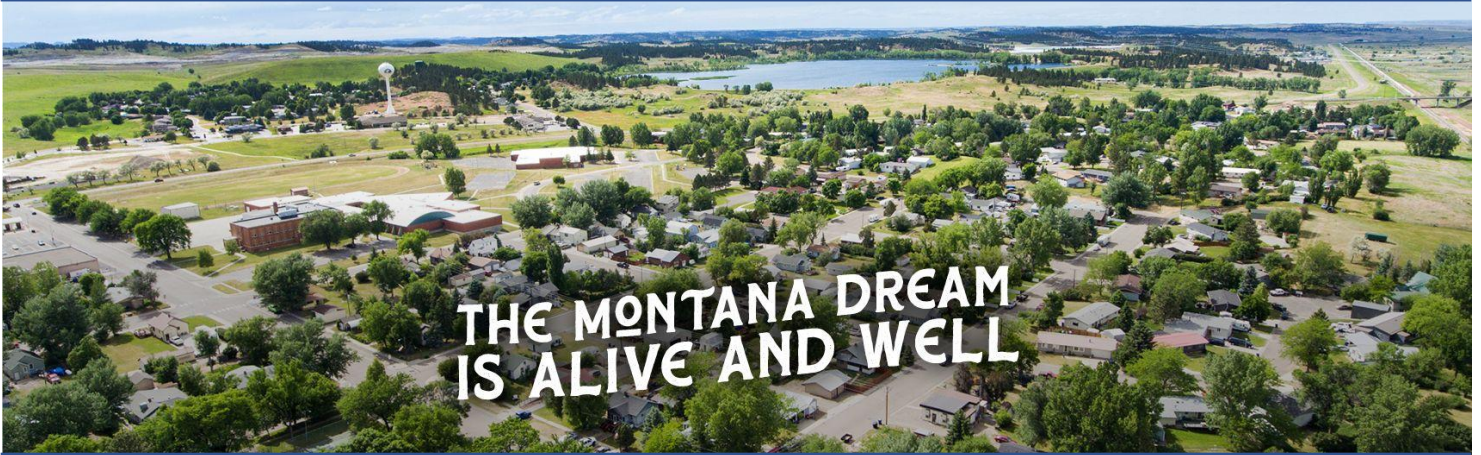


Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2024



2024 Community Meeting Recap for the Community of Colstrip

Annually, Southeastern Montana Development Corporation (SEMDC) initiates public input throughout a four-county region to assist in developing a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). In the past, we have held community meetings to gain insight into trends, strengths, and concerns in various communities. This year we conducted online public surveys to assess how things have changed from last year, and to note what projects are priorities to be completed for the following year(s). These conversations are incorporated into a five-year CEDS planning document created by SEMDC to be utilized in the process to assist the communities in Southeastern Montana.

SEMDC is working with citizens and communities to find ways to maximize positive impacts and mitigate negative ones. The more individuals in each community understand economic change and its impacts, proactively plan, and communicate within the community and region, the better the outcomes will be.

Developed by:

Southeastern Montana Development
Corporation (SEMDC)

www.semdc.org

406.748.2990

Colstrip CEDS Survey 2024

Group Discussion

SEMDC prepared a survey that asked about changes to previously gathered Strengths and Concerns. We provided last year's information in the survey and asked participants to indicate what had changed from last year's meeting. We recorded the results. The lists below are what survey responses indicated.

Strengths

10-year Government water Supply agreement	Low Cost of Living
Outside Pickleball Court	Low property taxes
200 Acre Industrial Site at Peabody	Low Utility Cost
30-year agreement - Feasibility Study (water)	Marketing-Diversification Strategy
Active planning board/addresses issues	Money and tax base
Agricultural Presence	More County Outreach
Airport – Instrument Rated/Small Jets	New Mountain Bike Trail by Western Energy
Area F+	New Veterinarian
Ash Pond Construction/Long Term Employment	Northend Water Loop
Avista and Rosebud County Impact \$\$	NW Energy Rosi Contract and \$ to community
Beautification Committee	Nuclear Possibility
Billings Hospital Support	Opportunity for RV space
Biomass possibilities	Parks and Recreation
Bird Watching Opportunities	Paser Study of Streets
Broadband Grant	People of Colstrip / Community Support
Business Innovation Center-Meeting Space / Partnership	Pharmacy
Castle Rock Lake fishing and recreation	Police department
CDBG Grants: Public Facilities / Economic Development	Potential for CO2 Capture
CDKC Credits for HS Students	Professionals Per Capita are high
CEI	Property Value Increased
CIF Impact \$\$/ \$10 million	Proximity to Billings
City Hall	Proximity to forest
City Financial Report, Increase	Quality of Life/Aesthetics of Area
Class 4 Rating for Fire Insurance	Rail Infrastructure
CMC Doc	Safe Community/Police Coverage 24/7
Colstrip Resident in Legislature	SCADA Water and Sewer System
CPRD	Schools, School System, excess buildings
Diverse Community	SEMDC / Annual Reports
Effective Local Government	Senior/Community Van Transportation
Employment (Fully Employed)	SHAC (Arts)
EMS/Ambulance Service/First Resp. Trg.	Shooting Range
Energy Studies (4)	Skilled Labor Force, Technical and Professional
Expanded Airport Hangars	Sports Illustrated Sports Town MT/USA
Fishing Opportunities	Strategic location for the airport to fill Tankers

