

HARNEY COUNTY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

September 4, 2012

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INTRODUCTION

The Harney County Economic Development Strategic Plan (the Plan) maps a clear path between the present condition and a vision of the future. It is intended to bring the future into view based on identified challenges and means by which they can be accommodated.

The Plan is a formal document that communicates Harney County Economic Development (HCED) goals, directions, and outcomes to various audiences, including the county and city officials, tribal and city councils, and state and federal agencies. In addition, the Plan is a tool to inform interested citizens and businesses of the county's goals and achievements relative to economic development.

Action Items are shown as tasks and do not include detailed methods for implementation. Such details are developed and held by the collaborators who are performing the tasks (such as Harney County's Economic Development office, Chamber of Commerce, and Community Revitalization Team committees).

Ongoing planning efforts can embrace additional purposes, for example:

- Bring focused issues to policymakers for review and debate
- Establish a means of coordinating the implementation efforts of HCED with policy concerns of public officials
- Build interagency, intergovernmental, and public/private/nonprofit partnerships
- Provide a forum for communication between the county, cities, agencies, and the constituents they serve
- Establish county-wide direction in key policy or functional areas to move toward pro-active decision-making
- Promote the spirit of cultural development in this region
- Engage private citizens more in a shared sense of community for purposes of economic development.

Frequent and recurrent feedback from the coordinating and partner organizations about Action Item progress can impact continuing activities, and from there, influence future planning, resource allocation, and operating decisions. To this end, the Strategic Plan Action Item Table needs to be reviewed and updated every year. Every three years a revision of the Plan and subsequent adoption by officials of Harney County, City of Burns, City of Hines, and the Burns Paiute Tribe will be a reminder of the successes brought about by continual attention to the strategies and actions depicted in this Strategic Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Strategic Plan supports the goal of economic development for Harney County. The Plan 1) outlines strategies to invigorate and stabilize the economy, in order of priority, 2) states objectives to be met in addressing those strategies, and 3) lists actions to be initiated toward fulfilling the objectives. The benefits of adopting this plan are the focus it brings to the broad subject of economic development, the organization of objectives around the priority of strategies, and the initial designation of coordinating and partner organizations responsible for the progress toward an improved economy.

The Strategic Plan addresses the fundamental challenges to current economic growth and recovery. It discusses problem areas such as transportation, our limited workforce, vacant storefronts, and industry closures. This plan also speaks to the opportunities for improving our business sector, for educating and training potential employees, for retaining or attracting businesses, and for continuing to utilize our natural resources.

Key elements of the Strategic Plan include:

- A vision of Harney County that reflects our pride in our quality of life
- The mission of the county's economic development office
- The context within which the Plan was developed
- Statements that indicate the situations we currently face
- A discussion of the Community Revitalization Team (CRT) and its development of strategies
- The SWOT (that is, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis conducted by the CRT and expressed in Table I
- The objectives that indicate the direction of change we can look forward to
- The Action Items (Table II) that are the specific tasks to be detailed and performed by the coordinating and partner organizations.

A simplified timeline is included, separating actions into short-term and long-term time frames. Short-term actions will probably require less than one year to accomplish. Long-term actions may take one year or more to initiate, and one to five years to complete. Throughout the Plan are references to quality of life, coordination, cooperation, and cost effectiveness. In working through strategies to improve and stabilize our economy, we anticipate that governing bodies, agencies, industries, businesses, organizations, and private citizens will join forces to implement this Harney County Economic Development Strategic Plan.

HARNEY COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

VISION OF SUCCESS

The quality of life in Harney County is a key to our economic well-being, and is characterized by:

- Clean air
- Clean, fresh, and abundant water
- Vast open spaces
- Superb natural beauty
- Friendly communities
- Western heritage.

A strong economy based on our highly valued quality of life is at the core of our vision of a successful Economic Development Strategic Plan. This vision encompasses:

- Civic pride
- A capable, well-trained, and reliable workforce
- A high employment ratio
- Successful entrepreneurs
- Competitive and industrious businesses offering living wage jobs
- A vibrant, successful Burns-Hines business corridor
- The safety and welfare of persons and communities
- Social and cultural benefits and activities.

MISSION

The mission of Harney County Economic Development is to enhance the economic well being and long-term prosperity of our communities by serving as an important catalyst for new business and a critical resource for those who wish to grow, while valuing our rich heritage, authentic western character, and rare quality of life.

CONTEXT

This Economic Development Strategic Plan (hereafter, the Plan) addresses two categories, or levels, of community and economic development activities: 1) business expansion, retention, succession, development, and recruitment, and 2) community development activities such as downtown development, tourism promotion, arts and cultural development, and advocacy for adequate infrastructure, safety and education. All of these activities are important for the future of Harney County.

CURRENT SITUATION

Some of the difficulties facing Harney County are summarized here. Many of them are also identified in Table I, SWOT Analysis (page 9). This section gives an indication of what we know about our economic situation and, in some instances, what we need to do to bring economic stability to Harney County while maintaining our quality of life.

Like many other rural areas of Oregon, our economy has weakened significantly in the past twenty years. Historically, our economy has been based on timber and agriculture. Environmental regulations have devastated the local timber industry and our agricultural industry is also threatened. Without a doubt it is time to diversify our economic base. We must seek new avenues of economic stability, including the possibilities of value-added forest and agriculture products, recreation, and controlled use of our natural resource areas.

Without a replacement industry to support wage-earners, the loss of income from the timber industry and our industrial plant closures has had the secondary effect of seriously impacting town merchants, and many have been forced to close their businesses. Small stores have a hard time competing with internet markets (like Amazon) or mega-stores in nearby cities (such as Costco and Walmart). However, our isolation (2.5 hours from the nearest mega-store) can often be an asset for our local shops. In the past two decades many structures in the downtown area have fallen into disrepair. We need to encourage and facilitate building maintenance and building renovation along with business promotion and business succession. A program like “Oregon Main Street” could be very beneficial in this area.

One of the most important tasks for developing a strong economy is to ensure an available and capable local work force that can meet the needs of existing and prospective businesses. A number of generalizations can be made concerning the Harney County workforce.

