

THE HEPPNER COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

A strategic plan for the economic and community development

of the community of Heppner, Oregon

HEPPNER COORDINATING COUNCIL

June, 1999

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following persons were faithful participants through the long process of developing the 1999 Heppner Community Strategic Plan. These people made up the Strategic Planning Working Group. The group met every two weeks from early September until the completion of the project at the end of June. The steadfast dedication, participation and enthusiasm of these people, made the project successful and truly a community developed plan.

John Edmundson

Doris Brosnan

Jerri Sly

Tom Sly

Bob Jepsen

Mike Armato

John Kilkenny

Claudia Hughes

Pam Wunderlich

Dar Merrill

Andrew Johnson

Rose Buschke

Gerald Breazeale

Janel Lacey

Tony Chavez

Marilyn Bader-Nesse

Ron Anthony

Pam Schmidt

Gary Nolan

Ken Roberts

Facilitators:

Rick Minster

Delanne Ferguson

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
VISION, MISSION AND PRINCIPLES STATEMENT	3
Vision Statement	3
Mission Statement	3
Principle Statements	3
CONDITIONS AND TRENDS REPORT	5
National, State, and Local Demographics	5
Statewide Planning Rules	7
Telecommunications and Computers	8
Environmental Activism	8
Agriculture	9
Decline of Timber Industries	10
Medical Services	10
Housing	11
Transportation	12
Child Abuse, Neglect and Teen Pregnancies	12
Domestic Violence	13
Flood Hazards	13
STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS	16
Strengths	16
Weaknesses	18
Opportunities	19
Threats	20
Visual Analysis of the SWOT	22
HEPPNER COMMUNITY GOALS	25
Education	25
Infrastructure	25
Business Development and Employment Opportunities	26
Quality of Life	28
Appendix A	30
List of Respondents	
Appendix B	31
Communication Plan	
Appendix C	35
Comments from the Public	
Appendix D	36
List of Presenters	

HEPPNER COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Heppner is a community of about 1,500 people located in Eastern Oregon. The community of Heppner shares

in a greater community of residents of the Willow Creek Valley including the cities of Lexington and Ione. It has an agricultural, timber, and government-based economy supplemented by tourist activity.

A decade ago, the Heppner Economic Development Corporation (HEDC) was founded to guide job maintenance and expansion in the community. In September of 1990, a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis was completed. One of its recommendations was that HEDC develop a strategic plan to plot the course to Heppner's future. Representatives from across the community were invited to form a Community Response Team which then went on to develop the original strategic plan entitled *Vision 2000 Goals and Strategies*.

Upon completion of the Heppner Strategic Plan, the community response team renamed themselves "Heppner Coordinating Council" or HCC for short. Members represent a variety of economic and social community groups and interested individuals that share a common mission of building the economic health, unity, and progress of the Heppner area. One of the main duties of HCC is to regularly update the strategic plan and revise it as needed. Enough changes have occurred within the community and the region that a revision is now appropriate.

VISION, MISSION, AND PRINCIPLES

VISION STATEMENT

The 21st Century will bring continued revitalization to Heppner, with a stabilized job base, an infrastructure that has kept pace with the needs of a projected population of 2,000 people, a community trust to provide financial support to local improvement projects, and gradual economic growth that is in balance with the small town character currently in place.

MISSION STATEMENT

Emphasis will be placed on maintaining the existing friendly atmosphere and positive spirit of community that includes feeling safe during all hours of the day, welcoming visitors and newcomers, and supporting each other during times of need or crisis. The local economy will be diversified in order to offset large fluctuations in natural resource-based occupations and stabilize family incomes. Infrastructure such as sewer, water, and streets/sidewalks will be sufficient to meet the needs of a population of 2,000, while the current quality of health services, schools, and public safety will be maintained to keep pace with growth. Community projects will be financially supported in a variety of ways including our continued partnership with local businesses, receipt of state and federal grants, and establishment of a not-for-profit community foundation.

PRINCIPLE STATEMENTS

- 1. Conduct development activities in a manner that preserves the quality of life**
 - 2. Ensure that Heppner remains a community with an emphasis on feeling safe and secure at all times**
 - 3. Continue to improve the aesthetics of our community through landscape and beautification projects and transition of unsightly properties along major routes and throughout town**
 - 4. Promote programs and efforts aimed toward increased awareness of drug and alcohol abuse and zero tolerance for child abuse**
 - 5. Expand opportunities to provide access to higher education and quality job training locally**
 - 6. Maintain the core elements of local, high quality, affordable health care**
 - 7. Involve the public in decision making in a meaningful way, at an early stage in the process**
- Maintain a high level of public understanding of and confidence in community and economic development activities**
- 8. Maintain high quality, diverse child care opportunities and make them easily accessible to community members**
 - 9. Continue community support and involvement in our schools**
 - 10. Create opportunities to involve our youth and young adults, with their young fresh perspectives and new ideas, in community planning**
 - 11. Continue to protect the citizens from the destructive impacts of floods**

CONDITIONS AND TRENDS REPORT

NATIONAL, STATE, AND LOCAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Nationally there is an ongoing population shift from the center of the country to the East, South, and West. The agricultural areas of the nations heartland are increasingly being held by fewer owners in larger tracts.

Mechanization and chemicals have reduced the need for farm laborers. Declining returns per acre due to international competition and other factors have made the small family farm more and more difficult to own and maintain. Children from families traditionally involved with agriculture are choosing professions which are more profitable, more predictable, more available, and perhaps less demanding.

The railroads that once served widely scattered small communities and provided a valuable transportation link have been abandoning unprofitable lines. This severing of rail with the rural communities further isolates them and increases the cost of transporting commodities. It also makes travel options for passengers in these communities more limited. The rail line that served Heppner was abandoned by Union Pacific, ostensibly because there was not enough traffic to justify the expense of maintaining the tracks.

This shift away from agricultural pursuits toward more industrialized areas has caused the cities along both coasts, major transportation corridors, and the South to swell in population. The lure of higher paying jobs and perhaps a better climate or more desirable living conditions are causing people to move into the cities and suburbs. Areas of rapid growth face many difficulties with urban sprawl, traffic congestion, pollution, crime, and a loss of open space/parks, farm and timber lands. The concentration of populations in major metropolitan areas swings the balance of government to the urban needs. The votes, the majority of the population, live and work in the urban environment. The less populated areas are buffeted by the whims of the population centers. Laws are often written and implemented to address the needs and desires of the urbanites without considering fully the impact or implication on the rural areas.

The American dream has long been home ownership with a piece of land that a family can call its own. Suburbs spring outward from cities to accommodate the demand for the individual homes where people can live in relative quiet and raise their families and still commute to their jobs in the more populated and congested cities. This drift away from city centers into the suburbs makes the existing road structures inadequate and overloaded. Larger and wider highways are built to avoid gridlock during peak hours.

At the same time, people in other less prosperous countries see the United States as a land of opportunity and are eager to move here for a better life. Increasingly, legal and illegal immigrants are seeking relatively better paying jobs in this country. In some cases, they are not able to find work at all in their homeland. The ethnic balance is changing because of the increasing numbers of immigrants from Mexico and other countries.

This is especially evident in North Morrow County. What has been traditionally a white Anglo-Saxon protestant majority is converting steadily to a Hispanic majority. The larger average family size of the Hispanic community coupled with the immigration trend will cause the percentage to rapidly shift away from the formerly dominant Caucasian population. Immigrants are often competing for jobs in this country. This situation allows lower wages to be paid to workers who are often pleased to have any job.

