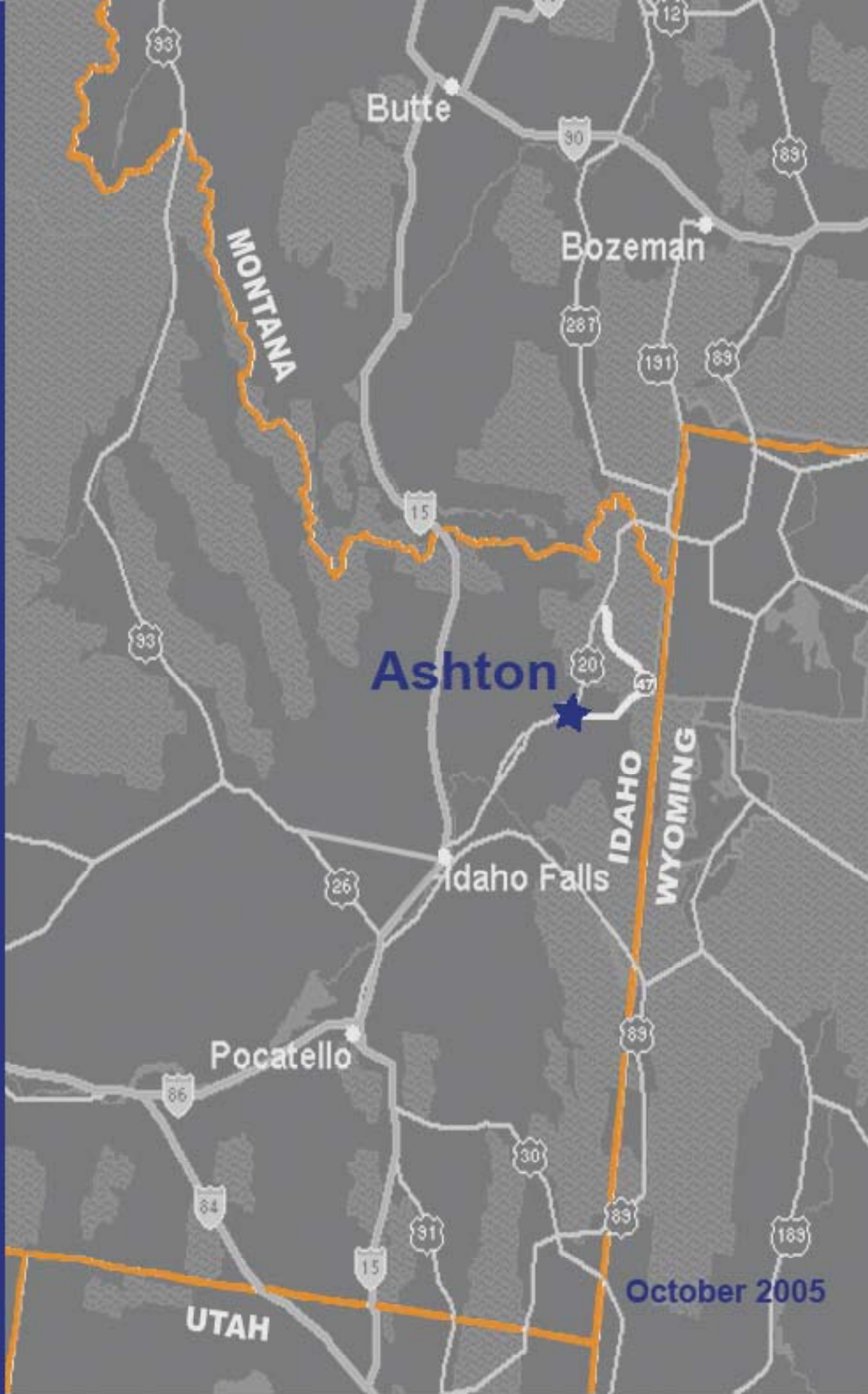


Ashton Community Review



Thanks to the Following Ashton Community Review Sponsors:



Dr. John Toenjes



Ashton Area Chamber of Commerce



Ashton Lions Club

Ashton Rotary Club



Fall River Ranch Resort



Preface

The key to success is alignment. Staying in alignment with a world that will be characterized by complexity, diversity, and pace of change.

Ed Barlow, President, Creating the Future, Inc.
Quoted by Mayor Stronks, *State of the City* address, October 26, 2005

Ashton Mayor Teddy Stronks used these words in his *State of the City* address on October 26, 2005. Ashton is a city on the cusp; change and growth are coming, whether Ashton is ready or not. The sentiment expressed by the mayor in his address says it all: Ashton is ready to be ready.

Participating in the Community Review process is another sign that Ashton is ready to take on the future. The Community Review is a partnership between local host communities and visiting teams comprised of individuals from the public, private, and non-profit sectors. Visiting teams use their expertise to assess identified issues within a community and provide feedback to that community to use to increase its vitality and wealth. The community then uses that feedback to plan for the future.

*The **vitality** of a community refers to its resiliency and capacity to respond to change, both positive and negative.*

*The **wealth** of a community refers to its assets, including infrastructure, climate, scenery, environmental quality, individual skills, human spirit, and crime rate.*

This document provides an overview of a Community Review conducted for the City of Ashton, Idaho, October 25 - 27, 2005. The review was conducted at the request of the City of Ashton, which submitted an application for review in 2004.

This report presents observations and perspectives generated from the review process for use by Ashton's city government, civic leaders, and residents in future planning efforts. The review is not a formal market study or analysis; it is simply a mirror designed to reflect Ashton's strengths and challenges at one point in time and provide recommendations and resources to assist in capitalizing on those strengths and meeting those challenges head-on.

As Ashton's traditional industries of agriculture and timber are playing increasingly smaller roles in Ashton's economy, the community is asking, "What's left?" to provide jobs, build the economy, and support the vitality of Ashton. The short answer to this question is "Plenty." Ashton is fortunate to have dynamic, forward-thinking, creative citizens and leaders and is surrounded by hundreds of miles of unparalleled natural resources. It has the ability to capitalize on its many attributes to build a strong and prosperous future for itself. The Community Review, and the recommendations and resources it has generated, provide a starting point for Ashton's future. Ashton is in alignment with the world and is prepared to stay that way.

Intentionally left blank

Acknowledgments

The Ashton Community Review could not have been completed without the unwavering commitment to the process demonstrated by the Ashton home team. These team members coordinated the visiting team's trip to Ashton, served as tour guides, shuttled team members, cooked and served meals, endured long days, answered endless questions, and, most of all, served as valuable resources concerning all aspects of Ashton and the surrounding area. Home team members included:

Coordinating Team

Mayor Teddy Stronks, Team Leader
Joni Amen
Suzette Bollinger
Bryan Hutton
Toni Kingsley
Jori Lenz
Paula Toenjjes

Arts, Historic, and Recreation Resources Team

JoAnn Anderson, Team Leader
Sherri Davidson, Team Leader
Jane Daniels
Robin Jenkins
Tom Howell
Portia Loosli

Community Design and Identity Team

Letha Whitmore, Team Leader
Christine Dexter
Lacey Eckberg
Sheila Kellog
Robin Rivas
Ross Wynn
Thayle Wynn

Land-Use Planning Team

John Jorgensen, Team Leader
Kurt Eidam
Jerry Funke
Leon Martindale
Al Staub
Kathy Stegelmeier

Visiting team members brought with them a variety of perspectives and areas of expertise. Included in the visiting team were representatives of city governments of other small, southern Idaho towns, private for-profit and non-profit organizations, the faith community, and state and federal government. Visiting team members included:

Coordinating Team

Brian Dale, Team Leader
Dale Dixon, Team Leader
Erik Kingston
Amy Luft
Monica Massarand

Arts, Historic, and Recreation Resources Team

Hank Ebert, Team Leader
Richard Juengling, Team Leader
Kyle Babbitt
Louis Clements
ReNea Nelson
David Pennock

Community Design and Identity Team

Janie Gebhardt, Team Leader
Tom Putnam, Team Leader
Gale Harding
Tom Jenkins
Blair Kay
Shawn Larsen
Knut Meyerin

Land-Use Planning Team

Kurt Hibbert, Team Leader
Delverne Seaman, Team Leader
Ben Eborn
Steve Ernst
Chris Henderson
Glen Pond

While some members of both teams contributed to the review as part of their “regular” jobs, many others worked tirelessly as volunteers—in some cases even taking vacation time to participate. In all cases, individuals worked long hours, well beyond 8-hour workdays. This dedication is to be commended.

Intentionally left blank

Table of Contents

PREFACE	I
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	III
TABLE OF CONTENTS	V
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	VII
PART I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW	1
COMMUNITY REVIEW PROCESS.....	1
IN-KIND VALUE	2
ASHTON COMMUNITY REVIEW ORGANIZATION AND SCHEDULE	2
<i>Pre-Review Planning</i>	2
<i>Review Week</i>	4
HOME TEAM MAKEUP AND CONTRIBUTION.....	5
VISITING TEAM MAKEUP AND CONTRIBUTION	6
COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION	8
COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS	9
PREVIOUS AND CURRENT PLANNING EFFORTS, GRANTS, AND COMMUNITY PROJECTS	10
<i>Planning</i>	10
<i>Grants</i>	10
<i>Community Projects</i>	11
AREAS OF CONSENSUS AND CONTENTION.....	11
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED AND EXPRESSED BY THE COMMUNITY	12
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OBSERVED BY THE VISITING TEAM	13
FOLLOW-THROUGH AND IMPLEMENTATION.....	13
<i>Youth Advisory Board</i>	14
<i>Improve Communication</i>	14
PART II. TEAM REPORTS.....	15
ARTS, HISTORIC, AND RECREATION RESOURCES	15
<i>General Community Comments and Concerns</i>	16
<i>General Visiting Team Observations</i>	16
<i>History and Heritage: Community Archives and Hess Heritage Museum</i>	16
<i>Tourism Development</i>	19
<i>Recreation</i>	23
<i>Arts and Cultural Resources</i>	29
<i>Youth Activities</i>	30
<i>Arts, Historic, and Recreation Resources: Conclusions</i>	31
COMMUNITY DESIGN AND IDENTITY.....	32
<i>General Community Comments and Concerns</i>	32
<i>General Visiting Team Observations</i>	33
<i>Community Identity</i>	34
<i>North Fremont High School/Youth</i>	37
<i>Downtown</i>	38
<i>Community Design and Identity: Conclusions</i>	40
LAND-USE PLANNING	41
<i>General Community Comments and Concerns</i>	41
<i>General Visiting Team Observations</i>	42
<i>Long-Term Planning</i>	42
<i>Infrastructure Development</i>	45
<i>Land-Use Planning: Conclusions</i>	47
PART III. STRATEGIES, NEXT STEPS, AND CONCLUSIONS	49
CAUTION: CHANGE AHEAD.....	49

STRATEGIES	49
<i>Communication</i>	50
<i>Community Identity</i>	50
<i>Economic Development</i>	51
<i>Long-Term Strategic Planning</i>	51
<i>Partnerships</i>	51
<i>Inclusiveness</i>	51
NEXT STEPS	52
<i>Start With a Plan</i>	52
<i>Establish Priorities and Create a Timeline</i>	53
<i>Evaluate Progress and Stay on Track</i>	53
CONCLUSIONS	54
APPENDICES.....	55
APPENDIX A. ASHTON COMMUNITY REVIEW APPLICATION	57
APPENDIX B. ASHTON COMMUNITY REVIEW SURVEY AND SURVEY RESULTS	63
APPENDIX C. COMMUNITY REVIEW ITINERARY	73
APPENDIX D. COMMUNITY REVIEW AND TOWN HALL MEETING PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS	77
APPENDIX E. VISITING TEAM BIOGRAPHIES.....	83
APPENDIX F. MAYOR STRONKS' REPORT ON 2005 TO THE CITY COUNCIL	93
APPENDIX G. NEWS RELEASE: NEW STUDY FINDS TOURISM AN INCREASING ECONOMIC FACTOR IN IDAHO	97
APPENDIX H. ARTS AND CRAFTSPERSONS IN THE ASHTON AREA	101

Executive Summary

This document provides an overview of a Community Review conducted for the City of Ashton, Idaho, October 25 - 27, 2005. The review was conducted at the request of the City of Ashton, which submitted an application for review in 2004.

This report presents observations and perspectives generated from the review process for use by Ashton's city government, civic leaders, and residents in future planning efforts. The review is not a formal market study or analysis; it is simply a mirror designed to reflect Ashton's strengths and challenges at one point in time and provide recommendations and resources to assist in capitalizing on those strengths and meeting those challenges head-on.

A participating community can designate three areas upon which it wants the review to focus. Ashton focused on Arts, Historic, and Recreation Resources; Community Design and Identity; and Land-Use Planning. These topics are outlined in detail in Part II of this report, along with specific observations, recommendations, and resources provided by the visiting team.

Each of the team reports was prepared by the team assigned to that issue. Because of this, a certain amount of overlap appears among reports. This allows each team's report to appear as that team intended, but is also an indication of the importance of an issue. In other instances, different team reports may recommend different ways of resolving the same issue. It is up to the community to choose the path that is right for it. A brief summary of the observations and recommendations for each of the focus areas is below.

Arts, Historic, and Recreation Resources: This team analyzed Ashton's cultural and recreational life and recommended ways for the community to develop opportunities for visitors to spend more time and money in Ashton. The team also recommended ways to maintain and perpetuate existing amenities and develop additional assets to benefit the community's residents as well as visitors.

Observations

- Ashton has many assets, the foremost of which are its residents.
- The potential exists for developing additional assets and amenities.
- Increased amenities can directly benefit Ashton's residents as well as visitors.
- Ashton has the potential to become a recreational destination in its own right, if it so chooses.
- Youth are not well integrated into community life.

Recommendations

- Develop an identity that reflects how Ashton sees itself and what it wants to become. Use this identity to guide planning.
- Develop and expand existing amenities to capitalize on what already exists.
- Increase the number of citizens involved in community activities; encourage involvement by those representing all sides of issues and actively solicit volunteers.
- Involve youth: provide activities and opportunities for them to contribute to the community.

Community Design and Identity: This team explored Ashton from an "outsider" point of view and visited with Ashton citizens for an "insider" point of view in an effort to help Ashton citizens see their community through different eyes. Ideally, a community's identity should be defined by the people who live there and not by outside sources; however, in the absence of self-determination, that identity may be defined by others.

Observations

- The Ashton community has many valuable assets—the new North Fremont High School, a state-of-the-art nursing home, dedicated community leaders, and unmatched natural resources.
- Ashton appears to be a community searching for a single identity; it currently has several “identities” (farming community, recreational hub, etc.).
- Ashton faces many challenges that commonly plague small towns, including keeping up the appearance of the community and providing access to recreational and social activities for all ages.
- Ashton has the drive and assets to move forward to define itself and create a community that will be viable far into the future.

Recommendations

- Develop an identity that defines how Ashton sees itself before outsiders create an identity for Ashton.
- Capitalize on Ashton’s current assets—use the new high school to its fullest potential, tap into local talent, build upon momentum created with the new nursing home and emergency services center.
- Find solutions that solve multiple issues at once. For instance, soliciting specific types of businesses can help fill empty storefronts on Main Street and provide jobs and local shopping or activities.

Land-Use Planning: This team examined land-use applications in the city and the surrounding area of city impact and looked at how this will affect future land-use planning and other issues.

Observations

- Ashton is a well-planned community with a solid central core of schools, churches, and community facilities located in or adjacent to the community center.
- Growth for the Ashton community is inevitable; this growth may threaten past planning efforts.
- Ashton’s historical land use faces current challenges and potential threats.
- The city’s planning tools and capacity, including planning and zoning ordinances and the city’s comprehensive plan, need to be updated.
- Overall the infrastructure in the City of Ashton is keeping up with demands; Ashton has been aggressive in planning the upgrade and maintenance of the water and sewer systems.

Recommendations

- Use proactive collaborative and strategic growth management principles.
- Learn from the experience (mistakes) of other upper valley communities by putting in place tools needed to direct growth and preserve community identity.
- Coordinate and cooperate with local, county, state, and regional governments and planning agencies to mold future growth into something the community can, and would like to, sustain.

Other Areas of Focus: The visiting team also identified broader issues, or challenges, that appeared as recurring themes throughout the review and appear as such throughout this document. Some of these issues specifically align with one or more focus areas, while others do not. These issues are:

- Communication
- Community Identity
- Economic Development
- Long-Term Strategic Planning
- Partnerships
- Inclusiveness

Many of these issues overlap or build upon each other. For example, communication is not an issue just for communication’s sake, but is a key component of developing a community identity, including all citizens in community life, developing partnerships, and implementing economic development and strategic planning. Similarly, community identity is not an issue that stands alone, but is key in long-term planning and in capitalizing on economic development opportunities. These issues are touched upon throughout this report; strategies for addressing these are discussed in detail in Part III.

Part I. Introduction and Overview

The Community Review is a partnership between local host communities and visiting teams made of individuals from the public (local, state, and federal), tribal, private, and non-profit sectors. Visiting teams use their expertise to assess identified issues within a community and provide feedback to that community for it to use to increase its own vitality and wealth.

The visiting team for the Ashton review was composed primarily of individuals from southeast Idaho (Blackfoot, Rexburg, Idaho Falls, Malad, Montpelier, Island Park, Pocatello), so they were able to provide “outside” perspectives while still being intimately familiar with the region and its resources and challenges. They brought ideas and perspective from their own communities to share with Ashton. The visiting team worked closely with a home team, who provided a wealth of local information and served as the visiting team’s hosts. While the visiting team offers its observations and recommendations, it is up to the home team and all residents of greater Ashton to work toward fulfilling the goals the community has set for itself.

Community Review Process

The first Idaho Community Review took place in Heyburn, Idaho, in 2000. Since then, 11 additional communities have undergone review; Ashton is the 12th. A Community Review is initiated by the community seeking review through completing a Community Review application (Appendix A; available online at <http://irp.idaho.gov/CommunityReview/tabid/221/Default.aspx>). Community Reviews are available to communities with populations of up to 10,000.

When an application is received, it is reviewed and a core Community Review team visits the community to meet with officials and gather additional information. If the application is accepted, several months of planning lead up to the actual review visit. During the advance planning stage, review leaders visit the community to help identify and articulate local needs, clarify roles and expectations, and develop a sense of the expertise needed in visiting team members to best serve the community.

The actual review visit takes place over a period of two to three days. (In Ashton, the review took place October 25 - 27, 2005.) During this period, a visiting team of approximately 20 - 25 individuals converges on the community. These individuals immerse themselves in specific focus areas (usually three) as identified by the community. The visiting team is divided into core groups (one for each focus area), each escorted by a home team, made of individuals with local expertise in the area of that group’s focus. In Ashton, the three areas of focus identified by the community were:

- Arts, Historic, and Recreation Resources
- Community Design and Identity
- Land-Use Planning

The result of this collaboration is a mirror, or “sounding board,” for the host community. Visiting team members listen, observe, question, and interact with community residents and leaders, then develop observations, recommendations, and a list of resources available to the community based on the three areas of focus. These results are communicated to the community in a variety of ways:

- An oral presentation, with plenty of time for community questions, comments, and interaction, presented the last evening of the review and open to all members of the community.
- A written report (this document) containing the same general information as the presentation, but in greater detail, to be used as a tool to help remind the community of its many assets and provide recommendations and resources to better utilize those assets and manage local challenges.

- A formal presentation of the final written report to the community. Within three to four months of the review, members of the visiting team return to the community with 100 copies of the printed report and present the document to the community. The report presentation often takes place during a regularly scheduled city council meeting. Community Review co-chairs give a short oral presentation, where they summarize the report and highlight action items for the community.

In-Kind Value

The in-kind value of each review varies and is always substantial. It is the equivalent of hiring a professional consulting firm of 20 - 25 experts in land-use planning, economic/community development, tourism, facilitation, infrastructure, communication, and other fields of expertise for two to three days of focused on-site work (14 hour days are typical), plus weeks and months of work before and after the review by a core group of team leaders who plan the review, prepare the report, and follow up with the community. In addition, those experts open themselves to continual follow-up: a community can call any member of its visiting team at any time to seek advice or clarification. Travel and lodging costs are also assumed by the visiting team, as is the cost of preparing and printing the final report.

At standard billing rates for visiting team members, plus travel costs for 20 - 25 individuals, the total in-kind value to a community generally exceeds \$50,000 - \$75,000. The net cost to the community is limited to providing meals for visiting (and often home) team members for two days, local tour transportation, and meeting space, plus the time (paid and volunteer) of home team members. Community volunteers, businesses, and civic organizations often donate many of the local out-of-pocket expenses.

Ashton Community Review Organization and Schedule

On October 25, 2005, 24 community development professionals descended upon Ashton to begin the on-the-ground phase of the Ashton Community Review. However, the Community Review process actually began much earlier with Ashton's decision to apply for a Community Review, and subsequent submission of its application, in 2004. In its application, the City of Ashton asked to review team to look at three core interest areas: Arts, Historic, and Recreation Resources; Community Design and Identity; and Land-Use Planning.

Pre-Review Planning

Prior to the October community visit by the entire visiting team, a core group of organizing team members visited Ashton on two occasions to meet with community leaders, plan the review, and help the community define and clarify its goals and expectations.

Community Review Survey

In preparation for the on-the-ground review, a five-page survey was made available to Ashton residents in September 2005 (Appendix B). The survey asked respondents to rate 75 community features and resources as well as share thoughts on strengths, assets, challenges, and problems facing the City of Ashton. Copies of the survey were available to Ashton residents at businesses throughout the community and were randomly distributed to households within the city. Seventy-eight useable surveys were returned; 57 by people who live within the city limits of Ashton and 20 by people who live in Fremont County, but not in Ashton (one person did not respond to this question). The 57 surveys completed by Ashton city citizens represent 5% of Ashton's population. The limited number of responses and lack of a random sample prevent survey results from being generalized to reflect the views of the population of Ashton as a whole.

While many community features received high ratings (Table 1), well over half of the community features listed in the survey received mean (average) satisfaction ratings below the mid-point (4.0) of the

satisfaction scale used in the survey (7 = very good, 1 = very poor) (Table 2). Written comments¹ covered many subjects, but several themes were prevalent (Table 3). Complete survey results and comments can be found in Appendix B.

Table 1. Highest Rated Community Features*

Community Feature
Condition of School Buildings
Quality of City Library
Friendliness of Residents
Banking and Financial Services
Fire Protection
Involvement of Churches in Community
Traffic Conditions
Ambulance Services
Quality of Elementary Education

*Features with a mean (average) rating over 5.0 (7.0 is “Very Good”).

Table 2. Lowest Rated Community Features*

Community Feature
Condition of Rental Housing
Availability of Doctors
Recreation for Adults
Availability of Rental Housing Options
Local Arts and Cultural Opportunities
Vocational Education – Job Training Opportunities
Higher Education Opportunities
Availability of Local Jobs
Quality of Available Local Jobs
Recreation for Teenagers
Availability of Mental Health Care
Variety of Local Industry
Entertainment Options
Public Transit

*Features with a mean (average) rating less than 3.0 (1.0 is “Very Poor”).

Table 3. Common Themes in Written Comments*

Theme
Need new/more/better-paying jobs
Need new/more businesses (shopping, restaurants)
Need to improve the look of the town, especially Main Street
Need more/better recreational opportunities, especially for youth
Need to resolve issues surrounding old high school
Need city planning to deal with coming growth
New residents are driving up housing costs
Water issues – quantity, quality, pressure

*See pages 69 – 70 for all written comments

¹ The written comments discussed in this report represent 20 of the 78 surveys returned. The remaining 58 surveys were accidentally destroyed before the answers could be compiled.

Review Week

Visiting team members arrived in Ashton the afternoon and evening of Tuesday, October 25, and most stayed through the evening of October 27, departing the morning of October 28. Visiting team leaders stayed through the morning of October 28 to begin work on this report, conduct follow-up activities, and take additional photos. A detailed itinerary can be found in Appendix C.

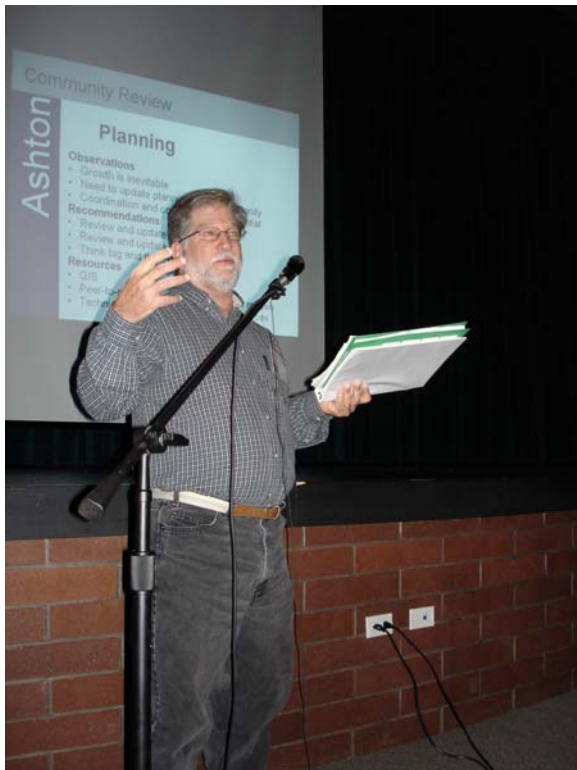
Tuesday, October 25

Community Review participants and community leaders met for an “ice-breaker” session Tuesday evening. Together, the home and visiting teams were able to further define and clarify goals and expectations, and the team members for each of the three areas of focus were able to get to know one another and begin the process of answering questions and sharing information, concerns, and successes.