- The available local labor force consists of 400-500 individuals (averaged throughout the year).
- There are shortages of jobs in entry-level skilled-trade and management positions.
- There are shortages of workers for experienced welding and engineering positions, and those requiring computer expertise.
- We have valuable resources for workforce development. Harney County can provide referrals as well as a variety of training opportunities through Oregon Employment Department’s *WorkSource Oregon*, in Burns; Treasure Valley Community College and Eastern Oregon University’s Distance Learning Center on the Burns High School campus; and the county’s Economic Development Office.
- Some prospective new business ventures will pay for worker training.

A tourism industry could be cultivated here, providing we boost the current downtown corridor infrastructure and amenities, increase the number of vital shopping experiences, effectively manage the cost of marketing tourism, and promote revenue-building

activities that do not suggest a change from rural to urban. The community of Harney County needs to find value in promoting tourism all year long to develop a more stable economy, especially in the face of the nearby Silvie Valley Ranch Resort development, whose principals have approached us and have spoken to the influx of tourists we can expect in the near future.

Industrial transportation in and out of Harney County is currently limited to the trucking industry utilizing our several intersecting highways. Business and industry closures have resulted from the lack of alternate transportation, such as rail service, and high fuel costs. Our economic future depends in part on planned upgrades to our municipal airport to the point of scheduled passenger and cargo service. Public passenger transportation is limited to EastPoint bus service, which travels east and west to connect our region to the Greyhound Bus system. At the very least, any possibility of developing as a trucking or distribution hub will depend on maintaining the condition of these highways.

HARNEY COUNTY COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION TEAM

The Community Revitalization Team (CRT) is a monthly open forum that began in the early 1990s. Previously known as the Community Response Team, it includes:

- County and city elected officials
- Economic Development Director (team leader)
- Business owners
- Chamber of Commerce Director (co-team leader)
- Ranchers & farmers
- Burns Paiute Tribe
- Artisans
- Civic groups
- Educational professionals
- Health care professionals
- Students
- Senior citizens
- Interested citizens.

The CRT strives to enhance and improve our economic condition through cooperative team work among its civic and community representatives. The CRT acts as a “sounding board,” frequently participating as a partner organization, and often as the coordinating organization, in the development and successful completion of objectives. In 2010, the CRT took on the task of updating the 2005 Harney County Strategic Plan.

RATIONALE FOR SELECTED STRATEGIES

The specific economic development strategies presented in this Plan were identified by 1) consulting with elected officials, retail merchants, local non-profit organizations, community leaders, and interested citizens, 2) utilizing a SWOT analysis as an

assessment technique, 3) reviewing previous economic development strategic plans, and 4) relying on previous experience related to community and economic development.

PRIORITIZING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Attendance at CRT meetings varies but an average attendance is 20. Discussions were held over the course of 12 months to develop a preferred list of economic development strategies for Harney County. The tabulated results are listed here, including the recent addition of the proposed Performing Arts and Education Center.

1. Business-Retention, Expansion, and Succession
2. Business-Recruitment
3. Destination Tourism
4. Downtown Development
5. Value-Added Forest Products
6. Value-Added Agriculture
7. Infrastructure Development
8. Health Care
9. Cultural Tourism
10. Telecommunications Business
11. Transportation Hub
12. Entrepreneurship Development
13. Energy Diversification
14. Performing Arts and Education Center

SWOT ANALYSIS

Completing a SWOT, that is, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, analysis is a well-known approach to planning. In general, the following questions were asked and answered with respect to community, business, and industry development activities.

- What *strengths* currently exist?
- What *weaknesses* currently exist?
- What emerging *opportunities* exist?
- What emerging *threats* exist?

While the responses can be helpful in identifying general conditions and factors related to economic development strategies, additional information frequently is needed to show a direct connection to specific strategies being considered.

For this reason, the CRT used a strategy-specific approach with a SWOT analysis. The results of this SWOT are shown in Table I, below, as originally grouped together into strengths/opportunities and weaknesses/threats. Development of objectives will be found in the next section, and Action Items will follow in Table II of the Plan, on page 22. Short-term actions will probably require less than one year to accomplish. Long-term actions may take one year or more to initiate, and one to five years to complete.

The SWOT analysis provides a significant perspective throughout the life of the Plan, both for strategic planning and decision-making. It helps in making initial decisions about the best ways to move forward. Using the assessment to frequently examine opportunities for success in view of threats can clarify when change is possible. Being flexible in adjusting and refining action plans mid-course can take advantage of new avenues.

Table I. SWOT Analysis

| STRATEGY | STRENGTHS/OPPORTUNITIES | WEAKNESSES/THREATS |
|--|---|--|
| Business Retention, Expansion and Succession | Good base of local businesses Available small business financing Active retail merchants association Funded Economic Development Office Supportive Chamber of Commerce Civic pride | Lack of awareness of available business finance programs Labor force needs different skill sets Limited number of entrepreneurs |
| Business Recruitment | Funded Economic Development Office Strong community support Available industrial buildings Available land and infrastructure Complete local government support Burns, Hines, and Crane rural fire suppression subscription programs | No rail service Labor force needs different skill sets Condition of school buildings Proximity to scheduled air service Rural fire suppression infrastructure not fully developed Challenges to planning/development by environmental groups Flood zone designations in city communities |
| Destination Tourism | Steens Mountain Silvies Valley Ranch Resort Cohesive rural communities Malheur Refuge Bird Festival Hunting/fishing The vast High Desert, Northern Great Basin Large number of local artists and artisans Burns Paiute Tribe Performing Arts and Education Center being planned Variety of lodging facilities Variety of restaurants Large variety of espresso-serving establishments | Insufficient marketing budget Challenges to planning/development by environmental groups Resistance to change Few shopping opportunities Empty storefronts Table continued on next page. |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Table I, continued | | |
| Downtown Development | Historic buildings Community Center Pro-active merchants Excellent “core “businesses Oregon Main Street Program underway Local government | Insufficient marketing budget Absentee building owners No 24-hour law enforcement |
| Value-Added Forest Products | Good proximity to forests Wood products workforce Available industrial-type buildings Support from USFS and BLM | Transportation cost Absence of wood processing facilities Existing and changing forest management practices Introduction and spread of invasive plant species Limited stewardships to guarantee product Challenges to planning/development by environmental groups No rail service |
| Value-Added Agriculture | Proximity to large volumes of cattle and hay Available industrial land and buildings Available and experienced work force | Transportation Age of operators Challenge of large barriers to enter agriculture business |
| Infrastructure | Available homes to purchase Available land for building Burns, Hines, and Crane rural fire suppression subscription programs | No 24-hour law enforcement Rural fire suppression infrastructure not fully developed |
| | | |

