



**Resource Team Report  
Alcester,  
South Dakota**

***March 27-29, 2007***

*A Governors 2010 Initiative*

## *Acknowledgements*



**The Community Resource Team Assessment Program is coordinated by the South Dakota Rural Development Council to help fulfill Goal #4 of the Governors 2010 Initiative to “*Brand and Develop South Dakota’s Quality of Life as the Best in America by 2010*” by stabilizing rural populations through community development.**



**This program is made possible through the collaborative efforts of over 150 volunteers representing 50 plus organizations throughout South Dakota.**



**The program is also made possible through financial contributions made by the State of South Dakota (Governors Office of Economic Development), USDA Rural Development, and the South Dakota Community Foundation.**

**At the local level, this process would not be possible without the many hours of volunteer service from your local planning taskforce and local financial sponsors.**



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**South Dakota  
Community Foundation**

**Thank you to everyone who contributed to making this Assessment a success!**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Alcester Resource Team Assessment

March 27-29, 2007

	<u>Page</u>
Executive Summary.....	2
Introductions by Resource Team Members.....	4
Process for the Development of the Team Study and Report.....	5
Resource Team Members.....	6
Interview Agenda.....	7
2010 Initiative .....	8
Alcester Themes.....	10
Recommendations.....	11
Planning and Infrastructure.....	11
Quality of Life.....	24
Economic Development.....	53
Community Identity.....	77
What Was Said in the Interviews.....	92

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# Executive Summary

About 15 plus years ago I visited Alcester and I have had a vivid memory of coming in over a hill from the north and seeing this beautiful little community down in a valley. As I prepared for the community assessment, this image kept popping into my mind and I wondered if the scene would still be as awesome as I remembered it. It was even better.

As I approached Alcester, I saw that pretty town in the valley, but there was a sign that summed up the scene. The sign states the motto, “Alcester, a small town treasure.” This sign not only hits the nail on the head when it comes to appearances, it also captures the spirit of the community.

The word “treasure” means any thing or person greatly valued or highly prized. According to this definition, a treasure doesn’t have to be something expensive or elaborate; it doesn’t even have to be tangible. In Alcester, the school system, excellent bank, active churches, extensive manufacturing businesses, fantastic restaurants and housing developments are certainly treasures any community in the state would be envious of.

Treasure is also something a person can do. Our team met so many people that truly treasure the quality of life Alcester has to offer...and with good reason. Dedicated volunteers, forward thinking leadership and open minded citizens are responsible for making Alcester the community it is today.

We heard comments on the fact that times are changing and it is time for Alcester to re-evaluate and plan for the future. I have my own motto that is in a picture frame on my desk. It says, “Grow. Change. Or Die.” Sounds a bit harsh, doesn’t it? But it is so relevant when it comes to small, rural communities. We absolutely have to choose the first two, or the third chooses us. Towns that want to be like they were 20+ years ago might as well shrivel up now, because they aren’t going to make it. That’s why I was elated to hear Alcester residents say we need to plan for the future. This report can assist your community with some of that planning, but the push needs to come from your community members.

Alcester has the basic tools in place to assure a vibrant and successful future. This report will give your community some ideas as to where to look for outside assistance as you decide to move forward. But the core responsibilities for developing the ideas and making sure things move forward resides at the local level.

The recommendations in this report cover a broad range of issues, from a bathhouse at the pool to agricultural development. Many of the projects are large and will take years to complete. However, there are many recommendations that are smaller and can be achieved relatively easily. Just like the cell phone tower that is on tap to be constructed this summer. I knew we brought Dusty Johnson for a reason! These ideas provide a place to start and a contact person to get the wheels rolling.

Setting priorities for Alcester is the first step. Participation in the upcoming priority-setting meeting is vital. The efforts must reflect your entire community and that requires participation-both great and small. Once this has been done, you can begin to develop strategies for how you want to accomplish your objectives over the next 2, 5, 10 or 20 years.

The South Dakota Rural Development Council is a great resource and Shawn Pritchett, the executive director, is willing to help in any way they can. Please feel free to call upon any of the resource team members for additional advice as you move forward with your efforts.

On behalf of the Resource Team, I want to personally thank Marji Duncan, Robin Doty and Vicki Ahart for being the driving force for the assessment. Speaking from experience, preparing for these assessments takes a lot of legwork and time...we greatly appreciate your efforts. We ate a lot, laughed a bunch and made new friends. I reckon that is time well spent. Thanks also to the citizens of Alcester for your attendance and input. I hope you enjoyed the experience as much as I did.

Alcester is truly a small town treasure and I wish you all the best in the future.

Sincerely,

Karen Burket  
Resource Team Leader

# Introductions by Resource Team Members

**Dusty Johnson (Public Utilities Commission):** Thank you, Alcester. I was impressed with the kindness, honesty, and openness that you displayed to our assessment team. You have a wonderful community and I wish you all the best.

**Alison Kiesz (SD Department of Agriculture):** First of all, I want to thank Marji, Robin, and all the people of Alcester for their kindness and hospitality during our three-day assessment. It was a great experience for me and I hope it was for the community as well. Alcester has many things going for it that other communities would love to have – some large employers, a great bank and a wonderful school system. Sure, you have some areas that need improvement, but all communities do and I think this assessment is a great step in accomplishing some of those goals.

I'm sure it can't be easy to have a team of outsiders come into your community and give you suggestions on how to improve yourselves, but I hope that you'll be open to our recommendations and realize that they are only recommendations. The true work lies within your community. Thank you again for allowing us a glimpse into your community. I think anyone would be lucky to call Alcester home.

**Michael McMahon (Custer County Planning Director):** Many thanks to all of the assessment participants for making my stay in your wonderful community so enjoyable!!! I am very impressed with your commitment to the Alcester community and I thoroughly enjoyed the time I spent with you. You took very good care of me and the other members of our team during our stay. I hope that our recommendations can begin to repay your generosity as you work to improve your community!

**Shawn Pritchett (South Eastern Council of Governments):** Thank you for the warm hospitality that we received during the three days that we spent in your community. These Assessments take a great deal of planning and I want to thank all of those who were involved in these efforts. Your hard work and dedication ensured that the Assessment was a success. I also want to thank everyone who participated in the listening sessions and in the town hall meeting. It was great to see so many people at the final meeting. It is clear that there are many passionate residents in Alcester who wish to see the community succeed. I hope that you use this report and its recommendations as a tool as for helping you move forward with your selected priorities. Please do not hesitate to call me at anytime for further assistance. I look forward to many more great things happening in Alcester! Thank you.

# Process for the Development of This Report

The South Dakota Rural Development Council (SDRDC) has provided a Resource Team to assist the City of Alcester, South Dakota in evaluating the community's assets and liabilities and in developing suggestions for improving the environmental, social and economic future of Alcester.

The Alcester Chamber of Commerce coordinated the Community Assessment locally with the assistance and support of the City of Alcester and the Alcester Community Foundation. Marji Duncan served as the community planning leader and, with the help of many local volunteers serving on the planning taskforce, developed the agenda, coordinated logistics, and publicized the assessment within the local community.

The Resource Team toured the town and surrounding area and interviewed over 150+ individuals during the three-day period from March 27-29. The team interviewed representatives from the following segments of the Alcester community: City, County Government, EMS, Law Enforcement, Fire, Business, Retail, Industry, Chamber of Commerce, Development Corporation, Housing, School Faculty, Administration and School Board, Parents, Daycare Providers, Farmers, High school and Jr. High youth and more. Each participant was asked to respond to three questions designed to begin communication and discussion and to serve as a basis for developing an action plan. The three questions were:

- **What do you think are the major problems and challenges in Alcester?**
- **What do you think are the major strengths and assets of Alcester?**
- **What projects would you like to see completed in two, five, ten, and twenty years in Alcester?**

Upon completion of the interviews, the team met to compare notes and share comments following three days of intense study. The team then agreed that each team member would carefully analyze the things said, synthesize what they heard with their knowledge of programs and resources, prepare their notes and suggestions, and then forward these items to be combined into SDRDC's final report to Alcester.

An oral report was presented to the residents of Alcester on March 29, 2007. Following the oral report, a formal written report was prepared and presented to the community of Alcester. A community follow-up and prioritization meeting will be held in Alcester after this report is distributed and made available to the community at large.

# **Alcester, South Dakota**

## **March 27-29, 2007**

### **Resource Team Members**

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# Alcester Community Assessment Agenda

## *March 27-29, 2007*

### **Tuesday, 3/27/07**

<b>TIME</b>	<b>TITLE</b>
4:30 PM – 6:00 PM	Resource Team Meets
6:00 PM – 7:00 PM	Listening Session: Rural and City Residents/Open
7:00 PM – 8:00 PM	Listening Session: Parents and Daycare Providers
8:00 PM – 9:00 PM	Listening Session: Commuters and Newcomers

### **Wednesday, 3/28/07**

<b>TIME</b>	<b>TITLE</b>
7:30 AM – 8:30 AM	Listening Session: Agriculture and Ag. Business
8:45 AM – 11:00 AM	Community Tour
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Listening Session: Retail/Chamber/Economic Dev.
1:30 PM – 2:30 PM	Listening Session: City and Rural Residents/Open
2:30 PM – 3:30 PM	Listening Session: Retired Residents
5:00 PM – 6:00 PM	Listening Session: Civic Groups/School Board
6:00 PM – 7:00 PM	Listening Session: Public Safety
7:00 PM – 8:00 PM	Listening Session: City and County Government

### **Thursday, 3/29/07**

<b>TIME</b>	<b>TITLE</b>
7:30 AM – 8:15 AM	Listening Session: School Faculty and Administration
8:15 AM – 9:30 AM	Listening Session: Youth
9:30 AM – 10:30 PM	Listening Session: Ministerial Association
1:00 PM – 6:00 PM	Resource Team Preparation
6:00 PM – 6:30 PM	Community Dinner
6:30 PM – 7:30 PM	Town Hall Meeting



*The Governors 2010 Initiative is the comprehensive strategic plan for economic development in the State of South Dakota over the next five years. The Community Resource Team Assessment Program is one piece of this initiative, with the mission of helping rural communities advance their community planning. The Community Assessment Program helps to develop a local community/economic development plan that is unique to the community, while at the same time, fitting in with the state's overall 2010 Initiative*

**The following Goals and Objectives were identified in the Governors Statewide 2010 Initiative**

**Goal 1: Double Visitor Spending from \$600 Million to \$1.2 Billion by 2010**

- 1A. Change the way we market South Dakota
- 1B. Focus new energy and investment on expanding the fall shoulder season for visitors in order to increase the percentage of tourism revenues for this season to 42 percent
- 1C. Expand investment in tourism's peak season through greater use of partnership and cooperative efforts
- 1D. Develop a statewide "One-Click, on-call" reservation system by 2005
- 1E. Capitalize on the existing outdoor opportunities in our state

**Goal 2: Increase GSP (Gross State Product) by \$10 billion by 2010**

- 2A. Promote the creation and development of new businesses that will contribute \$6 billion to the GSP
- 2B. Promote the growth / expansion of existing businesses that will contribute \$4 billion to GSP
- 2C. Promote agricultural and natural resource development in South Dakota

**Goal 3: Become a Recognized Leader in Research and Technology Development by 2010**

- 3A. Secure Homestake Mine for use as an underground science laboratory
- 3B. Improve ranking to at least 30<sup>th</sup> nationally for NSF funding
- 3C. Development research and technology infrastructure at our universities with the private sector  
(Emphasis on research that can be commercialized and will benefit South Dakota)

**Goal 4: Brand and Development South Dakota's Quality of Life as the Best in America by 2010**

- 4A. Enhance South Dakota's image to young people in an effort to retain and import young adults
- 4B. Enhance History and Arts as a tool for economic development and cultural tourism
- 4C. Stabilize rural populations through community development
- 4D. Stimulate affordable homeownership, rental housing, and day care facilities in South Dakota communities which evidence a need.
- 4E. Improve cooperative efforts with the Native American Tribes

**Goal 5: Uphold Our Commitment to the 2010 Initiative as a Work in Progress**

- 5A. Assign implementation to Department of Tourism and State Development
- 5B. Create ongoing update and accountability structure for 2010 Initiative

*Following distribution of this Community Resource Team Assessment Report, the South Dakota Rural Development Council will convene a follow up priority-setting meeting in the community to help focus on select set of goals and objectives based on the data collected during the assessment and the recommendations included in this report.*

# What We Heard From What Was Said

After listening to citizens of Alcester, the Resource Team reviewed what was said and condensed the comments down to major themes that will be addressed in the team member reports. (These are in no particular order of priority).

Major Theme/Sub Themes	Page Number
<b>THEME: PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE</b>	
Master Plan/CIP/Comprehensive Plan	11
Infrastructure	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streets and Sidewalks</li> <li>• Water, Sewer &amp; Storm Water</li> </ul>	13
Cell Phone Service	21
<b>THEME: QUALITY OF LIFE</b>	
Recreational Opportunities	24
Pool and Bathhouse	24
Outdoor Sports Facilities	27
Walking Trail / Bike Path	28
Intramural Sports / Expanded Summer Rec.	30
EMS Recruitment	32
Daycare	36
Afterschool Program	40
Senior Center	42
Community Center/Youth Center	44
Senior Transportation	49
<b>THEME: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>	
Industrial Park Development	53
Business Development and Retention	58
Shopping Local	63
Livestock and Ag. Development	66
Housing Development	69
Subdivision Development	69
Midrange Elderly Rentals	72
<b>THEME: COMMUNITY IDENTITY</b>	
Promotion of Community	77
Annual Event	78
Awareness of Resources	81
Community Development Coordinator	82
Volunteerism	86
Communication	89

# PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

**SUB THEME: Master Plan / CIP / Comprehensive Plan**

**Challenge:** There is a lack of comprehensive planning among all of the community and government groups in the community. Many people in the community have ideas for things that need to be accomplished but there is difficulty in implementing many of the ideas/projects.

**Recommendation:** Virtually every small town in South Dakota faces the same challenge that Alcester faces: There is a burning desire to make our community a better place to live. It is difficult to translate this desire into concrete accomplishments (both literally and figuratively!). Congratulations—you have already begun the comprehensive planning process!! You have already taken the most difficult and important steps to create a comprehensive plan: you decided to participate in the planning process and you committed your time and effort to reach a community consensus on the plan's contents.

This report can act as the basis for much of your future comprehensive plan. You have already provided some of the basic research and direction for the creation of a plan. Our assessment team served as the facilitators, recorders, and neutral sounding board you needed to start the process. Your next step is to secure further staff support to continue this process. This support can be obtained from your local Planning District, a planning consultant, or your town's engineering firm. The amount of work needed to prepare numerous revisions to the draft plan, host meetings, and produce research is usually well beyond what can be expected from a volunteer or volunteers. The Planning District is usually the best place to start asking for help.

By now you are probably wondering what a comprehensive plan is and why it's so hard to prepare. A comprehensive plan is supposed to look at every aspect of a community—streets, water supply, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, flood and drainage management, housing stock, housing supply, employment, health care, recreation, etc.—and present information and data that can be examined by the community and used to establish community policies and priorities. The priorities define the projects and programs that the community consensus ranks in importance. The community policies guide the manner and form of implementing the priorities. For example, the town engineer should inventory the water supply system and evaluate the condition and capacity of its components. This inventory is used as a basis to calculate the system's capacity to add new homes and businesses to the system on a case-by-case basis and on a system-wide basis. Another example is, if the community decides that it wants to encourage sensible

## **PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE**

### *Master Plan / CIP / Comprehensive Plan*

growth through new residential development(s), that a subdivision ordinance must be created to guide such development in a manner that will assure both the developer and the community that the development will proceed in an orderly, safe, and economical manner.

Creation of a comprehensive plan will highlight the need for a number of enabling ordinances to guide the implementation of the community's wishes. One of the most important of these implementation tools is the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The CIP provides an economic calendar for the construction of the physical projects identified in the comprehensive plan. This vital tool provides the city and its residents with a list of pending projects, estimated project costs, proposed project funding sources, proposed project partners, a prioritized ranking of the projects, and the standards used to prioritize identified projects and to introduce new projects to the CIP. A CIP will provide the framework for the community to build and implement the projects you desire.

An important thing to remember about the comprehensive plan and its implementing tools, such as the CIP, is that these documents do nothing if they just gather dust on a shelf. You would be well served to have an annual community pot luck picnic/plan review session to review progress, to accept new ideas, to lay out the work and projects that will take place in the next year, to thank those that have worked so hard in the past year, and to take the time to appreciate your community and neighbors!

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**PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE**  
*Infrastructure (Streets / Sidewalks / Water / Sewer)*

**SUB THEME: Infrastructure**

- **Streets**
- **Sidewalks**
- **Water, Sewer & Storm Water**

**Challenge:** Several respondents commented on the amount of curb and gutter already installed in the community and how this is a strength and asset to the community's development efforts. Respondents did express some concern, however, regarding the condition of some streets, availability of sidewalks, and repair/replacement of the existing water/wastewater infrastructure.

**Recommendation:** As noted in the previous recommendation, having a long-term plan for addressing infrastructure needs is important. This will help you identify priority areas, establish a timeframe for completing identified improvements, and list potential financial resources that may be tapped to help pay for the infrastructure upgrades. This Capital Improvement Program (CIP) lists all upcoming planned capital activities for the city over several years. The CIP can be a complex document, or it can be something as simple as a list of prioritized improvements scheduled over several years. Having initial cost estimates and information on potential grant and loan opportunities for financing these projects is also useful.

Banner Associates, the city's engineering firm, is a great resource for identification of infrastructure needs and priorities. The South Eastern Council of Governments can provide assistance with research of financing options available to fund each type of improvement. City staff member and elected officials are key local resources to help identify public works needs, determine key priorities, and determine availability of local funds to help finance various projects.

Having a CIP will help set a long-term course for capital improvements. The CIP should be reviewed and amended each year to reflect changes in priorities, available funding, etc.

The rest of this recommendation is devoted to discussing how communities deal with each of the following areas: Sidewalks, Streets, and Water/Wastewater Infrastructure. Included are references to available financial resources for helping to finance these improvements.

Streets

Even if you choose not to do a full-blown Capital Improvement Plan, consider doing an assessment of your existing streets and identify a list of priority areas that need improvement. Project cost estimates should be developed. This can be done by the city working in conjunction with the city engineers. Based on the project cost estimates, a

## **PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE**

*Infrastructure (Streets / Sidewalks / Water / Sewer)*

determination can be made as to how much and when various improvements can be accomplished.

Street improvements can be financed in a number of ways, but there are generally not many grant programs available. Those that are available are specific to certain types of roads. Most street improvement projects are financed using one of the following strategies, or some combination thereof:

- a) USDA-Rural Development's Community Facility loan program
- b) A city special assessment process
- c) City general tax dollars
- d) General obligation bonds issued by the city
- e) Sales tax revenue bonds
- f) Rural Electric loan funds (REED)
- g) SD Department of Transportation Grant funds (Industrial Park, Agri-Business, and Community Access Grants)
- h) HUD CDBG funds from the State

The USDA Community Facility Loan Program can provide a low interest, long-term loan to the City of Alcester to conduct road improvements. The program requires that bonds be issued and pledged to secure repayment of the loan. These bonds can be backed by a revenue source (sales tax) and/or general obligation bonds (general tax dollars). General obligation bonds, however, will require an election.

The special assessment process can be used to help finance street projects. Property owners along the street where the improvements are made can be assessed over time for the cost of the improvements.

General city dollars can be used for improvements as funding is available. These road improvements can be included as part of the city's normal annual budget and appropriations process. Keep in mind, however, that city budgets are already stretched thin so there may not be a lot of revenue available on a regular basis to pay for major improvements. Or, other places may need to be cut to free up available revenue for this purpose. One strategy may be to identify certain sections of town each year or every other year to focus on improving.

General obligation bonds and sales tax revenue bonds can be issued to help finance the project. This is generally done for larger improvement projects, given the expense and time involved in issuing bonds.

The Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) fund may be able to provide a low-interest loan for road improvements. REED's contact information is below, or you can contact South Eastern Electric Cooperative for more information about REED.

Grant funds for building and reconstructing streets are very limited and focused on specific areas in the community. The primary resource for road construction grants is the

## **PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE**

### *Infrastructure (Streets / Sidewalks / Water / Sewer)*

SD Department of Transportation (SDDOT). The three primary grant programs administered by SDDOT include the Community Access Grant Program, Industrial Park Road Grant Program, and the Agri-business Access Grant Program.

#### Community Access Grant Program

- Available to units of governments with populations of less than 5,000.
- The purpose is to enhance existing roads to downtown areas or for roads leading to schools, hospitals, grain terminals, or other significant traffic generating features of a community.
- Grant may not exceed \$400,000 and a local match of 40% of the construction costs is required.
- Applications usually are accepted once a year around August 1.

#### Industrial Park Road Grant Program

- Primarily for building new roads in industrial parks when a known business is preparing to move in or expand.
- Commitment by a business to begin construction on their facility within six months of date of grant approval; or evidence that the new construction has taken place within the last year.
- No Application Deadline
- Eligible applicants are units of government
- There is a 20% local cash match required for construction costs if the project is located within an industrial park or a 40% match for a road leading to or running adjacent to an industrial park.
- The unit of government also agrees to operate and maintain the road for its useful life.
- Minimum capital investment of at least five times the required state participation costs
- Five new jobs will be created by the industry.
- Land in industrial park must be zoned Industrial.
- Land in the industrial park must be owned by the government, industry, or an industrial development corporation.

Agri-Business Access Grant Program - Requirements are similar to the Industrial Park Road Grant Program, except that there is a 40% local match required on all construction costs and the road must serve as the primary access to an agricultural production or service business. There is no deadline for submitting applications. Agri-Business Access Grants can be used for roads inside or outside city limits.

The Community Development Block Grant is another potential option for financing road improvements, particularly as it may relate to building access to a new or expanding business. More information regarding CDBG is listed in the Water/Wastewater section below.

One last comment regarding streets – Be sure that if improvements to the underlying wastewater and water systems/infrastructure are necessary or planned in the near future,

## **PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE**

### *Infrastructure (Streets / Sidewalks / Water / Sewer)*

complete the road improvements sometime thereafter. There is nothing worse than digging up a street that has been recently reconstructed in order to repair the underlying utility systems.

#### Sidewalks

Sidewalk installation and repair is normally the responsibility of property and home owners. The city, by ordinance, can require property owners to install, repair, and maintain sidewalks.

Most city sidewalk projects are financed by the city utilizing general tax dollars or a loan based on sales tax revenue. Sidewalks can also be financed by assessing the property owners via a “special assessment” for the cost of the project. In many instances property owners can complete their own sidewalk projects in accordance with a city standard. Few grant programs exist that provide assistance in this area. Most grant programs that are slanted toward infrastructure improvements usually cover areas related to streets and underlying water/wastewater infrastructure. Therefore, if a sidewalks program is pursued in the community, be aware that costs for the projects must rely on local funding either through the city or through local assessments on related property owners.

Several listening session respondents expressed a need for more sidewalks in the community for public safety and recreational purposes. This is a difficult issue for most rural communities to address for a couple of reasons. First, if sidewalks were not previously installed in older neighborhoods, homeowners generally bear the burden of installing sidewalks through the assessment process. For individuals on a fixed income, this can present an unexpected financial burden. In addition, installation of sidewalks in older neighborhoods usually means that mature trees, fences, and other barriers need to be removed to accommodate the sidewalks. This creates additional turmoil for property owners.

If the city chooses, a master plan for sidewalks can be developed. A master plan inventories the existing sidewalks and identifies areas where sidewalks need to be installed or replaced. Upon completion of this inventory, the city could develop ordinances that provide guidance to property owners for completing sidewalk installation and maintenance. If you choose to complete a master plan, my advice is to make sure that this process is open to the public, and work diligently to inform the public as to the progress of any plan. This will help ensure that the residents of the community are constantly in the loop regarding any discussions.