On a global scale, more products are being produced in foreign countries where the labor prices are lower. In order to compete, many US companies have some or all of their products made where they can operate with lower labor and overhead costs. The cost of shipping goods from foreign lands is low enough that other countries can produce products at a lower cost and then sell the product in the U.S. for less than the same product made domestically. The same is true for agricultural products and commodities. It is truly a global market in which the best and less expensive product is the one that will find favor with consumers. Brand and country loyalty is a thing of the past. The population is also aging with the big "baby boomer" generation. The population boom of the post World War II era is now reaching retirement age. This large segment of the population has had a great effect on the economics of this country. The products sold to satisfy the needs and desires of the boomers (from birth to maturity) have been a

strong driver of the economy. The retirement benefits of Social Security have been largely financed for the older population by the workers in this age group. The shift of the population to retirement age will have a great effect on the ability of Social Security to survive and pay benefits to retiring boomers. The proportionately smaller working population will be hard pressed to support the aging population. The average life span of US citizens is increasing, making the years after retirement longer than they have ever been. This trend will create new opportunities as well as problems. Those boomers fortunate enough to have saved for their retirement and/or invested in other retirement plans will have opportunities to travel, recreate, and locate where they please. There will also be increased needs for health care for the aging as well as retirement homes, assisted living accommodations, and nursing homes.

On the West Coast, as elsewhere, trade in agriculture and natural resources, like timber, is declining in importance to the overall economy. Still, many small and isolated communities depend on these commodities for their survival. Without large industrial employers, their economies remain fragile. The small populations affected by the vagaries of the agricultural market and the loss of timber go largely unnoticed by the national population. The people in large cities have lost their connection to the land that has supported them for so long with food and fiber. National forests, lakes, streams, and open spaces are seen as recreation areas for the urban population. Also, to some extent, the farms and ranches are looked upon as sources of rest and relaxation. It is a pleasant experience for the urban dwellers to leave the cities and feast on the uncluttered forests and fields beyond.

Morrow County is in an agricultural area and heavily dependent on the income generated by the growing, cutting, and shipping of raw materials. Some industries have developed to process the raw materials into consumable commodities. Saw mills process logs into lumber and chips, while other plants turn potatoes into french fries. The cities in the north county are experiencing rapid growth due to industrial development along the transportation corridor of Interstate 84, the Columbia River, and rail lines. The increasing job opportunities are at the lower end of the income scale for the state. While Morrow County has experienced strong growth in employment, the per capita income has decreased. Statewide, per capita income has increased; however, Morrow County has not experienced the economic revitalization of the majority of the state.

A survey of all the residents of the Willow Creek Valley was conducted in July of 1999 by Elesco, Ltd. in cooperation with the City of Ione, the City of Heppner, the Port of Morrow, Morrow County, Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative, and the Oregon Economic Development Department to get a better understanding of the local demographics and available workforce. There was approximately a 40 percent response to the survey which revealed some significant statistics.

Most of the respondents have lived in the valley between two to ten years. Of these relative short term residents, many moved to the valley for employment. This would indicate that it is possible to recruit workers from other areas if employment opportunities were offered.

Another significant segment of the population was the long term residents who have lived in the valley for fifty years or more.

STATEWIDE PLANNING RULES

The state of Oregon has one of the most progressive and restrictive system of planning laws in the nation. These laws were developed to confine growth of the urban areas from encroaching into the vast and productive timber and farm lands. The basic philosophy that governs the implementation of the planning rules in Oregon, is that cities should be constrained and restricted from spreading onto productive agricultural and timber lands. The intention is also to limit urban sprawl, to avoid taxing the transportation system, and to make more effective use of basic infrastructure, land, and resources. The aim, overall, is promotion of quality of life, while preserving open space, natural resources, farms, ranches, and timber-producing property.

Local planning functions, while autonomous, must conform to State planning rules and goals. Challenges to local ordinances, rulings and plans are handled through the State Land Use Board of Appeals. The Department of Land Conservation and Development has oversight on Comprehensive Plans and Periodic Review and ensures compliance with State law.

While the intention of these statewide planning laws is admirable and well founded, there is sometimes confusion

on how these laws should be administered. This is particularly evident on the east side of the state where huge tracts of land are uninhabited and cities are restricted to fixed boundaries. East-side residents may become frustrated with the difficulties experienced or perceived when trying to develop their property or remove restrictions. Limiting growth to a small area where there is so much open space available just does not seem to make sense to many people.

Under Oregon law, cities and counties must agree on establishing a line between urban type development and rural farmland and rural subdivisions. Once the urban growth boundary between urban-type development and rural has been agreed to and accepted by the Department of Land Conservation and Development, it can only be changed by showing a need for more buildable lands. The intention is to avoid having scattered development and to keep more density in the urban growth boundary and also avoid permanently taking productive resource lands out of production. Cities have the ability to determine the housing density within the city limits and, with county approval, inside the urban growth boundary. In the highly populated, rapidly growing areas the planing goals have real meaning. Without increasing density, the surrounding farms, fields, and timber areas would rapidly be consumed. Where slower growth is taking place, especially where the productivity of the land is low, there may not be the same need for high density development. Many of the older population, as well as a fair number of the working families, desire a small plot of land where they can have a more rural lifestyle without going into commercial agriculture production. There is apparently a demand for small acreages of an acre or two where people can have a little space to grow a garden and relax from the hurried lifestyle of the city.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND COMPUTERS

The explosion of computer technology has made computers faster and more powerful than many people would have dreamed a decade ago. While computers are becoming faster with more power, they are also becoming cheaper and within the reach of most Americans. Computer technology has also led to tremendous developments in the world of telecommunications. Fax machines, answering machines, voice mail, cellular phones, e-mail, and the internet are changing the way we do business. It is now possible to be in touch with any part of the world from nearly any location. Information is readily transportable through phone lines enabling people to conduct work from their homes. An engineer can make drawings from his computer and have it printed anywhere there is a printer capable of reading his software. Materials and services can be sold over the internet from a location anywhere on the globe. Software writers can operate virtually anywhere they have access to a modem and phone lines. The list goes on as far as the imagination cares to take it. Rural areas may be able to capitalize on this technology by appealing to the desire of folks to live in small towns with low crime rates, access to recreation, low traffic volumes, and other quality of life issues.

The Rural Electrification Act of 1936 provided government subsidies to provide electric power and telephone service to rural communities, farms, and ranches. The act served to connect sparsely populated areas to the major trade centers with telephone service. Later, with deregulation of the telecommunications industry, the door was opened for many advances in the field of technology that served to lower customer costs through competition and expand the use of new and innovative services. The deregulation also permitted the large phone companies to sell off their less profitable exchanges in rural communities. This shift toward profitability by the major phone companies to the larger cities leaves the rural communities at risk once again of lagging behind in the development of their communication system. There is little incentive for small phone companies to invest in major capital improvements to serve limited populations.

Heppner is ahead of most small rural communities in that it has a point of presence on the fiber optic system. Maintaining a point of presence on the fiber optic cables is essential to attracting business and industry that need high speed data transmission capacity. According to Century Tel representatives, T-1 lines can readily be made available, and there is excess capacity in the system.

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM

Increasingly people are becoming concerned with environmental issues. With Rachel Carson's book, The Silent Spring, a whole era of environmental awareness was born. Attention has focused on pesticide use and the impact on human and natural environmental health. The loss of species, threatened loss of species, shrinking habitat, and the

consumptive use of resources is of concern to more and more folks. A small but extremely vocal contingent of environmentalists has taken to the use of terrorist tactics to try to prevent activities that they believe threaten the earth. A rift has formed between users of natural resources and the environmental community. Farmers, ranchers, and those employed in the timber industry often view environmentalists as the enemy. Often, the resource users see themselves as stewards of the land and resent the inference that they are the cause of natural resource destruction. They see environmentalism as a threat to their livelihood and possibly even their existence. Environmentalists sometimes view resource users as uncaring and obstinate. Increasingly, the two groups have taken sides and seem unwilling to consider anything the other side has to say. Even resource users are sometimes at odds with each other. The coastal fishing industry, for instance, points to the destruction of habitat along the streams and watersheds and the construction of dams as a cause of the demise of salmon and other fish.