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the Plan is to guide Harney County's strategy to enhance, improve, and develop the economic well-being of our citizens, businesses, and industries, along with the quality of life we cherish. To begin to address the issues identified in the SWOT analysis, the objectives will indicate some changes that can be expected. The paragraphs below are in the same order as the priorities established (see page 8). Action Items that stem from these objectives are found in Table II, on page 22.

1. BUSINESS RETENTION, EXPANSION, AND SUCCESSION

Maintaining and expanding a successful business (or industry) requires dedication and initiative on the part of the business owner and the workforce. Succession in this context indicates a stage of business operation when an owner looks forward to moving out of an operational or management position, for example retiring, and pro-actively prepares to hand the reins to another. For the continuity of operations an owner must identify – and educate and train – a successor. To maintain a successful business and economic environment, several businesses in Harney County will benefit from an analysis of succession readiness.

With our unemployment rate exceeding the national and state averages, workforce development is necessary for successful business retention and expansion, and is a critical element in business succession and recruitment. A better understanding of the workforce needs of existing businesses will aid our efforts to devise specific tactics to develop a strong workforce. A well-rounded training effort, available by several means, can produce a workforce that entices a potential business to locate in our region.

A comprehensive business retention, expansion, and succession program is under development. The program will initiate a systematic outreach to existing companies to identify their needs, challenges, and opportunities. Some objectives of this program include:

- Opportunities to support the expansion of existing companies. This includes focusing on utilizing buildings and vacant land in the Snow Mountain Industrial Park and proposed new industrial area(s).
- Opportunities to promote business succession, to avert pending job losses or business closures
- A community-wide approach to addressing business needs
- Systematic contact with, and involvement of, business owners
- Identification of challenges and opportunities for business
- Opportunities to engage the CRT to partner in the program tasks
- Good working relations between governing bodies, businesses, and organizations
- Vendor and sub-contractor business networking opportunities.

By meeting the needs of existing companies, the stage is better set for successful business recruitment efforts. Potential new businesses to the community may investigate the satisfaction of existing businesses, and make their business-location decision on such satisfaction levels.

The Business Development Center at Treasure Valley Community College provides key services to companies ready to expand or needing support to continue. Business finance specialists are available to conduct finance forums (Oregon Business, for example, can package and promote such a forum) and assist company owners in taking advantage of the financing opportunities available at the regional, state, and federal levels.

Both the Small Business Administration and the Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation provide business loans. However, maintaining a local (county) fund that could be tapped only by Harney County residents who are interested in starting their own business can give promising start-ups much needed assistance.

2. BUSINESS RECRUITMENT

Business recruitment strategies can take a number of approaches, as described below.

Relationship-Based Approach. This approach recognizes that a trusting relationship can be developed between a visitor's community-identification position ("This is a community I value.") and a business-expansion commitment ("I've created my company, and I'm looking to expand."). This approach puts such relationships first, and develops opportunities from there.

Targeted or Key Industry Approach. A targeted-industry approach identifies expanding industries that have location requirements consistent with the labor force, infrastructure, and business development features in the community. Industry-specific recruitment efforts have been implemented for Harney County based on the expertise of the Economic Development Director and many of the CRT members, including the elected officials and the Chamber of Commerce Director.

Import Substitution Approach. Businesses frequently import goods and sometimes services into (or through) the cities/county from beyond the area. When significant out-of-area purchases are being made repeatedly, opportunities may exist to expand or relocate those businesses to Harney County to serve this business niche.

Geographic Based Recruitment Approach. This approach begins by focusing on geographic areas – whether in-state or internationally-based – that may contain businesses seeking to expand or relocate. Specific advantages exist in Portland (Oregon's largest economic region), Bend (Oregon's fastest-emerging region), and Boise, Idaho (the closest metropolitan area to Harney County).

Combining the relationship- and geographic-based approaches also holds promise. Capitalizing on the network of our business and government leaders who consider Harney County an emerging destination and one of the last great frontier home-fronts, is a good rationale for using this combined approach.

While retention, expansion, and succession address existing local companies, recruitment requires the county's subscription to and participation in the Oregon Economic

Development Association. This organization provides “outside” leads to us that we follow up, as appropriate, with the objective of making contact with a company ready to expand or relocate. Harney County’s Enterprise Zone and E-Commerce Zone are two tax-saving programs that may be available for new business ventures.

The internet is a critical tool in community and economic development practices. Virtually all business recruitment opportunities are first evaluated using the internet. Likewise, companies looking to expand or relocate to Harney County almost always will conduct research on the internet before making a personal connection. Five websites – Harney County government, Economic Development Office, City of Burns, City of Hines, and Chamber of Commerce – are vital links to those looking for a window into our communities, for details about our county, and for contact information. These important assets must be closely monitored and frequently updated.

3. DESTINATION TOURISM AND CULTURAL TOURISM MARKETING

A. DESTINATION RESORTS.

Destination resorts are one of the most profound economic development opportunities for certain rural counties. In Oregon, such resorts have been developed in Deschutes, Jefferson, Crook, Klamath, Coos, and Curry Counties.

The frontier community of Harney County seeks new economic opportunities, and destination resorts are one of those opportunities. The Silvies Valley Ranch Resort, located in both Harney and Grant Counties, can be a catalyst for our communities by enhancing tourism as well as general business development.