Geothermal Options	Strong Civic and Church Organizations
Golf Course/Free for residents	Students from Outside District
Grid United / Transmission Lines	Supportive Major Industries
Growth Plans: 4 counties and 5 cities	Sustainable and Reliable Water
Health Department	Swimming Pool/Splash Park
Healthcare infrastructure/supported tax district & recruiting \$	Trails (9+ miles) and Parks (32) Revamped Skate Park
Home Based Businesses	Transmission Line
Housing Needs Study	Utility Training Center Opportunity
Hunting and Wildlife Income for the area	Value added energy
Increase in Retiree Population	Volunteer Fire Dept
Interlocal Agreements	Unit 1 & 2 Commercial Options
Job Opportunities – Good Paying	Water Feasibility Study
Library	Wave/Cycle of younger families
Local Businesses	Wildlife In Town (Bird Watching)
Located on Oversized Loads Highway	Workforce Training Support
Long-term Coal Contracts /Coal Country	Yellowstone River water to Colstrip/Water Rights Opportunity for City
Improved Internet/Broadband with Range	

Concerns

“Coal town” perceptions State-wide	Major Industry spokesperson
2025 Washington Legislation	Mine Reclamation Holdups (release)
Absentee Ownership of Industry	Negative Perception (East and West)
Wastewater Study/Continued Water Reliability	No Plumber
Aging Infrastructure/Coal Plant	No Zoning for Industry
Area C Road	Nuclear
Assisted Living	NW Energy Depreciation Pressure
Basic Infrastructure: Water & Sewer	Outfitting/Hunting Access
Bond Release Progress Slow	Out-of-state non-union workers
Coal/Labor Contracts	Industry/ not diversified
Colstrip Long-Range Planning (10-30 yrs)	People Leave town to shop / Internet
Community Apathetic	Post Office Appearance/Safety Issues
Community Communication – Online Options,	Professionals / Telehealth
Community Involvement /Reactionary	Equal County Health and Public Services as rest of Rosebud County
Daycare – More Employees Needed	Public Services Training
Deer in City	Railway Diversified Currently
Developing Investments in the Community	Recruitment of Public Services Employees
Election: Mail in Ballot Only	Remote
Environmental Interests and the “War	Renewables on Transmission Line
EPA/DEQ Regulations	Retail visibility
Extreme environmentalism/no oversight	Seasonal Demand for Services
Higher Power Prices/Impacts	Walls and Stereotypes between NC Tribe and Colstrip

Housing Costs Increasing	Local, State and Federal Elections Impact on Coal Industry.
Increase costs -raw water	Shift Work Effects on Community/Regional Commute vs. Living in Colstrip
Overall Economic Uncertainty with the closing of Units	Shrinking Student Population
Interventions NWE	Skilled Labor Force Recruitment -attract-
Lack of available commercial / Retail space	Skilled Labor Retirement Gaps
Lack of centralized business district	Social Media
Lack of Chamber of Commerce	Solar subsidies
Lack of Confidence in the Future of Coal Jobs	Staffing -Not enough workers
Lack of Doctors/hard-attracting healthcare	Status of IBES
Lack of employment diversity	Tax Base Future- Future \$\$ from taxes
Lack of Plan for Plant Closure	Unwilling Power Plant Owners
Lack of Housing (Rent & Purchase)	Water Feasibility
Lack of Single Family/Low Income Housing	Water Pipeline Condition/Rights
Landfill Cell	Wind Farms Tax Abatement
Land Locked and Lack of Land to develop	Workforce
Housing Shortages	Better Medical Care

Working Groups

In this second portion of the survey, key projects from last year were listed and the survey asked if they were still priorities or if there were other projects that should be added. Again, the results were recorded.

Economy

MT Made Possible Expansion

Continue to grow MT Made Possible

Energy Studies

Continue to work with the four companies that completed the studies to move forward with clean energy options.

Business Innovation Center (BIC)

The development of a Regional Center to act as a focal point for industrial relocation and development opportunities would be critical.

Nuclear Energy Development

Create task force to advance potential for Nuclear Energy Development.

Data Center

Study potential for data center in Colstrip.

Colstrip Diversification Plan Update

Obtain funding for a plan update to continue to track progress and update projects for the community.

Housing/Quality of Life

Housing

Assisted Living Center/Retirement Community development and workforce housing; potentially conduct housing study to guide efforts.

Recruit Businesses that will Create Jobs

Capitalize on existing infrastructure assets to encourage recruiting businesses.

Senior Citizen Services

In-home care is needed

Infrastructure

Sludge Management

Proceed with sludge management plans

Improve Broadband / Internet Security

Continue to improve broadband speed, capacity, and reliability.

Colstrip City Street Repairs

Implement plans to repair streets in accordance with PASER Study