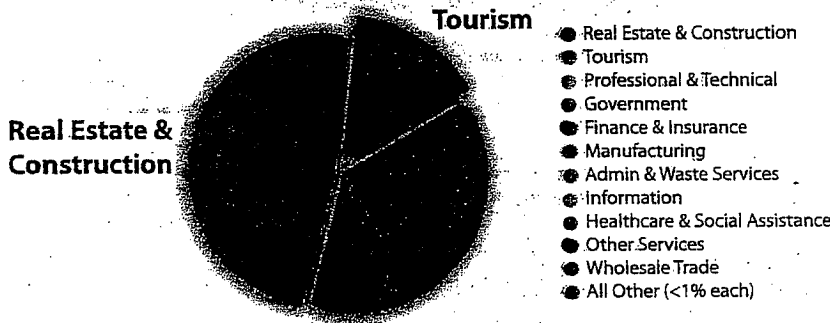


In the face of a national economic downturn, Blaine County faces daunting challenges:

- In 2006, an estimated 60% of Blaine County's gross domestic product was in real estate, construction and tourism – all sectors hit hard by the current economy.
- Our residents are highly educated – ¾ of local adults have some college education – but the majority of local jobs are lower wage service jobs.
- Service workers, and increasingly middle-income workers, are priced out of the Blaine County housing market and instead live in surrounding counties. This means that local employers find it progressively harder to attract and retain workers, particularly younger talent. It also means that we have more workers commuting into Blaine County, swelling area traffic and diverting spending to surrounding counties.
- 38% of Blaine County housing units are vacant.
- The number of passengers boarding commercial aircraft at Friedman Memorial Airport has declined steadily since 2003, down nearly 40% from 2003-2007. Now flights to major California markets have been drastically reduced and non-stop service to Seattle will only be available six months of the year.

Estimated Blaine County GDP 2006



If We Do Nothing

Workers will continue to move out of Blaine County to find cheaper housing and/or better jobs, taking their spending with them and leaving more housing units empty. Local shops and restaurants will lose more business, while simultaneously finding it harder to recruit or retain employees. Additional commuting workers will increase traffic volumes on SH-75. Unstable gas prices and increased traffic may prompt some workers to find employment closer to their homes in other counties – and Blaine County employers would feel further stress. Without a middle class, our community dies.

Turn the page for the proposed solution. If you have more questions, contact now.

Thursday, July 9, 2009

6:00pm in Ketchikan at the Church of the Holy Wood

5:30pm and earlier in the Rotary Room of the Community Campus

PLEASE COME!



Go Blaine!

Promoting Economic Vitality

Blaine County's Strengths

- » We can offer employers an educated, talented workforce. The number of college graduates per capita locally is twice the national average and the influx of new residents from major metropolitan areas brings a wealth of experienced professionals.
- » We have an entrepreneurial culture. In 2006, more than 30% of local residents were self-employed and growth in this sector generated more than 42% of our total employment growth between 2001-2006.
- » We already have several home-grown success stories, including Scott USA, Power Engineers, Smith Optics, SCOTTEVEST, Sun Valley Bronze and Rocky Mountain Hardware.
- » We may have unique access to capital for local reinvestment, given the personal wealth of many of our residents and part-time residents.
- » We offer incredible recreation opportunities in gorgeous, natural surroundings.
- » Despite our small size, we offer sophisticated cultural amenities – a unique combination.
- » The Sun Valley brand is internationally recognized.
- » A broad-based coalition representing many different interests has come together to create this strategy, creating significant momentum.

How We Can Turn It Around

Leverage the Sun Valley Brand to Expand Tourism

We are more than a ski town. We need to expand tourism into the slack seasons and to market all our attributes: golfing, hiking, biking, camping, birding, horseback riding, fishing, rafting and other outdoor pursuits; the SNRA and Craters of the Moon National Monument; world-renowned symphonies and unique local festivals.

ACTIONS:

- Broaden the marketing message to incorporate all recreation opportunities in/around Blaine County
- Create an aggressive convention and meeting strategy targeting specific industries and designed to bring in people during slack season
- Promote the arts and entertainment, special events and festivals
- Develop a one-stop Blaine County online portal to anchor all marketing efforts
- Employ cross-marketing, viral marketing and social networking

Diversity Development Opportunities

We have limited land available for development because 81% of land in Blaine County is state- and federal-owned. While this reflects our values as a community and adds to our attractiveness; it also makes the remaining land expensive.

ACTIONS:

- Use infill development in our existing urban areas to create opportunities without creating sprawl
- Plan for and target strategic sites that could provide future larger scale development opportunities

Establish a Design Institute

Already our area is blessed with a deep pool of design-related talent. An institute for design could serve as a catalyst to foster innovation in existing local sectors and foster entrepreneurship, thereby creating jobs, attracting talent and ultimately leading to a more diverse economy.

ACTIONS:

- Create cross-sector cooperation among local businesses heavily involved in design, such as Scott USA, Smith Optics, Eye Safety Systems, SCOTTEVEST, Rocky Mountain Hardware, Sun Valley Bronze, architects, builders, interior designers, galleries and visual artists, Power Engineers, Galena Engineering, etc.
- Develop local higher education capabilities to foster entrepreneurship and help ensure a talented workforce
- Obtain funding
- Attract world-class researchers and innovators

Support Small Business and Entrepreneurs

Ensuring the continued prosperity and survival of local employers is crucial to sustaining a healthy economy.

ACTIONS:

- Establish a formal business retention and expansion program
- Support retail, restaurateurs and other firms adversely affected by slack season
- Increase entrepreneurship and start-up activity by developing mentoring, fostering networking and facilitating financing

Sectors To Target

We can achieve short-term gains by taking advantage of our existing assets. Four specific sectors offer these quick benefits, and also provide a pathway to sustained economic vitality over the long term.

diversified tourism

Diversified tourism builds upon our existing strengths, will increase visitor spending and sales taxes, and will result in amenities that are attractive to locals and visitors.

ACTIONS:

- Continue to support redevelopment and revitalization in/ around downtown areas, including considering establishing a designated entertainment district
- Continue to support the arts
- Consider conducting a retail leakage study to determine niches to target
- Market outdoor recreational assets and other fitness and wellness amenities

clean technology

Clean technology builds upon strong local interest and robust existing capabilities in architectural services, building materials and construction. It also capitalizes on the increased availability of federal funding and the local availability of geothermal energy.

ACTIONS:

- Encourage green building standards in public buildings
- Embrace clean technology in all marketing materials
- Pursue research from regional higher educational institutions

health & wellness

Health and wellness links well with our area's recreational activities, and demographic trends should foster its continued growth. Further developing this sector will create higher wage jobs and may stimulate related research and manufacturing of equipment and supplies.

ACTIONS:

- Assist physicians and wellness experts in entrepreneurship and business expansion and retention plans
- Target development of businesses and services in the following realms: biomedicine, research and development for chronic disease management and pharmaceutical testing, and adaptive sports programs
- Continue to support expansion of healthcare-related programs at CSI and in Blaine County schools to supply labor

agriculture

Agriculture reflects our area's long history in farming and our local support of its continued operation.

ACTIONS:

- Continue to support agricultural interests
- Consider support (tax incentives, rebates, etc.) for greenhouse growing to encourage diversification of food products grown
- Consider linking entrepreneurial development strategies with agriculture to assist local organic producers
- Continue to provide additional avenues for small farmers, such as community-supported agriculture, farmers' markets, backyard farming, etc.
- Consider additional field-scale agriculture opportunities

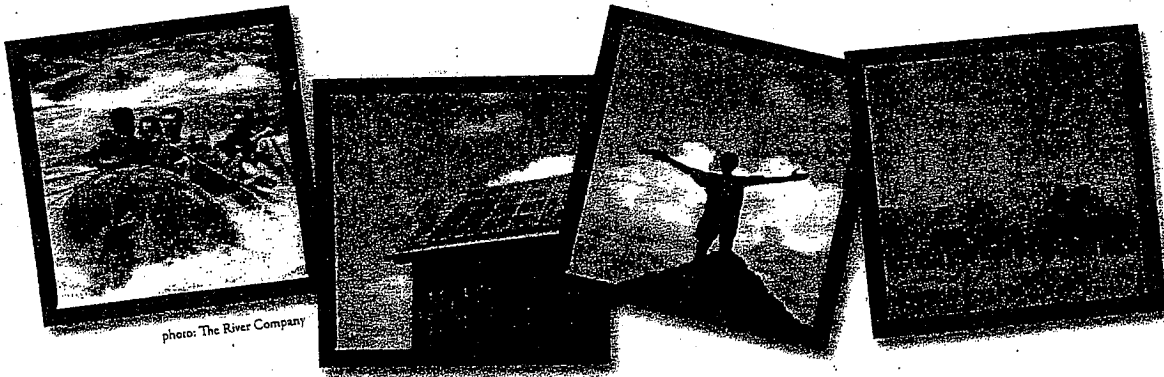


photo: The River Company

The consultants propose creating the Blaine Development Corporation – a three-person team charged with implementing the overall strategy, funded by private and public sources, under authorization from the county and its municipalities. The team would include an executive director, a marketing manager and an assistant.