Wednesday, October 26

Team members and community leaders met Wednesday morning for breakfast, then the three focus area teams spent the day on separate tours of community—each focusing on areas and issues pertinent to that team’s focus area. Team members took available opportunities to visit with residents during their tours, and met with business owners, service organizations, high school students, and others.

Following a dinner at the Ashton Opera House, Mayor Teddy Stronks presented a *State of the City* address and members of the community had the opportunity to share their views with visiting team members. The meeting was advertised to the public through a letter sent to city residents, the city’s Web site, personal invitations to several service organizations, a news article, and fliers distributed throughout town and to school children (Appendix D); approximately 10 community members participated in the meeting. Specific comments from community members are highlighted in *Areas of Consensus and Contention* and *Challenges and Opportunities Identified and Expressed by the Community* and in *Part II, Team Reports*, as they relate to specific focus areas.



Land Use Planning visiting team member Steve Ernst presents observations at Thursday’s town hall meeting

Thursday, October 27

Visiting team members spent the day discussing and distilling the information gathered on Wednesday. The visiting team as a whole discussed issues and themes that were found to be common to all focus areas. Each focus group developed a brief outline of their observations and recommendations and prepared presentations that were given to the public, community leaders, and home team members at a town hall type meeting Thursday evening. Approximately 50 Ashton citizens attended Thursday’s meeting, which was advertised in conjunction with Wednesday night’s meeting (see above). A lively question and answer session followed the presentations; cookies and punch were served afterwards and community members had the opportunity to visit with visiting team members one-on-one.

Friday, October 28

Visiting team leaders met the morning of October 28 to discuss additional needs and the outline for this report. By noon, all visiting team members had begun their treks home.

Home Team Makeup and Contribution

For the most part, home team members represented a cross-section of the community: men and women, business owners and farmers, employees and retirees, local leaders, community volunteers. Nevertheless, some segments of the Ashton community appeared to be missing: county commissioners, members of the local Hispanic population, and representatives of the school board. However, it was brought to the visiting team’s attention that the Ashton girls’ soccer team was away at the state tournament during this review, and many families had traveled to support them. This may account for some of the missing groups.

Many of the home team members donated their time and resources—some took vacation from work to participate and others provided the use of their personal vehicles. The city, with assistance from home team members, provided meeting rooms, tour transportation, refreshments and meals (often cooking and serving the meals themselves) for visiting and home team members, and refreshments for local residents at the public meeting held the evening of October 27. A list of businesses and organizations who provided monetary and in-kind contributions to the review process can be found on the inside front cover of this document.

Table 4. Ashton Community Review Home Team

Coordinating Team	
Mayor Teddy Stronks*	Mayor of Ashton, driving force behind the Community Review, has served on the Ashton city council since 1988, Rotary club member, local business owner.
Joni Amen	Ashton City Clerk and Treasurer, key player in planning Community Review.
Suzette Bollinger	Energy analyst and cell phone representative for Fall River Electric; former city councilperson, active in community service and church.
Bryan Hutton	Ashton Gem Team chairperson
Toni Kingsley	Ashton Deputy City Clerk, key player in coordinating Community Review.
Jori Lenz	
Paula Toenjes	Gem Team secretary, artist.
Arts, Historic, and Recreation Resources Team	
JoAnn Anderson*	
Sherri Davidson*	Piano teacher and substitute teacher, high school Booster Club member, Parent Teacher Partners Committee, Junior Miss Committee.
Jane Daniels	City of Ashton archivist, Island Park archivist, on Island Park Gem Committee and Island Park Library Board, provided tour of archives.
Tom Howell	Farmer and local business owner, historian, Ashton Seed Growers’ Association board member, Snake River Farmers’ Association board member, Idaho State Heritage Trust Foundation board of trustees member, provided talk on history of Ashton.
Robin Jenkins	U.S. Forest Service Recreation Technician, provided tour of Mesa Falls Byway.
Portia Loosli	
Community Design and Identity Team	
Letha Whitmore*	Local business owner, on Ashton’s Tree Committee, former Ashton Planning and Zoning Commission member.
Christine Dexter	On Ashton’s Tree Committee and Centennial Committee.
Lacey Eckberg	Fremont/Clark Counties Economic Development Director.
Sheila Kellog Center	Ashton Living Center Administrator, Rotary Club member, former Idaho Health Care Association board member, ECIPDA** board member, provided tour of Ashton Living Center.
Robin Rivas	
Ross Wynn	Retired business owner.
Thayle Wynn	Retired business owner.

Land-Use Planning Team	
John Jorgensen*	Retired, former city councilman, member of the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, Education Foundation, Independent Order of Odd Fellows, North Fremont High School Booster Club, and American Legion; Chair of the Library Board; active in church activities.
Kurt Eidam	Local business owner, Ski Race Committee Ambassador, Chamber of Commerce board member, Fremont County Planning and Zoning Commission member, Ashton Tree Community committee member.
Jerry Funke	Retired rancher, current Fremont County Planning and Zoning Commission member, Yellowstone Business Partnership board member, provided Community Review transportation.
Leon Martindale	Cemetery sexton; retired farmer, ski instructor, and Ashton Fish Hatchery employee; current Ashton City Planning and Zoning Commission member; active in church and community events.
Al Staub	Retired business owner, former city councilman and planning and zoning commissioner, Ashton visitor's center founder, former visitor's center manager and volunteer.
Kathy Stegelmeier	Retired business owner, Ashton Planning and Zoning Commission member, Ashton Economic Development Council board member, Chamber of Commerce board member/officer.
* Focus team leaders	
** Eastern-Central Idaho Planning and Development Association	

Visiting Team Makeup and Contribution

Visiting team members represented a diverse mix of professionals from the public, private, and non-profit sectors. They included federal, state, and local government representatives; experts in housing, tourism, labor, and planning; and private consultants, to name a few. All visitors' time was donated, along with their travel and lodging costs.

This significant investment represents an in-kind match toward a community's planning efforts and should be an incentive for community leaders and residents to make the best possible use of the review process and product. This is the equivalent of hiring a 24-member consulting firm for the cost of meals and local tours only. The key team members for the Ashton Community Review are listed in Table 5. Brief biographies of visiting team members can be found in Appendix E.



The Arts, Historic, and Recreation Resources visiting team demonstrates its commitment to a quality review.

Table 5. Ashton Community Review Visiting Team

	Title	Affiliation	Phone	Email
Coordinating Team				
Brian Dale*	Operations Specialist	U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development	208-334-1088 x3005	brian_dale@hud.gov
Dale Dixon*	Executive Director	Idaho Rural Partnership	208-334-3131	dale.dixon@irp.idaho.gov
Erik Kingston	Housing Resources Coordinator	Idaho Housing and Finance Association	208-331-4706	erikk@ihfa.org
Amy Luft	Environmental Ed. Coord./Outreach Specialist	Idaho Department of Environmental Quality	208-373-0478	amy.luft@deq.idaho.gov
Monica Massarand	Management Consultant	Interaction Consulting	208-861-8834	mmassarand@prodigy.net
Vickie Winkel**	Administrative Assistant	Idaho Rural Partnership	208-334-3131	vickie.winkel@irp.idaho.gov
Arts, Historic, and Recreation Resources Team				
Hank Ebert*	Rural Development Specialist	Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor: Commerce	208-34-2650 x 2141	hank.ebert@community.idaho.gov
Richard Juengling*	Administrative Support Manager	Idaho Office on Aging	208-334-3833	djuengli@aging.idaho.gov
Kyle Babbitt	Gem Team Chair	City of Island Park	208-745-0750	kbabbitt@cableone.net
Louis Clements	Board Member	International Folk Dance Festival	208-356-7030	dhcljc@yahoo.com
ReNea Nelson	Grant Analyst	Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor: Tourism***	208-362-0726	nelson0726@msn.com
David Pennock	Executive Director	Museum of Idaho	208-522-1400 x 3008	david.pennock@museumofidaho.org
Community Design and Identity Team				
Janie Gebhardt*	Pastor	First Congregational United Church of Christ	208-232-3056	janiegebhardt@cableone.net
Tom Putnam*	Program Planning & Dev. Specialist	Partners for Prosperity	208-785-0059	tomp@p4peid.org
Gale Harding	Madison County Extension Educator	University of Idaho Extension	208-356-3191	gharding@uidaho.edu
Tom Jenkins	City Council Member	Malad City	(435) 863-4825	tom.jenkins@atk.com
Blair Kay	City Clerk	City of Rexburg	208-359-3020	blairk@rexburg.org
Shawn Larsen	Mayor	City of Rexburg	208-359-3020 x328	mayor@rexburg.org
Knut Meyerin	Regional Director	US Senator Larry Craig	208-523-5541 x10	knut_meyerin@craig.senate.gov
Land-Use Planning Team				
Kurt Hibbert*	City Planner	City of Rexburg	208-359-3020 x 314	kurth@rexburg.org
Delverne Seaman*	Community Development	Partners for Prosperity	208-785-0059	delvernes@p4peid.org

	Title	Affiliation	Phone	Email
	Specialist			
Ben Eborn	Teton County Extension Educator	University of Idaho Extension	208-354-2961	beborn@uidaho.edu
Steve Ernst	County Planner	Bannock County	208-236-7230 x 7233	stevee@co.bannock.id.us
Chris Henderson	City Council Member	City of Montpelier	208-847-8881	montcity@dcdi.net
Glen Pond	Regional Community Manager	Utah Power	208-359-4285	glen.pond@pacificcorp.com
<p>* Focus team leaders **Did not travel to Ashton ***Ms. Nelson is no longer with the Department of Commerce and Labor. She can be reached at the phone number and email address provided above.</p>				

Community Description

Ashton, Idaho, is a community of farmers, loggers, and businesspeople; leaders and followers; individualists and conformists...yet all of these individuals and entities come together to genuinely form a “community.” The whole of Ashton is truly greater than the sum of its parts.

Ashton is a small town. As of 2004, the population within the City of Ashton was 1,126; however, the “community” of Ashton encompasses many more people than are seen through census figures. County residents surrounding Ashton are active members of the Ashton community—they shop, get their mail, work, attend church, go to school, provide leadership, and participate in community events in Ashton.

The population of the City of Ashton has remained relatively stable for many years: between 1970 and 2004, the net change in population was -61 people. However, Fremont County is growing: between 1970 and 2004, the net change in population was +3,553. While some of this growth in Fremont County is in other communities, growth is also occurring just outside of the city limits of Ashton. The population of Fremont County, as a whole, is expected to grow from 12,667 in 2005 to over 17,000 residents by 2030.

Ashton lies in the northeast corner of southern Idaho, 50 miles from Yellowstone National Park and 39 miles from Grand Teton National Park. This proximity to Yellowstone National Park is largely responsible for the founding of the City of Ashton. While Mormon pioneers had been settling in the area since the late 1890s, and the town of Marysville, just east of Ashton, had been established, the City of Ashton was founded in 1906 to accommodate a train depot and other facilities to extend an existing rail line from St. Anthony to Yellowstone National Park to accommodate foreseen waves of tourists.

While tourism was the impetus for bringing the railroad through what would become the City of Ashton, facilities were soon added for shipping lumber, livestock, and agricultural products as well. The railroad provided farmers with a means to



Ashton touts itself as the “World’s Largest Seed Potato Producing Area”

get their products to market. Seed potatoes, in particular, became a significant export from the Ashton area. In fact, Ashton boasts of being the “World’s Largest Seed Potato Producing Area”; however, the number of acres in seed potato production have decreased by approximately 50% since this claim was first made (from about 15,000 acres to about 7,500 acres), so this moniker may no longer be accurate.

Rail passenger service to West Yellowstone was discontinued in the 1960s and the tracks to West Yellowstone were removed in the 1970s; rail tracks from Ashton to the Teton Valley were removed in 1990.

Agriculture, tourism, and logging have provided much of the economic base for Ashton and the surrounding community. However, times are changing. Agriculture is becoming less and less profitable, and increasingly agricultural land is being converted to other uses. Economic and cultural changes have caused a significant decrease in the timber harvest near Ashton; only one timber mill remains open in the entire county. Lastly, bigger, faster highways mean that tourists on their way to Yellowstone and Teton National Parks and fishing in the Henry’s Lake area frequently speed through Ashton without stopping.

Community Expectations

The City of Ashton requested the Community Review team look at three focus areas within the community:

- 1.) Land-Use Planning, including:
 - Area of impact and annexation issues
 - Planning wisely for growth
 - Zoning ordinances
 - Comprehensive planning
 - Technical improvements (GIS – software improvements)
- 2.) Community Design and Identity, including:
 - How to capitalize on Ashton’s marketing slogan of “Gateway to Adventure!” and make it more recognizable as referring to Ashton.
 - How to draw tourists and advertise nearby scenic byways.
- 3.) Arts, Historic, and Recreation Resources, including:
 - Investigating the possibility of making Ashton THE trailhead for a thousand miles of snow machine trails.
 - Investigating the possibility of enhancing the new/future “Rails to Trails” trail to the Teton Valley.
 - Investigating the possibility of developing a town museum.
 - Looking at how to enhance Ashton’s archives.
 - Looking to potential activities for youth.

In its own words, the City of Ashton requested the Community Review in hopes that:

It would bring together different groups to work together towards a common goal and improve the city, together. Also help obtain new ideas in effective planning for our future. A review from the outside would perhaps shine the light on areas of potential that are being overlooked.

And

It would give suggestions on GIS mapping software and other tools available to help us with land-use planning or what other technical tools our city would be benefited from.

Previous and Current Planning Efforts, Grants, and Community Projects

The City of Ashton, Fremont County, local businesses, and various other entities have been proactive in working together to secure grants and have begun efforts to plan for, and manage, anticipated growth.

Planning

Fremont County, with participation from the City of Ashton and other cities within the county, has been working on a 2005-2006 countywide transportation plan (under contract with J-U-B Engineers, Inc.). The transportation plan is being funded with federal and local funds to determine future transportation routes, pathways, and standards for new roads.

Fremont County also produced an area of impact map for the City of Ashton, which shows proposed impact area zoning for the city. In addition to the area of impact map, the city is working on plans for a trailhead (called the “Wye”) adjacent to an old railbed that will be used as part of the “Rails-to-Trails” program. The city hopes to apply for grants to build a parking lot, restrooms, and a small park at the trailhead.

The *Mesa Falls Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan* was completed in December 2005². This plan was produced on behalf of the Mesa Falls Scenic Byway Committee, which includes six advisors from the City of Ashton (some of which also served as Community Review home team members). The plan contains recommendations and strategies to enhance the economic growth, vitality, and tourism potential for Ashton, many of which mirror or complement the recommendations and strategies found in this report. It is recommended that the corridor management plan be used in conjunction with this report and that recommendations that appear in both be strongly considered, as weight should be given to the fact that two separate review/planning processes, conducted by different entities, reached many of the same conclusions.

Grants

In 2002, Ashton was awarded \$21,000 to complete a study to evaluate the condition and efficiency of the city’s wastewater collection and treatment facilities. This grant was matched by the city. Ashton has recently completed the study and is in the process of meeting recommendations for upgrading its system.

Construction of the Ashton Memorial Nursing Home was also partially supported through grant monies. The nursing home is currently the city’s largest employer, and provides over 50 jobs. It also provides a much-needed service of caring for seniors in a familiar, local setting, with familiar, local caregivers.

A local teacher applied for, and received, a grant for nearly \$200,000 to purchase physical education equipment for the new North Fremont High School. The facility and equipment are available for public use.

The Ashton Pool Committee was awarded a grant to replace the swimming pool boiler. This has drastically cut heating costs, thereby saving the city money, and will help the city maintain the pool as a resource for youth and adults alike.

The City of Ashton received a grant to help re-sign the city to meet new state regulations. With grant monies, the city was able to replace street name signs and posts as well as traffic signs.

Prior to the Community Review application, an area citizen had prepared a grant application to open a new museum in Ashton, focusing on military vehicles and snow machines. While the grant application was not successful, this type of forward thinking should be commended and encouraged in the future.

² Planmakers, Inc. and J-U-B Engineers, Inc. 2005. *Mesa Falls Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan*. Boise, ID. The plan (7.5 mb) can be accessed electronically at <http://itd.idaho.gov/planning/reports/scenic/FullMesaFallsPlan.pdf>.

Community Projects

Ashton's Tree Committee worked with the Urban Renewal Commission and the City of Ashton to beautify Main Street by replacing dead trees, planting flowers in the beds at the base of the trees, and building a drip irrigation system to water the trees. The group also installed conduit for future new streetlights along Main Street (pending funding).

Ashton hosts several community events each year, which not only build community pride and cohesiveness, but also bring tourism dollars into the area. The three primary events are the American Dog Derby (February), the Mesa Falls Marathon (August), and the Ashton Cattle Drive (October). In addition, the city is planning many events to celebrate Ashton's centennial in 2006; most events will occur around the Independence Day holiday.



Ashton's American Dog Sled Derby was founded in 1917

Areas of Consensus and Contention

As individuals, Ashton citizens hold a variety of views on many subjects. While these views are diverse, a few continually arose as issues that nearly everyone agreed upon or that nearly everyone agreed that there was disagreement.

The first area of consensus appears to be that growth is coming to Ashton and northern Fremont County and that something needs to be done—fast!—to manage that growth before Ashton is changed against its will. While not everyone agrees exactly how to manage that growth, the community appeared to be in overwhelming agreement that growth is coming and something needs to be done before it's too late.

The Ashton community expressed great pride in three relatively new facilities, all of which came about as a result of partnerships, hard work, and negotiation: the new high school, Ashton Memorial Nursing Home, and the new emergency services building. All three facilities are state-of-the-art and are deserving of the pride accorded to them.

However, construction of the new high school has had an unforeseen and unfortunate consequence that has truly divided the community: the proposed demolition of the old high school. While not an issue specifically addressed by the Community Review team, this issue came up repeatedly during discussions with Ashton citizens and has also been featured prominently in local media. Many citizens expressed frustration with the process used to make this decision and also provided ideas of how this building could be used. While this issue is outside of the purview of the Community Review team, the issue of communication (an underlying issue of the high school debate) is addressed below (see *Challenges and Opportunities Observed by the Visiting Team*) and some of the ideas for the use of the old high school and/or the land it sits on are presented later.

An additional area of contention that affects the City of Ashton and that was frequently heard by visiting team members, but technically is a Fremont County issue, is a county planning and zoning ordinance requiring that a parcel of productive agricultural ground stand idle for 10 years before it can be developed into small parcels. While the intent of the ordinance was to prevent excessive subdividing of agricultural land, citizens expressed frustration that they felt it prevented locals from profiting from their own land. Similar scenarios were told to many visiting team members: a local farmer can no longer profit from farming his land and needs to sell it to make ends meet; he does not have the means to let it sit idle for 10 years. Therefore, outside interests (with enough money to afford the wait) purchase the agricultural land

at a fraction of what it will be worth in 10 years, then wait for the time to pass and subdivide the land: the “outside middle man” makes the profit, not the local farmer who has owned the land for generations and is part of the community.

A third area of contention also lies outside of the city’s purview, but again affects community residents. Fortunately, as of the writing of this report, this issue has mainly been resolved. An old railbed from Ashton to Tetonia is being developed under the Rails-to-Trails program, and the City of Ashton is working on plans for a trailhead for that new trail in the City of Ashton. The railbed runs through partially though private property, and some landowners had declined to grant right-of-way to the trail, citing concerns over liability, litter, and vandalism. This has been an issue of contention between those who support the trail for its economic and recreational benefits and those who wish to keep their private property private. However, agreements have been reached and signed with five of the six landowners who had reservations about the trail running through their land, and an alternative route is in place for the trail to bypass the one remaining trail segment. As the disputes have been settled, trail planning can proceed.

Challenges and Opportunities Identified and Expressed by the Community

Many challenges and opportunities were identified informally by citizens and formally by the city in its review application and pre-review process. Many of the challenges expressed by citizens in the pre-review survey and in discussions at town hall-type meetings were discussed above under *Areas of Consensus and Contention*. None of these issues were expressly identified by the city in its review application, and rightly so, as they are not city issues *per se*, but county, state, and school board issues that simply affect the city and its residents.

The city identified three areas of challenge/opportunity by choosing them as the areas of focus for the review. As identified above under *Community Expectations*, these three areas are **Arts, Historic, and Recreation Resources; Community Design and Identity**; and **Land-Use Planning**. Within these broad categories, the city identified the challenge of rapid growth, the need for local youth activities, and the desire to draw additional tourists into the community.

Two other main themes surfaced repeatedly in conversations with city leaders and citizens:

- The need for better communication among government and private entities and between those entities and community citizens (including those who live outside the city limits), and
- The need to provide high quality customer service and provide a welcoming atmosphere, especially to visitors and new residents.

Many other issues were broached by citizens in the community survey and at town hall-type meetings. These topics include:

The need ...

- For a city parks and recreation department
- To harness the potential for increased development along Highway 20 to entice tourists to stop
- To clean up town to improve a visitor’s first impression
- For rental properties
- To protect viewsheds
- For more local shopping and restaurants
- For adult education classes
- For better transportation to town from rural homes outside
- For jobs to keep youth from moving away and for on-the-job training programs
- For more cooperation among governments, but without overlap
- For more widespread involvement—a few are doing all the work
- For a community center that functions as such

Citizens also provided suggestions of solutions to some of the challenges they raised. Solutions included:

- Soliciting certain types of businesses (e.g., dry cleaners and handyman businesses) by advertising that Ashton needs them and would support new businesspeople will to locate those types of businesses in the community.
- Volunteering to fulfill some of the needs listed (e.g., one person said she might be willing to serve as a volunteer parks and recreation director).
- Offering many suggestions for use of the old high school to promote economic development, tourist services, and new businesses.
- Using the city's new Web page to its fullest potential to advertise Ashton to tourists and to potential businesspeople.

One positive aspect that was brought up and one that provides for additional opportunities is bringing the churches of all faiths together for projects. Citizens spoke of a progressive dinner that raised funds for a local charity that was jointly sponsored by a number of churches in town. This dinner was touted as a great success, not only in raising money but also in bringing together a variety of faiths. Additional opportunities abound for churches to work together for the common good of their parishioners and the community at large. A good start to this is an interfaith clergy group that currently exists. This group currently does not include members from all denominations; expansion to include all faiths is encouraged.

Challenges and Opportunities Observed by the Visiting Team

The visiting team observed many challenges and opportunities posed to the City of Ashton. Most of these issues fell into one of several recurring themes that the visiting team observed across all topics and areas of interest. These themes are:

Communication: How can different entities better communicate with each other? How can all entities better communicate with the public? How can businesses and citizens better communicate with, and welcome, visitors and new residents?

Community Identity: Where/what is Ashton? Where are its borders? The town core? City limits? Surrounding area? How does the community identify itself? Is Ashton a farm community? A recreational hub? What does it want to be? Can it be both? Is it a gateway to elsewhere or a destination of itself?

Economic Development: How can the community get/keep jobs to keep young people here? How can Ashton entice tourists to spend their dollars here?

Long-Term Strategic Planning: How can Ashton plan for and manage growth? Does it have the tools necessary for planning? For implementing plans? How can the city and county work together?

Partnerships: How can the city and others build upon current successful partnerships? How can they coordinate activities and planning? How can the city partner with and use the experiences of similar cities to help plan and implement plans?

Inclusiveness: Are all members of the community, regardless of age, race, religion, and length of residency, invited to participate in the life of the community and in making decisions that will affect the community's future? How can the city involve its youth, and other untapped groups, in community events, programs, and decision-making?

Follow-Through and Implementation

The visiting team issued a challenge to Mayor Stronks at the town hall meeting on October 27 to begin work immediately on two issues to be able to demonstrate progress by the time the visiting team returns to present this report in early 2006. These first two issues to be tackled are creating a Mayor's Youth Advisory Board and to improve communication with area citizens. These two items address two of the main issues observed by the visiting team: the need to get youth (and other uninvolved groups) more involved in the community and the need for improved communication with citizens and among governmental and service organizations (e.g., city government, county government, school board, service clubs, and committees).

Youth Advisory Board

In his January 11, 2006, report to the Ashton City Council on the accomplishments of 2005 (Appendix F), Mayor Stronks officially requested that the council and the community support the formation of a youth council to provide the city's youth with a voice in city decisions. Councilmember (and Community Review home team member) Jerry Funke voiced his support for this idea and the North Fremont High School government teacher reported he had spoken with several students and had received positive feedback on the idea.