At a minimum, however, the installation of sidewalks should be a requirement of any subdivision ordinance you may have in place. Putting this in place early ensures that developers or people looking to build homes in the new subdivisions install sidewalks. While this doesn't help the older portions of the community, this policy does help with any new development.

## **PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE**

### *Infrastructure (Streets / Sidewalks / Water / Sewer)*

If installation of sidewalks is a problem from a financial and/or political perspective and, if the reason why people are requesting more sidewalks is for recreational purposes, consider constructing a recreational trail in a portion of the community as an alternative. This provides you greater flexibility to design a trail that mitigates impact on property owners. In addition, more grant funding is available for this type of program. The Transportation Enhancement or Recreational Trails Program can provide grants for up to 80% of the cost for trails projects. See the Recreational Trails recommendation, further on in this report, for additional information on trails and trails development.

#### Water / Wastewater Infrastructure.

Several listening session respondents expressed concern about the quality of the existing water and wastewater (sewer) infrastructure. Some of the comments related to making sure that on-going repair and replacement was being completed to ensure that the system lasts far into the future.

Currently, the city is having a comprehensive review completed of its water/wastewater systems. The report, expected by the summer of 2007, is being completed by Banner Associates and was funded by a Small Community Planning Grant received by the city in 2005. This report will review the current repair and replacement needs of the systems and provide recommendations for areas that need improvement. The report will also take into consideration future needs of the community and the impact of these needs on the water and wastewater systems.

Once the report is received, city leaders will need to review the report's findings and prioritize which projects need to be immediately addressed and which projects can be scheduled in the future. Addressing various projects will be driven mostly by project cost, available funding, and whether the project is a pressing need.

Grants and loans are available for major water/wastewater projects. The staff at the South Eastern Council of Governments (SECOG) is available to help walk the community through the steps necessary to receive both grants and loans. Be sure to involve SECOG staff early in the planning stages in order to best accommodate grant and loan funding cycles.

The following loan and grant programs are available for funding water and wastewater projects:

#### Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)

DENR has several funding sources to aid communities in planning and implementing projects to improve its infrastructure systems.

**Small Community Planning Grant:** This program was established to promote a proactive approach to water and wastewater infrastructure management. Alcester has already

## **PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE**

*Infrastructure (Streets / Sidewalks / Water / Sewer)*

received this grant to fund 80% of the comprehensive water/wastewater studies that are currently in progress. Small community planning grants can also be accessed to help pay for rate studies for the water and sewer funds using the Show-me Ratemaker™ system. Contact SECOG staff for more information or to request a rate study.

**Consolidated Water Facilities Construction Program:** This program was established to provide grants and loans for water, wastewater and storm sewer projects.

- Projects must be listed on the State Water Plan before sending in an application.
- Water and Sewer Rates must meet the minimum requirements before an applicant is eligible to apply.
- This is a primary grant resource for communities doing water and wastewater projects. While grants are reviewed on a quarterly basis, it is best to meet the January 1 deadline because this is the first round each year and the round when the most grant money is available.

**Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Loan:** This program was established to provide low interest loans for drinking water projects. The funds available are dependent upon appropriations from the U.S. Congress and repayments from funds previously loaned.

- Projects must be listed on the State Water Plan before sending in an application.
- The rates and terms are established each year by the board and available on the DENR website. Currently the rates are 3.25% with a 20 year term or 2.5% with a 10 year term. There are also “disadvantaged” rates for communities with median household incomes lower than the state’s median household income. This enables a community to access lower interest rates and/or longer terms. Alcester would likely qualify for a longer term loan at a reduced rate for drinking water projects.
- This loan cannot be used for funding growth projects.

**Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan:** This program was established to provide low-interest loans to governmental entities for clean water and non-point source pollution control projects. The amount of funds available is dependent upon the amount of appropriation from the U.S. Congress and the amount of repayments from funds previously loaned.

- Projects must be listed on the State Water Plan before sending in an application.
- The rates and terms are established each year by the board and available on the DENR website. Currently the rates are 3.25% with a 20 year term or 2.5% with a 10 year term. A 30 year term loan is also newly available in 2007 at a rate of 3.5%.
- This loan can be used for funding growth-oriented projects.

## **PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE**

*Infrastructure (Streets / Sidewalks / Water / Sewer)*

### Governor's Office of Economic Development

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): These are federal funds given to the state and are administered by the Department of Tourism and State Development through the Governors Office of Economic Development.

- Types of projects that may be funded include water, sewer, fire halls, community centers, storm sewers and health care clinics.
- At least 51% of those being serviced by the project must be low/moderate income households.
- CDBG staff expects applicants to utilize planning district staff in the application and administration of these grants as the requirements are cumbersome, although not insurmountable.
- Alcester is one of only two communities in Southeastern South Dakota automatically eligible to apply for CDBG grants based on Census 2000 income data. This eligibility will continue at least until the next Census. This is a great opportunity for soliciting grants for major infrastructure projects since more funds are generally available through this program, and the funding is less competitive compared to the Consolidated Water Facilities Construction Program.

### USDA Rural Development

Water and Wastewater Program: Grants and loans are available to assist with economic development

- Used to construct, repair or expand water and/or wastewater systems, acquire water rights, pay necessary fees for legal and engineering services and other development-related costs.
- Grants are not available for storm sewer projects.
- Interest rates may change every quarter and depend on the US Treasury rate and on the service area of the borrower.
- The loan and grant rate is determined by the median household income of those served.
- Infrastructure for new housing development can be financed by site development loan programs.
- Interest rates are currently about 4.125% for a loan up to 40 years.

Community Facilities Program: Can also provide low-interest, long-term financing for general community infrastructure projects such as water, sewer, curb/gutter, etc. The loan program presently offers rates in the 4.125% to 4.5% range for up to a 40 year period.

### Rural Electric Loan Funds (REED)

Reed provides low interest loans for projects which are beneficial to the area as a whole.

- Includes medical clinics, street projects, fire halls/ambulance shelters, fire truck/ambulances, fire equipment, and water and sewer projects.

**PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE**  
*Infrastructure (Streets / Sidewalks / Water / Sewer)*

Other

Other sources of funding for major infrastructure projects may include direct federal appropriations. Communities have received grants called EPA STAG grants or HUD EDI grants for infrastructure projects. These are usually done directly between the city and South Dakota's congressional offices. Often, however, SECOG will administer the grants on the community's behalf. There are a couple of things to keep in mind regarding these appropriations. First, they are increasingly difficult to get due to federal budget constraints. If you are lucky enough to get these types of grants, it takes a long time to get the money and use it for a project, so you can't expect to ask for an appropriation in the spring and start the project in the fall. In many cases it takes several years to go through the process of accessing these funds from start to finish. These types of grants are better suited for big projects planned to begin several years in the future. Since Alcester is CDBG eligible, the Consolidated and CDBG grant programs are really your optimal source of grant funding.

For additional information on any of these programs please contact SECOG staff.

**Resources:**

South Eastern Council of Governments  
1000 N. West Ave., Suite  
Sioux Falls, SD 57104-1332  
Phone: 605-367-5390  
lynne@secog.org  
www.secog.org

USDA Rural Development  
2914 Broadway  
Yankton, SD 57078  
605-665-2662 Ext 4  
605-668-9729 (Fax)  
sherrie.lewis@sd.usda.gov  
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/sd/>

South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
Foss Building  
523 E Capitol  
Pierre, South Dakota 57501  
605-773-4216

## PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE

### *Cell Phone Service*

#### **Resources:** Continued

Rural Electric Loan Funds—REED  
Linda Salmonson  
Rural Electric Economic Development  
East River Electric Cooperative  
PO Box 227  
Madison, SD 57042  
605-256-4536  
lsalmonson@eastriver.coop

SD Department of Transportation  
Office of Local Government Assistance  
Paula Huizenga and/or Terry Jorgensen  
700 E Broadway Ave  
Pierre, South Dakota, 57501  
605-773-3921

SD Governor's Office of Economic Development- Community Development Block  
Grant  
Steve Harding – CDBG Coordinator  
711 E. Wells Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501  
800-872-6190  
www.sdreadytowork.com

Banner & Associates (City's engineer)

Contact city staff for additional information

<b>SUB THEME: Cell Phone Service</b>
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**Challenge:** Citizens in Alcester are frustrated with the spotty and unreliable cell phone service.

**Recommendation:** Sometimes it really is the squeaky wheel that gets the grease. There are thousands of communities across the country that suffer from poor cell service, so to stand out, Alcester needs to communicate with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission and with the cellular phone providers.

It is worth noting that in the last two years many people in Alcester have done a good job of communicating with the PUC and the providers and, according to information from the

## PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE

### *Cell Phone Service*

PUC, a new Alltel cell tower is expected to go up near Alcester in the spring or summer of 2007. If for some reason that doesn't happen, implementing the recommendations below might be effective.

1. Contact the PUC – PUC staff (see contact info below) can walk Alcester through the process that other communities have used to get cell phone towers. This would likely include a petition signed by community members, a community meeting with the Public Utilities Commission and providers, and working to “tell Alcester’s story” to the cell phone providers.
2. Circulate a Petition – To give cell phone providers some idea of Alcester’s desire for improved coverage, community leaders should circulate a petition. Once signatures have been gathered, they should be returned to the PUC along with any letters explaining why improved cell service is important for Alcester. The PUC will forward that information to the providers.
3. Communicate with the Providers – It is also helpful for community members to contact the providers directly from time-to-time to express their frustration. A blizzard of calls is likely not productive, but a few calls each month will likely keep Alcester on the providers’ radar until coverage is improved.

#### **Resources:**

Public Utilities Commission  
Leah Mohr, Communications Director  
Deb Gregg, Consumer Affairs Manager  
500 E. Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501  
1-800-332-1782  
cellular@state.sd.us  
www.puc.sd.gov

#### **Providers:**

Alltel  
1-866-alltel7  
www.alltel.com  
Building 4, Fifth Floor  
One Allied Drive  
Little Rock, AR 72202-2099

Verizon Wireless  
1-800-922-0204  
www.verizonwireless.com  
777 Big Timber Rd  
Elgin, Illinois 60123

## **PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE**

*Cell Phone Service*

### **Resources:** Continued

Sprint  
1-800-SPRINT1  
www.sprint.com  
2001 Edmund Halley Drive  
Reston, VA 20191

Wireless Alliance dba Unicel  
1-800.450.2000  
www.ruralcellular.net  
3905 Dakota Street SW  
PO Box 2000  
Alexandria, MN 56308

# QUALITY OF LIFE

<b>SUB THEME: Recreational Opportunities – Pool / Bathhouse</b>
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**Challenge:** If the community of Alcester had to come to a consensus on one issue, it would be the fact that something has to be done with the swimming pool and bathhouse. We heard that a new liner was installed to extend the life of the pool itself, but many commented on the dismal appearance of the bathhouse.

**Recommendation:** While the needed pool improvements are something everyone can agree that needs to be done, there are few things that will make a City Council cringe more than sticking money into something that doesn't make money. It's not a secret that pools are not moneymakers, and that's why this recommendation is under the theme "Quality of Life." That's exactly what it is. The pool improves Alcester's quality of life for its residents. Talk to communities that don't have swimming pools and you'll find some pretty disgruntled parents.

The good news is when we were listening to ideas about a pool, we didn't hear the need for anything huge and fancy (a.k.a. more expensive)! People just wanted to see improvements made to what is there. The bathhouse seemed to be the biggest concern.

One of the strengths we heard about Alcester is if there is something that needs to be done, a group of people will get together and do just that...get it done. The bathhouse would be a great community project that could have costs cut considerably by volunteer labor.

The first step would be to for a committee to see exactly what needs to be done and what will be included. It sounds as if the bathhouse is a "no brainer," it has to be replaced. As for the pool...should that also be replaced, can it be salvaged, is it more cost effective to build new, and if so, should it be in the same place? Communication with the public and different community clubs is a huge factor in the planning stages. The committee should have a broad range of representatives, and don't forget to include kids! Once the preliminary questions are answered and the City Council is on board, it's time to put together a game plan for financing, construction, etc....

If the City is planning on building a new pool, use some of the sources that are listed below to try to finance it. Also look into how other communities have built new ones. Britton and Canistota would be good examples to look at. Many communities end up doing a general obligation bond by election to fund their pools.

The main financing option for this is with the South Dakota Land and Water Conservation Fund. This fund can provides a small amount of grant funding for

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### *Recreational Opportunities – Pool / Bathhouse*

recreational building projects. Contact the South Eastern Council of Governments for more information.

#### Financing Options

##### SD Land and Water Conservation Funds:

- 50/50 matching grants for outdoor recreation improvements.
- Requests are limited to no less than \$3,000 and no more than \$50,000.
- Projects may include: swimming pools, playground equipment, ball field development, etc...
- The park and recreation areas acquired, developed or improved must be dedicated to outdoor recreation use in perpetuity.
- The funding is very limited.

##### USDA Rural Development

###### Rural Economic Development Loan program:

- May provide 0% interest financing for a swimming facility.
- Loan is actually made to a local cooperative, who then reloans the funds to a local municipality of non profit at 0% interest for 10 years.

###### Community Facility Loan Guarantee program:

- Could guarantee a loan made for this type of a project
- Contact your USDA Rural Development Office for more information

##### Rural Electric Loan Funds (REED):

Provide low interest loans for projects which are beneficial to the area as a whole.

- Financing projects include but are not limited to healthcare, childcare, distance education, fire protection, community facilities, public recreation and the arts.
- May consider lending up to 50% of a project's need with the first \$100,000 at 3% interest for up to a 20 year term.
- The project area does not have to purchase electricity from the local rural electric co-op.

##### South Dakota Community Foundation:

- Grant funds available for several types of project areas.

##### Ronald McDonald Foundation:

- Grant funds available for projects which are directly related to children's health and well being, including playground equipment.
- The applicant must be a non-profit or have 501-c3 status
- This program generally has smaller awards of \$10,000 or less for projects or programs.

#### Other Funding Options

- Conduct community fundraising activities.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### *Recreational Opportunities – Pool / Bathhouse*

- Other communities have done projects where bricks are sold to assist with fundraising. People can purchase bricks and their name of choosing is inscribed on the bricks. The bricks are then used as part of the project. Maybe charge businesses a bit more for bricks since it will be considered advertising. The brick fundraising was with the new Governor's residence in Pierre and also for new playground equipment in Lennox.
- Solicit volunteer labor to lower some of the costs. Sometimes local donated labor and other in-kind contributions can be documented and serve as part of the match for a grant or loan. The community of Tyndall recently built a new bathhouse using a majority of volunteer labor.
- Businesses and/or individuals may be more inclined to give material donations versus cash donations. In some instances, labor and/or equipment is donated from construction companies, etc...
- Have the City put projects into their Capital Improvements Plan to budget for it through their finances and to start planning now to reserve other financing options.
- Do some Internet searches for funding. Many private corporations have grant funds available and your pool project may qualify. Make sure to follow the directions the funding source is giving you and make sure to check any deadlines the grant may have.

#### **Resources:**

South Eastern Council of Governments  
1000 N. West Ave. Suite 210  
Sioux Falls, SD 57104  
605-367-5390  
lynne@secog.org  
<http://www.secog.org/>

USDA Rural Development  
2914 Broadway  
Yankton, SD 57078  
605-665-2662 Ext. 4  
sherrie.lewis@sd.usda.gov  
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/sd/>

SD Community Foundation  
Box 296  
Pierre, SD 57501  
605-224-1025  
[www.sdcommunityfoundation.org](http://www.sdcommunityfoundation.org)

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### *Recreational Opportunities – Outdoor Sports Facilities*

#### **Resources:** Continued

Ronald McDonald House Corp. of SD, Inc.  
2001 South Norton Ave.  
Sioux Falls, SD 57105  
605-336-6369  
[www.rmhc.com/grant/index.html](http://www.rmhc.com/grant/index.html)

<b>SUB THEME: Recreational Opportunities – Outdoor Sports Facilities (Ballpark Concessions, Soccer, Tennis)</b>
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**Challenge:** In many of the listening sessions, community members stated that they would like more recreational opportunities in Alcester. Some of the ideas brought up were a soccer field, tennis courts, and renovating the concession stand at the ballpark.

**Recommendation:** The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a popular source for community recreation facilities. The LWCF is administered by the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks. The program reimburses communities for up to 50% of project costs. Grants generally vary from \$3,000 to \$50,000. The remaining share must be funded with local money. The land within the project boundaries must remain perpetually dedicated to park use.

Priority for recreation facilities is assigned as part of the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) for each class of municipality (Alcester is a Class 2 municipality). The following items rank accordingly in the 2002 SCORP Master Plan (the most recent available)

<b>Item</b>	<b>New Development Ranking</b>	<b>Renovation Ranking</b>
Ballpark Facilities	Low Priority	High Priority
Soccer Field	High Priority	Low Priority
Tennis Court	Low Priority	High Priority

One way to fund these facilities (or provide matching funds) is to hold a unique fundraiser for a specific project. Other communities have sold bricks to individuals and businesses that will be incorporated into the project. The bricks might be sold for \$50 each. People can purchase bricks and have their name (or a name of their choosing) inscribed on the bricks. The bricks can then be incorporated into the landscaping somehow.

Local businesses, youth or other volunteers may be willing to donate materials and time to developing these recreational facilities.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### *Recreational Opportunities – Walking Trail / Bike Path*

Additionally, if the City of Alcester develops a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), you might ask the city to budget funds each year for outdoor recreation facilities. The CIP will help pay for maintenance and upkeep of the facilities once they are built. See the recommendation for developing a Capital Improvement Plan under the Planning and Infrastructure Theme.

The Southeastern Council of Governments (SECOG) can provide technical assistance to the City of Alcester in preparing grant applications.

#### **Resources:**

South Eastern Council of Governments  
1000 N. West Ave. Suite 210  
Sioux Falls, SD 57104  
605-367-5390  
lynne@secog.org  
<http://www.secog.org/>

South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks  
Land and Water Conservation Fund  
523 E Capitol Ave  
Pierre, SD 57501  
605-773-5490

Publication: Land and Water Conservation Fund Manual  
<http://www.sdgfp.info/Publications/Parks/LWCFmanual.pdf>

Publication: Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)  
[http://www.sdgfp.info/Publications/Parks/SCORP\\_MASTER.pdf](http://www.sdgfp.info/Publications/Parks/SCORP_MASTER.pdf)

<b>SUB THEME: Recreational Opportunities – Walking Train / Bike Path</b>
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**Challenge:** At a number of the listening sessions, residents expressed a desire for walking and biking paths, which would provide another activity for people of all ages. If done properly, the trails could be a source of pride for the community and provide an activity for out-of-town visitors, as well.

**Recommendation:** Walking trails are considered to be an important part of the transportation system and can receive more than 80 percent grant funding to construct a new trail. Trails usually must be designed and engineered prior to receiving financial assistance. The first step should be to contact the South Eastern Council of Governments,

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### *Recreational Opportunities – Walking Trail / Bike Path*

which is the planning district that serves Alcester. SECOG will be able to assist Alcester with the writing and development of recreational trail grant applications.

There are at least three financial resources available to assist communities with trails:

1. Recreational Trails Program – The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks administers the Recreational Trails program which provides 80 percent reimbursement for the development and maintenance of recreational trails, developing trail related facilities and educational programs. Trails include, but are not limited to pedestrian / walking paths, bicycling, in-line skating, equestrian use, cross-country skiing, snowmobile, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding, four-wheel drive use and other off-road motorized use. Grants are accepted every two years with the next application period beginning this year (2007).
2. The Land & Water Conservation Fund – This fund, administered by the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks Department provides grants for a wide range of outdoor recreational facilities including recreational trails. The program provides 50/50 matching grants (\$3,000 - \$50,000) for outdoor recreational improvements. The recreational areas acquired, developed or improved with the Land & Water Conservation Fund must be dedicated to outdoor recreation use in perpetuity.
3. Transportation Enhancement Grants – The South Dakota Department of Transportation also has a program for Biking / Walking path projects entitled Transportation Enhancement Grants. The program provides 81.95% reimbursement for projects such as recreational trails, landscaping, historic preservation and establishment of transportation museums.

One of the major issues associated with the construction of a walking trail is the acquisition of right-of-way either from private landowners or a government entity. Right-of-way agreements are not required to submit grant applications, but they must be in place before trail construction can begin.

#### **Resources:**

South Eastern Council of Governments  
1000 N. West Ave. Suite 210  
Sioux Falls, SD 57104  
605-367-5390  
lynne@secog.org  
<http://www.secog.org/>

## QUALITY OF LIFE

*Recreational Opportunities – Intramural Sports / Expanded Summer Rec.*

### **Resources:** Continued

South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks  
Trails Program Specialist, Scott Carbonneau  
Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant & Recreational Trails Program  
Joe Foss Building 523 E Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501  
605-773-3391  
Scott.Carbonneau@state.sd.us

Department of Transportation  
Office of Local Government Assistance  
Paula Huizenga  
700 East Broadway  
Pierre, SD 57501  
605-773-4831  
Paula.Huizenga@state.sd.us

Rails – to – Trails Conservancy  
1100 17<sup>th</sup> Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor, NW  
Washington DC 20036  
202-331-9696  
<http://www.railstrails.org>  
[www.trailsandgreenways.org](http://www.trailsandgreenways.org)

Northern Trails Training Partnership  
American Trails  
P.O. Box 491797  
Redding, CA 96049-1797  
(530) 547-2060  
[www.americantrails.org](http://www.americantrails.org) (great website)

<b>SUB THEME: Recreational Opportunities – Intramural Sports / Expanded Summer Rec.</b>
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**Challenge:** We heard about the excellent summer youth activities that Alcester has to offer, but we also heard requests to build upon that program. Young adults also commented that there is a lack of recreational/social activities.

**Recommendation:** As I was thinking about recommendations to write about for increased recreational activities, I struggled a bit about what to include. Bigger cities have facilities like YMCAs and Boys' and Girls' Clubs of America that fill the need of recreational and social activities for children and young adults. These places have paid activity coordinators and facilities that open up endless possibilities.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### *Recreational Opportunities – Intramural Sports / Expanded Summer Rec.*

But when it comes to smaller communities, I really do think we complicate things more than we need to. We can't compete with larger communities in terms of recreational facilities, but I don't think we need to as that is not our niche. There is a simplicity about rural communities that I think is charming and we can carry that over into recreation.

When is the last time any of you have played Dodgeball? How about kickball? It made me giggle the first time I heard about the popularity of these sports in bigger cities. But once I thought about it, I realized the fun factor isn't necessarily in the game itself, it's in the gathering with people and blowing off a little steam.

A dodgeball, kickball or sand volleyball league would all be simple, inexpensive ways to add some socializing and recreation to Alcester. We started a dodgeball league in Platte this past winter and it was a riot. The school let us use the auxiliary gym every other Thursday evening. The every other week format was worked really well as opposed to the weekly format our bowlers and golfers use. It isn't such a burden to find a babysitter and it seemed we weren't as tied down to participating.

We contacted eight team captains who were in charge of finding team members. We played co-ed and stressed the importance of not necessarily drafting a "dream team," but instead finding members that just wanted to have fun and get out of the house for a while. The head of the league set up a schedule and each team played the other seven teams each night. It's a fast paced game and the longest a match lasts is 10 minutes, so it isn't a marathon evening.

Again, this isn't anything elaborate, but I know the young adults in the community really enjoyed it. Of course I can't resist tweaking things, so I want to find a high school student or two to come babysit kids on site next year. That would make it even easier for people to play.

This goal would be easy to achieve in Alcester. All you would need are one or two people to organize the whole thing. Give it a shot, I know you're young adults will enjoy it.

I am thinking on the same lines for expanded summer rec. programs. Alcester already has a good foundation, now just expand on it a bit. Other communities will often run "mini-camps" through summer rec. programs or the school. Again, these are simple and inexpensive to do, but they help cure the "Mom, I'm bored" syndrome. The organization in charge of the camps, could contact people who have special talents to put on a workshop of some sort. An example would be to have an artsy person teach a pottery or create a wind chime class. You could have the boys' basketball team have a 2-3 day mini camp. The local greenthumb could help kids grow a community garden. An crafty person could teach calligraphy. The fitness fanatic could do "Walking Wednesdays" at the track. A local "chef" could teach cooking skills. The possibilities are endless...and notice they are not all related to sports!