Additionally, a real estate task force should be formed to update and advise the BDC on land issues, and a board should oversee the BDC's activities.

Implementation of the GoBlaine! strategy will require significant investment over an extended period of time. Possible sources of funding could include the cities and the county, private corporations and individuals, regional organizations, foundations, and state and federal government.

**Making it
Happen**

Where Else Has This Worked?

There are many examples of communities that have faced similar challenges and undertaken similar strategies, to great benefit.

In the early part of the decade in Racine County, Wis., fully 25% of the workforce was employed in manufacturing – until area plants announced layoffs and closures. Guided by the Racine County Economic Development Corporation, local leaders set to diversify the area's economy through a formal strategy that has since been adopted by 35 local governments and community-based organizations. As part of the strategy, they created the Center for Advanced Technology and Innovation (CATI) in 2001 – a partnership of area educational institutions, business development organizations and local industry. Its functions are three-fold: incubation, technology transfer and education. CATI's technology transfer program, which enables corporations to donate intellectual property to start-up companies and existing businesses, has been particularly successful. Today, CATI manages a patent portfolio valued at \$45 million, managing or owning nearly 300 patented technologies from global corporations including Kraft Foods, Boeing, Dupont and SC Johnson & Sons. In the past three years, CATI's licensing technology has fostered five new companies and nine licensing agreements.

Orlando, Fla., home of one of the world's largest tourist attractions, had an economy and image dominated by Disney World. In 2001, the Metro Orlando Economic Development Corporation (EDC) introduced an initiative designed to expand the area's brand beyond tourism. Leveraging its already established high-tech sector, the EDC launched a new marketing campaign: Orlando – Putting Imagination to Work. It adopted several new media and technology sectors to strengthen and expand existing businesses, and diversify the economy. Today, Orlando has nationally recognized clusters of innovation in digital media, agritechology, aviation and aerospace, and software. *Fast Company* magazine names Orlando as one of the "12 Best Cities for Innovation," *Forbes* magazine lists Metro Orlando among the "Best Places for Business and Careers," *The Wall Street Journal* ranks Orlando 7th for "Business Vitality," and *Global Insight* says Orlando will be #1 for job growth from 2007–2012.

Austin, Tx. moved its airport in 1999 to a larger facility at a recently closed air force base. The move left the city with a rare opportunity: redeveloping 709 acres just three miles from downtown. After substantial public input, the site was redeveloped into a compact, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use community including:

- 4,000 new housing units, of which 25% are "reasonably priced" and available to families with incomes less than 80% of the area median family income
- 300,000 square feet of retail, dining and entertainment
- 5,000,000 square feet of commercial office space
- a comprehensive network of public open space, neighborhood parks and pedestrian ways
- a vibrant town center



Putting imagination to work
ORLANDO



Who is Behind this Effort

The GoBlaine! strategy is the result of a two-year process undertaken, funded and supported by numerous local entities. The effort was initiated by Sustain Blaine, a coalition of citizens formed in 2007 to promote the region's quality of life and economic well-being.

Hundreds of local citizens took part in the development of this strategy, sitting for interviews with the consultants from TIP Strategies, attending open town hall meetings, participating in brain-storming sessions and volunteering their time on task forces.

To date, funding has been provided by Blaine County and the cities of Bellevue, Carey, Hailey, Ketchum and Sun Valley, as well as:

Citizens serving on the board of Sustain Blaine are:

- ARCH Housing Trust
- Citizens for Smart Growth
- A coalition of agricultural interests
- A coalition of developers
- First Bank of Idaho
- Friedman Airport Authority
- Haavik Consulting
- Idaho Department of Commerce
- Idaho Mountain Express
- Mountain Rides
- Power Engineers
- Sawtooth Board of Realtors
- St. Luke's Wood River
- Medical Center
- Sun Valley Company
- Sun Valley/Ketchum
- Chamber of Commerce
- Warm Springs Ranch Resort
- Webb Landscaping
- Will Miller Consulting
- Wood River Economic Partnership
- Wood River Land Trust

- Rick Baird, transportation
- Tom Bowman, government
- Neil Bradshaw, CDC Ketchum
- Mike Chatterton, school district
- Julie Cord, agriculture**
- Bob Crosby, real estate
- Vanessa Crossgrove Fry, nonprofit
- Rick Davis/Don Kuens, government
- Krista Gehlke, business
- Linda Haavik, land use**
- Rebekah Helzel, housing**
- George Kirk, development**
- Ted McCoy, entrepreneur
- Jason Miller, transportation
- Steve Mills, business
- Carter Ramsay, young professional
- Nils Ribi, government
- Hazel Tenorio, diversity connections
- Carol Waller, business
- Nathan Welch, nonprofit

** steering committee member
+ chair

What You Can Do

Thank you to all those who have brought us this far. We still need you — and many, many more — to make this strategy a reality.

To read the entire strategy, as well as the supporting research documents, please go to www.sustainblaine.org. Please voice your support of this strategy:

- contact your mayor and council members to ask them to endorse the strategy and provide funding for its implementation
- talk to your friends and colleagues – make sure they're aware and ask them to support the strategy
- join the GoBlaine! group on facebook or LinkedIn for important updates and to lend your name to the list of supporters
- if you'd like someone to present the strategy to your next group meeting, please contact Joy Kasputys at joykasputys@yahoo.com

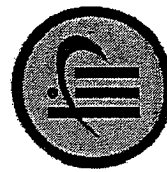
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an ECONOMIC STRATEGY for BLAINE COUNTY, IDAHO



Prepared for:
SUSTAIN BLAINE AND BLAINE COUNTY

Prepared by:



T · I · P S T R A T E G I E S

July 2009

acknowledgements

TIP Strategies would like to thank the members of Sustain Blaine, whose time and guidance for this economic development strategic plan were invaluable. We would also like to thank the business and community leaders, who greatly contributed to our understanding of Blaine County, its challenges and opportunities.

Sustain Blaine Executive Committee >

Vanessa Crossgrove Fry
Citizens for Smart Growth

Julie Cord
Agricultural Liaison

George Kirk
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Mike McNeese
Former Blaine County Administrator

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INTRODUCTION

the challenge > This plan provides guidance for ensuring the economic vitality of Blaine County. While Sun Valley is an "international brand," and the county is seen through the prism of a successful tourist destination, important opportunities for growth have gone begging.

The goals and strategies that make up the plan seek to meet the following criteria:

- ensuring economic sustainability (by providing for higher wages, balancing growth and the environment, and ensuring varied employment options),
- providing responsible and creative development opportunities, and
- reflecting the values of the citizens of Blaine County.

These goals are attainable, but they require significant changes in the county's perception of economic development. A welcoming attitude towards responsible growth is essential for the long-term viability of the Blaine County economy. The cost of inaction is stagnation. Without a diverse economic base, a dynamic workforce, and tangible development opportunities, the county will fail to achieve the quality of life expected by its residents. It will also fail to attract the talent and the companies that keep communities vital. This plan alone cannot accomplish those things. A determined leadership, however, can do so. This is the intent – and the challenge – of this plan: to establish strategies that ensure responsible and sustainable growth.

the background > Sustain Blaine provided the funding and oversight of the strategic planning process. The mission of Sustain Blaine is to promote an improved economic and societal future for Blaine County through strategies, programs, and policies that preserve and advance the region's quality of life and economic well-being. While the environment and social equity had broad constituencies, there was a lack of clarity on the state of the economy, its weaknesses, and the threats it faced. Indeed, economic development had not been brought into focus.

Shortly after the planning process began, a number of severe shocks made national and international news. First, energy costs hit all-time highs. The discussion of "peak oil" that dominated one of the town hall meetings revealed how dependent our economy was on affordable transportation costs. Just as oil prices came down, however, the nation began slipping into one of the worst recessions in its history. The decline in energy costs was perhaps the only positive outcome of this continuing crisis.

In retrospect, these crises helped focus the plan. Recommendations that might have been made in the spring of 2008 would be suspect today. Every sector of the national economy has been affected in ways that may result in a permanent restructuring. Banking and credit markets, the housing industry, manufacturing, and tourism all look

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



very different today than in 2008. The ways in which Blaine County responds to these changed conditions is now the most important element of this plan.

During the early phases of TIP's work, the primary concerns were:

- lack of housing options, especially in the mid to lower range,
- the ability to attract and retain young professionals, and
- the need to diversify the existing industry base.

While these goals remain relevant, the approach to them has changed. Strategies – and opportunities – must respond to tightening market conditions, much higher national unemployment numbers, and a general retrenchment of existing businesses.

Changes in the national economy and changing local conditions are putting significant stress on Blaine County. Prominent among these are the downturn in the housing sector, the likely closing and relocation of the existing airport, a significant weakening of the retail sector, continued aging of the population and out-migration of talented workers, and a limited supply of developable land. These stresses – both positive and negative – present Blaine with opportunities for economic development.

the response ➤ Sustain Blaine and Blaine County selected TIP Strategies – an Austin-based economic development consulting firm – to craft an economic development plan that could guide and focus economic opportunity countywide. The findings and recommendations outlined in this plan should serve as a framework for making investment decisions, and for providing guidance in growth that is both realistic and sustainable.