Improve Communication

Even before the Community Review, efforts were underway to improve communication between the City of Ashton and its citizens. The City of Ashton recently launched its own Web page (www.cityofashton.com), which, while still under construction, already serves as a central location where residents and visitors alike can find information about what is happening in the community. The Web site is particularly important in communicating with members of the greater Ashton community who are not citizens of the City of Ashton, as many other methods of communication (e.g., newsletters in utility bills) only reach those who live within the city limits.

The Ashton Area Chamber of Commerce newsletter is another relatively new method of communicating with the greater Ashton community. While not specifically a means of the city communicating with its citizens, it is an excellent forum for community members to learn about what is happening in the area.



Home and visiting team members discuss challenges and opportunities over breakfast.

Part II. Team Reports

The following sections summarize the observations and recommendations of each of the three focus teams. The information and observations are based on team members' experiences during their two-day visit to Ashton; input from citizens provided during town hall meetings, in casual conversations, and through the written community survey; and additional information and observations gathered before and after the October community visit.

Each of the three team reports was prepared by the team assigned to that issue. Because of this, a certain amount of overlap appears among reports. When overlap occurs, this is an indication of the importance of an issue. This is the case with the issue of Ashton's identity. Both the Arts, Historic, and Recreation Resources team and the Community Design and Identity team delve into this subject in some depth, but from slightly different perspectives. The repetition of this theme in both sections remains in this report in an effort to keep both team's observations and recommendations intact and emphasizes the need to address this issue from a community standpoint and from a tourism marketing standpoint. In other instances, different team reports may recommend different ways of resolving the same issue. There are always many ways of approaching an issue; these apparently "competing" solutions offer different opportunities for Ashton. It is up to the community to choose the path that is right for it.

Arts, Historic, and Recreation Resources

The Arts, Historic, and Recreation Resources team analyzed Ashton's cultural and recreational life. The team was asked to recommend ways for the community to develop opportunities for visitors and tourists to spend more time and money in the Ashton area as they travel on their way to or from Yellowstone National Park, Harriman State Park, Henry's Lake, and other regional attractions. The team was also asked to recommend ways to maintain and perpetuate existing amenities and develop additional assets for the benefit the community's residents.

Thus, the team's scope was very broad. As team members began visiting with members of the community, it quickly became apparent that there are several related (and sometimes overlapping) issues with which the community was seeking help. The numerous issues, comments, and concerns fell into five major areas (discussed in detail on the following pages):

- History and Heritage
- Tourism Development
- Recreation
- Arts and Cultural Resources
- Youth Activities

Even some of these topics overlap each other. For example, there are overlapping issues between recreation and tourism development, between recreation and youth activities, and between tourism development and history and heritage. The visiting team found the fact that these issues overlap is an indication of their importance to the future of the community.

It should come as no surprise that the Ashton area has many assets. The potential exists for developing additional assets and amenities for its residents and visitors if its residents, business owners, civic organizations, and leaders choose to do so. In deciding how, and if, Ashton chooses to develop its many assets, Ashton needs to decide how it sees itself and what it wants to become (also see *Community Design and Identity*, page 32). Currently, Ashton markets itself as the "Gateway to Adventure!" While Ashton certainly is a gateway to recreational opportunities elsewhere, it can also become a recreational destination in its own right, if it so chooses and then follows through with appropriate development and marketing strategies.

General Community Comments and Concerns

In addition to providing its own observations, the team also solicited input and observations from Ashton citizens via conversations with individuals during the two-day visit and via a pre-visit community survey. Below is a summary of the issues identified by the City of Ashton for the review, as well as positive attributes seen by Ashton citizens and the citizens' analysis of Ashton's needs and challenges, as they relate to the theme of arts, historic, and recreation resources.

Issues Identified by the City of Ashton:

- Making Ashton THE trailhead for a thousand miles of snow machine trails
- Enhancing the new/future "Rails to Trails" trail to the Teton Valley
- Developing a town museum
- Enhancing Ashton's archives
- Potential activities for youth

Positive Attributes Identified by Community Members:

- Beautiful scenery
- Great recreational options: camping facilities, fishing, hiking, outdoor experiences
- Gateway to outdoors
- Appealing storefronts along Main Street

Needs and Challenges Identified by Community Members:

- Need recreation, entertainment, and social events, especially for youth and young adults
- Need to beautify city buildings, Main Street, and neighborhoods
- Need to improve the look of old buildings
- Need more local businesses
- Need to improve the gateway on the south end of town

General Visiting Team Observations

The most striking observation of the visiting team was the many, many assets of the Ashton area: scenery, location, hardworking citizens, outdoor recreational opportunities, and more. The potential exists for developing additional assets and amenities for community residents and visitors if residents, business owners, civic organizations, and leaders choose to do so.

History and Heritage: Community Archives and Hess Heritage Museum

The Ashton community archives and Hess Heritage Museum together document and represent much of the history of the Ashton area. These are tremendous resources to past, current, and future Ashton citizens, but also provide an attraction to visitors. Unfortunately, there are currently no plans for the long-term sustainability of these two facilities and the history they contain. Plans need to be formulated and implemented for long-term sustainability before the history represented in these two great efforts is lost.

Heritage preservation efforts commonly are implemented and sustained by one or a few very passionate and competent individuals. These persons often have a significant personal connection to the project and/or a passion for the local history. The difficult issue to confront is how these efforts will be sustained after the initiators of the projects are no longer involved. Often there is no one to carry on. More often than not, there is some interest in sustaining an effort or project, but without the same passion and dedication, the project slowly dies.

This is a potential problem facing both the Hess Heritage Museum and the Ashton Archives. Both projects are currently operated by dedicated, passionate, and highly personally involved individuals. While both projects have identified potential individuals to continue the work, the committee was not able to evaluate to what degree these plans were formulized or the level of interest and commitment by the persons who have expressed interest in sustaining these projects.

It is in the interest of the community to ensure the preservation of the local heritage that has been collected and made available to the public through the Hess Heritage Museum and the Ashton Archives and to sustain these projects through time. The value of these assets cannot be overstated.

Community Archives: Observations

The Ashton Community Archives and volunteer archivist Jane Daniels are tremendous assets to Ashton and the surrounding community. It will take the utmost care to maintain and preserve this treasure. The remarkable work of Ms. Daniels and other local volunteers received statewide recognition when Ms. Daniels received Idaho's *Esto Perpetua* award in October 2005. While Ms. Daniels and her volunteers are preserving the history of Ashton, the community needs to recognize the value of this work, and take steps to secure the future of the archives.

Community Archives: Recommendations

The community needs to develop a strategic plan that addresses the long-term goals of the project and begins identifying ways to sustain the project for the long-term. Building public support is crucial, and should take the form of continued city government support, county government support, sponsorship by a local or regional historical society, and a grassroots volunteer base. One step that may help in a small way with fiscal solvency would be establishing a fee system for users of the archives. The burden on current volunteers could potentially be lessened by obtaining the services of a Brigham Young University-Idaho (BYU-Idaho) college interns to assist. Obtaining a computer and related software could also help with the archiving process and decrease needed volunteer time.

Community Archives: Available Resources

- BYU-Idaho. Blaine Bake, Archivist. Rexburg, ID, (208) 496-2376.
- BYU-Idaho. Guy Hollingsworth, Director of Internships. Rexburg, ID, (208) 496-2290.
- Historical Records Advisory Board. Steven A. Walker, State Archivist. 2205 E. Penitentiary Rd., Boise, ID 83712, (208) 334-2620.
- Idaho State Historical Society. Steve Guerber. 1109 Main Suite 250, Boise, ID 83702-5642, (208) 334-2682, fax: (208) 334-2774, www.idahohistory.net.
- Museum of Idaho. David Pennock, Executive Director. 200 N. Eastern Ave., Idaho Falls, ID 83402, (208) 522-1400, www.museumofidaho.org.
- State Historic Preservation Office. 210 Main Street, Boise, ID 83702, (208) 334-3861.

Hess Heritage Museum: Observations

The Hess Heritage Museum is a treasure trove of information and artifacts about local history and, indeed, the history of Idaho and the West in general. It appears, however, that much of the information about the individual artifacts remains in the memory of the Hess family. If this is true, much of the historic value of



The Hess Heritage Museum brings history alive for its visitors.

the collection will be lost through time as the people who know the most about the artifacts are no longer available. There is concern about the sustainability of the museum—the museum as a whole, the individual artifacts, and the histories connected to those artifacts.

While the museum is potentially a huge educational and tourism resource for the area, and offers tremendous unrealized potential to tourism development in the region, it doesn't offer visitors the full range of facilities that one would expect to find at such an attraction. For example, there are no restaurants or souvenir shops connected with the museum.

Hess Heritage Museum: Recommendations

A strategic plan for the sustainability of the Hess Heritage Museum should be drafted and implemented. The financial resources and manpower that will be required to sustain the effort through time should be the major focus of the strategic plan. This effort should begin with candid conversations with all parties involved. Within that discussion, it is imperative that the interest levels and commitment to the time required to maintain and develop this valuable heritage asset be frankly evaluated.

Determine how the historical information about the artifacts at the Hess Heritage Museum is recorded. If there are hard copy or digital records, a plan needs to be developed and implemented to preserve those records. The knowledge about the artifacts that remains in the memory of the Hess family needs to be recorded. This could be accomplished through an intensive oral interview that is videotaped as Dr. and Dr. Hess walk through the collection and describe the artifacts. The interviewer needs to be well prepared, however, to ask the appropriate questions so that the pertinent information can be gleaned. The taped interview should then be transcribed. This initial effort should lead to a more formal cataloguing of the entire collection. Work with a volunteer or college intern to catalogue exhibits and store them in an appropriate place.

The Hess Heritage Museum should be developed into a major stop for tourists. Cultural tourism, such as can be generated through the Hess Museum, can be an important segment of a region's economy. Studies show that cultural tourists stay longer and spend more money than other tourists.

An aggressive vision should be articulated that could include an increase in services provided, a gift shop, and eating facilities, with all of these housed in or around the Hess farm. The museum could have the flavor of a living museum with people in period dress working period farm implements, demonstrating period crafts, offering carriage rides, and serving old fashioned lemonade, root beer, and baked potatoes from the "largest seed potato producing area in the world" in a restaurant or snack shop. A gift shop could provide the appropriate souvenirs and also items of interest for people traveling with their families. The center would need to be continually open throughout the tourist season. The Hess Museum should also be equipped to provide visitors with information about the lodging and retail opportunities in Ashton (the visitor's center could be located close by, see below) and act as a springboard for tourist activity in the community.

Coordinate a meeting with owners, appropriate Ashton representatives, and the local or state historical society to more clearly define the future direction of the museum. This may alleviate some of the "unknowns" that are present right now.

It is possible, if done aggressively enough and under the right management, that this endeavor could be accomplished as a private for-profit business run by the Hess family or others. If this were the case, a business plan would need to be drawn up and evaluated and the appropriate investment sought. Special attention would need to be paid to the preservation of the historical items.

Another possibility is that the facility could be run as a private non-profit organization. In this case, grants and tax-deductible donations could be sought. The facilities and land would need to be donated or leased by the Hess family to the non-profit organization. City participation is more likely and the income could be used to not only support the Hess Heritage Museum, but also other historical efforts such as the Ashton Archives.

Hess Heritage Museum: Available Resources

- Idaho Associations of Museums. Jody Ochoa. 610 N. Julia Davis Dr., Boise ID 83702.
- Idaho Humanities Council (grants). 217 West State Street, Boise, ID 83702, (208) 345-5346, www.idahohumanities.org.
- Idaho State Historical Society. Steve Guerber. 1109 Main Suite 250, Boise, ID 83702-5642, (208) 334-2682, fax: (208) 334-2774, www.idahohistory.net.

- Museum of Idaho. David Pennock, Executive Director. 200 N. Eastern Ave., Idaho Falls, ID 83402, (208) 522-1400, www.museumofidaho.org.
- State Historic Preservation Office. 210 Main Street, Boise, ID 83702, (208) 334-3861.

Tourism Development

Tourism is at the core of Ashton's history and it is an important part of its future. In fact, a new study shows that travel and tourism accounted for five percent of Idaho's gross state product in 2004 and will continue to provide an increasing share of the state's jobs and wages in years to come (Appendix G). Were it not for the railroads, and the Yellowstone-bound tourists they carried to Ashton a hundred years ago, the city would not be what it is today.

While outdoor recreation is already a key component of Ashton's economy, cultural tourism should not be overlooked. Refer to the section on the Hess Heritage Museum, above, for more observations, recommendations, and resources on cultural tourism.

Guided hunting and fishing trips are successful ventures and should continue to be capitalized on. However, hunting and fishing seasons are limited to certain times of the year and these activities may not appeal to everyone who lives near or is contemplating visiting the Ashton area. While these activities will continue to remain important components of the region's economy, there appears to be excellent opportunities to develop additional tourism opportunities as well, such as agricultural and ranch tourism, and guided wildlife, bird watching, photography, float, and recreational horseback riding trips. With abundant wildlife, two national wildlife refuges, and two national parks in the region, these activities have the potential to attract large, new, and diverse markets to Ashton.

Tourism Development: Observations

Ashton has an abundance of nearby tourism and recreational assets, such as Mesa Falls, Cave Falls, Warm River, and the Hess Heritage Museum, to name a few. The Ashton area's scenic vistas, rolling farm country, and nearby rivers and lakes already provide ample opportunities for fishing, hunting, wildlife watching, photography, snowmobiling, and boating. Harriman State Park, Henry's Lake State Park, St. Anthony Sand Dunes, Yellowstone National Park, and the Grand Teton National Park are also relatively close.

Though the region around Ashton is rich with agricultural land and farms, and there is at least one farm-based bed and breakfast establishment, there was not a large effort to use the rich agricultural heritage of the Ashton area to take advantage of opportunities for cultural tourism. In addition, Ashton does not take full advantage of its visitor's center or opportunities for signage.

Visitor's Center

Ashton's visitor's center and information kiosk are key assets, yet they are not nearly as helpful to tourists as they could be with some maintenance and updating. For example, much of the information on the outdoor kiosk is out-of-date and maps are faded or difficult to read. There appears to be different groups in charge of managing the visitor's center and the kiosks, even though the kiosks are on visitor's center property. When visitor's center volunteers were questioned about the kiosks, there appeared to be confusion or a lack of knowledge concerning who managed them and what types of information were available on the kiosks. The visitor's center is not open year-round, and the kiosks do not provide current or ample information, so travelers can't find services and information in the off seasons.



The Ashton visitor's center is located on Highway 20 near the north end of town; a more central location, near the turnoff to Highway 32, could provide greater benefit.

The location of the center may not encourage tourists to detour into Ashton. Assuming much of the tourist traffic on Highway 20 is north-bound, headed for Yellowstone National Park, it may not make sense to have the center on the north end of town, after the traffic has already passed the turn for Highways 32 and 47. As it is now, if travelers desire to return to town from the visitor's center, they would have to make a left turn onto busy Highway 20, then another left turn onto Highway 32. Most tourists will simply turn right and head for West Yellowstone. Signage advertising the visitor's center to southbound travelers appears too close to the center, and, again, travelers are required to turn left across traffic to enter the visitor's center and again to continue south.

Signage

Currently, the only sign informing travelers on Highway 20 that they are in a town is the State Transportation Department-installed *Ashton* sign located at the turnoff point to downtown. That sign is a signal for tourists to turn into downtown Ashton; however, tourists with little or no knowledge of the town have not been given any reason to turn and make that detour.

Hospitality

One area noted by visiting team members before and after the review involved customer service at local restaurants and lodging establishments. While in the company of city representatives, visiting team members received excellent service at local establishments. However, when visiting team members were alone and patronized local eateries, the service was noticeably different. Front-line staff were inattentive to customers and their needs and relatively uninformed or uninterested in local areas or events of interest to visitors.

Lodging in town proved a bit challenging, in that several local hotels/motels are closed during the winter. One hotel presented several surprises to guests: the alarm clocks had been removed from each room and several smoke alarms appeared disabled and were hanging by wires from the ceiling. Some guests were notified on check-in that they should unplug their phones before going to bed, since all calls to the front desk would ring through to guest rooms. This made wake-up calls impossible, and one guest who requested a "wake-up knock" noted that no one followed through. The issues of adequate lodging and consistent customer service are critical to Ashton's success, given the stated goal of increasing the tourism economy.

Tourism Development: Recommendations

Additional well-placed, visible, and attractive "Welcome to Ashton" entryway signs would be beneficial. These signs should be placed along Highway 20 for both northbound and southbound traffic. The city will need to decide the appropriate location of these signs: as one enters Ashton along the Highway 20 corridor (e.g., near the Super 8 motel on the north), or just before the intersection with Highway 32 to lead specifically to the city center. With the addition of a big archway, or other architectural or landscaping feature that highlights the entrance to the city center, the intersection with Highway 32 could attract a lot of attention and encourage travelers to stop in Ashton. *This recommendation of a sign and archway could be implemented immediately, with minimal effort, and yield immediate results.*

The old high school property near the intersection of Highways 20 and 32 would be an ideal location for a new visitor's center and park. It would encourage people to turn east onto Highway 32, where they can see signs welcoming them to Ashton and pointing the way to Yellowstone via the Mesa Falls Scenic Byway and other attractions. The sign should indicate the number of miles that would be added to the journey by taking that route.

A site near the Hess Heritage Museum on the southern approach to Ashton has also been recommended for an appropriate location for a new visitor's center (see above). Both properties would serve well; whichever property first becomes available for development for this purpose would be an improvement to the current location.

The Ashton Area Chamber of Commerce office should be relocated to the visitor's center, and a staff person should be hired to operate both facilities and coordinate volunteers for both organizations. Information on display in the visitor's center and kiosk should be routinely updated throughout the year. There needs to be coordination of site facilities for updates and maintenance. All active businesses in the area should be included on the business directory. Maps and directions to attractions in the kiosks (both indoor and outdoor) should be large, colorful, current, and easy to read. The hours of operation on the visitor's center should be well established, clearly posted, and well advertised through the Ashton area.

Tourists who stop at the visitor's center can learn about area attractions. However, there is little information available concerning what is in Ashton itself. Having more information on what is available in the community, such as retail, dining, and lodging establishments, may entice visitors to spend a little more time in the area. Consider what it is that makes someone pull off the freeway: is it information, a clean restroom with a changing station for parents with kids, a good cup of coffee or espresso, or the best ice cream soda in eastern Idaho? Perhaps it's a little of each. Signage should give people at least one good reason to slow down and stop for a visit. Understanding what people want—whether visiting from out of town, out of state, or from another culture—is critical if you want them to spend time and money in Ashton.

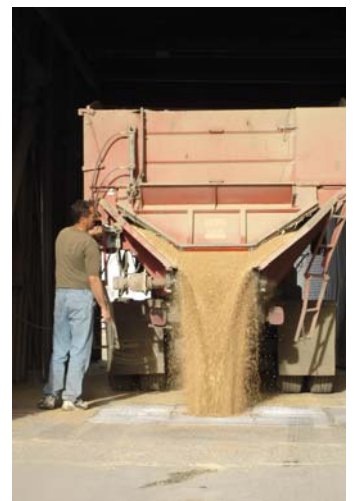
There are many excellent visitor's centers throughout Idaho that can be models for an Ashton area visitor's center. The Ashton Area Chamber of Commerce should visit visitor's centers in Idaho Falls, Mesa Falls, Harriman State Park, Twin Falls, and Mountain Home. The visitor's centers in Twin Falls and Mountain Home are largely staffed by well-trained volunteers under the supervision of staff. The Mountain Home visitor's center sells a wide variety of gifts and souvenirs, the proceeds of which are used to support the center's operations.

Ashton should develop a strategic tourism development and marketing plan. That activity should be undertaken by or coordinated with the Ashton Area Chamber of Commerce. The Ashton Area Chamber of Commerce should have a representative on the Yellowstone Teton Territory (YTT) regional travel organization (<http://www.yellowstoneteton.org>) and should update its tourism promotional materials in conjunction with YTT's regional tourism marketing efforts. Partnering with the Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor's Tourism Development Division is also strongly encouraged.

An important element of attracting tourism dollars is making the community attractive to visitors. Ashton received a downtown revitalization grant from the Idaho Department of Commerce in 1997. Before beginning new revitalization projects, delve into information from that grant to develop a better understanding of what was accomplished and what remains to be accomplished that was outlined in the grant materials. A copy of block grant application and the project benefits statement is likely to be in the City of Ashton's files and also may be obtained from the Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor's Economic Development Division at (208) 334-2740.

Ashton's downtown business district would benefit from additional beautification and other improvements. The city recently added trees and fixed some of the sidewalks along the Main Street. A continued concerted effort by the public and private sectors to improve building facades, occupy vacant buildings, recruit new retail businesses and offices, and provide amenities such as street lamps, benches, and flower planters, could result in a more appealing downtown, generate additional business, and help create new jobs. Ashton leaders should consider visiting nearby towns that have undergone successful downtown revitalization programs, such as Rupert, Driggs, Arco, Dubois, and St. Anthony.

Agricultural and ranch tours may be appealing to "city slickers" who want bona fide western experiences at working guest ranches and to visitors and tourists who want to learn more about potatoes and other crops that are important to the local economy. For example, tours that show how potatoes and other crops are



Ashton can benefit by marketing its agricultural heritage to tourists

cultivated, harvested, processed, packed, and shipped can bring national and international visitors to farms for a few hours at prearranged times during the year. Or, visitors may stay at working guest ranches for several days to a week throughout the year. Such experiences would provide farmers and ranchers with additional sources of income, showcase the area's important history and heritage, and offer additional reasons for visitors to stay in the Ashton area.

Ashton should build on the tourism potential of existing amenities and activities such as the Dog Derby, Mesa Falls Marathon, Cattle Drive, Mesa Falls Scenic Byway, and the abundant, high quality fishing opportunities. Additional activities could include organized nature hikes, fall foliage tours, an Ashton River regatta, rancher or farmer of the year awards, and many others. These assets and activities can be augmented by cycling and cross country skiing tours or races, and arts and crafts and music festivals. Such opportunities are limited only by one's imagination and one's ability to organize, manage, and market everything that Ashton has to offer.

Take advantage of Idaho Commerce and Labor's Tourism expertise in devising customer service training for all those who have front-line contact with the public. As the saying goes, "you only have one chance to make a first impression." Ashton might even consider a community-wide effort to develop an "Ashton Ambassador" program, with incentives for those who go the extra mile to make visitors welcome, promote area businesses, and let tourists know about local recreational opportunities. This could involve local high-school students (future employees), seniors, and others. Let visitors know you are proud to be from such a great small town, and give them a reason to come back. You never know if the customer in front of you is scouting a location for a movie, business relocation, large group event, or even a visit from royalty.

Tourism Development: Available Resources

- Center for Profitable Agriculture. Entertainment Farming Through School Tours. <http://cpa.utk.edu/level2/projecthighlights/projhigh-6.htm#entertainment>.
- Clements, Louis. Ideas and recommendations regarding promoting tourist use of area scenic drives or fall color tours. dhcljc@gobigwest.com.
- Entertainment Farming and Agri-Tourism bibliography. <http://www.cip-icu.ca/English/academic/omalley/refs.pdf>.
- Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor. Hospitality training. www.idahost.org.
- Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor, Idaho Travel Council Grant Program. Supports local and regional tourism marketing efforts. Carl Wilgus, Tourism Development Administrator, (208) 334-2470 or carl.wilgus@tourism.idaho.gov.
- Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor, Rural Community Peer Program. Possible mentors for maintaining and staffing the visitor's center. Gloria Mabbutt, (208) 334-2650 ext 2139 or gloria.mabbutt@community.idaho.gov.
- Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. 5657 Warm Springs Avenue, Boise, ID 83712-8752, (208) 334-4180, fax: (208) 334-3741, www.idahoparks.org.
- Idaho Department of Transportation. PO Box 7129, Boise, ID 83707-1129, (208) 334-8000, fax (208) 334-3858, www2.state.id.us/itd/planning.
- Idaho Outfitters and Guides Licensing Board. Offers guidance on the licensing requirements for companies and individuals that want to offer guided trips and services. (208) 327-7380, www2.idaho.gov/oglb.
- Idaho State Department of Agriculture. Farm and ranch tourism. Shelby Kerns. (208) 332-8678, <http://www.agri.idaho.gov/Categories/Marketing/12004farmranch.php>.
- Jefferson County Economic Development. Example of excellent county Web site. Hart, John P., Director. PO Box 275, Rigby, ID 83442, (208) 589-8811, jhart@co.jefferson.id.us, <http://www.gojefferson.org>.

- Keystone Agricultural Innovation Center. Agritourism/Entertainment Farming. <http://kaic.psu.edu/marketingoptions/agritourism.htm>.
- Kodak American Greenways Awards Program, a partnership project of the Eastman Kodak Company, The Conservation Fund, and the National Geographic Society. Provides small grants that could be used for photos and updates for the kiosk. www.conservationfund.org.
- National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service. Entertainment Farming and Agri-Tourism. <http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/entertainment.html>.
- National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse (NTEC). Assists in learning to use transportation enhancement funds to revitalize transportation. www.enhancements.org.
- Outfitters and Guides Association. Offers guidance for companies and individuals that want to offer guided trips and services. www.ioga.org.
- Planmakers Planning and Urban Design. Assistance with downtown revitalization. John Bertram, 417 S 13, Boise, ID, 83702, (208) 336-1438.
- Property and Environmental Research Center. Entertainment farming. <http://www.perc.org/perc.php?id=279>.
- *Smart Towns: A Guide to Downtown Revitalization*. Idaho Department of Commerce, 1998. Boise, ID.
- Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education. Entertainment Farming and Agri-Tourism. <http://www.sare.org/publications/marketing/market03.htm>.
- Yellowstone Teton Territory (YTT). An organization whose focus is promoting and developing tourism in eastern Idaho. Mr. Courtney Ferguson, YTT Chair, (208) 359-9688; Donna Benfield, YTT grants and membership, c/o Rexburg Chamber of Commerce, (208) 356-5700.

