foundation is to make funding available for local projects. The foundation has raised over $50,000 of which more than $20,000 has been used to help support a new Brockway fire truck.

During Horizons Study Circle discussions, one of the top priorities that surfaced was the need for a reliable fire truck. The town's old fire truck was unreliable, having been built in 1954 and having quirks that made it tricky to operate. A reliable fire truck would improve not only the community's physical safety but improve community members sense of security. Brockway residents worked together, found a truck and equipment and put it all together.

The Great Northern Development Corporation has been a valuable partner to the Brockway community. The organization was created to assist northeast Montana residents and businesses with technical assistance, grant writing and access to funding programs for business loans and community development. GNDC has been assisting the community

Brockway

- Population: 140 in 2006
- Poverty rate: 18.8 percent of individuals
- Per capita income: $17,492
- Visioning participants: 47
- Percent of population involved in visioning: 33.6 percent

Columbus creates foundation, focuses on youth

Columbus

- Population: 1,931 in 2006
- Poverty rate: 14 percent of individuals earned income below the poverty level in 1999
- Per capita income: $17,689
- Visioning participants: 295
- Percent of population involved in visioning: 15 percent

Horizons outcomes:

- Created the Columbus Community Foundation
- Columbus Community Foundation provided $10,000 in grants to community nonprofit organizations in 2008
- Horizons Beautification Committee partnered with the Main Street Program to beautify the community, especially the area near a downtown burned-out building
- Created a local farmer's market
- Provided information and training to community members
- Began an after school program in January 2009

Columbus is on the banks of the Yellowstone River near Interstate 90 in south-central Montana. The community originated as a stagecoach station along the Yellowstone Trail and is the government center of Stillwater County. Today farming and ranching provide an important and stable economic base for the community, while forestry, fishing, hunting, mining and refining also contribute to the economy. Columbus grew more than 10 percent in population between 2000 and 2006. It has had a low unemployment rate (about 2.8 percent in 2007) but a relatively high poverty rate. About 15 percent of women and 17 percent of individuals under age 18 live on incomes below the poverty line. In addition, about 16 percent of citizens over age 65 live below the poverty line.

PHOTO COURTESY OF STILLWATER COUNTY NEWS

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicate:

- Median age is 38.3 years, compared to 37.5 years in Montana
- Largest age category is 40-44 years at 8.5 percent; Smallest category is 65-69 years
- 96.6 percent White, 1.7 percent two or more races, 1.3 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native, less than 1 percent other
- 37 percent of residents over 25 have a high school degree; 28 percent have some college
- 68 percent of individuals and 44 percent of households earn less than $30,000
- Income bracket with the largest number (12 percent) of households is "less than $10,000"

Through Horizons, the community set its the top priorities and wrote the following vision statement: "Columbus is a safe, progressive community that values its people and honors and preserves its history. Its character is reflected in its active community involvement, youth development and the support of a self-sustaining business environment. Columbus is a place where all community members can thrive, prosper, and grow."

Youth have also been both a focus in the Horizons program and involved in the entire process. The Columbus Mentoring Committee developed an afterschool program that began in January 2009. It began with 12 students in grades 2-4, but expanded in April 2009 to 21 students - grades 1-4. This *Youth in Action* program hopes to expand through grade 6 if funding is available.

Actions by the Horizons Beautification Committee repainted the sign into Columbus and planted flowers nearby to provide a warm welcome to visitors. The committee also renovated a sign by a local park. A part of the Montana Main Street Program, Columbus focused on improving a vacant lot left after a fire.

The Horizons Steering Committee helped create the Columbus Community Foundation, which has received generous donations from the community of over $22,000.

Through Horizons, community members focused on becoming a self sufficient community. They created farmer's market to encourage self sufficiency and local buying. The 2008 Farmer's Market was kicked off by Montana's Governor Brian Schweitzer.

To increase educational opportunities, several workshops were offered, including ones on real estate and working effectively on public boards.

According to the community blog, Horizons brought together Columbus and surrounding areas in what the blog attributes as the most important accomplishment: *unification of a community.*

Crow Agency volunteers promote economic progress

Horizons outcomes:

- Created Apsaalooke Limited Liability Company for economic development
- Helped devise the Universal Commercial Code System Compact, the first agreement of its kind in the United States between a tribal and state government.
- Facilitated local youth attending the First People's Youth Camp for American Indian youth
- Provided training on biodiesel development
- Provided a finance workshop for entrepreneurs
- Brought together representatives from the City of Billings and Crow Nation to discuss how they could establish a more beneficial economic relationship
- Established the Crow Men's Health Project

Crow Agency is in south central Montana's Big Horn County. The Crow Agency has a rich American Indian culture unique to the Apsaalooke Tribe. Many of the residents speak Crow as their first language, and Crow Agency is the capital of the Crow (Apsaalooke) Tribe and home of the Crow Tribal Administration.

With 18 percent of households earning between $10,000 and $14,999, poverty is a significant concern. About 43 percent of individuals under 18, 46 percent of women and 35 percent of men live below the poverty line. The unemployment rate on the reservation was 9.1 percent in 2007.

U.S. Census Bureau or Headwaters Economics data indicate:

- Median age is 23.1 years, compared to 37.5 years in Montana; largest age group is 10-14 years
- 95.7 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native, 3.7 percent White, less than 1 percent Asian and two or more races
- 34 percent of individuals over 25 have a high school degree; 33 percent have some college education
- Top industry is education, health and social services
- 86 percent of individuals and 57 percent of households earn less than $30,000

Crow Agency recognized the need to reduce both poverty and the issues that surround it and Horizons has helped in that process. The citizens came up with the following vision statement: "The Apsaalooke Community seeks to improve its quality of life by balancing and sustaining cultural values, language and education to ensure prosperity of all."