During the research for this economic strategy, TIP sought input from various organizations, stakeholders, and subject-matter experts. Several public meetings and workshops were held, allowing community residents to participate in developing an economic strategy for the county. In addition, three task forces were appointed to contribute suggestions to the planning efforts in the areas of innovation, land development, and talent attraction and retention. TIP found great value in the task forces' work and we incorporated many – but not all – of their ideas and recommendations into this economic strategy for Blaine County. The task forces' final reports can be found in the appendices to this document.

TIP was committed to addressing goals for the county as a whole, in ways that all the communities – as well as agricultural interests – could benefit. To this end, it became clear that the organizational structure for implementing the plan would need to be a prime consideration. The role of the county, the municipalities, Sustain Blaine, and the Sun Valley Company would need to be factored in, as would nonprofit and other organizations, such as the Sun Valley-Ketchum Chamber, the Hailey Chamber of Commerce, and the Wood River Economic Partnership. We feel strongly that the county can leverage its brand and set a course for long-term economic vitality. The strategies that follow can accomplish that, but not without a formal mechanism and broad commitment to ensure they are enacted.

primary goals > TIP's definition of economic development guided the planning effort: "the use of public resources to stimulate private investment." This point of view was relevant before the recession, and it is especially relevant now. It argues on behalf of public investment that results in tangible results - results tied to the willingness of private sector companies, developers, and individuals to commit to countywide economic development efforts.

The goals that follow are in priority order. Strategies and action items are outlined for each goal, while specific tasks are included in the implementation portion of the study.

GOAL ONE > LEVERAGE THE SUN VALLEY "BRAND"

Blaine County is no ordinary place. It is, in fact, one of the most-recognizable and desirable destinations in the United States. Any economic development plan that does not begin with that realization will sell the county short. Most importantly, this plan argues for seeing the brand value extended to both the mid-valley and the southern portions. Agricultural interests, industrial sites in Carey, and proximity to Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve and Sawtooth National Recreation Area are all important to the county's overall economic opportunities.

GOAL TWO > DIVERSIFY DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Diversifying the county's economy, beyond tourism and vacation home construction, may be an obvious goal but it is immensely challenging. High land costs, a limited workforce, and restrictive transportation options make traditional business recruitment a daunting enterprise. The consulting team focused on sites and development opportunities that could mitigate these factors.

GOAL THREE > SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURS

Finding the appropriate scale for business growth requires more than an expansion of existing businesses or the attraction of new companies. Innovation, through small business and entrepreneurial growth, represents one of the most tangible opportunities for the region.

GOAL FOUR > ESTABLISH A DESIGN INSTITUTE

A good plan is not just good housekeeping. It requires an element of boldness. Blaine County's most conspicuous needs for diversification center on the lack of higher educational opportunities and a broad talent base. While the attraction of a college or university is a desirable long-term goal, a more concrete strategy could yield more immediate results. Add to that the opportunity for a high-profile, high-visibility initiative, and the idea of an *institute* takes center stage.



IMPLEMENTATION

GOAL FIVE > CREATE A COUNTYWIDE ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

Plans prove their worth through local commitment. It is the view of the consulting team that a formal mechanism for implementing the plan is required. Blaine County does not lack for dedicated and resourceful individuals. Nevertheless, neither the county nor Sustain Blaine has the resources (financial or staffing) to take on or coordinate the delivery of the many actions listed in this report. In addition, a formal awareness campaign in support of the plan is strongly encouraged. This, too, takes resources and time.

TIP examined a range of options for providing an implementation model. These included an economic development foundation (funded through private contributions as well as grants) and a private nonprofit board operating through corporate and private investment. Both of these scenarios have advantages, but neither has standing with existing political entities. In other words, we sought a model that would actively engage the county and the municipalities.

With these as a backdrop, we wanted to emphasize that *implementing* the plan and conducting a formal economic development program are closely linked. In fact, they are best seen as one and the same. As a result, this plan recommends the creation of a Blaine Development Corporation (BDC).

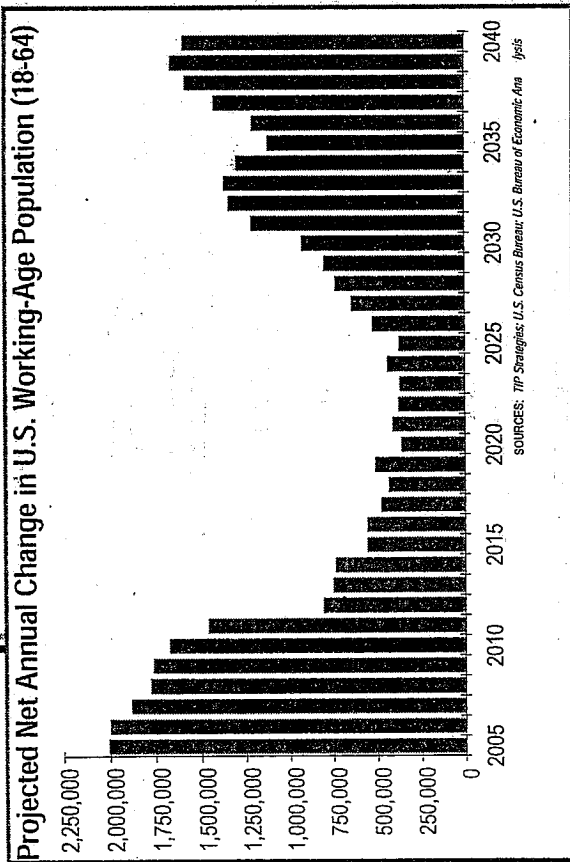
The BDC would be vested with the authority for the following:

- to implement the Blaine County Strategic Plan,
- to provide general guidance on economic issues affecting the county and its municipalities,
- to raise funds on behalf of economic development, and
- to manage an incentive program, including a loan fund for business development.

In this scenario, the BDC's organizational capacity would consist of an executive director, a marketing coordinator, and administrative support. A board of directors would advise the executive director. For the startup phase, one option would be for the county and municipalities to dedicate the staff. Other options would require a capital campaign be set in motion.

Prior to the establishment of an economic development organization, TIP recommends that Sustain Blaine formally adopt the plan. Once this step is taken, Sustain Blaine should encourage the county, its constituent municipalities, and other local nonprofit organizations to also adopt the plan.

strategic plan



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

TIP defines economic development as the application of public resources to stimulate private investment. This view supports the idea that neither the public nor the private sector alone can ensure a healthy economy. Land, labor, and capital – the traditional components of economic thinking – must be addressed through partnerships.

Talent > The concept of talent means more than just a labor pool. It means recruiting talented people as well as cultivating the talented individuals represented by groups as diverse as students, retirees, and entrepreneurs. It also means ensuring that the employees and companies that have been responsible for a community's growth continue to see a reason to remain in the area.

National demographic trends, most notably the aging of the baby boomers, suggest that demand for workers may soon outstrip supply, even with an overall increase in population. This will hold true in Blaine County, where the population is expected to increase among companies as well as communities. Focusing on the development, attraction, and retention of talent should, therefore, be an important part of any economic development strategy.

Innovation > The U.S. manufacturing industry continues a transformation that has profound effects on the practice of economic development. It is forcing us to rethink what we mean by a primary job, how we measure economic impact, and how we design incentives. This is because, in large part, manufacturing employment continues to decline. It is no overstatement to say that you cannot build an economic strategy solely around manufacturing jobs.

The current economic recession has shown that a sustainable economy cannot be built on the construction and real estate sectors either. In the past decade, these sectors have become the primary industries in Blaine – larger than even the tourism sector. This has exposed Blaine's economic vulnerability and illustrates the need for a diverse economic base in the county.

For this reason, our assessment of industry considers the full complement of economic activities – ranging from traditional industrial employers to advanced research to entrepreneurship – as well as the physical infrastructure (industrial parks, sites, transportation, etc.) and business climate to support those activities. Understanding the

THE PLAN



role of innovation, the opportunities for expansion of existing companies, and the best targets for recruitment are important building blocks of an economic development plan.

Place > Much has been written about the importance of quality of life to the site selection process. Communities throughout the nation have positioned themselves by touting their advantages in this regard – good schools, safe streets, pleasant weather. We agree these factors are important. We take issue only with the narrowness of the focus. Quality of life assumes that everyone thrives in the same environment and is attracted to the same amenities. It assumes that current residents' view of what makes a community would be shared by all.

By contrast, quality of place considers what is attractive to a range of residents, both old and new. The idea of quality of place accommodates growth and recognizes the benefits of change. It recognizes that one person's "good place to raise a family" might translate into another's "there's nothing to do in this town." Quality of place is about providing options, not just for current residents, but for those who will be residents in the future.