Recreation

Recreation is a major factor in drawing tourists to the Ashton area and in providing a high quality of life for Ashton residents. The area offers boundless opportunities for outdoor recreation including snowmobiling, skiing, hunting, fishing, rafting/boating, hiking, and camping.

Much of the focus of the team’s community tour was Ashton’s role in linking tourists to regional recreational activities. Though the tour did visit the city park and the now mostly unused ball diamond, it was clear that residents were mostly interested in the question of how Ashton residents and businesses can expand and take advantage of existing regional recreational opportunities.

City-Based Facilities: Observations

As a small city with a larger surrounding community base, Ashton has the potential to create additional recreational opportunities for its residents and to entice visitors and residents of surrounding communities (Marysville, Island Park, Warm River, etc.) to come to Ashton for recreation as well.

The city park has a nice pavilion, playground, and grassy area for recreating. Residents have donated benches for sitting by the playground. There is a volleyball net near the pool. The tennis courts are in disrepair and are on the school side of the property. Some residents observed that there is a need for a skate park. There might be space for it between the tennis courts and the pool.

The pool (outdoors) at the city park is the only public pool in the region. Though the pool is heavily used by residents and non-residents, it barely breaks even. One comment heard was that it is so heavily used by non-residents, that at times it is not available to



Ashton City Park is an asset to the community

local residents. Because the summer season is so short, some residents have suggested that the pool be covered to make it a year-round resource.

There is no park and recreation department in city government, but there is a parks and recreation fund in the budget for maintaining the city's parks and recreational facilities. Also, there is a pool committee and a tree committee. There is not a recreation district in Ashton.

The ball diamond is rarely used. There is no longer either a Little League or a women's softball league as there recently was. The visiting team was told that school age youth are now playing soccer, and that baseball and softball are passé.

Two private golf courses exist a short distance east of Ashton; however, there is little signage to assist visiting golfers in finding them, or even becoming aware they exist.

The community plans to develop the "Wye" area as a trailhead for year-round recreation. This would provide a tremendous opportunity for both locals and visitors to access extensive snowmobile trails in the region as well as the Ashton-to-Tetonia trail for cross-country skiing and hiking.

City-Based Facilities: Recommendations

Consider establishing a parks and recreation commission or advisory board to foster broad community involvement in recreation planning and development

Potential programs at the city park could include a fishing derby, a farmer's market, a snowmobile swap, and summer movies on an outdoor screen. The tennis courts were obtained through Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF), which means they are to be kept for public use in perpetuity. The city needs to work with the school board to learn what their intentions are for the courts and to ensure they remain available to the public.

Two relatively small recreational projects may be feasible for Ashton. There seems to be fairly broad agreement that a skate and skateboard park is desired and would be used. The city should look into this. Additionally, given the winter weather of Ashton, an ice skate/hockey rink seems to be another logical recreational facility to consider. The city should also actively look for ways to encourage use of the softball field by school/community groups for fundraising events, etc.

City-Based Facilities: Available Resources

- BYU-Idaho. Use interns to teach recreational classes or provide other assistance. Kari Archibald, Internship Coordinator, Recreation Leadership Department. Rexburg, (208) 496-2224, archibaldk@byui.edu.
- City of Island Park. Trails. (208) 558-7687.
- City of Hailey. Hailey has what is reportedly one of the best public skate parks in the United States. It was designed and built by youth and financed by donations. Then it was deeded to the city, which maintains the park with the active assistance of its patrons. Ray Hyde, Hailey Public Works Manager. (208) 788-9830 ext 19.
- City of Rexburg. Greenways and skate parks. Kurt Hibbert, City Planner. (208) 359-3020.
- City of St. Anthony. Greenways and skate parks. 420 N. Bridge Street, St. Anthony, ID 83445, (208) 624-3494.
- City of Salmon. Skate park and ice rink. Gary Van Huffel. (208) 756-3214, garyvh@centurytel.net.
- Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. Land and Water Conservation Fund grants (for Wye trailhead and other park facilities). Heather Westenzweig, East Region Grant Specialist (Idaho Falls). (208) 525-712, www.idahoparks.org
- Skaters for Public Skate Parks. www.skatersforskateparks.org.

Library and Community Center: Observations

The city has a community center with a library, public restroom, office space, and a small gym. The gym and offices are currently leased out to an independent program that uses that area exclusively. When a visitor walks in, there are no signs saying what is available or where to go for more information. The city no longer has space for community gatherings in that building.

The new school possesses the facilities to serve as a community center. It has an auditorium and a gym with courts, a running track, and weight room. It is a wonderful place for fitness, exercise, and training. Community members can come in the early morning to use the equipment. (See *Community Design and Identity* for additional observations, recommendations, and resources concerning the community center, library, and school.)

Library and Community Center: Recommendations

To cut down on public confusion, the sign for the community center should be changed to say “library and public restrooms” if that is the only current access available. Signs should be added welcoming people to Ashton and telling them where the city offices are located and also where they can get more information.

The city should work with the school board and school administrators to create a “community center” atmosphere in the new high school and to let people know that meeting space and activities are available at the school. The city or school could set up a community fitness program or offer health and recreation programs. It should be explored to see if there is time in the gym for adult sports programs/leagues or summer leagues.

Also, the City of Ashton may wish to consider building or sponsoring a bona fide community center or youth center as a separate facility that can be a focal point for community-based family and youth programs and activities.

Library and Community Center: Available Resources

- Boise Public Library. Grant information. Mary Kay Jones Aucutt. 715 South Capitol Blvd. Boise, ID 83702-7195, (208) 384-4024, fax: (208) 384-4025, maucutt@pobox.ci.boise.id.us.
- BYU-Idaho. Use interns to teach recreational classes or provide other assistance. Kari Archibald, Internship Coordinator, Recreation Leadership Department. Rexburg, (208) 496-2224, archibaldk@byui.edu.
- Grantsmanship Center Magazine, The. PO Box 17220, Los Angeles, CA 90017, (213) 482-9860, fax: (213) 482-9863, www.tgci.com.
- Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor. Community Development Block Grant Program, provides matching grants to cities and counties to build or renovate buildings for senior centers, community centers, and youth centers. Dianna Clough, Community Development Manager. (208) 334-2470.

Community Education Programs: Observations

There is a lack of adult education classes offered in the community. There is also a growing number of Spanish speaking families moving into the area

Community Education Programs: Recommendations

Work with the nearby colleges (Eastern Idaho Technical College, Idaho State University, Boise State University, BYU-Idaho) to offer courses in the distance learning room at the new high school. Topics suggested from residents included crafts, high school math refreshers, environmental sciences, conversational Spanish, English as a Second Language (ESL) for youth and for adults, and bi-lingual classes (teach both languages at the same time). There are a few school systems in Idaho that are offering English and Spanish classes as a way for students to learn both languages at once.

Community Education Programs: Available Resources

- Boise State University. Distance Education. <http://www.boisestate.edu/distance>.
- Shaw, Michael. Spanish instructor. 1118 E Jefferson Street, Boise, ID 83712, michaeljayshaw@yahoo.com, (208) 724-1073 (cell).

Regional Facilities: Observations

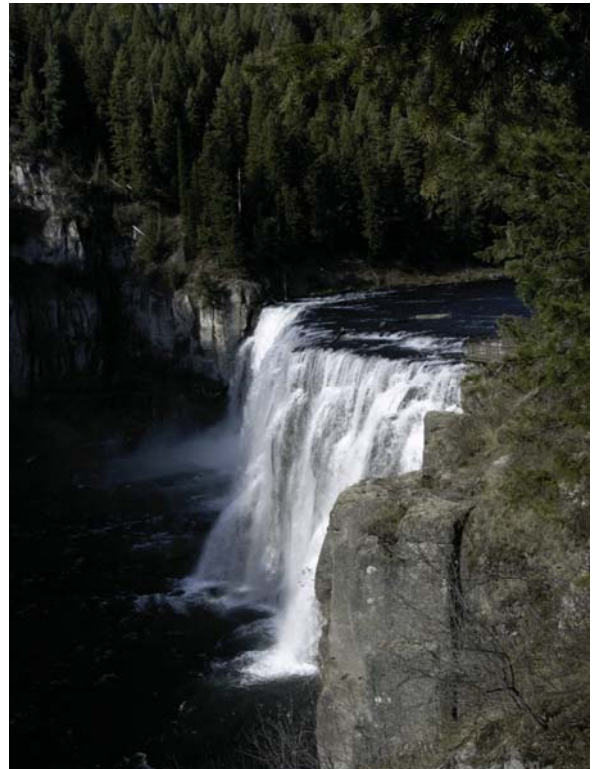
The Bear Gulch area is a trailhead for summer and winter use known to the locals, but doesn't seem to be known or marketed outside the area. With its parking and restrooms, as well as plowed accessibility in the winter, this area offers many possibilities for tourism development. The area is used by snowmobilers and cross-country skiers. However, there is no signage and the landmark tunnel (see below) is hard to see from the road. Although the ski lift has been abandoned and is becoming overgrown, the locals use the hill for tubing.

Regional Facilities: Recommendations

The Bear Gulch site seems a natural site for the establishment of a yurt or warming hut to further promote year-round use. There appears to be an untapped opportunity waiting to happen by further developing the scenic tunnel/rail/trail biking, hiking, and cross-county skiing opportunities from the area into West Yellowstone, Montana. Bike/helmet rentals, coupled with a shuttle service, could be developed into a tourism draw that could benefit the local economy. Understanding the community sentiment that was communicated by some regarding the U.S. Forest Service, it would be a positive step to focus on what can be vs. what once was. Energies could be used to move forward and establish a plan that would enhance the area to the benefit of tourists and locals alike.

Regional Facilities: Available Resources

- Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. Off Road Motor Vehicle Fund for Recreation Trails. 5657 Warm Springs Avenue, Boise, ID 83712-8752, (208) 334-4180, fax: (208) 334-3741, www.idahoparks.org.
- Kyle Babbitt Consulting. Kyle Babbitt. 445 N 3rd W Rigby, ID 83442, (208) 745-0750, kbabbitt@cablone.net.
- R&R Marketing Group. Loni Rahm, Facilitator. PO Box 777, Chelan, WA, 98816, (509) 682-0814, rahm@nwi.net.
- U.S. Forest Service. Ashton/Island Park Ranger District. Adrienne Keller, District Ranger. PO Box 858, Ashton, ID 83420, (208) 652-7442.



Ashton is surrounded by unmatched scenery and outdoor recreational opportunities

Bear Gulch Railroad Tunnel: Observations

The old railroad tunnel at Bear Gulch is in need of repair. This tunnel is part of the Idaho Parks and Recreation and Targhee National Forest trails following the old rail bed from Warm River, Idaho, to West Yellowstone, Montana. Parts of the tunnel approach show signs of deterioration and could be a hazard to visitors.

Bear Gulch Railroad Tunnel: Recommendations

- Have the site examined by an architectural engineer for recommendations to upgrade the safety factors.
- Submit a bid to the Idaho Heritage Trust regarding funds to use for repair.

Bear Gulch Railroad Tunnel: Available Resources

- Idaho Heritage Trust Foundation. Gaetha Pace. (208) 549-1778, gaetha@mindspring.com.
- Idaho Preservation Office. 210 Main Street, Boise, ID, 83702, (208) 334-3861.

Promoting Public Access Trails and Amenities: Observations

Fly-fishing on the Henry's Fork River in the summer is a big recreational resource in Ashton and draw to the area. Many people know about the upper Henry's Fork River and Henry's Lake, but are not as aware of the outstanding waters in and around Ashton. The Henry's Fork Foundation and a number of fly shops are located in Ashton.

Snowmobiling and cross-country skiing are big sports in the winter. There is a snowmobile shop in Ashton. The community is working on a trailhead at the Wye to provide better access for these recreational activities. There is much to do in the area, but not all of the businesses know what there is to offer. Many people go in one shop and ask where something else is or where to find another item, but the business is not always well enough informed to provide this information.

Promoting Public Access Trails and Amenities: Recommendations

The Henry's Fork Foundation has a public access sites map and the Forest Service has summer and winter trails maps of the forest lands. Get more copies of these in the visitor's center and in the outside kiosk. Develop one map or a series of maps showing all of Ashton's recreational amenities: recreation-related shops, food, lodging, etc. A map series could have each map be season or activity specific. Make a common flyer and distribute the listing of resources and businesses to the public, visitors, and local businesses. Have a hospitality classes to offer ongoing education to the staff at all businesses of how to work with the public so that they feel welcome to the community and to teach what is available in Ashton. Develop a strategy to ensure comfortable, clean and service-oriented lodging options. Pay particular attention to winter lodging options, as these appear to be especially limited. (Also see hospitality-related recommendations on page 22.)

Promoting Public Access Trails and Amenities: Available Resources

- Ashton Area Chamber of Commerce. Business listings. www.ashtonidaho.com.
- Henry's Fork Foundation. Fishing access maps. Steve Trafton, Executive Director. PO Box 550, Ashton, ID 83420, (208) 652-3567, fax (208) 652-3568, www.henrysfork.com.
- Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor. Hospitality training. www.idahost.org.
- Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. Rails-to-Trails program. John Sandy. (208) 334-4180.
- University of Idaho Cooperative Extension. Hospitality training. Janice Stimpson, Extension Educator. 49 W 1st N St. Anthony, ID 83445, (208) 624-3102, fremont@uidaho.edu.
- U.S. Forest Service. Trail maps. Ashton/Island Park Ranger District. Adrienne Keller, District Ranger. PO Box 858, Ashton, ID 83420, (208) 652-7442.

Promoting Winter Recreational Opportunities: Observations

There is a lack of local business and activity information available in the winter because the visitor's center is not open. It sounds like there have been discussions to pursue a location for a winter rest area.

Promoting Winter Recreational Opportunities: Recommendations

The city should pursue the idea of a winter rest area. The site should include restrooms, a gathering space/warming area, a large parking lot, and an information center with local flyers, maps, and listings, focusing

on resources available in the winter. This type of information needs to also be available at local businesses.

Promoting Winter Recreational Opportunities: Available Resources

- Ashton Area Chamber of Commerce. Business listings. www.ashtonidaho.com.
- Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor, Idaho Travel Council Grant Program. Supports local and regional tourism marketing efforts (including grants to develop fliers). Carl Wilgus, Tourism Development Administrator, (208) 334-2470 or carl.wilgus@tourism.idaho.gov.
- U.S. Forest Service. Winter trail maps. Ashton/Island Park Ranger District. Adrienne Keller, District Ranger. PO Box 858, Ashton, ID 83420, (208) 652-7442.

Mesa Falls Scenic Byway: Observations

There are a number of recreational sites near Ashton. Ashton could be the site to stay while visiting the area. The Mesa Falls Scenic Byway goes through the City of Ashton and up to Highway 20. Sites along the byway include the Stone Bridge access to the Henry's Fork River, Cave Falls, the edge of Yellowstone National Park, Warm River Campground, the Warm River feeding fish site, Bear Gulch, Lower Mesa Falls, and Upper Mesa Falls. Much of the land is in the Targhee National Forest. Once completing the scenic drive (going north), people can drive south on Highway 20 to visit Harriman State Park and return to Ashton or drive north to Island Park. Other recreational activities include hiking, biking, horseback riding, fishing, ATV riding, and hunting in the spring/summer/fall, and snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing in the winter.



The Mesa Falls Scenic Byway offers numerous recreational opportunities

Mesa Falls Scenic Byway: Recommendations

Capitalize on the Mesa Falls Scenic Byway and help to publicize/market the sites and activities along it. Site maps should include educational materials about protecting the resource by packing out garbage, not picking plants, giving animals a safe distance, etc. Add a highway sign saying that the Mesa Falls Scenic Byway starts in downtown Ashton and work with the Forest Service to add signs at the Lower Mesa Falls overlook.

To better market the byway resources, create a trail system master plan, as well as a map showing byway trailheads. Be sure to include community and local resources in the new materials to promote Ashton and Ashton businesses.

Mesa Falls Scenic Byway: Available Resources

- Idaho Department of Transportation. PO Box 7129, Boise, ID 83707-1129, (208) 334-8000, fax (208) 334-3858, www2.state.id.us/itd/.
- Mesa Falls Scenic Byway Advisory Committee. Joni Amen, Ashton City Clerk. 714 Main Street, PO Box 689, Ashton, ID 83420, (208) 652-3987, jamen@fretel.com.
- Planmakers Planning and Urban Design. Developed *Mesa Falls Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan*. John Bertram, 417 S 13, Boise, ID, 83702, (208) 336-1438.

- U.S. Forest Service. Ashton/Island Park Ranger District. Adrienne Keller, District Ranger. PO Box 858, Ashton, ID 83420, (208) 652-7442.

Arts and Cultural Resources

Arts and Cultural Resources: Observations

There was not much of an arts presence in Ashton during our visit. The Seed Potato Management Area signs are the most attractive public art in Ashton. Though they were created for a very practical purpose, they were very tastefully done.



Public art can serve a practical purpose

Despite the current lack of an arts presence, there is potential for more community plays and arts activities in the area. A number of artisans live in the area (Appendix H). It was suggested to the visiting team that more could be done to encourage local arts and crafts, and provide outlets for local products. There is also a sense that local businesses may be interested in broadening their inventory of gifts and souvenirs to include locally-produced arts and crafts.

The Opera House is a gem that has been purchased and reopened by private owners for parties and receptions. It has a large room in front of a stage. There is a kitchen and back rooms for storage and access to the stage. The theater on the main street is boarded up. We were unable to find out the status and condition of this facility. This building could be a valuable resource for residents and visitors if investors, donors, or public entities could be found to renovate the building and operate it for movies, plays, concerts, and community gatherings.

Arts and Cultural Resources: Recommendations

Establish an arts council or arts commission to promote the arts in Ashton.

Use the current list of local artisans (Appendix H) as a starting point for a more comprehensive directory of local artisans. Everyone on the current list should be contacted to determine if they want to remain on the list, to get complete contact information, and to learn of needed additions to the list. The artists and craftspersons should be encouraged to provide their arts and crafts through local stores and/or in their own shops and studios. If they welcome guests, directions to their property and suggested visiting times should be included with that information. The completed directory should be offered to all stores, restaurants, lodging establishments, chambers of commerce, visitor's centers, and other tourist services throughout eastern Idaho.

Business owners in the area who want to feature local arts and crafts could do so based on the information in the directory or through their own efforts to locate interested artisans. The visitor's center or other business (perhaps the Hess Museum) could feature one or several local artists or craftspersons each month by displaying their art or products. The city could offer arts or craft fairs at the city park in the summer, or in the school or community center in the winter.

Develop plans to generate more public art. Look to other communities that have used a variety of media to create artworks that attract the attention of tourists, while making the community more attractive to residents. Such efforts can help create strong civic pride, which can then lead to other beautification efforts. The Coeur d'Alene Moose statue project (No Moose Left Behind) may be a model to study. Ashton should also consider developing a city percent for art program like Boise, Moscow, Coeur d'Alene and, most recently, Rexburg have adopted (contact Delta James at the Idaho Commission for the Arts for more information, see below). Work with the Opera House and new school theater as sites for community plays.

Arts and Cultural Resources: Available Resources

- Idaho Commission for the Arts. Delta James, Director of Community Development. (208) 334-2119, djames@arts.idaho.gov, www.arts.idaho.gov.
- Handmade in America. Information on developing and promoting local and regional arts and crafts. www.handmadeinamerica.org.
- Paul G. Allen Foundation. Resources for non-profit organization development. www.pgafoundations.com.
- Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor. Community Development Block Grant Program, provides matching grants to cities and counties to build or renovate buildings; possible use for the theatre. Dianna Clough, Community Development Manager. (208) 334-2470.
- Idaho Heritage Trust Foundation. Gaetha Pace. (208) 549-1778, gaetha@mindspring.com.
- Excel Foundation. Success in Coeur d'Alene (sculptures and related fundraising and plans). Heidi Rogers. (208) 667-2588, hrogers@uidaho.edu, www.excelfoundation.org/photogallery/moose.htm.

Youth Activities

Youth Activities: Observations

Residents universally stated that Ashton is a great place to raise families. Though there are different perspectives regarding the need and opportunity for providing activities for youth in the community, there was significant agreement that Ashton youth desire to have additional activities. This is particularly true for older youth and specifically regarding activities in the evening. Ashton churches offer youth activity programs one night each week. Visiting team members also heard that youth find outdoor recreation activities in the area keep them busy during daylight hours, but they are looking for more to do in the evening. The visiting team was told that older Ashton youth go to Rexburg for movies, bowling, dancing, and on dates. New families have some difficulty locating a compiled listing of activities that are available to the youth and families.

Youth Activities: Recommendations

Establish a youth council to engage youth in the city council and in government in general. Also consider engaging the youth in the development of a nature trail from the high school to the nearby wetlands. The trail can serve two purposes—science education and fitness. High school students can be involved in the planning, design, construction, and utilization of the trail.

Periodically close off a downtown street to hold dances, particularly geared for youth. This could be started with the centennial celebration, but should not be limited to that one event. Also explore the feasibility of developing small local facilities for movies, bowling, or dancing. Consider whether the opera house or other existing facility can be used for any of these purposes. Request that local restaurants and other establishments stay open or have specials on Saturday nights after school sports events or dances.

Some youth indicated an interest in establishing recycling programs and facilities in Ashton. Encourage them pursue this idea and help them identify resources available to them.

To better communicate with citizens, consider creating a community calendar of events (like on Ashton's Web site) and posting it in key locations around town, such as the City Drug building and the post office. Work with the phone company to see if an Ashton-specific phone book can be developed.

Create a "Welcome Wagon" packet of services and activities with contacts to be given to new homeowners by city or chamber of commerce staff as they get connected to city services and/or get a post office box. (The advantage of using the post office box is that city services are limited to city residents, but all "community" members [city and county residents] use post office boxes. While not officially

“city” residents, these non-city community members use the same facilities, schools, etc. as those living within the city limits.)

- Work with city or chamber of commerce staff or volunteers to list programs available to youth to include in this packet.
- Work with schools, sports groups, Fremont County 4-H, Future Farmers of America, churches, and others to learn what is currently available.
- Include a survey in the packet asking if the new residents would like to get involved with specific issues/activities in the community.
- Approach businesses about putting money-saving coupons in the packet.

Youth Activities: Available Resources

- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Opportunities for small grants to stimulate the planning and design of greenways in communities. www.nfwf.org or www.conservationfund.org.
- National League of Cities. Resources for involving youth in the community. www.nlc.org/TYEF.
- National Safety Council. Grants that promote safety and health among youth; possible use for development of a safe greenbelt or recreational/educational trail. www.nsc.org/youthsafety.
- Paul G. Allen Foundation. Funding opportunities for investment in youth engagement in their communities. www.pgafoundations.com.
- Youth Venture. Information on using youth for community needs; also helps youth create their own “ventures” by providing seed money. www.youthventure.org.

Arts, Historic, and Recreation Resources: Conclusions

Comments expressed by the community during the review were mixed, ranging from, “Stay Away – We don’t want growth!” to “We need more economic development to bring the businesses back and have the stores on Main Street full.” But no matter what personal opinions were expressed, the common thread that bound the community together was the friendliness of the people, their community spirit, and pride in their heritage. Concern was expressed several times for the youth and the importance of keeping them involved in the community through participation in activities.

It was shared that a few volunteers do the majority of the work, and there is a need to get additional people involved and take ownership to lessen the “burn-out” of volunteers. With the cultural diversity that exists in Ashton, it was mentioned there needs to be more incorporation of minorities into leadership roles. With the 2006 centennial celebration quickly approaching, incorporation of ethnic groups, renewed participation and energy in the volunteer ranks, and inclusion of the youth is a priority. Combined, this will help to ensure the success of the centennial celebration and continued pride in the community.

Our brief stay in Ashton led us to conclude that Ashton is not only a gateway through which tourists pass, but is, or has the potential for becoming, a destination or hub. Ashton is also home to approximately 1,200 inhabitants within the city limits and many more in surrounding communities in central Fremont County. Amenities that we have encouraged to be developed or improved directly benefit Ashton’s residents. For example, whatever help artists and crafts persons receive to market and sell their products improves local businesses. Downtown revitalization is successful when businesses benefit. A skate park, theatre, community center, tubing hill, and other proposed recreational and cultural amenities are largely for the good of Ashton’s residents, their guests, and visitors. The Hess Heritage Museum and the community archives are unique local assets that are worth keeping and expanding.