The balance of environmentalism vs. natural resource consumption has swung in the favor of environmentalism. Nationally, there are more people concerned for the health of the natural environment than there are direct users of the resources. For most of the country, the relative small population directly involved in resource use and extraction is not a major concern. The same appears to be true to some extent at the state level. Laws and regulations are made by a majority of people not employed in the resource extraction industries. It is difficult for resource users to be heard above the clamor of, "save the salmon, trees, streams, etc."

This concern for protection and preservation of the natural resources has many real and potential impacts on the rural communities that are based on agriculture and timber. Locally, the heretofore unthinkable breaching of the dams on the Columbia River to save salmon and steelhead, is seen as a real possibility. Many of these communities have economies greatly affected by the Columbia River dams. A breaching of the dams or a drawdown of the water level behind the dams would severely affect river transportation, electrical production, and irrigation.

Without the slack water pools behind the dams, barges and other water transport would have a difficult time moving upstream. Downstream trips, while theoretically much faster, could be fraught with difficulties from shallow water and rapids. The lower water levels would cause irrigation intake pipes to be relocated and docks and other structures to be moved. The cost of these relocations may be prohibitive, causing their use to be abandoned. If barge traffic were eliminated, the costs of transporting goods could increase substantially. The return that farmers now realize on their grain would be lessened with the extra cost of shipping by rail or truck. Truck traffic would increase on the highways that already have a large volume of trucks. The increased loading of the pavement would result in higher maintenance costs. Complicating this picture is the lack of certainty that dam drawdowns or breaching would bring back the salmon.

Farmers and ranchers are also directly affected by the salmon issue. The condition of the streams and watersheds is also a factor in the equation of whether salmon migration, spawning, and rearing can occur. Environmentalists point to the degradation of streams through logging, farming, and grazing operations. Agricultural interests point to cities and the pollutants that they dump into the rivers and streams as the cause of river and stream degradation, while cities blame non-point pollution as the primary culprit. It is a complex issue, and the reluctance of the various interests to join together to identify the problems and work cooperatively for a solution further polarizes groups of self interest and inhibits resolution.

AGRICULTURE

The traditional economic base of private industry in Heppner has been resource and agriculture. Current economic conditions throughout Asia, the main market for Morrow County wheat, are not conducive to a healthy wheat market. This is helping to create a weakened wheat price structure above and beyond the normal fluctuations expected. Last year, in general, market prices for wheat were below the cost of production, and government programs were needed in order to prop up the farmer. However, for the last few years, the federal government has been stepping back from price support programs. The timing could not be much worse. Along with farmers, these conditions adversely affect all local businesses and service providers.

According to a recent study by Washington State University, we must look for more of the same in 1999. While prices are expected to improve, not much progress will be made. Furthermore, other world conditions, such as foreign government price supports, are taking their toll on wheat markets.

The cattle industry is also in a prolonged state of soft prices. In addition to soft prices for beef, continuing environmental pressures are expended in order to decrease the rancher's ability to graze cattle on public land without a substantial increase in cost.

The possibility of dam elimination or drawdown is a real threat to our agricultural industry. This, naturally, would have a devastating effect on the Port of Morrow and all of the farmers of Morrow County. While mainly operating in the north end, irrigated fields would have to either move water intake stations or stop farming. Elimination of barge traffic on the Columbia River is discussed below.

DECLINE OF TIMBER INDUSTRIES

The timber industry, once a mainstay of the Oregon economy, has drastically declined in recent times.

Environmental issues, falling prices, and decreased supply of logs from national forests and private lands have caused many lumber mills to close. Workers employed in this industry have been displaced and whole towns and counties have suffered with the loss of revenue. Logs and lumber are transported on a global scale, making the long term outlook for the local timber industry less than prosperous.

Locally, timber has become scarce. With the closing of the Kinzua Lumber Mill in Heppner, an important economic resource has left our community. What direct and indirect effects this will have on Heppner remains to be seen. Questions as to where displaced mill workers will find jobs and the effects on our community's loggers and log truck drivers have yet to be sorted out. However, there is a nationwide reduction in logging activity due to supply issues and also environmental issues. While there may be timber-dependent jobs available in the near future, the long term trend is toward the elimination of this industry.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Tremendous advances have been made in the field of medicine, raising the average life span and contributing to a better quality of life for many. Transplants of living tissues from donors, non-invasive diagnostic techniques, and new medicines are just a few of the improvements once thought impossible but now commonplace.

The universal desire for a longer, better quality life has created a boom in the medical industry. In addition to the direct medical care services, a whole support industry has evolved. From pharmaceuticals to prostheses manufacturing, computer imaging, and diagnostics to herbal remedies and alternative medicine, the field expands. Direct and indirect employment in these industries is increasing. Medical insurance is also big business that capitalizes on the desire and need of the public to be able to afford adequate care and access to the latest developments. Companies often use health care benefits as a means to recruit and retain workers. Union and employee advocates demand more and more company-provided insurance benefits, or at least access to group coverage.

Small towns often lag behind the larger cities in providing access to health care facilities. Their smaller populations are not able to support large medical institutions providing the latest in modern advancements. Those towns fortunate enough to have medical facilities may not fully utilize their services. People want the best when it comes to their health and the health of and their loved ones and will travel great distances to get the specialized care they need. Sometimes the local clinics and hospitals are bypassed because they may be perceived as unable to provide high quality care. At the same time, the citizens want convenient access to health care for emergencies and for routine sickness and minor injuries. This want for convenient access to health care, but lack of utilization of local services, makes operation of a small local facility difficult. Hospitals and health clinics are a source of good paying jobs for a significant portion of the population of a small community.

Heppner is served by the Morrow County Health District. There exists in Heppner a multi service hospital, two physicians, a nurse practitioner, expanding diagnostic services, Certified Rural Health Clinic, a pharmacy, and a private dental practice. Soon to be added telecommunications will connect the physicians and providers with trauma facilities within the metropolitan areas and will improve the trauma emergency outcomes and improve quality care during trauma emergencies.

The health district has been under financial stress but has restructured its organization, added services and is recruiting physicians to insure its future financial viability. The district has addressed many difficult issues including the need for subsidized health care to other county areas. Although controversial within the Heppner area,

this has fostered support within the northern communities to insure that their healthcare needs are met as well. It is believed that the cost-cutting effects of the HMO and PPO movement has been fully realized, causing a nationwide increase in medical and insurance costs. Although there has been many changes within the health care reimbursement system, the rural health system has been given several safety nets such as critical access designations and increased reimbursement for Type A rural facilities, has received Proportionate Share income of \$750,000 for the next 2 years, increased reimbursement through the Federally Certified Rural Health Clinic programs and acquired several grants from their affiliations with larger facilities.

HOUSING

Morrow County has experienced a significant population increase. Between 1997 and 1998, the County population grew by 350, or an increase of 3.7%. The growth of employment in the North County has brought in additional families to the area. Subdivisions have been developed or expanded in Irrigon, Boardman, and nearby communities. Heppner has also experienced a population increase from 1465 in 1997 to 1500 in 1998, an increase of 2.4%. Most of the growth has taken place through the occupation of existing buildings that were formerly vacant. Several of the older vacant homes have been renovated and occupied. Several homes are currently in the process of being renovated and may be available for occupancy. The Lakeview Heights subdivision, completed in 1996, is a recent addition to the City of Heppner. At over 10,000 sq. ft. per lot, the lots are considerably larger than average for the City. There are currently 24 lots in the subdivision, of which 3 are built on. At an average of 2.6 persons per dwelling, there is room available for an additional 55 people. The large lot size in the subdivision contributes to a higher cost for these lots. The subdivision appears disconnected to the city since one must leave the city and travel on rural highways to access it. There is only one road in and out. According to the local realtor, sales in the subdivision are slow due to the requirement of the developer for clients to buy a combined lot/house package, the relatively high cost, the lack of models to show, and that all the homes have been manufactured. No homes are available within the subdivision for immediate occupancy.