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### *EMS Recruitment*

The person or organization in charge, could organize 10 or so workshops or mini camps, advertise them in the paper or send a flier home with schoolkids. The camps could charge a nominal fee (\$10-\$20 depending on need of supplies) and then have a registration day. The registration fee could also go to help pay the teacher of the class a small stipend.

I don't have a bunch of resources for you, but this isn't really anything you need outside resources for. The resources are in your own community. Find those people with talents and a lot of patience and you'll be surprised at the response.

#### **SUB THEME: EMS Recruitment**

**Challenge:** As with any rural community in South Dakota, Alcester's volunteer ambulance department is struggling to recruit and, just as importantly, retain EMTs. When a department is low on volunteers, the current group suffers from burnout. And we all know burnout leads to fewer volunteers. It's a vicious circle. Alcester's department has an added challenge of having to transport all patients to a medical center of the patient's choosing. While the call volume is average for a small community, the time it takes for each patient from start to finish is longer because of the miles that need to be traveled.

**Recommendation:** I think this is the seventh time I've written on EMS recruitment for community assessment reports. I'm an EMT in Platte, so I feel the pain of being short on numbers and funding. While many of these recommendations are similar to other reports, I learn something every time I do one of these. Writing about EMS recruitment makes me try to think outside of the box a little bit.

In the last few assessments, I've become aware of how proud EMTs are of their program. It doesn't seem to matter if they have five volunteers or twenty volunteers, there always seems to be a core group that makes that community's ambulance service thrive. Often times those people are strong leaders with strong personalities. I'm guilty of being one of those personalities. It's not necessarily a bad trait, in fact, it's needed to get things done on a volunteer department. But, something I've learned to do is to take a step back and make sure I'm letting others be an equal member of a team. I'm not pointing fingers, I'm just writing about what I've learned from other communities and my own.

In Platte, we have two EMTs on duty during the day shift and two during the night shift. Everyone has a pager, so if it's a particularly crummy call, others show up at the shed to help. I was going on just about every call, it wasn't because it was necessary, but I'll be honest, I'm a control freak, I'm a good EMT and I didn't think anyone could do the job as well as I could. I was guilty of loving the job so much that it prohibited others from becoming an equal part of our team.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### *EMS Recruitment*

I didn't go to therapy or anything, but I did learn this important lesson from assessments. I could see it in every community! I was in one community that had four EMTs attend a listening session and complain that no one wanted to serve on the ambulance service. After an hour of listening to it, there was no way at all that I would have set foot in that ambulance shed for anything! The personalities were so strong that you could have been the best EMT in the world and you wouldn't have done one thing right. While these people were certainly an asset to the community as they kept the department going, they were also the biggest deterrent to recruitment of new department members.

I am in no way, shape or form saying this is Alcester's case, but I do think every ambulance service needs to be aware that the veterans can be rather intimidating to newcomers. I know I was! We are so proud of what we do and get so much personal satisfaction from it that it's addictive. My words of advice are to share that feeling with others, let them in to be a part of something great. Was it easy to step back and let others take ownership? Nope, I had to do a lot of meditation and deep breathing exercises to get through that, but I lives.

With the sermon done, I'm going to move on to a few observations and recommendations for recruiting EMS personnel. First and foremost, I want it to be said that I think we shoot ourselves in the foot when it comes to recruiting volunteers. We tell everyone how much time it takes. We complain about the testing to become an EMT. We whine about the recertification requirements. We moan about getting calls in the middle of the night and so on and so forth. We're absolutely right, it stinks, but we need to get over it. Complaining should be done in Pierre, not to potential volunteers.

When talking with people, promote the good things about the job, not the bad things. If someone says, "How can you be an EMT? Doesn't it take a lot of time?" Answer, "Yes, it does, but I love it because..."

We need to focus more on promoting the friends we make and the feeling we get from helping others. There is no other group of people I would want in charge of my family if they needed EMS than the people on my ambulance service. Other services out there may have fancier equipment or paramedics, but I'm convinced no one will go above and beyond like small town EMT's. Alcester is no exception to this rule...we heard time and time again what a first rate ambulance service the community has.

When recruiting, it's important to acknowledge that the test is tough and the hours stink, but that shouldn't be our focus. Tell recruits that you will help them through the training and that once they are through it, you'll help them with calls until they are comfortable. I'm afraid we look at new volunteers as being "fresh meat" and we are so anxious to lift our workload, that we overwhelm them.

In Platte, we've taken a couple of hints from our fire department. They never have problems recruiting people. Take the liquid refreshment factor out, and the reason they have a full force is because they do things that promote camaraderie. For example, they always order pizza or grill out before or after a meeting. This gives people time to visit

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### *EMS Recruitment*

with each other and talk about different calls they may have been on. It also gives people a chance to eat as they probably just got home from work and then needed to run to the meeting. We've started doing this at some of our meetings and attendance has increased.

When we recruited this last time in Platte, we really did an all out publicity blitz in the newspaper and had EMTs seek out others they thought would be good candidates. We did funny things like "The Top Ten Reasons to be an EMT." With that we put funny things like "you get to see what everyone really looks like at 4AM," "you get a warm, fuzzy feeling in you heart when you help someone," and "you don't have to worry about the pay putting you in a different tax bracket" (because there isn't any!)

We also had EMTs write letters to the editor about what they like about being an EMT. I'll admit it, I had to write most of them (trying to get guys to write a letter to the editor is like pushing a rope) and most everyone just signed off on my eloquent missives, but it worked. People seemed to respond very positively to this effort.

I also think it's vital to give people a personal invitation to join. Sometimes I think communities put an ad in the paper asking for volunteers and then complain because people didn't sign up in droves. We all know people in our communities that would make excellent EMTs, personally ask them! You'll hear every excuse in the book as to why people can't or won't join (in fact we have a contest where we share the excuses and pick the worst one, but I digress...). I think the newspaper articles and letters to the editor get people thinking, but I know for a fact that the last ten people we had take the test were persuaded by current EMTs in face to face contact. Be relentless, don't take no for an answer if you know someone would be good. A maybe to me is as good as a yes.

During the training we enlisted the help of community volunteers to feed the class. Everyone seemed to appreciate that as it made it easier for them to get to class on time and it was one less thing to worry about. We also had a veteran EMT assigned to each class night so they could help with questions, training, etc....It is nice for new recruits to hear that the National standards they are tested on are by no means the way things are done on rural, volunteer services. Let's face it, the training is overwhelming and it is great to have someone say, "You just need to get through this training, and then things are more realistic on the ambulance service." (Does the term "load and go" ring a bell?)

When recruiting, it is vital to educate the community as to how much money is saved on taxes by having a volunteer service. We compared what surrounding towns with paid services were paying in taxes compared to Platte. We also made a plea to business owners to make it possible for EMTs to leave work during the day to go on a call. Platte had been struggling with filling day shifts because employers weren't allowing employees to leave work or they had to clock out if they did. We really worked the fact that those businesses would be paying so much more in taxes if it weren't a volunteer service. I firmly believe people should not have to lose money if they volunteer to be an EMT. Make businesses aware of the alternatives. We printed the numbers on the taxes saved in an article on the front page of the paper and I know for a fact that a few businesses took notice as we have some of their employees on the department now.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### *EMS Recruitment*

I recommend that you explore the possibility of paying your volunteers something. Even if it is something small, the volunteers appreciate it. Gift cards or certificates to area restaurants or local businesses can serve a double purpose of volunteer appreciation and business involvement. I know a number of our EMTs use the payment to do something with their family or save it to buy something for the household. Granted, it's not much, but it is a gesture that is appreciated and used to compensate for time away from families. At least, look into providing financial support for educating new EMTs.

I also want to recommend the community consider celebrating EMS week. This would include the fire department and the ambulance service. These people work hard and donate numerous hours of time away from their jobs and families. It doesn't take much to make someone feel appreciated. Maybe do an appreciation supper, picnic, or something like that.

I wish I had a number of resources to give you, but the answers to the recruitment problem really lie in your own community. You have to find a way for people to step up to the plate. I'm listing the State Department of Public Safety as a contact to see what other communities have done. Give me a call and we can brainstorm some ideas.

For information regarding EMT training please take advantage of the resources below.

#### **Resources:**

Office of Emergency Medical Services  
South Dakota Department of Public Safety  
118 W. Capitol  
Pierre, SD 57501  
Bob.graff@state.sd.us  
[www.state.sd.us/dps/EMS](http://www.state.sd.us/dps/EMS)

Karen Burket  
Platte Ambulance Service EMT  
PO Box 336  
Platte, SD 57369  
605-337-2895

Bureau of Labor Statistics  
U.S. Department of Labor  
Occupational Outlook Handbook  
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics  
[www.bls.gov/oco/ocos101.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos101.htm)

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### *Daycare*

#### **Resources:** Continued

South Dakota Emergency Medical Technicians' Association

[www.sdemta.org](http://www.sdemta.org)

Visit the "EMT Thoughts" Link

National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians

[www.nremt.org](http://www.nremt.org)

#### Training Resources

Stacy Grace

Training Officer/NAEMT SDEMTA

605-201-0406

[Grace12073@hotmail.com](mailto:Grace12073@hotmail.com)

Barb Jorgensen

Eastern Specialist/EMS Liaison

[barb.jorgensen@state.sd.us](mailto:barb.jorgensen@state.sd.us)

Yankton County Emergency Medical Services

[www.yanktonems.com/education.html](http://www.yanktonems.com/education.html)

Western Iowa Tech Community College

[www.witcc.com](http://www.witcc.com)

EMS Training Catalog

[www.witcc.com/pdf/catalog.pdf](http://www.witcc.com/pdf/catalog.pdf) - pp. 110 and 128

<b>SUB THEME: Daycare</b>
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**Challenge:** One of the most commonly-voiced challenges for Alcester was lack of daycare. A number of people commented on the fact that some families take their children to another community for care or that it has been a deterrent for others looking at moving to Alcester.

**Recommendation:** I'm not sure if there is a more overlooked issue in rural communities than reliable daycare. We talk about the need for infrastructure, quality schools, streets, etc..., and while these are all important, daycares should be toward the top of the list also. As a parent, if I don't have a good, quality daycare to leave my children at each workday, I'm either going to a) stay home with them, b) take them to another community that does have a good facility, or c) move to a community that has better options. None of these choices help the tax base of Alcester.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### *Daycare*

With the pronounced need Alcester has, a daycare center should be explored. Sometimes the words “daycare center” send a shiver up and down the spines of home-based providers, but it really shouldn’t, because there is a need in communities for both. In fact, a daycare center may provide an opportunity for an existing in-home provider to expand his or her operation (and ability to serve the community).

Alcester should consider the formation of a daycare center because of the increased numbers of children centers can handle, as opposed to in home providers. Non-licensed providers can care for up to 12 children, then the next level that can be done in a private home is a group family care. This provides for up to 20 children and is licensed by the state. There are not a lot of homes that can accommodate this many children.

The next level is the daycare center, which can care for a much larger number of children, based on the square footage of the facility. Based on the number of responses about the need for reliable daycare, this could be a solution to a serious problem in Alcester.

The first project I tackled in Platte when I started as an economic development coordinator was a daycare center. I now could write a book on 100 things I wish I would have known before I started the project! It was a difficult task, but it is probably one of the projects I am most proud of. Each day we have 30+ children attend and it is something the community has really gotten behind.

We were granted a Governor’s house to use for the center, but we needed more room than that, so we put a full basement underneath it. To qualify for a Governor’s house, a value of at least \$32,000, the community needs to submit a grant proposal to the state. The grant application walk is pretty self-explanatory, and the people at the SD Housing Development Authority are a pleasure to work with.

The house needs to be granted to a non-profit entity, which would be the city or development corporation. Before a house is granted, a feasibility survey is taken to be sure the interest is there. A budget also is submitted with the proposal. Another requirement is to have a manager that for the facility that has taken some early childhood classes. The manager does not have to be certified immediately, but needs to be working toward the certification. The Department of Child Care Services can assist with these requirements.

Another option that crossed our minds had to do with a facility in Alcester that may not be at full occupancy. If there is a place at the school, or maybe even at The Village that could hold a center, you wouldn’t have to worry about construction costs. Think outside the box a little, just because a building has always been used for housing or retail doesn’t mean it can’t be used as a daycare center.

One thing to keep in mind when deciding where to put a daycare center would be convenience. Many centers are close to schools, so when parents are dropping off school-aged children, they can also drop off younger children in a short amount of time.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### *Daycare*

It is also useful for after-school care as kids can walk to the center, with the help of an adult, of course.

Another thing to keep in mind is the fact that communication about this project with the community is a must. In-home providers need to be aware of what is going on, too. A daycare center is in no way meant to take the place of in-home providers and the last thing a community wants to do is put one out of business. There may be a provider that enjoys daycare, but has to turn away families because they are full. That provider may be interested in managing the daycare center. They are the experts, and the one's with the patience, so be sure to include them.

Many daycares are funded through a USDA Rural Development Community Facilities loan. Another financial resource, not just for daycare centers, but in-home providers as well, is SDREI's First Children's Finance program. FCF offers low-interest loans to childcare businesses to create new childcare spaces or improve existing ones. First Children's Finance, DCC's Child Care Loan Fund may have money for technical assistance. FCF offers loan options for technical assistance and training, as well as for equipment, expansion, repairs, and working capital up to \$75,000. Loans for \$5,000 or less (Mini Loans) offer a simplified application process and reduced fee.

The Department of Social Service's Child Care Division also has a number of small grants (up to \$500) available to childcare providers for use in purchasing toys, cribs, and other equipment. Although the grant is relatively small, it can serve as another resource to assist providers in Alcester improve the quality of their childcare.

Finally, one last source that I want to reference is a directory maintained by the National Child Care Information Center (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services). The center provides comprehensive information on how to start a childcare center including published guides, funding sources, and state-by-state information about licensing and contacts. You can view this directory online at <http://nccic.org/poptopics/starting.html>.

### **Resources:**

Platte Development Corporation  
Karen Burket  
P O Box 336  
Platte SD 57369  
Phone: 605-337-2895

### Daycare Financial Resources

South Dakota Housing Development Authority  
PO Box 1237  
Pierre, SD 57501  
605-773-3181  
[www.sdhda.org](http://www.sdhda.org)

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### *Daycare*

#### **Resources:** Continued

USDA Rural Development  
2914 Broadway  
Yankton, SD 57078  
605-665-2662 Ext 4  
605-668-9729 (Fax)  
sherrie.lewis@sd.usda.gov  
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/sd/>

SDREI – First Children’s Finance  
Beth E. Davis, President  
625 S. Minnesota Ave. Suite 103 (57104)  
PO Box 802  
Sioux Falls, SD 57101-0802  
605-978-2804  
info@sdrei.org

#### Reference Information on Starting and Licensing a Daycare Facility

National Child Care Information Center  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
243 Church Street, NW 2nd Floor  
Vienna, Virginia 22180  
800-616-2242  
<http://nccic.org/>  
<http://nccic.org/poptopics/starting.html>

South Dakota Department of Education  
Child and Adult Nutrition Program  
700 Governors Drive  
Melissa Halling  
Pierre SD 57501  
Phone: 605-773-3413

South Dakota Department of Social Services  
Child Care Services  
700 Governors Drive  
Pierre, SD 57501  
800-227-3020  
<http://www.state.sd.us/social/ccs/ccshome.htm>

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### *After-School Program*

<b>SUB THEME: After-School Program</b>
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**Challenge:** With a majority of both parents working outside of the home, after-school care for school aged children has become an increasing need. This need is probably even greater in Alcester, where many of the parents work outside of the community, but send their children to the exceptional school in Alcester. So what do parents do with their children after school hours?

**Recommendation:** Reliable after-school care is a necessity for parents that work outside of the home. If both parents are employed, the chances of children being unsupervised at home increases. It is a tough age for children as they feel they are too old to go to daycare, but yet too young to be left alone at home. Many communities have turned to after-school programs for those children.

An after-school program would be yet another service your school system could offer to families, old and new to Alcester. Critics will say that at some point parents need to take care of their children, not the school system. But the reality is if the community doesn't provide after-school care, those kids are likely to go home to an empty home. This alternative is neither safe nor ideal.

Many school systems have taken on after-school programs and have seen success with them. The programs often times run from after school to 5:30/6:00 PM when parents pick them up. Most send home calendars a month ahead of time, and the parents mark which days the children will attend. Fees vary from program to program. Many schools determine a family's fees according to the school lunch program eligibility. If a student qualifies for free or reduced lunches, then the program is free or the fee is reduced. The fees I have seen from various programs are very reasonable and comparable to what a daycare would charge.

Activities at after-school care vary greatly. The thing that makes them successful is giving children choices and making it "fun." It can't be a great big study hall. Guest speakers, special projects, computer games and free play are common activities.

I'm a firm believer in never reinventing the wheel and after-school programs are no exception. I'd suggest checking into other schools' programs and begging, borrowing or stealing what works from those. Tweak them for what works for your community. I am listing a few contacts for people who run after-school programs in their communities in the resources.

Of course funding is always an issue for weary taxpayers. The good news is after-school programs often qualify for grant funding, but the bad news is continued funding is not guaranteed for these programs.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### *After-School Program*

Applications and information can be obtained from Rosemary Hayward at that South Dakota Department of Social Services (Contact Information below). Successful applications demonstrate a need for such programs by providing documentation as to the extent of youth involved and community support.

Another potential funding opportunity for this type of program is the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center Grants Program administered by the South Dakota Department of Education. For more information on this grant program, contact Sue Burgard at 605-773-5238. Full contact information below.

Reviewing and studying a successful grant is one of the proven ways to enhance the chances of your grant being funded. If you would like to explore this program farther, additional information can be made available.

#### **Resources:**

Rosemary Hayward  
Child Care Services  
Department of Social Services  
700 Governors Drive  
Pierre, SD 57501-2291  
605-773-4766 or 1-800-227-3020 ext: 6432

Sue Burgard  
SD Department of Education  
Office of School Enhancement  
700 Governors Drive  
Pierre, SD 57501  
605-773-5238  
sue.burgard@state.sd.us  
<http://doe.sd.gov/oess/21cent/>

South Dakota School-Age Care Alliance (SoDakSACA)  
Jan Stange  
Advisor  
GAP--Great After-School Place  
1330 Main Avenue South  
Brookings, SD 57006  
605-692-4399  
gapost@brookings.net

Afterschool Alliance  
<http://www.afterschoolalliance.org>  
*Provides information on funding and technical assistance for after-school programs*

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### *Senior Center*

#### **Resources:** Continued

“New Haven”

Kim Eich

112 E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street

Dell Rapids, SD 57022

605-428-6184

kimeich@go.com

Doug Voss

Centerville Public School

610 Lincoln St.

Centerville SD 57014

605-563-2291

doug.voss@k12.sd.us

#### General Links:

South Dakota School-Age Care Alliance

<http://www.westdakota.com/SoDakSACA/>

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids

<http://www.fightcrime.org/reports/stateCC/southdakotaCC.pdf>

South Dakota Coalition for Children

<http://www.sdcchildren.org>

South Dakota KIDS Count

<http://www.usd.edu/brbinfo/kc/>

Office of Child Care Services - Out of School Time Division

<http://www.state.sd.us/social/CCS/OST/infoost.htm>

South Dakota Department of Education and Cultural Affairs

<http://www.state.sd.us/deca>

<b>SUB THEME: Senior Center</b>
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**Challenge:** Several listening session respondents noted that the existing senior center is in need of repair.

**Recommendation:** The first thing you need to determine is the extent to which the existing building is capable of continuing to serve as a Senior Center and how much it

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### *Senior Center*

would cost to rehab and repair. If the cost of rehabilitation and repair is too high, it might make more sense to build a new facility or integrate a senior center with another community building.

I am not aware of any major grant programs available specifically for repair of senior centers. USDA Rural Development may be able to provide or guarantee a low interest, long-term loan to help fund rehabilitation of the existing facility or the construction of another facility. The Community Facilities program provides financing for a wide range of building projects including emergency services, community centers, senior centers, etc. Currently, this program provides interest rates around 4.125% for a term up to 40 years.

Local fundraising and donations from local organizations and individuals will be the primary source of financial assistance to help make repairs to the existing facility.

If you choose to build a new facility, or build a new facility that incorporates a Senior Center, you may be able to obtain a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to help defray the cost. CDBG provides grants up to 50% of the total project cost depending on the project and its total cost. CDBG cannot be used for operations or regular maintenance and repairs. It can be used, however, to help construct a new facility, or another eligible community facility that incorporates a Senior Center.

The City of Lennox recently built a new Senior Center in their community and they received a CDBG grant to help defray the cost. The South Eastern Council of Governments worked with the city and the Senior Center to prepare, submit, and administer the grant. Because CDBG could only fund a portion of the project, the city, seniors, or other organizations would need to provide funding for the remainder of the project. You could also take out a Community Facilities loan from USDA Rural Development for the remainder of the project.

The next recommendation discusses building a community center. A senior center component could be included as part of the building of a community center. The City of Parker remodeled an existing facility into what is now called “Parker Multigenerational Center”. The MGC houses the Parker Senior Citizen Center the Hearts In Mind Preschool and the Parker Medical Clinic. Since its completion the center has created a lot of synergy between the different entities with in the building. The City of Parker used Community Development Block Grants, Federally appropriated funds and funds from the City of Parker to complete the project.

#### **Resources:**

South Eastern Council of Governments  
Angie Hilton  
1000 N. West Ave, Suite 210  
Sioux Falls, SD 57104  
(605) 367-5390  
angie@secog.org

**QUALITY OF LIFE**  
*Community Center / Youth Center*

**Resources:** Continued

USDA Rural Development  
2914 Broadway  
Yankton, SD 57078  
605-665-2662 Ext 4  
605-668-9729 (Fax)  
sherrie.lewis@sd.usda.gov  
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/sd/>

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)  
Steve Harding  
Governors Office of Economic Development – GOED  
711 E. Wells Ave.  
Pierre, SD 57501

Federal Grants Directory: [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and [www.cfda.gov](http://www.cfda.gov)

South Dakota State Library Grants Directory: [www.sdstatelibrary.com/grants/index.cfm](http://www.sdstatelibrary.com/grants/index.cfm)

<b>SUB THEME: Community Center/Youth Center</b>
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**Challenge:** Alcester would like to have a facility available for community meetings, events, and youth activities.

**Recommendation:** During the listening sessions, one of the reoccurring projects identified by participants was the need for a community center. Several people noted that there was no place in the community to even host larger wedding receptions and other community gatherings. Participants also noted that there was a lack of things for the youth to do or a place of youth to congregate. Also related is the Senior Center discussed in the previous recommendation.

A community center can mean many things to different people in the community. There are several examples of community centers throughout South Dakota and each one includes many types of amenities. Almost universally, a community center is a location where large community events can be held, including kitchen facilities. In addition to that, other amenities might include:

- EMS facilities such as police and ambulance
- City offices
- Smaller meeting spaces
- Gym
- Wellness Center

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### *Community Center / Youth Center*

- Youth Center
- Senior Center
- Childcare Center
- Etc.

What a community center in Alcester might look like is up to the city and planning leaders, with input and direction from the general community. The community has already been working on some initial plans as to what a community center might include. Based on the preliminary plans, the center would include multipurpose space for larger meeting/banquets, a kitchen, a smaller meeting room, and perhaps space for city services such as police, ambulance, city offices, etc.

Before I discuss the actual financing of such a facility, I want to first discuss the planning of this facility. The most important thing is to involve the public in the planning process as much as possible. A first step, if not completed already, would be to conduct a comprehensive survey of the community specific to a community center. This could be an online survey, a paper survey included in the city utility billings, or some other method. The survey can be very simple, but it should include the following areas:

- 1) What components would you most like to see included in a community center?
- 2) What are the highest priority items to include in the community center?

