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Introduction

I would like to thank the Town of Star Valley Ranch and the Star Valley Ranch Association for their hospitality while we conducted the assessment. I also want to thank Forsgren Associates who also was a sponsor of the assessment. We greatly appreciate those private businesses who realize how important it is to a community to plan their future and are willing to participate in that process.

I was very pleased that I had the opportunity to come back to Star Valley Ranch and serve on this assessment team. It is always interesting to come to communities when you have served on the first team to see and hear the changes.

It was very apparent that Star Valley Ranch has become a “Town” - you can see the changes with the new Town Hall, the Post Office, the maintenance shop, the Town entrance and the start of new businesses – the ATM machine! A great deal has happened in a very short amount of time. In addition, we “Heard” the changes. It is almost like people have had a taste of the good life and now want more. I am not saying that this is bad by any means; it is just the growing pains of a new community. I do commend the leadership in both the Town and the Association for continuing to tackle the challenges facing you, and I hope that this assessment will give you some new ideas to continue the growth of your community.

My report is presented as requested with suggestions for the Town, and then the Association and then joint suggestions. Even though it is presented in this format, I think we all realize that you all must continue to work together to assure a bright future for the community.

TOWN OF STAR VALLEY RANCH

Theme: INFRASTRUCTURE

Challenge: Water, roads and sewer continue to be huge issues for the Ranch and should continue to be the priority for the community as this improvement assure the growth of the community and solve issues. The Sewer improvements seem like they are 10-15 years off and should be in your long-range plan.

We also heard comments concerning road improvements and as expected people are divided. Some want roads paved others want roads left as is. Those are decisions of the leadership depending on funding and priorities. The majority of people are very happy with the maintenance and the crew – kudos to the Town employees!

Solution: You are very aware of the many grants and loan funds available to you, so there is not much to add. Continue your relationship with USDA Rural Development and your Regional Wyoming Business Council Director. I would remind you that grant writing and assistance is available through RC&D (Resource Conservation and Development) and the WRDC (Wyoming Rural Development Council). For assistance from the WRDC, contact Jo Ferguson or myself.

Resources:

USDA Rural Development
Ann Stoeger, Area Director
508 N. Broadway
Riverton, WY 82501
307-856-7524 Ext. 4
Ann.stoeger@wy.usda.gov

RC&D

Coordinator: Maureen Meagher
625 S. Washington Street
P.O. Box 1761
Afton, WY 83110-1761
307-886-9412
Maureen.meagher@wy.usda.gov

Theme: RECREATION

Challenge: Recreation in various forms and activities was brought up over and over in the listening sessions. You have a very health conscious and active community and from what we heard, they want more recreational opportunities for all ages. The Town and Association have divided up duties and tried to make it very clear through an Agreement. In terms of recreation, the town is involved through “wellness.” In defining wellness, paths and trails seems to come under the Town of Star Valley Ranch. However, there is still a great deal of confusion over responsibilities. As the Town grows, a top priority should be to create a recreation department, funded and administered by the Town.

Solutions and ideas: There were so many different ideas of recreation opportunities/desires in the community that I suggest you develop a recreation plan for the community. This plan could take into consideration activities, facilities and education.

Numerous people in the third question (What projects would you like to see implemented?) indicated that they wanted a year round indoor recreation facility. One person attending a session, I think, made a wise comment at least for the very near future. “Folks in SVR can take advantage of other town recreation/community centers until they can build their own. (Alpine, Thayne, Etna – all have facilities with different missions). This does not mean a facility should not be a part of your long range recreation plan; however, you do have facilities that can be utilized that are not a long distance from your community.

We also heard the desire for folks to have some pocket type parks in different locations in the community. One thought might be to talk to some long time property owners that have not built and may not build that might be willing to allow playground equipment temporarily on their property.

Another suggestion is to continue to finish the walking path on the BLM land – it is a great addition to the community!

Resources:

For recreation planning, I suggest a company by the name of Taintor Associates, based out of Massachusetts, but also works in Colorado.