Horizons participants were involved when in March of 2007, the Crow Tribal Legislature passed the Apsaalooke Limited Liability Company Act, the first jurisdiction in the world to adopt legislation. That provides for the economic development for the Crow Tribe. Crow Agency made history again in February 2008 when the tribe, the State of Montana and the federal government signed the Universal Commercial Code System Compact, to standardize the way banks file liens and allow Crow tribal members to use personal property as loan collateral, including loans for business startups, autos and lines of credit. This opens opportunities for business growth and the job creation.

Horizons inspired educational opportunities for youth and adults. Three youth attended the First People's Youth Camp for American Indian youth at the University of Great Falls. The students wrote an essay on how they would use the entrepreneurial knowledge and skills gained at the camp. Adults attended a workshop on biodiesel development and potential biodiesel crops. In addition, a workshop for entrepreneurs was held.

Crow Agency

- Population: 1,552 in 2000
- Poverty rate: 41 percent of the individuals earned below the poverty line
- Per capita income: $7,354
- Visioning participants: 271
- Percent of population involved in visioning: 17.5 percent

Representatives from the City of Billings, Crow Agency and the Crow Nation formed a steering committee to develop a mission, goals and plan for a more beneficial economic relationship.

Developing a sense of pride in the community is another important part to overcoming poverty. The Crow Environmental Planning and Protection Office coordinated a citywide cleanup.

Crow men participating in Horizons worked with MSU faculty to establish the Crow Men's Health Project to address cancer awareness for Crow men.

Culbertson focuses on four strategic issues

Culbertson

- Population: 714 in 2006
- Poverty rate: 11 percent in 1999
- Per capita income: $15,393
- Visioning participants: 273
- Percent of population involved in visioning: 38 percent

Horizons Outcomes:

- Identified and addressed community food bank needs, including moving to a wheel-chair accessible site and adding a computer
- Identified strategic areas that needed work
- Produced a community asset brochure
- Offered a first-time homebuyers class to give people an understanding of the tools needed to purchase a home
- Offered an estate planning workshop
- Offered a workshop on building and sustaining specialty and value added food businesses

Culbertson is located in northeastern Montana, 23 miles from Montana's eastern border with North Dakota line and 60 miles south of the U.S. border with Canada. The town was founded in 1887 where the Northern Pacific Railroad crossed the Missouri River. The first settlers raised horses for the U.S. Cavalry. As cattle prices rebounded after 1890, cattle ranching expanded and today grain and cattle operations are important industries. There also is some oil production. Culbertson's top industries are education, health and social services. The unemployment rate at 5.5 percent in 2007. About 11 percent of individuals live with incomes below the poverty line, 15 percent of people over age 65 and 13 percent of women also live on incomes below the poverty line.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics date indicate:

- Median age is 43.1 years, compared to 37.5 years in Montana
- 89.5 percent White, 6.0 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native, 3.1 percent Two or More Races, less than 1 percent other
- 35 percent of individuals over 25 have a high school degree; 25 percent have some college education
- 77 percent of individuals and 50 percent of households earn less than $30,000

Through Horizons, Culbertson's citizens have devised plans to overcome poverty. The people of Culbertson identified four strategic areas to focus on:

- Lack of Family Housing/Housing Expansion Board
- Small Business Development and Internet Marketing of Local Products
- Community Recreation for Youth and Adults
- Community Asset Brochure

Culbertson also developed a vision statement: "Culbertson is a safe thriving community of hope where everyone works together to create prosperity for all."

Part of overcoming poverty is providing adequate education and training opportunities. To work on the issue of housing, Culbertson Horizon Program hosted a first time homebuyers class. Additionally, an estate planning workshop was held as was training on how to serve on a public board.

Opportunities for youth education were also provided. Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center sent a person to teach a high school workshop on entrepreneurism, specifically on building and sustaining specialty and value added food. Mission Mountain is also a great resource for home based business to develop products and get marketing support.

Horizons Study Circles identified a need to upgrade the food bank. A new computer was purchased and the Food Bank was able to join a network to provide additional food items. A new location was found for the bank that is handicap accessible.

Local resident Kay Ramsbacher wrote on the blog about the success of Horizons, "I see the beginnings of a new united community. Not only are individuals working together better, but groups within the community are willing to work together, sharing experience and knowledge."

Forsyth acts on high priority issues

Horizons Outcomes:

- The FAIR Community Foundation grew from Horizons.
- Rosebud County Extension expanded its services for residents eligible for food stamps by adding the outreach of the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program
- Organized the first Forsyth Trash Bash, a now-annual event to clean up the town
- Began a yard of the week program to encourage beautification
- Sponsored a forum on the future of the community pool
- Sponsored workshops on estate planning and serving on public boards

Forsyth is in southeastern Montana between a bend in the Yellowstone River and Interstate 94 about 100 miles west of the border with North Dakota. Forsyth is the government center of Rosebud County. It contributes to education, health and social services. Forsyth started as a railroad town when the Northern Pacific Railroad laid tracks across the northern plains.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicate:

- 70 percent of individuals and 45 percent of households earn less than $30,000
- 14 percent of individuals under 18 and 11 percent over 65 live below the poverty line
- 12 percent of women live below the poverty line
- 95.4 percent of the population is White, 2.3 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native, 1 percent of two or more races, less than 1 percent other
- 37 percent of individuals over 25 have a high school degree; 23 percent have some college education
- 15.4 percent of housing units are vacant

During Horizons Study Circles, Forsyth citizens identified areas for attention: recreation, communication, beautification, infrastructure, marketing-promotion and services. During Horizons' visioning, citizens described their goal for Forsyth "to be a vibrant well-kept community that supports family values; fulfills economic, educational and social needs and provides a 'hometown' quality of life."

With help from Forsyth Horizons, the MSU Extension added to the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program with six sessions for low income families to learn about budgeting, shopping, meal preparation and basic nutrition. A youth portion of the program is to be conducted at area schools.