The first question could provide a laundry list of potential components of a community center (i.e. meeting space, kitchen, etc). The first question should also ask people to assess if that component is very important, somewhat important, or not important in terms of whether it is included in the community center's design. The second question should go a bit further by asking people to respond as to what one or two components are most important to include in the community center.

Once this data has been compiled, it is recommended that you host a community meeting. This could be one of many community meetings held during the planning phases to provide updates to the public on the status of the project and to gather additional feedback. For example, you could hold a community meeting after the survey is completed to report on what was learned from the responses, get peoples' feedback to that, and discuss next steps. A follow up community meeting could be held once some initial design work has been completed and cost estimates have been assembled. This will be an additional opportunity to gather community input, modify the plans as necessary, and to determine if there is sufficient community support to move to the next phase. A final community meeting could be held prior to moving forward with construction to solidify final plans and design for the facility.

Public input is crucial as this would be a major capital project for the community that would require local resources for both construction and on-going operations of the facility. Not only will funds be necessary to help build the facility, but there will need to be an on-going commitment to fund operations from existing local resources such as the second-penny sales tax recently implemented by the city. Grant funding is available, depending on the project scope, to fund a part of the construction. But the burden of

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### *Community Center / Youth Center*

funding the on-going operations will fall on the community. It is difficult at this early stage to determine what these costs might be, but once a preliminary design has been completed, you can get a better idea of what that might entail.

To take a step back, another consideration you will need to make is what happens to the city auditorium. The answer to this will depend heavily on what the community does or does not want included in a community center. One option is to renovate the existing auditorium to serve as a community center, bringing it up to date and making it more useable for the kind of community functions that the facility is not currently capable of hosting. This option could be looked at simultaneous to looking at building a new facility. You can do a cost comparison between the two options to determine what is more feasible and cost effective both from a capital/building cost perspective and from an on-going cost of operations perspective. Again, having the public involved in these discussions throughout the process is vital.

Renovating the existing city auditorium may be contingent on a couple of factors such as: Can or would city offices be moved to the new facility? Can the current facility be renovated to serve identified community needs? Is the building structurally sound sufficient to insure that it will last long into the future? Can the building be made handicap accessible? Are there potential alternative uses for the facility if it is abandoned?

Again, these questions can better be answered once you have a full understanding as to what should be included in the community center. If the auditorium is not a good option, is there another organization or business in the community that would purchase the building to use in some other fashion? For example, does one of the local manufacturers have a need to expand or for additional storage? If so, could this facility serve that purpose?

Cost is always a primary consideration. As noted above, there are two major cost components. The first one is cost for building/renovating the structure. In this regard, your major funding sources include:

- 1) Community Development Block Grant
- 2) USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Program
- 3) Other city sources such as local taxes, or bonding by pledging sales taxes or a general obligation bond
- 4) Fundraising
- 5) Other

A Community Development Block Grant is going to be your major source of grant funding for this type of project. This program could provide a significant grant for building a community center or converting an existing facility into a community center. CDBG can fund up to 50% of the cost of construction up to a maximum dollar amount, which is usually determined based on the total project size. There are some stringent regulatory requirements tied to CDBG funding, however, because they are federal funds. For example, there are significant challenges in using CDBG funds for purposes such as a

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### *Community Center / Youth Center*

youth center, wellness center, city offices, ambulance services, police, etc. CDBG can be used for community meeting space, senior citizens, etc. Based on initial conversations with CDBG staff, CDBG funding may be available to renovate certain portions of the existing city auditorium but it could not be used in conjunction with the city offices. Also, funds could not be used for rehabbing the gym area. It could potentially be used to renovate the gym area into community meeting/banquet facilities by lowering the ceiling, making necessary conversions to the facility, adding a kitchen, etc.

Because of the limitations in what CDBG can pay for, it is vital that they be involved in the conversations regarding design of any proposed new or renovated facility. The South Eastern Council of Governments serves as your local resource regarding the CDBG program. Having SECOG and CDBG involved from the beginning can insure that the design of the facility is done in a way that maximizes eligibility for this grant.

Attempts to get CDBG funds should not be the primary “driver” in determining what you include as core components in the community center (that should be driven by locally identified needs), but it is important to involve SECOG and CDBG staff in the early design phase to ensure that CDBG eligibility for portions of the facility/project are maximized.

The remaining cost of construction or renovation will need to come from tax dollars, taking out a loan through the issuance of bonds, and/or fundraising.

If the city and/or county has some funds available for this project, they could be appropriated through the regular budgeting process. But budgets are always tight and funds are usually already slated for other purposes. Since a community center would naturally require funds to cover on-going operations, any annual funds available should probably be reserved for helping to pay the on-going operating costs.

Often, governmental units will bond or borrow funds for these types of capital improvement projects just as they would for large infrastructure projects. The city could pledge some available second-penny sales taxes to help repay these bonds over a 20+ year period, or the city could issue general obligation bonds (although this would require an election).

In conjunction with bonding, the city could utilize USDA Rural Development’s Community Facilities program to help finance the bonds. This program can provide a direct loan, guaranteed loan, or some combination thereof in order to decrease the interest rate. Currently, that interest rate is 4.125% with a term up to 40 years (interest rate subject to change quarterly). The longer term provided through this program can help keep the debt service low, which along with the low interest rate, is a major benefit of this program.

Another primary source for funding this type of capital project is fundraising. Because of the cost of building a community center, setting a fundraising goal is a good way to help

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### *Community Center / Youth Center*

build momentum for this type of project and minimize the long-term costs of financing this facility.

Under the “other” category, alternative sources of funds might include working with the city, senior center, county, or other organizations that may have a need for shared use of this facility and could provide funds to support this project.

The other side of the cost equation is on-going annual costs to operate this facility. This will need to be done locally either through the city or other entities/organization that may use or be located in the facility. Some funds could be generated to support these operational costs by renting out the facility for various events, but the primary responsibility will likely lie with the city.

Location will be important if you choose to construct a new building. This will be a key component and decision point as you go through the design phase. The design of the facility and the source of the financing will drive selection of a location. For example, perhaps the county may be interested in helping to support the building of a mixed use facility on the fairgrounds. This facility could be used in conjunction with the County Fair during certain times of the year, while serving a dual purpose as a community center.

A variant on this suggestion is to form a broader coalition of parties to contribute to the construction of a community center. The county could contribute a building site at the fairgrounds and some construction funds, site preparation work with county equipment, or grant application administration in exchange for exhibit hall space during the annual county fair and a periodic county commission chambers that would bring improved access to county government by area residents. The city council might also contribute construction funds, utility connections, or grant application administration in exchange for council chamber and special event usage. Local churches could contribute a portion of the local match for grant construction funds in exchange for center use for wedding receptions, meals for large funerals, and other large-gathering events. The school district might contribute construction funds or grant writing/administration expertise in exchange for center use for graduations, science fairs, plays, class reunions and other large events. The community foundation might contribute funds for furniture and furnishings in return for office space. Grants for construction or furnishings may also be available to non-governmental entities from private foundations. Many other possibilities exist. By spreading costs and uses of expertise across many organizations, the community may be enjoying a wide variety of different uses and events in its new community center.

Take time to tour centers located in other communities for ideas. Burke and Platte both have community centers that appear to be similar in size and scope to the project you are proposing to accomplish in Alcester.

While the planning phase for a community center may seem painstakingly slow, proper and considered planning will ensure that you construct or renovate a facility that meets the long-term needs of the community in the most cost effective manner.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### *Senior Transportation*

#### **Resources:**

South Eastern Council of Governments  
Angie Hilton  
1000 N. West Ave, Suite 210  
Sioux Falls, SD 57104  
(605) 367-5390  
angie@secog.org

USDA Rural Development  
Sherrie Lewis  
2914 Broadway  
Yankton, SD 57078  
605-665-2662 Ext 4  
605-668-9729 (Fax)  
sherrie.lewis@sd.usda.gov  
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/sd/>

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)  
Steve Harding  
Governors Office of Economic Development – GOED  
711 E. Wells Ave.  
Pierre, SD 57501

Federal Grants Directory  
[www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and [www.cfda.gov](http://www.cfda.gov)

South Dakota State Library Grants Directory  
[www.sdstatelibrary.com/grants/index.cfm](http://www.sdstatelibrary.com/grants/index.cfm)

<b>SUB THEME: Senior Transportation</b>
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**Challenge:** At several listening sessions we heard that the Seniors are looking for public transportation to and from doctor's appointments, other appointments, etc. We also learned that the nursing home has a bus that is available for public transportation, but due to resource limitations, it is not currently set up to provide regular service.

**Recommendation:** Transportation for seniors and the elderly is certainly a concern for many communities. Alcester is in the unique position that a bus is available for transportation, but you currently lack a mechanism to operate the bus on a regular part-time or full-time basis. During the assessment process, we learned that the community

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### *Senior Transportation*

received the bus through a grant in 2002 and it can be used for various community transportation needs. The nursing home currently pays the insurance on the bus, but there isn't any mechanism set up or enough resources dedicated to coordinate regular services.

If this is a priority for the citizens of Alcester, the issue can be resolved in a couple of ways. If you do not have one already, you should develop a transit committee that will coordinate resolution to this issue. The committee should be composed of representation from churches, the city, the nursing home, senior center, and other relevant constituencies. The first item of business is to determine the need for this service in the community. How many days of regular service are necessary? Is the need more for local transportation or for transportation to neighboring communities for medical appointments, or some combination thereof? What are potential clients willing to pay for this service?

All of these questions need to be answered to help guide your thought process to resolve this issue for the community. A survey of seniors in the community, and related organizations (senior center, nursing home, Village Apartments), will help provide perspective on the actual needs or demand for this service. Once this information has been compiled, then you can look at your options to resolve the issue.

One option would be to continue as is with a slight modification. The Nursing Home could continue to own and maintain the vehicle. The Nursing Home, or another entity in the community, could help coordinate scheduling. The transit committee could mobilize an effort to train a cadre of volunteer drivers and assist them in obtaining their commercial driver's license and provide training on use of the vehicle. A central scheduler/contact could then schedule volunteer drivers on a regular basis (maybe 2 days per week for intra-community transports and 1 day per week for trips to Canton, Sioux Falls, or other communities where seniors may have medical appointments, etc). The central contact person could also take calls from people looking to schedule a trip or post a sign-up sheet in various locations such as the Senior Center, Nursing Home, Village Apartments, Post Office, Grocery Store, etc. A fund could be set up to help pay for gas expenses which could be partially subsidized through user fares and other contributions such as city funds, private donations, fundraising, etc.

Another option, once a Transit Committee has been established, is to begin discussions with another transit provider to provide regular service to Alcester. The two closest transit providers providing service near Alcester are Siouxland Regional Transit System and the Rural Office of Community Services (ROCS).

Siouxland primarily provides service to the communities of Elk Point, North Sioux City, and communities in between. ROCS provides transit services to many communities across southeastern South Dakota stretching all the way to Winner. ROCS currently provides regular service to Canton, Hudson, Beresford, Centerville, Viborg, Parker, Lennox, Sioux Falls, and other communities.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### *Senior Transportation*

I have had some initial conversations with ROCS as to whether they would be willing and able to provide service to Alcester on a part-time regular basis. This is something that they may be interested in helping you set up. In addition, depending on your preferences, ROCS could also potentially work out a scenario to utilize the existing vehicle to help provide this service.

With the ROCS options, you would essentially be using a service that would pay for a regular full or part-time driver. ROCS has access to potential grant funding that could help subsidize the cost of this service, but the community would be required to commit a local match. As with all federal and state grants, funds that help support these services is becoming increasingly scarce. The local cost of providing this service would depend entirely on the community's service needs, how many days of service are required, and what type of transport is needed (for example transports to Canton, Sioux Falls, and/or just within Alcester, etc).

Again, doing an early assessment of your true needs is important. Mobilizing a committee to spearhead this effort is essential so that they can coordinate the information gathering process. Once you have assessed your need, begin looking at your options. Invite ROCS to come to your community to discuss what options might be available with them and the potential costs. Once you have full information available, you can make a wise decision as to how to proceed.

I think either approach or something similar would work very well and would solve a large need that citizens of Alcester currently have.

#### **Resources:**

Morningside Care Center  
Desiree Duncan  
Alcester, SD  
605-934-2011

Rural Office of Community Services (ROCS) - Transit  
Winnie Jo Jons  
PO Box 70  
Lake Andes, SD 57356-0070  
605-487-7635

Siouxland Regional Transit System  
Sandy Langel  
507 7th Street Suite #506  
Sioux City, IA 51102  
712-279-6919

**QUALITY OF LIFE**  
*Senior Transportation*

**Resources:** Continued

South Dakota Department of Transportation

Office of Public Transit

Jackie Mattheis

Transportation Specialist

605-773-4169

jackie.mattheis@state.sd.us

<http://www.sddot.com/fpa/transit/rural.asp>

List and Map of Transit Providers in South Dakota

<http://www.sddot.com/fpa/transit/network.asp>

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

<b>SUB THEME: Industrial Park Development</b>
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**Challenge:** Development of an industrial park to facilitate recruitment of new businesses to the community and retention/expansion of existing businesses.

**Recommendation:** An area has already been purchased for development of an industrial park on the northwest side of the community. Several listening respondents noted the need to further develop the industrial park to better attract new industries. Other session participants wondered whether another location might be more prudent for developing an industrial park given the terraced nature of the existing land and the cost for getting water/sewer infrastructure to that particular property.

Developing an industrial park can be a difficult endeavor, particularly because many of the grant programs that exist to help with this require that you have a prospect ready to move in before you can tap the funds. On the other hand, you need to have the infrastructure in place in order to get a business even interested. It is a chicken or the egg situation. Which comes first?

Committing to the development of an industrial park is a worthy goal. Before moving forward with the existing site, however, you need to ask yourself two important questions:

- 1) Does the current property, with its location and terraces, provide an industrial area that would be attractive to potential business?
- 2) Is the cost of getting water/wastewater infrastructure to the site cost prohibitive, or alternatively, is it less expensive to select another location from an infrastructural perspective?

Based on the responses to these questions, you may or may not choose to move forward with developing the current location, or you may. If the current location is not optimal, is there an alternative location that makes more sense? These are important areas to consider before devoting the time and energy that industrial park development naturally requires.

The other question you must ask yourselves is what are the most likely candidates for business recruitment/expansion in Alcester? Examples might include distribution centers, manufacturing, and back office businesses. Each of these industries has different requirements in terms of access to the roads, infrastructure needs, land requirements, and labor. Understanding the needs of these different businesses is key to how you develop your industrial park.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### *Industrial Park Development*

Developing an industrial park takes commitment from the city, the development corporation, and the general public. Commitment must be in the form of not just financial resources, but also of leadership. The city, development corporation, and key local business leaders must be in lock step to make this goal a reality. Industrial park development is one part infrastructure and one part marketing. But without some infrastructure and a site plan in place, your marketing efforts may not bear fruit.

Site and infrastructure development are the hard part and probably the portion that will require the most long-term financial commitment. Planning is crucial. Select a site that is conducive to the businesses that are most likely to locate or expand in the community. Site plans will change over time as businesses commit to locating in the industrial park. Developing a flexible plan that anticipates changes upfront is crucial. Infrastructure is a core and often overlooked component. The industrial park must have access to and connection with the city's current water and wastewater systems. Site selection must recognize this and anticipate the capacity of the city's system to absorb growth. Certain sites or areas may be less expensive to develop than others in terms of infrastructure. Work in conjunction with the city's engineer to develop a plan that reduces the cost long term. Even within an individual site, development of one section or another may make sense from an infrastructural perspective. This all needs to be understood and planned for early on in the process.

It is important to not overlook zoning. If you are planning for light industrial, then the site should be zoned accordingly. Recognize how adjacent properties are also being developed or may eventually be developed. For example, would development of industrial property impact potential future housing development around Alcester's golf course?

I know that in the past you have visited with Jeff Eckhoff regarding development of your Industrial Park. And while Alcester is not a member of the Lincoln County Economic Developers Association (LCEDA), it may be worth it for you community to pursue some type of affiliate member relationship with this group. This would give you an opportunity to utilize Jeff Eckhoff for technical assistance, particularly since Jeff has substantial experience in the area of industrial development in other communities.

Recognize, however, that the leadership and commitment to this project must come from the local level. It may make sense to develop a special committee made up of representatives from city staff, elected officials, development corporation board members, business leaders, and the general public to take the lead in these efforts. This will ensure that everyone is involved and communication is open as you move forward with this type of project.

Financing industrial park development is crucial. Local funds will be necessary to make this project happen. There are grant and loan funds available for some infrastructure development in industrial parks but the grant funds are generally limited to opportunities where a business has committed to actually locating in the park. Thus, some communities have chosen to do some infrastructure development initially using local

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### *Industrial Park Development*

funds and then being prepared to access other grant programs when a business is committed to locate at the site.

There have been cases where funds have been secured through special congressional line item appropriations (HUD EDI grants) for infrastructure development prior to securing a committed business. This is usually worked out directly between the community and South Dakota's congressional offices (as noted in the previous recommendation regarding infrastructure). Keep in mind, however, that congressional line items are becoming increasingly rare given current federal financial constraints. But this is an option you may choose to pursue. The remainder of the initial infrastructure development could be funded through loan programs administered by the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources and/or USDA Rural Development. Depending on the type of infrastructure (i.e. water vs. sewer), eligibility requirements will apply. But between these two entities, loan funds could be potentially secured. The South Eastern Council of Governments can assist you in developing applications and walk you through the process of accessing these programs.

Once a business is committed, primary grant resources available to you may include a Consolidated Water Facilities Construction Program Grant (SD DENR) and/or a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for water/wastewater infrastructure. CDBG may also be potentially used for industrial road improvements. Another grant resource for road improvements includes the Industrial Park Road Grant Program administered by the South Dakota Department of Transportation. Again, the South Eastern Council of Governments can provide assistance in accessing these programs at a point when a business is ready and committed to locating in the industrial park.

Another tool utilized by other communities to fund infrastructure development is Tax Increment Financing (TIF). It is my understanding that Alcester had put a TIF district in place previously for this industrially zoned land, but that it has since expired. TIF is a beneficial strategy to help fund infrastructure development for a business looking to locate in your industrial park. TIF essentially takes the tax funds generated by the improvements to the location, such as the business's building and site improvements, and dedicates that tax funds for infrastructure improvements. This strategy has been utilized in several other communities with success and can be another tool in your arsenal for helping to attract potential businesses. This need not be put in place until a business commits to the site. Since you have already implemented a TIF in the past, your community appears to be familiar with this process.

Some communities have also funded development of industrial parks through a second- or third-penny sales tax if this is seen as a priority for the community.

Putting up a spec building is another strategy you may pursue. As with infrastructure improvements, however, few grant resources exist to help fund this type of project unless a business is committed. Some communities have secured a USDA Rural Development Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBEG) for this purpose, but again it is my understanding that a committed business is necessary. Contact USDA Rural

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### *Industrial Park Development*

Development directly for more information on this program and how it may be utilized to fund a building.

If you choose to build a spec building, keep in mind that you will need to build something that will generate the most interest from potential businesses. That means taking into consideration the size of the building and its construction.

Some communities, like Lennox, build a spec building for business recruitment purposes. A spec building is a marketing tool, but be prepared to have it sit to empty for several few years. Lennox's spec building sat empty for many years. And while it did not generate an occupant right away, it did allow the community to at least be considered by several businesses looking to locate in the Sioux Falls vicinity. Now, two new businesses have moved into their industrial park. Again, it took a lot of commitment on the part of the community to sit on a building for many years without seeing much benefit. Residents were critical of the development corporation and the city for taking this risk, but now that businesses are moving to Lennox, they look like heroes.

Marketing your industrial park is the other core component to consider. But without a real product to sell, and without at least some infrastructure in place, your marketing efforts may not induce the type of immediate results you would like. Infrastructure development and marketing must be done hand-in-hand to produce the most benefit. Recognize all of the tools that you have to offer and include these in your marketing efforts. For example, will the community commit to utilizing TIF financing to support infrastructure development once a business commits to locating in the industrial park. Promote any tax abatement policies you might have in place so businesses know that you have that available as well. Use your website and brochures to promote your community, industrial park, labor pool, land/buildings, educational system, quality of life assets, special programs and incentives. More and more businesses are looking to the internet to research communities. An attractive useful website is an excellent opportunity to make a good first impression.

### **Resources:**

Lincoln & Minnehaha County Economic Development Associations

Contact: Jeff Eckhoff

Commerce Center, 200 N. Phillips Ave, Ste. 101

Sioux Falls, SD 57101-0907

Phone: 605-339-0103

Email: jeffe@siouxfalls.com

Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED)

Contact: Ryan Pidde

2329 N. Career Ave.

Sioux Falls, SD 57107

Phone: 605-367-4517

Email: Ryan.Pidde@state.sd.us

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### *Industrial Park Development*

#### **Resources: Continued**

South Eastern Council of Governments

Contact: Lynne Keller

1000 N. West Avenue, Suite 210

Sioux Falls, SD 57104

Phone: 605-367-5390

lynne@secog.org

www.secog.org

Steve Harding

Community Development Block Grant Program

Governor's Office of Economic Development – GOED

Department of Tourism and State Development

711 E. Wells Ave.

Pierre, SD 57501

605-773-5032

www.sdgreatprofits.com

USDA Rural Development

2914 Broadway

Yankton, SD 57078

605-665-2662 Ext 4

605-668-9729 (Fax)

sherrie.lewis@sd.usda.gov

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/sd/>

South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Foss Building

523 E Capitol

Pierre, South Dakota 57501

605-773-4216

SD Department of Transportation

Office of Local Government Assistance

Paula Huizenga and/or Terry Jorgensen

700 E Broadway Ave

Pierre, South Dakota, 57501

605-773-3921

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### *Business Development and Retention*

#### **SUB THEME: Business Development and Retention**

**Challenge:** Like many small communities, Alcester, wants to see economic growth. It also wants to maintain the good employers and businesses already located in town. Citizens were particularly interested in seeing two small businesses return to town (laundromat, convenience store) and in retaining two large employers (Custom Coils and Alkota).

**Recommendation:**

The assessment team recommendations come in three main categories:

1. Develop Small Entrepreneurial Businesses
2. Recruit New Employers
3. Retain Existing Businesses

1. Develop Small Entrepreneurial Businesses

There seemed to be a widespread belief that two businesses that had once been in Alcester, a laundromat and a convenience store, had been financially successful, but had closed due to other reasons. There were also other business ideas that residents thought would do well financially (e.g., a dollar store). The key to getting those businesses up and running is to find someone willing to invest the resources. The first step would be to have the Chamber of Commerce set up an “Entrepreneurial Forum” to lay out not only the business possibilities, but also the many loans and other resources that are available to entrepreneurs in South Dakota. This forum would feature experts from entities like the Governor’s Office of Economic Development, the Small Business Development Center, the South Eastern Development Foundation/Dakota BUSINESS Finance, and the Enterprise Institute (contact info below). Work should be done to ensure that the session is well attended, although having even one person decide to open a new business in town would certainly qualify as a success. With all of the loans available, even citizens that do not have a great deal of personal wealth might be able to realize their dreams of owning a small business. Some of the resources that would be available to potential entrepreneurs:

The Governors Office of Economic Development (GOED) offers a free information packet to individuals interested in starting a business in South Dakota. The Startup Package includes helpful information on topics such as preparing a business plan, marketing, protecting your idea, licensing, state taxes and more.

The South Dakota Small Business Development Center (SBDC) provides free business planning and management guidance to our state's entrepreneurs through individual consulting and group training (group training may include a small fee). These services enhance the potential for success, resulting in the creation and retention of jobs and wealth for South Dakotans.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### *Business Development and Retention*

The Enterprise Institute was developed by the South Dakota State University Foundation to encourage and assist the establishment of entrepreneurial growth enterprises in the region. The Institute supports this objective through their Business Resource Center and Entrepreneurial Network. The Business Resource Center is the first stop for any business in the region seeking to go to the next growth level, including assistance to start-up companies. Some of the services available are market assessment and analysis, business plan editing and evaluation, and financial assessment. The Entrepreneurial Network is an association of chief executive officers, business owners, and other key individuals who are available to share ideas, problems, opportunities, and other issues involved in start-up or growing businesses.

The Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) is a nonprofit association of volunteers dedicated to entrepreneurial education and the formation, growth and success of small businesses nationwide. Through free, small business counseling and support services, SCORE volunteers are here to keep your business going and growing.

South Eastern Development Foundation is a nonprofit organization that provides low interest loans, in conjunction with bank financing, to projects where the risk may preclude the borrower from receiving 100% conventional financing through normal lending channels. The South Eastern Development Foundation, staffed by the South Eastern Council of Governments, administers a revolving loan fund that can provide financing of most primary businesses uses such as inventory, working capital, furniture, fixtures, equipment, land & building. This is a resource for potential new and/or expanding businesses in the community . SEDF also works in conjunction with Dakota BUSINESS Finance (also staffed by the South Eastern Council of Governments), to provide low interest financing for long term assets such as land/building through the SBA 504 program. Participation of a bank to finance a portion of the project is a requirement of both programs.

#### Financing:

Once a business plan has been prepared, financing can be sought from private and public sources. When assessing financing options, it is necessary to adequately match the use of funds with the source (i.e. long-term financing should be used for long-term assets, short-term financing should be used for short term needs). Most private and public sources can be blended together to create a complete financing package. Nearly all financing options will require the business owner to contribute equity and personally guarantee the loans. Financing sources can be found at the Governor's Office of Economic Development, US Small Business Administration, USDA Rural Development, the South Eastern Development Foundation, and Dakota BUSINESS Finance.

## 2. Recruit New Employers

Recruiting businesses from out of the immediate area is not an easy task. A great deal of patience and hard work will be necessary. A few recommendations:

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### *Business Development and Retention*

- Become familiar with your GOED regional representative. The GOED sales representatives are tasked with recruiting businesses to South Dakota. Better information on Alcester may help them understand where Alcester might fit into a company's plans. GOED has recently undergone a reorganization that has their sales representatives focus less on a particular geographic region, and more on a particular industry. Despite that fact, there will still be value to having the GOED representatives based out of Sioux Falls fully briefed in all of the assets that Alcester has to offer.
- Talk to your existing businesses. Businesses often like to locate near businesses within their industry (in clusters) or near businesses that complement their operations. That's why it is important to sit down with your existing businesses to determine what some good prospects might be.
- Develop a website that describes the community and financial assets that Alcester could offer a community. The existing Alcester website has a great deal of information for current Alcester residents, but less information for a business considering moving to the area. Given that many businesses use the web to research communities, this is an important task.
- Consider constructing a spec building. Recommendations on spec. buildings can be found in the previous Industrial Park Development recommendation.
- Remember the most successful recruiting efforts in economic development are typically the result of some type of connection to the area. You have several alumni that have left Alcester and now work in a variety of fields. This is one of your best resources in terms of business prospects. If you have not done so yet, assemble the list of alumni from the area. Survey these individuals to determine where they work, what they do, if they are interested in starting a business, if their current employer is considering an expansion, and if they have an interest in investing in their "home" community of Alcester.

### 3. Retain Existing Businesses

Communities rarely understand how important their existing businesses are until after they leave. Luckily, that is not the case in Alcester. We heard on numerous occasions how important the town's existing employers (especially Alkota and Custom Coil) are to the town's success.

Business retention is important, but it is important to remember that there are many global and national factors that affect when a company downsizes or closes a work location. Despite that fact, there are some things that communities can do to improve the likelihood that a business will continue to be successful:

- Once a year, have the chamber president or mayor schedule a chance to talk over coffee with the manager or owner of the business. Use that meeting to ask what things the city and/or development corporation can do to help them make their businesses more successful and promote potential expansion. Whether it is access to capital, training, or something else, promoting retention and expansion of your existing business base should be a top priority. If you don't ask, you may find out about problems too late to do anything about them.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### *Business Development and Retention*

- When there is a state government official in town (e.g., Governor, Director of Economic Development, etc.) ask them to stop by and thank the manager or owner for doing business in Alcester.
- Make a point to recognize successful companies in town. Involve their managers and employees in community committees. The more connected that executives are to a community, the less likely they are to move their operation elsewhere.
- Don't forget the corporate headquarters. Major business decisions for employers in town that are part of a much larger corporate entity are often made at the corporate headquarters. Once a year have the chamber president or mayor take the time to send a letter or a card to the CEO or division manager.
- Be aware of things you can do to assist with any workforce concerns. Manufacturing or technical operations often have a hard time finding experience or trained employees. If you know that they are experiencing a shortage of a particular kind of worker, do what you can to help market the positions.

### **Resources:**

Governor's Office of Economic Development  
711 East Wells Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501-3369  
Phone (605) 773-3301  
Toll Free: 800-872-6190

Small Business Administration  
Sioux Falls District Office  
2329 N. Career Ave., Suite 105  
Sioux Falls, SD 57107  
Phone (605) 330-4243  
Fax (605) 330-4215  
TTY/TDD (605) 331-3527  
[www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov) (Small Business Administration)

Workforce Development Program  
Governors Office of Economic Development  
2329 N Career Ave., Suite 109  
Sioux Falls, SD 57103-1650  
Phone: (605) 367-5340  
Fax: (605) 367-4519  
E: [Ann.Gesick-Johnson@state.sd.us](mailto:Ann.Gesick-Johnson@state.sd.us)

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

*Business Development and Retention*

### **Resources: Continued**

South Eastern Development Foundation  
Dakota BUSINESS Finance  
1000 N. West Ave, Ste. 210  
Sioux Falls, SD 57104  
605-367-5353  
shawn@secog.org  
www.secog.org  
www.dakotabusinessfinance.com

Enterprise Institute  
823 Medary Avenue, Box 525  
Brookings, SD 57007-0499  
Phone: 605-697-5015  
info@senterpriseinstitute.org  
<http://senterpriseinstitute.org>

EQUIP and the Center for Women Business Institute  
Contact: Kathleen Sheets  
University of Sioux Falls  
1101 W. 22nd Street  
Sioux Falls, SD 57105  
605-331-6697  
[www.sdbusinesssuccess.org](http://www.sdbusinesssuccess.org)

Small Business Development Center  
Vermillion Lead Office  
USD School of Business  
Vermillion, SD 57069  
Phone: (605) 677-5287  
Fax: (605) 677-5427

USDA Rural Development  
2914 Broadway  
Yankton, SD 57078  
605-665-2662 Ext 4  
605-668-9729 (Fax)  
sherrie.lewis@sd.usda.gov

South Dakota Community Foundation  
207 East Capitol  
PO Box 296  
Pierre, SD 57501  
Phone: (605) 224-1025  
Toll Free: (800) 888-1842

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### *Shopping Local*

#### **Resources:** Continued

Dakota Roots

<http://www.dakotaroots.com/default.aspx>

Matches participants with career openings available from the state's leading businesses and allows participants to decide which ones to pursue.

<b>SUB THEME: Shopping Local</b>
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**Challenge:** With the community of Alcester being so close to Sioux Falls, it is imperative to educate residents and emphasize the importance of shopping locally.

**Recommendation:** I've written on this theme for assessments before and there is very little in economic development that I feel as strongly about. It is vital that residents know the importance of shopping locally. If our residents don't support our hometown businesses, how can we expect others to?

A couple of years ago I read an article about hometown shopping that has stuck with me to this day. The gist of the article had to do with small town shoppers voting every single day as to whether or not they will continue to have a grocery store, a pharmacy, a lumberyard, etc...The voting is done with dollars. A vote to have the present services continue is cast each time the consumer purchases something locally. If the dollar is spent outside of the community, it is a vote of indifference of continued services.

Shopping locally is a tough issue for communities like Alcester that have so many people traveling to and from work in other communities on a daily basis. Let's face it, we are all guilty of shopping out of town. There will always be those who will drive a distance to purchase flour because it's 50 cents cheaper and, quite frankly, they will always look for an excuse to go elsewhere. However, a shop local campaign aimed at consumers that want to keep (or even improve!) the quality and quantity of services presently offered is worthwhile.

It is vital for businesspeople to lead by example. If a patron can't get a particular item in their store, by all means make a suggestion as to where else the item can be found in town. In order to make businesses aware of what each has to offer, maybe a "Business Spotlight" in the local paper would be beneficial. Don't assume everyone knows what your business has to offer...get the word out. (I've lived in Platte for 10 years and just found out I can order window shades at the hardware store!) Another idea would be implementing a program which has the "Chamber of Commerce Business of the Month." The business owner could speak at the monthly chamber meeting explaining their business, goals, etc...I think these two ideas put a face with a business storefront. It

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### *Shopping Local*

makes people realize these are the businesspeople who support our church groups, our sports activities, fundraisers, etc...

It is also important that any City purchases that can reasonably be made in town are. Again, the City and its businesspeople lead by example. If you don't purchase items in town, how can you expect citizens to? This sounds simple and obvious, but be mindful of it.

Whenever there is a community fundraiser or benefit and local stores donate to the cause, be sure everyone knows it. Local businesses are constantly being hit up for goods or "in kind" donations. It's important to let everyone know the grocery store donated the pancake batter and sausage for the pancake benefit. Let people know the local hardware store and elevator sponsored a young lady in the Miss Teen SD pageant. Whatever it is, people should know about it.

I think small towns are guilty of asking for donations and not giving credit where credit is due. Sometimes it's as if we expect local businesses to "ante up" and most are happy to help. But those businesses should get the positive advertising along with their donations. Do the megastores in larger cities donate to all of the small town causes? Absolutely not. Moral of the story...don't take advantage of a good thing.

There are a few things we do in Platte that I think are beneficial to the shopping local cause. In the local grocery store, there is a sign as shoppers walk in that states how much it costs to drive to the local megastore. Then the sign asks the shopper if they have saved that much driving rather than shopping locally. It really caused a bit of a rumble for awhile, but the reason it did was because we are all guilty. We got over it and I know this particular shopper thinks twice about everything purchases out of town. The awareness this sign has caused is priceless.

The major thing Alcester businesses have to offer that bigger cities can't is service. It may not be feasible for a smaller business to offer the low prices discount stores offer, but service is the element that can even the playing field. Small business owners need to go "above and beyond" in services offered. It can be something as simple as free gift wrapping, free delivery of groceries on Tuesdays and Thursdays, free set up of appliances, etc...ask for these services in larger cities and the businesspeople will ask what planet you are from.

I have an example of how important service is. I wanted to buy an artificial Christmas tree, did some price comparisons and found the one at the local hardware store was about \$20 more than out-of-town. I bit the bullet and bought it in town. Took it home, set it up, the middle section of lights didn't work. Called the hardware store, the owner brought a middle section from another tree to the house, helped set it up and took the one that didn't work back. Would that have happened if I had bought it in a discount store? Absolutely not. Even if it was an inconvenience for the store owner to deliver a replacement (it was his idea, not mine!), he had one hugely satisfied customer who went

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### *Shopping Local*

out and told everyone what had happened. You cannot put a price tag on the PR that business owner did that day.

I am a firm believer in never underestimating the importance of looking a customer in the eye and saying thank you after a transaction. Not the mandatory, “Thanks, don’t let the door hit you on your way out,” you receive at large stores where they have no idea who you are, but a genuine, make-you-feel-good thank you. This is so vital in making a lasting impression. When we were in Alcester, we experienced excellent service at the restaurants and stores we were in. Something as simple as good customer relations can be the deciding factor as to whether or not that customer refers your town to others or if they make a repeat visit.

Another aspect Alcester would benefit from promoting would be to point out how much time is saved by doing shopping in Alcester. There may not be the selection there is in other communities, but that isn’t necessarily a bad thing. Less selection means you’re in and out in less time (does it matter if there are only three types of lettuce rather than ten to choose from?). People are well aware that time is a valuable commodity, use that for promotion. Shopping in Alcester means no traffic, no lines, no wait and that translates to time...something that should be pointed out to shoppers.

The number of people who come into your community each workday would be a fairly untapped source for boosting the local sales tax base. I would definitely consider putting fliers or coupons of some sort in the break rooms of Alkota and Custom Coils. The fliers could advertise a weekly or monthly shopping special at local businesses. This low cost advertising would get people into stores during lunch breaks or even right after work.

Another part of shopping locally involves educating the public on the importance of keeping their dollars at home. The City of Howard put their youth to work on a school project that showed residents the impact shopping locally had on their tax revenues. Even with the strong economy Alcester has, it’s imperative to keep the issue in front of people. Maybe request a copy of the report from Howard to see if it would be something the school could work with the City on.

Watertown has an Uptown Watertown organization that has developed a plan to help business owners improve the outward appearance and signage on their stores. Kay Solberg, a local business owner and community promoter, may be able to provide some information as to how they promote shopping in Watertown.

I also think it would be beneficial to include smaller communities around Alcester in promotions. Sometimes pride and competition in small communities gets in the way of common sense. Small towns need each other if they are going to survive.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*Livestock / Ag Development*

### Resources:

Karen Burket  
Platte Development Corporation  
PO Box 283  
Platte, SD 57369  
605-337-2895  
mkb@midstatesd.net

Miner County Community Renewal  
(Youth Shopping Local Study)  
Randy Parry  
605-772-5153  
parryr@allinanced.com.net

Kay Solberg  
Classroom Connection  
Watertown, SD  
650-886-3040

### SUB THEME: Livestock/Agriculture Development

**Challenge:** During the listening sessions, we heard that there is opportunity for more livestock development/production in Union County. After the assessment, I did some research and I was surprised to find that Union County is ranked 64<sup>th</sup> out of 66 counties when it comes to beef cow numbers and it is ranked 53<sup>rd</sup> for all cattle numbers.

Another challenge brought up during the listening sessions is the increasing costs of farming. These costs keep many young people from starting their own operation.

**Recommendation:** While being ranked in bottom 20% for cattle production may seem like a disadvantage, I think it's a tremendous opportunity for those wanting to begin or expand cattle production.

Ag United for South Dakota is a non-profit organization developed through a collaboration of farm organizations with a goal of keeping family farms and ranches growing. Their mission statement is to help promote and advance farm and ranch families and rural communities in South Dakota.

Ag United has hosted livestock seminars across the state for producers interested in starting or expanding a livestock operation. Their seminars cover all aspects of constructing and operating a state-permitted livestock facility including regulations,

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### *Livestock / Ag Development*

zoning, construction, nutrient management and more. Ag United also works one-on-one with producers who are interested in starting or expanding a livestock facility.

The SOUTH DAKOTA CERTIFIED™ ENROLLED CATTLE program is one that producers in the area might be interested in enrolling in. This program was developed to add profitability to South Dakota's producers and processors while providing consumers with a safe, wholesome, quality product. SOUTH DAKOTA CERTIFIED is a source, age and process verified program that will add additional confidence to the customer by incorporating specific protocols that will be certified and verified by the State of South Dakota. Producers enrolling cattle in the program must follow specific production and management practices. For more information, contact the South Dakota Department of Agriculture.

Livestock development in the Alcester area seems to be a natural fit given Alcester's proximity to major livestock markets and processing centers. Encouraging additional livestock production will take a concerted effort on the part of rural residents and community organizations. One way to get this started is by hosting a meeting with rural producers that could be sponsored and spearheaded by the local development corporation. Often we think of a development corporation working exclusively to enhance commercial development within a community. But working to enhance area agricultural production is also another niche that this type of organization can fulfill. Encourage rural producers to become active in the development corporation. If there is interest in pursuing projects in this area, form a separate ag committee that can focus its efforts in this area.

Research land use requirements set by the county. Often the development of large livestock operations can generate contentious situations among community and rural residents. Research various livestock alternatives. Be aware of regulatory and land use requirements. Depending on the type of project you choose to pursue, account for particular issues that people may have with the project and work to mitigate concerns on the front-end. Being open with the process, and working to address potential situations on the front-end, can save you many headaches in the long-run. There are several programs available that support livestock and agricultural development. These programs are generally administered by the South Dakota Department of Agriculture, USDA Rural Development, or USDA Farm Services. In addition, the South Dakota Value Added Ag center is a technical assistance organization that can provide additional insight and technical expertise as you look to develop agricultural development in Alcester. The contact information for each of the organizations is listed below.

While land prices and input prices are pretty much out of our hands, I want to let you know about a few resources that are available for beginning farmers and ranchers. The South Dakota Department of Agriculture offers a few financing programs for beginning farmers and ranchers.

- Beginning Farmer Bond Program – Funds can be used for land, machinery, equipment, breeding livestock or farm improvements. The producer can't own a substantial amount of land or have a net worth over \$300,000.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### *Livestock / Ag Development*

- VALU Guaranty and Livestock Loan Participation can both be used to purchase livestock but the producer must have 60% of their gross income derived from agriculture.

The USDA-Farm Service Agency provides direct and guaranteed loans to beginning farmers and ranchers.

The South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service can also offer education and assistance to producers on a variety of topics including economic and business information, farm management and general agricultural and livestock information. Programming is often based on emerging needs and this is something that might be pursued by their staff.

### **Resources:**

Ag United for South Dakota  
Steve Dick, Executive Director  
PO Box 507  
Sioux Falls, SD 57101  
605.336.3622  
info@agunited.org  
www.agunited.org

South Dakota Department of Agriculture  
Division of Ag Development  
523 E Capitol Ave  
Pierre, SD 57501  
800.228.5254  
agmail@state.sd.us  
www.state.sd.us/doa/  
(for both SOUTH DAKOTA CERTIFIED program and financing programs)

Sherrie Lewis  
USDA Rural Development  
2914 Broadway  
Yankton, SD 57078  
605-665-2662 Ext 4  
sherrie.lewis@sd.usda.gov

Cheri Rath  
Executive Director  
Value Added Agriculture Development Center  
210 East Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, South Dakota 57501  
605.224.9402  
Cherirath@yahoo.com  
www.sdvalueadded.coop

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
*Housing Development – Subdivision Development*

**Resources:** Continued

Kelly Rasmussen  
Value Added Ag Subfund  
Governors Office of Economic Development  
711 E Wells Ave.  
Pierre, SD 57501-3369  
1-800-872-6190  
goedinfo@state.sd.us  
www.sdgreatprofits.com

Union County Farm Service Agency  
1101 E. Main Street  
PO Box 460  
Elk Point, SD 57025  
605-356-3308  
www.fsa.usda.gov/sd

<b>SUB THEME: Housing Development – Subdivision Development</b>
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**Challenge:** There is a lack of available lots to build on in town.

**Solution:** There are two actions that should be undertaken by the Alcester City Council to provide affordable new building lots within the City. The first action should be to create a subdivision ordinance. The second action is to ask your local banker to suggest several landowners, developers, and contractors that might be interested in creating new residential and commercial subdivisions in Alcester.

The creation of a subdivision ordinance can be accomplished by working with the local Council of Governments or the town engineer. Contact as many towns in the region as you can and obtain a copy of each town's subdivision ordinance. Ask area developers and contractors what they like and hate about each of these ordinances (and take both with a grain of salt!). The purpose of the subdivision ordinance is to detail the standards and requirements for plats and development of new lots so that everyone involved (the subdivider, the subdivider's financial backer, the owner of the land being subdivided, the city, the neighbors, and the purchasers of the new lots) knows what the process, rules, and outcomes will be before they begin the subdivision process. All of these stakeholders have financial, emotional, and personal interests in the process and must be treated equitably, honestly, and fairly. The City acts as the facilitator (and often the referee!) of the subdivision process and must find a balance for the allocation of costs between the public and private sectors. Finding the best amount of platting, utility tapping, and impact fees for the Alcester community will be challenging. An important

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### *Housing Development – Subdivision Development*

component of the subdivision ordinance is a provision to require annexation of these new subdivisions as a condition of their approval and development.

Our team repeatedly heard how fortunate the Alcester community is to have a bank in town whose management is so committed to the community. I believe that a delegation from the city council can successfully approach the bank's management to request assistance in forming a development partnership. This partnership will involve a landowner willing to convert farmland to urban residential use, a subdivider/developer will to do all of the hard work to make the development happen, a realtor to create a marketing plan and sell the lots, contractors to build the infrastructure and homes, a city engineer/building inspector to ensure that all applicable codes are met, and a financier to provide the capital to make all of this work. It takes a lot of faith, sweat, and perseverance to make this work. I saw ample evidence of all of these qualities during my stay in Alcester.

Change is seldom an easy thing. Change through growth of a city is much like the birth of a new baby in a family. There are several months of anticipation/dread, moments of pain and hard work, and joy with the arrival of the new addition (and let's not forget the angst of the teen years either!!!). Annexation of adjacent or nearby new subdivisions should be a voluntary and cooperative effort between the parties described above. The creation of a comprehensive plan can assist this process by proposing and mapping areas of future development, suggesting appropriate land uses, and defining the policies that will guide and support the growth of the community.

In terms of financing lot development, contact USDA Rural Development and the South Dakota Housing Development Authority (SDHDA) regarding potential low interest funding that may be available to support site development. Both USDA Rural Development and SDHDA have rural site development programs that may be able to provide financing for subdivision expansion. In addition, SDHDA also has the HOME program that may be able to provide another alternative financing to support this project. The contact information for these organizations is listed below.

Another strategy is the implementation of a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district that could help support the subdivision development. Tax Increment Financing utilizes the tax revenues from the incremental increase in the land value, due to development, and dedicates these funds to help repay the cost of infrastructural improvements and site development. In eastern South Dakota, TIF is something that has been used primarily for commercial development. However, it has been utilized for residential development, with success, in many western South Dakota Communities.

Finally, you can also utilize Essential Function Bonds to help with residential development. Essential Function Bonds are usually partially backed by the city and can be utilized to help finance residential infrastructure development. The City of Mobridge has successfully used Essential Function Bonds to construct town homes with garages that have appealed to older residents, although they are open to anyone. The local

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### *Housing Development – Subdivision Development*

housing authority manages the units for the developer; they are not low-income units. They are open to any family interested in renting

The City of Centerville recently went through a two year process of converting an old city football field into a housing development utilizing some of the resource described above. Bill Hansen, who helped lead this effort, is an excellent resource available to discuss the challenges faced by that community in confronting their lack of housing and how they developed and implemented a solution. Bill's contact information is listed below as well. Centerville was assisted in their efforts by the Sioux Empire Housing Development Partnership, which is yet another resource available to assist you with your housing development needs.

#### **Resources:**

South Eastern Council of Governments

Lynne Keller

1000 N. West Ave. Suite 210

Sioux Falls, SD 57104

605-360-5390

Lynne.keller@secog.org

South Dakota Planners Association

Neil Putnam, Secretary/Treasurer

City of Mitchell Planning Dept.

612 N. Main Street

Mitchell, SD 57301

605 995-8433 phone 605 995-8410 fax

e-mail: nputnam.cityofmitchell@midconetwork.com

Tom Serie, F&L Development, developer on project in Mobridge.

Phone: 507-220-0808

Judy Richey, Program Specialist, Mobridge Housing and Redevelopment Commission

116 4<sup>th</sup> Street West, P.O. Box 730

Mobridge, SD 57601-0307

Phone: 605-845-2560

Fax: 605-845-3039

Sherrie Lewis

USDA Rural Development

2914 Broadway

Yankton, SD 57078

605-665-2662 Ext 4

605-668-9729 (Fax)

sherrie.lewis@sd.usda.gov

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
*Housing Development – Midrange Elderly Rentals*

**Resources:** Continued

Bill Hansen  
Centerville Development Corporation  
2201 State St.  
Centerville, SD 57014  
605-563-2019  
605-563-2484 (Fax)  
bjhansen@hcinet.net

South Dakota Housing Development Authority  
PO Box 1237  
221 South Central Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501  
Phone: 605-773-3181  
Fax: 605-773-5157  
www.sdhda.org

Jim Schmidt  
Sioux Empire Housing Partnership  
W 200 N Phillips, Suite 304  
Sioux Falls, SD 57104  
605-339-0942  
housing@siouxfalls.com

<b>SUB THEME: Housing Development – Midrange Elderly Rentals</b>
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**Challenge:** There is a need for starter and mid-range housing for new families and retirees.