A buildable lands inventory was conducted in 1994 and indicated that there were 137 undeveloped, but buildable, acres within the Urban Growth Boundary. The report also concluded that of this land only about 48 acres had much potential for development. This property is presently not served by city services. Most of the remaining 89 acres in the buildable lands inventory is not practicably served by roads, water and sewer. Much of it is also held by one property owner who has no intention or desire to sell or develop the property. Many of the vacant platted lots within the City have no access or services.

Nearly all of the easily developed bottom land in the City has been developed. Steep slopes surround the City on all sides making the expansion of the City extremely difficult. In order to provide additional housing opportunities within the City, it may be necessary for the City to take a proactive stance to induce development.

TRANSPORTATION

Heppner lies almost 50 miles from interstate freeway 84. There are no public passenger conveyances. The trafficking of goods produced in Heppner are an added cost to potential manufacturing concerns. There exists adequate parcel service via U.P.S., the U.S. Mail service, Federal Express and Pony Express. The Ports of Morrow and Arlington handle most of our grain transportation via barge on the Columbia river. Amtrak passenger train service to the Hermiston rail yard was stopped in 1996.

There are no major plans for improvement in these circumstances. There does exist a major threat to our barges however. Draw downs or removal of dams on the lower snake river and the John Day dam would greatly imperil, if not eliminate, the transport of grain via barge. This would require alternate means of transportation in order to deliver grain to market. Trucking and rails would left as the only viable alternative. Currently, Union Pacific is undergoing close congressional scrutiny for it's perceived ineptness in running their system. There already is scheduled to be a "test" draw down of the John Day dam and of the lower Snake river dams. Momentum in Washington D.C. and of the other side of the Cascades seems to be in favor of a partial return to a more wild river.

CHILD ABUSE, NEGLECT AND TEEN PREGNANCIES

The reported incidence of child abuse and neglect in the State of Oregon has been on the increase. Between 1996 and 1997 there was a statewide increase of 6.5%. The population of the state increased over the same period by

1.13%.

In Morrow County, the incidence of child abuse and neglect decreased by 11.5% over the same period between 1996 and 1997. The incidence has shown a steady decline in the last two years. From 1997 to 1998, the victim rate dropped 36%. Currently the Morrow County rate is 22.3 incidents per 1000. The region average is 15.9 per 1000. While the incidence of child abuse and neglect is still quite high in Morrow County, it is showing a marked decrease over historical levels.

According to figures provided by Bill Sheribon with the Services to Children and Families, there is a high incidence in South Morrow County. Out of the 27 referrals from October 1, 1998 to December 31, 1998, 10 came from South County and 8 of those were from Heppner addresses. Mr. Sheribon indicated that sex abuse referrals were on a decline lately, while reports and findings of other abuse seemed to be on the increase.

The incidence of teen pregnancies in Morrow County appears to be stable but high at this point. Morrow County had a teen pregnancy rate of 21.9 per 1000 in 1997. This compares to an Eastern Region average of 15.2.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The incidence of domestic violence in the Umatilla/Morrow County area appears to be on the increase. It is not known at this time how Morrow County statistics compare with region, State, or National statistics.

FLOOD HAZARDS

Flooding frequently occurs in lowlands and along streams and watercourses of all kinds. This flooding causes billions of dollars of damage every year and significant loss of life throughout the world. These events are, to some extent, unpredictable and are related to the vagaries of weather, climate, topography, and watershed conditions. In the United States, flooding causes millions of dollars of property damage annually. Many areas are subject to frequent and repeated flooding, which has prompted the federal government to establish a flood insurance program. Local agencies are required to participate in this program to reduce the loss of life and property due to flood events. FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, administers the flood insurance program in the United States. Participating local government agencies are required to set and enforce building restrictions in flood-prone areas. Through an engineering study, a map of the area likely to be covered by water in a flood event is prepared for each city. The map, or FIRM (flood insurance rate map), is based on a ten-year, one-hundred-year, and five-hundred year event. The base flood referred to in the supporting documents is the one-hundred year event. The hundred-year flood actually represents a one percent (1%) chance in any year that a flood of that magnitude will occur. Lending institutions such as banks, savings and loans, etc. are mandated that any homes or businesses within the 100-year floodplain, financed by them, must be covered by flood insurance.

Cities and planning agencies are required to adopt flood hazard reduction ordinances in conformance with FEMA guidelines. All new residential and commercial construction or significant reconstruction within the designated flood hazard areas are required to build to the current standard. Residential units must be elevated one foot (1ft.) above the base flood. Commercial units must be either elevated or floodproofed to one foot (1ft.) above the base flood. This requirement is designed to reduce the likelihood of loss during a flood event.

Within the 100-year flood plain is an area called the floodway. This is an area designated on the FIRM for the movement of flood waters. The floodway is considered a high hazard area due to the depth and velocity of the water expected during a flood. Within the floodway additional restrictions are placed on building construction. Generally, buildings may not be placed within the floodway unless it can be proved that the building's presence will not cause a rise in the base flood. Buildings must also be built to withstand the hydraulic forces from flowing water and debris and must be built to allow flood waters to pass.

While the flood insurance program is designed to reduce the loss of life and property, it does place a financial burden on property owners within the designated flood hazard area. The FIRM may be revised based on changing conditions that affect the flood hazard. FEMA receives many requests for modification of the FIRM and it is at their discretion whether or not to modify any map. Some communities have zoned land within the flood hazard areas to open space, parks, or other non-building zones to avoid the complications of administering flood building regulations and to reduce the potential losses that may occur due to floods.

Heppner lies in a valley surrounded by steep slopes and sits at the confluence of four streams: Willow Creek, Hinton

Creek, Balm Fork, and Shobe Creek. The steep slopes of the hills surrounding these creeks, along with the prevalence of severe thunderstorms in the area, contribute to the likelihood of flash flooding. Land practices in the watershed can have a profound influence on the severity of the flooding.

The City of Heppner suffered a devastating flash flood in 1903 that killed more than 200 people. This flood was one of the worst floods, in terms of loss of life, ever to occur in Oregon. The local cemetery contains many graves of the victims of that flood. In 1971 another destructive flash flood occurred, which caused extensive property damage. No loss of life occurred because of the 1971 flood, possibly due to some advance warning. There have been nineteen (19) flood events between 1883 and 1971, or an occurrence of one flood per 4.6 years on average.

Due to the high incidence of flooding in the City of Heppner, the U.S. Army Corps Of Engineers built a dam across Willow Creek on the edge of the City to reduce the flash flood hazard. This dam was completed in the fall of 1982. The FIRM for Heppner was prepared after the completion of the dam and reflects the reduced area subject to flooding. However, since the Willow Creek Dam was constructed to intercept the waters only from Willow Creek and Balm Fork, the major flood hazard reduction occurred between the dam face and the confluence with Shobe Creek. Below Shobe Creek, an extensive area of the valley floor is covered by the designated flood hazard area. The flooding that occurred in 1971 was documented to have originated in the Shobe Creek watershed.