The CRT placed Destination Tourism third in its priority of economic development strategies, indicating that the developing Silvies Valley Ranch Resort project should receive special attention due to its high probability of success and job creation. The project is well planned and funded. It has the potential of creating dozens of jobs for Harney County residents in the professional and domestic fields and will likely create “spin-off” businesses. The destination resort at the Silvies Valley Ranch will provide a major opportunity for increased tourism beginning in 2014. Harney County shop owners, event organizers, cultural groups and city, county, and Tribal governments will want to be prepared for an influx of tourists.

B. CULTURAL TOURISM.

Cultural Tourism as a separate strategy did not rank with Destination Tourism in the priority list; however, it is included in this section because there are shared objectives. The Chamber of Commerce, in addition to supporting Harney County member organizations, manages a Harney County Chamber website and functions as a visitor center, engaging in promotional efforts for events and activities all year long.

Increasing the number of visitors to Harney County, along with providing more reasons for those visitors to stay, will in turn increase the annual revenues generated by the transient lodging tax in the cities of Burns and Hines.

This is an appropriate time to review the current transient tax rates, how the tax revenues are disbursed, how our tax rates compare with other municipalities in rural Oregon, and the potential for levying a transient tax on lodging facilities outside the city limits of Burns and Hines. Some municipalities have a transient tax committee that oversees the tax fund and its distribution for tourism-enhancing advertising or activities. This is an approach that could be adopted to provide a self-perpetuating funding stream for marketing our area as a place to explore.

A revolving fund could be established from transient lodging taxes to assist interested individuals, groups, or business owners in organizing and sponsoring events, rallies, and festivals that will bring more visitors, more often, and for longer periods of time. Consideration could be given to expanding, for example, our annual Bird Festival, Country Music Jamboree, Quilt and Art Show, Obsidian Days, and Harney County Fair, Rodeo and Race Meet. The proposed Performing Arts and Education Center will be a new destination venue for tourists, building on Harney County's entertainment assets and expanding our capacity for conferences and educational forums.

C. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SLOGAN.

Many successful businesses capitalize on an increasingly well-known slogan, and this technique can have benefits for communities, as well. Following a county-wide survey to create a new "tag-line," the Chamber of Commerce will now use *Room to Roam* on advertising and publicity, emphasizing our wide open spaces. Showcasing the tag-line locally, such as on event posters or brochures, will remind us of one of our quality-of-life values. For some time, Harney County has been known regionally as *The Gateway to the Steens*, identifying one of Eastern Oregon's major attractions as a Harney County landmark.

D. QR CODE.

Another imprint that has the potential to showcase the features of Harney County is the QR Code. This barcode-type insignia could be viewed by various communicating devices and enable the operator to connect to a Harney County website for access to many types of information and photographs of the area. The Chamber of Commerce will be urged to initiate a proposal to utilize this code to attract visitors.

E. DESTINATION SIGNAGE.

Burns and Hines are fortunate that all travelers, whether they are driving east and west or north and south must, for all practical purposes, drive through the main business corridors. A serious effort must be made to get a larger percentage of these visitors to stop. Attractive, informative, and strategically placed signage needs to be identified, designed, funded, and constructed.

4. DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

Harney County has a colorful and vibrant history. Any downtown development should capitalize on these assets. First-time visitors to Harney County often recognize the special nature of the place and look to invest in the community based upon the positive first impression of the downtown corridor. The potential for a new type of visitor to downtown has increased with the ongoing development of the Silvie Valley Ranch Resort. Once in full operation this resort could provide a steady stream of high-end shoppers to the area.

The Burns-Hines business corridor increasingly will become the adjunct destination to large-scale events such as the Bird Festival, the Country Music Jamboree, the Harney County Fair, Rodeo and Race Meet, and events associated with the proposed Performing Arts and Education Center. These all have the potential to increase in size, and their economic and civic benefits will continue to spread throughout the entire community.

A. ANNUAL CLEANUP.

An annual activity throughout Burns, Hines and the surrounding areas is the clean up of weeds, trash, and debris. Led by the group PRIDE, it is a cooperative effort of the cities, county, C&B Sanitary Service, Rimrock Recycling, Oregon Department of Transportation, the local media, and numerous civic groups and individuals. This ongoing effort is a hallmark of the value the citizenry places on their quality of life, and thereby contributes greatly to our economic development efforts.

B. ACCOMMODATING TOURISM.

Attracting more visitors will increase the demand for convenient and safe parking and clean, safe, public restroom facilities. In order to entice our visitors to stop, explore, and spend along the downtown corridor we must accommodate their needs, as well as showcase clean and prominent store fronts, shopping, dining and entertainment venues, and inviting parks. In addition, there is always the possibility of attracting someone who will want to start or relocate a business in Harney County.

C. DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY.

Downtown development has been identified by the CRT as one of the top economic development strategies. Recent modernization of the 200 block of North Broadway could lead neighboring building owners to decide to improve the condition and appearance of their buildings.

The CRT believes a collaborative effort involving building owners, merchants, the Chamber of Commerce, the county's Economic Development Office, City of Burns, City of Hines, Harney County Court, the Burns Paiute Tribe, and all interested citizens could be engaged in the development of a main street program. Participation in the Oregon Main Street Program was initiated in April of 2012. This statewide program, coordinated

by the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department, could prove to be an invaluable asset to the economic development strategy for the entire county.

Oregon Main Street Program efforts toward enhancing the Burns/Hines business districts involve the “Main Street Four-Point Approach,” which entails:

- Organization (volunteers, staffing, board of directors)
- Promotion (events, public relations, advertising)
- Design (building and amenity stabilization, preservation, beautification)
- Economic Restructuring (supporting existing businesses, promoting new businesses).

One objective of the Economic Restructuring effort is to convert unused or underused commercial space into economically productive property. The goal here is to build a commercial district that responds to the needs of today’s consumers.

Another program that could be used to enhance the central business district is Destination Downtown Encore. Like the Oregon Main Street Program, it stresses that we are one of the few areas in frontier America able to attract visitors based on a quaint downtown area, besides having other attractive and desirable features that can draw substantial numbers of visitors.

