



2011 Community Meeting Recap for Ashland

This document is a summary of the 2011 CEDs community meetings. These meetings were designed to discuss local findings from the five-year CEDs document created last year by SEMDC, and to get community feedback as to what the current state of the community is, how things have changed from last year, and what projects are priorities to be completed for the following year(s).

This year was especially important to host a community meeting because of the many natural resource development projects currently going on, expanding, and those that are proposed to begin in the next few years. There will be many impacts on communities in south eastern Montana, and the goal is to maximise positive impacts and mitigate negative ones. The more communities understand the impacts, proactively plan, and communicate within the community and region, the better the outcomes will be.

This document summarises the thoughts, ideas, and projects discussed at the community meeting. It also summarises some of the findings from the survey that was passed out at the meetings

Ashland Assessment and CEDS Update Community Meeting 2011

Group Discussion

The first activity in this community meeting was to brainstorm strengths, weaknesses, and influential factors in Ashland. This was a way to open up discussion, and begin looking at the various aspects that enhance or hinder this community. Due to the resource industry that is developing locally and regionally, we asked the community to not only think of strengths, weaknesses, and influential factors, but also think ahead to how this industry may affect this area.

Strengths

Coffee Shop	St. Labre
Tourism & educational opportunities	Heritage Living Center
Health Clinic and mental health services	Hwy 212
Custer National Forest and beautiful landscape/outdoor recreation	Current Demographics and income levels help in getting grants
TRECO	

Concerns

Housing (all types)	Cell Phone service
Emergency services current and future	Employment Opportunities slim now and concerned with more people moving in
Land and buildings for new businesses/development is limited	Infrastructure water / electricity / sewer
Basic Services	Limited schooling -no capacity and space
Limited recreation for youth	Basic services – limited with construction
Difficult to develop with temporary workers coming in	Costs associated with upkeep etc. of roads and infrastructure development
Lot of risk in speculation	Limited air Transportation
Location in regards to mine issues because of lack of municipality government and mine located in PR County	Competition for current jobs when higher pay jobs
Social Issues with population Boom	

Influential Factors

County Gov. (Ashland is not a municipality)	Coal and RR Companies
Property Owners / Other coal comp.	N. Ch. Tribal Gov
State Gov. (Policies etc.)	Economy: Local, state, national

Service Providers (Cell & Internet)	Companies outside of local area
Geographic location with coal bed – Otter Creek	Geography (isolated)
Tax-base system	Impacts of Otter Creek will come before money comes
Competition and wages	Consideration of Municipality Org.
Tax base	Real Estate and speculation
Flood Zone issues	Community Health Center
Fed and state funding volatility	

Working Groups

In this second activity, we divided the group up to discuss the following themes in more detail: Economy, Housing, Quality of life, Infrastructure and Services. Groups were asked to discuss various concerns, and were encouraged to propose a project that could tackle the issue at hand. After the themes were discussed, we came back as a group to review each issue. Each person was given three stickers which they would use to vote on certain projects they deemed more important. They could put all three stickers on one project, or one sticker on each project. This prioritisation of projects will give SEMDC and the community an idea of what the community would like to see accomplished. Below is a summary of each group's main concerns and projects associated.

Economy

Otter Creek Effects

A lot of money will come into the community through wages etc. – what will that bring into the community socially, and due to the lack of stores/restaurants etc. will that money just flow back out? Also, Otter Creek has not yet been developed, so if businesses plan to expand or entrepreneurs plan new businesses, how much are they willing to speculate and spend on something that has not come into fruition yet?

Ensure there are local training opportunities

It would be ideal to incorporate training opportunities at Chief Dull Knife College for people interested in trades which could supply local workers for Otter Creek. Also, local training opportunities could support other essential services such as plumbing etc.

People go to Miles City for groceries because lack of food options in Ashland

This is detrimental because locals are not spending money in the community; it is an expense to travel that far for necessities, and for some people inaccessible.

Working with landowners who own a lot of local land to work on expanding the community and/or developing

It is difficult to expand or prepare to expand Ashland to develop housing, industry, etc. when local land outside of the town is owned privately. It would benefit the community to work with these landowners to discuss possible ways of expanding opportunities for community development.

Projects

Storage units and Lots for RV's - **1 vote**

Make sure local training is offered

Housing

Need for housing – current and future

Currently there is a need for quality housing and with the advancement of the Otter Creek mine, there will be a great need for workers housing in the beginning and longer-term housing for coal-miners. Arch Coal (owner of Otter Creek) stated that they do not intend to build a city (like Colstrip), and therefore workers will probably be scattered through Ashland, Broadus, Miles City, etc. So there is potential for many workers to live in Ashland, but how much to developers build and prepare for a drastic increase in population, and how much preparation might be premature at this point?

What type of housing is best?

In the process of looking into the development opportunity, is it wise to build more mobile homes, multi-family units, or single-family units? In preparing for a boom and bust scenario how to best plan for quality but flexible housing?

Need enhanced local decision making and zoning and land use with in Ashland

There are various difficulties with the fact that Ashland is not a municipality, has no local governance, and has no tax-base. With the looming need for more developments in the community, it was expressed at the meeting the need to have some control of development (such as land-use or zoning), especially because it is estimated that developers outside of the community may come in. It is important to get organised now.

Projects

Inventory of the local land (**1 bullet**)

4-plex houses - 1 vote

10 Unit RV Park

Quality of Life

Need for patient care but also mental health services

Currently there is a need for increased health care as well as mental health services. This need will increase as more people move into the area.

No library

Currently there is no library in the community. It was suggested that Ashland network with the Rosebud Public Library Network.

Fire district and Ashland Public School district goes through the Otter Creek Area

This highlights a potential tax-base source of funding

Projects

Clinic Exp. And Mental Health Services (**7 bullets**)

Community center and park (**3 bullets**)
Library (**2 bullets**)
Chamber of Commerce (**2 bullets**)
Nursing Home

Services and Infrastructure

There are limited services in Ashland

Some of these needed services are a nursing home, additional assisted living capacity, enhanced grocery store and gas stations, lodging, dining, digital cellular and internet services. The need will greatly increase as Otter Creek Development begins. There is also a need for a fire and EMS building. These services will need to be able to meet the increase in population as well as potentially serve the Otter Creek development.

Water and Sewer

There needs to be an assessment of infrastructure and updates to the water and sewer. If more development occurs what is the current capacity of these services?

Safer downtown Sidewalks

The “main street” in Ashland is the highway that goes through. Traffic must slow, but there are few safety measures to insure accidents don’t occur. A potential funding for this could be through TCEP.

Projects

Expand fire and EMS building (**2 bullets**)
Tongue River road corridor study (**2 bullets**)
Assessment of Water and Sewer Capacity (**1 bullet**)
Voice over IP Phones (**1 bullet**)
Infrastructure Needs List (**1 Bullet**)
Invite Dept of transportation Admin
Develop a community website

Projects and Survey Results

The following pages are charts illustrating the prioritization of all projects and the results from the survey passed out at the meeting.

Ashland CEDS 2011 - Projects Proposed