Study Circles identified city beautification as a need. Forsyth Horizons hosted the First Annual Forsyth Trash Bash working with many other local organizations. This week-long event included yard cleanups, a trash pickup service, improving city grounds, and ended with a BBQ. The Beautification Task Force also started the "yard of the week" program recognizing home beautification efforts.

Forsyth

- Population: 1,898 in 2006 (down 2.4 percent from 2000)
- Poverty rate: 11 percent of individuals in 1999
- Per capita income: $17,994
- Visioning participants: 377
- Percent of population involved in visioning: 20 percent

A top priority in Forsyth is the community pool. The City Council was investigating ways to decrease costs or increase revenue for the pool, and Horizons helped by sponsoring a city-wide forum with trained facilitators. Participants discussed the issues and then provided the City Council with recommendations.

To help provide long-term groundwork and funding for community projects, the FAIR Community Foundation was started. It has received donations from community members and grants.

Horizons in Forsyth arranged for several workshops, including ones on estate planning and how to serve on local boards.

Because of Horizons, residents are taking the time to tackle important issues while establishing the foundation for a successful future for the rural community.

Harlowton Horizons helps youth and adults

Harlowton

- Population: 899 in 2006, down from 1,062 in 2000
- Poverty rate: 10 percent of individuals in 1999
- Per capita income: $13,717
- Visioning participants: 159
- Percent of population involved in visioning: 18 percent

Horizons Outcomes:

- Established a scholarship for a graduating senior as an incentive for youth to remain drug and alcohol free
- Brought education and training to the community
- Sent a local business to "Eureka! Winning Ways Training," where participants generated ideas to grow their business and identify priorities.
- Established a community garden
- Contributed to the distribution of over 8,300 pounds of food to 131 families

Harlowton is in central Montana and is the county seat of Wheatland County. Founded as a station where the railroad switched to electric engines, Harlowton today is primarily an agricultural community. The unemployment rate in Wheatland County is low at about three percent in 2007, but so is the average income.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicate:

- 97 percent White; 2 percent Hispanic or Latino, 1.8 percent Two or More Races; less than 1 percent other
- Median age is 47.4 years, compared to 37.5 years in Montana
- Largest age category is 10-14 years at 7.6 percent
- Largest industry is education, health and social services
- 38 percent of individuals over 25 have achieved a high school degree, 22 percent have some college education
- 82 percent of individuals and 60 percent of households earn less than $30,000
- Income bracket with the largest number (17 percent) of households is "less than $10,000"
- 14 percent of individuals over 65 live below the poverty line
- 12 percent of women live below the poverty line
- 17.2 percent of housing units are vacant

Horizons has trained new leaders, provided educational opportunities and brought Harlowton together to re-invigorate the community. Horizons brought workshops to town on topics including how to be a productive board member, estate planning, computer basics and Internet basics. In addition, Horizons gave existing businesses information and resources to grow and create jobs. A local business, Cream of West, had the opportunity to attend Eureka! Winning Ways Training, where participants generated ideas to grow their business.

Horizons Study Circles identified underage drinking as a concern, and a Partnership for Youth grant was received to address the issue. The group received funds from Triangle Communications for a Drug and Alcohol Free Scholarship for a graduating senior as an incentive for youth to remain drug and alcohol free and promote a safe community.

The Harlowton Ministerial Association came together with the Montana Food Bank Network to conduct the Thrivent Food Truck Event. Over 50 volunteers distributed 8,316 pounds of food through the event to 131 families in need.

Harlowton Horizons established a community garden on land donated by a local business owner, and residents of all ages planted and worked in the garden. The garden is a source of food, but also has provided educational opportunities to the public. Blog writers commented on the success of the garden, "Volunteers have come forward from all walks of life represented in Harlowton, especially those who have never volunteered before."

A sense of community and helping one another has spread throughout Harlowton, including the school system. A local English teacher challenged students to "pay it forward" and come up with a way to improve someone's life. After the tasks were completed, one student reported, "There are very few things that produce more meaning than a simple task aimed to help out a neighbor or friend."

Melstone's Horizons program helps refocus town

Horizons Outcomes:

- Established the Melstone Area Chamber of Commerce
- Established a community center which serves as a youth center and senior center
- Began a farmers market
- Created an historical walking tour
- Drew up plans for a business incubator

Melstone is located in south central Montana in eastern Musselshell County. The town was established as a base for railroad operating crews. The railroad line was abandoned in 1980, but the community remains centered on its high school. Calling itself the "The Little Town that Could," Melstone residents have begun re-growing their city. It drew more than a third of its population to Horizons programs.

"It (Horizons) definitely changed how I look at the town," said Justin Brewer, a 17-year-old who was a facilitator on a committee looking at the needs of the area's youth. "I think it has a future now, and I didn't think so much before."

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicate:

- Median age is 41 years, compared to 37.5 years in Montana
- 95.6 percent White, 1.5 percent some other race and two or more races, less than 1 percent other
- Largest industry is education, health and social services
- 27 percent have achieved a high school degree
- 28 percent of individuals over 25 have less than a high school degree
- 65 percent of individuals and 47 percent of households earn less than $30,000
- 11 percent of individuals over 65 live below the poverty line
- Unemployment in Musselshell county is at 4.8 percent
- 35.6 percent of housing units are vacant

One of the biggest accomplishments from Horizons was creating the Melstone Chamber of Commerce, which has four committees, one each for the teen center, beautification, renovation and maintenance, and new businesses.

The Beautification Committee applied for grants and applied those funds to a tree program, a community garden, creating town planters and more.

The idea of a Teen Center in Melstone was proposed during Horizons visioning. The Community Center houses the teen center, city offices, the Melstone Area Chamber, weekly senior dinners and special events. Horizons volunteers painted and improved the building interior and the community hopes to upgrade the kitchen to commercial quality. Horizons, in partnership with other local groups, received a $50,000 grant to develop an afterschool program.