THE PLAN



GOAL ONE > LEVERAGE THE SUN VALLEY “BRAND”

the challenge > With “Sun Valley” being a recognizable national – and, in many respects, international – brand, Blaine County has a highly marketable “product” most locales would envy. Yet, merely having a brand is just one step in economic development marketing. To achieve economic success, one must leverage that brand. Blaine County, however, has not seized the opportunity to build on the Sun Valley brand to create additional, diverse, countywide economic opportunities.

In economic development marketing, the “product” is a place. Because one doesn’t “buy” a place, however, places are marketed differently from consumer products. With economic development marketing, what one is actually marketing is the place’s brand. Branding can raise awareness of individuals and businesses considering relocation as well as of potential visitors or tourists who could become permanent residents or repeat visitors. The important elements of branding are:

- commitment to a particular message and theme that does not vary over time (or does so only minimally);
- clarity of image and message; and
- uniformity of use by all entities (e.g., references to the Sun Valley area should all use the same themes).

Historically, Blaine County was known primarily for alpine skiing at the Sun Valley Resort. The county successfully attracted a broad range of visitors, both young and old alike. Within the last few decades, the area has seen a demographic shift in the tourists it attracts. Now these tourists tend to be retired – or older – and affluent. Recently, Blaine County has seen an increase in summer visitors, which now surpass the number of people who visit during the winter. The growth in summer tourism has resulted in a broader awareness of countywide amenities and activities beyond skiing. Many of these activities and amenities – such as the mountain biking opportunities featured in an October 2008 story in the *New York Times* – appeal to young professionals. This group is precisely the demographic the area needs to attract to replenish its talent pool and help sustain its economy. Thus, this is a prime opportunity to reach a wider audience and expand the Sun Valley brand.

Long periods between the busy winter and summer months present another example of missed opportunities to fully leverage the Sun Valley brand. These “slack” periods are painful for area businesses, particularly retail, restaurants, and hotels. Some businesses close during slack. This affects Blaine’s economy and contributing to a loss of community, with closed doors, dimmed lights, and fewer people in the county’s core areas during these periods.



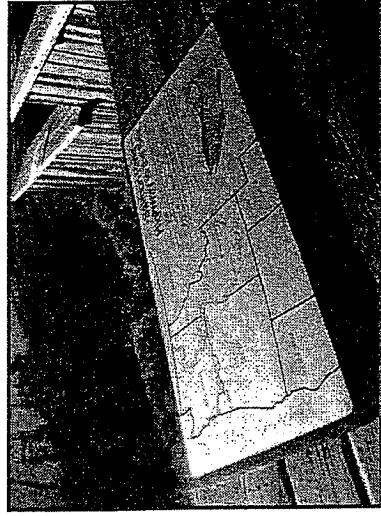
OBJECTIVES:

- Expand the brand.
- Leverage tourism to diversify the economy.
- Attract a younger potential talent pool.

LEVERAGE THE BRAND

Goal 1





Blaine's difficulty in attracting conferences, conventions, and meetings extends beyond marketing. A lack of diverse accommodations and meeting facilities limits the number and size of events the county can host. For example, when the Sun Valley Resort is completely booked, no comparable meeting or accommodation space exists elsewhere in the county. Accessibility, particularly air service and capacity, also poses a serious impediment to a successful convention strategy. Flights to Blaine can be prohibitively expensive – especially for organizations paying travel expenses for large groups. Recent cuts in flight service have only added to obstacles one faces when travelling to the area. Even the *New York Times* noted that “the Sun Valley area is challenging to reach.”

The Sun Valley brand has not actually benefitted Blaine County as a whole. Instead, the north county experiences the lion's share of the economic benefits. This is to be somewhat expected, given that the majority of the existing tourism attractions and marketing efforts are found north of Hailey. However, to truly leverage the brand, to reach deeper pools of potential tourists, talent and residents, and to improve the economic sustainability of the entire county, community and business leaders must get past any existing or perceived north-south county divide and include all corners of the county in economic development activities and strategies. Amenities countywide should contribute to – and benefit from – the Sun Valley brand.

the response > For decades, Blaine County's ski-related tourism served as a magnet for workers who wanted a lifestyle that allowed them to intertwine time on the slopes around time at the office. Skiing remains a crucial part of Blaine County's tourism sector and, thus, its economy. Fortunately, the county's tourism sector is moving beyond an exclusive focus on skiing to achieve economic vitality. Blaine must also expand its marketing efforts and tools if it is to successfully leverage the “Sun Valley” brand for economic growth.

The region offers an enviable array of recreational, entertainment, and cultural activities and amenities. These span the entire county, from hiking, camping, rafting, and biking in the mountains in the north valley to birding, fishing, and visiting Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve near Carey in the southern county; from world-renowned symphonies at the Sun Valley Pavilion to the Trailing of the Sheep Festival to the Big Wood Folk Festival in Bellevue. Yet, many remain largely unknown beyond the county and its part- and full-time residents. Outside of Blaine, the area is primarily known for alpine skiing and the Sun Valley Resort. Therein lies the hook to attract additional tourists, talent, and business: “Sun Valley” is already a recognizable brand. Now, Blaine – the entire county, not just the north valley – must leverage that brand.

Blaine must continue to broaden its marketing efforts to use tourism as a means for stimulating economic growth. This includes more than recreation activities, but cultural arts and events, too. And, to help turn tourists and secondary homeowners into full-time Blaine residents and professionals, it's imperative that business opportunities throughout the county are promoted as well. These efforts must be strategic, coordinated, and

LEVERAGE THE BRAND

80/11



countywide. Building on existing tourism-related websites to establish a one-stop Blaine County online portal should be the anchor of such marketing efforts.

The county also must expand the tools it uses to promote the “Sun Valley” brand. Cross-marketing, viral marketing, and social networking are all avenues to reach a wider audience of potential tourists, talent, and businesses. In particular, new media and social networking tools should be used to attract the interests of young professionals, a group that Blaine desperately needs to attract and retain to ensure the sustainability of its economy. This group, ages 25 to 40, is adept with new media and expects to communicate via such methods.

An aggressive convention and meeting strategy provides opportunities to expose new tourists and potential talent to Blaine. Targeting specific industries and focusing on shoulder seasons, or slack, would provide the best opportunities for immediate economic impact, particularly for restaurants, retail outlets, and hotels. To be successful, Blaine must ensure it has adequate and diverse meeting and accommodation facilities to meet an expanded and more diverse demand.

The myriad festivals and events held throughout the county offer additional options to leverage the brand. Blaine should expand and promote existing festivals as a means for increasing the duration of visitors’ stays and their local spending as well as for attracting new visitors, including during slack. Doing so exposes existing visitors to different activities in the county and draws new visitors to the area.

LEVERAGE THE BRAND

GOAL 1



GOAL ONE IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS	LEAD ORGANIZATION	TIMELINE >>			
		ONGOING	0-6 mos.	6-12 ms.	1-2 yrs. 3-5 yrs.
STRATEGY ONE > BROADEN MARKETING MESSAGE AND EFFORTS TO LEVERAGE TOURISM'S IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY					
Action A >> Establish an aggressive countywide conference and convention strategy linked to target sector opportunities.	CHAMBERS	X			
Action B >> Broaden awareness and expand opportunities in other outdoor recreational activities beyond downhill skiing.	CHAMBERS	X			
Action C >> Expand promotion of the arts and entertainment and special events and festivals in Blaine County	CHAMBERS	X			
STRATEGY TWO > DEVELOP NON-TRADITIONAL MARKETING METHODS TO LINK TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Action A >> Develop an online portal to increase awareness of business opportunities to visitors and residents.	CHAMBERS & BDC		X		
Action B >> Pursue cross marketing opportunities with companies whose brand could be aligned with Sun Valley	CHAMBERS & BDC			X	
Action C >> Commence a viral marketing strategy to promote the area.	CHAMBERS & BDC			X	
Action D >> Continue to use social networking sites as a means for promoting Sun Valley and Blaine County	CHAMBERS & BDC	X			

LEVERAGE THE BRAND

Goal 1:

➤ STRATEGY ONE >> BROADEN MARKETING MESSAGE AND EFFORTS TO LEVERAGE TOURISM'S IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY.

Blaine County offers a wide variety of natural and cultural amenities that have drawn visitors to the region for decades. While the area's economy has clearly grown due to the long-term success of the Sun Valley Resort and other amenities, Blaine County has been unable to capture the full benefits of tourists visiting from throughout the world. In other words, the "Sun Valley" brand has not yet been fully leveraged. Doing so will require a cohesive approach that promotes amenities from the entire county that can be enjoyed throughout the year and attract a wide audience. This will require coordinated efforts from all major stakeholders, including the Sun Valley Company. A major goal of this new marketing message is raising awareness among professionals and younger talent that the area is more than a tourism and retirement destination. It also offers opportunities for entrepreneurship, innovation, and business:

- Action A: Establish an aggressive conference and convention strategy linked to target sector opportunities (See the Target Sector section of this plan). Attracting conferences, conventions, and meetings to the county year-round – but particularly during slack – could provide a boost to the economy and local business owners as well as bring potential new residents and talent to the county.