As a result of the 1971 flood, extensive work was done to construct a series of diversions in the Shobe Creek drainage, along with the conversion of cropland to CRP (Conservation Reserve Program) under a program sponsored by the Soil Conservation Service, now the Natural Resource Conservation Service. A water control district was formed to provide for continuing maintenance of the project. Since the construction of the Willow Creek Dam, and the work done on the Shobe Creek drainage, no significant flooding has been documented within the City of Heppner.

The Army Corps Of Engineers has installed a system of measuring stations along the stream courses to monitor flows along with precipitation gauges. A warning system consisting of sirens and notification to the Sheriff's dispatch office has also been installed to warn City residents of impending flooding. Should stream and precipitation conditions indicate the potential for flooding, a siren will sound to warn citizens in flood hazard areas to move to higher ground.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS

SWOT ANALYSIS OF HEPPNER

In September 1990, the Oregon Economic Development Department conducted an assessment of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) of Heppner. The results of that assessment are available through the Heppner Coordinating Council (HCC).

In the fall of 1998, the HCC orchestrated a review and updating of Heppner's Strategic Plan. As part of that "community stakeholders" task, a subcommittee of Heppner-area residents completed a SWOT analysis based on data and the perceptions of over thirty key individuals in the community.

STRENGTHS

Although "competitive strengths" are those attributes that set a community apart as attractive to businesses or investors, Heppner's appeal lies mostly in a quality of life experience, which can be converted into economic strength.

1. Heppner has a solid base of government employment: Heppner is the Morrow County Seat, so county employees represent a significant number of the work force. Heppner's schools also represent a stable number of employees. Although the Port of Morrow lies to the North, its administration and the many businesses located on its land provide employment opportunities to a number of Heppner residents willing to commute. A State Highway Maintenance Station is located in Heppner, as well as offices for Senior and Disabled Services, the OSP, ODFW,

NRCS, ASCS and OSU Extension. The Heppner Ranger District of the Umatilla National Forest, is headquartered in Heppner. The Morrow County Health District is another major employer in the area. These stable, generally well paying jobs offer reliable sources of employment that offset swings in the natural resource industries.

2. Other area employers with long histories help to provide a strong economic base: Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative and the Morrow County Grain Growers are two major employers in the area. The core retailers have been in business for decades and continue to offer employment, part-time and full time. The farming and ranching businesses, mostly family-owned, continue to contribute substantially to our local economy. Several area ranchers have diversified into bird, deer, or elk fee-hunting. Although these businesses do not employ great numbers as individuals, collectively, they represent a sizable, consistent number of employed.

3. Within the past five years, Heppner has experienced a growth in new small businesses and changes in ownerships of long-established businesses, both of which indicate confidence in the community's future: Among new small businesses are found a timber broker, a second antique shop, three additional building contractors, a low-voltage electrician, a drill-bit sharpener, a used book store and copy business, a boot maker, and a second barber. New owners have invested in Lott's Electric, Green Feed, the bowling alley and café, one of the auto repair shops, one of the restaurants, a service station that will now include a mini market, and Bucknum's Tavern. The Heppner Day Care has become a viable organization, which has recently begun the purchase of the building it uses, and other home child-care providers have also improved services.

4. Many retail business owners report a high-quality full-time workforce with an excellent work ethic. Employers and employees usually know their customers, which generally means conscientious service. Such service and an attempt to exceed customers' expectations remain the local retailers' appeal.

5. Heppner is competitive in the areas of technological advancements, educational opportunities, and business financing: Fiber optic line is supporting communications to and from Heppner with a point of presence in Heppner, and local servers are available for internet users. Blue Mountain Community College, sixty miles from Heppner in Pendleton, provides workforce training and offers evening classes in Heppner. Two traditional lending institutions and the Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation and Morrow Development provide financing for small and large businesses. The Port of Morrow continues to be financially supportive of economic development.

6. Heppner benefits from the Morrow County Health District and other interests in elderly care: Although the health district has faced many threats, financial and other, efforts by the board and the administration to strengthen its viability are showing positive results. Three health-care providers currently demonstrate interest in staying in Heppner and in keeping the hospital and clinic viable. Additional equipment is being purchased to enhance diagnostic capabilities. The long-term nursing care allows the elderly to remain in the community, and a completed feasibility study supports the building of an assisted living facility in a joint venture with the Morrow County Health District and the Willow Creek Valley Assisted Living Corporation. The St. Patrick's Senior Apartments, a city-owned facility, offers housing for retirees and the elderly. A chiropractor and an optometrist serve patients once a week in Heppner. A family of dentists who has recently purchased the dental clinic has been well received by the townspeople.

7. Heppner's population of 1500 represent, in general, small-town virtues: Sports for the youth and quality education are priorities that have stimulated multiple hours of volunteer work, have resulted in support for new little league ball fields and a new water park, have created the county recreation tax district, and have led to close scrutiny of the four-day school week. When something needs doing, the community rallies, as it did for the aforementioned and for the planting of trees along the new main street. During a recent increase in the amount of local vandalism and concern, especially among the elderly, citizens formed a committee to examine the problem and find solutions. People tend to watch out for one another. Many respondents consider Heppner one of the safest communities in Eastern Oregon in which to live and raise families.

8. Recreation opportunities continue to expand: Heppner remains a major destination for deer, elk, and bird hunters, many of whom have become pay-to-hunt customers. Fishing attracts a certain number to nearby streams and the Willow Creek Reservoir, which now boasts a new RV campground. Snowmobiling enthusiasts are improving the mountain trails, and cross-country skiing enjoys a small but dedicated following. The Willow Creek Golf Course

recently purchased additional land, with a long-range plan for expansion. The Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo and Morrow County Fair and Rodeo attract impressive numbers of participants and spectators, so much so that private financial donations have made the building of a multi-use structure at the fairgrounds possible. A bicycle brochure now features the highways of Heppner and the surrounding region. The now-complete scenic byway is gaining attention and use each year, and Heppner businesses benefit from the stops made en route to and from the Southeast. Some limited progress has been made in the establishment of a working agricultural museum. The Arts Council of Morrow County and the Recreation tax district provide support of art and sports activities.

9. Within the historic, picturesque charm of Heppner lie some existing sites for development: The junior high school building has tremendous potential for office space or small businesses. The upper level of the Klamath First Bank was once used for office space and remains usable. The space previously used for the county health department's business is empty, and the old Chevron station has closed, thereby freeing up space for another business. Other office space is available at the Pettyjohn building and the USFS building.

10. There is a relatively large, educated and available workforce in the Willow Creek Valley. According to a survey conducted in 1999, there are at least 126 individuals that commute from the Willow Creek Valley to cities to the North. If jobs were available locally, and where pay and benefits were comparable, these people could likely be expected to prefer working near home, and would fill the available positions.

11. Zoned for industrial development, the nearby site of Frontier Resource's sawmill, a long-standing business, that closed on March 14, 1999, has been given to the Port of Morrow. The transfer of the property to the Port of Morrow has opened up approximately 30 acres of industrial land for development.

12. Heppner is well served by the media: The weekly local newspaper provides local coverage and the *East Oregonian* is delivered daily, as is *The Oregonian*. A local television cable system remains competitive with the satellite systems.

WEAKNESSES

1. One of Heppner's strengths, its relative remoteness, is also a weakness, and the removal of the railroad tracks further eliminated transportation options. The geographic isolation often equates with increased transportation costs that businesses pass on to the consumer. This isolation has proven unattractive to some potential business interests.

2. Heppner's retail section has dwindled, shows little sign of expanding, and cannot keep local residents at home. Residents, instead of shopping at home, will drive 50 to 80 miles to search for "bargains," as well as items not available in Heppner, and to have an "outing." Another contributing factor is the lack of local entertainment opportunities, for shopping and dining are common for an individual or family that must travel to see a movie.