Melstone celebrated its centennial in June 2008. Residents collected stories about the community's history and placed plaques at historic sites to create a self guided walking tour.

One of the community's goals is to help businesses and attract new families. Residents developed plans for a Business Incubator to support to home-based businesses. To help build skills for businesses, computer classes were offered. To fund the Business Incubator, Melstone hosted a community dance and silent auction and started a farmer's market. In addition, the Melstone FFA program is working on a steer manure packaging plant with hopes of putting the business together, selling it and developing another business.

Tammy Brewer, Melstone Area Chamber President and Horizons community coordinator writes on the blog, "I really feel the training and opportunities that the Horizons Project has provided us with is and will continue to make a difference that will have a huge impact on our community."

Melstone

- Population: 139 in 2006
- Poverty rate: 11.2 percent
- Per capita income: $15,027
- Visioning participants: 49
- Percent of population involved in visioning: 35 percent

Roundup Horizons leads to community improvements

Roundup

- Population: 1,953 in 2006
- Poverty rate: 20 percent in 1999
- Per capita income: $15,123
- Visioning participants: 402
- Percent of population involved in visioning: 20.6 percent

Horizons Outcomes:

- Created the Musselshell Valley Neighbors Web page to improve communications
- Updated a Roundup brochure to encourage tourism, reality sales and recreation
- Presented workshops on grant writing and serving on community boards
- Won a grant to update autoclave equipment at Roundup Memorial Hospital
- Won a grant to fund a handicap access door for the library
- Organized a clean-up day at the fairgrounds

Roundup, located in central Montana along the Musselshell River, is the county seat of Musselshell County. The community began with the coming of cattle ranchers to the area, and cattle round-ups gave the town its name. Today, Roundup is predominately an agricultural community and is surrounded by some of the Big Sky Country's best outdoor recreation. It also has a municipal golf course.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicate:

- Population increased by 1.1 percent from 1,931 in 2000 to 1,953 in 2006
- 97 percent white, 2.7 percent Hispanic or Latino, 1.5 percent two or more races, less than 1 percent other
- Median age is 41.7 years, compared to 37.5 years in Montana
- Top industry is education, health and social services
- 80 percent of individuals and 61 percent of households earn less than $30,000
- Income bracket with the largest number (19 percent) of households is "less than $10,000"
- 28 percent of individuals below 18 live below the poverty line
- 23 percent of women live below the poverty line
- Unemployment rate in Musselshell County is 4.8 percent (2007)

Roundup Horizons came up with five strategic action items that residents agreed were most important to address. Those items are: establish a community foundation, develop activities for youth, organize a 100 year Roundup Recognition, improve Roundup Memorial Hospital, market the City of Roundup.

The community identified structural or organizational changes through Horizons. The changes were continue dialog with stakeholders in community, learn about grant writing and maintain grants for community growth, increase knowledge of boards and committees in the community to better enable members to help the community grow, work on the negative perceptions that surround the community, develop ways to unify new and old members of the community.

One of the first actions was improving the communication within the community. This was done through a calendar and a website called the Musselshell Valley Neighbors Web page to promote knowledge and awareness of the Roundup area for community and recreational growth.

To encourage economic development, a Roundup brochure was updated to encourage tourism, reality sales and recreational opportunities.

Roundup Horizons brought speakers to town to provide education on topics including, serving local government boards and grant writing. As a result from the grant writing workshop, the Roundup Memorial Hospital applied for a grant to purchase new equipment. Also through the workshop, the library was able to apply for grants to fund a handicap access door.

One of the most used public areas in Roundup is the Musselshell County Fairgrounds. Community members organized a cleanup day with donated materials and labor. The day's activities included pulling weeds, hauling garbage and painting the grand stands.

Horizons is continuing to make an impact in Roundup. Through Horizons, the community has reached out for new resources, made partnerships and was able to accomplish their set goals.

Scobey Horizons brings opportunities

Horizons Outcomes:

- Brought educational workshops to Scobey
- Partnered with City of Scobey and Flaxville on housing and renewal grant
- Fundraising activities to support meals for senior citizens
- Through Horizons, Scobey and Daniels County are working together to improve the community's economics

Scobey is in northeastern Montana and is the seat of Daniels County government. The railroad brought settlers to the area, and soon after Scobey become a center for dryland wheat farming. Still predominantly an agricultural area, the Daniels County Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture Web page describes the town: "Today, Scobey is a little city with all the amenities of a big city."

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicate:

- Median age is 49.6 years, compared to 37.5 years in Montana
- Largest age bracket is 45-49 years at 8 percent; Smallest bracket is 20-24 years
- 95.7 percent White, 2.5 percent Hispanic, 2.2 percent two or more races, less than 1 percent other
- Largest industry is education, health and social services
- 38 percent of individuals over 25 have achieved a high school degree; 25 percent have some college education
- 79 percent of individuals and 56 percent of households earn less than $30,000
- Income bracket with the largest number (16 percent) of households is "less than $10,000"
- 15 percent of individuals under 18 live below the poverty line
- 17 percent of women live below the poverty line
- Unemployment rate in Daniels County is 2.5 percent (2007)
- 18 percent of housing units are vacant

To help improve the economy Scobey embraced Horizons. The Horizons Steering Committee ran a survey in the local newspaper to gauge public opinion on areas to address. The top three areas were livable wage jobs, improved economy and health care. Thirty-eight percent of respondents indicated they were willing or very willing to help with a Horizons project. To add to the education opportunities, guests were invited to town to talk on a variety of issues, including estate, survival of family farms and ranches and serving on public boards.

Scobey Horizons teamed up with the Scobey City Council and Flaxville to apply for a Housing and Neighborhood Renewal Grant to provide low and moderate income residents housing at an affordable price. The team received funding for a housing plan, the first step in qualifying for a renewal grant.