Specific Tasks:

- Coordinate the targeting of specific businesses and organizations for holding conferences and symposia in Blaine County.
- Establish a local volunteer program through which local business professionals and/or retired entrepreneurs could market Blaine County's asset to conference attendees.
- Create a brief profile and coherent and coordinated marketing message to assist these volunteers in promoting Blaine County's positive aspects.
- Create a formal mechanism through which the volunteers could refer potential business relocation leads.
- Include part-time residents who may also have business or civic connections in their other places of residence from which they could uncover potential leads.
- Consider supporting the development of new conference space in Blaine County to accommodate larger meetings.
- Support development of additional hotels and lodging facilities, including more variety of accommodations.



Action B: Broaden awareness and expand opportunities for outdoor recreational options. According to local sales tax figures, trade at local retail establishments during summer months now outpaces that during the traditional ski season. This is not to say that the area should stop promoting skiing. It does, however, highlight the opportunity to increase tourism and spending throughout all seasons and across a wider range of activities. Particular interest should be paid to promoting recreational activities that will attract a more demographically diverse group of tourists.

Specific Tasks:

- Promote the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve. Explore options for Carey leverage its position as a "gateway city" to Craters of the Moon, which lies partly in Blaine County. More than 227,000 people visited the park in 2008, providing Carey a unique opportunity to harness the economic potential of these tourists. Carey should work with the National Park Service as needed and should also consult the National Geographic's Center for Sustainable Destinations, which provides a "gateway communities toolkit" to help communities develop strategies to take advantage of a nearby park.
- Expand snow boarding options and amenities at Sun Valley Resort, such as building terrain parks.
- Continue to promote the world-class Nordic ski trails and amenities in the area.
- Continue to promote the Sun Valley Ice Rink as a premier destination for amateur and professional skaters.
- Increase promotion of other winter sports, such as sledding, snow-shoeing, and snowmobiling.
- Continue to promote the area as a destination for mountain biking and hiking by continuing to work with Big Wood Backcountry Trails and other groups to maintain and expand trail systems.
- Continue to promote the southern portion of Blaine County for fly fishing.
- Continue to promote the Sawtooth National Recreation Area as a destination for camping, hiking, ecotourism, wildlife viewing, and other activities. Partner with the U.S. Forest Service to promote the year-round range of activities and Blaine County as a gateway to the SNRA.
- Continue to promote other summer activities, including river rafting, golfing, and horseback riding.
- Continue to promote Blaine County as a world-class destination for road biking.
- Coordinate with federal land managers, such as the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and National Park Service, to promote their sites in coordination with Blaine-based activities and events.
- Continue to regularly contact nature, adventure, and recreation tour companies to update them on expanded activities and events in Blaine County, particularly during slack periods.

LEVERAGE THE BRAND

GOAL 1



▪ Action C: Expand promotion of the arts and entertainment, including special events and festivals, in Blaine County. Arts and culture are magnets for tourists. A February 2009 study by the nonprofit Americans for the Arts noted that "communities that invest in the arts reap the additional benefits of jobs, economic growth, and a quality of life that positions those communities to compete in our 21st century creative economy. Whether serving the local community or out-of-town visitors, a vibrant arts and culture industry helps local businesses thrive."

Specific Tasks:

- Promote the Sun Valley Pavilion as a major destination for live music and other performing arts.
- Establish new special events catering to a younger audience (e.g., live contemporary music, independent film/video, etc.), such as the Elkhorn Concert Series.
- Continue to promote and support existing festivals and events, especially those that draw people during the summer.
- Encourage the use of art in public places, including sponsoring public art at bus stops.
- Establish concurrent events and festivals within Blaine County to expand joint-promotional opportunities.
- Consider jointly promoting festivals with communities near Blaine County (e.g., Stanley) to increase overall traffic in the region.
- Expand regular art awareness events, such as the Sun Valley Gallery Association's "Gallery Walks" in Ketchum, into other communities in Blaine. During these regular events, artists display their work and shops extend their hours on the first Friday of the month. Similarly, artists' displays and extended shop hours can be held in conjunction with other county events. This gives visitors an additional option after their recreation or other event has ended for the evening.
- Expand the "Gallery Walks" concept to provide regular events for other types of arts and entertainment. For example, some communities host "First Fridays," when local artists from musicians to painters to thespians provide free performances or extend their hours. The Wood River Arts Alliance could assist with planning and publicizing such events.
- Support local artists through publicly and privately sponsored events and other programs.
- Engage local students and youth in production of special events and festivals.
- Establish a "Blaine County History Trail" and "Blaine County Art Tour."
- Continue to promote area museums, including the Blaine County Historical Museum, the Heritage and Ski Museum, and the Ore Wagon Museum.



➤ STRATEGY TWO >> DEVELOP NON-TRADITIONAL MARKETING METHODS TO LINK TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

The development of new media during the last decade presents both challenges and opportunities for marketing strategies. The availability of high-speed Internet service in most markets across the U.S. has enabled the spread of new nontraditional advertising outlets and has forced the rethinking of marketing strategies. Many older media, such as TV, radio, magazines, and newspapers, are struggling to retain their audience in the face of competition from Internet-based information sources. More recently is the emergence of Web 2.0, which is a second generation of the Internet driven by user-generated content, and more specifically, social networking technology. One prominent example of this is YouTube. Due to this shift toward interactivity, it is critically important for a marketer to engage its audience in such a way that the goal is to achieve the establishment of a community. Essential to this is a community in which the audience feels fully vested and empowered and, therefore, assists (directly or indirectly) in the overall marketing strategy. In other words, the audience is transformed into marketing agent as Americans become more immune to traditional advertising.

- Action A: Develop an online portal to increase awareness of business opportunities to visitors and residents. While both the Sun Valley/Ketchum Chamber and Visitors Bureau and the Hailey Chamber of Commerce have a well-established online presence, their websites focus on tourism, particularly in the north valley. To truly leverage the brand, these efforts should be expanded to encompass the whole of Blaine County and include more than tourism-related information. Offering information about business opportunities at the same site as tourism options exposes potential tourists to business activities in the county. This highlights professional opportunities in Blaine to an audience that might not otherwise know about these activities. Similarly, it exposes a business audience to the social, recreational, and cultural offerings in the county.

Specific Tasks:

- Develop an online community portal to increase awareness of business opportunities to visitors and residents. Consideration should be given to hosting this portal on area chamber websites or on the website of the Blaine Development Corporation (BDC).
- Compile a database of mentoring, training, employment, and business development opportunities in Blaine County.
- Include professional and continuing education courses offered in Blaine County for licensed professionals.
- List or link to higher education and continuing education classes offered at the College of Southern Idaho (CSI).
- Provide information about Blaine-area business organizations and their regular meetings, as well as any one-off or special events they have.
- Include the portal's address or URL on all marketing materials.



LEVERAGE THE BRAND
GOAL 1



▪ Action B: Pursue cross-marketing opportunities with companies whose brand could be aligned with Sun Valley. Cross-marketing is the partnership of two entities to promote goods or services to a combined customer audience. For the purpose of this plan, this concept would include area chambers and/or the Sun Valley Resort partnering with private companies who offer goods or services that fit the local brand. One example is the partnership of the local area with a sport recreation company to promote both its goods and Sun Valley in national advertisements.

Specific Tasks:

- Consider conducting further research on tourists who visit Blaine County to assess their purchasing habits and identify potential partners (e.g., data mining operations, psychographic profiling, etc.).
- Consider partnering with local companies to increase awareness of their products, as well as Blaine County (e.g. SCOTT USA, Smith Optics, Rocky Mountain Hardware, Power Engineers, Sun Valley Bar, etc.).
- Consider targeting companies from outside the area whose brand, goods, and/or service is strong and is a fit with Sun Valley and Blaine County (e.g., a national outdoor sporting goods retailer).
- Consider sponsoring or co-sponsoring events that relate to the Sun Valley brand and could drive visitors to Blaine.

Action C: Commence a viral marketing strategy to promote the area. As marketing relies less and less on traditional methods, a viral marketing strategy becomes critical, particularly for reaching the young professionals (age 25-40) who expect to be communicated with via these nontraditional means.

Specific Tasks:

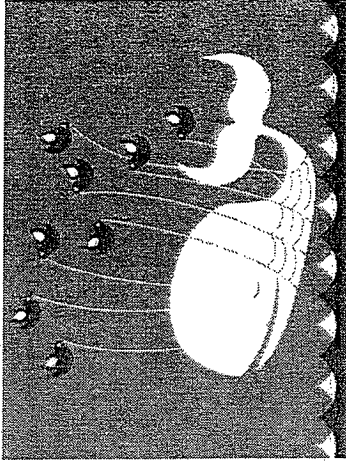
- Identify potential opinion leaders/brand champions who could assist in raising the profile of Blaine County through their activities. Consideration should be given to existing celebrities with ties to the area.
- Offer weekly podcasts that highlight upcoming events, weather conditions, Blaine County news, etc.
- Contribute periodic clips to existing podcasts for target sports, such as skiing and biking.