Ashton has many other assets, the foremost of which are its residents. Their mobilization and participation will be essential to the implementation of these recommendations. We were asked how to get citizens involved. Getting organized is the first step. Identifying and appointing leaders and volunteers according to their interests and skills is the next step. Finding resources is another component.

Setting goals and deadlines is also critical. We have suggested some sources of assistance and ideas, but our thoughts are only the starting point. Existing organizations, such as the Ashton Area Chamber of Commerce, the Gem Team, foundations, civic clubs, schools, and churches as well as the City of Ashton, Fremont County, and local businesses all have a role to play. Many residents clamored for more and improved amenities. Those who would like to see changes need to step up to the plate. And those who fear growth must be invited to the table. Ashton is their community as well.

Youth must become involved, especially in those programs or services of which they are the principal beneficiaries or in which they have the greatest interest. The ambivalence about the need for activities for youth voiced by some is not shared by the parents with whom we spoke. Local schools can play a pivotal role in meeting community needs.

While on the subject of youth, we also heard that jobs are needed. The desire for one's children or grandchildren to be able to stay in Ashton or return to the community was nearly universal. Our report did not begin to address all potential economic development opportunities, services, and resources. That alone would justify an entire chapter. However, we believe that tourism and recreation development, downtown revitalization, and the improvement or development of many community amenities, when implemented, will all play an important role in supporting ongoing and future economic development efforts.

We were warmly received by Ashton's residents and deeply appreciate the hospitality of those who hosted our brief stay. We hope that these recommendations adequately address most of the areas we were asked to examine. We also hope that they are a stepping off place for Ashton to create a strong and viable community with new activities for all of Ashton's residents and visitors. Do not hesitate to contact our team's members when questions arise or if additional information or ideas would be helpful.

Community Design and Identity

Community identity is a key aspect of any place where citizens feel a sense of place and history. Ideally, a community's identity should be defined by the people who live there and not by outside sources; however, in the absence of self-determination, that identity may be defined by others. The overall design of neighborhoods, a downtown core, and key entryways helps a community define itself. Some important questions include: Is infrastructure in place to provide for community meeting areas? Does the community look, and therefore feel, welcoming? Does the community provide locally sponsored events, and are they well attended and well received?

The Community Design and Identity Team explored Ashton from an "outsider" point of view and visited with Ashton citizens for an "insider" point of view in an effort to help Ashton citizens see their community through different eyes...to identify what message they want to send about Ashton to the outside world and to identify the resources available or needed to assist citizens in participating in community life. From their observations, the Community Design and Identity Team has divided this focus area into three main issues:

- Community Identity
- Role of the New North Fremont High School/Youth
- Role of Ashton's "Downtown"

General Community Comments and Concerns

In addition to providing its own observations, the team also solicited input and observations from Ashton citizens via conversations with citizens during the two-day visit and via a pre-visit survey. Below is a summary of those comments and concerns broached by community members that relate to the theme of community design and identity, as well as issues identified by the city prior to the Community Review.

Issues Identified by the City of Ashton:

- How to capitalize on Ashton's marketing slogan of "Gateway to Adventure!" and make it more recognizable as referring to Ashton
- How to draw tourists and advertise nearby scenic byways

Positive Attributes Identified by Community Members:

- Caring community/friendly people
- Quality nursing home
- Relaxed atmosphere (not busy)
- Good atmosphere to raise children
- Beautiful scenery
- Great outdoor recreation opportunities
- Low crime rate
- Community bonds together (example: progressive dinner)
- Community events (cattle drive, dog sled race, marathon): fun, bring in tourist dollars, unite community
- New North Fremont High School: quality facility for students and for the community

Needs and Challenges Identified by Community Members:

- Need improved communication among city, county, citizens (county and city), and civic groups
- Need a community center that functions as such
- Need a neat, clean, and welcoming entrance to town/downtown/neighborhoods
- Need to develop more partners – internal and external
- Need a parks and recreation department, recreation opportunities for youth, entertainment, social events
- Need to protect viewsheds
- Need increased cooperation among governments
- Need widespread citizen involvement
- Need more unity among churches
- Need to resolve issues surrounding the old high school

General Visiting Team Observations

The Community Design and Identity team was struck immediately and repeatedly by the great potential and valuable assets of the Ashton community. The new North Fremont High School, state-of-the-art nursing home, dedicated community leaders, and unmatched natural resources all demonstrate community pride, showcase what can be accomplished in Ashton, and provide a solid base from which to grow.

However, Ashton also faces many challenges that commonly plague small towns, such as providing for situations such as substance abuse and domestic violence, including all local residents in all aspects of community life (regardless of race, religion, or longevity in the area), and keeping up the appearance of the community with ever-shrinking city budgets.

Ashton also faces additional challenges, many of which have been brought about by changing times. The first of these is the need for a unified community identity. Ashton is struggling to identify itself as economic forces compel it to reevaluate its identity and economic base: is it a farming community? A tourism destination? A recreational gateway? Change has also manifested itself in the construction of Ashton's new high school. While the new school itself has had a positive impact on the community, the unintended consequence of the construction of the new school has been a great controversy concerning the fate of the old school. While many, many ideas exist concerning the most appropriate fate of this old building and the land it sits on, the larger issue is that the community needs to work through this controversy, accept the final result without lingering animosity, and move on so that the community can heal and be able to work together in the future for the greater good of all.

Community Identity

The central issue surrounding the topic of community identity is that Ashton lacks a single, common, theme or understanding of what it is and what it has to offer not only to the outside world, but also to the community itself. While there were many positive aspects or issues that help explain the community, there seems to be a lack of a unified vision regarding what Ashton is, what it has to offer, and what it wants to become.

Community Identity: Observations

It is apparent from talking with community members that Ashton and the surrounding area have numerous outdoor recreational opportunities and that many people feel that Ashton needs to capitalize on this. While visiting with people throughout Ashton, there were differing opinions on what the identity of Ashton really was and what it should be. Some felt the focus should be on the natural resources and that Ashton should capitalize on creating a “destination” based community for tourism activities. Others felt that recreation was important, but expressed their desire to keep the rural and small town characteristics without “overdoing” tourism. Still, others felt that there were many other facets and a historical value that represent Ashton that go beyond tourism.

Many people spoke about the community-sponsored events that help to capitalize on the outdoor attractions of the area. It is clear that many people feel strongly about continuing and improving these premier events, including winter dog sled races, a summer marathon, and an autumn cattle drive, that bring outside dollars and resources into the community. It was apparent that these three premier events have helped to create outside visibility to Ashton; however, there is a sense that more could be done to expand these events. Some community members felt that increasing the “marketability” of Ashton could be started with the expansion of those recreational and community events that are already successful. Increased publicity and marketing to outside communities about these events and promoting other events to coincide with the premier events are two strategies noted that would help to bring in continued outside resources and dollars into the community.

While it was apparent that these events help, in part, to define the community, there are many other areas that are integral in helping to describe Ashton. One of the key areas that has much current and historical significance to the community is agriculture. Although it has declined over the past decade, Ashton continues to be one of the nation’s top seed potato producers. In addition, the area supports wheat, barley, corn, and other crop production. These combine with seed potatoes to provide an important component of



“Gateway to Adventure!” is one of Ashton’s many identities.

the economy. In visiting with community members, it was clear that much of what defined their community was not just the prevalence of recreational opportunities and land access, but also the history and current value of agriculture. The Hess Heritage Museum and the history behind the old grain elevators in the downtown area are two examples in which the community can rally behind in helping preserve two key aspects of the agricultural identity of the area. Local residents that we talked with felt that the agricultural focus of the area was really symbolic of the past as well as the future of Ashton. (Read more about the Hess Heritage Museum in the *Arts, Historic, and Recreation Resources* section.)

Another important aspect of the community's identity is its downtown. First, in creating an identity of cooperation and inclusiveness, each community needs a communal gathering place. It was noted by several community members that the downtown community center is not very accessible to the community because it is being rented to a service provider who holds classes there regularly. This has created inaccessibility to the community, or at the very least, a perception that it is not easily accessible to the community. By default, it seemed that with the inaccessibility of the community center, the new high school became a focal point or gathering place for community events.

In addition to the focus on more effectively utilizing the community center, there is an obvious need to improve and increase the appearance of the downtown business district. While there are many quaint shops and buildings that represent the history of the area, many of the buildings are dilapidated and have unattractive store-front appearances. In addition, there is a real need to attract and re-direct motorists from Highway 20 into the downtown area. Increased and better signage, as well as a downtown restoration initiative, are two areas to consider. The appearance and functionality of the downtown is an important consideration that coincides with the identity of the community. More will be discussed and talked about in relation to the downtown area on page 38.

By most accounts it seems that the community works well in bringing people of various faiths and backgrounds together and working on common goals and events, although some citizens did express they felt different faiths could work together to be more inclusive. Many people felt that Ashton was a "good place to raise a family" and that it had good people who cared about one another. It was apparent in talking with various people, however, that there were opportunities for increased inclusivity through suggested community-sponsored dinners and events that would help bring the community closer together as well as increase opportunities for volunteer support from citizens who may not be civically engaged or active in the community.

Community Identity: Recommendations

Define exactly what your identity is, both from an internal (people within your community) and external (marketing your community to others) perspective. This is a critical first step. The Community Review team has listed a number of assets and resources that the community can draw upon in seeking to define its identity. Using these identified resources along with those the community sees as important will help determine critical aspects of the community that need to be preserved, maintained, enhanced, and marketed.

Each of the assets listed below should be considered integral in the identity of the community. There are likely many others, that will need to be determined by the community, that can help shape and define the identity of Ashton.

- Natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities
- Agricultural, current and historical
- High schools, both new and old
- Nursing home
- Community center
- Senior citizens' center
- Ashton dam
- Thrift store/flea market that serves economically disadvantaged population in the area

Solicit input from the community. In creating a community identity, the mayor may want to consider forming a community-based council or group that is assigned to this project and then work on recruiting citizens, community leaders, businesspeople, the agricultural community, the faith community, and other stakeholders throughout the community to serve on this council. This could be a role for the newly-invigorated Gem Team. In developing a broad range of opinions on what identity Ashton should create for itself and the outside world, the community will take more ownership in this process and will be more likely to value the idea of marketing its identity. Ultimately, the identity should be able to articulate what

Ashton is, what it has to offer, and what it expects to become. With continued growth and development of the area, creating an identity becomes even more important. Unless the community is willing to create and define its identity, it may be defined, for better or for worse, by outside forces that may be beyond the community's control. Once the identity is created, a community vision and goals can be determined in order to tackle challenging issues, such as population growth, land-use issues, and recreation.

Develop a central locale that is the "heart" of the city. This location or facility can be a hub for communicating the community's identity, provide a clearinghouse for volunteers, and provide a location for community events. One way to accomplish this effort is to more effectively use the current "community center" (currently used as a library and gym) or establish a new community center. This building should represent the focal point for community-sponsored events. Using this building more effectively could help to rally the community around activities that not only help Ashton market itself, but also create a more unified internal community. While certain events, such as the Christmas cantata, may require larger facilities such as the high school, citizens should understand that the community center can and should represent a place in which the community can gather and come together to accomplish shared community goals.

Establish partnerships to effectively market the identity of Ashton. There seems to be some tension between neighboring communities, specifically between Ashton and St. Anthony. A way to possibly overcome this barrier would be to create partnerships, such as working with the chambers of commerce on ways to effectively market both communities. Seeking partnerships with the City of Island Park and other surrounding communities would also be helpful. In addition, the Ashton Area Chamber of Commerce and the Gem Community team might look to form partnerships and help increase economic development efforts. In the community meetings held during the Community Review, it was mentioned that Ashton has very little exposure on the Internet. Working with the city, the Gem Team and Ashton Area Chamber of Commerce may be able to find ways to increase exposure for Ashton and the surrounding communities on the World Wide Web.

Determine how to use "community identity" to increase and improve some of the efforts that are happening on a local level; do not focus solely on the external aspect of the community's identity. Many citizens expressed that the community is "close-knit," but mentioned that there are opportunities to work together more effectively and continue to create a warm and welcoming community. One opinion was that while there were a few community-sponsored social events, there needed to be more. In addition, during the community meeting of the Community Review, several community members expressed ideas of ways to educate and update community members as to what community events, social activities, and volunteer activities exist. A brainstorming session may be helpful to find innovative ways to post news and events that are geared toward and impact the citizens. There may be also be opportunities to explore how the faith-based community could be more inclusive and work together to accomplish community and civic events.

Community Identity: Available Resources

There are a number of available resources in many rural communities that currently exist to help understand how a strong identity can create a more cohesive community as well as one that is appealing and attractive to the outside world. Creating a strong identity that is reflective of the values, culture, and assets of the community helps to not only increase economic development efforts, but also preserves many of the aspects and way of life that are so important for local residents.

- Ashton's youth. It was identified in our visit that there is a tremendous amount of talent in the youth population that those youth are looking for a way to contribute. In creating a youth advisory committee to the mayor, valuable input on the identity of the community, as seen through the eyes of the youth could be captured.
- City of Montpelier. Has worked to create a unifying identity. K.B. Rasmussen, Gem Team Director. George Land, Mayor. 534 Washington, (208) 847-0824.

- City of Salmon. Working on tourism ideas and promoting positive aspects of their community. Stan Davis, Mayor. City Hall, 200 Main St., Salmon, ID 83467, (208) 756-3214, fax (208) 756-4840, mayorofsalmon@cityofsalmon.com.
- Community Image Survey CD. A good visualization tool for addressing community design and land-use issues. The CD can be purchased for around \$25, can be designed around the needs of Ashton, and can be a good tool to help community members visualize how they can work together on addressing community-related issues. www2.lgc.org/bookstore/detail.cfm?itemId=55.
- Partners for Prosperity. Available to help the community work together to address community-related issues. Tom Putnam, Program Planning and Development Specialist. 625 West Pacific, Suite 1, Blackfoot, ID 83221, (208) 785-0059, <http://www.easternidahoprosperty.org>.

North Fremont High School/Youth

The new North Fremont High School was completed in 2004 and replaced an old high school building also located in Ashton. The new school is an asset for Ashton and the surrounding area. In addition to serving the educational needs of its students, the new high school also serves an important community function by being able to accommodate large community events that could not have been held at the old high school or at the community center.

North Fremont High School/Youth: Observations

It is clear that much care went into planning for the needs of students and the community when designing the new North Fremont High School. From state-of-the-art computer facilities and a distance learning lab to a gymnasium with weight training equipment and walking track available to both students and the public, the school fills several previously missing niches within the community.

In addition, attention has been given to programs that will reach not only college-bound students, but also those interested in more technical skills, and exploratory classes are offered in various areas such as art, music, and shop for students to see if they have interest/aptitude in areas they may not have had other experience in. It was apparent both from walking the halls as well as speaking with students that the students take great pride in their new school. The principal also noted that for him, a mark of student appreciation of the new facility is that they not only go into the library/media center, but they are checking out more books and seem to be reading them.

A visit with the government class gave members of the visiting team a sense of youth who really like the community in which they live. There was no sense that they are missing out on educational opportunities they might experience in a larger city, but they did note two things they would like: more after-school activities, like a place to go bowling or to a movie, and more job opportunities. Many of the students look forward to college away from home but would like an opportunity to come back providing they could find work. As one student put it, "It's about enough money to live on."

North Fremont High School/Youth: Recommendations

Use the new high school to its fullest potential. The high school is a real asset; the resources that are there should be used to the advantage of the whole community.

Use Ashton's youth to their fullest potential. The youth themselves are another asset. Look to them for ideas about the community's future as well as for assistance with community projects. Through school and otherwise, youth often have abilities and access to resources that others in the community may not. For instance, youth may be able to publish a community newsletter through a journalism class or update the city's Web page in a Web design class.

Use school pride to foster involvement. The visiting team was frequently told how only a few people contribute their ideas and energy to projects for the benefit of the greater community. Finding ways to involve different people in community events is always a challenge. Since the new high school is a point of pride for the community, activities surrounding it could serve to generate involvement from those not previously involved in community projects.

Resolve the controversy surrounding the old high school. The fate of the old high school is a point of tension in the community. While the building itself is the concern at the moment, the issues surrounding its fate seem to point to deeper issues. Efforts need to be made to get past the high school issue and bring people together for collaborative work for the greater good.

North Fremont High School/Youth: Available Resources

- Established resources. Use both the people and facility resources you already have to reach more of the community.
- Youth. Ashton's youth are a marvelous asset and resource.
- Cooperation. Look for materials/people that can help build a greater cooperative spirit in the community. (The recent effort to raise funds for the community by having a progressive dinner at the various churches might be one such event. You might also try an event that connected youth and the various churches.)

Downtown

Highway 20 is the primary north/south thoroughfare for travelers driving from the south to the west entrance of Yellowstone National Park. Highway 20 passes through Ashton, but Ashton's Main Street and "downtown" are located off of Highway 20. With most services of need to travelers (a grocery store, restaurants, motels, fishing supply stores, and gas stations) located along Highway 20, and little in the way of signage or other enticements to enter downtown, there is little incentive for travelers to venture off of Highway 20 and onto Main Street.

Downtown: Observations

Most key services for travelers are available along the highway—a grocery store, restaurants, motels, fishing supply stores, and gas stations—so there is little incentive for travelers to venture onto Main Street, nor is there any indication that Main Street exists or what one might find there.

However, Main Street can be worth a visit by travelers—but first they must be enticed to stop. There is some "old-time charm" to several of the buildings, many of which reflect the architecture of the early 1900s. There are some delightful as well as functional shops along this main street. A number of stores along Main Street try to offer a variety of things, but they aren't really advertised as "variety stores," so they may be missing some potential customers. There are also a number of empty stores with nothing in the store windows, while a number of other places have received special attention and are very attractive.

The Ott's Place building and Flea Market building are good examples of places that have retained a special charm, and the City Drug store seems to have a reputation that reaches beyond Ashton for its great huckleberry treats. Not far off Main Street is the old Opera House which is not only attractive, but has great potential. In the time the visiting team walked along Main Street, few people were observed spending time in the downtown area with the exception of those coming and going from the gym located in the community center.

A few community members have put in great efforts to beautify downtown with the addition of trees and some flowers. They not only raised funds to purchase the trees and flowers, but have also planted and cared for them. Since the Ashton review occurred in late autumn, the team was not able to enjoy the full impact of the new plantings, but has been told they add an aliveness and attractiveness to Main Street.

The current "community center" and the old high school but are not currently adding to a sense of "invitation" to visit Main Street, either by form or function, except for the library portion of the community center. However, each has the potential to provide a focal point to Ashton's downtown.

Downtown: Recommendations

Capitalize on the charm of the old architecture. Consider placing historic marker signs on older buildings—even noting what purposes they have served in addition to the dates when they were built. Ideally the plaques would be uniform in size and design to create a unifying theme. Signs are also needed to draw people onto Main Street. Adding a visual attraction at the intersection of Main Street with Highway 20 can also pull people downtown. For example, placing an old train engine at that intersection would provide visual interest while showcasing the history of Ashton.

Improve storefronts and unify downtown with a theme. Even something as simple as fresh paint could help in some places. Also find ways to creatively deal with empty storefronts such as using them for community displays or to advertise community events. Encourage existing shops to use their window displays more effectively to better indicate the goods and services available and to improve their visual appeal. Some work has already been done to improve the appearance of Ashton’s downtown, particularly by the Ashton Tree Committee. Build upon and expand this work to other downtown beautification projects.

Attract new businesses to downtown. Business development was a commonly heard desire. While not all business would be attracted to locate in the downtown, having an attractive downtown could affect the kinds of business willing to establish themselves in Ashton. Another commonly heard comment was that many Ashton residents tend to shop elsewhere since they can’t even buy a pair of jeans in town. It does seem there could be an opportunity to establish at least a clothing store if not other kinds of shops. The community should consider actively recruiting specific types of businesses. Another possibility might be to explore possibilities for the old Opera House—create a summer theater or music hall as an attraction for visitors to stop in Ashton.

A recurring theme has been the desire for more activities in Ashton, especially for youth. Research the possibility of using some of the existing facilities for movies or bowling or other types of activities to meet the needs of the youth in the community. Explore the needs of the community to see if those needs could actually be met *in* Ashton.

Meet the needs of people who already visit Ashton; how could the city better meet the needs of the snowmobilers or those who participate as runners or supporters to the marathon? It doesn’t seem that these groups are the same type of clientele who are attracted to places like Sun Valley or Jackson Hole—so develop toward the needs of those who are attracted to those attributes Ashton already has.

Many of these recommendations would be best carried out in a coordinated effort that may require a greater coming together of business leaders and community members. A small group of people has been quite effective, but more people committing to the effort would be very beneficial for all. What might really enhance this effort is to work through the Ashton Area Chamber of Commerce.

Downtown: Available Resources

- Baker City, Oregon. Has successfully dealt with the issue of improving the appearance of its downtown. Dr. Charles Hofmann, Mayor. PO Box 650, 1655 First Street, Baker City, OR 97814, (541) 523-6541 hofmann@eoni.com. <http://www.bakercity.com/main.htm>.
- BYU-Idaho. Use BYU faculty or interns to assist with design issues. Justin Hodges, Internship Coordinator, Department of Architecture and Construction. Rexburg, (208) 496-2413, hodgesj@byui.edu.
- City of Montpelier. Montpelier has used its downtown beautification plan to create a visible, recognizable identity, and increase tourism and recognition of the local area from outsiders. Montpelier has created the identity of “bears” throughout their community as it is in Bear Lake



City Drug, in downtown Ashton, offers an old-fashioned soda fountain; an attraction for locals and visitors alike.

County. Main Street has a bear theme, with wooden bears, bear benches, bear flowerpots, and so forth. This has helped improve the appearance of their main street and helps to draw attention to local businesses. K.B. Rasmussen, Gem Team Director. George Land, Mayor. 534 Washington, (208) 847-0824.

- City of Salmon. Has successfully dealt with the issue of improving the appearance of its downtown. Stan Davis, Mayor. City Hall, 200 Main St., Salmon, ID 83467, (208) 756-3214, fax (208) 756-4840, mayorofsalmon@cityofsalmon.com.
- Ekberg, Lacey. Fremont/Clark Counties Economic Development Director. (208) 351-5884, freclarkecdev@yahoo.com.
- Federal Grants. Many federal grants are available to rural communities to help with downtown revitalization issues. <http://grants.gov/Find#receiveGetStarted>.
- Gem Team. Ashton's Gem Team can work with community volunteers and other stakeholders to help "jump start" ideas or initiatives. For example, the Gem Team could partner with a downtown revitalization committee. Bryan Hatton, Gem Team Chair. PO Box 689, Ashton, ID 83420, (208) 652-3467.
- Idaho State University. Use ISU faculty or interns to assist with marketing issues. Philip Nitse, Marketing Department Chair. Pocatello. (208) 282-3707, <http://cob.isu.edu/Departments/Marketing/>.
- Local Businesses, Agencies, and Organizations. Look to entities located in or near Ashton, such as the Rural Electric Association and the U.S. Forest Service, that may be able to contribute to Ashton's visibility. If a business or organization can benefit from a revitalized downtown Ashton, they may be willing to help make that revitalization happen. Help them see the benefits to them.
- Partners for Prosperity. Serves as a clearinghouse for grant and other assistance opportunities available to small and disadvantaged communities. Tom Putnam, Program Planning and Development Specialist. 625 West Pacific, Suite 1, Blackfoot, ID 83221, (208) 785-0059, <http://www.easternidahoprosperty.org>.
- *Show Me The Money* newsletter. Weekly, free newsletter produced by Idaho Commerce and Labor to promote grant opportunities and events that may be of interest to rural communities and non-profit organizations. Sign up to receive the newsletter at community.idaho.gov/ShowMeTheMoney/tabid/377/Default.aspx.

Community Design and Identity: Conclusions

Community identity is a key aspect of any community where citizens feeling they belong to a "community" and not just live at a specific locale. Ashton appears to be a community searching for an identity. This is not necessarily a bad thing. The fact that Ashton has several "identities" (farming community, recreational hub, etc.) points to Ashton's many different assets. Additionally, the fact that Ashton is actively trying to find or create an identity means that the "identity" will be something that Ashton has chosen for itself; not something outsiders have placed upon the community.

The Ashton community has many valuable assets—the new North Fremont High School, a state-of-the-art nursing home, dedicated community leaders, and unmatched natural resources. These assets can be built upon to improve the community. However, Ashton also faces many challenges that commonly plague small towns, including keeping up the appearance of the community with ever-shrinking city budgets and providing access to recreational and social activities for citizens of all ages. Many issues can be dealt with at once, often using the assets already on hand, and many solutions can solve multiple issues. For instance, actively soliciting specific types of businesses can help to fill up empty storefronts on Main Street, provide jobs, and provide needed local shopping or activities for citizens.

Ashton has the drive and assets to move forward to define itself and create a community that will be viable far into the future. It now must move forward and capitalize on its assets. The recommendations

and resources listed above are a place to start, but Ashton must then build upon its successes to continue its momentum into the future.