Flaxville is 12 miles east of Scobey. For the past two years, the Flaxville Local Development Corporation has worked to complete a feasibility study for the school building. The Daniels County Horizons helped the corporation find financial support. Horizons also helped with fundraising for continuation of congregate meals for senior citizens and keeping the building in good condition.

Daniels County has received support from the Midwest Assistance Program. Through MAP, the Scobey and Flaxville are working to improve infrastructure and develop ways to keep both communities self sustaining. Scobey also partnered with the Great Northern Development Corporation to provide professional services that enable others to reach their economic goals and improve their lives.

Through Horizons, Scobey and Daniels County have been able to develop partnerships and take steps to overcome poverty in the community. The community has become stronger and created a new sense of unity.

Scobey

- Population: 958 in 2006, down 11.5 percent since 2000
- Poverty rate: 13 percent in 1999
- Per capita income: $17,150
- Visioning participants: 181
- Percent of population involved in visioning: 19 percent

Terry Horizons leads to Prairie Benefits

Terry

- Population: 549 in 2006
- Poverty rate: 13.3 percent of individuals in 1999
- Per capita income: $15,093
- Visioning participants: 115
- Percent of population involved in visioning: 21 percent

Horizons Outcomes:

- Founded Prairie Benefits Foundation
- Landscaped the Interstate-94 entrance to Terry
- Brought speakers to Terry to discuss how to build on it's strong agricultural foundation, including speakers on ethanol production, natural beef and back-grounding beef cattle
- Conducting a feasibility study on affordable housing and assisted living options

Terry is in east central Montana and is the county seat of Prairie County. Historically known for sheep herding and wool production, the county remains a strong agricultural production area. It also has the benefit of the Yellowstone River nearby offering recreational opportunities.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicate:

- Median age is 52.7 years, compared to 37.5 years in Montana
- Largest age bracket is 50-54 years at 10.3 percent
- 97.5 percent White, 1.6 percent two or more races, less than 1 percent other
- Top industry is education, health and social services
- 32 percent of individuals over 25 have a high school degree;
- 23 percent have less than a high school degree
- 24 percent of housing units are vacant
- 79 percent of individuals and 57 percent of households earn less than $30,000
- Income bracket with the largest number (14 percent) of households is "$10,000-14,999"
- 16 percent of individuals over 65 live below the poverty line
- Unemployment in Prairie County is 3.1 percent (2007)

Through Horizons, Terry residents set priorities, improved their leadership skills and acted. In Horizons Study Circles, community members focused on the need to create a thriving community while preserving the area scenery and history.

To help create the long-term solution emphasized by Horizons, Prairie County started its own Foundation, Prairie Benefits. Since Terry's population has the oldest median age in the state, the foundation may help us use age as an asset to capture the transfer of wealth that is coming in the following years. The foundation funds projects to reduce poverty.

The town landscaped the entrance to Terry off of Interstate-94 and erected a welcome sign. Another landscape project took place at Terry High School, coordinated by high school students.

Agriculture is one of the largest industries in Prairie County and promoting value-added ag products was set as a top priority. Horizons invited guests to talk about adding value to commodities, about ethanol production, natural beef and back-grounding beef cattle. More educational opportunities have been planned.

Another issue in Terry is the need for affordable housing. Terry has a clear need for assisted living facilities, though none are available. Affordable housing is needed for families at all income levels. County Commissioners received a grant to look at the feasibility of assisted living in Terry.

Other community needs include a year-round restaurant and to revitalize a dormant outdoor theater. In the long run, these businesses will help stimulate Terry's economy.

Writers on the community blog write, "We know we will be successful at reducing poverty when we see those in financial poverty feeling empowered enough to participate in community events and projects. We will also know we are successful when those affected by poverty can help identify other projects that can further help to reduce poverty in our community."

White Sulphur Springs Horizons invigorates foundation and beautification efforts

Horizons Outcomes:

- Reinvigorated the Meagher County Community Foundation
- Gave the park an uplift
- Developed a beautification plan and began work on it
- Establish a community garden
- Reestablished a mutual self-help housing project, which offers grants and low-interest loans to low income households
- Is investigating wind energy generation

Native Americans used the natural hot springs near White Sulphur Springs in central Montana, and an early settler developed a stagecoach stop and resort there. The town now is an agriculture and mining area as well as being the county seat of Meagher County. White Sulphur Springs applied to participate in the Horizons Program because, in spite of its many assets, it is facing economic challenges.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SARAH HAMLEN

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicate:

- Median age is 44.1 years, compared to 37.5 years in Montana
- 96.2 percent White, 1.5 percent two or more races, 1.4 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native, less than 1 percent other
- Largest industry is education, health and social services
- 39 percent of individuals over 25 have a high school degree; 21 percent have some college education
- 21.9 percent of housing units are vacant
- 81 percent of individuals and 52 percent of households earn less than $30,000
- 16 percent of individuals under 18 live below the poverty line
- Income bracket with the largest number (15 percent) of households is "less than $10,000"
- 15 percent of women live below the poverty line
- Unemployment rate in Meagher County is 5.1 percent (2007)

The Horizons Steering Committee added energy to the Meagher County Community Foundation to help implement the Horizons action plan. The visioning process had identified beautification and town cleanup as central needs. Community members gave a local park an uplift, with cleaning, landscaping and refurbishing. Flowers were placed around town and Horizons is working with the city on a street beautification plan.

The foundation awarded a grant to the 4-H and Youth Center groups to clean up the rodeo grounds. Another grant was awarded to Smith River Health Ministries who helped citizens unable to care for their yards and cleaned sidewalks.

The foundation funded a community garden, which is located behind the Youth Center and is taken care of by Youth Center participants and community members. Produce from the garden is donated to the local food bank and the Youth Center.