Action D: Continue to use social networking sites as a means for promoting Sun Valley and Blaine County. Social networking sites are an essential weapon in any marketing arsenal today. They offer an unparalleled opportunity to reach a wide, diverse, and immediate audience. Yet, it is crucial to stay abreast of social networking trends, as what is popular one day may be outdated and passé in a matter of months.

Specific Tasks:

- Assist Sun Valley Resort in raising the profile of its Facebook page.
- Invite local residents and professionals to post positive messages about the area on social networking sites (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn).
- Recruit local celebrities or personalities with a Blaine affiliation – such as athletes, actors, or musicians – to promote Blaine County through their social networking profiles and activities.
- Send invitations through Facebook and other sites for Blaine-based events, such as the Sun Valley Food and Wine Festival, Spiritual Film Festival, Big Wood Folk Festival, and Sun Valley Sustainability Conference.
- Post photos from activities and events in Blaine County on networking and sharing sites, such as Flickr.
- Post video from activities and events in Blaine County on networking and sharing sites, such as YouTube.
- Coordinate with Blaine-area businesses and organizations to promote the Sun Valley brand on their individual sites.
- Coordinate with touring acts that visit Blaine County to post information about the region and their event on their social network sites and blogs.
- Convene an ad hoc committee to advise the county on new and popular social networking sites and methods.



The "fall whale," an image displayed on Twitter when its network is down, has become an icon of social networking.

LEVERAGE THE BRAND

Goal 1:



GOAL TWO > DIVERSIFY DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

the challenge > The economic growth and sustainability that Blaine County seeks is stunted by a lack of affordable, developable land. This has contributed to skyrocketing single-family housing costs, particularly in the northern Wood River Valley. As a result, the cost of living in the county is beyond the means of many area workers. Today, a median-priced home in Blaine is out of reach for more than half of the county's population. Thus, workers move to more affordable surrounding counties, contributing to increased traffic congestion, and affecting local commerce and sales tax revenues.

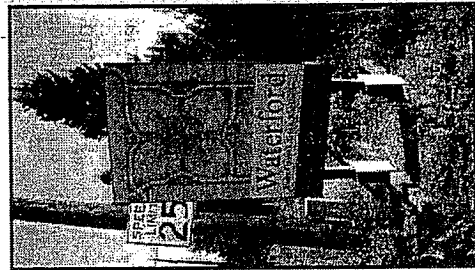
OBJECTIVES

- Provide mixed-use developments, including office, housing, retail, dining, and entertainment.
- Stimulate activity in city cores with private investment and infill development.

Housing costs also affect area employers' ability to attract and retain talent, particularly young professionals, who are in the early stages of their careers and typically live within a limited, modest budget. In essence, Blaine's cost of living serves as a barrier to supporting the workforce needed to diversify the local economy. Without access to labor, businesses cannot afford to stay in Blaine. For example, Icebreaker, a high-end clothing manufacturer from New Zealand, recently moved its U.S. headquarters from Ketchum to Portland, Oregon, partly because its expansion plans were more feasible in talent-rich Portland.

Land-use constraints – both physical and political – create an obstacle to increasing the supply of land available for housing and other uses. Many land-use decisions are out of Blaine County's control. For example, according to the Idaho Department of Commerce, 81.6 percent (1,380,235 acres) of the county is public land, including 77.7 percent owned by the federal government, 3.6 percent owned by the State of Idaho, and 0.3 percent owned by the county and municipalities. While this vast amount of pristine, undeveloped land provides recreation opportunities and outdoor experiences that attract people to the area, it also affects the land available for development. Some land constraints result from local quality-of-place decisions, such as ordinances that prohibit development along hillslides, protect open space, or prevent density. Although such policies reflect local priorities, they have an impact on the availability of medium- to large-size strategic sites. This, in turn, affects the county's ability to provide residential and commercial space for its growing population. Ultimately, this restricts economic growth in Blaine.

Blaine's housing stock is also limited. The typical housing unit in the county is a single-family dwelling, yet consumers' housing preferences are undergoing a shift nationwide. Retirees seek upscale yet low-maintenance housing and young professionals seek a more urban lifestyle near work and entertainment amenities. These groups represent a large segment of Blaine's current population (retirees) and a segment the area needs to attract (young professionals). Despite a current surplus of affordable rental units in the county, Blaine still lacks variety in the housing stock available for ownership. To attract and retain needed talent, the housing options these individuals want must be available.



LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

GOAL 2



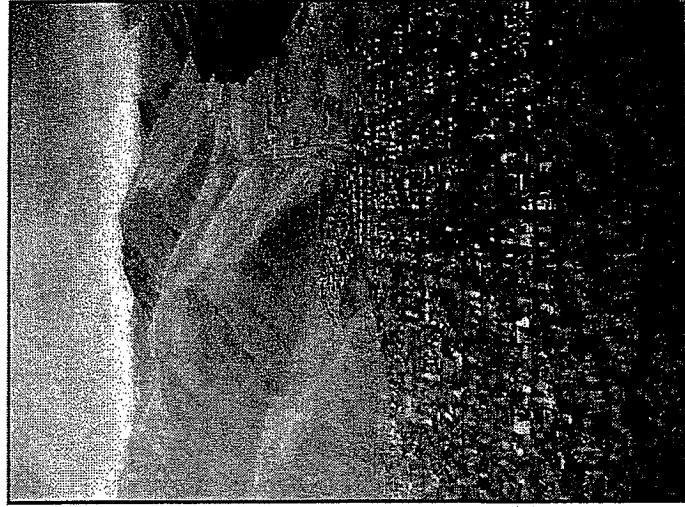
Retail and other amenities reflect the higher cost of living within the county. With its reputation as a high-end mountain resort area, Blaine County attracts a wealthy, mobile cadre of tourists, residents, and nonprimary homeowners. Many local retail-, personal services-, and food-related businesses cater to this niche, leaving few options for area professionals and other workers. As a result, many residents travel outside of the county - to Twin Falls, for example - for their shopping needs.

the response > To stimulate economic growth, Blaine must address the availability of affordable, developable land in the county. This can be achieved while continuing to respect local priorities, including those that make the area a desirable destination to potential talent, businesses, and visitors.

Targeting strategic sites in the county and assembling the land needed for development is critical. In doing so, the county should identify target sectors and land uses, such as health care, light industrial, and mixed use, that support existing and emerging sectors. One opportunity for large-scale development is the Friedman Memorial Airport, a site of about 211 acres. The location of the current airport has been deemed unviable by the FAA. While there is continuing controversy within the county, this plan operates on the assumptions put forward by Landrum and Brown. The results of their planning efforts - along with the Environment Impact Statement for the Friedman Memorial Airport Authority - are unambiguous (www.airportsites.net/sun-eis/default.htm): the airport must relocate.

While a new location for the airport has not been established, the closure of the current facility offers unprecedented opportunities to Blaine County. This large tract of land in a prime location can act as a cornerstone for future economic growth. Working with the airport authority, a model development at the site is a hoped-for outcome of this plan. Landrum and Brown has prepared preliminary land use designs currently under review by the authority and the county. They mirror many of the themes described throughout these goals and strategies.

The development of the Friedman Airport may take considerable time, but planning for a reuse cannot begin too soon. Discussions with the Friedman Trust are already underway. In fact, the designation of additional larger-scale development sites would certainly provide economic benefit to the county. While this goes beyond the scope of the existing plan, TIP feels that the land use task force recommended in Goal Five should be charged with the task of identifying other potential sites. It is, after all, unnecessarily limiting to suggest that Blaine consider only one major redevelopment project - especially one that will take many years to realize.



LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

GOAL 5



Blaine County can learn from the experiences of other communities that have turned an airport closure into a major opportunity. At the same time, these communities have not restricted their growth exclusively to one redevelopment project. There is no reason for Blaine County not to be ambitious in its economic development efforts.

Blaine County and its constituent municipalities should review and revise their policies regarding density, particularly in the city centers and along major transportation corridors. Consideration for infill development should be given priority. Steps to further diversify the housing stock, especially in the urban cores, should be primary components of infill development. Maintaining zoning that encourages low density development will increase sprawl and contribute to increased housing costs. While no one would move to Blaine County in search of a high-rise loft, more diverse housing options, such as townhomes, condos, or accessory dwelling units, would better support the needs of a more diversified workforce and help attract young professionals.

Improving resident and visitor experiences also affects economic development. Efforts include linking downtown destinations, such as shuttles; improving pedestrian facilities, such as sidewalks, enhancing signage; and providing adequate transportation options from well-maintained roadways to reliable public transportation. Coupled with infill and increased density, these efforts breathe life into core places within the county and contribute to community cohesiveness, which is essential to stimulating countywide economic vitality.