3. Heppner's limited availability of building sites includes sites for homes and for business development. Although the Corps of Engineers will be re-examining the flood plain and flood way issues at Heppner, presently, developable land is almost non-existent. The residential building sites up by the reservoir have not been developed or marketed as expected, a situation now being examined.

4. Heppner's demographics reflect at least two probable impediments to growth: 1) Many of the residents have lived in Heppner their entire lives, many represent up to fifth generations of original residents' families, some lack the desire for change or growth. 2) The lack of ethnic diversity can affect marketing opportunities, as well as limit the preparedness of Heppner's youth for the environments beyond its city boundaries.

5. Visitor accommodations in Heppner remain limited. When special events occur in March and August, participation is adversely affected. Almost ten years have passed since a feasibility study denied the need for a motel-fine restaurant addition to Heppner. The one bed and breakfast business recently ceased operation, and the fee-hunting businesses offer their lodges as B and B accommodations only during off-seasons.

6. Closure of a long-standing lumber business creates economic uncertainty and a change in Heppner's employment pattern.
7. Heppner provides few employment opportunities. Many residents must commute long distances to find suitable employment. Limited governmental budgets and restrictions, tight private business budgets, and improved technology leave fewer summertime jobs for high school or returning college students. Graduates tend to leave the community to pursue careers.
8. Infrastructure creates some problems for Heppner: The water source needs to be expanded and many water lines need to be replaced. Although the sewage system is utilizing only about 60% of capacity, a need exists for a separate septic dumping system. Although the main street-highway and sidewalks have recently been improved, back streets and sidewalks remain in disrepair.
9. Derelict buildings, including the former swimming pool, and abandoned lots, including the Union 76 property, remain a blot on the beauty and appeal of Heppner.

OPPORTUNITIES

1. Retirees continue to show interest in Heppner. Young retirees are viewed as one source of new small business owners. Long-term residents generally wish to remain in the community of family and friends, creating an opportunity for businesses that cater to the needs of the elderly: the senior apartments, the nursing home, the anticipated assisted living facility, and other businesses that entrepreneurs might recognize as valuable to this segment of Heppner's society.
2. No official report has yet become available to this committee on traffic through Heppner since completion of the scenic byway, but retailers generally agree that more visitors seem to be traveling through Heppner. How to convert this information into opportunity could become clearer upon the completion of a soon-to-be-conducted economic diversification study. An enlarged golf course might, for example, benefit. A completed agricultural museum might attract out-of-area travelers. Activities at the reservoir might become more attractive.
3. Lexington and Ione are both involved in efforts to improve water and sewer systems. Commercial development in Lexington is viewed as a possibility. Heppner's economy could benefit from growth in either or both of these communities.
4. As growth impacts the areas on the Columbia River, Heppner could attract individuals wanting to live and own homes in a small town and commute to work. Additional building sites may become available upon completion of the Corps' reassessment of the flood plain and flood way. Although such newcomers would have common access to shopping at the north end, they could be expected to shop for some basic needs in Heppner and support our schools, and some could become involved in local activities.
5. Heppner's remaining historic and vintage buildings hold potential as attractions for visitors and for individuals interested in such properties for businesses or homes.
6. Strong interest in residential lots, country acreages, and mobile home sites represent opportunity for growth, and the county planning department is careful but cooperative with the idea of growth.

7. Internet access with a point of presence on fiber optic cable opens a door of opportunity for Heppner in attracting individuals and businesses who are looking for the small-town living atmosphere but needing business contact with the world-at-large.
8. The possibility of an enterprise zone is worthy of investigation. A motel-restaurant is an example of a business that could be attracted to Heppner under enterprise zone conditions.
9. The opportunity for diversification of industries has become a reality at the sawmill site after Frontier Resources has completed its closure and cleanup. The Governor has requested increased economic development funding for rural, depressed economies. The Port of Morrow has volunteered to spearhead an effort to attract industry to the available site.
10. The former swimming pool is being investigated as a site for a community activity center.

THREATS

1. A sharp decline in a resource-based economy continues to threaten Heppner's viability: timber-related government and private employment, agricultural businesses suffering from market fluctuations and environmental restrictions.
2. Retailers report a growing difficulty in finding individuals willing to work only part time, which is necessary to their business success. Also, some business owners report surviving by a slim margin that is increasingly threatened by regulations, reduced sales, and increased business competition in the North.
3. Increases in the local crime rate and in drug abuse threaten the safety and confidence of Heppner residents which in turn weakens the confidence in the local law enforcement agency. Law enforcement officials report youth and young adults as the majority of perpetrators and methamphetamine as the dominant drug problem. Lack of a local rehabilitation facility threatens a successful fight against drug abuse.
4. Strong clashes of personalities and differences among visions of what Heppner should be and become have created a division among residents: Some individuals see no need for change or growth. Some believe change and growth, in general, are important. Some say that change is good, if it is the "right" kind of change and involves the "right" kind of people. Such a division threatens the cohesiveness of the community, as personalities and emotions interfere with decision-making and cooperative efforts.
5. A lack of understanding or empathy on the part of the state's urban voters threatens Heppner's economy: the breaching of dams, the draw-down of the John Day Dam, the growing number of initiative measures that represent extremes in approaches to solving environmental problems.
6. As in any small community, "burn out" as well as apathy, continues to threaten Heppner's effectiveness as it works to maintain its valuable programs and events. Energy levels and innovations suffer. Many people fail to "buy into" activities. People are less apt to take ownership of events they have not helped to plan.

7. A "doom and gloom" attitude of some citizens threatens the enthusiasm necessary for Heppner to thrive.

8. The designations of floodplain and floodway over much of the valley floor within the City, limits the community's ability to develop. The requirements for flood hazard insurance for structures within the designated flood hazard areas increases costs for homeowners and limits the sale and recycling of older structures in these areas.

VISUAL ANALYSIS OF THE SWOT

The developed Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for the Heppner Community were analyzed in relationship to four "community viability" factors. These four were: **Infrastructure, Business Development, Quality of Life and Jobs**. Each SWOT element was evaluated against these four factors to see if any patterns or conclusions might be drawn.

Strengths	Infra-struct	Bus. Devel.	Qual. of Life	Jobs
1. Solid base employment = gov/schools/port				+
2. Other long tenured businesses; e.g. Columbia Basin Elec				+
3. Some new businesses/ new owners of existing businesses		+		+
4. Quality workforce/ customer service		+	+	
5. Technology/ education opportunities/ business financing	+	+	+	
6. Health Service and Eldercare			+	+
7. Community Spirit/ Unity/ Values			+	
8. Recreation Opportunitis			+	
9. Potential Sites for Development	(--)	+	(--)	
10. Media Presence/ Service			+	

Interpretation: Many of the strengths are tied to quality of life issues. The shaded area notes that although there are technology/education and business financing opportunities, the jobs that this may generate are probably pretty small in number.

Weaknesses	Infra-struct	Bus. Devel.	Qual. of Life	Jobs
1. Geographic Isolation		(--)	+/--	(--)
2. Retail loss/ lack of entertainment		(--)	(--)	(--)
3. Limited business and home sites	(--)	(--)	(--)	(--)
4. Demographics/dislike of change/lack of cultural diversity		(--)	+/--	(--)
5. Visitor Accommodation		(--)	(--)	(--)
6. Lumber business/ commuting workers		(--)	(--)	(--)
7. Youth Employment		(--)	(--)	(--)
8. Water System/ back streets/ sidewalks	(--)	(--)	(--)	

Interpretation: Weaknesses for the community tend to center around subjects of business development and job opportunities. Limited business and home sites affect all community viability factors across the board.