**Recommendation:** There is a multitude of programs and agencies that can assist the Alcester community with housing development. However, before charging off to contact agencies about building new homes, decide what type of housing project you want to undertake first. Include this decision in the work of the group proposed in the Subdivision Development Sub Theme. This type of focus will narrow the field of potential housing programs to a more manageable level.

A helpful guide for developing housing in rural areas entitled “Developing Community Housing Needs Assessments and Strategies: A Self-Help Guidebook for Non-metropolitan Communities” is available online at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Pages/housing/aahe/guidebook/contents.html>.

Some home development programs that are available through various entities in South Dakota are listed below. A full explanation is available from each entity’s web site or by referencing the SD Resource Directory ([www.sdcommunitynetwork.com](http://www.sdcommunitynetwork.com))

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### *Housing Development – Midrange Elderly Rentals*

1. South Dakota Housing Development Authority: HOME program; Housing Tax Credit Program; Multifamily Bond Financing Program; Rural Site Development Program; Governor’s Homes
2. USDA Rural Development: Farm Labor Housing Grants & Loans; Rural Housing Preservation Grants; Rural Housing Site Loans; Rural Rental Housing Guaranteed Loans; Rural Rental Housing Loans; Technical Assistance for Self-Help Housing; Community Facilities Program
3. Federal Home Loan Bank: Affordable Housing Grants provided through local member banks.
4. Housing Assistance Council: HAC Loan Program
5. US Department of Housing and Urban Development: Housing Counseling Grants; Rural Housing and Economic Development Grants; Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program; Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities; Youth Build; Assisted Living Conversion Program, Supportive Housing Program (Elderly, Disabilities and Homeless).

One way to provide affordable housing is to combine the use of Tax Increment Financing for site development with the use of Governor’s Homes (through South Dakota Housing Development Authority). The Governor’s Homes are put on top of full basements and turned into split level homes along with the addition of an attached garage. The cost for the residential lot is reduced for homebuyers at lower income levels through the use of Tax Increment Financing, making the homes more affordable to young families. This type of development has been coordinated through the Northeastern South Dakota Economic Development Corporation (contact information below).

Most of these programs specifically address affordable single-family and multi-family housing rather than mid- or upper-level housing. The community assessment team did hear a number of people express interest in having some higher end apartment / rental options for senior citizens. Tax Increment Financings and/or utilizing Essential Function Bonds is one “local” way of potentially address the mid-range rental housing issue. As noted in the previous recommendation, Mobridge was able to construct mid-range rental town homes through the use of Essential Function Bonds. Eureka is in the early stages of addressing their own housing issues in a similar fashion.

Also noted in the previous recommendation, Centerville has been working to address housing shortages in their community. In addition to constructing two spec homes in their new housing development, they have also constructed four additional rental housing units through their Housing Redevelopment Commission. A contact from Centerville that helped work on this project is listed in the resources section below.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
*Housing Development – Midrange Elderly Rentals*

Finally, the Huron Housing and Redevelopment Commission successfully built town homes for rental. These homes are available to anyone interested in renting. The units are lower maintenance and very nice. For further information, contact the Huron Housing Commission (information listed below).

**Resources:**

Federal Home Loan Bank – Des Moines  
Community Investment  
907 Walnut Street  
Des Moines, IA 50309  
800-544-3552 Ext. 1173

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development – HUD  
2400 West 49<sup>th</sup> Street, Ste. I-201  
Sioux Falls, SD 57105  
605-330-4223  
SD\_Webmanager@hud.gov  
[www.hud.gov/local/sd/working/localoffices.cfm](http://www.hud.gov/local/sd/working/localoffices.cfm)

South Dakota Housing Development Authority – SDHDA  
Attn: Ms. Dar Baum, Executive Director  
PO Box 1237  
221 S. Central Ave.  
Pierre, SD 57501-1237  
605-773-3181  
dar@sdhda.org  
[www.sdhda.org](http://www.sdhda.org)

USDA Rural Development  
Attn: David Adrian, Rural Development Manager  
1530 Samco Road, Ste. 2  
Rapid City, SD 57702-8007  
605-342-0301  
[www.rurdev.usda.gov/sd](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/sd)

North East South Dakota Economic Development Corporation  
North East South Dakota Community Action Program  
414 Third Ave. E.  
Sisseton, SD 57262  
605-698-7654  
nesdec@nesdcap-nesdec.org

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
*Housing Development – Midrange Elderly Rentals*

**Resources:** Continued

Housing Assistance Council  
1025 Vermont Ave. N.W., Ste. 606  
Washington, DC 20005  
202-842-8600  
Caitlin@ruralhome.org  
www.ruralhome.org

Tom Serie, F&L Development, developer on project in Mobridge.  
Phone: 507-220-0808

USDA Rural Development  
2914 Broadway  
Yankton, SD 57078  
605-665-2662 Ext 4  
605-668-9729 (Fax)  
sherrie.lewis@sd.usda.gov  
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/sd/>

Judy Richey, Program Specialist, Mobridge Housing and Redevelopment Commission  
116 4<sup>th</sup> Street West, P.O. Box 730  
Mobridge, SD 57601-0307  
Phone: 605-845-2560  
Fax: 605-845-3039

Susan Overgaard  
Centerville Housing Development Commission  
605-563-2207  
susano@firstmidwestbank.com  
www.centervillesd.org

Barb Cook, Executive Director, Huron Housing and Redevelopment Authority  
Shantel Wheeler, Program Manager  
P.O. Box 283  
1000 18<sup>th</sup> Street West, Suite 5B  
Huron, SD 57350  
Phone: 605-352-1520  
Fax: 605-352-6382

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
*Housing Development – Midrange Elderly Rentals*

**Resources:** Continued

Wanda Jundt  
Economic Development Coordinator  
Eureka Economic Development Corporation  
PO Box 134  
Eureka, SD 57437-0134  
605-284-2130  
ecdc@valleytel.net

# COMMUNITY IDENTITY

<b>SUB THEME: Promotion of Community</b>
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**Challenge:** We need to let people know where we are and get people off the Interstate to come see us—we need to promote and market our town.

**Recommendation:** Large communities hire marketing staff to create catchy phrases to pique visitor interest, to promote community events, to lure new residents and businesses, and to invent a plethora of programs to separate the tourist dollar from the tourist. Small communities maximize their assets by hiring a community development coordinator.

A community development coordinator for Alcester could be tasked with several jobs, such as chamber of commerce director, volunteer coordinator, planner, grant writer, advertising executive, and city web master. A community booster club to assist the coordinator should be formed with representatives from every organization in the community and with anyone interested in giving something back to the community.

Promotion of the Alcester community must be made to a number of different and distinct groups/sectors of the general public such as: tourists interested in community events (events like the county fair, school reunions, or perhaps a music festival), new businesses, potential town residents that work in town but live elsewhere, regional residents seeking a new church, or town residents who have not yet been involved in community activities. The potential list of marketing targets is endless.

Promotion of the Alcester community to tourist markets can be coordinated with a number of state and regional agencies. The community should also consider cooperative regional promotions involving nearby communities such as Beresford, Canton, Elk Point, and Hawarden. Diverse events such as a community father's day picnic, a three-on-three challenge basketball tournament, a community garage sale, a regional geo-caching tournament, senior Olympics, or a multi-denominational outdoor church service and fellowship pancake feed offer opportunities to expand community spirit and bring new people into town.

**Resources:**

South Dakota Office of Tourism  
711 E. Wells Ave.  
Pierre, SD 57501  
(800) 952-3625  
sdinfo@state.sd.us  
www.SDVisit.com – Industry Web site  
www.TravelSD.com – Consumer Web site

## COMMUNITY IDENTITY

*Annual Event*

### **Resources:** Continued

Rosie Smith  
Glacial Lakes & Prairies  
Box 244  
Watertown, SD 57201  
(605) 886-7305

Vermillion Chamber of Commerce & Development Company  
906 East Cherry Street  
Vermillion, SD 57069  
1-800-809-2071  
vacc@vermillionchamber.com

<b>SUB THEME: Annual Event</b>
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**Challenge:** Alcester does have Celebration Days around the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and an ethnic festival mixed in with it. The community would like to expand on this and host an annual event that would both defines the community and helps boost attendance/participation.

**Recommendation:** Planning an annual event is a large undertaking for any community. The challenge also lies in planning an event that sets your community apart and one that can be associated with Alcester for years to come. Almost every community has some sort of annual celebration in the summer. The key to a successful event is having the entire community involved so that it isn't the same handful of people planning everything. Make sure all of the local businesses, clubs, churches and the youth are involved.

I think defining your event as some type of music festival is an excellent idea. You could have your own "Alcester American Idol" as someone suggested. While this might sound humorous to begin with, I think the idea has merit. You could have a talent contest that might draw people from within Alcester but also surrounding areas. Tea has a youth talent competition during Teapot Days. One way to attract a lot of local talent is by having great prizes for the winners. You can charge a small entrance fee for each contestant and then use some of that to award prizes to the winners.

Having a "Battle of the Bands" is also another idea. Similar to the talent contest, you can advertise the Battle of the Bands and have a small entrance fee for each band, which you can then use to award prizes. Each band might play a certain number of songs or play for a set amount of time. You might be surprised by the amount of local talent. They are planning a Battle of the Bands at Wheel Jam in Huron this summer. You might want to contact them to learn more.

## COMMUNITY IDENTITY

### *Annual Event*

These events could be held at the city park on a summer evening. It's great family entertainment and even provides something for the youth to do. The chamber, community club or other community organization (or all of the above) might want to serve a meal before the show – hamburgers, hot dogs, barbeques, etc.

The South Dakota Arts Council (SDAC) partners with the National Endowment for the Arts and the state of South Dakota to provide funds for grants to artists, arts organizations, community arts projects, traditional arts apprenticeships, and community symphonies and orchestras. In addition, the SDAC provides the state with the Artists in Schools and Communities arts residency program and a Touring Arts program.

For example, the SDAC has a Touring Arts Roster of various musicians and artists. You can book a musician or group on the Touring Arts Roster and then the Arts Council will provide funds to help pay for the musician to perform in your community.

The South Dakota Humanities Council also has a wealth of resources that you might want to look into. They have a wide range of resources for programs concerned with people, their values and the human experience. Some of the resources the SDHC offers are a speaker bureau, audio visual resources, traveling exhibits and a video lending library. All of these resources are offered at very little cost in order to promote the humanities in South Dakota. You might be able to incorporate one of these into your annual event.

Most local, state and federal agencies do not have grant funds to fund annual events, but they can provide other resources. For example, the SD Office of Tourism can promote your event by listing it on their calendar of events. They have several other marketing programs that you might want to look into. One that may be of particular interest is their "Great Events" promotion. Each year, the Office of Tourism selects a small number of unique South Dakota events to be featured in their "Great Events" campaign. After establishing an Alcester event as a well-run and successful event, the "Great Events" program may help you take it to the next level. Contact the tourism office for additional information.

I've focused on the music potential for an annual event, but you could also incorporate several other events into the weekend. Ideas include a golf tournament, a putting contest, water wars between the Alcester Fire Department and neighboring communities' fire departments (a great way to draw others to town), softball or baseball tournaments, tractor pulls (adult or kids), a fun walk/run, a parade, and the list goes on. Look and see what other communities are doing and then tailor it to Alcester.

Successful events can bring many people to town – some who may even be looking for a nice community to live and raise a family or maybe someone looking to start-up a small business. You should have some information on the community and contacts available at these events.

## COMMUNITY IDENTITY

*Annual Event*

### **Resources:**

City of Tea  
600 E 1<sup>st</sup> St  
PO Box 128  
Tea, SD 57064  
cityoftea2@iw.net  
605.498.5191

Big Jim 93.3 Classic Rock (Battle of the Bands organizer)  
Mike Lyon  
866.424.4546  
mlyon@bigjimrocks.com

South Dakota Arts Council  
711 E Wells Ave  
Pierre, SD 57501  
800.952.3625  
sdac@state.sd.us  
www.artscouncil.sd.gov

South Dakota Humanities Council  
South Dakota State University  
Box 7050, University Station  
Brookings, SD 57007  
605.688.6113  
sdsu\_sdhc@sdstate.edu  
<http://sdhc.sdstate.org>

SD Office of Tourism  
711 E Wells Ave  
Pierre, SD 57501  
605.773.3301  
sdinfo@state.sd.us  
www.sdvisit.com

## COMMUNITY IDENTITY

### *Awareness of Resources*

#### **SUB THEME: Awareness of Resources**

- **Welcoming Committee**
- **Directory**
- **Community Foundation**

**Challenge:** During the listening session, citizens noted that they often didn't know as much about community resources, such as the community foundation, the skill sets of residents, and what businesses have to offer. It was noted that newcomers to Alcester are usually even less aware of many of the community resources than long-time residents are.

**Recommendation:** There are three primary recommendations offered by the assessment team:

1. **Community Skills Directory** – It was obvious to the assessment team that many residents have talents, skills, and abilities that they would be willing to share. Larger cities often have businesses that specialize in skills that Alcester residents could perform for one another, either for free or for a nominal charge (computer skills, basic home maintenance, graphic design, mending, etc.). A directory of individuals and the skills they possess could be an asset to the community, especially if updated every three years or so. Businesses could also benefit from listing services and products that they offered that might not be well-known around town.

This project could be headed up by a student group at school or the local ministerial organization, either of which could use it as a fundraiser. Ads could be sold for the directory, and a nominal fee could be charged for those wanting to purchase a directory.

2. **Establish a Welcoming Committee** – People often notice when newcomers arrive in Alcester, but sometimes forget to educate the new residents on all there is to do in town. The common, but effective, welcome wagon idea would serve to make new residents feel welcome, as well as providing them info on the recreational and shopping opportunities in town.

While in Alcester, the assessment team heard about how strong the local ministerial organization is. In many ways, that organization would be a perfect fit for this project. Volunteers from any of the local churches could visit newcomers, providing them information on:

- a) **Services Available** – Name, contact, phone number (include school, hospital, assisted living units, senior center, youth center, etc.)
- b) **Businesses** (both in town and surrounding area) with contact info and coupons

**COMMUNITY IDENTITY**  
*Community Development Coordinator*

- c) Churches with contact info and service time
- d) Events: What, when, where, who to contact and how do they volunteer to help
- e) Recreation available – Lake, camping, fishing, hunting, horse back riding, biking, hiking etc.
- f) School / Sports Calendar, Adult Ed classes, etc.
- g) Copy of the community skills directory

The costs for this program (primarily printing), could be covered by charging the businesses featured in the materials a small fee (perhaps \$2 per new resident). This would provide an outreach opportunity for the ministerial association while educating residents about the assets of the Alcester community.

3. Community Foundation – Alcester has a community foundation that has made a number of helpful grants, but many people in town didn't seem to know about the foundation. Once a quarter, the community foundation should ask the weekly newspaper to run a report displaying all of the grants given out by the foundation year-to-date, information on how to apply for funds, and a balance of funds that the committee could give out yet that year. Although there has not been a deadline for grant applications in the past, the committee may want to consider implementing one, as a deadline often serves to spur entities considering applying for a grant to actually submit one. The deadline need not be a “hard” deadline, but could be marketed as an opportunity to get in application to ensure that they will be considered along with others. Applying after that date might mean that the committee no longer has funds left to disperse for the year.

One idea that the City of Platte implemented to help build recognition of the Community Foundation was to work with the city to implement a Community Foundation donation program through their water utility billing system. Community residents could “opt in” to allow the city to round up their monthly water bill to the nearest dollar. The difference is then set aside and donated to the Community Foundation. This not only works to help build the Community Foundations trust fund, thus increasing the amount of grants available over time, but this strategy helps to build recognition of the Community Foundation and its continuing efforts to support service projects in the community.

<b>SUB THEME: Community Development Coordinator</b>
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**Challenge:** While we didn't specifically hear a need for a community development coordinator, we heard many needs that could be fulfilled by such a position.

**Recommendation:** You'll notice I didn't call the proposed position an “economic development coordinator.” Larger cities have people that are solely dedicated to

## **COMMUNITY IDENTITY**

*Community Development Coordinator*

economic development which involves courting different companies and enticing them to set up an expansion or relocate to their city.

Smaller rural communities have people they call economic development coordinators, but they wear many more hats than just “economic development.” While economic development is very important to our communities, there are other issues that also need coordination.

Being the executive director of the Platte Development Corporation makes me a “jack of all trades, master of none.” There really are a number of things that I do, not necessarily because they are directly related to economic development, but because if my group doesn’t do them, they won’t get done. I probably deal with quality of life issues just as much, if not more than economic development.

Example...my group wrote a successful grant for some playground equipment at the park a couple of years ago. Economic development? Directly, no. Indirectly, yes. When I give people tours of Platte, I tell them we are a progressive, young community that is an excellent place to raise a family. But then I show them our park with 50+ year old equipment, that doesn’t reinforce my statement.

We also needed a daycare center in Platte. My group wrote the grant and did the legwork to get it off the ground. Economic development? Probably not. Is it a selling point for our community? Absolutely.

My group initiated a fundraiser for the Platte Community Foundation. Economic development? No way. Does the money go toward quality of life issues that need to be addressed in my community? You bet.

My point is not to brag about accomplishments, but to point out that if these issues were not taken on by myself and my board of directors, the projects would not exist today. The citizens of Alcester are not any different than anyone else. They are busy and the last thing they want to do in their spare time is to write a grant or take on another project. That is basically what I am paid to do. I get projects going or completed for the community. There is a definite need in Alcester for a similar position.

We heard about a number of excellent projects and ideas, and I think the money and manpower could be found to complete them. But what was lacking is a leader that coordinates all of that and gets it off the ground.

Many communities cringe at the idea of putting someone else on the payroll, and I may be a bit biased, but can your community afford not to? In Platte it has cut down on volunteer burnout and it has helped to bring about many projects that were just not getting done because no one would take it and run.

When (notice I didn’t say if) Alcester decides to hire a community development coordinator, the number one criteria should be to find someone who loves and has a pride

**COMMUNITY IDENTITY**  
*Community Development Coordinator*

in your community like no other. Hire a “people person.” I’ll admit it, that’s why I am good at my job. Do I have a business degree? Can I even balance a checkbook? Nope, but I love my community and I can motivate people to do the same.

There are a number of different variations on the community development/economic development coordinator in the state of South Dakota. None of which may match exactly to the ideals of Alcester. But I would encourage you to at least start a dialogue and speak to some of the individuals listed as to what they do for their communities. When doing that research, ask what their salary is, but also ask how much they have brought into their communities in terms of grants and in-kind contributions. I earn well under \$1,000/month as a part-time coordinator, but have been responsible for bringing in over \$725,000 in grants in the last 3 years. My City Council thinks of it as a pretty good investment.

Capital resources for funding a coordinator include city sales tax revenues, city and county general fund contributions, annual contributions from banks, utilities and other community stakeholders will see and increase in their revenues if a new business is generated, the development corporation, and chamber.

**Resources:** *Examples of Economic/Community Development Coordinators*

**Southeast Enterprise Facilitation Project**

Nancy Larsen, Facilitator  
PO Box 106  
501 S. Broadway  
Marion, SD 57043  
605-648-2909  
sefp@southeasternelectric.com

**Badlands / South Central Enterprise Facilitation**

Freya Simpson  
32551 271st St.  
Hamill, SD 57534  
605-842-3220  
fsimpson@gwtc.net

**Freeman Economic Development Corporation**

Sharon Schamber, Development Coordinator  
PO Box 43  
Freeman, SD 57029  
605-925-4444  
freemansd@gwtc.net

**COMMUNITY IDENTITY**  
*Community Development Coordinator*

**Resources:** Continued

Greater McCook Development Alliance  
Jack Hansen, Executive Director  
100 Main Street Suite B  
PO Box 217  
Montrose, SD 57048  
605-363-3020  
jack@onemccook.com

Platte Development Corporation  
Karen Burket, Executive Director  
PO Box 393  
500 S. Main St..  
Platte, SD 57369-0393  
605-337-3921  
mkb@midstatesd.net

North Central South Dakota Economic Development Corporation  
Jackie Heil, Executive Director  
Mobridge, SD 57601  
605-845-5202  
ncsded@westriv.com

Parker Development Corp., Inc.  
Mark Kasten, Economic Development Coordinator  
PO Box 57  
Parker, SD 57053-0057  
605-297-4305  
info@parkersd.org  
www.parkersd.org

Minnehaha / Lincoln County Economic Development Association  
Jeff Eckhoff  
200 N. Phillips Avenue, #101  
Sioux Falls, SD 57101  
605-339-0103  
jeffe@siouxfalls.com

Lake Francis Case Economic Development Corporation  
Jessica Schoenhard, Executive Director  
115 West Lawler St.  
Chamberlain, SD 57325  
605-734-4418  
lfc@midstatesd.net

## COMMUNITY IDENTITY

### *Volunteerism*

#### **SUB THEME: Volunteerism (Award and Youth Engagement)**

**Challenge:** It's clear that Alcester's greatest assets are its people. But it often seems like 20% of the people are doing 80% of the volunteering. Some older citizens also felt over-stretched with their volunteer commitments.

**Recommendation:** Clearly, small communities cannot function without the help of volunteers. The important thing is to have a large volunteer base so that projects get completed, but volunteers don't feel burned-out. I think there are a few things you can do to recruit new volunteers in the community so your volunteer base is more balanced.

The first suggestion is to capitalize on this assessment. It has generated a lot of "buzz" in the community. And this report covers many areas of recommendations. Volunteers might come out of the woodwork once they see a project that they are interested in helping with.

I think one reason that many people don't volunteer is because they don't know what opportunities are available. One thing my church did was to have one Sunday where each group within the church set up a table in the narthex before and after the service to publicize what opportunities were available and to recruit volunteers. This worked fairly well as people could learn about each group and then sign up to volunteer with whatever group interested them. Members from each group then followed up with the new volunteers to make sure they actually became involved.

A variation of this idea might work for your community. Maybe there is a well attended event where different groups could set up tables and promote themselves and recruit volunteers. Or you could have a "volunteer fair." Or maybe each group could write a paragraph about themselves and what kind of volunteers they are looking for and contact information. A compiled list could be mailed out to all citizens, included in the newspaper, available at City Hall, the grocery store and online.

Another variation of this might be to inventory the community residents. Have a short survey people can fill out asking them about their willingness to volunteer. Are they looking for short-term projects that last only a few weeks? Are they looking for short time commitments each week? Ask about their skills and talents and what times they are available to volunteer. Volunteers usually take three forms:

- Leaders and coordinators
- Worker bees
- Donators

You need all three of these to make any project successful. Not everyone is willing and able to be a leader, some just want to show up and work. While others may not have the time to coordinate a project or work, they want to donate money or supplies. Be appreciative of all three kinds of volunteers.

## COMMUNITY IDENTITY

### *Volunteerism*

Another reason that people don't volunteer is because after working all day, they don't want to spend even more time away from their children and families by volunteering. There is a great opportunity to make volunteering more family oriented. Families could help renovate the concession stand at the baseball field, clean-up the park, help at the food pantry, etc. With a little creativity, you can find many ways for families to volunteer together.

Thirdly, people don't volunteer simply because they are not asked. Consider asking a co-worker, neighbor or someone from your church, "this project needs to be done, and you're great with that, can you help?" You might be surprised at the response you get from making a few phone calls.

Several young adults (20-40) in the community wanted ways to become involved and socialize with each other. Maybe they could get together to start a local Jaycees organization or something similar. This not only involves them in community activities, it provides a chance for socializing.

Volunteer recognition plays a huge role in retaining volunteers. You have many great leaders in the community who have worked hard to make Alcester the town it is today. Consider making a "volunteer of the year" award and naming it after one of these great leaders. Each organization could nominate one person and a committee could review applications and choose the winner. You could have a volunteer appreciation dinner or potluck to recognize all volunteers and present the award. You could also recognize volunteers in several categories such as Senior Volunteer, Youth Volunteer, Community Volunteer, and Business Volunteer.