Spurred by Horizons, a mutual self-help housing project was re-started in White Sulphur Springs. The program offers grants and low-interest loans to low income households for safety improvements and weatherization.

Another issue White Sulphur Springs chose to address is working to become more self sustaining and create jobs. One idea was establishing wind energy in the area, and a grant was received to explore community-owned wind energy generation.

White Sulphur

- Population: 1,002; up 1.8 percent since 2000
- Poverty rate: 13 percent of individuals in 1999
- Per capita income: $13,836
- Visioning participants: 262
- Percent of population involved in visioning: 26 percent

The White Sulphur blog attests to the success of Horizons and bringing the community together. Blog users write:

"In all of the work of Horizons, we have tried to recruit diverse groups of people to help us make things happen. Because of this diversity, we have been able to draw together individuals who have never interacted in the past."

Whitehall Horizons leads to homes, park and more

Whitehall

- Population: 1,156 (2006)
- Poverty rate: 12 percent of individuals (1999)
- Per capita income: $15,527
- Visioning participants: 892
- Percent of population involved in visioning: 77 percent

Horizons Outcomes:

- Community Development Board created to advise the town council
- Established a "sweat equity" building project for six homes to be built summer 2009
- Worked with other community groups to create Silver Tower Park
- Received grant to hire a full-time person to educate youth about drinking and driving
- The high school added an elective that includes LeadershipPlenty curriculum and challenges youth to become leaders

Whitehall is near the Jefferson River in southwest Montana's Jefferson County. The river provides for water recreation and area agriculture. Commercial gold mining is important. The Lewis and Clark party passed through the area in August 1805, and Whitehall is still on the main "trail," as Interstate 90 passes nearby.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicate:

- Median age is 41.2 years, compared to 37.5 years in Montana
- Largest age bracket is 10-14 years at 8.1 percent; smallest age bracket is over 85 years
- 94.5 percent White, 2.5 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native, 2.5 percent Two or More Races, less than 1 percent other
- Largest industry is education, health and social services
- 37 percent of individuals over 25 have achieved a high school degree; 21 percent have some college education
- 71 percent of individuals and 50 percent of households earn less than $30,000
- Income bracket with the largest number (15 percent) of households is "less than $10,000"
- 17 percent of individuals under 18 years live below the poverty line
- 14 percent of women live below the poverty line
- Unemployment rate in Jefferson County is 2.8 percent (2007)

Horizons "woke the town up and brought everybody to be on the same page," says MSU Extension Agent Tara Mastel. "We had several things reinvigorated because of Horizons."

Due to Horizons, a Community Development Board was created to advise the Whitehall Town Council. The community also focused on the need to spruce-up, and members of many organizations worked on the I-90 entrance to town, clearing weeds, building trails and purchasing picnic tables to create Silver Tower Park.

Horizons Study Circles identified a need for affordable housing. A resolution to the National Affordable Housing Network was passed, and a USDA-funded project is underway to provide six new affordable housing units. Plans are being made for senior housing and housing for people with disabilities.

The Montana DUI Task Force has been granted an extended presence in Whitehall. Through Horizons, the community was able to apply for a grant that will be used to fund one full-time staff position. This individual will focus on educating youth about the consequences of drinking and driving.

Youth in Whitehall shared the responsibility as Horizons Study Circle facilitators and were asked to participate on various boards and committees. The school now offers a new elective that includes LeadershipPlenty curriculum and challenges youth to become leaders.

Whitehall has worked with nearby Boulder on several projects. Whitehall has been able to learn by watching Boulder's housing project. Whitehall and Boulder are working toward an animal shelter that can support both communities.

Wibaux Horizons definitely CAN

Horizons Outcomes:

- Created "Wibaux CAN," the Wibaux Community Action Now committee
- Took first steps toward developing local wind energy
- Hired an expertise to conduct a structural inventory of Wibaux housing
- Renovating old houses to make them available to rent
- Improved bathrooms in the city park
- Held a community clean up day
- Developed a brand new medical clinic to serve the community
- School board used grant money to add an employee in cooperation with other counties to educate youth on the consequences of underage drinking.

Wibaux is the eastern-most town in Montana located along Interstate 94 near the North Dakota. In Wibaux's early days, the town was a major cattle shipping center for the Northern Pacific Railroad. The town of Wibaux serves as the government center of Wibaux County.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicate:

- Population decreased by 14.5 percent since 2000
- 98 percent White; less than 1 percent other
- Median age is 44.9 years, compared to 37.5 years in Montana
- Largest age category is 50-54 year at 8.3 percent
- Largest industry is education, health and social services
- 31 percent of residents have less than a high school degree; 31 percent have a high school degree
- 15 percent of individuals over 65 live below the poverty line
- 13 percent of women live below the poverty line
- 79 percent of individuals and 57 percent of households earn less than $30,000
- Income bracket with the largest number (17 percent) of households is "less than $10,000"
- Unemployment rate in Wibaux County is 2.5 percent (2007)

During Horizons Study Circles in Wibaux, community members set their top priorities as expanding business/job opportunities, improving housing options for low income families, increasing Wibaux's population, improving medical care, beautifying the town.

One of the greatest success stories of Wibaux Horizons is creation of the Wibaux Community Action Now Committee. Wibaux CAN is funneling money back into the community by allowing residents to apply for grants for projects to improve the community.

To draw wind energy development takes several years of monitoring data, so the community erected a wind monitoring station southwest of town as the first step toward this potential for economic development. To increase affordable and desirable housing, the Horizons Steering Committee hired an expert to conduct a structural inventory, and locals are renovating old houses to make them available to rent. Projects to clean-up the city include improving bathrooms in the city park and a community clean up day.

Horizons participants identified a need for a medical clinic in Wibaux, and county commissioners took action. Now Wibaux has a brand new medical clinic that serves the basic medical needs of the community.