With the collaboration of the CRT and others, a focus on the uniqueness of downtown Burns and opportunities in Hines can solidify the current merchant core, and pave the way for expanded shopping for both residents and tourists.

The tourism industry and downtown development project(s) will significantly enhance – and in turn be enhanced by – the proposed Performing Arts and Education Center. This center will provide a venue for performances and an education wing for band, choir, theatre, visual art, fiber arts, and media for our youth and communities. It will offer an excellent destination venue for tourists and county residents for entertainment, education, and conferences.

D. FUNDING DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT.

Regardless of the theme, design or incentive program, any redevelopment or revitalization of the Burns and Hines business districts will involve clearing the funding hurdles. There are many foundations with connections to Harney County, and possible grants from these sources must be identified and solicited.

Some members of the CRT have formed a Downtown Redevelopment Team (DRT), initially comprised of the four committees involved in the Oregon Main Street Program. The DRT will be the lead in seeking owners’ participation and possible grants for funding, and will work in conjunction with the CRT on projects.

5. VALUE-ADDED FOREST PRODUCTS

Approximately 75% of the land base in Harney County is public lands. Historically, Harney County utilized the resources provided by this publicly owned land. A new market for Juniper trees is increasing, and the biomass industry is identifying processes to safely harvest the waste material in our forests. These efforts may allow us to generate jobs and create badly needed tax revenue from these vast public lands. Efforts must be continued to establish a collaborative and cooperative relationship with environmental groups, identify new and environmentally sound ways to commercially harvest and market our forest land resources, and support the fledgling business start-ups that are indicative of the entrepreneurial spirit that grows in Harney County.

6. VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURE

Harney County's economy has been dependant upon agriculture for generations, with hay and cattle ranching representing the largest sectors within the agriculture economy. Opportunities to add value to these and other commodities, such as sheep, goats, swine, and poultry are as important as recruiting agriculture-related companies to the area.

The focus of this strategy is to promote and encourage the expanded use of our agricultural resources, and to identify and develop value-added processing industries, such as those for biomass, dairy hay, creamery products, livestock processing, and wholesale meats.

We must continue to develop and maintain stewardships with the USFS, BLM, and other government and environmental organizations; it is essential to ensure the conservation and utilization of our resources.

In the mid-1990s a Harney County Events Center Committee studied the feasibility of constructing and operating the "High Desert Events Center," a covered arena suitable for livestock shows and sales. The study included a concept design for a clear span steel building (190 feet by 250 feet). A business plan was developed and subsequently approved by the Harney County Fair Board, which declined to move ahead at that time.

With local horse and bull exhibits and sales; performance shows; 4-H, FFA and other organizations' competitions; and national interest in, for example, cutting-horse events, construction of this arena would enhance both the livestock industry and the tourism industry. It is time to revisit this arena plan and create a venue that attracts visitors to take part in supporting our western heritage.

7. INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

This Strategic Plan encompasses four different governing entities: the City of Burns, City of Hines, Burns Paiute Tribe, and Harney County. They each will have developed plans regarding some areas of infrastructure. These four will be called upon individually

and collectively to develop and maintain infrastructure capacity that will allow for managed growth and to meet or exceed demand for elements that impact economic vitality.

While a few action items relate to infrastructure, a careful review of state and federal mandates, changes in infrastructure conditions, and county, city and Tribal plans is required to adequately address this objective. We will assist the governing entities in identifying funding sources for all of Harney County's infrastructure needs, whether based in city, county, or Burns Paiute Tribal jurisdictions. Cost-saving cooperative funding ventures will be emphasized. The CRT will be an asset in identifying opportunities for particular issues. Certain of the following infrastructure elements are addressed below, as development and/or as maintenance objectives.

- Water
- Transportation
- Sewer
- Social and government services
- Energy
- Public Safety
- Education
- Telecommunications
- Health care systems
- Community facilities
- Rural fire suppression

A. FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS.

In the areas beyond the jurisdiction of our cities' fire departments, our citizens can choose to subscribe to programs that can assist in protecting themselves and their property. Along with the quality of life we can experience living in rural Harney County, there is importance in maintaining the economic value of one's property and the region.

We will use marketing tools to promote the subscription to the Burns and Hines Fire Suppression Districts and the Crane Rangeland Fire Protection Association. With subscription programs in place, the next step is to enhance those programs with additional equipment and rural stations, and to support the improvement and expansion of existing – and the development of new – rural fire suppression systems and organizations.

In addition, Harney County's Community Wildfire Protection Plan will require monitoring and updating, both locally and on the national website.

B. PUBLIC SAFETY.

Public safety is paramount to the economic development of any community. Harney County is the largest county in Oregon and the seventh largest in the United States. Emergency medical and fire protection along with law enforcement is a necessity of all individuals. The distances involved in addressing the needs of the population in the county's 10,000 square miles require more-than-adequate services and response times.

Service planning, budgeting, and manpower training must be adequate to ensure timely primary and backup coverage for law enforcement, fire departments and emergency

medical services. County contracts for these services must be examined and requirements updated as necessary. The needs of the people must be met, but at the same time, duplicity of services and costs must be reduced or eliminated where applicable.

Cooperation and combined effort will be important, such as in developing mutual aid agreements between jurisdictions, or investigating the possibility of combining service departments such as the Burns and Hines Fire Departments.

C. WATER.

Water resources may appear to fluctuate wildly in this part of the Great Basin, with snow melt, rising water tables, and flood irrigation seemingly mixed with drought, yet hay yields using pipeline irrigation is one of Harney County's greatest economic drivers. The county Watermaster and the Soil and Water Conservation District agency provide information, resources and education. Water management and aquifer recharge is of critical interest in this high desert, for population centers, businesses, agriculture, and all rural communities and residents. Any plans in place in any of the four governing jurisdictions will need to address long range planning for water use.

At the same time, infrastructure to address watershed planning must include protecting county inhabitants and their dwellings from unanticipated flooding. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) regulatory remapping of the county flood plain bears some attention. The draft Silvies Watershed Risk Mapping, Assessment and Planning (MAP) document requires final comment by July of 2013. FEMA software is designed for future flood area management, researching building locations, identifying greater or lesser degrees of flood plain habitation, and thereby possibly changing flood insurance rates. Residents who live in a county flood zone might benefit by this watershed planning effort. We will monitor the progress of this plan and anticipate taking advantage of any cost-saving opportunity it presents for the citizenry.