Threats	Infra-struct	Bus. Devel.	Qual. of Life	Jobs
1. Decline in Resource Based Economy		(--)		(--)
2. Lack of Part-time workers/over-regulation/ losses to N. End businesses		(--)		(--)
3. Crime and Drugs/ lack of rehab facilities		(--)	(--)	
4. Lack of common community vision	(--)	(--)	(--)	(--)
5. Lack of understanding by urban voters	(--)	(--)		(--)
6. Volunteer burnout/ no young leadership emerging			(--)	
7. "Doom and Gloom" thinking		(--)	(--)	

Interpretation: Threats are varied. The lack of a common community vision can be very negative as it affects all four community viability factors.

Opportunities	Infra-struct	Bus. Devel.	Qual. of Life	Jobs
1. Retirees/ contribution to small businesses	(--)	+		
2. Scenic Byway/ local attractions	(--)	+	+	
3. Growth in Ione/ Lexington		+	+	
4. Bedroom community to N. end Growth	(--)	+	+	
5. Internet		+	+	+
6. Enterprise Zone	(--)	+		+
7. Lots, country acreage, mobile home sites, planning dept. cooperation	(--)	+	+	

Interpretation: Infrastructure must keep pace and is directly married to business development opportunities. Although 7 opportunities were identified, none of them contribute but a small number of jobs, with the possible exception of a future Enterprise zone.

HEPPNER COMMUNITY GOALS

The following goals have been developed to help direct the efforts of public officials and community organizations in their efforts to build and develop the community of Heppner and the Willow Creek Valley. The goals have been sorted by category under which they may be most easily described . No attempt has been made to prioritize the goals as priorities will be determined by conditions and opportunities as they arise.

EDUCATION

- **Support Morrow County School District efforts to meld community and school education and activity needs.**
- **Determine the local educational needs in the Willow Creek Valley and establish a local Blue Mountain Community College facility providing on-site educational and training opportunities.**
- **Expand access to, and use of, the public library in the community.**

INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Determine Library District Facilities needs and proceed with development/expansion as warranted.**
- **Investigate the financing and construction of a joint city hall/library facility.**
- **Expand the golf course to 18 holes or regulation 9 holes to accommodate the desires of the local population and to attract new visitors.**
- **Maintain, upgrade, and expand City infrastructure including water, wastewater, streets, sidewalks and storm drainage to meet the needs of an anticipated eventual population of 2,000.**

Action Plan:

- A) Establish and construct bike route from South end of town to safely access swimming pool at North end.
- B) Prepare Master Water System Improvement Plan.
- C) Proceed with implementation of Water System Master Plan
- D) Replace and upgrade old deteriorating water mains.
- E) Design/construct septage handling facility.
- F) Extend sewer mains to un-served property within the city.
- G) Replace, restore, or remodel City Hall to appropriate standards.
- H) Prepare Storm Drainage System Master Plan.
- I) Offer citizens opportunities to improve their streets through the LID process.
- J) Implement the Heppner Transportation System Plan.

- **Remove Willow Creek from the DEQ listing of water quality limited streams (303(d) list).**

Action Plan

- A) Form a Watershed Council to provide a plan for addressing water quality standards.
- B) Ensure that the City of Heppner Wastewater Treatment Plant maintains the ability to meet standards for discharge.

- **Manage the watershed and land usage to limit destructive impacts of future floods.**

Action Plan:

- A) Form Watershed Council to ensure that flood concerns are addressed when considering land treatments upstream from Heppner.
- B) Ensure that the Water Control District remains active in maintaining diversion structures, terraces, and CRP land in the Shobe Creek and Hinton Creek drainages.

- **Reduce financial liability of flood hazard regulations.**

Action Plan:

- A) Pursue amendments to the Flood Insurance Rate Map.

- **Reinforce awareness of critical need for transportation system to South County and within the City of Heppner.**

Action Plan:

- A) Complete Transportation System Master Plan.
- B) Maintain involvement in the State Improvement Plan for highway improvements.

- **Maintain technological sufficiency for Internet communication capability.**

Action Plan:

A) Market Heppner's point of presence on the fiber optic system.

- **Repair, remodel and reuse old swimming pool building and grounds.**

Action Plan:

A) Form committee, including youth as well as adults, to consider possible options and make recommendations to City. Some possibilities include:

- a) Skating rink
- b) Skateboard park
- c) Basketball court
- d) Community Center
- e) Other ideas and suggestions.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- **Retain local medical facilities and services and encourage and promote the use of local services.**

Action Plan:

- A) Provide brochure of available services.
- B) Improve traffic and pedestrian access to medical facilities.

- **Promote sense of community within the Willow Creek Valley. (Heppner, Lexington & Ione communities)**

Action Plan

- A) Market the Willow Creek Valley area under the name of "Oregon's Willow Creek Valley".
- B) Plan and implement joint community events which will serve to tie the communities together.

- **Develop a marketing strategy to attract small businesses and light industry to our community.**

Action Plan:

- A) Establish Community Response Team to respond to industrial inquiries.
- B) Establish mechanism to expedite building permits.
- C) Employ the RARE (Resource Assistance for Rural Environments) program through the University of Oregon for economic development.
- D) Review Heppner Fact Book and keep current.
- E) Review and update the GAP study.

- **Develop a strategy to retain and enhance existing commercial/retail businesses.**

- **Increase buildable land inventory for housing and business purposes.**

Action Plan:

- A) Solve problems with developing and marketing Lakeview Estates.
- B) Readjust Urban Growth Boundary
- C) Investigate zoning for small acreage ranchettes.
- D) Promote development of a residential subdivision.
- E) Create zoning buffer area adjacent to the Heppner Urban Growth Boundary.
- F) Investigate the creation of an Urban Renewal Agency.

- **Expand the range of housing opportunities by adding a new assisted living facility.**

- **Provide an index of local services and organizations so that they are well known to the majority of the community.**

- **Attract additional visitors to the community while preserving its historic values and quality of life.**

Action Plan

- A) Prepare a tourism development plan which will increase visitors to the community.
- B) Prepare a Centennial Memorial of Flood Event of 1903, for 2003.

- **Provide youth job creation, enhancement and retention.**

Action Plan:

- A) Educate employers about training opportunities.
- B) Educate youth about employment opportunities.

- **Provide visitor accommodations.**

Action Plan

- A) Develop bed and breakfast facilities.
- B) Encourage the location of additional motel facilities in Heppner.

QUALITY OF LIFE

- **Develop a strategy to attract families to our community.**

Action Plan:

- A) Create video to market Willow Creek Valley.

- **Develop and maintain a strong and responsive law enforcement and crime prevention system, including citizen participation, to curtail the growth of crime and vandalism.**

Action Plan

- A) Continue to involve city police in the Neighborhood Watch Program.
- B) Establish a program for seniors to mentor youth.

- **Establish a community foundation to assist in funding small, community-oriented development projects.**

- **Maintain a neat clean and attractive community.**

Action Plan

- A) Establish a committee to promote and educate the community as to the benefits of beautification and to recognize improvements.
- B) Enforce nuisance ordinances prompted by citizen complaints.

- **Increase the availability of child care providers to meet demands, especially for night time and weekend hours.**

- **Continue to reduce the incidence of domestic violence and child abuse and neglect.**

Action Plan

A) Implement the Morrow County Commission on Children & Families Goals and Strategies.

- **Develop a plan to recruit, train and involve leaders of all ages in community affairs.**
- **Establish a program to recognize and commemorate the community's historic/older buildings.**

Action Plan

A) Assist property owners with historic designations.

- **Develop a Community Communication Plan to disseminate information and solicit public comments/involvement.**

Action Plan:

- A) Encourage project managers/leaders to develop a communication plan for their project. Suggested guidelines for project communication will be included in the Strategic Plan Appendices.
- B) Establish community radio station.
- C) Improve public awareness of emergency response procedures.