Taintor & Associates
Newburyport, MA 01950
978-462-0404

info@taintorassociates.com

http://www.taintorassociates.com/who.htm

For additional consultants, I found this web site that lists several companies:

<http://www.lpa.state.mn.us/pdf/MNconsultlist.pdf>

Theme: PUBLIC SERVICES

Challenge: With community growth the issues of needing public services such as law enforcement and fire suppression increase. The major challenge of fire suppression is adequate equipment and dependency on other communities.

Solution: We understand that a county fire district is in the works, and suggest you continue to work with the County Commissioners to move this forward.

You have been doing a great job of obtaining equipment. Many people (especially those that work on or with the equipment) would like to see new equipment purchased. However, one young man was not sure about that since he works on the equipment and says it is job security! On a serious note, good, reliable equipment is a necessity and I suggest USDA Rural Development and their equipment programs.

For Law Enforcement, consider increasing assistance with the other communities and the Sherriff's department. Sometimes just seeing a law enforcement vehicle parked in the community can help with enforcement.

Resources:

USDA Rural Development
Ann Stoeger, Area Director
508 N. Broadway
Riverton, WY 82501
307-856-7524 Ext. 4

Ann.stoeger@wy.usda.gov

Theme: COMMUNICATION

Challenge: Communication challenges were identified between the Town and citizens; citizens and the SVR Board; the Town and Association and then between the changing demographics of the community. From observations of the first assessment to this assessment, I think you have made major strides in the communication arena. I remember our first assessment, people were communicating through CB radios! Communication can always be improved but it is also a two-way street.

Solution: Continue your email notifications – I don't live in Star Valley Ranch but I always know what is going on in Town because Jo Ferguson, as a property owner, gets the emails and shares them with me.

The following are some general suggestions for continued improvement in communications:

1. Suggest creating and supporting a Council of Governments for the Star Valley. **Councils of Governments** defined are regional planning bodies that exist throughout the United States. A typical council is defined to serve an area of several counties, and they address. It would be beneficial to all communities to meet once a month or every 2 months to discuss common issues, projects, etc. Great way to keep communications open especially with potential changes in administrations.
2. Joint meetings between Town Council and Association Board and those minutes of the meeting posted.
3. Utilize the back of water bills for community announcements. The back of bills are usually blank and a great way to share information.
4. For communication with the younger generation moving into the Ranch, consider the social media opportunities such as Face Book or Twitter for communication. There are several young people on the ranch that might be able to create a Face Book page and maintain it for you. Maybe training on social media might be great fun!

Resources:

For social media training:

Scott Baylo

WBC Marketing Director

214 W. 15th Street

Cheyenne, WY 82002

Scott.baylo@wybusiness.org

MISCELLANEOUS SUGGESTIONS:

1. **Signage:** The Town of Evanston just finished a great way- finding plan for the downtown community. It included signage for the community as well as a beautiful design for a community bulletin board. I was very impressed with the plan and the work completed and suggests it might be an idea down the road for Star Valley Ranch to consider. The consultant was Meyers-Anderson. Jerry Meyers is currently doing work on the Barn.

Meyers-Anderson

849 Front Street, Suite 202

Evanston, Wyoming 82930

Phone: 307-789-0934

Mailing Address:

PO Box 2340

Evanston, Wyoming 82931-2340

2. Social Services: We were presented at the listening session’s information and statistics about use of the Thayne Senior Center by Star Valley Ranch community members. I am also aware that the Center has made requests to Star Valley Ranch for funding and through some earlier confusion over contracting last year, they did not receive funds and they approached the council again this year for funding and it was denied. I know that it is the right and authority for the council to make this decision, but I would suggest you continue to discuss the matter with the senior center. Through other assessments in the state, we see the great value senior centers bring to communities. It is not just a place to receive meals, but it provides social opportunities for individuals and many times information on senior services, issues facing seniors and health assistance. With the lack of a center in Star Valley Ranch, it is an opportunity to provide this service in very close proximity to citizens.

3. Economic Development training opportunity: I would like to offer a training opportunity to someone in the community that might give you some unique ideas for “growing” businesses in your community. Each year the Wyoming Main Street program offers scholarships to the National Main Street conference and state pre-trip. The 2011 trip will be to Iowa. The conference offers numerous sessions in economic development; downtown development, etc. Please contact the Wyoming Main Street program at 307-777-2934.