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Goal 2:



GOAL TWO IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS	LEAD ORGANIZATION	TIMELINE >>			
		ONGOING	0-6 mos.	6-12 ms.	1-2 yrs. 3-5 yrs.
STRATEGY ONE - INCREASE DENSITY WITHIN THE EXISTING URBAN AREAS THROUGH INFILL DEVELOPMENT					
Action A >> Increase occupancy rates for existing commercial properties.	COUNTY & CITIES		X		
Action B >>> Support public and private investment opportunities in downtown areas to create mixed-use anchor destinations and improved public places.	CITIES		X		
Action C >> Target specific locations for increased density (e.g., city centers, along transit routes, etc.).	CITIES & CHAMBERS			X	
Action D >> Develop policies for incentivizing denser development.	COUNTY & CITIES			X	
Action E >> Promote transportation mobility options linking urbanized areas and downtown destinations.	MT RIDES & CITIES				X
Action F >> Consider the establishment of a designated entertainment district in one of Blaine County's downtown areas.	CITIES				X
STRATEGY TWO - ESTABLISH A PROCESS FOR ASSEMBLING AND DEVELOPING STRATEGIC SITES					
Action A >> Update information on preferred sites.	BDC			X	
Action B >>> Determine level of public sector support.	BDC				X
Action C >>> Engage development community.	BDC				X
Action D >>> Develop area plans.	BDC				X
Action E >>> Develop marketing and recruitment strategy.	BDC				X

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT



STRATEGY THREE - TARGET STRATEGIC SITES AND TRACTS TO PROVIDE LARGER-SCALE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Action A ->> Support the assembly and redevelopment of tracts in the South Gateway/McHanville area	BDC & COUNTY								X		
Action B ->> Begin planning for the redevelopment of the Friedman Airport site	CITY OF HAILEY & BDC									X	
Action C ->> Leverage Carey's assets to promote industrial development in Blaine County	BDC & CITY OF CAREY										X

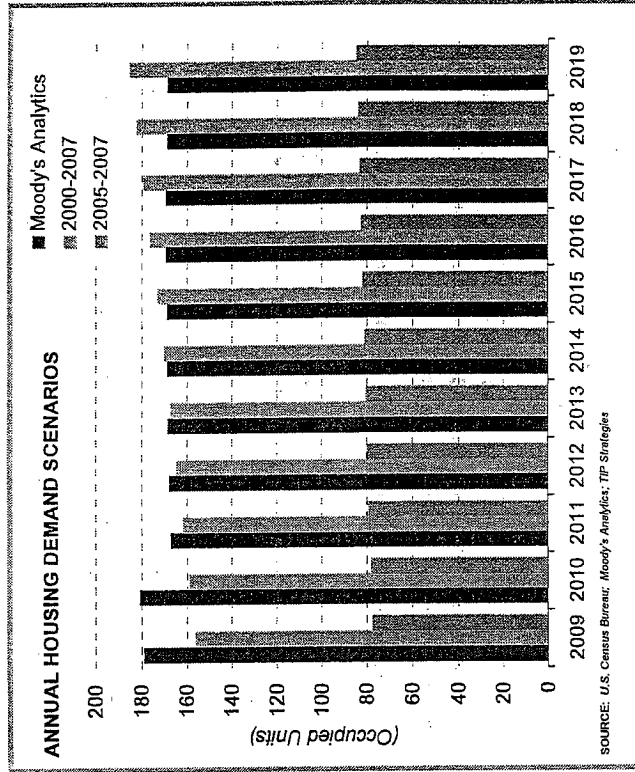
LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT
Goal 2:



► STRATEGY ONE >> INCREASE DENSITY WITHIN THE EXISTING URBAN AREAS THROUGH INFILL DEVELOPMENT.

Developing a vibrant urban fabric can lead to both economic growth and community cohesiveness. Energetic, creative mixed-use developments in city centers can be functional, inviting, and sustainable. They can also engage residents and visitors in the community in ways that have a positive economic, environmental, and social impact. To achieve this, existing urban areas must be places where people live and work. This includes integrating workforce housing into the “urban” cores. Blaine has fewer units of workforce housing than its competitors. For example, Blaine County has just more than 100 units while Telluride has more than 600.

For the assessment portion of this study, TIP analyzed three scenarios to determine the potential demand for housing in Blaine County that would be generated by future full-time residents (see the *Economic Development Assessment of Blaine County* for the full findings). Obviously, these projections are subject to change depending on future economic conditions in Blaine County. In fact, current market conditions show a nearly unprecedented level of residential vacancies. Nevertheless, growth in the county can expect to return with improving business opportunities (nationally and locally). Rather than return to the previous imbalances, this report takes a more aggressive posture. According to this analysis, Blaine County can reasonably expect total demand for new housing units over the next 10 years to fall within a range of 900 to 1,900 units. This would represent a 10 percent to 20 percent increase in the county’s housing stock for permanent residents. Moreover, these projections do not take into account future demand for housing from potential seasonal/part-time residents. This latter source of demand should not be discounted, given that TIP estimates that approximately half of the 2,000 new units constructed between 2000 and 2007 were for seasonal use only. If this ratio remains constant, then the total demand for new units (for both full- and part-time residents) in Blaine County could range somewhere between 1,800 and 3,800 units for the next 10 years.



LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Goal 2:



- **Action A: Increase occupancy rates for existing commercial properties.** Key to vibrant, active city centers is ensuring that businesses are located in these areas. In addition to providing a presence during typical work hours, businesses in the city center also contribute to a livelier after-hours environment, as employees often stay in the area for dining, shopping, and other entertainment pursuits.

Specific Tasks:

- Develop a formal, public inventory of available properties.
- Create an information packet, including the inventory of sites, to provide to commercial brokers and individuals seeking to establish a small business in Blaine County.
- Maintain an updated inventory online. The Idaho Department of Commerce's Gem State Prospector (www.gemstateprospector.com) is one online tool, but Blaine should use a locally managed online inventory to ensure the information is up-to-date and accurate.

- **Action B: Support public and private investment opportunities in downtown areas to create mixed-use anchor destinations and improved public places.** Stimulating development of quality public places requires commitment from the public and private sectors. One example is city-owned sites (e.g., surface parking lots) in the downtown area of Ketchum that could be redeveloped to increase housing density.

Specific Tasks:

- Review existing ordinances and zoning policies to ensure they allow for these types of developments.
- Distribute activity nodes and anchors across the core of downtowns such that pedestrian and vehicular traffic must pass other tenants when traveling between anchors. This location strategy will provide heightened visibility for other tenants located in the core.
- If new public facilities are planned, encourage them to be within or adjacent to a downtown core to serve as a primary employment anchor.
- Encourage development of flagship mixed-use projects that will include entertainment options, fine dining, office, retail, and residential units. These projects should be designed with the goal of promoting Blaine County's downtowns as after-hours destinations. However, careful attention should be paid to attract tenants that complement, rather than compete with, existing downtown businesses.

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Goal 2



Action C: Target specific locations for increased density (e.g., city centers, along transit routes). A key element of managing growth is increased density in high-volume or high-traffic areas, with traffic including pedestrians and bicycles.

Specific Tasks:

- Work with both public and private property owners and the cities to identify, inventory, and prioritize sites at highly visible or strategic locations suitable for redevelopment.
- Create an information packet, including an inventory of priority sites, to provide to commercial brokers, retail site consultants, and franchisees seeking locations in Blaine County.
- Include redevelopment opportunity sites in marketing materials for Blaine County.
- Consider commissioning a study to determine Blaine professionals' housing stock preferences.
- Increase the range of housing options.
- Develop employment targets and related land-use and density requirements for city centers.

Action D: Once specific locations have been finalized, develop policies for incentivizing denser development. Establishing specific criteria regarding design standards, employment and wage targets, density requirements, and other community goals would trigger incentives for desirable projects. Examples of incentives include a streamlined or "fast-track" review and approval process, waivers or reduction of the project's development-related fees, or in some cases, tax abatements or credits. Examples of policies include affordable housing targets in mixed-used projects.

Specific Tasks:

- Restructure zoning policies to allow alternative housing types, such as mother-in-law housing and mixed-use developments.
- Allow structures in certain areas (i.e., downtowns) to be taller (up to four stories).
- Investigate developing a "streamlined permitting process" for developments in desirable areas, especially if they include targeted sectors.
- Develop a baseline comparison of Blaine County's development review and permitting process with other Idaho counties. If no such baseline comparison already exists, then the county should begin tracking the review time for different categories of permitting (i.e., residential/commercial and infill/greenfield development). At the same time, the county should gather information from these benchmarks and begin comparing this data with Blaine County's.
- Encourage constituent communities to develop streamlined permitting process for desirable projects, including targeted industries. The degree of success that Blaine County enjoys is dependent on the functionality of the cities' permitting processes. For this reason, it is important for Blaine County to act as a liaison between prospects and the cities.

GOAL 2
LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

- Hold monthly or quarterly meetings with the development community to review the benchmark data discussed above to obtain developer feedback. This qualitative information can often be more valuable than the comparative data in improving the development review and permitting process.

▪ **Action E: Promote transportation mobility options linking urbanized areas and downtown destinations.** To create a livable, vibrant, sustainable community, Blaine's urban areas must be fully accessible based on diverse transportation options. This includes mobility links among city cores as well as well-maintained infrastructure within each downtown destination. Mountain Rides has taken some steps in this direction, and its efforts should continue to be supported.