There are other, simpler ways you can recognize volunteers as well, ranging from a thank-you card to recognition on the town sign to writing a public thank you letter in the paper. Some volunteers would just appreciate good food after a long day of volunteer work.

Implementing a leadership development program might be something to consider. A program that several communities have undertaken is the LeadershipPlenty program. It targets new and emerging leaders in the community. The curriculum is skills-based and helps leaders assess their personal skills and how they can best contribute to community efforts as well as strengthen the community's assets. It also teaches ways to manage and resolve conflict for better group decision-making.

One of the great things about this program is that it has been relatively successful in engaging people in community activities where they haven't been active before. Best of all, LeadershipPlenty builds strong bonds among people of different backgrounds and increases people's understanding of different factors that enter into community decision-making.

## COMMUNITY IDENTITY

### *Volunteerism*

The SDSU Cooperative Extension Service offers leadership development workshops for communities such as “Asset Based Community Development,” “Moving People to Action” and “Putting the Vitality of Youth to Work in the Community.” The extension service provides these programs for a minute cost – usually just to cover the costs of materials.

Engaging youth into volunteer opportunities is also important. One way to do this is by encouraging family volunteer involvement. Youth can become involved in the community by volunteering with their parents for a project that interests the whole family.

Several schools have a Key Club, a service-oriented club led by high school students that is part of the Kiwanis Club organization. The Key Club members volunteer for several projects such as shoveling snow for elderly or disabled residents, hosting a carnival for elementary kids every year and several other service-oriented projects.

By involving youth in volunteering, they will feel a stronger connection to the community. They will also take more pride in the community if they have a sense of “ownership.” It may even help them stay connected with the community if they leave for higher education and make them more likely to want to move back once they start their careers.

Other communities have created a youth council to give youth a broader voice in community affairs. Or create ex-officio membership on various councils/boards such as city council, school board, chamber and others. The important thing is to give youth a voice and take it seriously. The more connection you build with youth in the community, the more likely they are to want to stay in the community if an opportunity arises allowing them to do so.

### **Resources:**

Community Leadership Development  
SDSU Cooperative Extension  
1905 Plaza Blvd  
Rapid City, SD 57702  
605-394-2236  
<http://sdces.sdstate.edu/cld>

Points of Light Foundation  
[www.pointsoflight.org/resources/volunteerresource/](http://www.pointsoflight.org/resources/volunteerresource/)

Leadership Plenty South Dakota  
[www.leadershipplentysd.org](http://www.leadershipplentysd.org)  
605-978-2804

## COMMUNITY IDENTITY

### *Communication*

#### **Resources:** Continued

##### *Youth Councils*

Converse Area New Development Organizations (CANDO)

Joe Coyne, Executive Director

130 South Third St

Douglas, WY 82633

307-358-2000

jcoyne@candowyoming.com

Jaycees: [www.usjaycees.org](http://www.usjaycees.org) or [www.sdjaycees.org](http://www.sdjaycees.org)

Key Club: [www.keyclub.org](http://www.keyclub.org)

##### *Resource Books*

“The Successful Volunteer Organization: Getting Started & Getting Results in Nonprofit, Charitable, Grass Roots & Community Groups” – Joan Flanagan

“Volunteer Recruiting and Retention: A Marketing Approach” – Nancy Macduff

“101 Ideas for Volunteer Programs” – Stephen McCurley and Sue Vineyard

“Recruiting Youth Volunteers for Your Organization” – SDSU CES

available online at <http://agbiopubs.sdstate.edu/index.cfm>

<b>SUB THEME: Communication</b>
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**Challenge:** Communication is tough in a busy society. When an event is being planned in a community, we often will put an ad in the local paper and hope for the best. Unfortunately, many people are so busy that they don't take the time to be as informed about community events and politics as they should. So how do we keep the public informed and involved?

**Recommendation:** Alcester's communication challenges are a bit more complicated than other small communities. There are so many people that commute in or out of Alcester each day and it is easier for those people to be “disengaged” in the community. If I didn't work in my community or run errands on Main Street, I would probably miss quite a bit of hometown happenings.

While we acknowledge communication is tough, it needs to be addressed. That means thinking differently than in the past. Newspaper ads and stories that tell about events are the traditional way of getting word out. Alcester has an exceptional newspaper that we

## COMMUNITY IDENTITY

### *Communication*

heard about a number of times. This is and probably always will be the number one resource for information.

But are there other ways we can communicate efficiently and effectively?

Communication between community entities is a good place to start. The leaders in your community need to know what is going on. It isn't possible for everyone to make every meeting, but it's important to have a grasp on what is happening in these groups. I heard a number of times that there have been projects where someone just takes the bull by the horns and gets it done. That's great, but think of how much time and energy could be saved if everyone were on the same page!

Centerville has quarterly meetings that have representatives from different civic groups like the Chamber, ministerial association, Lion's Club, etc.... During this meeting each group reports in as to what projects they are working on and need help with. This has resulted in greater understanding of what each group does and what their needs are.

We started doing this in Platte, too. I'll admit, I moaned and groaned because I did not want to organize or attend another meeting. But, it is worth it, and I don't hear the complaining about it anymore because these meetings make us more effective and they wind up saving us a lot of time and resources. Everyone is on the same page (or at least the same chapter). These meetings have also helped the rumor mill as community leaders hear the news directly, rather than secondhand.

Sometimes communities have huge issues that need accurate and dependable information. Examples would involve a school expansion, bond issues, or zoning issues. These issues can tear small communities apart if details are not conveyed in a timely manner. To keep the rumor mill at bay, many officials will hold community informational meetings and be shocked when only ten people show up. You have to go to the different sectors instead of expecting them to come to you. They naysayers think they have the correct information, they don't need to attend a meeting. Send representatives to Chamber, Garden Club, school board, and church board meetings. Give the information on their time and turf, it makes projects go much smoother.

Newsletters and websites are also great ways to get information out there. The Chamber could put out a monthly newsletter that has community events listed in it and a website should be updated on a regular basis. If a person logs on and gets out of date information on your community, I bet they won't bother to check the website again. A computer class in the high school may be able to assist with the updates as part of a class.

I'm a true believer in word of mouth information. If I have a meeting or fundraiser I am planning in my community, I walk up and down Main Street or make phone calls to find "volunteers." The personal approach gives people a chance to ask questions, too. This is an approach that takes a sense of humor as you have to talk people into giving up some of their precious spare time, but most of the time people will step up. Ask a business owner or leader to be responsible for bringing 3-4 people to the meeting.

## **COMMUNITY IDENTITY**

*Communication*

### **Resources:**

Centerville Area Development Corporation  
Bill Hansen, Executive Director  
2201 State St.  
Centerville, SD 57014  
605-201-7593  
bjhansen@hcinet.net

# LISTENING SESSION RESPONSES

## Responses to the Question: What are the major issues and challenges facing the community of Alcester?

- Business development and growth
- Keeping enrollment in the school up. To get people to move here, you have to have job opportunities.
- Need to get people to live here. People commute here to work. Need to get people to have their families here for the school.
- Getting more people in town.
- More business and industry.
- No money to fund projects. Need more money to do these projects. Not enough grants out there.
- Large percentage of people commuting into town.
- A lot of problems with roads. Don't have the money to get this stuff done. Have ally ways that rarely get work done on them. Some people only have access through the ally ways. Need simple things like adding rock. On my street, there are six houses all with access through the ally.
- Getting community input into something like this.
- Need more younger people to take over some of the duties. I'm tired.
- A lot of Alcester people shopping in other towns, especially in a dollar store. There were twelve Alcester women in the Beresford store the other day. There are things you can't get here.
- Jobs. I drive 100 miles a day. There is a caravan of people going to Sioux Falls each day. There are a lot of manufacturing jobs here, but not much else. A lot of people coming in and out of the community.
- Just moved back here. Original Alcester people. We moved back because we like the community. This is home. And yet, we leave everyday to work. It would be nice to be able to stay here. We don't feel a part of the community when we are gone most day.
- Need economic development. The problem is funding. Where do you get the financing to do things that you want to get done.
- Too many gray haired people in our organizations. Not enough young people involved.
- Moved here about 3 years ago. Attracted to the community because it is small and quiet. I like it. Shopping – Need more places to shop.
- The job situation. The one industry we have here doesn't pay much here. I make \$5 to \$6 more by commuting.
- It is cheaper to shop out of town. If something cost \$9 here and it costs \$3 elsewhere, you are going to buy it out of town.

## LISTENING SESSION REPOSSES

### *Problems & Challenges*

- Industry and business. How to attract people here and stay here.
- With the Sanford Health growth spurt, how can we attract people here by the growth that might provide. How do we advertise our town and the good things that we offer.
- Apathy with middle and younger people. It is a problem.
- Daycare. We have good daycare people, but some people are going out of town because there is not enough.
- Would like to see a lot of young folks move in. When people move in, I ask, Do you have kids? Important for keeping the school going.
- Job creation. There are things that we should explore to take advantage of new technology. It is a small world and we could be a service hub. If we can create jobs, the rest will fall into place.
- The problem here is that there are too many old people here in town. Need more involved young people.
- Ditto
- Need greater support from state government. Alcester can't compete. We are forgotten by the state. Can't compete with Sioux Falls because the costs are spread over a larger population. Need legislators and state agencies for assistance.
- Taxes to high for businesses to compete here.
- Keep the youth occupied, but also encourage older folks to be involved too.
- Geographically, we lie off the beaten path. Other communities have major highways, by sheer volume they have more people going through town. We are not on an Interstate. People not having to come through.
- The challenge, how do we attract people or how do we get people to come into the community. The fact is that geography says were are here. We can't move.
- Agree, what happens in Pierre. They are isolated from the rest of the State. How can a little town like Alcester be heard. Feel like the State is ignoring the small towns.
- We could do a better job of marketing our school. We were a nationally recognized school. Need to leverage that.
- We are exporting our youth. Need to bring them back here.
- Older kids hang out on Main Street. We have an empty lot. Be nice to add a slab of cement and hoops.
- Need a pool that is heated.
- Apathy.
- Need to have jobs to keep the kids here. Everyone's kids leave. A lot go to Southeast Tech and then go someplace else.
- Maybe the school needs to teach some tech skills.
- Apathy – Some people just refuse to be involved. Need to somehow get people interested in town.

## LISTENING SESSION REPOSSES

### *Problems & Challenges*

- I think the kids like it here. They have a great time. I think they would stay if there was a place to work. Have to get some kind of technology-based jobs. Need new fresh ideas. Need to get something going.
- The pool house is in tough shape. It is a dire mess. A big challenge.
- Only a few and limited professional opportunities here. The tax that we pay, it is expensive to live here.
- Need to stop paying state tax dollars to have students attend schools in Iowa.
- 95% of the money I spend is not spent here, I need more choices so I can spend money here
- We need more things for kids to do...not just sports...maybe a place to see movies for kids or matinees for families...something not fancy, just easy for families to do
- Kids need something to do in the winter
- Apathy...trying to get people involved in the community
- People are afraid to get involved...they need to be a part of the community
- We have a communication problem...people plead they don't know what is going on
- The Council takes a lot of grief they don't deserve, but they have to hear all the complaining
- Apathy...I'm on the board of the golf course and we meet a lot of indifference from people...
- The community has a history of people just going out and doing things...when we had the pool done, people came in and dug with loaders, etc...and we had a pool. If it is not something people are passionate about, they don't want to sign up. We just get things done and then we have a hodge podge of smaller things, not an entire project
- We have a weak government in the City...we just fix problems as they arise, we don't plan well enough because of our vision
- We are a retirement place for the rural folks...that is a thing of the past, we need to change and move forward...we need a larger picture of what's going on
- Streets are in disrepair
- Some people have the idea that this is the way it has always been and the way it should be kept
- We need a group of people on the dev. corp. that are innovative and progressive thinkers
- A number of people in leadership positions worry more about what people think, rather than what is right for Alcester
- People are so busy that they don't want to volunteer, they want to protect their private time
- I try to spend money in town...there is something wrong with customer service when a business tells you to purchase something you need out of town, they don't want to order it in.
- Lack of livestock
- Need a bigger farm supply store

## LISTENING SESSION REPOSSES

### *Problems & Challenges*

- Changes in agriculture – need less people to run a farm
- Not as much employment opportunity in farming
- Average age of farmers in area – not a lot of young farmers
- Lack of livestock – more opportunities to buy local than crop farmers
- Getting younger farmers eligible for financing to get started
- Concerned about youth – younger people need to be involved in community activities
- Lions Club can hardly hold together any more – need younger people involved
- Need to attract more retail businesses to service farmers and ranchers
- I don't think the kids want to put the time in to farm now
- Livestock business
- It's too hard to get into farming and for young kids to start
- I think there is a stigmatism around farmers – some people look down on it – it used to be an honorable profession
- Need more opportunities for young people to return
- Farms just keep getting bigger and bigger
- No shortage of farmers bidding on land that comes up for sale – farms just keep getting bigger
- Pool needs help
- Being small can be a disadvantage because we have to rely on the resident to support us
- We need a long term plan...we can't just fix problems as they come up
- We don't have a problem getting people to help with specific projects, but to get people to commit to a group is difficult
- Our cell phone access needs help
- Communication with citizens and other communities as to what we have to offer
- Our Chamber volunteers, but we've become more of a service organization rather than bringing people into town
- It is tough to find volunteers
- Our post office isn't in a good location for access
- Society is busy, it's hard to get people involved
- The City doesn't have much for coffers, we're on a year to year basis, we don't have any extra money to spend as a City
- Our progress has been homegrown, not with people coming into town...we need to support local people more in their endeavors
- We need a place for elderly people to move to that are nice...they should have garages, etc...we have lost a number of people that go other places to live b/c they can get maintenance free living that is more upper scale
- We need to let people know where we are and get people off the Interstate to come see us
- We have too many dead end roads, too much turning around and coming back...it doesn't look organized to people coming in

## LISTENING SESSION REPOSSES

### *Problems & Challenges*

- DOT needs to be aware of the fact that we have more roads in SD than just those around Pierre
- Our future should be focused on young people from the community to start businesses
- Our location is good, but we are off the beaten path, so it's hard to get the visibility you need to get people here
- Daycare or even evening care is a need in the community
- Our young people need something to do in town
- We need some more places to eat at...something open later in the evening would be nice...can't get anything to eat after 8:30
- Too many commuters...wish they would work in town
- Apathy
- Senior citizen transportation
- The town seems to have a lot of retired people...need to bring in young people
- Need more retail
- No place to have dinner on Sunday
- Laundromat
- We don't have the population base we used to have
- We need a community center
- We are exporting our young people...there aren't jobs kids want to do to make them come back
- Apathy
- Economic development needs to improve
- People don't get involved enough
- It's always the same people doing the volunteer work
- Our Lion's Club used to have 60-65 people, but now are half that
- We miss our chicken from the convenience store
- We need more room for our thrift store
- Attracting young people with children
- We have to compete with a number of smaller communities around
- We need to lobby for getting rid of a tax on food
- Walk in apartments for retired people
- Community center
- Elderly transportation
- Housing is a problem for elderly people...the Village is great, but the kitchens are too small...need something a little bigger
- Too much secrecy in town about projects
- Some people don't accept other peoples viewpoints...you're shot down right away
- Streets...the seal coating doesn't hold well enough
- Community center for receptions
- I need a garage!
- We used to have a pizza shop, we don't have a place for kids to hang out

## LISTENING SESSION REPOSSES

### *Problems & Challenges*

- The youth need a place to congregate...used to have a burger stand/ice cream store
- We need some good zoning laws for houses that are being remodeled
- Providing a variety of activities for them so they want to stay here. Entertainment.
- No growth. A lot of younger people graduate and go on and don't come back.
- How the foundation works. (we have one).
- There are things that are not available here naturally. Nothing for teenagers to do. It is going to be that way because it is small, but maybe there are ways that we could provide some more activities.
- The lack of enthusiasm from a lot of young families. They don't see the need to work to keep the community vibrant.
- Money – we have a lot of worthwhile projects but we need to find the money to do the projects.
- With the VFW – to get the younger people to come out at night and get involved in the local organizations. Not sure how to accomplish that. The same people are there over and over again.
- We don't have a community building to hold meetings for our organization. We meet in two separate areas. Need a place with a decent kitchen.
- A lack of interest from the middle (aged) people. They need to be involved.
- We need a community building. The food pantry needs to get out of the basement where it is at.
- Young people. Need to step up and volunteer.
- We don't get enough activity and cooperation from people in the community to get involved.
- Like so man small towns, we are all fighting to stay alive and keep things happening in town.
- Would like to see a bus to take the elderly to doctors appointments and such.
- Desperately need a new senior center. Have had a lot of problems. No furnace, no heat. Need a new facility. Whether it is in a new community center or not.
- Need senior transportation for doctors appointments. People are hiring people to get to appointments.
- Ditto to that. Also need more volunteers delivering Meals on Wheels.
- As a senior citizen, need to work harder to get young people involved as a participant. Get them involved in community activities. If you give them the opportunity, they will do it.
- Don't promote the school and community enough.
- Money. With the school and law enforcement, we always hear that there is no money.
- We hear a lot about young people not participating, but I think the older people may be just as guilty. The younger generation will catch on if the older generation is talking it up.

## LISTENING SESSION REPOSSES

### *Problems & Challenges*

- Not being on the Interstate corridor is difficult in attracting new businesses. Also, business retention is a big issue. We need to help them grow their business.
- Cell phone service.
- Would like to see Highway 46 rerouted through Alcester. Would be good to get more truck and tourist traffic.
- Funding is always an issue for Fire. We have a big fundraiser each year. We usually raise \$5,000 or so. It is battle each time you have a large expenditure.
- The numbers of volunteers for EMS services. We have been lucky so far with the fire department.
- Get volunteers. Had a run in with EMT association in the 1980's and ended up quitting the Ambulance service. And then it was started back up again in 1996. It is good that it is back.
- Need something for the kids to do. No set after school program.
- Would be nice to make the gym into a impromptu movie theater. The money collected from showing movies could be used for the community and it would provide something for kids to do.
- We need crosswalks with flashing yellow lights across Highway 11, maybe around 6<sup>th</sup> street and a couple blocks south.
- Crosswalk. But we have to deal with the state since it is State Highway.
- Commute times to hospitals. We have a 45 minute commute to trauma centers. WE have limited volunteers for EMTs. The fire department has been very good to them with lift help.
- Most of the people we transport, they doctor in Sioux Falls or Canton. It would be nice to have more of a full time doctor in Alcester.
- Issues with fast driving around the schools.
- EMS – Finding people to be involved. Getting people to get involved in anything around the community. People are busy, but we all are.
- Not enough family stuff to do.
- People not abiding by the school speed zones.
- Resources available is a big problem. There is nothing for me to do here for work.
- Too much money gets spent outside the community.
- The money thing. Would like to see Homeland Security a fair way of awarding its grants. Towns all around us get them and I think it is our turn.
- A lack of community involvement.
- Tough to get people to turn out for events.
- Difficult to keep costs low in a small town (taxes, water rates, etc).
- Struggling with school enrollment – down 40-50 kids the last decade.
- Need more jobs for people in their twenties and thirties.
- Need better paying jobs.
- Need to do a better job of support services for people with jobs (e.g., daycare).
- Problems with financing projects.
- Need to keep school going.

## LISTENING SESSION REPOSSES

### *Problems & Challenges*

- Lack of comprehensive planning among all the community and government groups.
- There are lots of ideas, but not much follow through.
- Not enough communication, cooperation, interaction.
- Need a better swimming pool bathhouse.
- Need better sidewalks and walking trails and bike trails.
- Money is always a problem for local governments. We aren't going to have enough money for sewer problems when they come.
- Some of the older parts of town do not have good enough infrastructure.
- Community center.
- Need to develop industrial park.
- Need more housing for newcomers.
- Tough to know what comes first, the chicken or the egg (infrastructure or business).
- Raising money to do things we want to do
- Ditto
- Trying to get more families to move into community to keep the school going
- Having enough money to keep our streets in order
- Keep good businesses in town
- Bring in more businesses to get families to come in
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Diversify the economy – have different types of businesses
- New families coming into town
- Getting families into town
- Daycare – need more
- Need more families in here – different businesses to bring families in
- Need to promote the town more and market it
- Ditto
- Business retention – retaining the ones we have
- New businesses to bring people to town
- Ditto
- Need to bring alumni back to live – need younger population
- Need a tennis court
- No clue
- More business and industry
- Ditto
- Need something for the kids to do – they often drive to Sioux falls for entertainment
- Ditto
- Something to keep kids off main street
- Leadership to coordinate all efforts
- Rec center for kids
- Ditto

## LISTENING SESSION REPOSSES

### *Problems & Challenges*

- Rec center or something for kids
- Something for early twenties to do – other than go to the bar
- We lost one convenience store
- Need ice skating rink during winter
- Activities for young and old
- Need to develop our industrial park
- Swimming pool – need to improve
- Commuters need to enjoy town and become involved – they leave for work and then don't do anything for the community when they are home
- Couldn't find housing in town when we were looking at moving there
- Cell phone service
- Need places to eat
- Cell service
- Jobs for young people
- Not much to do...should have a bowling alley
- Cell service stinks
- Cell phone service is an issue
- We need something to do at a community center or something
- We need a fast food restaurant
- Need a movie theater
- Rec center for things to do in
- We can't shop here...we need a Walmart
- Gas prices stink
- There is no place to rent video games
- The high school building needs help...it is dangerous
- Pool isn't heated
- Air conditioning in HS
- No public transportation for elderly
- Our track is bad
- Self esteem problem...there is a lot more here than meets the eye...we have a lot to offer someone...the community needs to sell themselves as being a great place to live
- We are not listed with SD churches...suppose it's because we are close to Akron
- We need more industry or we can't keep it together
- Place for youth to hang out or even the 20 to 40 year olds...maybe a coffee shop of some sort
- We have a lot to offer, but we don't get the word out or toot our own horn
- We need a place to gather...community center maybe
- The community has an inferiority complex about itself
- The school has taken over life...there are so many activities, it's hard to get time for churches and families
- Parents are often so involved in their kids' activities that they don't have time to dedicate to other projects

## **LISTENING SESSION REPOSSES**

### *Problems & Challenges*

- Many people shop out of town
- Community center is needed in Alcester...worked on it for awhile and now you don't hear anything about it
- The younger generations aren't practicing their faith as much as their parents or grandparents have
- We need to focus on youths' overall needs
- Welcome packet for people moving into town would be nice
- Union county Fair is here, but not well attended...we need cooperation to make that bigger
- We need some help with the Senior's Center
- We are in need of a daycare center
- The things we think of as problems would not be a big deal if you lived in a big city...we don't have traffic
- We are losing a number of farms
- Need a new mindset as to where the community is going...we're not an agricultural community anymore
- More activities in a central location is needed
- More housing
- Infrastructure needs help
- People that move into our community don't feel like they quite belong and we need to change that

## LISTENING SESSION REPOSES

### *Strengths & Assets*

#### **Responses to the Question: What are the major strengths and assets for the community of Alcester?**

- Have a lot jobs in town.
- Just glad to be back in Alcester. Been gone for 50 years. No traffic. Happy to be here.
- Luxury of being a small community where people know one another.
- A nice place to live. It hasn't changed much since I grew up here. Just about everyone gets along. Not everyone, but most everyone.
- It's home. Just glad to be back.
- We lived in metropolitan areas for most of my life. I love it here.
- Great schools. Education system is great.
- Churches play a big part of why we like it here. I couldn't drive if I lived in a major metropolitan area.
- I don't have to lock my care here. I travel for work and this is the best place to be.
- We have a lot of old people in the community, that helps the crime rate. But there is no crime with younger people and families as well. That says it is an overall safe community.
- I like the small town quiet atmosphere. I raised five kids here. Great volunteers in the community rec program.
- School second to none.
- Strong churches and fire department.
- Great golf course.
- I like the quietness here. We are from a big city. Nice and peaceful.
- I like the quietness. Where we used to live, you didn't even answer your door during the day. It wasn't a great place to live. When we retired, we wanted to live where it was quiet.
- Quality of people. Good people live here. People that move here feel welcome and comfortable. Easy to say this is home.
- The people and the school. Great place to raise a family.
- Great people
- Free preschool for everyone in the district. Helps bring in some open enrollment.
- School system. Only place I would want to live.
- Excellent bank. The person running the bank has done a lot for the town.
- Leveraging the national recognition of the school.
- I didn't grow up here. We have lived in several larger towns. One of the greatest strengths is the experience of the older people coming back into the community. Need to put that to use.
- We have a wealth of history.
- We moved here 20 years ago. We could have moved anywhere. It didn't take long for me to see the Alcester people take pride in the community.
- We are 45 minutes from Sioux Falls and Sioux City in terms of industrial goods, healthcare, etc. If you go to Minneapolis or elsewhere, you would have to drive just as far to find these things.
- Great nursing home and bank that employ a lot of people, and manufacturing base.
- We are lucky to have as many jobs we have here.