We will look to Burns' and Hines' and Harney County's Water System Plans for guidance in helping achieve their specific goals for water management.

D. ENERGY.

It is possible that several alternative energy sources, such as wind, geothermal, biomass and solar, can be developed here. These resources provide multiple opportunities for economic development through businesses wanting to use them (e.g., wind energy) and the subsequent spin-off employment (e.g., wind tower maintenance). We will continue to encourage new businesses and industries to take advantage of our natural resources, and work with environmental groups in the possible development of alternative energy sources.

The two electric companies that service Harney County manage their industry to maintain adequate, uninterrupted, and affordable power to residents and their industrial and business needs in this frontier region. It is essential to back their every effort. At the same time, we must effectively communicate the importance of their support for Harney

County's quest to develop alternative energy sources, and that doing so will not lead to true competition in their market.

For many years there has been a goal of acquiring natural gas delivery into Harney County via pipeline. We will continue to seek out pipeline projects with the potential to come to Harney County.

E. TRANSPORTATION.

Harney County's Burns Municipal Airport will soon have an up-to-date fire suppression system, and be one step closer to the possibility of scheduled air service. With the certified runway reconstruction, Burns is the only general aviation airport in the state with total concrete runways. The longest runway is certified for 50,000-pound dual-wheeled aircraft. The airport is capable of servicing small charter and commuter planes, and receives regular courier service at this time. Cargo service in and out of Harney County could be a boon for attracting small distribution companies. It could answer some transportation challenges for companies with small and/or lightweight products. Renewed rail service would answer transportation challenges, as well. We will readily promote these transportation objectives for the economic future of our region.

Scheduled bus service from Burns is available daily, eastbound from Burns to Ontario and westbound from Burns to Bend. At these outlying cities, the EastPoint shuttle service intersects with daily Greyhound buses. This public transportation service is essential for our Harney County citizens and steps must be taken to ensure this state-wide system continues to provide us with connection to nation-wide routes.

Rural gas stations are a necessity for residents and visitors alike, and make it possible to enjoy living and traveling through this frontier region. To maintain our lifestyle it is critical to preserve our rural gas stations. As with other types of business, it is important to identify their needs, and opportunities for retention and succession. It is important to monitor transportation and fuel-based regulations that might negatively impact the future of our rural gas stations, and be ready to speak up for these essential facilities.

Although the CRT and community at large can be instrumental in developing support for making airport improvements a priority, and monitoring bus and gas station service needs, we will also look to Burns' and Hines' and Harney County's Transportation System Plans for guidance in helping achieve their specific goals for transportation.

F. TELECOMMUNICATIONS/TECHNOLOGY.

The fiber optics capacity at the Burns Archive Center is enormous and ready to serve data management companies. Collaboration and cooperation with the Burns Paiute Tribe may make this facility available for new businesses to the area. High-speed internet service is available to Burns and Hines and some outlying areas, and cellular phone service is widely available, but more areas throughout the county will be attractive to potential new businesses, including home-based businesses, and residents, when coverage for both technologies increases. As part of determining infrastructure needs, we will promote and

monitor expansion efforts. As one of 17 specified E(lectronic)-Commerce zones in Oregon, we are primed to offer benefits to prospective electronics firms. Within a recognized Enterprise Zone, Harney County can offer businesses with new investments a tax-savings for three to five years. These business opportunities will continue to be promoted and advertised.

G. EDUCATION.

Businesses interested in relocating to Harney County often inquire as to the quality of our school facilities, as well as our education system. Reviewing the school districts' plans for repair/renovation/replacement of the numerous school facilities will prepare us to appropriately communicate with potential business owners.

The proposed Performing Arts and Education Center will be unique in its performing arts capability and a strong education resource for students and teachers in achieving higher education goals.

Part of our quality of life rests with our youth and their advancement into meaningful careers and adulthood. The goal of establishing and maintaining a strong economy is based, in part, on developing a capable, well-trained and reliable workforce. Along with adult re-training programs, we will increase opportunities for success by continuing to develop partnerships between education and business that will provide mentorships, training and school-to-work positions.

Table II. Harney County Economic Development Strategic Plan Action Items

| Strategy | PROPOSED ACTION ITEM | Coordinating Organization(s) | Partner Organizations | Short Term or Long Term | Funding Source or Budget |
|---|--|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Abbreviations and acronyms are shown in Appendix A. Short-term actions will probably require less than one year to accomplish. Long-term actions may take one year or more to initiate, and one to five years to complete.</i> | | | | | |
| Business Retention, Expansion and Succession | Survey and define workforce needs of existing businesses | HCED | CRT, WSO, Merchants | ST | HCED |
| | Define and advocate workforce resources | HCED | TVCC, EOU, WSO | ST | HCED |
| | Identify and implement on-the-job training program | HCED | CRT/WSO | LT | |
| | Foster the expansion of companies | HCED | CRT | LT | HCED/ County |
| | Identify and promote business networking opportunities | HCED | CRT | ST | |
| | Identify tax incentives for business or commercial property owners | HCED | County Court, Business Oregon | LT | County, Business Oregon |
| | Communicate the value of succession planning | HCED | CRT | LT | HCED |
| | Initiate and maintain contact with businesses and start-ups for distributing information | HCED | CRT | ST | HCED |
| | Schedule periodic business finance forums | HCED | Business Oregon | ST/LT | HCED, County |
| | Establish a revolving business loan/grant fund | HCED | County Court | LT | County |
| Business Recruitment | Identify and permit new industrial land | HCED | Landowners, Cities | LT | HCED |
| | Prioritize types of recruitment and development | HCED | -- | ST | HCED |
| | Initiate incentives for development of alternative energy source businesses | HCED | County Court | LT | HCED |
| | Establish a revolving business loan/grant fund | HCED | County Court | LT | County |
| | Follow up on business recruitment leads | HCED | OEDA, CRT | ST/LT | HCED |
| | Maintain websites to attract businesses and visitors | County, HCED, C of C, Cities | Webmasters | ST/LT | County, HCED, C of C, Cities |
| | Advertise in Oregon media | HCED | C of C | ST/LT | HCED, C of C |
| | Advertise through booth at Oregon State Fair | C of C | HCED | ST/LT | C of C, HCED |
| | Promote frontier locations to attract film industry | C of C | HCED | ST/LT | County |