Wibaux

- Population: 485 (2006)
- Poverty rate: 10 percent of individuals (1999)
- Per capita income: $18,105
- Visioning participants: 135
- Percent of population involved in visioning: 28 percent

Wibaux also chose to focus on youth. The school board is using grant money to combat underage drinking and drinking and driving. The grant added a fulltime position and is working with other counties to educate youth on the consequences of underage drinking.

A writer on Wibaux's blog reflects on an accomplishment in the community and writes, "A typical example of making a community better in small towns; it takes more than one entity, it takes several working together."

Circle expands communications through Horizons

Circle

- Population: 593 in 2000
- Poverty rate: 18.3 percent of individuals
- Per capita income: $13,412

Horizons Outcomes:

- Organized the Redwater Community Foundation
- Helped expand the broadcasting license of the Circle radio station so that it can now reach Brockway and in a 25-mile area
- Working with the high school, developed the radio station run by students. to broadcast continuously, including live interviews and local sports
- High school students in art and entrepreneur classes participated in Horizons increasing speaking skills, leadership and community involvement.
- Developed banners through town that say *Circle - A great place to be AROUND*
- Arranged for promotional aerial photos of Circle and resulting postcards as an economic development tool and sense of pride
- Developed placemats with a map that describe 100 things to do in Circle

Circle is the government center of McCone County in northeastern Montana. Situated between the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers, Circle is about 70 miles from Montana's eastern border with North Dakota. The surrounding landscape ranges from badlands and buttes to rolling prairie, and the area produces hard red winter and spring wheat, feed and malting barley, feeder cattle and feeder lambs. Circle has a high employment rate but also high poverty rate, with 18 percent of individuals falling into that category. Community life centers on the schools.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicate:

- 96.89 percent White
- 24.2 percent of housing units are vacant
- 26 percent of the population is under 20 years of age; 22 percent are age 65 or older
- 14 percent of adults have four years of college
- 39 percent have complete high school

The median income for a household in the town was $27,500, and the median income for a family was $36,354. About 16percent of families are below the poverty line.

Glendive Horizons helps business and healthy living

Glendive

- Population: 4,615 as of 2006
- Poverty rate: 14.8 percent of individuals are below the poverty level
- Per capita income: $15,544 in 1999

Horizons Outcomes:

- Began the Greater Glendive Community Foundation
- Helped develop a community garden
- Organized a farmers market
- Developed a farm-to-table co-operative
- Arranged for participants in the federal WIC program to be able to redeem their food coupons for fresh fruits and vegetables
- Purchased Western Trails food business
- Started a garden at the state prison

Located on Interstate 94 in eastern Montana, Glendive is the government center for Dawson County, an area of extensive outdoor opportunities. Glendive has excellent conditions for agriculture recreation, agate hunting and fishing. The largest employment sector is education, health and social services, but recreation, transportation, warehousing and utilities also employ many people.

The Greater Glendive Community Foundation grew out of a Horizons-facilitated meeting. People estimated that about $70 million dollars will transfer from the older generation over the next 10 years in Dawson County. Foundation staff hope individuals will arrange to donate just 5 percent of that to help fund community projects. Already, the foundation has helped refurbish the Community Concert grand piano at the high school, given to the Brett Fitch Skate Park, Special Olympics equestrian program, and accomplished many more projects. Glendive's farm-to-table program with its dream of a sustainable local food system for Montanans sprouted as a way to reduce poverty in 2005. It has blossomed into the Western Trails Food hulless barley and bean food production and packaging business (www.westerntrailsfood.com), a Saturday farmers market in Glendive and more. Shares are now for sale in the Farm-to-Table Cooperative (www.farmtotablecoop.com) which plans to place ag products in area restaurants and stores. In addition, a commercial kitchen is being set up and plans have been drawn for a restaurant and microbrewery. Personnel at the Montana Department of Corrections prison have started a garden with "high hoop" tunnels to lengthen the growing season.

Sidney Horizons forms foundation

Horizons Outcomes:

- Formed Richland Community Foundation, board of directors in place March 2009
- Held county-wide conference focusing on health, housing and life-long learning
- Formed Horizons Community Development
- Brought educational programs to Sidney

PHOTO COURTESY OF BILL VANDER WEELE

Sidney is in the Yellowstone River Valley of northeastern Montana, the hub of a regional agriculture and energy economy as well as the government center of Richland County. During the early 1900s, the federal government launched a large scale irrigation project on the Yellowstone River. With irrigated land, agriculture became the most important industry in the area. Agriculture still underpins the economy, though education, health and social services employs the most people followed by the retail trades. There is a low unemployment rate but 8.5 percent of the families and 12.7 percent of individuals have income placing them below the federal poverty level. Sidney is a leader is "cross-state-border-relations," being part of what is termed the "Mon-Dak" region of Montana and North Dakota.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicate:

- 95.8 percent white, 0.9 percent two or more races, less than 1 percent Black or African American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian and other
- Median age is 39.1years, compared to 37.5 years in Montana
- 36.9 percent of individuals over 25 have achieved a high school degree; 24.8 percent have some college education

Sidney

- Population: 4,774
- Poverty rate: 12.7 percent of individuals in 2000
- Per capita income: $16,911

- 16.1 percent have a bachelor's degree or greater
- 42.9 percent of families earn less than $35,000
- 12.7 percent of individuals are below the poverty line
- Unemployment rate in Richland County was percent 3.6 percent (2004)

During the initial Horizons survey, community members reported:

- a strong desire for a community building to complement the facilities already available in the county.
- to have a recreational area for all ages.