STAR VALLEY RANCH ASSOCIATION

Theme: RECREATION

Challenge: Recreation in the community has been divided between the Town and the Association by the Association handling all aspects of recreation and the Town’s involvement is “wellness.” There were numerous activities/opportunities/ideas presented to us from members of the community to diversify recreation in the community and some great ideas presented.

Solutions: I offer the same solution as presented earlier in the report for a recreation plan is developed for the Ranch. There may be some planning grants available for this type of planning and I suggest you contact USDA RD – an RBEG (Rural Business Enterprise Grant) planning grant might be available for this type of plan; or WBC (Wyoming Business Council) through your regional director.

Resources:

USDA Rural Development

Ann Stoeger, Area Director

508 N. Broadway

Riverton, WY 82501

307-856-7524 Ext. 4

Ann.stoeger@wy.usda.gov

Elaina Zempel
Wyoming Business Council
1100 Pine Ave
Kemmerer, WY 83101
307-877-2203
Elaina.zempel@wybusiness.org

Challenge: The Association has concerns about facilities that are in need of repair and the Barn – which is currently being evaluated by Jerry Meyer of Meyer – Anderson Architects. This work is being completed by a Wyoming Main Street Architect grant.

Solution: One the plan is completed, the Association might be able to obtain a Main Street Challenge Loan through the Wyoming Business Council for improvements.

Resource:
Mike Martin
Wyoming Business Council
214 W, 15th Street
Cheyenne, WY 82002
Mike.martin@wybusiness.org
Or
www.wyomingmainstreet.org

Challenge: People are looking for a variety of recreational experiences other than golf.

Solution: In the future, I highly recommended to the Town that the creation of a Town recreation department is the best solution. It would reduce confusion and not have a division of duties. In the meantime, one project people recommended was to have classes in activities such as cross-country skiing; tennis; etc. I suggest that you look at the skills you have in the people in the community and see if you can find volunteers to set up classes in these activities. A committee of the Association could set this up.

MISCELLANEOUS IDEAS:

1. We heard from several people that they were missing community events – events that would bring the community together. There is one committee with the Association that seems to have taken a hiatus and is not planning events. It might be time to re-organize that committee! There is the potential to develop an annual community event (other than 4th of July) that can be a money maker for the Association. Dubois Main Street recently contracted with a company that helped them design a unique fund raising event (Day of the Cowboy) for the community. This was their first year and they netted \$4,000. The contact is: Mari Mullen from Port Townsend, Washington. director@ptmainstreet.org,

2. The DCC&Rs were a hot topic at the assessment. It sounds like you are on the right track by tackling these and it is important that everyone be informed and a part of the solution. It is imperative to get them passed that you do everything you can to get hold of everyone!

3. With a change in leadership of the Association Board, it sounds like it is time to complete strategic planning. I understand there have been several attempts to complete the plan and now is the time to do it. I have volunteered to help with that strategic plan, but I also offer other folks that can help:

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307-777-6430

OR

Community Builders, Inc.
873 Esterbrook Road , Douglas, WY 82633

For Bobbe Fitzhugh
Call (307) 359-3311
Email: Bobbe@consultCBI.com

For Joe Coyne
Telephone: (307) 359-1640

Fax: (307) 358-3214
Email: Joe@consultCBI.com

3. Just a heads up: We heard concerns over the life guards at the swimming pool this summer. Those guards were not paying attention to swimmers but rather being distracted by friends. This could be a major safety issue for the Association.

**BOTH – TOWN OF STAR VALLEY RANCH AND THE
STAR VALLEY RANCH ASSOCIATION**

Theme: GOVERNANCE OF THE COMMUNITY

Challenge: We heard over and over the confusion of responsibilities between the Town and the Association. To help us understand, we created the following chart:

Town of Star Valley Ranch	SVR Association	Joint
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure Water-culinary Roads-snow removal/grading Safety Fire, dogs, EMT, LE Septic tank • Wellness activities (BLM land) • Ordinances/codes • Post Office • Fire wise • Communication with citizens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation Golf-irrigation Swim Tennis • Social activities Cards Swimming • House and entertainment Craft fairs Pot luck Restaurant/Bar/pro shop • DCC&R/Architectural controls • Communication • Barn and Silo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eminent Doman Maintenance yard 4000 Green Canyon Tank Community Assessment