Table II. Harney County Economic Development Strategic Plan Action Items

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| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|-----------------|---|--------------|--------------------------|
| Destination Tourism | Increase tourism as cooperative effort | HCED | C of C, CRT | ST/LT | HCED, C of C |
| | Review transient lodging taxation | HCED, C of C | Cities of Burns and Hines, County Court | LT | -- |
| | Establish pro-tourism fund for event organizers | HCED, C of C | Cities of Burns and Hines, County Court | ST/LT | Outside grants |
| | Investigate event expansion | HCED | CRT, C of C | ST | HCED, C of C |
| | Develop on- and off-road bicycling and motorcycling opportunities | HCED, USFS, BLM | C of C, CRT | LT | USDA Grant |
| | Expand recreational access to public lands | USFS, BLM | HCED | LT | USDA Grant |
| | Support and utilize known resources for marketing | HCED | C of C, Merchants | ST/LT | HCED, C of C |
| | Embrace and capitalize on Silvie's Valley Ranch project | HCED | C of C, CRT, Merchants | LT | HCED/C of C |
| | Make use of new "Room to Roam" slogan | C of C | CRT | ST/LT | C of C |
| | Identify and secure community support and funding for Performing Arts and Education Center | HCAEF | School District 3 | LT | Grants and Contributions |
| | Develop and install destination signage | PRIDE | C of C, CRT | ST | Grants |
| | Develop and initiate use of QR Code | C of C | CRT | ST | C of C |
| | Develop a High Desert Native Plant Arboretum | CRT | | LT | County |
| Expand tourism window to year-round | C of C | HCED | LT | C of C, HCED | |

Table II. Harney County Economic Development Strategic Plan Action Items

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|---|--|--------------------|--|---------------|------------------------|
| Downtown Development | Continue to develop the OR Main Street Program | C of C, CRT | OECD | LT | C of C |
| | Identify, apply for and leverage grants for downtown revitalization | DRT | CRT | LT | Grant funding |
| | Continue to track features of Destination Downtown Encore | HCED | C of C, CRT | ST | HCED |
| | Cooperate in effecting annual Burns/Hines clean up | PRIDE | Peoples Project | ST/LT | -- |
| | Support downtown project "Arrowhead Plaza" | HCOT | CRT | LT | HCOT funding |
| | Update and implement the approved Master Landscape Plan for the downtown corridor | PRIDE | Cities of Burns and Hines, C of C, CRT | LT | -- |
| | Establish maintenance system for downtown plantings | PRIDE | Merchants, C of C, Cities, Peoples Proj. | LT | -- |
| | Improve and expand bicycle and pedestrian trails | CRT | C of C, County Court | LT | County |
| | Enable completion of Native American Center on north Broadway | Burns Paiute Tribe | HCED | LT | Tribal funding sources |
| | Engage with commercial property owners to increase occupancy and maintain structures | HCED | CRT | LT | HCED, C of C |
| | Actively promote continuing and emerging events | C of C | CRT | ST/LT | County, HCCC grants |
| | Identify potential locations for parking lot and restrooms | CRT | HCOT | ST | -- |
| Develop public parking lot and public restrooms | HCED | CRT, County Court | LT | Grant funding | |

Table II. Harney County Economic Development Strategic Plan Action Items

| Strategy | PROPOSED ACTION ITEM | Coordinating Organization(s) | Partner Organizations | Short Term or Long Term | Funding Source or Budget |
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|-----------------------------|--|--------------|--|----|--------|
| Value-Added Forest Products | Identify new ways to harvest our forest lands | County Court | USFS, HCED, CRT | LT | County |
| | Continue efforts toward a collaborative and cooperative relationship with environmental groups | County Court | USFS, BLM, HCED, HCOT, High Desert Part. | LT | County |
| | Recruit timber-related companies | HCED | County Court | LT | HCED |
| | Support development of biomass as energy source | HCED | County Court | LT | HCED |
| | Support development of value-added processing industries | HCED | County Court | LT | HCED |
| | Monitor any industry developing value-added forest products | HCED | County Court | LT | HCED |
| | | | | | |
| Value-Added Agriculture | Recruit agriculture-related companies | HCED | County Court | | HCED |
| | Support development of biomass as energy source | HCED | County Court | | HCED |
| | Investigate development of covered arena | HCED | Fair Board, County Court | ST | HCED |
| | Develop/maintain stewardships | HCED | USFS, BLM | LT | HCED |
| | Support development of value-added processing industries | HCED | County Court | LT | HCED |
| | Monitor any industry developing value-added products with local ranchers | HCED | County Court | LT | HCED |

Table II. Harney County Economic Development Strategic Plan Action Items

| Strategy | PROPOSED ACTION ITEM | Coordinating Organization(s) | Partner Organizations | Short Term or Long Term | Funding Source or Budget |
|----------|----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
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| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--|--------------|---|-------|----------------|
| Infrastructure | Ensure needs are met for planning and performance of public safety (agency) services at city and county levels | County Court | Cities of Burns and Hines | LT | County, Cities |
| | Provide marketing support for rural fire suppression programs | HCED | Burns and Hines, Crane Association | ST/LT | HCED |
| | Support grant applications for rural stations and equipment | HCED | Burns and Hines, Crane Association | LT | HCED |
| | Investigate needs and requirements for developing rural fire stations | HCED | Burns and Hines, Crane Association | LT | HCED |
| | Encourage mutual-aid between fire suppression programs | HCED | County Court | ST/LT | HCED |
| | Investigate combining Burns and Hines fire departments | HCED | CRT, Cities of Burns and Hines | LT | HCED |
| | Strive for 24-hour law enforcement coverage | HCED | Cities of Burns and Hines, County Court | ST/LT | Cities, County |
| | Strive to reduce or eliminate duplicity of public-safety services/costs | HCED | Cities of Burns and Hines, County Court | ST/LT | Cities, County |
| | Strive for cooperation and combined efforts towards addressing infrastructure needs affecting public safety | HCED | Cities of Burns and Hines, County Court | LT | Cities, County |
| | Assist in identifying funding sources for all infrastructure needs, including service stations | HCED | Cities of Burns and Hines, County Court | LT | HCED |
| | Create long-range planning for rural water supplies | HCED | County Court | LT | HCED, County |
| | Address watershed issues, including unanticipated flooding | County Court | Cities of Burns and Hines | LT | County |
| | Support Oregon Trail Electric and Harney Electric in maintaining affordable and quality power | HCED | CRT/ County Court | ST/LT | HCED |