## LISTENING SESSION REPOSSES

### *Strengths & Assets*

- The friendliness of the people.
- Born and raised here. With my kids getting to the age of going to Sioux Falls, I wanted them in a smaller school. Wife is from Sioux Falls. She couldn't sleep for the first three nights because it was too quiet.
- With all these old people, we have lots of volunteers. If I was younger, they'd have to pay me. I have six volunteer jobs already.
- Glad to have good examples here.
- Steakhouse and Arlenes. Big assets.
- Great fire and ambulance services.
- *If I leave my window down in my car and it rains, someone rolls it up for me.*
- We are wasting our biggest strength and that is our people. A lot of people I went to school with a higher paid professionals, but they are not around here.
- The people are the biggest strength. The main reason I live here is because of family.
- The school and the new addition.
- We have a great school, but feel that the taxes are too high.
- Get the development first, then you can afford to do some of the dream projects that we want to get accomplished.
- The churches are strong here. Kids are able to hang around with other kids and families that have the same values that my husband and I have.
- Safe place to raise a family. Good school.
- We voted to raise our taxes to support our school. It is painful, but it is also a positive that will help bring people in.
- I like that my kids can walk to the pool and they are safe
- Strong summer program for the kids
- Nice community in appearance, people keep things up well
- School
- Close community
- Cost of living is great
- I like that everyone looks out for each other
- A number of churches that all work together
- Food pantry
- The churches are very welcoming
- Good school – best in the state
- Fire department
- Golf course
- Community – everybody works together
- Ditto
- Really good at pulling together
- Very good place to raise kids
- Most people have been here their whole lives so you know everyone
- School
- Friendly people
- Small town atmosphere
- Several organizations and clubs in the community
- Geographical location – close to Sioux Falls, Sioux City and even Omaha
- Ethanol plants right around us

## LISTENING SESSION REPOSSES

### *Strengths & Assets*

- There is feed for livestock – still raise hay, have feed
- Livestock friendly environment
- Ideally located
- Great community
- Community is very welcoming
- Kids in town are great
- Good café and great steakhouse. The steakhouse brings people to town
- Alkota – employees close to 100, Coil manufacturer employees close to 100. Nursing home and bank also employ a lot of people
- Have good technology – high speed internet, pretty good cell phone service
- We have more curb and gutter than a lot of other towns
- Decent residential development – continues to add homes every year
- School system is solid
- The people...people from other towns that come to Alcester say the town is friendly
- We have a strong religious sector
- Strong businesses
- Location to Sioux Falls and Sioux City is a benefit...we can get anything we need fairly quickly
- Alcester gives you a good warm feeling
- It's a quiet town...we should publicize that
- Spirit of cooperation
- Our ambulance and fire department are all volunteers
- some businesses allow the EMTs and fire department personnel to leave for calls
- We live in close knit neighborhoods
- Relatively low crime rate
- Willingness of people to serve on projects
- Some businesses are pretty large...that's a benefit to bring people in
- We are a very caring community
- Many individuals have made large investments in town...the elevator, Alkota, the grocery store, Custom Coil, new churches, school additions...
- Location...many people live here, but commute...at least they are living here and sending their kids to our schools
- Hwy 11 gives us access to the eastern side of Sioux Falls relatively easily
- The kids are doing very well in school
- Nice golf course
- I wish the business district was as vibrant as it used to be
- I like everything here
- Good quality of life
- Neighbor support
- We live between Sioux Falls and Sioux City
- Meals on Wheels is a blessing
- The Senior Center is a plus
- Village Apts. with no steps is a blessing
- Seniors Center and Meals on Wheels
- We like the town...we moved here because our grandkids were here
- Senior Citizen Center

## LISTENING SESSION REPOSSES

### *Strengths & Assets*

- Meals on Wheels
- Good place to raise a family
- Good businesses...would be nice to have those that are commuting to live here
- Summer rec
- Pool
- Cenex
- Friendly community
- We are eye pleasing
- People help each other out
- We don't have big city living
- People moving in may be a bit intimidated because we all know each other already
- You've gotta drive 50 or 60 miles if you want crime
- Friendliness...people will pitch in and help
- We have a good mixture of people...it a farmer is sick, other farmers come in to harvest the crops...that carries over to town when people move in
- We have a couple of really great restaurants
- Interior Design
- Our thrift store is a plus...the money goes to church programs for those families that need it
- Churches
- Our school is solid in academics
- It's been a long time since we've had a shoot out in town
- We have a thrift store and food pantry
- Good safe place to raise a family
- It is a small community, it is a strength. The safety, feeling free to leave your keys in your car.
- It is like living in a family here. We couldn't wait to move back. A wonderful town.
- The school.
- Fortunate to have some big companies. The Bank, Custom Coils, Alkota.
- We like being in a small town, but also like to be able to be in Sioux Falls within an hour.
- We work together as a community in the event of a disaster or if someone is in need.
- It is the people. The people are kind and helpful. People are friendly.
- We have a great school system.
- Good churches
- We came here because we bought a business and we stayed because we liked it here.
- I like the fact that I don't have wait for Tee time at the golf course.
- I visit my son in the big cities. I can't wait to get home. The safety here is a big asset. Great place to live.
- Small town atmosphere. The people that do volunteer do a great job at it.
- Great summer rec program.
- Beautiful area.
- The people. A very clean town. People keep their yards up.
- The people number one.
- The school.

## LISTENING SESSION REPOSSES

### *Strengths & Assets*

- The school buildings are nice. The downtown is attractive. We have a lot of curb and gutter throughout town.
- Lucky to keep a medical facility in this small town.
- Lucky to have a pharmacy too
- I live here because my husband lives here.
- Law enforcement is top notch.
- The fire department and ambulance service does a great job. My wife had to use the ambulance service. Everyone knows the people, so you go above and beyond.
- We have a good fire department. I know we are known around town as a bunch of goof balls. The ambulance service is great, though they struggle getting volunteers.
- The community and surrounding area has always been very supportive of the fire and emergency services.
- As an ambulance service, we usually know the person that we are transporting. That can be good and bad. I like to think that a familiar face helps the patients. We have also had great help from the fire department.
- It is a small community. You get to know people and work together.
- School system. I don't have to worry about my kids running around and playing.
- Very good special ed program here. Found them to be better than the bigger city.
- Everyone knows everyone. Very friendly. A lot of trust.
- Great city newspaper.
- Six gyms in town.
- Community really stuck together to build new school addition.
- Quality school system.
- School system.
- Proximity to SF and Sioux City.
- School system.
- Very clean little town.
- Small town feel
- School system.
- City has money available for new businesses (revolving loan fund).
- Bank is great.
- Willingness to do projects.
- Supportive businesses
- Community foundation in town.
- The people who do get involved have a strong work ethic.
- School – that's why we decided to stay in Alcester.
- Nursing home is a great asset.
- Alcester has a lot of personal pride. The homes are kept up, yards look nice, etc.
- We have a group that is willing to rake people's yards and help people with other projects.
- Caring people
- If someone needs help, people are around to help out
- Helpful people
- School
- Medical clinic, chiropractor
- A lot more personal than a big city

## LISTENING SESSION REPOSSES

### *Strengths & Assets*

- Combination of community and sense of cooperation
- Location between Sioux falls and Sioux city
- Very caring community – feel like you’re one big family
- Schools and friendly community
- Bank
- Great school and great churches – family feeling
- Ditto
- We were raised in small towns and wanted to raise our family in one
- Strong fire department
- Home town
- Location – close to Sioux falls and Sioux city and close to quality education at near universities
- Location to Sioux falls
- People are really cordial
- Very pretty town – very attractive and safe
- A lot of work has been done in the parks – it’s a real asset
- Support from people – small communities are a nice place to live
- Caring community
- Network of friends
- Ditto
- Community where you can become active with your kids – a lot of parents are coaches
- Ditto
- Grade school and churches
- Small town atmosphere
- Businesses are a strength – many families would be gone without those businesses
- New grocery store
- Close enough to where I live that I can go home and change clothes when I smell like a skunk
- Real strong summer program for kids – softball and baseball, but it could be expanded to other activities
- Can let kids run around in town without worrying about them
- Nice caring community – everyone works together
- Ethanol plant in Hudson really helped our community
- Businesses give employment to high school kids so they don’t have to drive out of town to work
- The steakhouse is a great place to live
- You don’t have to try out for sports
- Everyone knows everyone
- People are friendly
- Small town atmosphere
- Steakhouse
- Low crime
- At least we have a swimming pool
- Swimming pool
- The icy stand

## LISTENING SESSION REPOSSES

### *Strengths & Assets*

- You only have to go a few blocks to get anywhere
- Low crime .. it's safe
- You don't get lost
- Everything is close
- Snow cone stand...
- Ditto
- Fitness center is great
- Grocery store
- Tanning beds and fitness center
- Lots of basketball courts
- We have a kind community
- The golf course
- We should promote our golf course as we don't even need tee times
- Good infrastructure...good water tower to serve needs of community...good thinking on the City's part
- When we do projects, we do it up right
- We are among good Lutheran people here
- Active VFW and Legion Post
- Good group on Senior Citizens
- Community spirit is impressive
- The library...what a great project between the city and school
- Many people are related to each other and that makes it like a big family
- Great steakhouse and café
- Golf course and pool
- The park is really nice
- Strong sense of family
- Good people with good values
- Blue Ribbon School
- Steakhouse and café and bank is impressive...people from all over come to bank here
- I have always felt welcome to this town
- Clean air and we have space
- We live in a beautiful community...we could do some regional things to capitalize on a bit
- We have a number of people that left Alcester and came back with a wealth on information and experiences
- Thrift store and food pantry brings people to the community
- Our senior citizens volunteer a lot
- I think it's great that we can still have church activities announced at school

## LISTENING SESSION REPOSSES

### *Projects*

#### **Responses to the Question: What are the projects you would like to see accomplished in Alcester in the next 2, 5, 10, and 20 years?**

- Something for the youth. For the teenagers. Perhaps a youth center. Need a good place for kids to go to hang out.
- Need a youth center for young kids.
- Community center. Been on city council for many years. Finally to a point to have opportunity to generate some revenue to use toward a community center. Try to make that a reality. Two to five years.
- Ideally, I would like to see an expansion in the golf course long term. More housing development. Need 5 new houses every year.
- Need improvements in infrastructure. Need enhanced 911 online. That needs to be happening. We go out with EMS, it is real hard to get to some addresses.
- Need a good mix in the community. Younger people coming back with their families. Become the Texas of the Midwest with retired people moving back.
- Need young people moving back.
- Community Center.
- Need to grow our economy.
- Community Center. Need some pool tables.
- Better cell phone reception.
- Need a Laundromat in town.
- Agree with everything.
- See more advertising and promotion of the community for people moving to the area.
- Be nice to see Main Street full of store again. Can't expect that overnight.
- Economic Development. Development Corporation has land for an industrial park. We don't have the capacity for Spec buildings, but would like to see something happen out there.
- Get more businesses and stores going.
- Better cell phone reception in the country.
- Not sure what the economic development group in town does, but I would really like to see an aggressive business development project to go after the county and state to get something going here.
- If we had technology jobs here, we could get some of the young people move back.
- Short term – Could use help. Would like to see Highway 46 turn and go through Alcester. Could be done in conjunction with resurfacing project in 2009.
- Most people's kids leave after college and don't come back. Most people with kids are not here.
- Would be nice to use the Auditorium for shuffle board, roller skating, and other activities.
- Could use some Saturday night concerts again.
- Like to extend the business district. Be nice to have a movie theater here.

## LISTENING SESSION REPOSSES

### *Projects*

- Agree with changing the Highway. It saves you a lot to go straight down highway 11. Need to talk to legislators about that.
- Would like to see a new swimming pool. That might attract younger families to move into town.
- Short Term – I would like to city an addition to the city building to add locker rooms and add city space.
- Long Term – Refurbish the opera house here in town.
- Have a pork plant that is now empty. Used to employ 30 people.
- Need to get roads and streets in there so people will come in look.
- Need streets completed in the housing development. Need to get the streets done to get people to buy the lots up there. Those could turn into long term
- Short Term – Industrial Park.
- Long Term – Pool, and High School
- Industrial park is key. Problem is a catch 22. No money for infrastructure, but can't get a business until infrastructure is in.
- A lot of older people that leave town when they get to a point when they get to a point where they need more Senior Housing. No other place for them to live.
- Small businesses – Daycare and a Laundromat. Just need someone to set it into motion.
- Need some advertising signs on the interstate.
- A heated swimming pool (message from daughters and her friends).
- Need a full time grant writer and economic developer.
- Need assisted living or a retirement community here.
- Need a youth center. Something for them to do in town.
- Need an after school program. We have a library and lot of kids go there to use computers and read books.
- For older kids
- Need a soccer program in addition to existing rec programs.
- Need a call center put in town here.
- A light rail system to Sioux Falls
- Like to see Golf Course add another 9 holes
- I work with a lot of older people, our community could use a transportation system. We have researched this. We got a bus, but city didn't assist and nursing home can't support a full-time driver.
- 10 to 20 years from now, my kids will move away with their kids, and I would like them to have a job here.
- Need housing, condos, etc for older people that are handicap accessible.
- Would like to see the pool house redone.
- A walking trail. We have the town course. Need a bike trail. A place for people's strollers.
- In longer term, would like to see sewer system, streets, etc repaired. We operate on emergency system only. We fix when things break, but don't plan repair and replacement regularly.
- Bowling alley or movie theater

## LISTENING SESSION REPOSSES

### *Projects*

- The pool needs to be fixed
- City owned utilities
- We need transportation for elderly people
- Community center needs to be completed and done right
- Economic committee that does something
- We need to increase the population and the other services and projects will happen
- Need to quit sending kids to school in Iowa
- Industrial park with infrastructure
- Street replacement
- City should own some wind generators
- It would be nice to know how many people commute into town for jobs. Then we could try to attract them to live here
- Add more businesses with higher paying jobs
- Want to keep the school strong and maybe attract people with open enrollment or through other means
- It would be nice to see some more feedlots or swine operations – these could be good opportunities for SDSU students to come back to the area
- We need some place for the young people to go and keep them busy on the weekends
- New community center – place for people to gather
- Develop industrial park and put some infrastructure into place
- Better chance to grow existing businesses rather than attract new businesses
- Need something for young people to do
- Need to keep swimming pool in good shape
- Opportunities for livestock – there is room for expansion
- Try to attract more people
- We should try to get some more lots developed so we can have more houses built
- We need to get the industrial park up and going so we can get some different businesses in...there isn't a place in Alcester to start a business if you want to
- We need to promote the school so we get more open enrolled students
- Daycare center would be nice
- The school system needs to market themselves better
- We need to get some daycare options, too many people are having to take kids to providers in other places
- A welcoming committee for someone new would be nice...many newcomers wouldn't know what is available in Alcester
- We need to assess what we have and make improvements so we look appealing to families
- Continuing ed. Programs
- Could start some courses at the school that are more hands on
- We need some apartments for elderly people with medium to higher end units
- Community center would be nice so we can host larger groups of people

## LISTENING SESSION REPOSSES

### *Projects*

- Put up a spec building 10 – 12,000 sq. ft. in the industrial park...a place where you could start up a business
- Community center would be nice...we have to go out of town for wedding receptions
- Spec building would be useful
- Maybe the companies could expand a bit
- New businesses
- Economic development
- Need to hire an economic dev. coordinator or even a regional coordinator
- It would be nice to have some sort of a concert or something that would bring the community together...could do it in March when it is a slower time
- Senior transportation would be useful
- Community center for receptions
- Daycare center
- Community center would be good for everyone
- Organize an outdoor court for basketball
- Develop the industrial park...infrastructure, streets
- We should have a community event that brings people to town
- I hope we'll have more volunteers in the future to replace those that are getting out
- Community center in the near future
- We need to look at things that will keep our youth here, not just jobs, but quality of life issues
- Community center
- A project that gets our name out there
- Maybe a music festival would get some people to come in...could use it during the summer
- The ethnic festival is doing OK, but needs to be tweaked a bit
- Apartments for the elderly
- We could have Alcester American Idol or something \
- We need a place for kids
- Community center
- Place for kids
- Our church needs a parking lot
- People are traveling to Beresford to get on a bus to go to doctor's appointments
- We have a good clinic, but we need a doctor to come in so we don't have to go to Sioux Falls
- It would be nice to have a dialysis machine in Alcester so we don't have to travel
- We need a hardware store
- Clothing store would be nice
- Need a new concession stand at the baseball field

## LISTENING SESSION REPOSSES

### *Projects*

- Need to remodel the existing community building. Add onto it and make it more handicap accessible.
- Need more daycare.
- Need a new swimming pool.
- Need an employee to help keep up the parks.
- Would like to see a new business downtown
- I would like to the Clubhouse Express back in business
- Would like to see us realize an investment made in the industrial park. No sense having industrial money put into farmland.
- I would like to see a community center.
- Would like to see more lots opened up in the housing area (infrastructure, streets, curb & gutter).
- Senior center and new community center.
- Need a Laundromat.
- Need jobs. That will bring the people here.
- Need to do something with industrial development. With that comes jobs and with jobs come people for the school and town.
- Need to get the industrial development going. Something in the field of communications and computers.
- Would like to see something move forward once the meeting is done. That he committee takes a hold and runs with it.
- Two years – remodeling of the existing city hall.
- Also, would like to see the roads put in at the Housing Addition to open more lots.
- In 10 years, need to get the industrial park developed. Can do it in phases or segments.
- Youth center / community center. Give the youth something to do.
- Revitalize the old section of town.
- Youth center.
- Need more than baseball and softball for summer rec. These are great, but we need more variety.
- The pool is a big thing. Need to update the pool.
- The pool. Would be nice in the next two years to lay the foundation for a new pool in five years.
- It would be nice to pay someone to be a grant writer, economic development person, chamber coordinator.
- Need a community center. There are so many different activities that it could be used for. Need an indoor pool with adult night swim.
- Need a community center.
- Would like to see a counter on the road to see how many people are actually driving into town to work.
- It is very tiresome to attend weddings in town and go out of town for receptions. We need a community center to accommodate these events locally.

## LISTENING SESSION REPOSSES

### *Projects*

- Ditto to that. We had a couple that wanted to have an Anniversary celebration, and they couldn't find a place to hold it. We need a place to hold these types of events.
- Ditto to needing the community center.
- Need to involve the rural community more. Alcester's trade territory is 12 or 13 miles radius of the community. Too much of our trade territory is going to Beresford or Hawarden. We don't offer enough here to get people into town. Need to get more rural people involved in community organization and activities.
- Need to set goals that we can attain.
- With economic development, we need to know what grants are available help with our initiatives.
- Need a directory of local organizations and resources.
- Would like to see the streets in better shape and updated. Snow removal would be a good thing to work on.
- Maybe improve healthcare. More services offered. The ideal thing would be is to have a doctor in town.
- Medical transportation for people that have a appointments in Sioux Falls (just for normal checkups).
- A new high school
- Need things for families to do. In the summer, the pool and ICY shoppe are big. Need something in addition to these.
- Need to keep two big businesses here.
- Need to get the new streets in the residential area done.
- Additional outdoor recreation.
- New swimming pool.
- It would be nice to have a stage where we could have some concerts and other cultural events.
- Pool.
- Community daycare.
- Youth activities.
- Continue to build upon quality of life advantages.
- Walking trails.
- Renovation project continuing in the community center.
- Improve sewer system; concerns about possible need for a new lift station.
- Residential around golf course.
- Another nine holes.
- Get an RV park targeted toward full-time RVers. These people are looking for quiet atmosphere when they aren't on the road. We are a no income tax state.
- Serious improvement in housing. Need better senior housing – apartments with no stairs and with attached parking.
- It would be nice to have better sidewalks. My child still hasn't learned how to ride a bike. Training wheels don't work on a pothole-filled street.
- Transit – we have a bus. We need to put it to use.

## LISTENING SESSION REPOSSES

### *Projects*

- Let's be debt-free in ten years.
- It would be nice to have some manufactured homes or Governor's Houses for the seniors.
- Early childhood education. MN has education starting at age two.
- Daycare.
- Affordable housing.
- Clinic is only staffed part-time. It should be expanded and affiliated with Sanford.
- Need to expand and fix swimming pool so it can be used for kids and adults
- Continue with economic development
- Try to get other businesses to come into the city
- Need better cell phone service
- Other types of housing for seniors
- Swimming pool – we need a new bath house
- Swimming pool
- Swimming pool
- Fix the streets
- Pool
- See and industrial park rather than a corn field
- Need infrastructure before we can develop houses and industrial park
- Need streets opened up so we can build houses in new development
- Incentive program for new people to move into town – discounted lots for houses
- Enclosed swimming pool
- Roads and swimming pool and tennis court
- Need to look at high school in the long term for updating
- Ditto
- Housing development
- Street improvement and swimming pool
- Swimming pool
- Ditto
- Industrial park needs to be developed
- Indoor pool/rec center
- A community daycare
- Pool
- Daycare
- Improve roads
- Enclosed pool and rec center
- A place with good acoustics for concerts/performances
- Bowling alley
- Open more streets so more people can build a house
- Enclosed pool in combination with rec center
- Offering incentives for people to move hear
- Community center for wedding receptions

## LISTENING SESSION REPOSSES

### *Projects*

- Open convenience store
- Swimming pool
- Rec center
- Address handicap accessibility throughout town
- Bowling alley
- Landry-mat
- Fast food restaurant
- Rec center with volleyball net, b-ball, things to do
- A factory to bring in more jobs
- Place to rent video games
- Bowling alley with things to do for kids
- Rec center
- Radio station
- Tennis courts
- Air conditioning
- Community center
- New high school...it's falling apart
- Rec center
- We need better sidewalks around town...skateboarding is impossible
- Make school shorter
- Fix up the gym in the HS
- Arcade
- We need to improve the county fair
- Our sidewalks are horrible
- Skating rink...rollerblading and ice skating
- Best Buy
- Outdoor volleyball court
- Heated pool
- Subway
- Bigger and better pool
- New lockers at the gym
- Water slide at the pool
- Rollerblading place...we have to go to Sioux Falls
- Camping place in town
- Better weight room in the elementary
- Better soccer field
- Music festival would be nice to have...could play off the Hammit (state song composer)
- Fix up swimming pool
- Community ed. Opportunities
- Community intramurals for young adults...many are athletic, so maybe we could do a volleyball, dodge ball, softball league
- We need to address the housing situation

## **LISTENING SESSION REPOSSES**

### *Projects*

- We need some training in diversity...introduce the fact that not everyone is Norweigan or Lutheran
- We need to get some industry going so we stay viable
- Community ed courses would be nice to have
- Senior citizens need some classes to do in continuing ed
- We need to have someone take the ball and run with projects
- Pool, community center, museum
- We need to get a Rec Center with and indoor pool
- Band shell again for the music festival
- We should set a goal to grow our community to 1,000 people before the next census
- Need more apt. with garages for elderly people
- Pool needs to by updated
- We are not very far from larger communities and we should try to get people to live here instead of commuting in
- We need to keep our clinic
- Indoor pool for PE classes