- **Develop and implement a program that welcomes newcomers as well as visitors to our town.**

Action Plan:

A) Establish local ambassadors to greet newcomers.

- **Provide diverse wholesome and fun recreational activities and facilities.**

Action Plan:

- A) Implement Fairgrounds Master Plan.
- B) Maintain community swimming pool.
- C) Develop agricultural museum.
- D) Involve children in planning decisions involving recreation.
- E) Establish a Boys and Girls Club.

Appendix A

The following persons contributed their thoughts on a survey supplied by the SWOT team.

LIST OF RESPONDENTS:

Mike Mills, Heppner Economic Development Corporation
George Koffler, Heppner Economic Development Corporation
Bob Jepsen, Heppner City Mayor
Jerry Healy, Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative
Sharon Harrison, Klamath First Bank
Andrew Lacey, Heppner Planning Commission
Jerry Breazeale, Heppner City Manager
Joyce Hollomon, Shoe Box Business Owner
Mike McGuire, Heppner Chamber of Commerce President / Postmaster
Louis Carlson, Morrow County Judge, Retired
Sharon Lewis, Heritage Land Company
Ann Spicer, Soroptimist President
Skip Matthews, NRCS Service
Delanne Ferguson, US Forest Service District Manager
John Murray, Murray Drugs Company Business Owner

Shannon Bara, Gardner's Men's Wear Business Employee
 Lavern Keithley, Willow Creek Reservoir RV Park Manager
 Darla Wishart, Northwest Motel Manager
 Rick Minster, County Economic Developer
 Tim Van Cleave, People's Church Minister
 Barbara Hayes, Retired High School Counselor
 Larry Mills, Retired Morrow County Grain Growers Manager
 Cliff Green, Coast to Coast Business Owner
 Claudia Hughes, Heppner Chamber of Commerce Director
 Bob Kahl, Van Marter and Kahl Insurance Business Owner

Appendix B

Communication Plan

Round One: Objective: **INFORM THAT STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT IS OCCURRING AND WHAT THIS MEANS TO THE COMMUNITY.**

Communication at this stage needs to be broad-based. Materials need to be prepared and available for dissemination; both a synopsis/briefing format and the entire document to date. Flyers and briefing papers need to explain that the full text document is available at City Hall/contact Jerry.

Target Audience:	Action:	Who's Responsible:	By When:
All Community Members	1) Prepare a flyer that can be inserted into Columbia Basin mailings. Coordinate with CBE.	Delanne will prepare flyer. Jerry will call CBE.	April 14 X
	2) Put an announcement on Heppner TV scrolling page.	Jerri will do, with follow up a week later.	April 14 X
	3) Prepare "#" copies of full text document.	Jerry	April 14 X
	4) Articles in Heppner G-T and EO, Hermiston Herald	Jerry, with follow-up a week later	April 14 X

X = Accomplished.

Round two: Objective: **COLLECT FEEDBACK FROM COMMUNITY. EMPHASIZE GATHERING**

OPINIONS ABOUT GOALS. MAKE PEOPLE AWARE OF POSSIBLE PROJECTS.

Strategy is to seek out representative opinions from community groups and diverse demographics. More one-on-one contact will be used.

Some committee work is required before this step can be implemented. The lists of potential projects should be added to each goal, which hopefully will elicit some specific feedback. Project proposals at this point would just be a list of possible ones that we already know about. Ask for new ideas. Need to develop an "interview form", so that information can be more easily compiled later. Responsible parties need to prepare ahead by obtaining suitable materials from Jerry.

Target Audience:	Action:	Who's Responsible:	By When:
------------------	---------	--------------------	----------

Seniors	One-on-one interview, with Howard Gilliam	John Edmundson	4/28/99 X
---------	---	----------------	-----------

High School Class	Class assignment	Ron Anthony	
Heppner Coordinating Council	Meeting	Rollie Marshall to call mtg.	
HEDC	Meeting	Doris Brosnan	4/21/99 X
City Council	Meeting	Jerry Breazeale	5/11/99 X
Chamber of Com.	Chamber meeting	Jerry Breazeale	
Businesses	1) Retail Meeting	Doris Brosnan	5/3/99 X
	2) Knock on doors		5/3/99 X
Day Care Providers	One-on-one interviews	Mike Armato	4/28/99
Teachers	Staff mtgs via administration	Ron Anthony	
Civic Orgs:			
Lions	Meeting	Tom Sly	5/1/99 X
Elks		Tom Sly	5/1/99 X

Willow Valley Service Club (Soroptomists)	Meeting	Jerry Breazeale/Rene Devin	4/23/99 X
Masons		Doris Brosnan	5/7/99
Oddfellows		Rollie Marshall	5/7/99
Churches	Present to Ministerial Assn	Andrew Johnson/Jerri Sly	5/7/99
Wheat League		John Kilkenny	
Cattlemen	Letter	Pam	4/21/99 X
Morrow County		Jerry Breazeale	
Hospital	Contact Administrator	Jerry Breazeale	X
Little League		John Kilkenny	
All	Community Presentation/ Townhall meeting		1 or 2 weeks after other interviews, 5/20/99

X = Done as of 5/4/99

Round Three: Objective: **SYNTHESIZE INFORMATION AND VALIDATE THAT WE HEARD CORRECTLY, AND THAT COMMUNITY "BUYS IN" TO GOALS OF THE PLAN. SEEK COMMENTS ON PROJECT PROPOSALS.**

Outside of the Communications Plan, the committee will need to compile and edit all the input from various sources and prepare a "chapter" of the plan that states what we heard. Then we need to go back to the community asking "Is this what you want?"

Target Audience:	Action:	Who's Responsible:	By When:
------------------	---------	--------------------	----------

All Community Members	1) Prepare a flyer (this time discussing how we collected info and what we heard) that can be inserted into Columbia Basin mailings. Coordinate with CBE.	Doris Brosnan, Jerri Sly, Janel Lacey, Delanne Ferguson	6/30/99
-----------------------	---	---	---------

2) Put an announcement on Heppner TV scrolling page.	Jerri Sly	6/30/99
3) Prepare "#" copies of full text document.	Jerry	6/30/99
4) Articles in Heppner G-T and EO, Hermiston Herald	Jerry	6/30/99
5) Town hall meeting		6/16/99

Appendix C

HEPPNER STRATEGIC PLAN

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

USFS needs to spend more on recreation facilities in Morrow County. Upgrade Penland Campground. How are we going to pay for improvements? Seniors on fixed incomes have limited resources for paying increased property taxes.

Anti-loitering ordinance is needed. Professionally painted signs in all business windows stating loitering is not permitted.

Maintain hospital and ambulance services.

The upkeep of our historic buildings, an assisted living facility, and the need to plan now for the future are important.

Appendix D

The following persons gave presentations on community needs and resources from the perspective of their organizations:

- Louis Carlson Morrow County Judge
- Dave Harlan OEDD Regional Development Officer
- Steve Dube USDA Rural Development Coordinator
- Paul Kershnisnick USDA Rural Housing Specialist
- Dallas Fridley Oregon Regional Economist
- Judy Rea Oregon Wheat League Vice President
- Gary Neal Port of Morrow General Manager
- Larry Sample Morrow County Sheriff Department
- Doug Rathbun Heppner Police Department
- Jerry Breazeale Heppner City Manager
- Bill Sheirbon State Services to Children and Families
- Dar Merrill Morrow County Commission on Children and Families
- Chuck Star Morrow County School District
- Kathy Ferge Blue Mountain Community College

Anne Morter Blue Mountain Community College
Sheila Dahlman Morrow County Health District
Marilyn Bader-Nesse Morrow County Behavioral Health Dept.
Laura McElligott Morrow County Health Dept.
Tamra Mabbott Morrow County Planner
Cyde Estes Heppner Planning Commission