Table II. Harney County Economic Development Strategic Plan Action Items

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|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--|-------|--------------|
| Infrastructure, continued | Seek natural gas delivery into county via pipeline | HCED | County Court | LT | HCED |
| | Reinforce benefits of approved, permitted projects | HCED | County Court | ST/LT | HCED, County |
| | Continue to oppose challenges by environmental groups | County Court | CRT | ST/LT | County |
| | Establish education and business partnerships for workforce training | HCED | Business Owners, TVCC, EOU, WSO | LT | HCED |
| | Monitor condition and maintenance of school buildings | Harney County School District 3 | CRT, Cities of Burns and Hines, County | LT | -- |

Appendix A.

Abbreviations

| | |
|--------|--|
| BLM | Bureau of Land Management |
| BO | Business Oregon |
| C of C | Chamber of Commerce |
| CRT | Community Revitalization Team |
| DAS | Department of Administrative Services (Oregon State) |
| DRT | Downtown Redevelopment Team |
| EOU | Eastern Oregon University |
| ESD | Education Service District |
| FAA | Federal Aviation Administration |
| GEODC | Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation |
| HCAEF | Harney County Arts in Education Foundation |
| HCED | Harney County Economic Development (Office) |
| HCOT | Harney County Opportunity Team |
| HDP | High Desert Partnership |
| HEC | Harney Electric Cooperative |
| ODOT | Oregon Department of Transportation |
| OECD | Oregon Economic and Community Development (State Department) |
| OEDA | Oregon Economic Development Association |
| OTEC | Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative |
| PRIDE | Positive Results from Innovation, Determination, and Energy |
| SWOT | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats |
| TVCC | Treasure Valley Community College |
| USFS | U.S. Forest Service |
| WSO | <i>WorkSource</i> Oregon |

Appendix B.

2010 - 2012 Harney County Community Revitalization Team

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Barbara Cannady | Fizzle Flat |
| Becky Cunningham | Rimrock Recycling |
| Bette Ballard | Citizen |
| Bill Andersen | Business Owner |
| Bob Oswald | Business Owner |
| Craig LaFollette | Mayor, City of Burns |
| Dan Hoke | Burns City Council |
| Dan Nichols | Harney County Commissioner |
| Debby Peckham | Harney County Arts in Education Foundation |
| Don Munkers | City Manager, City of Burns |
| Fred Flippence | Harney Electric Cooperative |
| James Campbell | Citizen |
| Jan Cupernall | Citizen |
| Jan Oswald | Business Owner |
| Jen Hoke | Harney County Chamber of Commerce |
| Jim Schultz | Citizen |
| Joan Davies | City Manager, City of Hines |
| Joann Hofman | Citizen |
| Kate Marsh | Harney County Arts and Crafts Association |
| Ken Peckham | Harney County Arts in Education Foundation |
| Kenton Dick | Burns Paiute Tribe |
| Larry Holzgang | Business Oregon |
| Linc Reed-Nickerson | Harney County Radio Stations KBNH and KORC |
| Linda Johnson | Harney County Opportunity Team |
| Martin Thompson | Attorney |
| Maureen Webber | Citizen |
| Michelle Bradach | Manager, Burns Paiute Tribe |
| Nancy Walker | Citizen |
| Nathan Ritches | Business Owner |
| Patty McNeil | Sterling Bank |
| Peggy Ausmus | Teague Motor Company |
| Pete Runnels | Harney County Commissioner |
| Phil Kessinger | Citizen |
| Randy Fulton | Harney County Economic Development |
| Ruth Schultz | Mayor, City of Hines (Retired) |
| Samantha Landon | Business Owner |
| Scott Fairly | Governor's Solution Team |
| Steve Grasty | Harney County Judge |
| Zelly | Citizen |

Appendix C.

2000 and 2002 Harney County Community Response (Revitalization) Teams

| | | |
|------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Christina Hill | Mayor of Hines | |
| Dale White | Oregon Economic Development Commissioner | |
| Dan Nichols | County Commissioner | |
| Dick Day | Retired | |
| Elaine Durheim | Highland Hallmark | Added to 2002 CRT |
| Ethel Bossuot | Balloon Express | |
| Eugene D. Timms | Retired, Oregon Senate | |
| Fred Flippence | Oster Professional Group | |
| James Ford | Education Service District | Not listed for 2002 CRT |
| Jean Cain | Perennial Plant, Inc. | |
| Jim Keniston | Ochoco National Forest | |
| Karen Bonner | Teacher | Not listed for 2002 CRT |
| Laura Van Cleave | Mayor of Burns | |
| Linda Johnson | Harney County Chamber of Commerce | |
| Lois Lines | Foxy Fabrics | Not listed for 2002 CRT |
| Michael Serrine | Strategic Staffing | |
| Pam Mather | City of Hines | |
| Pauline Braymen | Burns Times Herald | |
| Richard Jennings | Harney County Planning Department | |
| Rob Corbett | City of Burns | |
| Rudy Hefter | Bureau of Land Management | |
| Ryan Day | Citizen | Added to 2002 CRT |
| Steve Grasty | Harney County Judge | |
| Consultant: | | |
| Rick Minster | Oregon Economic & Community Development Department | |