Land-Use Planning

The Land-Use Planning team focused on existing and historic land-use application in the city and the surrounding area of city impact. Historic Ashton is a well-planned community that was built primarily around the agricultural industry and the railroad. The interdependence of agricultural and other service industries in the community is well-established and a strong and vibrant Main Street developed early in the community's history. The community has enjoyed a sound residential and commercial balance and has an early foundation of sound community planning.

The visiting team observed that the community has the advantage of a solid central core with schools, churches, and community facilities located in or adjacent to the community center. However, there are some current challenges and potential threats to this historical land use.

Many issues or areas of interest fall generally under the umbrella of "land-use planning." The Land-Use Planning team grouped its observations and recommendations into two main areas:

- Long-Term Planning
- Infrastructure Development

General Community Comments and Concerns

The community itself identified many planning issues and concerns. Issues that the city identified are outlined below, followed by citizen comments related to land-use planning that were gleaned from discussions with community members and pre-review surveys.

Issues Identified by the City of Ashton:

- Area of impact and annexation issues
- How to plan wisely for growth
- Zoning ordinances
- Comprehensive planning
- Technical improvements (GIS – software improvements)

Positive Attributes Identified by Community Members:

- Low crime rate
- New North Fremont High School: quality facility for students and for the community

Needs and Challenges Identified by Community Members:

- Need a community center that functions as such
- Need to resolve the old high school controversy
- Need to partner with other entities
- Need for better communication among government and private entities and between those entities and community citizens (including those who live outside the city limits)
- Need a city parks and recreation department
- Need to harness the potential for increased development along Highway 20 to entice tourists to stop
- Need to clean up town to improve a visitor's first impression
- Need for rental properties
- Need to protect viewsheds
- Need for better transportation to town from rural homes outside
- Need for more cooperation among governments, but without overlap

General Visiting Team Observations

Visiting team observations are summarized below under the topics of Long-Term Planning and Infrastructure Development.

Long-Term Planning

The first observation made by the team is that growth is inevitable. There is an immediate need to become involved with municipal leadership to mold future growth into something the community can, and would like to, sustain. Ashton has an advantage not available to most upper valley communities: growth has not destroyed the historic planned community. Ashton still has time to learn from the experience (mistakes) of other upper valley communities by putting in place the tools needed to direct growth and preserve community identity.

The second observation is the need to update the city's planning tools and capacity, including planning and zoning ordinances and the city's comprehensive plan. Coordination and cooperation in this regard are critical. The team reviewed both of these documents and it was clear that most developments will not be adequately regulated with the current code.

This section is divided into five subject areas:

- Updating the City Comprehensive Plan
- Updating City Planning and Zoning Ordinances
- Developing Administrative Capacity for Land-Use Planning
- Coordinating Planning and Zoning Efforts with Fremont County
- Make No Small Plans: Think Big!

Each subject area has its own observations and recommendations. Available resources for the entire Long-Term Planning section are listed at the end.

Updating the City Comprehensive Plan: Observations

The comprehensive plan is a visionary document that outlines what a community wants to become. Plans vary extensively from one community to the next. Most communities want to control unrestrained growth and preserve their community identity.

It would be of great benefit for the citizens of Ashton to support the city government in reviewing and updating the comprehensive plan.

Updating the City Comprehensive Plan: Recommendations

The city should work with the local area residents to work through a comprehensive planning process. This process typically takes several months, but can be a very rewarding experience as citizens build consensus on the long-term directions for the community.



With proper planning, vistas such as this can remain part of the Ashton landscape in perpetuity

Update City Planning and Zoning Ordinances: Observations

This observation was made evident by the home team expressing frustration with the tools currently available in the zoning ordinances. There were several tools that appeared to them to need updating and/or inclusion for the first time.

There appear to be several sections of the city planning and zoning ordinances that need to be amended to further the stated goals of the community.

Update City Planning and Zoning Ordinances: Recommendations

The city needs to develop updated code to include implementation of “smart growth principles” (see www.idahosmartgrowth.org) and include community mixed use zoning downtown and along the commercial corridors. The city needs to review all of the code pertaining to development in the city and integrate regulation of current development practice into the code.

City residents also expressed a desire to create a level of design review for commercial buildings and multi-family housing in the community to assure that buildings are aesthetically pleasing and that community context is maintained.

It would also be of great advantage for the City of Ashton to complete an analysis of what the city population would be at full build-out. This would help the Public Works Department in planning infrastructure and extending services to future high-growth areas of the city.

Developing Administrative Capacity for Land-Use Planning: Observations

As is the case in most of Idaho’s rural communities, land-use planning struggles to find the people and time it needs to be successful. Ashton is fortunate to have excellent city staff with a good understanding of issues facing the community. The various city departments all have a role in supporting land-use planning. The visiting team appreciates the Public Works Department’s understanding of the impacts growth will have on the long-term costs of providing services. It is critical for the city departments to continue to support the City Planning and Zoning Commission with the timely relay of infrastructure information to the commission and City Council.

There appears to be a need for closer communication between county planning and zoning staff and the City of Ashton Planning and Zoning Commission.

Developing Administrative Capacity for Land-Use Planning: Recommendations

Work closely with the planning staff at the county and support them with available resources. Include the planning staff at the county in any city planning and zoning code revisions so that the county staff understand city expectations.

Coordinating Planning and Zoning Efforts with Fremont County: Observations

Planning efforts would be enhanced if the city could coordinate with the county in implementation of land-use regulations. This would allow a more seamless transition as the traveling public passes along the Highway 20 corridor. It would also assist the planning and zoning commissions in recognizing nonconforming land uses.

It would appear that the goals of smart growth are not being strongly implemented at the county level. There appears to be a great deal of frustration at several of the service providers concerning the great costs of county sprawl and the demands it is placing on public services.

Coordinating Planning and Zoning Efforts with Fremont County: Recommendations

Schedule planning meetings with the combined planning commissions and political entities to address the long-term vision of the community. How will the communities in Fremont County continue to provide services with the current growing demands? What would the communities like to see changed?

It would be very helpful to see a close integration of the zoning ordinances in the county. The city should become involved in supporting GIS development at the county. This is perhaps the planner’s greatest tool as the zoning and comprehensive plan maps and associated data can be archived directly with the county. With a very small budget allocation these tools could be made available to the city on a much more consistent basis. This discussion should start with the city approaching the county about coordinating this resource.

Make No Small Plans: Think Big!: Observations

One of the hardest things for a community to imagine is anything changing significantly from the way it has been for the past 30 years. However, Idaho is currently the **third fastest-growing state** in the nation. What this means in the short term is that preparation for explosive and sustained growth needs to begin now. It is hard to imagine, and a relevant point is that not everyone will be happy about this fact. We do, however, have a responsibility to work anxiously to preserve those aspects of our community that have long-term and lasting value to us as individuals. Change and growth do not have to destroy core foundational values in a community. Working through the comprehensive planning process will have positive impact on the visioning and long-term planning capability in the city.

Growth is changing rural Idaho communities throughout the state, and not always to the benefit of long-term residents. Many wealthy outsiders see towns like Ashton as a “getaway” or investment, not a place to raise a family and put down roots. Over and over we are seeing communities virtually “strip mined” by speculative outside investment; as a result, local property values (and taxes) quickly escalate beyond the reach of working families, police and fire fighters, school teachers, and other critical workforce members. This phenomenon has also forced many elderly residents on fixed incomes out of their no-longer affordable homes. Be sure that as a community and county, you are clear on the legacy you want to leave your children and grandchildren; it’s a slippery slope from “resort community” to just plain “resort.”

Make No Small Plans: Think Big!: Recommendations

Keep working together on land-use planning issues. There is a great need for volunteers in the community and many of the successes of past years can be attributed directly to the work of volunteers.

The city and the school board need to coordinate better and build consensus together. School board members could be appointed to city committees and visa versa.

The city needs to think “proactive” rather than fall into the “reactive” trap. Planning for proper land-use takes more than just hoping it will fall out the way you would like it to. Possible considerations involve inclusionary zoning, local community land-banking to ensure affordable land for workforce and community housing development, set-asides for affordable housing in every new subdivision, and other incentives to create a sustainable place where new families can afford to live, where employers can count on a stable workforce of locals, and where local businesses have a reason to stay open in the evenings and on weekends. Housing affordability is increasingly tied to economic development and community resilience.

Long-Term Planning: Available Resources

- Advocates for Real Community Housing (ARCH). Creative solutions in community housing. Request a copy of the “Our Neighborhood” DVD to learn more about the importance of affordable community housing. <http://www.archbc.org>
- American Planning Association. <http://www.planning.org/>.
- Fall River Rural Electric Cooperative. <http://www.frrec.com/>.
- Fremont County Assessors Office. <http://www.co.fremont.id.us/departments/assessor/index.htm>.
- Idaho Land Use Planning Act. Available at <http://www3.state.id.us/idstat/TOC/67065KTOC.html>.
- Idaho Planning Association. <http://www.idahoplanningassoc.com/>.
- Private planning professionals/consultants. Look in the yellow pages of larger communities under “Planning.”
- University of Idaho, Landscape Architecture Program. <http://www.class.uidaho.edu/college/units/larc/overview.htm>.

Infrastructure Development

The visiting team worked with home team members in reviewing the existing city infrastructure. Visits were made to the city park and pool, wastewater lagoons, city water storage tank, and booster pumping station.

Overall the infrastructure in the City of Ashton is keeping up with demands. There is some concern about the life of the wastewater lagoons and how much growth they will accommodate. There appears to be enough capacity for the new school to be on city water. It was not clear why this was not done.

It was the observation of the visiting team that the city has been aggressive in planning the upgrade and maintenance of the water and sewer systems. There have been multiple studies completed and engineering work done to assure the long-term viability of clean water for the community. Ashton has had problems with nitrates in the wells in and around the city in the past. There are several public infrastructure development opportunities in the city that are under development and at various stages of implementation.

This section is divided into four subject areas:

- Development of the Old Railroad Wye
- Build-Out Study with the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- Open Space Provisions in the Comprehensive Plan and in City Ordinances
- Support Fire District in Facility Expansion and Development

Each subject area has its own observations and recommendations. Available resources for the entire Infrastructure Development section are listed at the end.

Development of the Old Railroad Wye: Observations

One of the most important infrastructures yet to be developed in the City of Ashton is the railroad Wye north of town. This location is identified in the Idaho Department of Transportation's *Mesa Falls Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan*³ as a starting point for the Department of Parks and Recreation Ashton/Tetonia Rails to Trails project. Chapter 2 of the plan suggests developing large parking and mobilization areas for the implementation of year-round recreation opportunities.

This project is well on the way to full implementation. There is widespread community support for the proposal and there is a strong intergovernmental partnership that has evolved. The community will have a new launch pad for a variety of recreational opportunities.



The soon-to-be developed Wye trailhead will be the starting point for the Ashton/Tetonia Rails-to-Trails winter and summer use trail.

³ Planmakers, Inc. and J-U-B Engineers, Inc. 2005. Mesa Falls Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan. Boise, ID. The plan (7.5 mb) can be accessed electronically at <http://itd.idaho.gov/planning/reports/scenic/FullMesaFallsPlan.pdf>.

Development of the Old Railroad Wye: Recommendations

Continued intergovernmental cooperation will allow for the co-funding of this initiative. Public support and use of the facilities will drive the opportunities for close collaboration. This project will realize a long-term vision for the old rail corridor to the Teton Basin and add yet another tourist attraction to the community.

Build-Out Study with the Planning and Zoning Commission: Observations

A build-out study would communicate the future infrastructure needs of the city. Build-out studies can also help in planning roads in the impact area and assist the city in the budgeting process. Estimates as to density and total population can be calculated at the current zoning allowed in the city and then extrapolated to future time frames. This should be done for a 5, 10, 15, and 20 year terms.

A build-out study has not been completed for many years and therefore the city has not had an important planning tool to look beyond the immediate future. This tool would be of great benefit to the planning and zoning commission and the city council as they begin to deal with rapid growth.

Build-Out Study with the Planning and Zoning Commission: Recommendations

Complete a build-out study using all available data (current population density, projected density, etc.).

Open Space Provisions in the Comprehensive Plan and in City Ordinances : Observations

Community open space appears to be highly valued in Ashton. There is a need to protect treasured vistas by implementing a public process to identify areas that may need to be acquired by the community for use as open spaces or parks.

The views in and around the City of Ashton are breathtaking. The community should learn from the experience of other high growth areas and plan now to preserve those areas of highest value to the community.

Open Space Provisions in the Comprehensive Plan and in City Ordinances : Recommendations

Protect open spaces by acquiring additional spaces for the community, then link open spaces with the trail system at the Wye.

Support Fire District in Facility Expansion and Development: Observations

The City of Ashton had a major involvement when the fire district was expanding its facilities the 1990s. The facility in Ashton is currently the largest joint venture of its kind in eastern Idaho. The district and county have maintained excellent service with volunteers.

The city and county should work together with the fire district in the expansion of needed facilities. The county should continue to coordinate with the city and the fire district in the implementation of new subdivision development and, where possible, encourage residential development inside urban growth areas.

Water issues will continue to be a problem for the fire district. Recent news coverage of fire loss in the county testifies to the difficulty in providing services over such a large area.

Support Fire District in Facility Expansion and Development: Recommendations

Ashton needs to maintain and nurture their existing relationships with Fremont County. Ashton could relieve a great burden from county commissioners by properly planning new residential development in the city and adjacent areas in the areas of city impact.

Maintaining infrastructure capable of expanding residential use would work well for the county in reducing sprawl into environmentally sensitive areas. Provision of services within the city would be much more cost effective in this scenario. The city and county should also reverse current trend of large subdivisions being developed in the county, far from fire services.

Infrastructure Development: Available Resources

- American Planning Association. <http://www.planning.org/>.
- Association of Idaho Cities. <http://www.idahocities.org/>.
- FreTel Communications. <http://www.fretel.com/>
- Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor. <http://cl.idaho.gov/portal/>
- Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. <http://www.idahoparks.org/>
- Idaho Planning Association. <http://www.idahoplanningassoc.com/>.
- Idaho Transportation Department. Transportation Enhancement Funding. <http://itd.idaho.gov/planning/reports/newenhancements/>.
- Life Estates. A right to exclusive possession and use of land for the period of a lifetime, then an estate can be transferred to someone/something else. For example, a person may leave her child a life estate of property with the provision that when that child dies, the property is deeded to the City of Ashton. Learn more at <http://www.wcel.org/wcelpub/5110/5110c12.html>
- Private Public Partnerships. Partnerships between governments and the private sector in managing buildings and properties. Learn more at <http://www.gao.gov/special.pubs/Gg99071.pdf>.
- Teton Regional Land Trust. <http://www.tetonlandtrust.org/>.
- Trust for Public Land. <http://www.tpl.org/>.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Idaho. <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/id/>.

Land-Use Planning: Conclusions

Ashton is a well-planned community, and has been since its inception. It continues to benefit from historical planning efforts. However, inevitable growth may threaten these past efforts. Ashton will benefit from proactive collaborative and strategic growth management, which will influence whether the growth becomes a net gain for the community or a net drain.

Ashton itself can mold its future to determine if growth will enhance the local economy, quality of life, and unique identity, or detract from it. The future is in your hands.

Intentionally left blank

Part III. Strategies, Next Steps, and Conclusions

Through the act of applying for a Community Review, the City of Ashton took a powerful first step toward increasing community wealth and vitality and controlling the community's destiny. Ashton decided *it* would decide what it would become in the future, rather than let outside forces decide for it.

However, a first step is not enough. Challenges lie ahead.

Ashton is changing and will continue to change. It is growing. Agriculture and logging are not driving the economy in the way they once did. While local support for this growth is mixed, Ashton is bound by a sense of community spirit and pride in its heritage. These shared sentiments can bring the community of Ashton together as it searches for an identity, uses its recreational and historic resources to their greatest potential, and plans for the future.

Caution: Change Ahead

No one disputes that Ashton will grow and change, perhaps significantly, over the next few years. With any change comes new challenges. While not always easy, planning for change and meeting challenges head-on allows a community to set its own destiny. Some of the challenges observed by the visiting team include:

- The need for improved communication among city, county, and other leaders, and between leaders and citizens.
- The need to establish a unique community identity, before the “outside world” establishes one for you.
- The need to recruit and keep well-paying jobs in Ashton (economic development/tourism).
- The need for long-term strategic planning on all levels.
- The need to maintain, develop, and sustain partnerships.
- The need to include all members of the community in community life and decisions.

These “challenges” are *good* challenges. Their very nature indicates Ashton is a quality place to live and is looking toward the future. For instance, the need to develop a community identity wouldn't be as crucial an issue if Ashton did not have many different facets (different “identities”) that it can draw upon. The need to recruit and keep jobs wouldn't be as much of an issue if there weren't youth who wanted to live in Ashton as adults, providing they can find work. The need to broaden the participation of all members of the community wouldn't be an issue if Ashton did not have so many diverse groups within the community to begin with.

These issues are broad and weave themselves throughout this document; some relate specifically to one or more of Ashton's three focus areas (Arts, Historic, and Recreation Resources; Community Design and Identity; and Land-Use Planning), while others do not.

Strategies

Below we briefly outline the strategies highlighted in this report that can help Ashton plan for, and respond to, the broad challenges listed above. Strategies specific to Ashton's three focus areas are outlined in detail in *Part II: Team Reports*; however, many of the strategies listed below mirror or complement those of the specific focus areas.

Communication

Home team and visiting team members alike recognized the need for improved communication among city, county, and other leaders, and between leaders and citizens.

Even before the Community Review, efforts were underway to improve communication between the City of Ashton and its citizens. The city recently launched its own Web page (www.cityofashton.com), which, while still under construction, already serves as a central location where residents and visitors alike can find information about what is happening in the community. The Web site is particularly important in communicating with members of the greater Ashton community who are not citizens of the City of Ashton *per se*, as many other methods of communication (e.g., newsletters in utility bills) only reach those who live within the city limits.

The Ashton Area Chamber of Commerce newsletter is another relatively new method of communicating with the greater Ashton community. While not specifically a means of the city communicating with its citizens, it is an excellent forum for community members to learn about what is happening in the area.

These efforts are a great start, and the fact that they were implemented before the Community Review indicates that leaders already recognized communication as an important issue.

This, however, is only part of the equation. Continued and improved relations and communication among city, county, and other leaders (chamber of commerce, school board, other cities, etc.) is a must. These organizations and their leaders must work in concert to leverage resources and provide consistent growth policies. The current conflict over the old high school has exacerbated this issue. It is imperative that the community moves beyond this issue to work for the common good. A good place to start is for the city to invite other leaders (e.g., county commissioners, school board members) to appoint members to serve as liaisons with the city council and for the city to offer to do the same with other organizations. These liaisons would attend meetings and provide input related to the organization they represent.

A third aspect of this issue is that of communicating to, and serving the needs of, visitors and new residents. Simply providing quality customer service at local businesses, and cultivating knowledgeable front-line employees, goes a long way to improve relations and communication: a friendly smile, a warm welcome to a stranger, an offer to help, and the knowledge to be able to do so. Providing customer service classes to employees, that not only teach skills, but also teach about local resources, can be a valuable investment.

Community Identity

Currently, Ashton has many “identities”; it is the seed potato capital, a gateway to adventure, a recreational destination, a farming community, a logging community, and a “wide spot in the road” on the way to Yellowstone. Now is the time for Ashton to establish an identity for itself before the “outside world” does it first.

While this report recommends establishing a unifying identity, this does not imply that Ashton must narrow itself. Ashton is a many-faceted place. It truly is a farming community, a logging community, a recreational haven. A well thought-out identity can encompass all of those facets of Ashton’s personality.

Solicit input from the community as you seek to establish your identity. Consider forming a community-based council or group that is assigned to this project and then recruit citizens, community leaders, businesspeople, the agricultural community, the faith community, and other stakeholders to serve on this council. Ultimately, the identity should be able to articulate what Ashton is, what it has to offer, and what it expects to become. Once an identity is established, it can be used as a basis for marketing what Ashton has to offer.

Economic Development

Jobs and economic development were not subjects the visiting team was asked to review. However, as with most small communities, economic development and jobs fall hand-in-hand with most other aspects of community development. The visiting team continually heard comments from citizens and youth that long-term, living-wage jobs were a key to Ashton's survival. We agree. Many youth, in particular, stated that they would like to stay in, or return to, Ashton to live and raise a family, but cannot without jobs. The fact that youth have the desire to grow old in Ashton says a lot about the community: it is up to that community to recruit employers that allow youth to stay or return. Tourism and recreation development, downtown revitalization, and the improvement or development of many community amenities can all play an important role in supporting ongoing and future economic development efforts.

Long-Term Strategic Planning

Ashton is a well-planned community, and has been since its inception. However, inevitable growth may threaten past planning efforts. Ashton will benefit from proactive, collaborative, and strategic growth management, which will influence whether the growth becomes a net gain for the community or a net drain.

Strategic planning, on all levels—regional, county, city, district—will allow Ashton to control its growth and its destiny. It is imperative that strategic planners from different agencies work together to create plans that complement each other and provide for consistent treatment of growth issues.

Partnerships

Partnerships leverage resources; they allow for more or higher quality goods and services than can be accomplished alone; they build alliances. The Ashton community has benefited from recent successful partnerships; the new high school, Ashton Memorial Nursing Home, and the new emergency services building all demonstrate what can be accomplished through working together. Build upon the momentum of these successes to create new partnerships to bring about new and exciting initiatives. Establish partnerships to market the identity of Ashton. Work with St. Anthony, Island Park, and/or Fremont County to collaboratively market the area. Encourage the Ashton Area Chamber of Commerce and the Gem Community team to work together to increase economic development efforts.



The Ashton Emergency Services center is an example of the positive outcome of successful partnerships

Inclusiveness

Many “outsiders” looking in see most rural Idaho communities as homogenous: they assume everyone looks the same, thinks the same, *is* the same. This is not the case. Ashton is home to a diversity of individuals: farmers, businesspeople, students, retirees; Mormon, Catholic, protestant, atheist; young, old, middle-aged; Caucasian, Hispanic, Native American; long-term residents and newcomers; those who look forward to growth and those who want to hold on to what Ashton “used to be.” Like most people, Ashton residents don’t mind change; they just don’t want to **be** changed.

Ashton's residents are its backbone. However, as is the case in many locations, a few individuals end up doing much of the community work. This can not only cause the "burn-out" of those volunteers, but also limits the community vision to that of those few who are willing to do the work. Ashton should strive to include all members of the community in its efforts.

Now is the perfect time to start to recruit new voices and new energy into decision-making and into the day-to-day running of a community, as the Community Review process and Ashton's centennial celebration provide vehicles for recruiting new volunteers into community life.

Three "groups" of Ashton citizens appear to be especially needed and available for contribution: youth, newcomers, and the Hispanic community. Through the proposed "youth council," the city has already begun reaching out to youth and including them in community decisions and programs. They are the adults of tomorrow; including them now not only allows them to have a say in what their community will become, but also provides them with the tools necessary to lead the community when their time comes.

Several of the people who attended the town hall meetings sponsored by the review team were "newcomers," and many lived outside the city limits of Ashton. Yet, these individuals demonstrated a commitment to their new community by showing up to learn and contribute. They expressed a willingness to volunteer. Tap into these individuals; welcome them, and their energy and new ideas, to the community. Put them to work.

The visiting team did not see or visit with many members of Ashton's Hispanic community, nor was the Hispanic community represented in the written community survey (only one respondent identified him/herself as a race other than "white"). However, census data show that 14% of Ashton's community is of Hispanic origin⁴. The visiting team was told that much of the Hispanic community had traveled to Boise to watch the Ashton girl's soccer team compete in the state tournament, but this certainly does not account for everyone, or for the lack of representation in the written survey. Make an effort to include this under-represented community in the community as a whole. Work with them to bring their ideas and contributions to the table and to address their needs.

Next Steps

The Community Review offers many, many recommendations, ideas, and resources. It is now Ashton's job to sift through these, weigh their costs and benefits, and decide how to proceed. The visiting team does not expect you to follow-through with every suggestion and idea. To attempt to do so would be impossible. The key to success is to work methodically—plan, prioritize, evaluate, and, if necessary, re-group.

Start With a Plan

Decide on community priorities, then develop a plan of how to reach them, complete with goals and objectives. Make sure your objectives are timely and measurable and support your goals. Continually refer to your objectives and "check" them off as they are completed.

The plan does not have to be a formal document, but does need to be well thought out and bought into by the appropriate players. Use the plan to guide decisions on specific actions, such as recommendations from this report.