Wolf Point develops leaders through Horizons

Horizons Outcomes:

- Young Horizons participant became involved in tribal politics after participating in LeadershipPlenty
- Development of community-wide logo
- Aided Wadopana pow wow community feast

Wolf Point is the largest community on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation in northeastern Montana. Camping, fishing and rafting opportunities on the Missouri River are abundant. The town developed as a shipping point for grain and is still served daily by Amtrak's Empire Builder. Wolf Point is the home of the annual Wild Horse Stampede, held every year during the second weekend of July. The stampede has been called the "Grandaddy of all Montana Rodeos". In 2003, Wolf Point was named the official site of the Montana Cowboy Hall of Fame.

U.S. Census or Headwaters Economics data indicate:

- 55.7 percent White; less than 1 percent Black or African American, 40.5 percent American Indian, 1.6 percent Hispanic and 3.6 percent Asian, other races or two or more races.
- Median age is 36 years, compared to 37.5 years in Montana
- The median income for a household in the city was $27,962, and the median income for a family was $33,681
- About 17 percent of families were below the poverty line, including 23.1 percent of those under age 18 and 5.7 percent of those 65 or over.
- Largest industry is education, health and social services
- 13.3 percent of residents have less than a high school degree, 31 percent have a high school degree; 33.5 percent have some college

Wolf Point

- Population: 2,663 (2000)
- Poverty rate: 17.9 percent of individuals
- Per capita income: $13,605

- 21.5 percent have a college degree or more

In the city the population was spread out with 31.0 percent under the age of 18, 7.8 percent from 18 to 24, 25.5 percent from 25 to 44, 20.0 percent from 45 to 64, and 15.7 percent who were 65 years of age or older.

EARLY DAYS IN WOLF POINT

Montana Horizons in participants own words

"There have been wonderful gifts given to the community through Study Circles and LeadershipPlenty training."

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

"**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."

"…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."

"I guess maybe what stood out to me was that you had **some high school youth** involved…And **brought some things to the table that probably that the old folks out in the pasture wouldn't have brought to our attention**."

"Two of our trainers … are youth. One …**his junior class wants to take on a project that can make an impact on the community. And this is directly a result … I'm sure … of his Horizons involvement."**

"I've just noticed a few more people being a little bit more confident themselves and maybe a little bit more professional in their manner of getting their opinion out there."

"**It was kind of interesting the number of new people that signed up (for community boards) coming out of the LeadershipPlenty** … And people understand that you do not have to be the 'movers and shakers' in the community to be on these boards. That everybody has … not only the right, but an obligation to be there. And people signed up."

"There's people getting involved in issues that was never there before."

"We do have a lot of civic organizations, in town … (All the different organizations seemed) to approach these things on an organizational basis as opposed to a united front … And, I believe that **there's been some of that bridge building** between some of the civic organizations that are already in the community."

"Housing is a huge issue…. small communities say that they don't even have housing that would attract teachers to their school. And they start saying 'rather than twenty of us …each writing a housing grant … **what if we all band together** and just wrote one …**That's the first time that some of these people have ever talked to each other.**"

"Before we had people who were saying… 'the people who aren't working are just bums' …And then we gave them the statistics and it's like … this one family, she holds two jobs. And here's another family … they're both disabled and they haven't been able to get the training. So, **I think it changed a lot of views."**

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

"We had people who we had never seen before. Never, ever. I have helped a lot of community projects and I didn't know a lot of these people … The usuals also did. But a lot of new people. So I think we're going to get some new leadership."

"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 than just not trying hard."

"I have learned that I'm not the only person that is concerned…. "

"We all have the same dreams for the community… And I think that that's one thing that I have really learned … is we are all basically all the same and we all have the same dreams for (the town) that it will become a prosperous community."

"I guess I didn't realize how many talented people we had in the community and not just educationally or those sorts of things. I mean everything from artists to spiritual leaders in the community to business owners in the community."

"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."

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MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

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MONTANA HORIZONS IN PARTICIPANTS OWN WORDS

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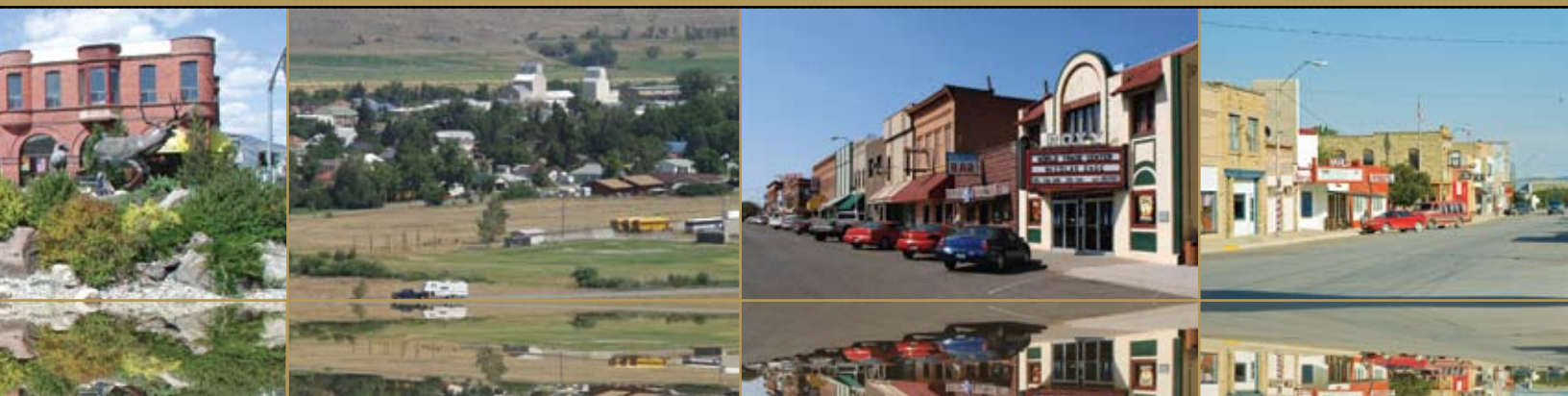
PUBLISHED MAY 2009