Specific Tasks:

- Establish direct connections between high-density and popular locales within Blaine County.
- Continue to support Mountain Rides' efforts to link urban areas with city centers.
- Continue to support the expansion of Mountain Rides.
- Assist in the development of a regional transit system connecting Blaine County with Shoshone and Twin Falls.
- Provide transit services during peak periods and special events to deter parking in the downtown areas.
- Designate downtown areas as primary destinations in the county's transportation plan.
- Provide adequate pedestrian facilities, such as sidewalks, signage, and public toilets, within each urban area.
- Provide needed facilities to support cycling between and within city cores. This includes well-designated signage and bike parking racks.
- Increase connectivity between Wood River Trails and the downtown core areas.
- Research the possibility of a bicycle sharing system or community bicycle program whereby bicycles are made available for a low cost. The bicycles are made available at racks around the community and are released by token or coins. Users can pick up and return the bicycles at any of the racks. In other communities, both municipalities and nonprofits have provided the bicycles and managed the program. The structure of the programs, which are under way in communities worldwide, varies greatly. The Wood River Bicycle Coalition has worked toward this task and should continue to be supported.

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

GOAL 2



▪ Action F: Consider establishing a designated entertainment district in one or more of Blaine County's downtown areas. An entertainment district provides a concentrated area that can be a thriving home to an array of cultural, art, shopping, music, theatre, dining, and nightlife attractions. If fully leveraged, an entertainment district can draw visitors and residents to a common location, enhance the area's overall image, capture increased tourism spending, retain and attract young talent, attract baby boomer retirees, and protect private and public investments that have already occurred in the area.

Specific Tasks:

- Meet with property owners and area residents to gauge support for the establishment of an entertainment district in one of Blaine County's downtowns. If the proposal receives a positive community reaction, the following tasks should be considered.
- Identify the boundaries of the entertainment district.
- Designate the entertainment district with special zoning status (if necessary):
- Develop a conceptual site plan for the entertainment district as a means for promoting the idea to potential developers – both regional and national.
- Include conceptual site plan in marketing materials for Blaine County.

► STRATEGY TWO >> ESTABLISH A PROCESS FOR ASSEMBLING AND DEVELOPING STRATEGIC SITES.

Without a predetermined strategy for eventual development of the strategic sites, the BDC and its allies will likely run into several obstacles. This is especially true given the level of engagement by many of Blaine County's citizenry. TIP recommends following carefully the actions below prior to taking on the development of major sites. The process described should be applicable to any of the preferred sites. (See Strategy Three.)

▪ Action A: Update information on preferred sites. Understanding ownership, zoning, legal disposition, infrastructure, and other related issues should be the first step in the process.

Specific Tasks:

- Assemble/update information on number of parcels, ownership, and current asking price (for properties being offered for sale).
- Ensure that properties are annexed and/or zoned to allow for the selected uses. For example, ensure the selected property for a future medical district will support medical offices, ancillary, and support uses. (See Strategy 3, Action A.)
- Determine the status of infrastructure and transportation-related improvements that might be needed to support proposed developments.

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

GOAL 2:



Approaches to Ownership

Under a **master developer** scenario, the public sector serves as a primary participant. The public sector acquires land, and then leases or sells land to a private developer and allows that party to develop the land according to pre-approved guidelines. In return, the developer is allowed to realize the long-term revenue streams. Under this approach, Blaine County or one of the municipalities would purchase the property, then set forth specific standards for the development and invite developers (through a competitive bidding procedure) to meet those standards. Area stakeholders (including existing citizens and companies) could then serve an advisory role to the city and developer.

Formation of a **public/private partnership** is another option. In this case, the public sector serves as both a participant and a facilitator. The city/county could choose to develop a portion of a development on its own or could confer the rights to a property in exchange for certain improvements.

▪ **Action B: Determine level of public-sector support.** There are several different development options available requiring varying levels of public-sector involvement. These can be broadly outlined along two paths based on ownership of the land:

- **City/county ownership.** In general terms, public-sector ownership of the chosen properties would improve the area's ability to attract developers and provide significant flexibility in negotiating terms. If it is decided that the public sector should take an active role in developing specific properties, a long-term horizon for development is necessary. This typically occurs using one of two approaches (see text box): a master developer strategy or some form of *public-private partnership*.

- **Private ownership.** In this scenario, the public sector serves primarily as a facilitator. For example, a developer agrees to make an investment in a property in return for city/county-financed improvements. While the level of cooperation varies dramatically, this approach is most successful when the public sector has a clear vision of how it wants the properties to develop and uses public improvements to guide private investment. This can be accomplished by zoning and codes, by design standards, and by the scale and location of physical improvements - from roads to water and sewer.

▪ **Action C: Engage development community.** Engaging the development community early in the process can help ensure that a project incorporates the most current thinking. TIP recommends the consideration of one or both of the following:

Specific Tasks:

- Host a developers' forum to discuss relevant issues regarding the design, construction, or positioning of a project in order to provide guidance in the planning process. The event could be organized using a round-table format, with developers leading the discussion, or a charrette approach (see text box), which emphasizes public input in the design of a specific project.

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Issue a formal request for proposal (RFP) to local and regional developers for a site plan for one of the preferred development sites. TIP recommends that the RFP be used for both the medical district and airport redevelopment sites. The RFP should ask developers to provide a detailed concept plan that accommodates mixed use projects.

Action D: Develop area plans. Once a concept is established for each development, the BDC and allies should prepare and implement specific plans to guide development of the projects. The planning process should include a broad range of stakeholders, including the public offices, citizens, other key stakeholders, and local employers, including those who may be prospective tenants of the developments. The following elements should be considered in the plan:

- **Barriers.** Identification of barriers to development and, where possible, actions for alleviating them prior to marketing the property.
- **Market.** A market-driven approach that considers the competitive environment and helps determine the appropriate mix of uses at the time of construction.
- **Funding.** The full array of financing tools should be brought to bear on the projects. This includes the creation of a tax-increment financing district to bond issues to general fund appropriations. Additional details on options must be linked to specific projects.
- **Linkages.** Consideration should be given to understanding the project's relationship to the rest of Blaine County. Development plans must be coordinated with other relevant plans, including comprehensive plans.
- **Impacts.** Performance standards should be developed for the projects, including an analysis of traffic impacts associated with the project, provisions for buffering of uses, as well as the protection of any natural areas. The plans should consider how these natural elements can be integrated into the development to create a "natural" feel and provide an amenity for tenants. Blaine County has demonstrated leadership in the area of environmentally sensitive development that should be brought to bear on these projects.

definition: CHARRETTE

A *charrette* is an urban planning technique for consulting with all stakeholders. Charrettes are typically intense, possibly multi-day meetings involving public officials, developers and local residents. A charrette promotes joint ownership of the solution and attempts to defuse traditional confrontation between residents and developers.

For developers and municipal officials charrettes achieve community involvement and hopefully avoid costly legal battles.

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▪ **Action E: Prepare a marketing and recruitment strategy.** While recruitment of new business is a viable option, the BDC should focus on the site as a means to encourage the expansion of existing businesses. The commercial/industrial center should be viewed as a way to create a “move-up” opportunity for existing employers and their supplier network. Once the needs of existing business have been met, marketing efforts should focus on the types of companies outlined in the Target Industry section of this strategy.

Specific Tasks:

- Prepare a strategy for marketing the selected sites, based on the recommendations of the specific plan and the expansion and recruitment targets outlined in this plan. The BDC should consider the preparation of marketing materials, including a brochure and website, or a webpage on the city’s existing website, specifically for the proposed development. Although the development is much larger in scale (1,600 acres) than anything recommended for Blaine County, the website created by the City of Tustin, California, for the Tustin Legacy redevelopment is a good example of how this approach could be implemented. (www.tustinlegacy.com/).
- Promote the sites creatively. The development should be positioned as more than another business park. The Tustin Legacy mentioned above accomplishes this through its mixed-use approach, its excellent website, and its vision of a master planned property.

► STRATEGY THREE >> TARGET STRATEGIC SITES AND TRACTS TO PROVIDE LARGER-SCALE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

Geography and policy has restricted the supply of developable land in the most desirable portions of Blaine County. It, therefore, only makes sense to establish a list of priority sites and coordinate their future development. TIP and Sustain Blaine solicited input from a range of local land use experts to better understand the options. This Land Use Task Force recommended three sites as priorities: South Gateway/McHanville near St. Luke’s Wood River Medical Center, Friedman Airport, and the Rinker-Scherer tract near Bellevue. TIP carefully considered these recommendations and determined that South Gateway/McHanville, Friedman Airport, and Carey should be the initial focal points for large-scale development in the county. Their selection as priorities was due to their value as uniquely strategic assets to Blaine County’s future economic vitality. In addition to these sites, TIP recommends the BDC and local municipalities continue to seek development opportunities at the following: Rinker-Scherer tract, Airport West area, and area adjacent to Warm Springs Road.

In addition to the process outlined in Strategy Two for each of the large-scale developments, the following actions should be uniquely taken for each:

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Goal 2