4

http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFFacts?_event=Search&geo_id=&_geoContext=&_street=&_county=ashton&_cityTown=ashton&_state=04000US16&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010

Establish Priorities and Create a Timeline

Once you have developed a plan and decided which recommendations or other actions you plan to pursue, it is time to prioritize them and develop a timeline for their implementation. Not everything can, or should, be done immediately. When prioritizing and developing your timeline, ask these questions:

- **Have we done our planning first?** With few exceptions, nothing should be done until a plan is in place.
- **Does this fit into the big picture?** Does the project fit into the plan? No matter how easy, fun, or inexpensive a project is, or how much community support it has, consider first whether it will help achieve goals and objectives. A project that does not meet plan goals can be useless, create an inconsistent community image, or draw resources from other projects.
- **How much will it cost? Can we afford it?** Small, inexpensive changes can make a big impact—a lot of money is not always necessary to achieve goals. However, avoid doing projects just because they are inexpensive and don't avoid projects just because they are expensive. If something will help you meet your goals, it is worth pursuing. For expensive projects, consider applying for grants or building partnerships to leverage resources.
- **How long will it take to implement?** Quick changes can often make a big impact. Just be sure they fit into larger program goals.
- **How quickly will we see the benefits?** Quick fixes can be good, especially in the short term, but longer-term fixes also often take a longer time to realize. Don't let a slower return on investment deter you from undertaking a worthwhile project. When feasible, consider starting these types of projects first so they can be slowly "doing their thing" while you undertake other projects.
- **Does something else have to happen before we can do this?** Consider the overall timeline. Does a plan need to be in place before something can happen (always a good idea)? Do voters need to be involved? Do you need to get permission? Jumping the gun can slow things down in the long run.
- **Does this have to happen before we can do something else?** If something else is waiting on the outcome of your project, consider this in your time frame. A project that may not seem important may need to take priority to allow something else to happen.
- **Are there external time frames we need to fit into?** When are grant requests due? If partnering, what are the other partners' time frames? You may need to begin a planning or grant application process long before you are ready to do the work.

Evaluate Progress and Stay on Track

Plans are great tools, but once developed and the "real" work begins, they are often relegated to collecting dust on shelves. Use your plans (this report, the *Mesa Falls Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan*, and the plan(s) you put together as a result of these) as roadmaps. Refer to them often. Continually compare projects against your goals and objectives and ask:

- Are we still working toward our goals and objectives?
- If not, do we need to refocus our energies or do we need to reconsider our goals?
- Are we using resources toward projects that don't lead us toward our goals and objectives?
- If so, how can we change that?
- Which objectives have we met?
- Is meeting our objectives getting us closer to our goals?
- Which objectives have we not met? Why?
- Do we need new or additional objectives to meet our goals?

Conclusions

Ashton is a city on the cusp. Change and growth are coming. Now is the time to develop the Ashton of the future in a way that future residents will look back and be grateful for what happened in 2006.

Use the recommendations and resources provided in this report. Expand upon them. Do not limit yourselves to these suggestions or resources, but always feel free to call upon any of your visiting team members for support. We'll be back to check on your progress. Ashton itself can mold its future to determine if growth will enhance the local economy, quality of life, and unique identity, or detract from it. Ashton is in alignment with the world and is prepared to stay that way. The future is in your hands. Good luck.

The key to success is alignment. Staying in alignment with a world that will be characterized by complexity, diversity, and pace of change.

Ed Barlow, President, Creating the Future, Inc.
Quoted by Mayor Stronks, *State of the City* address, October 26, 2005

Appendices

Intentionally left blank

Appendix A. Ashton Community Review Application

Intentionally left blank

Idaho Community Review Application

A Community Visitation Program

Offered in Partnership by the
Association of Idaho Cities, Idaho Rural Partnership,
Idaho Department of Commerce, Idaho Housing & Finance Association, Boise State University, & U.S. Department
of Housing & Urban Development

Please submit the answers to the following questions to the Association of Idaho Cities, 3314 Grace Street, Boise, ID, 83703. Cities with populations under 10,000 are eligible to apply.

The community review program is an excellent in-kind value for its cost. Idaho Cities such as Heyburn, Jerome, Hayden, Kooskia, Priest River, Weiser, and Buhl have conducted successful community reviews for under \$2,500. Estimated costs for a community review through a private consulting firm, including salary, travel, lodging, site visit, data collection, and report fees, is well over \$20,000 for equivalent expertise from 15-18 community development professionals.

Your community must agree to accept the following responsibilities to ensure the success of the review:

- Arrange for large and small group meeting sites throughout the review with community leaders and citizens
- Appoint a home team leader for each of the three focus areas you identify who is willing to work with the visiting team leaders to plan and coordinate the community review
- Arrange community tours and meeting agendas in the three focus areas you identify
- Pay for group transportation during the community tours and all team meals (many communities have partnered with school districts and civic groups to share transportation and meal costs)
- Make lodging reservations for the visiting team
- Publicize the community review to maximize community participation
- Assist with survey data collection prior to the community review
- Provide one or two individuals during the review to assist with data entry

Community: City of Ashton

Main Contact Person: Joni Amen, City Clerk

Address/City/State/Zip: PO Box 689, Ashton, ID 83420

Phone, Fax, Email: (208) 652-3987 Office, (208) 652-3401 FAX

Names/phone numbers/Email addresses of the three Focus Area team Leaders:

Teddy Stronks, Mayor- (208) 652-7725 teddystronks@hotmail.com

Steve Anderson, Chamber President (208) 652-7600

Cathy Stegelmeier- Ashton Visitor Center Director and owner of Stegelmeier Farmhouse B&B

3) Circle, or write in, the three focus areas that your community would like to emphasize. Focus areas might include some combination of the following:

Local Economic Development	Housing
Urban Renewal	Communication
Infrastructure	<u>Community Design & Identity</u>
<u>Land Use Planning</u>	Education
Transportation	Health Care
Natural Resources	<u>Arts, Historic, and Recreation Resources</u>
Seniors and Youth	Civic Life and Community Involvement

Other Focus Area(s): Tourism

In the Focus Areas identified, what specific issues does your community want to address?

1.) Land Use Planning:

- ◆ Area of Impact & Annexation.
- ◆ Wisely plan for growth.
- ◆ Review zoning ordinance
- ◆ Comprehensive Planning
- ◆ Technical improvements (GIS – Software Improvements)

2.) Community Design & Identity:

- ◆ Ashton once wanted to use the theme “Christmas Town USA” and paint the grain elevator like a candy cane! The plan never happened. The theme now is Gateway to Adventure! How do we capitalize on this theme and make it recognizable?
- ◆ Draw tourism and advertise scenic byways.

3.) Arts, Historic, and Recreation Resources:

- ◆ Investigate the possibility of making Ashton THE trailhead of a thousand miles of snow machine trails. Enhancement of the Rails to Trails to a greenway biking/hiking trail.
- ◆ Creation of a Museum
- ◆ Enhancement of our Archives
- ◆ Youth Activities

What is the best possible outcome resulting from a community review in your town?

It would bring together different groups to work together towards a common goal and improve the city, together. Also help obtain new ideas in effective planning for our future. A review from the outside would perhaps shine the light on areas of potential that are being overlooked.

It would give suggestions on GIS mapping software and other tools available to help us with land-use planning or what other technical tools our city would be benefited from.

What strategic planning, business development, enhancement, revitalization, clean-up, contracted or consulting efforts have occurred in your community in the last one to three years? (attach additional sheets, documentation, brochures, or report summaries as necessary)

The City of Ashton together with the Ashton Memorial Nursing home and ECIPDA was awarded a block grant to build the beautiful new Nursing home in town. The Nursing home is currently our largest employer providing over 50 desperately needed jobs in town. They are also taking care of our seniors in an awesome way with loving care from people they have known for years. The Nursing home is a wonderful asset to our community.

The Fremont County School District is currently constructing a brand new Jr. and Sr. High School building, which will be an invaluable addition to our community. One of the teachers, Laura Allen, was awarded a grant for almost \$200,000.00 for physical education equipment. The school will open up the area for the public to come in and use the equipment as well.

Fremont County has assisted the City in numerous ways. We resurfaced some of our streets and couldn't have done it without the County volunteering their equipment and manpower to help. They also help with snow removal when we need them. The City of Ashton is currently in the process of teaming with the County in a Transportation Study. We have also submitted an application for a grant to help with re-signing the City to meet the new State regulations.

Our Planning and Zoning Commission is actively involved with the City in encouraging citizens to cleanup their yards and have pride in their property. We team with the Department of Corrections and hire the Work-Camp men come in the spring and help do spring cleaning as well as repairs and maintenance on our buildings. Last spring we were able to cleanup several eye sores and helped the residents get rid of yard debris and large items. The County opens up the landfill and allows us to dump for free.

The Ashton Pool Committee was awarded a grant to replace our boiler for our in our facility. This has drastically cut our heating costs and hopefully this will keep the patrons coming especially for our youth.

An area citizen is working on an application for a grant to start a museum. He has a large collection of military vehicles and snow machines.

What other projects has your community completed in the last one to three years? (attach additional sheets or information as necessary)

Our Tree Committee together with the Urban Renewal Commission and the City of Ashton worked to beautify our Cities Main Street. The Tree Committee replaced dead trees and planted flowers in the beds at the base. The City and Urban Renewal worked together to build a drip irrigation system to water the trees. While they had the trench open they installed conduit for a future lighting project that we hope to do when funds become available.

The City has completed a wastewater study and is in the process of meeting recommendations for upgrading our system.

Has your community completed and implemented a Gem Plan? If so, please describe to what extent and attach a copy of the Gem Plan to this application.

Yes

What possible dates do you propose for a community review?

The Spring of 2005

Mayor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B. Ashton Community Review Survey and Survey Results

Intentionally left blank

COMMUNITY REVIEW SURVEY— 2005

We Need Your Input! Please Return by September 15th.

*NOTE: Answers about who completed the survey are recorded below in **bold**; answers to open ended questions at the end of the survey can be found on pages 69 –70 in **bold**. Answers to the “quality rating” section are found beginning on pages 71 - 72, following the blank survey.*

First, we would like to know a little bit about who has completed our survey. Please complete the following items before returning the survey to us.

Gender: **28.6%** Male **71.4%** Female Age: **Range 18 – 95 years; Median 45.5 years**

Ethnicity: **White 98.1%, Other 1.9%** Years Lived in the Community: **Range 4 mos – 82 yrs; Median 25.5 yrs**

Where do you currently live? **74%** In Ashton **26%** Other Area in Fremont County

Do you commute to work in another city or town? **17.98%** Yes **82.1%** No

If yes, to what city or town to you commute to work in? Rexburg, St. Anthony (most common answers)

Listed on the next several pages are 75 community features and resources. Please rate your perception of the quality of these features in your community. Please be absolutely honest in your answer, as it is important to know exactly how you feel. If you don’t have an opinion about it, simply do not respond to that item.

Item	Community Feature	Quality Rating
Transportation and Roads		
1.	City Streets and Roads	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
2.	Airport	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
3.	Traffic Conditions	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
4.	Parking Downtown	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
5.	Public Transit	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
6.	Bicycle and Pedestrian Access	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
Community Protection		
7.	Police Protection	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
8.	Crime Prevention Programs	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
9.	Fire Protection	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good

10.	Building Code Enforcement & Inspection	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
Water/Wastewater Resources		
11.	Water Supply	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
12.	Water Quality	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
13.	Sewage Collection and Disposal	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
14.	Flood Control Measures	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
Parks & Recreation		
15.	Community Parks and Playgrounds	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
16.	Sufficient Planning for Future Recreational Facilities	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
17.	Recreation for Children 12 and under	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
18.	Recreation for Teenagers	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
19.	Recreation for Adults	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
Local Leadership		
20.	Responsiveness of Local Government	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
21.	Cooperation Among Local Government and Civic Groups	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
22.	Community Involvement in Decision Making	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
23.	Cooperation between City and County	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
24.	Effective Community Leadership	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
25.	Long-Range Planning	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
26.	Planning and Zoning of Real Property	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
Educational Resources		
27.	Quality of City Library	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
28.	Local Arts and Cultural Opportunities	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
29.	Condition of School Buildings	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
30.	Quality of Elementary Education	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
31.	Quality of Middle School Education	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
32.	Quality of Junior High Education	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
33.	Quality of High School Education	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good

34.	Vocational Education - Job Training Opportunities	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
35.	Higher Education Opportunities	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
Health Resources		
36.	Ambulance Service	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
37.	Availability of Emergency Care	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
38.	Access to Hospital(s)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
39.	Availability of Doctors	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
40.	Availability of Mental Health Care	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
Housing		
41.	Availability of homes to Purchase	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
42.	Condition of homes Available	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
43.	Availability of Rental Housing Options	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
44.	Condition of Rental Housing	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
45.	Availability of Affordable Income Housing Options	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
46.	Condition of Affordable Income Housing Options	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
Community Appearance		
47.	Appearance of Downtown	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
48.	Appearance of Public Buildings	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
49.	Appearance of Neighborhoods	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
50.	Appearance of Gateways into Community	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
Social Climate		
51.	Friendliness of Residents	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
52.	Progressive Community Spirit	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
53.	Welcome Given to Newcomers	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
54.	Acceptance of Minorities	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
55.	Involvement of Churches in Community	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
Jobs and Industry		
56.	Availability of Local Jobs	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
57.	Quality of Available Local Jobs	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good

58.	Variety of Local Industry	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
59.	Business Involvement with Community	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good

Local Goods and Services

60.	Variety & Quality of Goods in Stores	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
61.	Number of Places to Eat Out	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
62.	Quality of Places to Eat Out	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
63.	Accessibility of Community for People With Disabilities	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
64.	Availability of Day Care for Children	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
65.	Availability of Senior Programs	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
66.	Availability of Drug and Alcohol Treatment Programs	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
67.	Banking and Financial Services	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
68.	Local Newspaper Service	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
69.	Hotel and Motel Accommodations	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
70.	High Speed Internet Access & Quality	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
71.	Entertainment Options	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
72.	Garbage Collection and Disposal	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good

Overall Perceptions

73.	Overall Community Quality	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
74.	City staff response to challenges in Ashton	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good
75.	Usability and helpfulness of city website www.ashtonidaho.com	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very poor Very good

Finally, we would like to know your perceptions—in your own words—about what is great about the City of Ashton and how you would like to see it improve. Please share your thoughts on these issues with us.

What are the strengths and assets that make the City of Ashton a special place to work, live, play, and raise a family? *Answers in **bold**.* (Note: The answers below represent 20 of the 78 surveys returned. The remaining 58 surveys were accidentally destroyed before the answers could be compiled.)

- Area not so busy
- **Beautiful new high school, rest home and swimming pool, people care about each other**
- **Beautiful scenery, good people**
- **Beautiful scenery, great camping facilities, fishing, hiking, outdoor experiences**
- **Community togetherness, gateway to outdoors, not much crime**
- **Friendliness, caring community, everyone watches out for each other**
- **Friendly, clean, good atmosphere to raise family, no gangs**
- **Great sense of community, lack of discrimination**
- **Great small community for families to start and grow**
- **Hunting and fishing**
- **Local people and honest community**
- **Nice small town**
- **Recreation options, scenery**
- **School board needs to reassess decision to tear down the old high school**
- **Small community, people try to help each other**
- **The people**
- **The people are what makes Ashton a great place to work and raise a family**

What are the problems and challenges facing the City of Ashton in the *short* term?

- **Adding new businesses, planning for city services**
- **Downtown area, no jobs**
- **Jobs and opportunity for all ages**
- **Lack of unity between churches, not many jobs, no recreation for youth, the fight over old school**
- **Land is being purchases by out of staters for high prices, these people want big city services**
- **Leave the school building alone and look at the property instead**
- **More jobs, cost of buying house is increasing, outside people can buy more because they have money**
- **Need more water supply, better quality water and water pressure**
- **Need to draw people in to spend money, main street's storefronts are very appealing**
- **Police picking only on a few people, the same people**
- **Snow removal**
- **Unaddressed drug problem, need recreation for young people, skate park**
- **Water costs for watering loans [sic], doctor visits, water quality**

What are the problems and challenges facing the City of Ashton in the *long* term?

- **Beautification of city buildings, main street, neighborhoods**
- **Future jobs, apartments or townhouses for low income or temporary residents**
- **Growth**
- **Growth-where will Ashton expand and how? what will local farmers do**
- **Job, things to do besides a bar, changing old buildings into better looking and much needed business**
- **Lack of opportunity for young people, they have to leave to find decent jobs**

- **Lack of unity between churches, not many jobs, no recreation for youth, the fight over old school**
- **Not enough jobs, and available ones pay poorly**
- **Providing services if there is an increase in population, adhering to planning/zoning regulations**
- **Too many people**
- **Water problems**
- **Water shortages, quality of drinking water, job shortage**
- **Weeds in used lots, unlicensed cars on roads**

What would you like to see the City of Ashton accomplish in the next five (5) years?

- **Create new jobs by increasing new businesses, increase cooperation in civic enterprises**
- **Fix the water situation**
- **Get some entertainment businesses into community so people don't have to go to Rexburg**
- **Improve storefronts and appearance of city building**
- **Improved water supply and water quality, a Starbucks and a quality bakery**
- **Increase water supply, spruce up main street to encourage visitors, better gateway on s. end of town**
- **Meals on wheels for seniors for all week**
- **More jobs and opportunities for all ages**
- **More social events, more jobs**
- **More sources of entertainment for young adults**
- **More stores in Ashton so we could stay in town to shop**
- **Spruce up main street, new businesses in vacant buildings, entertainment for youth**
- **Urge homeowners to fence in unsightly yards**

Do you have any additional comments about the information on the survey or about the City of Ashton in general? We appreciate any comments or suggestions that you have!

No comments recorded.

Thank you for your time and for completing the survey!

Please deliver to City Hall by September 15th or

**Mail to: City of Ashton
PO Box 689
Ashton, Idaho 83420
Fax 652-3401**

Table 1: Ranked Mean Quality Ratings of Community Features			
Rank	Community Feature	Quality Rating	
		Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	Condition of School Buildings	5.59	1.33
2.	Quality of City Library	5.37	1.30
3.	Friendliness of Residents	5.36	1.39
4.	Banking and Financial Services	5.33	1.31
5.	Fire Protection	5.26	1.22
6.	Involvement of Churches in Community	5.13	1.63
7.	Traffic Conditions	5.12	1.59
8.	Ambulance Services	5.04	1.44
9.	Quality of Elementary Education	5.04	1.49
10.	Community Parks and Playgrounds	4.87	1.49
11.	Quality of Middle School Education	4.85	1.37
12.	Quality of Junior High School Education	4.73	1.37
13.	Garbage Collection and Disposal	4.69	1.47
14.	Sewage Collection and Disposal	4.66	1.36
15.	Quality of High School Education	4.60	1.49
16.	Progressive Community Spirit	4.53	1.54
17.	Overall Community Quality	4.52	1.44
18.	Parking Downtown	4.42	1.17
19.	Usability and helpfulness of city website	4.42	1.49
20.	City Streets and Roads	4.37	1.71
21.	Welcome Given to Newcomers	4.25	1.53
22.	Availability of Senior Programs	4.22	1.33
23.	Availability of homes to Purchase	4.18	1.51
24.	Hotel and Motel Accommodations	4.16	1.49
25.	Effective Community Leadership	4.15	1.76
26.	Building Code Enforcement and Inspection	4.14	1.60
27.	Appearance of Gateways into Community	4.09	1.50
28.	Quality of Places to Eat Out	4.05	1.57
29.	Acceptance of Minorities	4.01	1.57
30.	City Response to Challenges in Ashton	4.00	1.70
31.	Responsiveness of Local Government	3.99	1.61
32.	Business Involvement with Community	3.97	1.37
33.	Cooperation Between City and County	3.97	1.41
34.	Availability of Emergency Care	3.96	1.73
35.	Appearance of Neighborhoods	3.92	1.23
36.	Water Supply	3.90	1.45
37.	High Speed Internet Quality and Access	3.88	1.74
38.	Availability of Day Care for Children	3.83	1.53
39.	Accessibility of Community for People with Disabilities	3.83	1.48
40.	Cooperation Among Local Government and Civic Groups	3.75	1.51

Note. Standard deviations indicate level of agreement in ratings across respondents (higher standard deviations indicate less agreement in respondent ratings). All ratings were made on 7-point scales where 1 = “Very poor” and 7 = “Very good”; thus, higher numbers reflect greater perceived quality.

Table 1: Ranked Mean Quality Ratings of Community Features			
Rank	Community Feature	Quality Rating	
		Mean	Standard Deviation
41.	Police Protection	3.74	1.82
42.	Appearance of Public Buildings	3.74	1.54
43.	Planning and Zoning of Real Property	3.68	1.42
44.	Appearance of Downtown	3.61	1.64
45.	Local Newspaper Service	3.55	1.92
46.	Long-Range Planning	3.54	1.51
47.	Recreation for Children 12 and under	3.51	1.72
48.	Variety and Quality of Goods in Stores	3.51	1.32
49.	Bicycle and Pedestrian Access	3.48	1.77
50.	Condition of homes Available	3.39	1.36
51.	Community Involvement In Decision Making	3.38	1.60
52.	Number of Places to Eat Out	3.26	1.37
53.	Access to Hospitals	3.21	1.55
54.	Crime Prevention Programs	3.18	1.68
55.	Sufficient Planning for Future Recreational Facilities	3.14	1.39
56.	Water Quality	3.10	1.69
57.	Availability of Drug and Alcohol Treatment Programs	3.06	1.66
58.	Condition of Affordable Income Housing Options	3.06	1.34
59.	Availability of Affordable Income Housing Options	3.06	1.47
60.	Condition of Rental Housing	2.97	1.41
61.	Availability of Doctors	2.96	1.53
62.	Recreation for Adults	2.91	1.79
63.	Availability of Rental Housing Options	2.87	1.41
64.	Local Arts and Cultural Opportunities	2.70	1.25
65.	Vocational Education – Job Training Opportunities	2.61	1.40
66.	Higher Education Opportunities	2.55	1.52
67.	Availability of Local Jobs	2.53	1.38
68.	Quality of Available Local Jobs	2.51	1.44
69.	Recreation for Teenagers	2.47	1.50
70.	Availability of Mental Health Care	2.43	1.35
71.	Variety of Local Industry	2.32	1.27
72.	Entertainment Options	2.18	1.41
73.	Public Transit	1.63	1.59

Note. Standard deviations indicate level of agreement in ratings across respondents (higher standard deviations indicate less agreement in respondent ratings). All ratings were made on 7-point scales where 1 = “Very poor” and 7 = “Very good”; thus, higher numbers reflect greater perceived quality.

Appendix C. Community Review Itinerary

Intentionally left blank

Community Review Itinerary - 2005		
Tuesday, October 25, 2005		Individuals Involved
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.	Ice Breaker - Orientation - Big Jud's (No Host-order off of menu)	home & visiting teams
Wednesday, October 26, 2005		
8:00-8:30 a.m.	Breakfast – Fall River Electric	home & visiting teams
8:30-9:00	Welcome	Mayor Stronks
9:00-9:15	History of Ashton	Tom Howell
9:15-9:30	Introduction of home/visiting teams	Commissioner Hess/Brian Dale
9:30-9:35	Community Review Logistics (Meals, Transportation, and Lodging)	Bryan Hatton
9:35-9:40	Community Review Instructions	Dale Dixon
9:40-10:00	Tour Overview/Itinerary	home team Leaders
	Land Use Planning	John Jorgensen
	Com. Design & Identity	Letha Whitmore
	Arts, Historic, & Recreation Resources	Sherri Davidson
10:00-4:30	Community Tours	home & visiting teams
	Land Use Planning – Al Staub	
10:30-	North of Town – commercial development	
	40 acres South of Town – proposed development	
-12:00	Lagoon and Well	
12:00-2:00	Lunch- 1313 N 3600 E- Lunch will be served at the LDS Tri-Ward Building by the cemetery.	Land Use teams, other invitees
2:00-	EMS Bldg/Fire Station	
	Trail Head at the “Wye” on the Railroad	
-4:30 pm	City Park/Pool/Ball Diamond	
	Com. Design & Identity – Letha Whitmore	Letha Whitmore
10:30-	Nursing home	
	New N.F. High School	
12:00-2:00	Lunch- 1313 N 3600 E- Lunch will be served at the LDS Tri-Ward Building by the Cemetery.	Com Design teams, other invitees
2:00-	Walking tour of town – City Drug and Flea Market (between 1pm & 4 pm) and Senior Center	
	Grain Elevators	
-4:30	Library	
	Arts, Historic, & Recreation Resources – Sherri Davidson/JoAnn Anderson	
10:30-	Hess Heritage Museum - National Registry	

-12:00	Ashton Visitor Center	
12:00-2:00	Lunch- Meet at City Hall – 714 Main Tour Mesa Falls Scenic Byway – Stone’s Bridge Rec. Access Warm River Fish Feeding Area(sack lunches)	A. H. & Rec teams- sack lunch (Bread for fish!)
2:00-	Walking tour of town – Ashton Archives and Flea Market (between 1pm & 4 pm)	
-4:30	Trail Head at the “Wye” on the Railroad – Grain Elevators	
5:30-8:00 p.m.	Dinner - Opera House - Group Photos!	home & visiting teams
6:00-6:45	Mayor’s State of the City Report	Mayor Stronks
7:00-8:00	team/Citizen Discussion	Community Town Hall Meeting
Thursday, October 27, 2005		
8:00-9:00 a.m.	Breakfast – Trails Inn	home & visiting team – Invitees
9:00-4:00 p.m.	Work Session - Fall River Ranch Resort-Lunch On-site	visiting team – Council/Staff
	The visiting team will compile the information and data from the previous day’s efforts into recommendation and action areas for the City and Community. In addition, potential courses of action with funding strategies will be described during this time.	
5:00 – 6:30	Dinner -Mi Ranchito	hometeam Leaders/visiting teams
7:00 – 8:30	Community Debriefing – New High School– (Cookies and Punch)	Community Town Hall Meeting
	The visiting team leaders will lead the debriefing and provide a general report on the team’s observations, findings and community input. Group leaders will deliver team recommendations via a group presentation. The visiting team will field questions.	

**Appendix D. Community Review and Town Hall Meeting
Promotional Materials**

Intentionally left blank

<date>

Dear _____,

The Community Review is coming to Ashton, October 25-27. I personally invite you to participate in the process.

The review was initiated by a group in our community. We requested the review, which has been performed in a variety of communities throughout Idaho with success.

Your involvement is key to our successful review. Our goal is to bring a fresh perspective and outside point of view to our area to help us become more prosperous and improve the quality of life for everyone in our community.

You will have several opportunities to interact with a number of people to share your ideas, opinions, thoughts and concerns regarding the greater Ashton area.

We seek a constructive, open and honest conversation with the goal of bettering our community. We are focusing on three areas in our community: Land Use Planning, Community Design & Identity and Arts, Historic, & Recreation Resources.

People from throughout Idaho with expertise in those areas are volunteering their time to participate in the Community Review as the visiting team. They are in contact with us on a regular basis and are excited to work with us throughout the Review.

Please look at the attached preliminary agenda and mark your calendar accordingly. I appreciate your involvement throughout the process.

Sincerely,

Mayor Teddy Stronks

Ashton Community Meetings

HAVE A VOICE IN ASHTON'S FUTURE!

Plan now to attend two community meetings which are part of the Ashton Community Review.

Discussion will focus on:

- Land use
- Community design & identity
- Arts, historic, & recreation resources

Wednesday—October 26

7:00 p.m.

Opera House

Thursday—October 27

7:00 p.m.

New High School

HAVE A VOICE IN ASHTON'S FUTURE!

Plan now to attend two community meetings which are part of the Ashton Community Review.

Discussion will focus on:

- Land use
- Community design & identity
- Arts, historic, & recreation resources

Wednesday—October 26

7:00 p.m.

Opera House

Thursday—October 27

7:00 p.m.

New High School

Ashton Community Meetings

Are you between 14 & 25? Your opinion counts.
Bring this paper to the Wednesday, October 26, 7:00
p.m. meeting at the Opera House and
win a DVD player.

Name: _____ Age: _____
must be present to win

September 30, 2005

(From the *Island Park News*)

Idaho Rural Partnership launches a ‘community review’ in Ashton

By **ELIZABETH LADEN**

Ashton leaders have launched a process that will identify the community’s core values and look at ways to improve the area’s economic and cultural opportunities and actualize the community’s vision and land use plan.

The process is known as a “community review,” and is spearheaded by the Idaho Rural Partnership (IRP), a state agency. IRP Executive Director Dale Dixon explained the community review process in recent meetings with the city and local organization leaders and the Ashton Area Chamber of Commerce.

The Idaho Community Review is a collaborative project of IRP, the Association of Idaho Cities, the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, Idaho Housing and Finance Association, Boise State University, University of Idaho, Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor, and other federal, state, local, and private organizations.

As part of the review, a visiting team of 12 to 15 community development professionals will divide into three groups and tour Ashton. They will focus on community design and identity, land use planning, and arts, historic, and recreation resources.

A community review survey is also being circulate around the community.

At the chamber meeting Thursday, September 22, Dixon said team members will meet with a “home team” of community leaders, interview and survey citizens, and give an oral presentation of their observations, resources, and recommendations. A written report will also be sent to the community with detailed observations and suggestions for possible action items and resources.

Dixon said the visiting team and home teams will meet at 7 p. m Tuesday, October 25 at the Ashton City Office to discuss the community review.

The teams will hold an open house to receive more input from community members from 7 to 8:30 p. m Wednesday, October 26 at the Opera House. Everyone interested in Ashton’s future should attend, Dixon noted.

At 7 p. m, Thursday, October 27, the team will hold another meeting, this time at the North Fremont High School Auditorium. At this event, team members will share what they learned during their visits, in the written survey, and at Wednesday’s open house, and offer their thoughts about directions Ashton should take. Cookies and lunch will be served.

Some suggestions visiting team members typically will include how existing economic development plans can be activated and enhanced, what businesses can do to bring in more customers, and what new business the community could effectively bring into the area.

Dixon said Ashton folks will be asked to think about what aspects of the community they do not want changed, and what planning tools they can adopt to prevent growth from changing what they value.

Recently, the city of Rexburg completed its community review. The review found that the city needs to do more to communicate with its citizens, who are often so busy that they do not have time to research on their own what is happening in their government.

In response to the review, the city launched a newsletter and a new Web site with an events calendar. The review also pinpointed a need for more parking and a traffic flow plan.

Cities can ask for a community review by contacting Dixon at (208) 272-0596 or 334-3131; e-mail dale.dixon@irp.idaho.gov . More information on IRP is at www.irp.idaho.gov.

Appendix E. Visiting Team Biographies

Intentionally left blank

Kyle Babbitt, Ph.D.

Kyle Babbitt Consulting
445 N 3rd W, Rigby, ID 83442
(208) 745-0750; kbabbitt@cablone.net

Kyle has an undergraduate degree in Geoscience, a Masters in Outdoor Teacher Education, and a Doctorate in Parks and Recreation Administration. Prior to coming to Idaho she worked for Cornell Cooperative Extension in New York State for nine years helping 4-H students and community members learn more about their water and wastewater issues. Through her work with Cornell, she became aware of the Henry's Fork Watershed Council in Idaho. She is a part-time educator at Harriman State Park of Idaho in Island Park and an independent consultant with the Henry's Fork Foundation and the City of St. Anthony, coordinating the Henry's Fork Greenway trail in St. Anthony. She is a member of the Rigby Recreation Committee and the Rigby Sewer Committee, and she chairs the Island Park Gem Team.

Louis Clements

Board Member, International Folk Dance Festival
125 East Moody Rd., Rexburg, ID 83440
(208) 356-7030; dhcljc@yahoo.com

Louis has served 15 years on the Rexburg Chamber of Commerce, 40 years on the Upper Snake River Valley Historical Society Board, and 20 years on the Idaho International Folk Dance Festival committee. He has authored 15 books on local history and is presently editor of the Snake River Echoes, a biannual publication of Snake River Valley history. He was Archivist and Director of the Teton Flood Museum for 17 years. He is also the Chairman of Rexburg Centennial Celebration and Madison County-State of Idaho Centennial Madison County trails committee.

Brian Dale, CCD

Operations Specialist/Faith-Based Liaison, U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development
800 Park Blvd., Ste. 220, Boise, ID 83712
(208) 334-1088 x 3005; brian_dale@hud.gov

Brian has been involved with the Idaho Community Review process since its inception, participating in nine reviews. He was a co-team leader for the Rexburg review. Brian is currently a member of Idaho's Governor's Coordinating Council for Families and Children. Additionally, he has worked with numerous local, regional, and national disability councils, advisory committees, and coalitions, and he served as Executive Director of the Utah Statewide Independent Living Council. A certified community developer (CCD), Brian has a B.A. from Westminster College (in Missouri) and attended Community Builder training at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Dale Dixon

Executive Director, Idaho Rural Partnership
821 W. State St., Boise, ID 83702
(208) 334-3131; Dale.Dixon@irp.idaho.gov

Dale is an Idaho native. He was named Executive Director of Idaho Rural Partnership in January 2005. The organization operates under a federal statute and governor's executive order to support rural Idaho through collaboration and partnership. He has 16 years of broadcast news and media communication experience, working in radio and for CBS, ABC, and NBC-TV affiliates, and traveled extensively in those roles. Dale is an Associated Press and Idaho Press Club award recipient. He serves with several Idaho organizations, including the Leadership Idaho Agriculture Foundation board of directors, Idaho Partners for Home Buyer Education, Inc. board of directors, Bureau of Land Management Resource Advisory Council for southwest Idaho, Boise District Resource Advisory Council, Northwest Nazarene University President's Advisory Committee. He is the Idaho Community Review steering committee chair.

Hank Ebert

Rural Development Specialist, Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor
P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0093
(208) 334-2650; hank.ebert@community.idaho.gov

Hank has served as the Gem Community Program Coordinator at the Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor since 2001. The Gem Community Program focuses on capacity building in small, rural communities in Idaho. He has participated in six Community Reviews beginning with the first one, in Heyburn. He earned a B.A. from Rutgers University in 1979 and an M.P.A. from Boise State University in 2003. He is a graduate of the Economic Development Institute and the Northwest Community Development Institute, and also attended the University of Idaho and The George Washington University in Washington, D.C. He and his family reside in Boise.

Ben Eborn

Teton County Extension Educator, University of Idaho
89 N. Main #4, Driggs, ID 83422
(208) 354-2961; beborn@uidaho.edu

Ben is the University of Idaho Extension Educator in Teton County. His program areas include community development, farm and ranch business management, adult leadership development, and 4-H and youth development. He has a BS in Agricultural Business and a Masters Degree in Agricultural Economics from the University of Idaho.

Steve Ernst

Planner, Bannock County Office of Planning and Development Services
103 N. 6th Suite C, Pocatello, ID 83201
(208) 236-7230; stevee@co.bannock.id.us

Steve has worked for nearly 25 years at the regional, city, and state level in community development; grant writing and administration, and county land-use planning. He also has nine years experience with the City of Pocatello Community Development Department and five years with Bannock County. He has a Masters Degree in Regional and Community Planning.

Janie Gebhardt

Pastor, First Congregational United Church of Christ
1200 Aspen Dr., Pocatello, ID 83204
(208) 232-3056; JanieGebhardt@cableone.net

Rev. Gebhardt has been the minister at First Congregational United Church of Christ since March 2000. She is involved in various community activities including being the chair of the Portneuf Valley Interfaith Fellowship, and past chair of the Healthy Pocatello - Healthy Youth Committee. She serves on the Domestic Violence/ Sexual Assault Task Force for Bannock County, and she is a member of Board of Directors for the Silver Sage Girl Scout Council.

Gale Harding

Madison County Extension Educator, University of Idaho
P.O. Box 580, Rexburg, ID 83440-0580
(208) 356-3191; gharding@co.madison.id.us

Gale is the Madison County Extension Agent for the University of Idaho, serving in this capacity for the last 32 years. He is currently the President of the Madison Economic Development Corporation where he directs and helps develop and encourage new businesses for the county. He serves on the Rexburg Chamber of Commerce board and belongs to the Rexburg Rotary Club. Gale is very interested in rural communities and would like to see them progress with the times so each generation can be proud of their heritage and community sense of up-bringing.

Chris Henderson

City Council Member, City of Montpelier
461 N. 10th, Montpelier, ID 83254
(208) 847-8881; montcity@dcdi.net

Employed with the Union Pacific Railroad, Chris has a wealth of experience with local community organizing and community development. A City Council member for the City of Montpelier, Chris has been very involved in assisting the city in assessing and addressing affordable housing questions. He is also a Montpelier Gem Team member, and is working with Bear Lake County organizing a regional coalition against drugs and violence.

Kurt Hibbert

City Planner, City of Rexburg
P.O. Box 280 (12 N. Center), Rexburg, ID 83440
(208) 359-3020 x 314; kurth@rexburg.org

Kurt has worked at the City of Rexburg as the Community Development Director and Planning and Zoning Administrator for the past four years. Rexburg has presented a planning environment where transition and change seem to be the norm. He has also worked as a community and economic planner in eastern Idaho for over 15 years in the development of the public-private partnerships needed to implement community priorities. He is a funding information specialist and is adept at various levels of city bonding and municipal finance. Kurt was a certified grant administrator for ten years. He has facilitated multiple comprehensive planning processes and enjoys helping communities succeed in implementing community priorities.

Thomas F. Jenkins

City Council Member, City of Malad
400 South Main St, Malad City, Idaho 83252
(208) 766-4430; tom.jenkins@ATK.com

Tom has served as a Malad City Council member for six years, and he has served on the Malad City Planning and Zoning Commission for two years. He has also been an Iron Door Theatre committee member for five years. Professionally, he has worked for ATK Thiokol for 19 years, working in a number of capacities within the organization. Tom holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Information Systems/Information Systems Management from Utah State University in Logan, Utah.

Richard Juengling

Administrative Support Manager, Idaho Office on Aging
P.O. Box 83720, Boise, Idaho 83720-0007
(208) 334-3833; djuengling@aging.idaho.gov

Richard has a BA degree from the University of Wisconsin with an emphasis on Urban and Regional Planning. He worked on land use planning in Wisconsin and then founded and directed a non-profit civil rights organization. He moved to Boise in 1990 to direct the Idaho office of the Land and Water Fund (a non-profit legal assistance organization). Richard then worked with the Idaho State Library managing grants for local libraries around Idaho, and then moved to his current position managing fiscal and administrative functions, including funding for Area Agencies on Aging and local organizations providing services to older Idahoans statewide.

Blair D. Kay

City Clerk, City of Rexburg
P.O. Box 280 (12 N. Center), Rexburg, ID 83440
(208) 359-3020 x 313; blairk@rexburg.org

Blair grew up in Teton Valley on a small farm raising cows, potatoes, and hay. He attended Ricks College, BYU Provo, and Utah State University where he majored in Business Administration with a minor in Accounting. His professional experience includes farming, banking, financial services, retail sales, potato warehousing, and electrical utility services with a major company. Blair was hired as the City Clerk for Rexburg in May of 2002 and relishes the new challenges the position brings.

Erik Kingston

Housing Resource Coordinator, Idaho Housing and Finance Association
P.O. Box 7899, Boise, ID. 83707-1899
(208) 331-4706; erikk@ihfa.org

IHFA provides funding for affordable housing in Idaho communities. Erik created and manages IHFA's Housing Hotline and the Housing Information and Referral Center. He has coordinated statewide strategic planning and reporting efforts for housing and community development on behalf of the state of Idaho since 1999. Erik is a board member of the Idaho Task Force on the Americans with Disabilities Act and Idaho Families with Children from Asia, and was formerly employed by Boise Public Works. Originally from Utah, he previously served as Executive Director of Salt Lake City's Wasatch Community Gardens, and on the Utah Arts Council Performing Arts Tour and Folk Arts Program. Erik's diverse background includes driving thirsty cattle through dry country and working in a central Idaho hard-rock mine.

Shawn Larsen

Mayor, City of Rexburg
P.O. Box 280 (12 N. Center), Rexburg, ID 83440
(208) 359-3020 x 328; mayor@rexburg.org

Shawn is currently the Mayor of Rexburg. He enjoys working with the staff and administration in helping Rexburg to be a better place to live, work, and play. He has a strong background in community involvement and has facilitated the implementation of the Teton Dam Marathon and several other large-scale community events. Shawn recognizes the value of the Community Review process and championed Rexburg's participation in the effort. He is a lifelong resident of Rexburg and was active in a family business downtown. As a result, Shawn has a love for downtown corridors and is a strong advocate for commercial core revitalization efforts and proper long term planning.

Amy Adams Luft

Environmental Education Coordinator/Outreach Specialist
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
1410 N. Hilton, Boise, ID 83706
(208) 373-0478; amy.luft@deq.idaho.gov

Amy holds a BS in Wildland Recreation Management and a BA in Spanish from the University of Idaho and an MS in Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management from Clemson University. In her schooling, her emphasis areas were environmental interpretation and tourism. She currently coordinates the Department of Environmental Quality's environmental education programs and conducts other outreach activities. With DEQ since 2000, Amy has also held the positions of technical writer/ editor and Web editor (writing and editing Web content on water quality). She previously served as the director of the Kimball/Banner County Chamber of Commerce in Kimball, Nebraska (population 2,500), where she worked daily on business and economic development issues affecting rural America.

Monica G. Massarand

Management Consultant, Interaction Consulting
PO Box 2112, Boise, ID 83701-2112
(208) 424-2241; mmassarand@prodigy.net

Ms. Massarand is a management consultant and owner of Interaction Consulting, a company dedicated to empowering organizations and communities to maximize their potential. Her areas of expertise include strategic planning, survey and focus group research, performance measurement, team building, and process reengineering. She advises managers, facilitates meetings, trains team members and other professionals, and speaks at conferences and other educational events. She has worked with a variety of clients, including the Public Employee Retirement System of Idaho, the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, and Idaho Power Company.

Knut K. Meyerin

Regional Director for U.S. Senator Larry E. Craig
490 Memorial Drive, Suite 101, Idaho Falls, Idaho 83402
(208) 523-5541; Knut_Meyerin@craig.senate.gov

Mr. Meyerin has actively participated in community development projects for over 30 years. He has worked in various capacities helping local municipalities address issues facing them. While participating in chamber of commerce organizations, non-profit groups, and the private sector, Mr. Meyerin has gained the necessary tools in observing and recommending ideas for Ashton regarding the downtown main street corridor.

ReNea Nelson

Previous Grant Analyst, Idaho Department of Commerce & Labor
9600 Mossywood Dr., Boise, Idaho 83709
(208) 362-0726; nelson0726@msn.com

ReNea Nelson, a native Idahoan, joined the Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor, Division of Tourism Development, in 1990 where she managed the Idaho Travel Council Grant Program from 1995 until February 2006. She actively worked with 38 - 40 non-profit organizations throughout Idaho conducting grant training and assisting in the implementation of approximately \$2.5 million dollars in advertising and marketing projects annually. Further promotion/marketing assistance also included yearly participation in the Idaho Governor's Conference on Recreation and Tourism and the National Tour Association Convention, as well as participating in recreation panels dealing with grant funding.

David Pennock, Ph.D.

Executive Director, Museum of Idaho
200 N. Eastern Ave., Idaho Falls, ID 83402
(208) 522-1400 x 3008; david.pennock@museumofidaho.org

Dr. Pennock has a Ph.D. in Systematics and Ecology from the University of Kansas as well as a M.S. and B.S. in Zoology from Brigham Young University. Dr. Pennock has been the Executive Director of the Museum of Idaho since October of 2000. Prior to this position, Dr. Pennock was a consultant for the Carr Foundation. Dr. Pennock has been active in education for the bulk of his adult life teaching at four universities as a graduate student, instructor, and assistant professor. He is a published researcher, has presented original research at professional meetings, and has been recognized by professional organizations for his research.

Glen Pond

Regional Community Manager, Utah Power
25 East Main, Rexburg, ID 83440
(208) 359-4285; glen.pond@pacificorp.com

An Idaho native, Glen worked for 14 years in banking in Rexburg, and has been employed a further 23 years with Utah Power. He is active in economic development, planning and urban renewal around eastern Idaho, serving on the Eastern Idaho Planning and Development Association Board of Directors. He has a BS in Marketing and Finance from Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.

Tom Putnam

Program Planning and Development Specialist, Partners for Prosperity
625 W. Pacific Ste. 1, Blackfoot; ID 83221
(208) 785-0059; putnthom@isu.edu

Tom has worked with Partners for Prosperity for the past two years, during which time he has been engaged in community development work and research at a grassroots level. His experience has been in researching and addressing the issues and indicators associated with poverty. His current job position requires community development work, especially organizing and developing viable working groups across Eastern Idaho. Tom then works with these regional groups to discuss and address the issues of poverty as it affects the region.

Delverne Seaman

Community Development Specialist, Partners for Prosperity
625 W. Pacific Ste. 1, Blackfoot; ID 83221
(208) 785-0059; delvernes@p4peid.org

Delverne is a Community Development Specialist with Partners for Prosperity. As part of the organization's mission to reduce poverty in 16 counties of eastern Idaho and the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, he assists community groups in increasing awareness and building capacity for low-resource entrepreneurs and micro-businesses by looking for economic opportunities through e-commerce. In addition, he organized and initiated the first Earned Income Credit Campaign that encompassed all of eastern Idaho and the reservation. He has also planned Partners for Prosperity's first Economic Summit to address the issue of emphasizing home-grown economic development through building and supporting an entrepreneur culture in eastern Idaho. Delverne has a B.S. in Economics from Idaho State University in Pocatello, Idaho.

Intentionally left blank

Appendix F. Mayor Stronks' Report on 2005 to the City Council

Intentionally left blank

Mayors Report on 2005

1/11/06

As I reflect on the past year it amazes me how productive we have been in accomplishing our goals. Our city looks so much better as our workers and residents have cleaned and spruced up all over town. We are even signed up to be on Keep America Beautiful in 2006. It is a national program. We want to look our best as Ashton turns 100.

We started off the year negotiating with the school board to save the old high school. We felt it could bring jobs to our community as well as preserve a landmark. But negotiations fell through. I tried as Mayor to continue as people from outside our city made offers to purchase it. These negotiations also fell through. But I feel we still need to work on finding ways to bring economic development to our city so our children won't have to leave this beautiful area to get jobs to support their families.

The wastewater project was a great goal to achieve. The community showed their support by passing the bond. We hope to get the grant money now so we can complete the project, upgrading the sewer lines is a must for the future of Ashton.

After ten years of lots of meetings and hard work the Area of Impact has been adopted by the city and the county. I am thankful for the dedicated people in Planning and Zoning. We now need to upgrade our Comprehensive Plan so we are ready for Ashton's future growth.

The negotiations with the railroad for the Y parking area are opening the door to tourism. We live in the most beautiful place on earth. We might as well take advantage of it. With help from the Idaho State Parks, ITD and the Forest Service the Rails to Trails will become a reality as well as the Mesa Falls Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan. We are grateful for the volunteers who steer these committees.

I have been going to meetings all year to bring public transportation to Ashton. I hope this will happen in 2006.

The community review was a highlight this year. It was good to hear from outside citizens what we have to offer. We have a lot to follow through with. Those are some goals we need to work on this year.

This is our year to celebrate our centennial. With our great committee and many volunteers I feel it will be a huge success.

I also feel it is time to update our City Building to accommodate our Council and the community. I think this should be on our agenda. These things just need to be done on a regular basis.

My last goal I would like to make is to our youth. I would like to have the council and community support me in starting a youth council. We need to let our youth have a say on what happens.

These are a few of my goals for 2006, which I hope the council will support and together we can help our community get ready for what is in store; growth, jobs and a better place to live.

I want to thank Joni, Toni and Jan, our Police force-Tom & Greg. Our maintenance crew Ricky, Delray & Todd and also all the part time employees. We have great employees

To my council past and present- thank you and may we continue to make things happen for 2006.

Appendix G. News Release: New Study Finds Tourism an Increasing Economic Factor in Idaho

Intentionally left blank



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: Nov. 28, 2005

Information Contact: Bob Fick, 208-332-3570 x 3628 or Georgia Smith, 208-841-5509

New Study Finds Tourism an Increasing Economic Factor in Idaho

Travel and tourism accounted for 5 percent of Idaho's gross state product in 2004, and a new study indicates the industry is providing an increasing share of the state's jobs and wages.

Conducted for Idaho Commerce & Labor the by Global Insight in partnership with D.K. Shifflet & Associates, the report estimated tourism's contribution to Idaho's \$43.4 billion gross state product last year at \$2.1 billion.

Over 47,000 workers earned \$728 million in wages directly through the tourism industry in 2004. That was twice the number of tourism jobs the state supported in 1997 and nearly three times the payroll that year. Wages directly generated by the tourism industry accounted for 1.7 percent of all compensation paid in Idaho in 1997. They accounted for over 3.2 percent wages of all compensation last year.

In addition, nearly 22,000 workers earning over \$625 million last year were indirectly linked to the industry that saw travelers increase total spending by over 7 percent to nearly \$3 billion in 2004. That eclipsed the previous record set in 2001 before the impact of the East Coast terror attacks.

There were 588,000 nonfarm jobs in Idaho in 2004.

"One of every nine Idaho workers depends on the travel and tourism industry for a paycheck, and they're working in every sector of our economy," said Carl Wilgus, assistant deputy director at Commerce & Labor and head of the Tourism Division.

Intentionally left blank

Appendix H. Arts and Craftspersons in the Ashton Area

Intentionally left blank

Artists and Craftspersons in the Ashton Area
(Compiled by the Arts, Historic, and Recreation Resources Home Team)

Quilting and Sewing

Christine Decker
Gloria Bohr
Monee Harrigfeld
Jill Wooten
Barbara Moon
Katie Lyon
Dawn Egbert
Debbie Mattingly

Crafts

Teresa Hansen
Sherrri Davidson
Julie Jacobsen
Linda Heiner
Glenda Christiansen
Patti Huntsman
Idaho Irresistables – Linda Sturm

Carving and Wood Products

Sam Jones
Dave Grimes

Furniture

Chris Stanley
Brad Dexter
Meredith Dexter
Lorin Penee
Dick Egbert
Herb Steinmann
Benny Smith
Tim Ryland

Flies

Brett Pincock Ishaar
Idaho Irresistables

Music

Community Band
Harmonettes
No-ta-tions

Photography

Shyan Valentine
Jim Berger

Art

Paula Toenjies
Maggie Reiman

Jewelry

Randa Pye
Paige Provence

Native American

Jull McFarland

For more information about this document or the Idaho Community Review process, contact:

Idaho Rural Partnership
Dale Dixon, Executive Director
821 West State Street
Boise, Idaho 83702
(208) 334-3131
dale.dixon@irp.idaho.gov